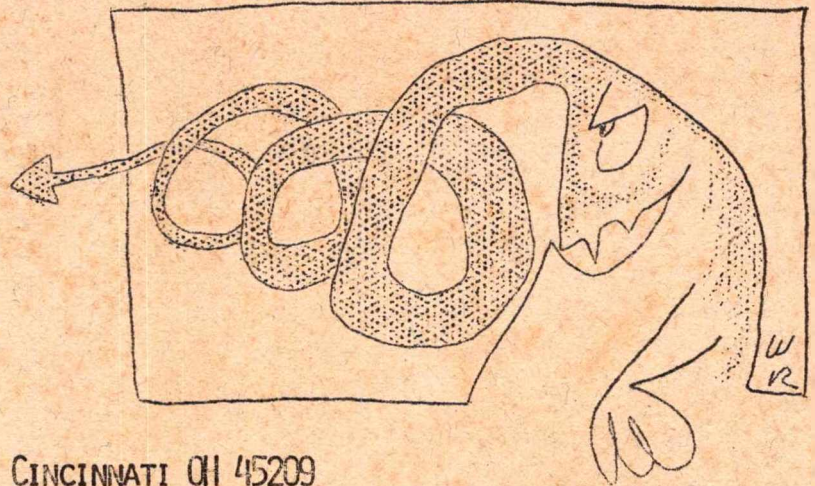


SEQUE

FOR FLAP #8, FEBRUARY 1981



DAVE LOCKE 4215 ROMAINE DR. #22, CINCINNATI OH 45209



OO: AH, ME -- ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER APA And a year of history under the belt. Right, it was only January of 1980 that we kicked off this long-winded party. Seems further back, but then 1980 was subjectively a long year for me. Many Images, many thoughts, and even many FLAPs. Seven mailings is many, isn't it? Perhaps not. We approach an area of difference where many may be one or a hundred. I saw it as generally enjoyable, sometimes even fun, and at least interesting. And now the party enters its second year, without too many going home and still early enough to predict late arrivals. This analogy must stop. Any real party that went on for a year would render me incoherent and possibly unable to drive home ("Thank goodness I had a car -- I was too drunk to walk." Copyright 1973, David G. Hulan).

JONI STOPA HI. I just turned past the OO. That's Official Organ in apanese, but then you know that, don't you? Do you also find that a rather arresting name for the ToC and business section of an apa? Official Organ. Raises all manner of Images, but none of them have any connection with amateur press organizations. An Official Organ could be a title of honor and achievement bestowed upon the top person in an orgy. Or the bottom person. Perhaps only the Pope has an Official Organ. If indeed it is true that we are royally being screwed by government it seems logical that somewhere there must be an Official Organ which can be whipped out for this purpose. Monogamists have Official Organs. All those pricks in Congress must be Official Organs. You know: Official Organs. Anyway, Joni, I turned past FLAP's very own Official Organ and here was your zine, all green and pristine, and without checkmarks in there. No checkmarks in the margins of your zine, Joni. Christ, what shall we talk about? No, I'm not much into gardening. No, the first time I went skiing I spent at least the last 45 seconds headed in a straight line toward a tree, absolutely convinced right up to the last second that this was sufficient time in which to deduce a method for turning the skis and avoiding the problems of skiing around both sides of the trunk. Finally I decided it was a good idea to fall over. Then I decided tobagganing sounded like more fun. Cat stories? Well, we saw a cousin of Garfield at a party. Hello? The comic strip: Garfield. Cincy had four parties, one each night starting New Year's Eve, and we went to the first and the third. Tanya Curry and Don Carter and two dogs and two cats hosted the third party, and one of the cats had Garfield's belly and enough disdain and enough quirkiness to maintain resemblance if you didn't look too close or managed to drink enough. Eh? Well, both cats were spoiled, one dog was immensely raunchy and clamoring for attention, and the other was presentable but I watched it nip other people

in its own attempt for recognition. And it was the night after New Year's Day and the furnace wasn't turned on. I played Othello and Jackie played Euchre. How does it sound to you so far? Yes, I have real cat stories, but maybe next mailing. I'll devote 5 or 48 pages to a whole pelt of them, and run that special cover on how to troll for barracuda with Dave Vereschagin. How about we talk costumes? Well, you were as delighted as myself with all the people at Windycon who dressed up like radishes and seemed to be everywhere. We didn't see the Masquerade, but caught a chunk of the one at Rivercon. How do you like the largess of uninspiring comics costumes and endless depictions of cinema characters? Wouldn't you rather make do without it? Me, too. It used to be we could lock up the theater buffs and the kids in the movie room. Now the children are invading the masquerade with inspiration from guess where? What this country needs is a good six-dollar convention at a Motel 6. And maybe a few other things. Bye, Joni.

