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The AFAB Gazette Turkey Special

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for The S.F.P.A. issue of December, 1993.

This just in . . . Generalissimo Franco is still dead, and so is Frierson's career.

THE NEWS: *It's been a quiet two months* in Bonkersville; there's not much news - Penny was twice under the knife for a scar tissue problem held over from a little nerve surgery in August (caused her to miss WindyCon). The Cat population has been drastically reduced over the past year by disease and dogs - we have Stephanie inside (and looking poorly), Percy the 14 year old is outside, Shadow That Creeps From the Nile (try saying it in ancient Egyptian) still thrives, and (right again) Elvis is Still Alive! The semi-wild set is down to Alfie (who still doesn't know What's It All About). Then largely-unnamed wild'uns are hard to count but if there are more than six, they are certainly subtle about it. There is one new wild baby, Spot's kid Spook.

I read the mailing when it arrived, noting that pages were owed and resolving to do more than the minimum in mlg comments for much there was that craved comments and lo! it has come to pass (again) that blather is the soup de jur de rigeure and we must needs attend to it. Good Intentions? surely a song by the Beach Boys dealing with loss.

The Season on TV - Item: we did not like Bob's transition to the card factory with Kirk (in an unnecessary reprise from **Dear John**) and losing the more colorful characters in exchange for Whitey and the secretary so unmemorable she shall pass without name here.

Item: because Irwin Allen had nothing to do with it, we are enjoying **Sea Quest** more than **Deep Space Nine** thus far (making Ferengis cute was a big mistake). OK, OK, so I like juvenile sf. **TNG** has ceased to be the must-watch it used to be for me.

Item: Our favorite of last year swept the Emmies and it went to their heads. Look for more **Picket Fences** disappointments (the mayor spontaneously combusted...please!) but still some gems.

Item: claims made that "LA LAW is back" fall on these deaf ears because cast changes make it impossible to equate the first two seasons to these restaffed law offices.

Item: **The X Files** continues to intrigue as a mutt sired by **Kolchak: The Night Stalker** out of **Outer Limits** (especially Ed Lauter's possessed astronaut story - exactly Shattner on **Outer Limits**). I'll not stop watching despite the conflict with **Bob** which causes me to record only one but watch both.

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Item: rabid "Dave's World" syndicated column reader is so-so **Dave's World** viewer, more delighted by Harry Anderson's entourage than his own version of Dave's persona. I liked Beth's actress when she was opposite Scott Bakula on the clever but underwatched **Eisenhower & Lutz** lawyer comedy some seasons ago. I am wild about Mia and Kenny at the office. But Meshack as the divorced doctor is so different from Anthony on **Designing Women** (even in syndication, a perennial fave as Michael says, himself in syndication) that I have not yet adjusted.

Item: I have really been sloppy about catching the shows due to their staggered introduction over several, rather than two, weeks. I cannot burn into the cortex the times as in seasons past. For instance, I will be anticipating **Hearts Afire** this coming Wednesday but **Laroquette** and **Frazier** get less attention than intended because I generally guess wrong about the day and/or time.

Item: despite the lavish praise for network shows you read above, I do admire the educational channels like TLC, Discover, and APT and spend much more time on them than with movies or network.

My life... is dominated by genealogy. I have sent the first oeuvre, a 128-page paperback, off to the printer, BookCrafters, without any idea when it will be returned in its 1,000 copy embodiment. But the work to be done to complete the second one is daunting, despite apparent huge progress in the form of draft pages wheeling off the little Laserjet III in these wee small hours while I WordPerfect these very words.

The first book was a learning experience - it doesn't its advance-assigned Library of Congress Card No. imprinted arriving with typical Frierson luck two days after the printer started on it (the LOC# will have to be hand stamped on the title page's verso as each copy is distributed). But it does have its own ISBN in the right places inside and ready to be added, with Bookland EAN, via a sticker already in hand to be hand-applied to each backcover. So cottage industry is on the brink of starting. The hallway is filled with bubblepack mailers. A self-inking stamp proclaims SPECIAL FOURTH CLASS BOOK RATE. All dressed up and nowhere to go...Will the books be available as our Christmas presents to distant relations? Quien sabe? Will it be appropriate as a Frank through SFPA - I seem to recall paperbacks have circulated but is that a fair tax on the treasury? Quien sabe? (right, I'm not bothering to look up how to start that sentence with the upside-down ? required of a true Spanish language text.

The book experience is one long sought, after the mimeo and xerox newsletter (SFC etc) and other non-apa "publishing" and the HPL experiences. Nevertheless, this dry and dull little tome does not reflect the creative energies (intuitive leaps which proved out) and tedious work (tracking and expunging the most invidious little errors) which

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went into it. I fear the same will be true of the larger work underway. I fear the most prevalent reaction will be: "I'm sure it was a labor of love, but why bother?" ****sigh**** the problem is: what might I have accomplished with the same energies, time and money?

