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APPARATCHIK
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The fiftieth 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 # 243. 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.). Do you realize that the ocean goes right under our feet?

Issue # 50, January 4th, 1996

APH here -- WELCOME TO THE big 50th issue of *Apparatchik*. Having just two weeks between issues doesn't leave us a lot of time to plan a lot of observation or celebration of even major milestones like a 50th issue, but this issue contains a lot of pretty cool material, and we figured we could spend a few extra bucks to give this one a special look and make it even harder to read than usual.

All in all, I'm very pleased with the path that APAK has taken. We're reaching more readers than ever before, and will probably double or triple our readership with the on-line version. The growth of the ranks of the Apparatchiki means that we should always have new material to offer, without crushing any one writer with our demented deadlines. And our readers continue to do their part, sending incisive and entertaining comment on what they read here.

We haven't really made much progress toward making this a more newsy fanzine, but that may yet change. Anyway, that doesn't strike me as being all that important. What is important to me is that we continue to present stuff that is of interest to at least some portion of our mailing list, and that we continue to arrive in your mailboxes once every two weeks. I tend to think of APAK as being a kind of navigational beacon, sending its regular signal out to those sailing the seas of fandom. Or perhaps a kind of radar, if you will, whose return gives us some idea of the shape and extent of the fannish body. Given the nearly-flat emission profile that much of fandom seems to offer these days, I suppose APAK is a massive spike of noise and interference. Think of us as the anti-stealth fanzine.

VMG here: THE FIFTIETH ISSUE of APAK shows a very different fanzine than the first issue I received from Andy while I was living in New York. From a single-page, bad-looking, badly-photocopied letter substitute, APAK is now poised to become THE focal point fanzine.

I'm proud to be a part of it. From that first issue, I thought Andy was doing something different just by proposing to do a weekly zine. That alone filled me with energy and interested me in contributing.

Since I started writing for the fanzine, I've had a lot of fun. I hope that our co-editorship, along with the brilliant participation of carl juarez, responsible for every improvement in the presentation of the zine for several months, will continue. I especially hope our correspondents will keep it up as well.

AS I TRIED to get to sleep by reading last night, I came upon *Zed*, a fanzine by Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden that came out in May, 1981, a precursor of *Izzard*.

From Patrick's editorial in *Zed* 1: "Its existence, its very

conception, you might say, is predicated on, and dedicated to, the proposition that (as Teresa says) 'Publishing an issue of *Telos* is like shitting a brick.' "

For more on shat bricks, just turn the page.

APH here again: I've just a few more pieces of business before you move on to Victor's tour de force (well worth waiting for, I assure you). With the new year comes a host of fannish events that are growing very large very fast as we approach them, things which used to be a whole year away. One of the first to concern us should be Corflu 13, which is just ten weeks off as I write this. Time to get those memberships in. And, according to a note I have here from JANICE MURRAY, the FAAA administrator for 1996, one of those things is the Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards, renewed last year by Corflu Vegas. Janice offers the following words of encouragement:

"Corflu, the fanzine fans' convention, will be held in Nashville, Tennessee on March 13-15, 1996. The Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards will be presented at the Sunday afternoon banquet. If you are a fanzine fan and would like to participate please list your top three votes in each category - Best Fanzine, Best Fan Writer and Best Fan Artist - for the calendar year 1995.

"Send your vote to Janice Murray, Post Office Box 75684, Seattle, Washington 98125-0684 USA. Votes will also be accepted via E-mail at 73227.2641@compuserve.com. The deadline is February 29, 1996.

"Since E-mail votes will be tallied as well as votes received by mail, there will be no official ballot. A postcard is sufficient. All votes must be accompanied by a name and mailing address. For more information about the awards please contact Janice at the addresses above or at (206) 524-1206. For information about Corflu contact Lucy Huntzinger, 2305 Bernard Avenue, Nashville TN 37212. Lucy's E-mail address is huntzinger@phyv02.phy.vanderbilt.edu and her phone number is 615 383-5763."

Janice goes on to note that she wants to make sure that voters in Canada, the U.K., Australia and other places outside the U.S. have a chance to vote this year, and to that end is trying to find a person to be the official electronic polling place for fans that aren't yet on-line. Once we have some news of who the volunteer national pollers turn out to be, we'll make the names known as soon as we can.