JOE NICHOLAS

Hi, you Limey bastard. Oh, sorry Joe, I got flushed with my hot, red English blood there and for a moment was carried away with great feelings of bonhomie. In the English manner, of course. You know, I had sympatico vibratio with your description of a ladybird crawling from under your typewriter keys onto the space bar. I once had a cat run across the keys on my electric typewriter, creating a rather strange interjection in the midst of a letter to Cagle. Perhaps it was chasing a ladybird, or ladybug as we call them on this side of the puddle. Moving right along I see you creebing at Arthur and Gil: *"If they're going to agonize about their sexual or moral or intellectual failings in print then they'd better expect to get clobbered for them by someone who's not sympathetic to their aims and intents, and the hell with any crap about respect."* Having just woken up after reading seven pages of your nine-page NABU article about the *"literal-minded American fan"* who cannot recognize *"put-downs so calculatedly exaggerated that no ... self-respecting British fan ... should have ... any trouble interpreting ... the sarcasm,"* it seems to me that I should avoid stepping on my dick by taking you too literally. It just wouldn't do to have you misunderstood, Joseph. No. Now that you have admitted to being as *"damned overwritten"* as you feel one of Arthur's zines is, it behooves me to look behind what you say and see what you mean. Obviously then, or close to it, since neither Arthur or Gil talk much about their *"failings,"* you didn't mean failings. You meant some word less exaggerated, like probably *'inclinations.'* *"Agonize"* seems like it could be an overstatement for *'tell.'* Now, *"someone who's not sympathetic"* is unquestionably humor by understatement. Sympathy is not your strong suit, Joseph, and you wouldn't approach within miles of either side of it, so *"sympathetic"* should likely be replaced by *'tolerant.'* *"Aims and intents"* could easily be exaggeration for *'ways,'* and *"respect"* an overstating of *'civility.'* Okay, now let's read that back: *"If they're going to tell about their sexual or moral or intellectual inclinations in print then they'd better expect to get clobbered for them by someone who's not tolerant to their ways, and the hell with any civility."* How about it, Joe, is that a good understanding of your meaning? Remember now, it wouldn't do for me to take what you say at face value and thereby misunderstand you. Of course, subterfuge via fascade makes the task of understanding even harder: *"The paper personality I parade here (and in other fanzines) bears very little relation to my real one."* Well, let's see it. You like this one better? Please realize that you might know what lies behind the hyperbole and name-calling and intolerance and I-Want-Attention construction which is the paper personality called Joseph Nicholas, whereas an ignorant child such as myself is not privvy to this great secret, and can only guess. This presumes that one cares enough to want to know. Is there some reason people who see you only in fanzines should care to know you? If not, let's avoid being surprised that people misunderstand you. And now let's switch to another level (of approach), and see where it leads us. This doesn't bother your ass, does it, Joe? I mean, you probably don't much mind being talked about, and I'm of a mood to tweek your cheeks and see

which way you move. Let's put it this way: personally I find you interesting to the extent that you and others say that you are unlike your fanwriting. Without a more reasonable view of what kind of person you are, I can't go long in maintaining interest in the rhetorical facade. So if I'm to maintain any interest in Joseph Nicholas, it can only be as a potential consequence of seeing behind your one-pony act. Not knowing where you're coming from is amusing only up to a point. Presuming that you're willing to play this game, let me make it easy for you. How would the real Joseph Nicholas answer this opening salvo of exploratory questions? Succinctly.

- 1) Do you feel exhilaration when someone takes offense at something you've written?
- 2) Is fanzine fandom a place for you to be someone you cannot be otherwise?
- 3) What, boiled down to essence, is your purpose in fanwriting? This is relevant in a situation where purpose is not self-evident, as I think we've established that Joe Nicholas lies behind a different persona which itself claims the right of overstatement in particular and hyperbole in general.
- 4) Can you envision any circumstance where you would be friendly with the paper persona of someone you have not met? If you can, convey the general scope of such a person, or name names. Whichever is shorter.
- 5) There is not an altogether improbable likelihood that one of these days you and I shall meet. You in the U.S. or Australia, me in the U.K. or in Australia. If this occurs, based on your current impression of/^{me}what do you imagine my impression would be of you? Why?
- 6) Have you ever heard the Abraham Maslow quote: "If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail"?

MIKE SHOEMAKER

Well, no, the rednecks of Timber Ridge had no effect on our moving to Cincy. Finding a job in Cincy had a lot of effect, though. In Louisville, between G.E. and Ford alone there were 6000 bodies laid-off and scrambling for jobs in (at its nadir) 7½ columns of employment ads. The headhunters and agency people tripped over themselves whenever an opening appeared in my field (or anything close to it), as there were only four other hungry Material Managers vying for the same opening. Of the two positions that came up, one went to a \$50K-a-year degreed man who settled for \$20K and the other to someone who met the qualification of being "fresh in the game and could learn the company's way of doing the job" (I told the recruiter: "Okay, they're cheap. I can be ignorant and do the job their way. Tell them I have amnesia." But I didn't get to first base, anyway). So I spread the resume net further and further out, and landed a job in Cincinnati. It is salary-wise in the ballpark of what I wanted (I looked lower, but for obvious reasons companies don't usually hire overqualified people or people seemingly interested in starting at the bottom in a different field). Function-wise I'm in the ballpark (Material Procurement Manager), and hired more for my computer conversion experience than for anything else. I work for the trouble division of a conglomerate which is #601 on the Fortune 1000, and this outfit will never move them up to #600. In itself this division is a conglomerate, with facilities in Cincy (2), Casey IL, Douglas AZ, Mexico (2, both in Agua Prieta), Haiti, and Tonbridge UK (the only one I don't have to worry about...). I could spend an awful lot of space talking about my new job, but your question has already been answered too thoroughly. Let's move along to your comment about your difficulty in being critical of your own writing, and how your initial shine evaporates as you get further away from a particular piece. My own self-critical mechanism works a bit differently, but it is defective. I may be pleased or displeased as I go along, and with distance and rereadings I may feel better or worse or the same. I go with my inclinations at each rereading and modify the piece accordingly. At a certain point I feel it's as good as I can make it, it's good enough for the time I want to put into it, it fails and I can't do it to my satisfaction, or it fails and I don't wish to spend further salvage time on it. I strive for the objective viewpoint mainly by being suspicious and removed when reviewing my own material, as well as by sniffing closely to see if it

