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The forty-ninth issue of a bi-weekly fanzine, edited and published by Andy Hooper and Victor Gonzalez, member & founding member fwa, supporters afal, at The Starliter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. # 103, Seattle, WA 98103, also available at fanmailAPH@aol.com. See the back page for availability and trade information. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 242. Apparatchiki: Steve Green, carl juarez, Lesley Reece, Martin Tudor & Pam Wells (British Address: 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX, U.K.). Black coat, white shoes, black hat, Cadillac!

Issue # 49, December 21st, 1995

AN EXAMPLE OF TECHNOCRACY IN TRIUMPH

Last week, Carrie and I were out doing our bi-weekly shopping trip to Larry's Market, when I suffered a transport to the age of seven. We had turned down the soup and cereal aisle (don't ask me), when Carrie pointed out that it was her turn to pick the soup for soup and sandwich night (slated for Saturday, December 23rd on the bi-weekly menu). She then handed me two coupons ("They pay for the newspaper," she is fond of noting.) and sent me to look for two brands of heavy, gritty cereal, made from oat hulls and wheat shafts.

While she frolicked among the imported canned Cockaleekie and Knorr-brand Mulligatawny (Larry's is a ritzy joint for a supermarket), I pawed around the glowing boxes on the cereal side of the aisle, searching for the most Calvinist-looking varieties. Few of them were familiar to me. Of course, the last time I can remember regularly eating cereal was when I was seven or eight, and most of the brands I embraced featured some Jay Ward cartoon character, or contained a plastic effigy of some kind which I felt the need to worship.

Cereals no longer seem to feature tiny plastic effigies as often as they used to. Modern cereals offer certificates you can send in to get a new Garth Brooks CD, or a fitness video by Covert Bailey. Or they feature many valuable coupons which will help you to buy more oat hulls and wheat shafts.

For a second or two, I felt a frisson of pity for modern children. I can remember receiving a purple plastic shark, about four inches long, from a packet of cereal when I was about seven, and I remember admiring the perfect, bullet-like lines of the animal. There was something nearly sexual about the way I admired that little shark. It was one of my favorite tub toys, along with the plastic diver with the slot for an alka-seltzer-like pellet, which made it rise and fall. What the hell ever happened to those guys?

But I digress.

Anyway, I was feeling sorry for modern kids, lacking the motivation to tug and clutch at their shuddering mothers, demanding a box of yellowish waferettes and the tiny plastic being within, when I noticed the bags of toys. Odd, Chinese made, injection molded plastic toys, hanging right alongside the boxes of cereal. This was still the place to assault your parents in the quest for plastic funerary goods (how many died by fire, under a merciless, benzene-scented stream of Ronson lighter fluid and the touch of a kitchen match?), although the quality appeared to have suffered badly. The plastic army men were strange, left-over colors, and they seemed to be supported by surplus Soviet vehicles. The Cowboys and Indians were covered with flash, and would never stand up correctly. And the "prehistoric animals" set contained a rust monster, a monster from Dungeons and Dragons.

I clucked my tongue and pushed the shopping cart on. I found one brand of chalk-flavored clusters, and then a familiar shape caught my eye. Hanging above the defective dinosaurs was a copy of the finest toy gun I have ever owned: the "Star Trek Phasar

Flying-Disc Weapon".

Back in about 1968, when I owned my first Star Trek Phasar Flying Disc Weapon, it was just about the state-of-the-art in childhood side-arms. The Super-Soaker was years off then, and the multi-barrel Nerf cannon was just a gleam in some designer's eye. A deep, burnished blue, it fit easily into my diminutive hands. The trigger pulled easily, and the tiny, colored discs inflicted a satisfying sting when they struck the target. The orange knock-off hanging from the cereal rack was only \$2.00. I had to try it out.

The modern version seems to lack the powerful spring of the original S.T.P.F.D.W., but it makes up for that with a sophisticated clip-loading system. The original had to be laboriously loaded disc by disc into the chamber by hand. The modern version still has the accuracy of the original, although it shoots low if you pull the trigger instead of squeezing. And of course, the modern version was made by near-slave labor in China, while the old one was made by near-slave labor in Taiwan.

It now sits proudly alongside the plastic effigies and funerary goods on my desk. Injection-molding technology has once again improved my level of personal satisfaction. Shouldn't the people behind such wonders control the course of our society?

Oh, and soup night will feature Progresso Minestrone and Monte Cristo sandwiches.

Victor sends his regrets this issue, but the holiday season is a busy time for reporters, with multiple carving-knife murders and drunken sleigh-accidents to cover. He'll be back for #50 with a piece on one of the best fanzines of his fannish salad days. We'll be initiating APAK NOW! as well, so on-line fans are encouraged to send us mail and let us know if you want to be on the list to receive it. To mark the season, Commissar carl juarez offers the following:

CHRISTMAS CARDS WE NEVER FINISHED DEPT.



First, stand in front of the receiver. Until you've set under one of his messages, you don't really know what preaching is. Thousands have heard this young man and have left, shaking their heads. Out of this conflict rises a story of towering heroism, riveting action and an entirely new twist to the universal themes of good and evil, because fortunately we still live in a society which accepts free expression and appreciates a healthy, honest laugh. It's pure capitalism. The cheese is now the toast, and is ideal to be used as a witness to lost souls, to be played in the home, or given to a sinner. Another first from a man whose life has been a series of firsts.



Watch them flop like carp!

AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH: We lead off this time with a card from ART WIDNER (P.O. Box 5122 Gualala, CA 95445-5122), while readers are still alert enough to translate Art's unique approach to the English language:]

"Tovarishi:

"Minor Nitpick: it wasn't brown's characterization of Corflu that got Glycer agley, it was b's estimate of Mike's *Fanthology 88* as 'abysmal.'