While I'm not sure I like the idea of not having a paper ballot at all (although Janice has offered to print some up and
(Continued on page 4)

I'll trade you two Herzog von Braunschweig for a Sir Henry Clinton!

When Seattle Fandom was Fab

By Victor M. Gonzalez
Staff Writer

This is a Small Fannish Fanzine. Analysts of fan trends Take Note. This is also a fanzine that subscribes to the notion that frequent is better than big, good is better than frequent, clubs beat four of a kind, and Bloch is superb.

-Telos 1, February, 1980

In the meantime this is Izzard, monthly and under an ounce.

-Izzard 1, September 28, 1982

I'm sorting through a stack of distressed fanzines from the John Berry collection, trying to find the Teloses. I've already sorted out the Izzards.

I find Telos 5 and toss it to one side. Splat Harlot 2 goes in the other stack. Splat Next, a fat one. Must be Telos 3. Splat. Then Egoboodle and the Moving Paper Fantasy. Two fanzines by Linda Blanchard, a former Seattle fan who stopped moving. Splat, splat.

Two weird Swedish zines by 14-year-olds. Phit, phit. Then a Wild Fennel. Split. Then Yandro 22. Splat.

I'm about to drop the next fanzine into the "non-Telos" pile, but I can't. The cover drags me in: full-color Atom. Creatures with "Acme" stencilled on the sides of their little pod craft disassemble a rocket ship while a human astronaut covers his mouth in shock.

The last Cry, or so it claims. Number 186.

Splat. I'm looking for Teloses.



No matter how much I've enjoyed my fanac in the last year, fandom now just doesn't seem as good as it was when I joined up twelve years ago.

Boy, back then it had spirit. Wit, style and charm seemed to be in abundance. Back then, it seemed like fans were funny. They were straightforward but subtle; they took and heaped criticism; they admitted their errors; sometimes they managed to argue without animosity.

No doubt my early memories were viewed through green-tinted lenses - or perhaps a hit of windowpane - but I believe the period just before my entry had a lot to do with my interest in fandom, and may rank with the best periods in fandom.

Those people were in the generation immediately before mine. Something happened to Seattle fandom in the late 1970s, when an influx of fans added to those already here. It changed the nature of fandom in the period leading into mine, when Topic A became the single significant item of discussion.

By the time I got here, "Fabulous Seattle Fandom" was dying. The Nielsen Haydens were gone to Toronto. Farber wasn't much publishing. Bostick was done. Kaufman and Tompkins were slowing down. Vanguard, started in 1978, still happens, though its participants age, drifting far away from fandom as a whole. Yet Vanguard still does provide our main channel for communication and discord.

Patrick and Teresa started up Telos in early 1980. It was typed to stencil, art was electrostenciled and cut in, and

it was printed on good fannish stock with an AB Dick closed-drum electric mimeo. It lasted about two years, though the editorial board changed almost every issue. From the beginning, Telos received an overwhelming amount of response: more than 120 fanzines and apazines were sent to Telos in return for the second issue. Long letters and regular columnists - most of BNF stature - filled its pages. It printed one inspired tour-de-force essay after another.

From the first ish it was a fannish zine, but I think it went farther than anything in its time in tying the fannish scene together with constructive philosophy and brilliant writing.

It all coincided with Warhoon 28, the Willish. Richard Bergeron's 10-year gestation had finally produced fruit: a 500-page volume of collected fan writing, most by Walt Willis. Patrick, who had previously excused himself from editing a fanzine by saying he would when the Willish came out, noted the spur in his editorial to the first ish: "Damn you Dick Bergeron."

Legend has it that Patrick and Gary Farber played a key role in Bergeron's reawakening from a long gafiation. Having discovered that Bergeron lived in the Dakota, a prestigious New York City apartment building, they went to visit carrying a box of Good Fanzines. The two determined men were turned away by the doorman, but, retreating into Central Park, they built a giant catapult from six-pack plastic thingees and twigs, and hurled the box past the heavy parapets onto the Advertising Genius' bed.

This was in 1978 or thereabouts.

Bergeron became interested again, de-gafiated, published the Willish, and forced Patrick to do a genzine.

In a similar way, the death of Ted White and Dan Steffan's Pong at issue 40 inspired P&T to start another fanzine, Izzard. They claimed they would take up the standard and continue a monthly, righteously fannish fanzine.