Halauity about pissing

smells. My objective in being self-critical at all is based upon realizing that my expression is not always interestingly adequate to convey my viewpoints, and my thoughts are not always interesting enough to be expressed. This does not spring from any great feeling of inadequacy... It comes from the realism which says that ego has its good and its bad characteristics, and it is of benefit to both myself and to others that I attempt to recognize the difference. This says little about critical faculties regarding content, which is no doubt suspicious. Perhaps this could be a problem. I know that Ed disapproves of our card talk. It sounds to him like we're talking about pussy. It struck me that maybe we could talk a little about pussy and Ed might ask to be dealt in on the conversation. Or he might comment that, in his view, we're just a couple of jokers. You think? No, I don't believe it either, but it's a thought. So was your idea of a Lifetime Score in Hearts. I want Lon to pay attention to this point. After he becomes a successful novelist I've asked him to write a fantasy based on the action of a Hearts game. The idea of a world where Lifetime Scores have significance is an idea with possibilities, unlike your idea that I'm *"making a common gambling mistake ... mixing personalities and egos with the simple business of coming out ahead. In gambling a winner is anyone who wins money, however little. 'Guaranteeing the win' is only useful if you're trying to prove you're better than someone else, but to paraphrase George C. Scott in The Hustler, 'It's simple to find out who's best in this game; you count your money at the end of the night.' (or at the end of the month, year, lifetime)." As they say, right here what you've got is your basic fallacy. Your basic fallacy is saying that winning does not also work over the long haul. If I win more than I lose at Hearts, or at anything else, I don't care how long you accumulate the numbers, I have won more than I have lost and anyway you want to look at it I am ahead. I have built this accumulation of winnings with the bodies of an awful lot of individual games. To win individual games requires a number of things, including an awareness that I am frequently enough in a position to sway distribution of the 26 points. I find it necessary to keep a finger on the pulse of the score throughout the game. Blowing three people over 100 points simultaneously is more remunerative than doing it to one... Seriously, using the ebb and flow of the politics of Hearts (overly blatant illustration: "Get Lon!"...) to position yourself the most favorably for the endgames (yeah, we're still talking Hearts) is more conducive to winning than not worrying about point distribution amongst the other three players. For instance, if I catch a few points and am watching two lower players trying to push Odell over 100, it behooves me to work with Odell at least to the extent where I am no longer going to owe money to Dero and Prezell (at which point I become fickle and assist Dero and Prezell in splitting Odell's losses). For instance, in a game where it works out that I'm one of two strong players in a game with two fish (Hearts Fandom lingo. All non-Hearts players still with us should skip ahead to the ~~XXXX~~ or risk falling asleep...), the measure of my game (ie: the degree of my success at winning) lies a great deal in how well I can fence (ie: countermanipulate) with the other strong player, and ignoring point spread amongst the three would be to ignore the fact that a strong player can often manipulate play to my disadvantage (eg: hold a weak player on the edge until the balance of all other scores is in the strong player's favor). All of this might indicate more seriousness toward the game than exists, when the real situation is that I, too, have "expended a lot of thought on consideration of the overall structure." However, not just "of rules." Of strategy. I can get croned to my eyebrows when I encounter the delightful experience of getting three good drinking buddies together for Hearts and bullshit and bonhomie, but I have played the game every whichaway, to the point where I consider myself as much an experienced fan of Hearts as, for example, an experienced fanzine fan or experienced scotch drinker. Experienced enough to have fun with it because it is a vehicle for interesting times, and experienced enough to grasp and understand and synthesize and philosophise on the structure of the game. I do suspect that you are well versed in the rules and strategies of the cutthroat version of the game (ie: the mechanics of one person playing a game of paranoia against three people who are*