The books - it has been a long time since I indicated some of the reading matter indulged in.

Long a fan of Clancy, I had savored a slow read of **The Sum of All Fears** (surely his creative apex) even after enjoying its dramatic reading by David Ogden Stiers (he also does the audiotape of **Clear and Present Danger**) - those two tapes may just be my favorite experience of being-read-to since childhood. Anyway, I did read that one slowly in hopes that the next would soon appear and then was so disappointed to learn that it [this next one] was going to depart from the Jack Ryan saga. Of course, Clancy had made "John Clark" such an interesting character that I couldn't fail to procure the book for reading but have not yet indulged. Well, maybe I read the first few pages to Penny or she read them to me a few weeks ago.

What else - currently finishing the **Cauldron** war book by Larry Bond. He doesn't exactly make it a technothriller but rather, like his **Red Phoenix**, he postulates a very sensible future scenario (there the second Korean war, and here the FrancoGerman domination of Europe turned military from economic because of the Nineties Depression). By the way, imho: The only thing that is keeping 1993 from being a depression is vocabulary and denial - face it, I'm depressed and the world's depressed. We're all into the 90's depression without admitting the truth of it.

Tapes instead - probably would have read **Dragon's Tears** by Koontz, **The Red Horsemen** by Coonts, and Kellerman's latest Alex Delaware mystery if I hadn't had trips and succumbed to the luxury of audiotapes instead. None compare with the majesty of Stiers' renditions of Clancy.

I wonder if I am an sf fan. I've not ordered anything from the book club except for Penny for a long time until Niven/Pournelle's **The Gripping Hand**. It had been so long since I was acquainted with the Moties that it was strange and sporadic and I've not made much progress in a month or more.

I enjoy a good laugh. I therefore purchased Doug Adams' **Mostly Harmless** because whether he's writing about Ford Prefect or Dirk Gently, the man "has my number." Surprising little of the book has yet been read and I'll probably start all over. Strange thing, that.

Page Four closer to Turkey Day

Well, since I no longer engage in drunkzine production, maybe a feverish cold-ridden mind can produce something akin? I'm having a whole bunch of no-fun suffering the first cold of the year (as far as my limited memory can retrieve that information). The inside of my balding pate is covered with fuzz, cotton and/or perhaps cotton candy and this lends an unworldly accuracy to my ability to convey a thought directly to my fingers and thence to the screen...weird. So much for the similarities to drunkzines. While lying/laying (no grammarchecker) in bed awaiting the commencement of the Monday Night CBS Line-UP (did I mention it is the 30th anniversary of JFK's death?), I thought of the impending deadline and the three remaining pages to be produced and came up with a thought for half of that bulk consisting of....of.... ****sigh**** I just LOVE being fuzzheaded.

Well, here's a nice subject - what activities have I not yet done in my life that I would care to do. How about this one? Get a month's worth of the **TV Guide** guide to the soaps, read them and take notes on the characters, then on a Monday tune in to all of them just to get the characters' names attached to faces/bodies, then on successive weeks watch only one show all week to see if one could give a darn about the plot or characters at the end of the experience. Why do this? Confession time - I was removed from the first grade in Tuscaloosa, Alabama with a low-grade fever (winter of 1947) and lay in bed for nine months as a result of the inadequate advances of pre-1950s medicine. (Yes, kiddies, some of us survived the Dark Ages before WonderDrugs - not the recreational kind, either). During that time I had a radio and Birmingham radio stations played ...ta-da, soaps. One Man's Family, Just Plain Bill, Stella Morgan: Backstage Wife, etc. etc. Does this early scarring prevent one from *ever* caring for fictional families? Psycho/socio-something study? Can I get a grant to pursue this?

I got a letter Saturday from a man who said at the beginning of his pitch that he had woken up in the middle of the night feeling my pain (I'm not making this up) and that if I would pay my \$20 membership in his Zoro-something society he would assure that the brightness I was entitled to would be apparent to me or similar foo-rah. I have a folder labeled "CHARLATANS" (surely, it is too polite an appellation) in which such letters go in case I have to find a legal way to accomplish the same moneysucking activities which these out-of-jail entrepreneurs can get away with.

Weird thing about the WordPerfect Spell function - it corrected two typos I had made (for which I am appreciative) but it also challenged "balding". Isn't anyone in Utah balding? (That's not a Guy joke, I swear, I really wasn't going to say "apparently Lillian's never been there" - I really wasn't, scout's honor, no lie, uh, er.....