"Bolshi nitpikski: See what one little bitski boovka (letter) can lead to: a good illustration of chaos theory. Yr reversal of the R in yr title, to give it a Russki appearance, no doubt, requires the inexorable consequence that the whole thing be read as Cyrillic, wch leads to a fonetick rendering of 'ARRAYATSNIK,' which means nichevo.

"You hit your head right on the nail with '...alien visitors... is actually secondary... when compared to their collaboration with, manipulation by or of, and concealment by the US govt.' That's why I finally turned off the *X-files*. Bfor it got popular, I rather liked what appeared to be a downtoearth approach to unearthly phenomena, sort of following HGWells prime dictum. With the CIA popping out of the woodwork about every five mins, XF is now little more than a routine spy thriller. I'm with Gore Vidal. Abolish the CIA: both fictional & real.

"I'd like to make a belated defense of my good buddy Don Fitch. I think he's been unjustly hauled over the coals for his mild observation that Intersection appeared to be just another bloated Worldcon to USfen & why spend a lot of \$&t. for that? That's why I didn't go. Only at the last minute when it was too late, did it bcome apparent that it mytvbn worth my while. I'm sorry that I wafld so long, but there was coz, & I don't think we were the only two who thot so. & I don't recall that we reinforced ea others vus in advance.

"What's with the fine print after my name at the end of #46? I turned 40 the next day, but was never near Ubatuba."

[VMG: Um, actually, the reversed "R" was meant to imply that APAK is a giant toy store. Not many of those in Vladivostok.]

[APH: Where did this supposed coal-hauling of Mr. Fitch take place? All I recall debating in these pages was his interpretation of the apparent conflict implicit in humorous British references to "The Scottish Convention." Beyond that, I'm not sure what you're talking about. Was Intersection in fact just another bloated Worldcon? Perhaps so. But the evening parties were the best I've seen since Orlando in 1992, and might even have been enough to justify the cost of a transatlantic ticket. I think you would have had fun, but you no doubt enjoyed the things you did with the money instead.

It's true that the backwards "R" in the masthead does not have much basis in correct grammar no matter what language you choose to associate it with. I guess it must be a joke -- you know, a gag? Something meant to be amusing? Heaven help us if people have been taking all this stuff literally -- I'd expect to get a call from the FBI about a mysterious body found in a saxophone case if that were true.

I have to disagree with you strongly in regard to the *X-files*. I'm actually sort of embarrassed to be doing this -- someone I respect in general stopped just short of calling me an idiot for enjoying the show a few weeks ago, which illustrated the dangers of admitting that I watch it at all -- but I have to point out that

the "CIA" is actually seldom involved in the show. The NSA have been making more appearances of late, but more often than not, the bad guys are an unnamed conspiracy of operatives and officials that cross departmental or agency boundaries in service of protocols and policies that are only imperfectly understood by either the protagonists or the audience. It is not a routine spy-thriller, because it is never clear who is exactly who. Episodes involving this nebulous conspiracy always seem more tension-filled and intriguing than the "monster" episodes, with the exception of one or two, like the ones with the guy who could crawl up drain-pipes and down chimneys -- Merry Christmas, everyone!

Let us now continue our dialogue with JOSEPH NICHOLAS (15 Jansons Rd., South Tottenham, London N15 4JU U.K.), aka the annex of *FTT's* lettercolumn:]

"I have now had the opportunity to consider in greater detail Greg Benford's response in *Apparatchik* 46, and am most perplexed by his assertion that I have been arguing for some sort of 'medieval socialism'. *Medieval?* I have certainly discussed the Middle Ages on several occasions (mostly in *FTT*), but I can't see how mentioning a particular historical period constitutes a desire to reconstruct contemporary society in its image. (Although I am reminded at this point of Alexis Gilliland's daft suggestion, in response to our first mention of LETS schemes, that we must therefore have the same view of money as the medieval church. Mind you, Gilliland has always had great problems with *FTT*, and has consistently addressed himself to what he thinks left-wingers ought to say and do -- based, I assume, on the tiny and unrepresentative US left rather than the broader and more inclusive European left with which we're familiar -- rather than what we actually say and do, and his letters sometimes verged on the comical in their attempts to pretend that we were 'really' secret com-munist apologists and that (say) a discussion of the heritage industry was Marxist code for something else entirely. I think he was most disconcerted that we weren't upset by the collapse of the Soviet Union.) Alternatively, it's perhaps less the Middle Ages in particular that concerns Greg than the image of a society which is static and non-expansive, and whose ideology is thus in opposition to the present. If so, then I suggest he's in for a (rude?) awakening, since the explicitly expansionist vision which has underpinned the historical trajectory of the western world for the past few hundred years is being rejected by increasingly large numbers of people -- especially here, by the generation 19-25 which is most identified with what's called 'D-I-Y culture': a generation which the government has clumsily attempted to criminalise *in toto* with its authoritarian Criminal Justice Act, thus ensuring its complete alienation from 'mainstream' politics and its contempt for any programme which does not put small-scale human and environmental concerns first. (I said a bit about this generation and its politics in *FTT* 17, but I assume the lack of American response that the D-I-Y ethos -- and I don't mean home improvements! -- is unknown over there.) Thus if Greg Benford were to sit down with a group of these people, and attempt to explain to them how and why (say) planning to mine the asteroids forty or fifty years from now was essential to the improvement of the human condition, he would be greeted first with bewilderment, then amusement, and finally with derisive laughter. Bluntly, people don't want to know,

I am Vacuo, the suck monster!

and *don't care*, about the space programme any more.