doing the same). I would like most to expose you to the game which involves three people who are more than street-wise in the game, and are friendly at least to the extent where shtick and non-expository politics (ie: talk can focus on the score, but not on the cards) is an amusing construct to build on top of the mechanical rules of the game. Often enough, in my experience, one encounters a game where politics is a factor. To ignore that is often to be at a disadvantage, given no shortcoming in mechanical ability. But I think you would very soon make an excellent fourth at such an imaginary table. I sense that you would fit in quickly and enjoy the same taste as I, which to boil it down is a simple mixture of respected abilities, friendly competition, and intrepid gamesmanship. Plus a dash of all the peripherals which can surround either a pickup game or actually making an evening of it in a premeditated fashion. XXXX Okay, everybody else can come back now. To turn around ninety degrees, one thing I wish I'd never made is an admission of arachnophobia. Cagle panders to it with tales of spiders which will latch onto my nose, and otherwise nice folk such as yourself will be overwhelmed to grab a comment hook in passing and tell their favorite spider story and solicit further comment by asking what kind of spider it was they once saw which looked so damned ugly and ghastly formidable. Nothing personal, Mike, but I hope one of those big-as-your-fist jumping spiders you explicitly describe manages to jump your ass and raise a welt as large as my feeling toward spiders. My feeling toward spiders is as large as your feeling toward memories, and I agree with you that memories are very important. I don't know as "*memories are the essence of identity*," though, mainly because I'm just a simple old Northwoods child and am unable to see the truth of such a reducto ad absurdum. To me, memories are what results after you strain personal history through your filters. Identity is a thrust of feelings, intellectualizations, moods, and gamesmanship, and varies at any given time, so the overview is that identity is tunnel vision except when you really focus on it and ask the question. When I want to ask the question I always deduce that identity is a matter of my ability to cope in any given situation. My identity when I am comfortable with the situation is not my identity when I am not. Life is flux, looking for a handle? Maybe. But I don't believe that memories are the essence of identity. There is enough of a degree of truth there to obscure the real truth. I see the real truth as: memories are to identity what history is to forecast. The thrust of yesterday into tomorrow is offset by the perspective of today. As for your great astonishment at my tossing out my high school yearbook: yes, but HS yearbooks are atrocious... I never liked anybody else's, and that gave me an overview to realistically evaluate my own. As a consequence I deduced that my memories of pubescence were immeasurably more valid than any possible rallying around such a misleading artifact as a yearbook. The yearbook was amusing, but during a period of frequent moving where being "lean and mean" was to save what was comfortably really important to me (in some manner, shall we say, whether thought out or not), I pitched it. I pitched file copies of my own fanzines. I pitched things which were nostalgically valuable on other levels, but not valuable enough in terms of materially carrying my past (in this form) along with me. The memories will exist in spite of the artifacts. And better, sometimes. Depends on how valid the artifacts really are. Value is relative, and on this topic can only be stated in personal terms. My copy of my first fanzine was obviously, because I pitched it, less valuable than a pre-marriage photograph of my now ex-wife and myself. A blowup of a photo by Sue Cagle of Ed and me at the assembly session of SHAMBLES #2 is prominently displayed while the books that I read and enjoyed as a pubescent are of more value in the gummy hands of my son than they are on display amongst the few books that I carry along with me as I move from one place to another. Artifacts of memory, or more precisely artifacts which represent memory, are of value relative to their representation. I save what is of value to me, which is not to say that this is representational of what is of value to anyone else. It can't be. It's all subjective. So are "scary moments," you know. And I had no trouble identifying with your concern at the appearance of unscheduled vehicles appearing in the wilds when you were camping. I found it interesting that

Jackie thought the description of your encounter to be overblown. City people may have no perspective on what is an unusual encounter in the wilds. I know that as a Northwoods boy I had no idea as to what, in the city or suburbs, was suspicious or potentially threatening. Something that is potentially unenlightening would be your reference, by number, as to what was of value to you on my top-ten Sci Fi list. I referred back to what you were commenting on, but I doubt that many others would. To be equally if not more cryptic, after gross evaluation of your own fifteen-book list of your top-ten, I would say that I think highly of 7, 8, and 10, like a lot 9 and 15, have not read 1, 2, 4, 13, and 14, chose not to finish 5, 6, and 12, and found 'okay' number 3 and 11. If you choose to go and look up the references. I think we are both guilty of what Lon might call "dialog." Certainly I feel that any mailing comment should stand on its own. Preferably in the corner. At one time I would respond to someone who gave me a cryptic mailing comment by sliding an equally cryptic one back at them somewhere. I gave that up, finally. Just a second ago, in fact. I also gave up believing that, *"philosophically speaking, the question of God's existence is of great importance."* It's of importance only until found unknowable. Philosophy can't legitimately do more than speculate around that. Personally speaking the subject is important until someone adopts a viewpoint on that subject. Philosophically speaking the subject is an old dead horse for the neos to ride, except that occasionally someone will come along who is silver-tongued enough to make people look to see if the corpus isn't still having tremors. As for right and wrong in a broad sense existing only as a result of divine authority: batshit. I know, you said "as absolutes." There are relatively few absolutes, even by divine authority. There is much more that is subject to interpretation amongst the religions than there are absolutes. Usually, it seems, the more something approaches being an absolute the more it can be justified by means other than divine ~~polity~~ authority. Strange about that. *"One who rejects absolutes would have to admit that something like murder for pleasure may one day be acceptable."* Hell, to many people it's acceptable now. And has been since recorded history became expansive enough to encompass the subject. That most people do not embrace such a concept is as much a byproduct of civilized rational thinking (awareness) as it is of dictates from the cosmos (rote).

ERIC LINDSAY

Mike wouldn't trade ENERGUMEN with a lot of people. Fanzine publishers, mainly. Mike wanted LOCs. He explained to me one time that a simple trade wasn't as valuable as an LOC. I explained to Mike that to me a simple trade represented a lot more labor than a simple half-hour LOC. Of course, I was laboring under the delusion that a copy of AWRY was worth more than a one-page letter from Dave Locke. Mike preferred the one-page letter. Different strokes. The concept of city personalities represents different strokes, too. I've never been to the Pacific Northwest, which contains one of the few cities I can work up any real interest in visiting: Seattle. San Francisco I had the opportunity to see on several occasions, and passed on all of them (a fact which once led Ro Nagey to make an asshole statement about my taste, which struck me wrong and I managed to piss him off with a two-minute routine on what I thought of such wonderful Ohio cities as Akron). I am not a fan of cities. Of the more interesting ones I've seen, I'd guess that San Diego, Santa Barbara, Flagstaff, Boston, San Luis Obispo, and Tampa are about the only ones which have had limited appeal (and not everyone would consider all of those as cities. So it goes). Something else that has limited appeal to me is the telephone. And I spend a lot of time with it on my job. I don't hate to use the phone, like you do, but with my hearing it requires a focus of attention that can become deadly very quick. Not as deadly as, perhaps, the thrust of BREWSTER McCLOUD, which I didn't see, I did see DEATH WISH, though. The audience was pleased as Charles Bronson blew away the bad guys after time and again placing himself in a position where they thought he'd be an easy mark. I was part of that audience. Afterwards I thought, "wait a minute, now," as I realized the suspension of disbelief had been skillfully manipulated. It was an excellent movie. Yes, it portrayed an aggrieved