"It is a terrible thing," Teresa wrote in Izzard 1, "after years of respectable fanpublishing complacency, to suspect that you are about to be called to a higher fate involving monthly deadlines. I made a small-fast-and-helpless noise."

This lasted six issues, though the fanzine as a whole lasted nine.

A final couch: I am not pretending to do a thorough job of looking back at this period. I am focussing only on Telos and Izzard - mostly Telos, and even with these two zines, I have neither the time nor the space to do justice to them.

But, boy have we fallen.



These old fanzines are funny. They've been sitting in Berry's garage for years and the moisture crept in. The wiltone isn't too bad, but the covers show a lot of damage. And the staples have almost rusted away. I open a cover and hear a click. The thicker paper cover popping off the top of its office-quality staples.

Rusty spots in the paper drip away from the staples in odd patterns. Imprints of the bottom of the staples in the fanzine stored directly above are mismatched with the fanzine's own staples, giving the incorrect impression it has been restapled at some point.



Tomorrow at dawn we strike . . . and the fascist insect dies.

An interesting aspect is to look at the changes Telos and Izzard went through. Telos was cursed with the revolving editor syndrome, as recorded in the chart alongside. It also went through a time of enormous growth followed by shrinkage.

But Telos had character. Issues 1 and 2 had a title drawn by Teresa in the left column of the front cover, and a more extensive colophon and credits list on the back cover. Issues 3 and 4 have full-page art covers, and number 5 returns to the left hand front.

The identity of the author of responses to letters were always noted with initials; Patrick started with the whimsical "pnjh" but eventually switched to the more economical "pnh." The standard adaptations to difficult formatting on a typewriter were adopted and improved upon: an editorial note in the lettercol was marked with the appropriate parenthesis crossed with a dash.

Izzard suffered more terribly from the size syndrome if not from the revolving editor syndrome. With Telos dead two months before Izzard started up, the extra material had to go somewhere, and finally it did, making the monthly Izzard get slow and ponderous.

But what a behemoth that was. I here list just the contributor's last names for the final issue of Izzard: Bieler, Carr, Benford, Carol, Stiles, Whitmore, Hatton, White, Ounsley, Pickersgill, Langford, West, Coleman and Shiffman.

And then it too died.

Editorials by Patrick and Teresa highlighted every issue of both fanzines; those by other editors weren't bad either. But, aside from columnists Bergeron, Carr, John D. Berry and Jay Kinney, Teresa's writing was probably the most looked forward to.

Telos 1 had "How to Be a Seattle Fan," by P&T and Alan Bostick, still the last word on the subject ("Never write for general-distribution fanzines if you can help it"). Teresa, with research help from many also presents a flowchart describing "The Origins of the Fan" that is funny if not outright strange.

In number 2, Patrick talked about the then-youngest force in fandom, Tilda Palmer, 12-year-old daughter of Bellingham fans Jack and Pauline Palmer, who once published Wild Fennel. She was trying to convince fans who had come to her home that they should join her apa, C/rapa, Jr.

"I assure you, I'm overcommitted as it is," said John to his hamburger.

"But everybody's joining!" implored Tilda. "We even have a carrot in the first mailing!"

"Well, then if I joined I'd have to be lower than a carrot, since it would be doing zines and I wouldn't," replied John, withering a little under Tilda's stern gaze. This was getting pretty bad, and besides Tilda was starting to glance in my direction, so I disappeared into the bathroom.

-Telos 2

In the same editorial, Patrick also addressed what "faanishness" means:

By the way, it isn't that we're not gratified with all the complimentary response to Telos 1, but we couldn't help but noticing that a lot of it took the form of "Wow, lettering-guide work, you guys must be faaaaanish." Well, I guess we are (we

TELOS

Issue #	Editors	Date	Pages
1	P&T	2/80	27
2	T&G&F	6/80	42
3	G&P&T&F	11/80	76
4	P&T	7/81	18
5	P&T&F*	7/82	24

IZZARD

Issue #	Editors	Date	Pages
1	P&T	9/28/82	10
2	P&T	10/19/82	12
3	P&T	11/28/82	14
4	P&T	12/6/82	8
5	P&T	2/12/83	8
6	P&T	2/26/83	6
7	P&T	9/83	34
8	P&T	3/84	38
9	P&T	2/87	88

P=Patrick Nielsen Hayden; T=Teresa Nielsen Hayden;

G=Gary Farber; F=Fred Haskell

* Listed as "Happy Deadwood Editor"

said so, after all) but we'd hate to be typed as a fanzine only open to fanhistorical reminiscings and funny stories about somebody's stapler breaking down at the collation, so perhaps we ought to Explain what we mean by that much-abused term.

