

* * * * * The fifth issue of a weekly fanzine by Andrew
A P P A R A T C H I K Hooper, member fwa, supporter afal, broadcast
* * * * * from The Starliter Arms, 4228 Francis Ave. N.
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* * * * * Press Production # 178, accept no imitations.

Let the Plaza buy you a drink sir?

I AM STILL WIPED OUT by last week's adventures in Las Vegas, but here it is, deadline time, and the full folly and horror of publishing a weekly fanzine has asserted itself for the first time. But that's okay, my will is good, as the late Kurt Cobain might have said, and besides, I have enough mail piled up to fill the zine three or four times. If I can just stumble through these first 62 lines, I'll be home free.

Silvercon III was a very small, very easy-going convention, mostly populated by gamers, although there weren't too many of them around, either. Surrounded by thousands of regular people hell-bent on throwing away as much of their money as possible, twenty-five cents a crack, Silvercon was one of those conventions which seems to stand outside of space and time. Everyone seemed very well-behaved, even the local sword-carriers. It felt a little like one of Iain M. Bank's "Culture" Space-Operas, everyone assuming a decadent little pose, greeting dear friends long forgotten, and above all, staying extremely relaxed.

What made it an exemplary event for me was the enormous number of fanzine fans (proportional to the rest of the convention, anyway) who were there. rich brown, John D. Berry, Charles Burbee, Eileen Gunn Robert Lichtman, Dan and Lynn Steffan, Ted White, and of course, all of the Vegas locals. I handed out a good 20% of last issue at the party on Thursday night.

Speaking of Thursday, I want to publicly recognize and praise Joyce Katz for the tremendous party she hosted to kick off the con. She baked a whole turkey! Someone needs to introduce a good run of microbrews to Las Vegas, but other than that, there was nothing the table lacked. The expense and effort would have been impressive if a dozen people had worked on it, and I gather that, sans the turkey, Joyce hosts a party of this calibre every month. The Las Vegas fans I hadn't met previously impressed me as smart, friendly and outgoing; I think there is fertile ground there for even more written fanac than Arnie has already discovered. It was great to meet them.

My only frustration of the weekend (other than the head cold I developed Saturday morning) was with the panel on "numbered fandoms" held on Sunday afternoon. We seemed so bent on proving that the theory of numbered fandoms could not be extended beyond the population boom of the mid-sixties, we never got around to trying to create a descriptive theory which might apply to fanzine fandom, if not fandom as a whole, and which could be brought into the present day. Even if we couldn't apply a neat number to our progress through fandom, perhaps we could point to having survived the Age of the Brooklyn Insurgents, the Era of Feminist Theory, or even the Big Dumb Genzines full of Feuding Fuggheads Interregnum. I wish I hadn't been quite so heavily sedated during the panel....

Also, it gets annoying to have to hear how a real fannish history of the sixties, let alone later periods, can never be written. We might not be able to use the methods and models of earlier fandoms; but sundry events occurred, fans participated in them, and the fannish record reflects that fact. Those who were there just have to do the work, create new models and theories to debate, or else some late-arriving fan will just get it all wrong.

There is no TAFF candidate, only Zuui

[THE TAFF ISSUE RAGES ON FOR ANOTHER WEEK, as illustrated by this massive missive from Arnie Katz. As usual, I will set any comments I might have in brackets and initial, like so: -- aph]

ARNIE KATZ WRITES: "As a neofan in the mid-60's, the fannish institution I most revered was TAFF. It embodied fandom's best aspects. I'm not an Organization Man, so formal clubs...don't appeal to me. Yet the idealistic purposes and practical consequences of TAFF were irresistible: Fandoms an ocean apart pooling their money to swap emissaries.

"A few nominees pushed too hard or didn't have the right spirit, but they were exceptions. Most winners subscribed to the goal of building bridges between North American and European (originally, U.S. & U.K.) fandoms.

"TAFF's routine, which worked so well in it's palmy days, aided the achievement of its purpose, as its founders and supporters conceived it. The low-key nominating phase suited the attitude that one should "stand," not "run" for TAFF. Money collection (the voting fee, auctions, and special fanzines) built enthusiasm and increased the visibility of all the candidates.

"The trip let the TAFFan meet, and form relationships with fans from across the sea. The hosts got to meet someone who they knew on paper, and this, too, tightened the bond between countries. The TAFF report earned money and provided entertainment. It also cemented and extended the newly made ties between the TAFF winner and host country fans.

"I don't know who is on APAK's mailing list, but I doubt many will seriously dispute Andy's somewhat gloomy assessment of the current state of TAFF. Finding appropriate candidates grows more and more difficult even as raising the money for the trip becomes easier. Once fandom desperately wanted to send people across the Atlantic, but had to scrape for every penny. Now, with lower fares and more affluent fans, getting the stake together is a snap, but the delegates don't excite many fans, including Andy."

[Whoa there, I don't think I ever said I was personally unhappy with the TAFF delegates we have had. Recently, both Pam Wells and Abi Frost were okay with me, although they didn't seem to have had much fun that I could observe. The lack of published reports from them and just about every other TAFF delegate of the past ten years is more problematic, but I think that fandom's dissatisfaction with the delegates is far less pronounced than the delegates' disillusionment with the trips' they have taken. Another thing we ought to be worrying about is how to make sure that people can come here from another country and have something approaching a pleasant experience. Assuming they'll let us, of course. --aph]

ARNIE CONTINUES: "One problem lies beyond TAFF: U.S. and U.K. fandoms are going through one of their periodic estrangements. It happened in the mid-60's, and here it is again. TAFF might help re-establish the closeness, but paradoxically, the coolness makes it harder to put forward candidates that excite fans in the host country.