man who hung around high-profile places to entrap scum, and then blow them away. I loved every minute of it, without being willing to legalize such behavior unless you had caught me with a petition just as I left the theater. It evoked much the same emotions as RAGE, with George C. Scott, but without the flaws. And speaking of flaws, I don't believe that Cary Lanahan has 150 proof rum. Try 151 proof. Try, too, writing your name on a piece of paper or on your wrist. *"My memory is so bad that once, when trying to answer a phone at work, I found I had forgotten who I was. It is very hard to be convincingly competent when you can't recall who you are..."* Hell of a party the night before, Eric? Smoking on your lunch break? Spiking the drink during coffee break? You know, they'll never let you back in the Boy Scouts if you can't remember your name. I should talk. When I get up in the morning I can't remember who I am, and have to resolve the question before I can put my slippers on. If I wake up late and with a sense of urgency I can usually cut through the fog quickly, but sometimes I resemble a robot with a short circuit. One time I realized I had overslept and surged into action by attempting to leap out of bed. Unfortunately it was a double bed and I leapt the wrong way, displeasing the person on the other side as I landed on her. From there I fumbled my way into her bathrobe, put my shoes on my bare feet, and dashed off to the kitchen to turn on a flame under an empty teakettle. I then rushed to the bathroom and started peeing on the toilet lid before I realized what I was doing. Grabbing the razor I shaved off a quarter of my beard, cursed, and shaved it all off. By this time my then-wife was watching the teakettle smoke as I threw off her robe and jumped into the shower with my shoes still on. She then threw the teakettle into the sink, came into the bathroom, and watched for a minute while I took a shower with the shower door still open, as much water hitting the floor as was hitting me. As I stepped out and started drying myself with our mutual hand towel she informed me that it was Sunday and demanded to know what was so goddam urgent. I finished drying myself and promptly went back to bed, only to awake a couple of hours later and attempt to tell her about this funny dream I'd had. Funny also, was your mini-arkle on the hazards of working with modifications to your home computer. Keep adding to that and you'll have a full fan arkle that any genzine editor would climb a fence to get. Really good stuff, Eric.

BECKY CARTWRIGHT

I've often said that convention reports are among the worst fanwriting. Not that they have to be. Just that they almost invariably are. Soon after reading this account of your travels I hauled forth my own rendition of the same incidents and felt appreciative that I had not run it through the same mailing. Mine will never see a stencil in view of the fact that someone has already done it and done it better. Much better. And, despite having lived through it (somehow), and spent a lot of time trying to describe it (uninspiringly), this acquaintance with the story didn't take a candlepower worth of shine off my enjoyment of the telling that you have rendered. Enjoyed it almost as much as I enjoyed getting to bulshit with you again. Especially as I got to spend that last night with you...

GARY MATTINGLY

What is "faither"? You used this twice on your first page. Faith, faither, and faithest? As for windows and privacy, I like both. As for Othello, you'll find like I did that the game is not as simple as it first appears. They even have international championships in it now. If they ever get around to championships in foolishness resulting from drinking, your story of wandering the dorm halls and calling for Ginger Rogers may go far. I'm not so sure about *"making out with various people in the kitchen and living room when they were trying to send everyone home,"* though. That may not get you far in terms of return invites. Some people are just party poopors in throwing guests out and going to bed, you know. Such people are usually known as hosts and hostesses. I'm not sure what you call people who think they can do without government. Hopeful, maybe. Did you hear about the people who went to a deserted island and made a living taking in each other's laundry?

LON ATKINS

I like Invitational affairs, be they parties, apas, or whatever.

The invitation is a social convention which focuses on who is to be asked. Detractors view it as focusing on who is not to be asked, which right off the bat throws a switch from positive to negative. To dislike invitational affairs is to dislike receiving or extending the invitation, to dislike the exercise of choice (positive or negative) in any given social situation, and to deny the validity of a guest list. Naturally that last line doesn't scan, and I think you're right that a fear of rejection, of not 'measuring up,' is the culprit in the mild fannish tendency to feel uneasy about invitational doings. And yet, there are certainly enough of these invitational affairs. From clubs/societies to apas to conventions. Some of them are even bordering on what you might call 'secret,' as though there were some shame involved. Perhaps indeed there is, under the circumstance where secrecy springs from paranoia. On the other hand is a shot of tequila and the thought that making a big deal about the invitational aspect of a gathering is suspect of snobbery. Why is it, you ask, that SFPA puts up with a "malignant organism" instead of excising it? No guts, that's why. Or, at least, that's part of it. The rest of it, as you suggest, is likely Insecurity in a different form. You're talking about Bill Bridgett, by the way, aren't you? I've been keeping a normally unobservant eye on his trail through fandom. I've also been following your mailing comments to him in SFPA. Your patience and dedicated efforts to get through to him have impressed me, but I wondered when you'd finally get around to suggesting the twerp be pitched out on his ear... And speaking of ears, I think both political parties would have been set on theirs if Anderson had been elected. No, never mind how he stood as a potential president; even being thoroughly ungenerous he didn't stand up all that badly compared to Carter and Reagan. Compare the difference with the wonderful gain of electing the sonuva-bitch and letting the elephants and jackasses know that their antics are less than amusing. We missed an overview and a great opportunity in this last election. Sounds like your office's catering service is missing an opportunity by not moonlighting as an exterminator service. Funny bit.