"I mention the space programme because -- if his letter in *FTT 19* is any guide -- I suspect that this is the solution Greg will advance to Andy's 'Iron Equations'; that building Mars colonies, etc., is the only real way to (in Greg's words) 'uplift humanity.' Yet it's entirely the wrong solution: uplifting humanity is not principally a question of developing new technologies but of political will. The political will to, for example, cancel Third World debt, which in real terms has been repaid many times over and in book-keeping terms can now never be repaid at all. The political will to reform the global trading system, so that developing countries can develop indigenous industries of their own and feed their own people first rather than growing luxury foods for export. The political will to reduce overconsumption in the western world, so that the less privileged have a fairer share, and so on -- because any 'solutions' which address the issue in purely technological terms would simply lose the race to greater global instability as the have-not five-sixths agitate more vociferously for the return of the resources taken from them by the other one-sixth.

"And this is to leave aside entirely the question of how space exploration is to be paid for -- a question which space enthusiasts again and again elide their way around. National governments? But national governments are too busy with the demands of their domestic electorates and their next electoral cycle to have time for such long-term planning. Multi-national corporations? But MNCs are too concerned with unit cost, profitability and their shareholders dividends (the 'bottom line') to sink tens of millions into speculative inter-planetary ventures which may not pay off, if at all, within the lifetimes of their directors' grandchildren. Individuals? Some space enthusiasts may be willing to sell their houses and all their contents to buy a share of a prospective Moon-base, but I doubt the rest of us would be interested even a tiny fraction of our income in the hope that some distant descendent may one day surf the polar wastes of Planet Boop in the Galaxy of Wooble. Yet without answering the fundamental question of who pays, and how, and over what timescale, space enthusiasts' dreams will go precisely nowhere.

"(On the other hand -- I can't resist this bit of malicious mischief -- why not give the space enthusiasts the L5 cylinder or Moonbase they crave? Then, once they're safely out of the way, the rest of us can get down to addressing that world's real problems, unencumbered by their whinging. Although if they continue whinging, the rest of us could slap together some cheap air-launched terminally-guided kinetic projectile weapon which would punch a satisfyingly large hole in -- but what am I *saying*? I mean, what a *horrific* waste of scarce global resources!)

"But let's turn now to Pam Wells's report of Novacon 25. I shall contradict her by saying that I didn't think the Cham-berlain Hotel was that objectionable -- the smallness of the rooms and the absence of bathtubs were irrelevant, since one never spends much time in one's room at a convention and showers are quicker and use less water than baths -- although the convention itself did seem to lack some of the buzz one might have expected of a twenty-fifth anniversary bash and the main bar was too murky and smoky for prolonged comfort. And, as Pam says, it was

overrun by outsiders on the Saturday night, whose usual Saturday night watering hole it presumably is -- one of them, noting our convention badges, asked me who or what we all were, but I avoided discussion of UFOs and such by saying that the gathering was purely social and had no purpose beyond that (which was probably quite true!). The outsiders continued to hang around well after the main bar had closed, presumably hoping that if they could get in with us they could continue to buy (expensive) drinks through the night porter, and one of them provided Christina Lake and I with a moment of inadvertent amusement when he asked if he could join 'you ladies'. Well, it *was* a bit dim, and perhaps he *was* taken in by my pony-tail, dangley ear-rings and leggings, but . . . 'Only one lady, actually,' I replied. Christina fell about, while he went bright red, and retired in some confusion. Unfortunately, he persisted in hanging around our group, and eventually had to be chased off by Tommy Ferguson.)" "Speaking of UFOs, I agree with you that the UFO episodes of *The X Files* are far preferable to the alternative, 'monster-of-the-week' stories, and as you'll perhaps have seen from the excerpt of my *Matrix* article reprinted in *Time Bytes* I think (although the reprint may have compressed the chain of reasoning too much) these episodes constitute a striking insight into the underlying obsessions of contemporary US society. Cue there, no doubt, for both of you to don your surrogate personas as *Fosfax* editors and denounce me for my 'ignorance' about 'the world' (i.e., dissent from Timothy Lane's view of the USA -- or so it usually seems). But before you launch into that, let me leave you with this: I plodded diligently through the the parody of *The X Files* which appeared in a previous issue of *Apparatchik*, and found it crushingly tedious; just not up to your usual standards at all. Plonking, laboured, and unfunny were some of the terms which came to mind . . . or perhaps I just don't know enough about Las Vegas fandom to grasp the in-jokes, what?"

[VMG: Since you address your final paragraph to us, I'll take the liberty of replying to it. Even though I haven't the slightest idea of what you mean. Surely in your conception of the universe, those who don't agree with you don't by necessity then agree with *Fosfax*. Surely Andy has never presented views quite so far to the right, and surely you didn't mean to imply that he had.

But if you did, we'd love to hear you elucidate. Logical presentations of one's views always have so much more impact that the random insult-hurling you are engaging in here. I've always thought of Andy as being fairly far to the left.

But it's always easier to agree with people who don't argue with you.

While it is likely that you didn't get many of the in-jokes in the *X-Files* parody, allow me to be the first to apologize for the unnecessary tedium we inspired. I admire those readers who will plod through anything. However, it was unfair for us to encourage your drowsiness. (Alms for the comatose? Alms for the comatose?)]

[APH: One of the great advantages that you possess in any debate, Joseph, is an unshakable belief that you know what "people" really want, regardless of what they may say themselves. I am willing -- barely -- to accept the notion that you have a firm grasp of what a certain activist segment of your own peer group hold to be important, and I'm willing to attribute to you an even greater awareness of what a somewhat larger segment of

I gotta burp my fungus, it's almost teatime

society needs. But sweeping statements like "people don't want to know and *don't care* about the space programme anymore" are too simplistic and too clearly motivated by a desire to justify your personal politics to be given much credence.