"Joyce suggests that we could create more fertile soil for TAFF if American faneds sent out more overseas copies (and encourage U.K. fans to do likewise.) Fanzines have always served the hobby well as a communications medium. Perhaps if younger British fans had more exposure to our branch of fandom -- the Corflu crowd? -- they'd probably find the reality more palatable than the image proposed obliquely from afar."

[I don't think it can ever hurt to send more fanzines to Britain, but I don't think it will provide a very satisfactory conclusion to the lack of contact between U.S. and U.K. fanzine fandom. The simple fact is, the British scene has never totally recovered from the energy drain brought on from hosting the 1987 Worldcon. This is why so many British fanzine fans are unhappy about the Worldcon being in Glasgow next year; they feel that they are only now beginning to see some life in their fandom again, and another Worldcon will only serve to grind that into gafia. Britfans fears about the lack of new blood and energy in their fandom are far more pronounced than ours; they seem unable to solve the dilemma which faces them, namely that all the younger, energetic fans around seem to con-runners and Judge Dredd fanatics, while those with taste, breeding and the ability to pub their ish are invariable so played out as to be unable to open their own cans of lager in the morning. We can blizzard these people with fanzines until we run out of trees, and the response we receive will not be too encouraging. I agree that we may well be estranged; but can anyone remember just who it we are supposed to be estranged from? --aph]

ARNIE AGAIN: "Neither of Andy's two proposed solutions to TAFF dissatisfaction appeals to me." [Yeah, yeah, so what, they don't appeal to anyone. Let's move on to the age of mammals and see if you have a better idea. --aph]

A.K.: "Perhaps there's another way.

"We write and talk about fanhistory, but how often do we profit from the lessons it can teach? Not very often, I think. We play trivia games and reprint articles and debate whether Opsla! was the focal point of sixth (or seventh) fandom, but fans seldom use past events as a guide for future conduct.

"Fmz fandom is the archive of fannish history and tradition. Because fmz fans are more aware of the hobby's continuity, changes in its institutions mean more to us than to people whose experience is limited to personal memories.

"It has never been less demanding, or more socially acceptable to be a fan, using the widest definition of the term, and mass fandom simply doesn't share our consensus about TAFF, or much of anything else. In any poll of All Fandom, our ballots will be swamped by the mundane opinion of the fan majority.

"TAFF is not the first institution created by hardcore fandom to go mass-pop. It happened to the Worldcon in the 70's. Fannish fandom's first impulse was to contest for the right to keep the Worldcon fannishly pure. It didn't work. Fanzine fans generally regard bidding and running a con as necessary evils, things endured to get tot throw the family's annual reunion. Confans love bidding. they love fan politics. They love green rooms and walkie-talkies and all that other folderol. Fmz fandom could not compete with that.

"Eventually, fmz fandom figured it out and stopped trying.... Fandom started Corflu. Instead of trying to take the Worldcon away from the thousands who now look to it for yearly entertainment, we set up a con just for us. Corflu makes few fan-ethical compromises, because it doesn't have to.

"We got the convention we wanted by concentrating on our real goals, by choosing substance over image.... I suggest we adopt the same approach to TAFF. Let TAFF become a mass institution. Let Worldcons and major regionals collect heaps of money and send squads of European fans to each year's Worldcon (and parties of U.S. fans to the biggest U.K. con.

"Let's start our own Fund to bring Britfen to Corflu or Ditto and send representatives of U.S.

fandom to the most appropriate event over there. Make publishing a fanzine within the last two years a voting requirement and limit candidates to fanzine fans of high repute. Such a fund would have slightly reduced financial resources, at least at first, but I don't think a brief slowdown in the pace of trips would be a bad thing.

"Joyce, ever the fannish firebrand, propounded a more radical option when I told her about this letter. 'Let's just walk away from TAFF and start over,' she declared. 'Fanzine fandom could run a special fund for some worthy individual and see how that went.'

"Special funds have the ad hoc quality that has characterized some of fandom's finest projects, and it might encourage the kind of fanac, like fund zines, that might help repair the inter-fandom relationship.

"Corflu works; perhaps a fanzine fund would, too."

[This is an interesting proposal, and a good alternative to the idea of trying to make TAFF more insular. And the nice thing about it is that we could leave behind all of the procedural "tradition" of TAFF, which prevents modern fen from doing much to adapt the fund to reflect the realities of contemporary fandom, while preserving the personal engagement which characterized TAFF's early years. I made a joke at Silvercon about your having a plan to bring someone over for Corflu next year, but seriously, if you guys could think of anyone, I'd be all for it. The only problem, of course, is that if fmz fans really walk away from TAFF, hordes of costumers and con-runners are not really going to rush in and take up the slack. -- aph] Next issue: Something that doesn't have to do with TAFF or Feuds.

APPARATCHIK IS THE LEO GORCEY OF FANDOM, prancing around like a bandy-legged little cock-of-the-walk, threatening to smack you with its hat and muttering, "Why, I oughta..." You can get three months worth of it for \$3.00, or a year's worth for \$12.00, or a lifetime supply for \$19.73, or in exchange for a few published LoCs or maybe you are fortunate enough to be one of those aristocrats who were placed on the mailing list by virtue of taste and stature in the fanzine world. You have my sympathy. By the way, it has been suggested that I print the APAK mailing list, so the readers would know who was receiving it (and by extension, who might read their letters). If I ever get a spare twelve or fifteen lines, I might do that; in the meantime, a sase will get you a copy of the current mailing list. Ciao, Bella.

...by the Smith and Rhuland Shipyard of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia...

APPARATCHIK # 5
C/O Andrew P. Hooper
4228 Francis Ave. N. # 103
Seattle, WA 98103

Address Correction Requested