Like I say to Dick Bergeron in the lettercolumn, it seems to me that fannishness is an attitude rather than a subject matter . . ."

-Telos 2

I'll let that one go right there. But it does point out something Patrick did throughout the two zines: talk about what fandom was and what it meant. Gary and Teresa also had things to say about it at various times, but Patrick's famously analytical nature led to the following sentences, in response to something Ted wrote in Izzard 3:

There are enormously complicated standards which apply; they have to do with personality, social context, timing, and a reification called "grace."

By 1979, the low level of craft in US fandom was a widely acknowledged embarrassment.

As ever, though, anyone in fandom can find somebody to admire them; thus the main effect of the critics' harangues was to drive those they wished to "improve" back to the egoboo and feedback of those less demanding. To my mind it boils down to what qualities in fandom you wish to select for. We're not British fandom; we don't have the ameliorating effect of endless social contact to salve antagonistic prose.

-Izzard 5

Whole new fields of obscurantist fanzine criticism beckon.

And that's just in the first section of a microelite article that includes section headings like "Sixth Fandom and fancestor worship," and "Dulce est desipere in loco."

Telos 2 also has a little from Teresa on the "Boring Technical Notes" relating to the mimeo they were using:

The machines's other peculiarity is the warp it gives to stencils. No matter how carefully we wrap and anchor and scotch-tape them, they sag in the middle, collapsing lines at the bottom of the page sending the reader's eye in a faint queasy down-and-then-up-again swoosh as it speeds across the page.

-Telos 2

But of course, it was Teresa's essays that are most fondly remembered. Many of the articles in Teresa's *Making Book* were originally printed in Telos or Izzard. Telos 3 - dedicated to the memory of Susan Wood - contained two: "God and I," and "Of Desks and Robots."

The issue also featured art by one of the true losses to active Seattle fandom, Ole Kvern.

Telos 4 was the recovery issue, as the reduced number of editors (back to P&T) printed the backlog of letters and little else. And then Telos 5 promised to bring it all back again, short and sweet: "The iron-clad rule for which is: keep it simple, keep it small. Voila. And don't be surprised if the next issue's even smaller."

Well, it couldn't have been much smaller.

And then Izzard took up the slack.

Well, this is about the end; I would simply encourage

young fans to look at this as well as other periods. Each has its own flavor, but there is a contemporary nature of this fanhistory that makes it especially compelling for me.

These were some pretty earnest people, and their loss can be seen both in terms of the Topic A impact as well as the usual factors. What I know I haven't done here is give a sense of how funny these zines are, and how they dealt with conflicts, which deserves an essay on its own.

A great thing about the P&T fanzines is how much constant enthusiasm they generated. As Patrick explained after Telos folded (though he didn't yet admit that):

No sooner did that issue (Number 4) Bertie MacAvoy returned from Ireland and dropped an irresistible 16-page trip report in our laps. Then we got the eight pages from Terry Carr, then the fat envelope of full-pagers from Jay Kinney, then the phone call from Loren MacGregor one fine Saturday morning announcing that he was sending us a column.

Meanwhile, the letter column file for the last two issues approaches a full inch thick when pressed down. Getting all the material on hand into issue 5 had involved bumping Loren to our FAPazine, eliminating the lettercolumn, and cutting our own editorials to a total of four pages. My God, we realized, we're cutting our own writing. Completely appalling. We're licked and we admit it.

-Izzard 1



If we are to have fan history, let it be real history.

(Continued from Page One)

let us send them out with a future issue; if there is sufficient interest, we'll take her up on that), I hope that no one will succumb to the puerile urge to castigate Janice as attempting to disenfranchise voters who are not on-line. Press releases like this will run through Ansible and other fanzines, and paper votes with a proper signature and return address will all be accepted. I regret the fact that there will be no paper ballot for fan-historians to look over in future decades, but we'll live.