As a very small and probably insignificant piece of evidence to the contrary, I point to the fact that the last issue of APAK was delayed by Victor's inability to send his article to me via electronic mail. For several hours, we simply could not access Internet addresses, and when I logged onto my own service, the simplest operations took minutes to complete. The reason for this, we eventually discovered, was that several hundred thousand people had all logged on at once to find out what had happened to the Galileo atmospheric probe of the Jovian atmosphere, and were all visiting the JPL web-sites and news groups. We eventually found a work-around using the much-smaller service that Carl Juearez subscribes to, but for that afternoon at least, there were quite a few people interested in the "space programme."

I find myself groaning at my gullibility in attempting to answer any of these loaded arguments, but I thought we had all pretty much agreed that it would take a major coalition of national governments, multi-nationals and personal investment to create any kind of permanent human residence in space. It will be difficult to achieve this, admittedly, and it would be inappropriate to pursue it prior to solving many serious issues on earth, but once again, you've allowed yourself to be spoiled by the pace of change and innovation in this century. Human history is full of examples of works and ventures undertaken with no expectation of immediate profit or success. (I found myself thinking of you as I stood at the foot of the spire of Salisbury cathedral a few days after Precursor – but note that I didn't say that these multi-generational ventures had been especially useful efforts.) Technology has become its own worst enemy in this regard; it has created an expectation of immediate and total success in any endeavor which it undertakes. Once we're free of that particular expectation, we'll be more likely to do a number of things, from developing sustainable tropical agriculture to making more dependable and useful application of orbital technology. You are quite correct in one regard; this issue has never been the utility of technology itself, but rather the political will needed to make use of it in ways which benefit the largest number of people possible. If people are so thoroughly motivated by self-interest and short-term profit, what reason is there to assume that the political will to accomplish your agenda can be asserted any more easily than that required to create an L5 colony??

And why is that space science and exploration has become your particular whipping-boy this year, anyway? Doesn't the American insistence on continuing to build strategic weapons like the B-2 deserve a few kicks as well? What about pure science like the search for the top quark or the efforts expended mapping the K/T boundary to prove the dinosaurs were killed by a comet? Why should we be mapping rogue asteroids and comets when we can't think of a good way to stop them from plowing into the earth anyway? Is it possible that the vehemence of your argument arises from a sense of personal betrayal at the failure of the technocratic agenda which most of us in SF fandom embraced when we were young?

However, I agree wholeheartedly with your assessment of the specious nature of arguments that space colonization will prove of great benefit to mankind. Most likely, it will only be of benefit to the people who make such efforts their career, to the

people who actually manage to get away from the earth themselves, and will make little difference to those of us who stay down here with our lips stuck out. One of the best books I've read on this conflict of interests is Michael Kube-McDowell's novel *The Quiet Pools*, which posits a cultural and psychological rift between humans who want to go into space and those who want to remain behind, and don't want the others to go either. Readers still open to consideration of such issues might want to pick it up, while those convinced that science fiction is the literature of a failed technocracy probably wouldn't enjoy it much.

The unbecoming humor of your "mischievous" aside strikes me as having indicted you more completely than I could.

I'm interested in pursuing this issue of the "D-I-Y ethos" (and our response thereto) a little further. If you were truly interested in what we have to say, I suspect that you wouldn't do things like sending out an issue commenting on ideas raised in the previous number, prior to sending that first issue to any North American readers. And then you have the brass to complain that we didn't send the type and volume of response you require? We pride ourselves on draconian and dismissive gestures toward our readership here at APAK, but our hats are off to you – I doubt we'd ever have even thought of this!

But back to this grass-roots anti-political movement. I can't say it strikes me as anything especially earth-shattering or particular to this generation. There has always been a small percentage of activists who preferred to get things done themselves, rather than engaging in protest designed to make other people do things for them. As far as it seems to apply to an entire generation in Britain, given the efforts which the government has made to disenfranchise and suppress them, such a movement seems almost inevitable.

Actually, I think we may have an imperfect parallel in the U.S., in the so-called "Libertarian" movement. Obviously, American Libertarian efforts to repeal all gun laws and end American participation in the United Nations have no relation to the efforts of British activists, but they share a common contempt for their elected government, and a perception that it is actively seeking to suppress and abuse them. The difference is that people in your country seem to be dedicated to finding a way to circumvent the government, and make it as irrelevant to their lives as it clearly deserves to be, while in this country we feel more comfortable blowing up government buildings and shooting government officials. Well, after all, it worked in the 1780's

Hey, look, Victor! A letter from TED WHITE (1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, VA 22046):]

"Well, here I am, at the office, with a little time on my hands, and a WordPerfect program in my computer. so I thought I'd try a little fanac.

"I haven't had much time for fanac for the past few months (post Intersection, really) (I returned to the office to find stuff really piled up -- and our busiest time of the year, too), but I've really been enjoying APAK (especially the Las Vegas 'con-report'), and I'm sorry that I haven't been more of a participant. (Although, to tell you the truth, I get the impression that my present lactivity is being enjoyed by much of fandom.)

"I've been ego-scanning the post-Intersection fanzines from Britain, and thus far it would appear we Americans had little impact on the convention. At the same time I've been reading American post-Intersection fanzines and surprised by

Next: Bruce Springsteen drives a stake through the heart of disco!

all the U.S. fans who were there whom I never saw. Few of them mention any interaction with Brit fandom -- which may explain the aforementioned Lack of Impact. My impression was of a fair amount of interaction between *our* portion of Amfandom, and a number of Britfans . . . but few of them have published anything since Intersection. (Major reportage thus far has been in ATTITUDE, but not even Pam discussed our presence)

"If you can do it, I would like to see a non-facetious defense of 'Teddy Harvia' 's Hugo wins.

"I mean, can anyone tell me with a straight face that 'Harvia' is even an Artist, much less a better one than, say, Steve Stiles? I'm told his 'art' is computer-generated, and that would explain its stiffness, its woodenness. But it doesn't explain the lack of humor in his 'cartoons,' much less his popularity.