MARTY HELGESEN

"Any kind of agnosticism which says that God cannot reveal Himself to us if He exists does deny the existence of God in the traditional Judeo-Christian sense." I suppose, but who said "cannot"? I'm not familiar with the existence of such a form of agnosticism. Tell you what, Marty. Let's go back to the dictionary. Mine, the American Heritage, is close at hand. It defines an agnostic as "one who doubts the possibility of knowing the existence of God or absolute truth." Dwell on that definition for a minute. Got it? Okay, now let's acknowledge that no one label covers everybody to a tee, and go on from there. I am a person who could fit well under that label (not perfectly, but well), and I know enough about religion and philosophy and science and logic to be aware that at the, uh, leading edge of our present knowledge there is no absolute truth concerning the existence or nonexistence of God. Nothing that will jump up and bite you on the ass, much less point to a particular religious leaning and give it the nod. Now, the whole picture changes if we ring in the word "faith." I won't bother defining the word up front, as we all know what it means and what it doesn't mean, what it can spring from and the effect it can have in trying to get a handle on that picture. Bearing in mind your own definition of faith look at me as confronting the question of the existence of God without faith, but with a working acquaintance of that leading edge of our present knowledge. Does that allow you to understand why I am an agnostic? Can we isolate "faith" as being the primary force to swing the pendulum one way or the other? If so, I'm now ready to define faith in my own terms. Actually, in Ambrose Bierce's terms. "Faith, n. Belief without evidence in what is told by one who speaks without knowledge, of things without parallel." Now I'll back up the agnostic viewpoint with subjective reasoning: the objective person knows that skepticism is not in itself a positive or negative position. The stereotyped atheist doesn't know that; the atheist sees skepticism as wishy-washiness, fence-sitting, a

lack of guts to take a position. The religious person, in his faith (belief/conviction/trust/revelation/allegiance), sees skepticism as, at worst, a negative position and, at best, a sad state of affairs arising from a lack of faith. I go through all this because you misstate at least the typical, dictionary-definition of the agnostic's viewpoint. You might search and find an agnostic who *"claims to know very definitely some things about the limits of the human mind or the availability of evidence about the existence or nature of God,"* but your average Joe and Jane Agnostic are as open to new findings, interpretations, knowledge and speculation -- but primarily new knowledge -- on religion as they are on most other things. They do not presume a limit or claim that the unknowable will always be unknowable. They are skeptical on this point, which is why you find the word "doubt" back in that dictionary definition I gave you, but, again, they do not interpret doubt/skepticism as being a positive or negative position. In the absence of faith, Marty, can you claim the agnostic's viewpoint to be missing anything other than faith? Now let's jump over to the "purpose to human life." Obviously you believe there is a purpose, but you don't state it. Tell me, Marty, what do you feel is the purpose to human life? Sure, I'll trade on that one. We have no purpose or purposes except those we make for ourselves, or accept from "authority." You know, Marty, I think we've got ourselves that debate we were talking about a while back... Listen: when you respond, run off one copy with that section blank and I'll send it to Cagle so we don't bore him too much. I'll have someone doodle in the blank space for him. Then all we'll have to do is keep from boring ourselves and everybody else...

JUDY STEVENS

Yes, I know what you mean about people who want things yesterday.

Purchasing is part of my vocational ballpark, you see. On requisitions people always (with one or two exceptions every decade) fill in "date wanted" with ASAP, SAP, Immediate, Today, Rush, Rush Rush (a note of emphasis from people who normally just use "Rush"), Hot, Urgent, or Rush Rush Rush (a point of stress from those who are used to stating "Rush Rush" as their standard requirement date). Exclamation points are frequently and liberally inserted. Naturally if the Purchasing Agent sees that everything is stressed and thus nothing is emphasized, he handles everything in due course and consequently a real priority can get buried in the stack ("but I marked it "rush"!"). Or the PA tries to make a big deal of everything and thus loses credibility and effectiveness and can't get to first base when something important does come along for special handling. There's the old story about the PA who gets a hundred requisitions dumped on his desk, 99 of them clamoring for his first priority attention and one of them requesting material within a reasonable period of time. Given the stereotype that most PAs are innate chucklers, phlegmatic, and perverse, guess which requisition got handled first? And speaking of handles, the Boob Cup isn't as arresting as the Dork Mug. I've seen both, as a gal who used to work for me made them for pocket money. With the Dork Mug, two huge balls form the cup itself and the penis is the handle. Moving right along from sex and ceramics to religion and the great multiplicity of incontrovertible beliefs (without stopping even once on politics), my ex-wife once explained to me the meaning of "incontrovertible" as it related to missionary zeal. Her beliefs were of the Southern Baptist kind, and this explanation took place when I asked her why in hell she couldn't leave people alone if they didn't share her viewpoint. Phoebe said: "If you saw a car turn onto a road where you knew the bridge was washed out, wouldn't you try to save them?" It was never made so clear to me before.