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I hear **Dave's World** in the other room where I am supposed to be eating Superchicken Soup the KoldKiller (ask for the recipe if it works - we are still experimenting) and I believe that zinc containers were the clue to the Jewish mythology of the curative powers of chicken soup.

Back from the soup...and I hope it works. So . . . almost two pages of blather to generate. At least, I won't (can't - lost the machine) subject SFPA to my last incarnation here in 1983 when I let a **TIMEX SINCLAIR** pseudocomputer's generate mailing comments. Surely, the products of my own feverish brain on these pages should contain more entertainment value than those pasted-up strips of thermal paper all caps crude-dot printing based on some vocabulary string algorithms, which ended my first sojourn in SFPA 1969-83?

Any thought of that period and the succeeding nine years brings to mind the perversion of a line from a despised song, **My Way**: "Regrets? I've had a billion..." The time away from work in those years were spent in pursuits and activities which have been almost totally repudiated by me as being evil or at the very least nonproductive and unhelpful toward either my own or my childrens' problems at this time. **Incredible** quantities of wasted time and money, which my current values require me to deny as having any worth to the rest of life of myself and family (except as outlined below). There's a big difference between the retrospectives of people like Lillian, who can find the up-moments among the downers of the past - I guess that is the "normal" worldview (weltanschauung?)

No, as foreshadowed above (a la Thomas Hardy) that's too extreme a view - it has the ring of self-pity pealing louder than the ring of truth. In fact, with a clear-eyed backward glance, most of the time and trouble of fandom's pursuits is not condemned by any value system, except as to my lack of perception in re the guidance needed for the children, which could have been easily carved out of fandom's activities without discernible loss. I certainly enjoyed and have had my life enriched by the people I've met at cons, in correspondence, and through the apas, notably, this one.

Subject Shift - not subtle, eh - Despite proof of direct lineage, Americans have no real claim on the coats of arms of British/Scottish families but many try to embellish their family histories etc. with them. My notion was that the better means is to adopt something modern and very American, a family logo. It can contain elements of the coats if one desires but you would not be so scorned (too strong? rebuked? criticized, at least) by the cognoscenti as a grasping social climber because there would be no pretensions as to the legitimate use of the older family symbols.

Page The Blessed Last

Can my life be so sterile that I cannot find a suitable topic? No, I was treated to a pre-birthday (she will be two years old tomorrow) outing with my granddaughter, Jessica Marie Frierson. Her grasp of vocabulary is quite primitive but she is an earnest conversationalist and a flirt. I understand that she has my son's temper but luckily the novelty of my presence is enough to dissuade her from demonstrating just how much of a pill she can be when the mood strikes her. She never walks except on tippytoe (so cute!). Unfortunately, she is growing up in a dysfunctional environment from which there seems to be no solution other than coming up with great heaping wedges of the monetary substance. HA HA it is to laugh, ho ho.

What do you think the chances are of mailing comments next issue? It really depends on Christmas clean up and the SFPA mailing - will it be positioned in retrievable condition or slung into a to-be-sorted area which never gets sorted? We have those black holes dating back to 1974. Hmmm, that head-on collision car wreck in July 1974 (not my fault, some may recall) was provocation enough for a carpe diem attitude - when death had not occurred, despite hazardous opportunities, by 8/25/1992, maybe I had to do something because the results of carpe diem were unacceptably BADDD!!!

On 11/22/93, **Murphy Brown** was about death - not a great show - and I came to the machine to finish this zine during **Love & War** (to me it's not the same without Dey, although characters Nadine and Mary Margaret are enough to attract me at least half the time) and now the long-shunned **Northern Exposure** to which Penny is devoted (although she is usually talking Atlanta bid "business" interminably during evenings, regardless of what is on TV). That will end when the money runs out, for certain.

What is so incredibly ironic about my situation is that I ought to be suffering (in silence, yea yea) from a unique experience with plenty of alternate opportunities; instead, all the canned execs, managers, lawyers, military honchos, etc. created by this Greater Depression have been creatively addressing their common plight and have already staffed whatever there is to be staffed, franchised, networked. I see NO OPPORTUNITY signs plastered all over the marketplace. Bleak, honeybabies, bleak for old Johnny Fever.

I just realized that Burt and Loni don't even work now for the same network. Duh.

Splashing around in Lake Woeisme hasn't been all that pleasant for you or me, but it is almost over and, really and truly, gang, if you bother to seek there are chuckles (okay, smiles at least) and what the hey, all was well-intentioned even if self-centered and boring as usual.

Thanksgiving - for all of this, I thank You, God.....no lie! MFIII 11/22/1993