Also, although Janice doesn't mention it, the same preferential voting system will be used as last year, with a first place vote garnering five points, a second-place vote three, and a third-place vote one. The difference is that there will be no nomination process, followed by a final ballot. This may lead to 85 people each receiving from 1 to 5 votes, but since almost no one sent in nominating ballots last year, the damage to the voting process seems negligible.

I hope that all of APAK's readers will vote; the fun of the whole thing, for me, is reading the results of the balloting afterwards, and seeing all the different people and fanzines that are someone's favorite out there. And folks, complaining that you can't pick out three choices from all of your friends and correspondents is now officially uncool; come on, give that egoboo up!

FANS OF fine writing should be happy to hear that slipstream novelist Steve Erickson has been hired to cover the 1996 presidential election for Rolling Stone magazine. This according to Ron Drummond, who waited until we were well

and truly incapacitated on the back porch at John D. Berry, Eileen Gunn and Rhonda Boothe's New Year's Eve party to mention it to us, so I hope I have it right. Erickson's inventive and evocative fiction has always entertained me; it will be interesting to see how he operates as an heir to Hunter Thompson and Timothy Crouse.

AT THE SAME party, Amy Thomson told me that she has begun writing her third book, a sequel to 1995's "The Color of Distance." Earlier in the evening, Eileen Gunn had told her that every SF writer in the country seemed to be talking about "Distance." "Really?" Amy asked. "Yes," Eileen replied, "they all want to know how you got that cover art!"

HOWARD WALDROP would like everyone to know that he survived the recent flooding and windstorms in the Skagit valley without too much trouble. He reported: "It was touch and go for a while there. We went to bed one night with snow all over the mountains, and the next morning it was GONE. It had to go somewhere . . . I didn't really start to get nervous until I noticed everyone else had moved their car on to high ground."

While we're waiting for the TAFF ballots to come out, this would be a good time to jot down your favorite writers, artists and titles of 1995 (and 1945!) in anticipation of nominating the Hugos.

Finally, there's no fanzine countdown in this issue because only two people sent fanzines since the last issue of APAK came out. This always seems to happen at the very end of the year, and I'm confident that we'll be back with a full list for #51. Until then, Happy New Year! ☺

SPITBALLING ROSWELL

by Jon Singer and
Andy Hooper

[The Roswell Event, despite being 49 years in the past, continues to attract attention. A.P. McQuiddy, an APAK subscriber and sometime contributor, is

riveted by the fact that one of the reporters involved had the same last name as he, and is currently looking into the possible connection. The city of Roswell itself has begun to use the alleged crash as a means to attract tourists to the region. And Jon Singer, quasi-polymath, raconteur, epicure and left-handed bowling beast, was sufficiently intrigued by my earlier coverage in these pages that he decided to read one of my primary sources for himself. This is UFO Crash at Roswell (Avon, New York, 1991), by Kevin D. Randle and Donald R. Schmitt. While reading the book, Jon took some notes, and we discussed these at the subsequent Thursday-night bowling session. What follows are some excerpts from the book, with the comments they elicited from us. -- APH]

Excerpt #1, page 95 (Referent to Roswell materials seen at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base by Capt. "Pappy" Henderson, who also claimed to have seen the bodies of the aliens on the ground in the desert):

"Kromschroeder said that Henderson claimed the metal was some of the lighter material lining the craft. He said that when properly energized, it produced perfect illumination. It was a soft light with no shadows.

"Henderson, after seeing an article about the Roswell event in 1982, mentioned the bodies to his daughter, Mary Katherine Groode. He told her a little more about them, saying that they were little men, gray, with slanted eyes and tiny mouths. He didn't tell his daughter how he happened to see the bodies, only that he had."

Jon: Dr. Kromschlaufer (or whatever the hell his name is), passing on what Pappy Henderson (I think) told him, basically tells these guys that when properly energized, the material gives off this exquisite shadowless illumination. What kind of happy horseshit is this? The statement is, first, meaningless (the term "properly energized" is nowhere defined), and second, highly suspect. How would he know what it does when "properly energized"? How many pounds of it does he have, that he can play around with "energizing" it? Worse, they (the authors) never mention this again or follow up on it in any way, as far as I can tell. Idiots.