DAVID HULAN

"Most people are surprised to find me an ex-Arthur Murray teacher; guess I don't seem the type. (In fact, I'm not, but you should

have known me before...)" You mean back when you used to be a Lady's Man? Was this a comment hook for me to drag out the old David Hulan, Lady's Man stories? Oh no, that's right: you got uncomfortable about that after a while, didn't you? You even stopped holding large parties where 99% of the invitees had either dated or married

you. I never saw so many women in one apartment before. Now you've got most of them together in an apa that you're OE of, and send them mailing comments. You're getting mellow in your old age, David. What did you do with your list of phone numbers that you used to keep in that 3" ring binder? Speaking of women, I got that same threat about what would happen if I shave off my beard, though as I recall Jackie gave me the option of shaving four or five times a day if the beard went. I think razor-burn is their chief objection, David. Something about "being nuzzled by a porcupine." They don't enjoy it, just like you don't enjoy talking on the blower. That, at least, is something I can enjoy, but it requires a good connection and an absence of background noise. My ears, you know. Ever turn on a recorder at a party and when playing it back try to distinguish one conversation from another? That's what life sounds like to me all the time. Blurred. No depth perception or selectivity in my hearing. I'm okay on volume, but I bring in too many stations at one time. Moving along by jumping over Ed to your personalzine, I want you to know that you should watch that shit about "Short People." It's a bum rap to be short, you know? I can't help it. It's not my fault. I didn't ask to be short. Today's shoes, with the 2" heels back in style (indeed, you can't find anything else), help a little but create new problems for the short person. Anyone my height who wears 2" heels generally walks about in a position reminiscent of a person chasing a bus. That's enough about short people. Let's talk about Marcia. She sits in front of a football game on the tube while she hooks rugs, you say, and only looks up "*when there's something good happening*"? You sense a zinger coming, don't you, David? Nah, I'll resist it. It's easy to resist temptation when I'm not around good scotch, an Asteroids machine, or a canoe. Dis-agreed somewhat with your view of the Newman books. It's yours, and mine is mine, and I agree that he ran on too long with examples and parodies, but felt the meat of the book was in his using the general topic of language to kick off some good storytelling. And from that standpoint, the first book was better than the second. I will agree with you that I don't care either whether or not reincarnation is true, and for the same reason: if you can't remember it, what good is it? However, your main statement -- "*As far as I'm concerned, if you don't remember something, it might as well not have happened*" -- sounds good in the eyetracking but doesn't hold up under examination. I started thinking about amnesia and blackouts and sleepwalking and suddenly realized that the statement has validity applied only to reincarnation. Just a thought. Here's another: this is the second time I've seen you go on about speech and pronunciation, and I still come away thoroughly bugeyed and wondering "what the fuck is he talking about?" Think and sink don't rhyme, you say? Nor thing and sing? Merry, Mary, and marry are pronounced differently? So are their, there, and they're? And what was it you were saying that last time a few years back, that you couldn't see any difference in pronunciation between pin and pen? David, you've got to stop drinking that Old Fedcal Green Label Bourbon before you sit down to sound out certain words and then turn around to write about it...

ED CAGLE

Who you callin' "Butter Balls," Cojones Azul? "Now yo ass is mine."

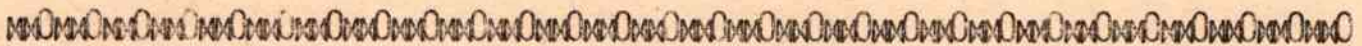
You really want it? Shall I mark it "special handling" when I ship it to you? "Educational Materials"? "Perishable Goods"? Damn right I read the MCs to me before I read anything else. That's not what egoscanning means, though. To ego-scan is to flip pages while looking for your own name. I'm not looking for my own name. I'm looking for mailing comments addressed to me. The ones about me will be caught when I read the whole zine, unless they also mention spiders in which case I instinctively know to skip them. However, I always stop at such an arresting comment as: "*It never occurred to me when I joined this apa that I would be reading along and suddenly find one member asking another if she wanted to screw in a canoe. And standing up, yet. You may have let your mouth overload your ass, Adelbert.*" You really think so? How come? The way I look at it, the worst that can happen is that I get wet when the canoe flips over. Say, listen: Johnny Winters is often great. Remember the skit where he played the Old Fart: "Com'ere, little girl, Come sit on

Grampa's face." Pilsner Urquell came out in first place in the lager/pilsner category in a blind beer-tasting test reported on by the LA Times back in mid-1979. They also tested ales, stouts, malt liquors, traditional amber/dark beers, and porters. Out of a possible 35 points, PU got 30.6 and overall came in second of the brews tested. The highest rating, 31.1, went to Anchor Steam. My highest rating, in placing orders via telephone, goes to the infuriatingly slow and stupid and dull order-takers who ask you to repeat a four-digit number three times, say "huh?" a lot despite your change-up in addressing them as though they are just a little slow in their congenital idiocy, and speak in a monotone so absolutely flat and devoid of intelligence that you really feel as though you're talking to a vegetable. Makes me want to wash my hand after I hang up the phone, and then wash the phone. A little further along here in your zine I note that we're back to my ass again. This time you're accusing me of talking through it, and even of saying things that my mouth wouldn't. Along the way you throw in a parallel about chipmunks and barbecue forks. It's all very confusing, I know. Listen, Fount, you're not shooting to be in competition with Bowers for the title of Mr. Esoteric, are you? Or is Tequila and Midori causing me to overlook the simple truth about chipmunks who lack self-identity and talk through their ass while pitching barbecue forks? All may come clear to me yet. Just to help out, perhaps you would care to explain what it was I should have been saying. This may or may not be more important than your offer to define my middle name but, okay, go ahead and define it. My middle name is Getulio. While you're at it, please define or clarify what appears to be a shifting or waffling on the meaning of "bullshit." Two quotes from one page: *"weeds out the people who blather from those who have a real talent for BSing, something I admire and enjoy,"* and *"I'd recommend it. One of those getdown-dirty, no-BS stories."* Say what, Lafcadio? Hanging a left to your musical quiz, I think I've got them pegged. That first one comes from the early Seventies. I don't remember the title, but the words are "Don't Bogart that joint, my friend, pass it over to me." The second one is "Winnepeg Whore." The third escapes me for the moment, but the lyrics are: "Take my love, and shove it up your heart." Okay, here's a couple. daDah, daDahDahDahDah Dah DahdaDah. And: Baugh beBahBaugh, beBaughbeBaughBaugh, Dang a dang dang, ding a dong ding.