"Somewhere recently (APAK?) I read Thayer's complaint that I ignored him or in some way snubbed him at, I think, Magicon. It came as news to me. On those occasions when I've seen him, he's been preening himself and behaving as if he was too good for the company of the likes of me. I've never seen him unbend in the company of fannish fans, much less take his hat off. His brief postcards-of-comment are always presented with a tone of superiority, as though no fanzine was worth one or two brief paragraphs of supercilious comment, no matter what its size or depth of content. He keeps his distance. So for him to complain about me slighting him croggles me more than slightly. Oh well.

"So only a day or two later, here's APAK #48 arrived in the mail. I'll append to my previous a few Actual Comments herewith.

"Maybe it's just me, but I do not share Steve Green's cynicism about the 'new' Beatles song, 'Free As A Bird.' It doesn't strike me as 'awesomely awful.' In fact, I rather like it. For all of the 'twisted technology' that led to its creation, it sounds like the Beatles of yore in all the important ways. Unlike the solo works of Lennon, McCartney and Harrison, it coheres as 'Beatle-y' and it satisfies the urge for Beatle music as none of those solo works have. (Thus far I like it better than 'Real Love' but I've heard the latter only in its TV appearance, while I've listened to 'Free As A Bird' in a variety of contexts -- car, office, and at home, both by myself and with friends.) There is a third song, I hear, but it lacks a bridge (thus far) and will require more reconstructive surgery. I've always felt that the collaboration and competition inspired Lennon and McCartney to greater heights than they usually achieved on their own, and even posthumously this appears to be true.

"As a corollary, I also disagree with Steve about Simon's use of fake-D. West art in LAGOON #7 -- an idea I thought (given the context: West faking the art/styles of other fanartists in #6) positively brilliant. (West *may* disagree.) I mean, this is exactly the sort of thing one indulges in at the high end of fanediting -- and Simon Ounsley is not only one of our best fanwriters (*his* contributions to #7 outshone West by a considerable margin), he is proving to be a major faneditor as well. Let us hear no more talk about taking him out and shooting him! (I liked West's original piece on fanart -- at last! Competent discussion of fanart! -- but his follow-up piece in LAGOON #7 verged on the tedious; he spent far too much space saying too little)

"As the 'discoverer' of Parke Godwin (I published him first in FANTASTIC; he was introduced to me by Marvin Kaye, whom I also discovered), I was interested to see his name on Budrys' list and disheartened to hear his books are now 'a staple of remainder tables across America.' I think he is *the* major author of fantasy to emerge in the past couple of decades. Not in sales, maybe, but surely in terms of depth and quality. I mean, have *you* read *Firelord*?

"Great egoboo from Avedon, re: BLAT! But what's this about 'they do dabble in politics from time to time, so I guess they are fair targets for political criticism'? Did I miss something here? *Have* we been criticized for our politics? I don't think of BLAT! as politically oriented, but I suppose our personal politics have cropped up in it pages from time to time, most notably in my brief comments on last year's elections and Newt's skiffy book. (It's hard to realize a year has passed since I wrote my last editorial for the zine -- well, I've written newer editorial stuff, but none of it has been published yet -- but currently we're still suffering the effects of Lynn losing her job last spring. We have virtually all of #5 'on disk,' as we put it now, which is kinda like having it all 'on stencil,' but leaves us at a further remove from publication thus far. *Sigh*)

"(For what it's worth, #4 really was published in 1995 -- due to the big Machine repeatedly breaking down in the final days/weeks of 1994, we had no issue to hand out at New Year's Eve -- and should be eligible for Hugo nomination. If anyone remembers us by then) End of page."

[VMG: Your participation in APAK is encouraged, Ted. I've been hoping for some time that you would be more involved. If much of fandom is enjoying your present lack of activity, I'd say it's time to ruin their day.

I couldn't agree with you more about the Lagoon pastiche of D. West's stuff. But does anyone know who actually did the fakes?]

[APH: First, the whole "political" issue arose from an offhand, smart-ass remark I made about three moths ago in regard to Christina Lake's review of Blat! in Balloons over Bristol. In keeping with the mock-communist tone of the publication, I made some wisecrack about the "political reliability" of people who gave Blat! less than glowing reviews. It was just a joke, which seems to have fallen completely flat. but let us hope that we have heard the last of it now.

In general, I really try to avoid commenting on issues like "our presence" as reflected in the pages of fanzines. First of all, people who spend a very large chunk of the weekend in smoky room parties probably can't expect to be considered a great part of the overall impression of the convention. Second, the whole weekend was so fragmented and chaotic, I'm impressed anyone can remember anything about it at all. And third, I've always felt that egoboo has to come without any tickling or hinting on one's part to be worth anything at all. Given the rampant egomania that grips most fan writers and editors, it's always amazing to me that they're willing to mention anyone else at all. I've been fortunate enough to be mentioned fairly frequently in fanzines of late, but it usually involves the word "fucking", to wit: "fucking Andy Hooper." Is that egoboo? One must suppose so, under the assumption that the only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about, but I harbor a few doubts.

As far as David Harvia or Teddy Thayer or Reddy Vitaha goes, I think his awards are justifiable on the grounds that he is well-liked and generally non-controversial. It's just like when Tim Kirk and Phil Foglio were winning Hugo awards; you might easily find two or ten or two hundred artists that were "better" according to some personal artistic criteria, and certainly a large number who were better qualified by virtue of being your personal friends. His awards are as defensible as theirs, as Charlie Brown's, as ERBdom's, and Orson Scott Card's (well, maybe a little more than Card's). But given the total lack of specific categorization implicit in the award, and the fact that David has never, to my knowledge ever turned down a fan editor who asked him for art, or failed to meet a deadline he promised to keep, Teddy Harvia is just about the best you are going to get in a Fan Hugo winner today. It would be good to keep in mind that his work does appear in fannish fanzines, which is more than you can say for most of the busy, over-blown unicorn school of fan art that seems to be the major competition for the award. Does this mean that I voted for him? That I nominated him? That I can't think of a dozen fan artists who I'm be personally happier to see clutching that rocket? No comment.