Andy: Yet another in the series of amazing properties attributed to the Roswell debris. Unfortunately, we never seem to hear these things from people who had any direct experimental contact with the stuff, just from people who had it in their hands for a few hours, or saw or heard about subsequent examinations. This is both frustrating and suspicious. And doesn't it ever strike anyone as odd that so many of the principals in the Roswell chain of evidence seem to have decided to come forward after reading tabloid stories about the event?

Excerpt #2, page 120 (Assistant Counter-Intelligence Officer Master Sergeant Lewis Rickett and Dr. Lincoln LaPaz examine the path which the Roswell object allegedly

followed):

"They had found a touchdown point, this one closer to the debris field. Rickett said that there was an area where it looked as if something had been dragged along the ground. They asked the rancher what might have marked the ground that way. The rancher didn't know what had caused it.

"Rickett and LaPaz tracked the light as far as they could. Rickett thought the lone object had stayed aloft as long as possible and then it had landed or crashed on the debris field. He thought that it had self-destructed. Rather than exploding, the object had just come apart, scattering the small pieces of material.

"Rickett, however, never took LaPaz out to where it had finally hit the ground. They circled the area, and when they found a place where the ground had been crystallized, a little bit of the foil-like debris was discovered. "

Jon: They talk about sand being melted, but they say things like "the ground was crystallized"... not very righteous. (Not fatal, just annoying.) Also, the authors don't really do anything with the blackened & "crystallized" area of ground that the deputies found. Where is it in relation to the crash site? What about it? It gets mentioned once, mentioned again in the recap, and so far that's all I see on it. No mention of how big it is, for example. Size of a kid's wading pool? A football field? What? Where are the deputies now, and why didn't anyone say anything about them?

Andy: I find this more interesting from a methodological standpoint. Rickett, junior spook on duty, takes a profound thinker from Washington out to view the scene of the crime, and no doubt went to considerable pains to investigate these intermediate landing spots: the terrain is quite rough, and the UFOs were understandably cavalier about following the local road net. They pore over these "touch-down" points carefully, and quiz the locals about them. But Rickett never actually took him into the debris field! It might be that LaPaz was fully briefed on the area already, but wouldn't he have wanted to at least walk over the area once himself? Perhaps Rickett still had to follow standing orders, which were to keep people, even people with high-level clearance, out of the debris field, even three months after the event.

The involvement of Dr. Lincoln LaPaz is interesting on the face of it. LaPaz was an expert in meteoritics, who had also been involved with the Manhattan Project and the effort to destroy Japanese balloon bombs before they reached the American coastline. He was skilled at finding meteorites, reconciling eyewitness accounts of their descent with topographical maps and what he observed himself. His involvement therefore draws us both toward and away from the balloon hypotheses at the same time. Later, he was a member of and consultant to the Aerial Phenomenon Research Organization, the first of the civilian UFO study groups.

Excerpt #3, page 53 (Bill Brazel, son of Mac Brazel, talks about the metallic foil found in the wreckage): "And he remembered the lead foil. "The only reason I noticed the foil was that I picked this stuff up, and put it in my chaps pocket. I had it in there two, three days, and when I took it out and put it in the box I happened to notice that it started unfolding

A strong odor of formaldehyde drifting on the breeze at Wright-Patterson

and flattened out. Then I got to playing with it. I would fold it or crease it and lay it down and watch it. It was kind of weird.

"The piece I found was a jagged piece. I couldn't tear it. Hell, tin foil or lead foil is easy, but I couldn't tear it. I didn't take pliers or anything. I just used my fingers. I didn't try to cut it with my knife. I didn't even get a little sliver off it."

Andy: Somehow, this account sounds more plausible to me than the ones offered by the Air Force personnel who were supposedly whacking the stuff with a sledgehammer while they flew to Wright-Patterson. But it is also distressingly inconvenient that Bill Brazel later showed off this piece of the foil in a bar, and that an intelligence officer visited him a week later and confiscated it.

Jon: The very thin grayish "metal" that nobody can cut or bend or burn is reminiscent of only one or two things I've ever heard of, and the main one is just about inconceivable: neutronium. It would have to be very goddamn thin, 1/10000000000000000 cm or so. (I can't do "ten to the minus sixteenth power" in ASCII...) That would give it a weight of about 1 gram per square cm, so a sheet a meter on a side would weigh 10kg or about 22 lbs.

Unfortunately, I have no least notion what its physical characteristics would really be, so this is even farther out on a limb. Feh.