JACKIE CAUSGROVE

Shit far, no one has come out in favor of *"unreasonable demands as criteria for raises."* There's always a ceiling on the factor of improvement, and when that ceiling is hit then it isn't a factor any longer. All this is obvious stuff, just like my picking up the wrong typing element back there when I switched from the Light Italic... By the way, MBO is an approach to having an organization get its act together, and not directly an effort to improve on individual job performance. It stands for Management By Objectives and works on the domirprinciple. It gets kicked off by stating the objectives of the organization, and all other objectives -- divisional, departmental, and positional -- line up behind it. On ILLUMINATIS, *"I still don't understand why the books have no appeal to him,"* the reverse is also true, and an idle interest in glimpsing the nature of that appeal was the cause for asking about it and in turn describing my own reaction. There's something about it which doesn't click with me and, given that, I find nothing else about it to make it particularly readable. No wordage yet expended, here or elsewhere, has provided a clue as to its popularity with some people. The popularity of singles bars is somewhat more obvious, probably because their purpose is very straightforward. Less obvious is why anyone would choose to "sneer" at them. Arthur is correct that it's more likely "possible" to have fun at a con without getting laid, but at a singles bar you don't have to commit three to five days... I understand your aversion to what you've heard about DEATH WISH, but think you might find seeing it to be interesting. It's one of my favorite films. You know, in the discussion of urban/suburban/country life, I note apples and oranges being mixed. You're referring to urban apartment living, and suburban and country homeowning. I

was visualizing urban and suburban apartment living and country homeownership. The one time I owned a house in the suburbs I did have trouble with a neighbor, but it was a rather off-the-wall development. I felt no stereotyped suburban pressure "to conform to someone else's idea of proper behavior," which isn't to say that it doesn't exist somewhere, but I know a lot of people in suburban houses who do no more than occasionally wave at a neighbor, and am aware of no one who is subjected to this suburban pressure you speak of. Dean comes the closest to having any pressure, but it's the development company that occasionally bothers him, not his neighbors. Do you have any direct knowledge of a widespread problem among the suburban people of your acquaintance? To leap forward to the subject of "spontaneity" in writing, Charlie Burbee once said that you have to work like hell to achieve spontaneity in writing. He was right. I don't work at it much in correspondence, do work at it a little in mailing comments, and work at it the most in arkles and editorial material. For me, rewriting never "distances" the material. On the contrary. A prime purpose of editing is to better make the expression match the thought. Of course, I'm not speaking for how well editing works out for other people on their material. I only know it helps my own stuff be more readable and better represent what I'm trying to say. This presumes that I try to say something, which I do, occasionally. Let me take the opportunity here to say that I'm an old hand at lifeguarding and a more than confident swimmer. What this means is that when the canoe flips over I'm very capable of flipping it back without swamping it, and then trying again... Let's try again with my question as to which of my favorite books you find "poorly written." Wait a minute. Were you slipping the answer in with: "## "Space Willies," by Russell. ##"? Sneaky... I'd be curious to know how many here have read SPACE WILLIES -- or, in Astounding, PLUS X -- and what they thought of it. Anyone? As for the fannish word "fugghead," I'd define it as the fan equivalent to "jerk." Hmmm. Let's check. THE NEO-FAN'S GUIDE calls a fugghead "one who speaks before he thinks, if he thinks at all. He is a lout fond of assinine statements, silly assertions, and fraudulent claims; an oaf with a babbling tongue." A mouthy jerk, apparently...



This stencil, and many before it, have been crunched out this Sunday the 8th of February. I think it's 1981. The crunching session has been inspired by Midori, Ballantine Scotch, and 151 proof Rum, with background music courtesy of the neighbors in some other apartment. For some reason I had a devil of a time (sorry, Marty) working up the wherewithal to sit down and type stencils. More so each mailing, in fact. I think I'll just break down and compose the damn thing right on stencil next time. Or on paper, and run it off on the Xerox at work. The alternative is that I draft a zine which nobody sees except me and Jackie... Okay, so I'll do this first draft next time. Ah, but it's uncomfortable to sit here and type. I'd rather lounge at the table with a pencil and a pad of paper. I'd rather rest my bod while diddling with this sublime wordsmithing. Perhaps I should get a secretary. Miss Pim, take a fanzine, please.

Perhaps I should get my own typewriter fixed, and buy a typing table that I can roll about (typewriter goes sailing across room. "Ah shit, the words won't flow!").

My typewriter, a Smith-Corona Electra, has been down and out for a couple of years now. There are two things wrong with it. One is the thing that I took it apart to attempt repairing, and the other is because of the fact that I took it apart. The disassembly got to a certain stage and of a sudden springs were jumping and zinging all about the room. I gathered them all up, stuffed everything in a box, and set it all aside. Time to get it fixed. We can now afford the outrageousness of typer repair.

We can now say goodbye until April, too. Goodbye. See ya. Adios. Later.