Personally, I sense the same kind of distance from him, but I think it arises from his perception that WE look down on HIM, not vice versa. What other conclusion is a person to come to when his work is referred to in ironic quotes, like "art," and "cartoons"? I find him an intriguing guy who does too much to cloak his acid wit in a pose of being "nice" . . . I think, deep down, David Thayer is substantially meaner and more biting in his humor than even Steve Stiles, and it is that hidden potential that keeps me interested in him. Not that he hides this side of himself from everyone; the comparatively innocuous pocsarcsd he sent in response to last issue, for example, featured this legend on its front: "If Hot Air really was Wind, you would be a Cyclone!"

To be honest, I don't know how he creates his art, but I'm not sure why that is such a qualitative issue here. Jeanne Gomoll, Stu Shiffman, and a number of other fan artists whom I know you respect, have used computer design aids to create art in recent years, and I don't think anyone criticized them for it. And I can't imagine that this has any impact on the degree of humor in his cartoons. I can't say his humor is likely to split my sides in the near future, but I do think they're funny in a nice sort of way.

Speaking of the devil, here's a note from DAVID THAYER (701 Regency Drive, Hurst, TX 76054-2507)

"I don't have a fever, but my head is stopped up. You'd think that ideal for commenting on your writing, but it's not. I'm excited to see you do your part to keep the UFO crash story alive by mentioning it.

"I'm indoctrinating Diana Thayer co-editor of the San Antonio Worldcon FRs, on the most important part of fanzine fandom. She's most delighted with the fan artists and what they send her. I've expanded her horizons. Have a big Xmas!"

[APH: I'll do my best, surely. And while we're rounding up the usual suspects, here's a note from GEORGE FLYNN (P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Square Station, Cambridge, MA 02142):

"*Apparatchik* 48 received (or *Arrayaatsnik*, as the banner appears to say in Cyrillic).

"I note in Victor's part of the editorial a statement about 'the incom-prehension . . . that many new fans face today.' The hyphen in *incom-prehension* is *sic*, and obviously

indicates that the word is to be deconstructed into income + prehension, thus subliminally suggesting a charge that fandom today is obsessed with grasping for money. (How much do I get for figuring this out?)

"On the whole I agree with Andy's evaluations of SF writers. In particular I can confirm that 'one feels little impulse to rewrite [Bujold's] prose,' having spent much of the last week copyediting the collection of her work that we're publishing for Boskone. (there are *some* authors, who shall be nameless, whose work I've found very hard to read after subjecting it to minute examination.) As for the ones on that list unfamiliar to you . . . Paul Preuss was a pretty promising hard-SF writer for a while, but has mostly sunk into share-cropping. I think Madeleine Robins recently sold a novel. Haven't seen anything lately by Darnay or Besaw.

" . . . plus a superb article on the future of TAFF by Arnie Katz.' You meant the one that said I had been a TAFF candidate this year?"

[APH: Remind me again why we put a proofreader on the mailing list, Victor.]

[VMG: Just like the backwards "R," subtle subtextual comments are hard for proofreaders (or proofwidners) to figure out. In fact, the hyphen was meant, much like the paragraph in Finnegans Wake that contextually names all of the stories in Dubliners, to point to one of the Great Fanzines All New Fans Must Read. Have you caught the other 19 references to other fanzines in that piece? (Hint: Hyphen was the easiest.)]

[APH: I see you're still trolling for a Joyce scholar who can touch her eyebrows with her tongue, Victor. Let's move on, though, to a fishing report from the rather damp HOWARD WALDROP (Box 5103 Oso General Store, 30230 Oso Loop road, Arlington, WA 98223), who confusedly asks:]

"Dear Andy, Re: return address label . . . did you throw Carrie over for Vic?

"Rivers still full but sort of clearing . . . no fishing around here for the last three full weeks. Sauk River was full of big Dolly Vardens and cutthroats 3 weeks ago, before World Fantasy Con.

"Got Washington State driver's license up at Mt. Vernon a week ago yesterday. Very civilized, they hand you your license when you're through -- unlike the Lone Star state, where they give you the monkey license (a piece of paper that says you're you, no picture; so everybody makes you use that and your passport to cash a check until your real license shows up in the mail anywhere from a month to six weeks later . . .) (If you look like your driver's license photo, you're too sick to drive . . .)

"Going to finish I, John Mandeville (25 years and holding . . .) before Christmas, I told everybody (Brit. agent, Berkeley, Legends UK). We'll see. Missed the year with the 4 in it, like I've done with a novel the last two decades.

"Stand aside; I take large steps.

"P.S.: Electricity off Fri. midnight to Sat/Sun midnight due to 80 mph winds. I went to John and Eileen's, after I had to drive 15 miles for a cup of coffee Sat. am. Ten guys were parked around the store when I got up Saturday morning. They don't have electricity at their homes a hundred yards away, but expected the store to have the espresso machine going. 'What do you think?' I said, 'They got a kerosene powered latte maker?' It was like I killed their pet turtles.

"Best, Howard."

When you have shot and killed a man . . .

[VMG: Who can respond to something this funny without being less funny?

Forget it.

However, we will keep the pet turtle idea in mind the next time Heddy Tarvia shows up.

Next, a message from TARA GLOVER (tara.glover@ukonline.co.uk), who liked being listed first in the fanzine countdown a few issues back, even if Andy did manage to get seven or eight major facts wrong in his review:]

"Thanks for a great review. It was really nice having *Cybrer* at number one. (That one was issue eight by the way).

Sorry about you not getting the other issues, we couldn't afford to print very many copies of some. (Or post them abroad, unfortunately.) When we were in Leeds Mum could come in to work on Saturdays and get them all photocopied. And Dad would be able to distribute them at meetings and cons. The total stock of *Cybrer* 8 now is fifty -- Dad did a second batch after so many went so fast at Novacon.

"Rob and I are working on the editorial presence - there's going to be a special 'Birdseye Potato Editorial'. It's great doing a report on Intersection from MY point of view. Rob says he's going to review some games and anime, and I'll try doing a fanzine report sometime, too.

"Mum said that I ought to point out a few things: it was Joseph Nicholas who wrote the plane piece, and Terry Jeeves illustrated. She says getting them to work together was quite amazing (apparently). Krys is actually female - but I had to ask Mum about that, since the name is uni-sex. It was really nice watching Ian Gurn do the cover on our dining room table, and watching him add those little bits, like the tiny fly buzzing round.

"Why not do a sort of list of other Hopelessly Naff References for people who might be interested? (Rob wanted to know what the others are.)

"Thanks loads for the egobool!"

[VMG: Don't forget to send me a copy. Please.

[APH: I regret to say that the entire run of APAK has been laden with Hopelessly Naff References from issue #1. Collect 'em all! Trade 'em with your cellmates!

Speaking of Hopelessly Naff, here's the arbiter of same, NIGEL RICHARDSON (electrostimulable at nigel@impolex.demon.co.uk), who says it's a fair cop:]

"Just got the latest bundle o' APPARATCHIKs (45 & 46) from whoever lives at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, West Midlands. (Has our Martin moved from that oh-so-evocative-sounding "Alum Rock Road"?) Your review of *Anorak Redemption* #1 is pretty damn spot on. I have tried the alternatives, but there is indeed something within our fandom that other areas of zinedom can only grope for. Knowing your audience is a wonderful thing, even if knowing and loving are two different things. The best non-sf fanzines are those that have, in their own manner, discovered the things that make fanzines so special. They'd rather trade than try to make money, rather know their audiences than have two hundred passive, silent consumers. As yet there isn't a non-fannish equivalent of *BLAT* (or even *APPARATCHIK*), but I think there could be within a few years. Zinedom may not be learning directly from fandom, but in an accelerated parallel way it's heading towards the same goals, making the same mistakes, going up the same blind alleys...

"Pam's Novacon report was accurate. I enjoyed the con,

and mostly for the right reasons. (Somewhere along the line I vowed never to go to another Novacon, but I only remembered that after the event). And I have to admit that fans are starting to look a lot less like the stereotype I mention in *ART*. There are still "fat, bearded tee-shirt and badge wearing geeks" (your words) but this is no longer the uniform. And it was the uniformity of fans that bugged me, more than the look itself. I don't care what people look like - as long as they don't all look the same. Well, okay, I do have certain preferences, but if Novacon 25 was anything to go by I'll have to find something new to moan about other than the sartorial elegance of fans. (I think there were more dapper waistcoats than figure-hugging XXXX t-shirts on the men and more miniskirts than dungarees on the women....)

"Re-read a pile of BLATs while recovering from the flu recently and almost changed my mind about fan history. I do enjoy it when it's done well, when it's about interesting people doing interesting things rather than dreary lists of dates and places. Yes, there is a soft and squishy side of me screaming to get out....

"But I still want someone to explain that Avedon Carol quote, however. What would Alun Harries have done if he was her?"

[APH: At a guess, I'd say he'd have topped himself off, pronto (sorry, Avedon, it was too good to resist).

I agree with you in general in regard to fan history, but I think there is some use for the "dreary list of dates and places" as well. I far prefer to read anecdotes and accounts of specific events and people, but its useful to have a kind of framework to place those things in. Not that I really want to have to write that kind of thing myself Anyway, this leads me to observe that we have a lot of the names and places sort of fan history bubbling around under the surface at the moment, as theoretically practised by the Timebinders, et al, and I'm hoping that other people will be willing to offer the specific and more entertaining stuff that makes reading history palatable - a kind of source-reading, if you will.

I have to admit that I have never seen very much uniformity in the sartorial crimes of fandom, but perhaps you have associated with a smaller absolute number of fans, or some other fuckin' useless mealy-mouthed drivel. Who gives a shit what fans wear, anyway? If you're involved in fandom because you're looking for eye-candy, someone has clearly led you well astray.

On the other hand, it is always good to hear of anyone from the Leeds group enjoying anything, especially if it has to do with fandom. Novacon sounds from all accounts to have been a pretty entertaining event, and if I ever happen to be in the north of England during November, I'll try to find time to attend the convention before slashing my wrists.

And to repeat one more time, for anyone who didn't notice in the last issue, Martin has indeed moved, and now shares digs with his beloved Helena Gough at the address which appears in the front-page colophon.

That's all we have room for this issue, but I'll tantalize you all with the note that next issue (#50!) will feature an analysis of the so-called "evidence" for the Roswell "event" by Jon (A Scientist, you know) Singer, plus a major piece from Victor and the debut of the electronic format of APAK NOW! Don't forget to let us know if you want to be on the electric mailing list as well as continuing to receive the paper version.]

. . . you have in some way clarified your attitude toward him.

FANZINE COUNTDOWN, December 7th to 20th

1) *Thyme* #106, edited by Alan Stewart for a whole continent, P.O. Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria, 3005 AUSTRALIA. Admittedly, this fanzine gives entire too much ink to things like anim and fat fantasy novels by David Eddings, but there are occasional gems thrown in that make it all worthwhile. This issue has an utterly brilliant wraparound cover by Ian Gunn, which seems slightly reminiscent of a Teddy Harvia cover on one of the Dave Romm/Jeanne Mealy issues of *RUNE* from a few years back. But this is a much more ambitious effort, much busier and filled with detail, as is Gunn's style. He also has a kind of full-page funny-animal view of Intersection inside the zine which actually made me laugh out loud, which generally only D. West can make me do. Obviously, any news from America or Britain is going to be hopelessly dated by the time *Thyme* reaches our shores, but the stuff about Australian fandom is always pretty fresh, and there's some interesting commentary by people like Terry Frost and Lyn McConchie. And every now and then there is a piece like Peter Vereker's review of Don DeLillo's *White Noise* that gives one hope for fandom as a whole. I really like and recommend this fanzine.

#2) *Saliromania* #10, written and edited by Michael Ashley, 9 Blakely House, Kelmere Grove, Woodside, Bradford BD6 2RF, U.K. After three years, at last, some word from Mr. Ashley, perhaps the most relentlessly grim writer of the entire Leeds group. This is such an English zine you can practically smell the combination of warm beer and despair coming off it. He finishes off his editorial in this issue by promising to be *energetic* and positive in his next issue, but I'd advise against holding your breath waiting for this to happen. What seems to have shaken him into action this time is a combination of continuing to receive fanzines and letters from people who haven't figured out how much he hates them, and the passage of various fans through his region of the world in recent months. He offers his version of the recent disastrous visit of GUFF delegates Ian and Karen Pender-Gunn to the Adelphi, and points out sensibly that it wasn't he and his mates' fault that the two visiting dignitaries and their handler, Chris Terran, failed to introduce themselves to anyone at the event, and as a result, no one talked to them because no one knew who they were. Nothing gets a fanwriter going like charges of elitism and stand-offishness. But not having met them doesn't stop Ashley from characterizing the Guffies' behavior as both strange and a trifle worrisome. Plus, he manages to throw in a few digs at Avedon Carol; does anyone besides me get the feeling of taking a long road trip with a group of unruly children whenever they read one of these diatribes? Ah, but never grow up, Michael, we all need your example to help remind us how very blessed we are.

#3) *Ansible* #101, written and edited by David (for it is he!) Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU U.K. The usual stellar stuff from Dave, featuring another example of disquieting synchronicity between his fanzine and mine. This issue leads off with an item regarding Simon R. Green, whom Kim Huett lionized so thoroughly in *APAK* #48's lettercol. Green sent Dave a note of frustration at the ham-handed treatment his latest work, *Deathstalker Rebellion*, received from a free-lance copy-editor working for Gollancz. The copy-editor himself was somehow contacted in regard to this incident, and this response trickled back to

Dave: "Only the stupidest of Simon R. Green's 'jokes' were deleted, as were hilarious cracks about the severely disabled. When he made the same 'joke' more than once, having clearly forgotten making it before (i.e., we're not talking about running gags), one or more renditions were cut. 'Jokes' in the following categories were allowed to stand: (a) unfunny; (b) very unfunny; (c) profoundly unfunny; (d) unfunnier than that." Obviously Kim's statement that he feels no impulse to edit Green's prose is not shared by all.

#4) *The Groom Lake Desert Rat* # 32, edited by, "Psychosp", available at Psychosp@aol.com. This an electronic fanzine that Carl Juarez turned me on to, and it's well worth the \$5.00 annual subscription implicit in its receipt. (The editor refers to it as "guiltware.") Psychosp lives in Las Vegas or some suburb thereof, and he is an expert on that region's two greatest contributions to modern culture, namely the casino buffet and the UFO lunatic. I've only gotten a few issues so far, so I'm still getting up to speed on the local mythology, but so far, this is the one writer I've found whose attitude toward UFO phenomena most closely approximates my own. This issue features an account of a visit to some UFO enthusiasts in Budapest, an observation of some west-coast businesses using the name "Area 51," the first step toward establishing a database of ufologists, and the "flame of the month," a selection of the barely-coherent hate mail he receives. I know the feeling.

#5) *Trash Barrel*, dated 9-25-95 written and edited by Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91606-2308. Basically this is a series of loose pages front and back featuring fanzine reviews which only occasionally reach the level of complexity and consideration as exhibited in this weedy little column. I suppose this is the American equivalent of *Fanzine Fanatique*. But look, Franson's been involved in fandom since before there was dirt, and he still has the energy and wherewithal to make some observation of the material which he receives, and on that level alone this effort is worth some level of approbation. Plus, Donald gets some stuff that I don't, and it is nice to get these addresses. **ALSO RECEIVED:** *Mobius Strip*, dated November, 1995, edited by Alexandra Ceely for the EPSFFA.

APPARATCHIK is the Hector Muñoz of fandom, a medical man with a fondness for exotic spice and Egyptian incense, and a positive mania for air-conditioning. Hard to believe this gargoyle once impressed the lower orders of Barcelona with his greatness. It's still available for the usual, but note that trades must now be sent to both Andy and Victor (Victor can be reached at 403½ Garfield Street S., #11, Tacoma, WA 98444, and electronically at Gonzalez@tribnet.com), and/or you can get Apparatchik for \$3.00 for a three month supply, or a year's worth for \$12.00 or a lifetime subscription for \$19.73, or in exchange irrefutable evidence of alien visitation of the earth (not including George Clinton albums). For readers in the United Kingdom, Martin Tudor will accept £10.00 for an annual subscription, £19.37 for a lifetime sub, see his address in the colophon on the front cover. Lifetime subscribers include Tom Becker, Judy Bemis, Richard Brandt, Steve Brewster, Scott Custis, Don Fitch, Ken Forman, Lucy Huntzinger, Nancy Lebovitz, Robert Lichtman, Michelle Lyons, Luke McGuff, Janice Murray, Tony Parker, Greg Pickersgill, Barnaby Rapoport, Alan Rosenthal, Anita Rowland, Karen Schaffer, Leslie Smith, Nevenah Smith, Geri Sullivan, Steve Swartz, Michael Waite, and Art Widner. More arrests are expected in shocking cellular cloning scandal.