The other, also quite distant, possibility is superconducting metallic hydrogen. I'm a couple years out of date, but it seems to me that some guys succeeded in making metallic hydrogen a while back in the lab, and it was grayish. Of course, it only existed while they had 3 million atmospheres of pressure on it. Maybe if you push it enough to make it superconducting, it becomes more stable. Maybe not. In any case, the described behavior is not characteristic of materials with ordinary atomic (which is to say, in the fundamental sense, electronic) bonds holding them together. (Bonds that are built of electrons in orbitals do have rather limited strength, nothing like what is described in the book.)

Considering what we think about nanotechnology, there's something else that the unfolding foil suggests: it suggests that the wreckage, wherever it is, may know that we have it. I'm not sure I wanna know about this!

Excerpt # 4, page 116 (an unnamed archeologist, describes what he or she saw at the "second" crash site, where the bodies were supposedly recovered):

"As they approached the craft, he saw three bodies. The one closest to him was in the best condition. It was small, with a big head and big eyes. Its head was turned to one side so that it was difficult to see the facial features. He saw a mouth, but he couldn't remember seeing a nose. It was wearing a silvery flight suit and had one arm bent at a strange angle, as if it had been broken.

"He hadn't been there very long when a jeep arrived carrying soldiers. He believed one officer rode in the jeep but didn't know. All of them were armed with pistols and some of them had rifles. The officer ordered everyone away from the craft and told them that it was an issue of national security and that he was asking them, ordering them actually, not to tell anyone what they had seen."

Jon: The authors alternate between 3 bodies and 4 bodies

indiscriminately, and give no particular commentary on the discrepancy. This is not righteous.

Andy: One of the bodies could easily have been obscured and therefore not mentioned, but that pales beside the massive coincidence of the archeologists and the army arriving at roughly the same time, especially since the bodies had been lying out there for five days. I also find it striking how rapidly that army personnel involved had swung from a kind of confused curiosity about the event to full-blown, threatening secrecy in less than 24 hours.

Excerpt # 5, page 168 (Regarding efforts to confirm that CUFOS had identified the debris field correctly): "Payne, using the back roads out of Capitan, headed toward the old Foster ranch (where Mac Brazel had lived in 1947). At first it was blacktop and fairly straight, but it quickly changed into gravel, dipping into deep canyons and climbing back out.

"Payne took them directly to the crash site. Bill Brazel had taken Schmitt and Randle to the northern end of it, and Payne drove to the southern end. In fact, the expedition in September hadn't removed all the flags they had planted. Payne stopped inside the flags, on the same three-quarter mile strip of New Mexico. It was further confirmation of the exact location of the debris field."

Jon: Two different people took the CUFOS gang to the same "crash site", albeit different ends of the area. The authors regard this as confirming or "proving" that it was the real crash site. Are they just stupid, or what? Wanna bet me a nickel that they haven't actually seen the real site?

And what about the impact marks that were observed in 1947? They say they were informed that the gouge had grown over. That's cute. Plants, yeah, sure. Not a problem. But enough to completely fill in a 10-foot-wide by 500-foot-long gouge in the top of a ridge? (I dunno . . . maybe if it was really shallow.)

It would be interesting to look at the earliest & latest satellite photos of that area. One presumes that such things are available. A comparison could provide some interesting pointers. One just might be able to see the difference in plant growth between +20 years and +50... (A feature that large might be visible, too -- on those "taken from space!" photo maps of this area, you can easily discern some of the Microsoft buildings.)

Andy: I think it is actually safe to assume that the area they looked at probably is the "traditional" site of the debris field, but that isn't any assurance that it is the "actual" crash site. The fact that the flags left by the earlier survey were still up makes Payne's identification almost worthless; he could easily have seen the investigators there and taken later visitors where he thought they wanted to go. And if the government were as powerfully paranoid about the site as they appear to have been, it's quite likely that a bulldozer or other equipment could have been used to fill in or otherwise erase the impact evidence. Given the apparent nature of the debris, I'm not sure how they could have hoped to get it all without scooping off the top six inches of the local soil, or maybe burying it under another six inches of imported fill.

Jon: One does wonder if they really could have gotten every piece of the debris. It might be possible to work up a detector for the stuff, if one thought carefully enough about its characteristics. A person could maybe build such a detector,

We'll just have a lot more paper in our attics.

and could maybe get permission to wander around in New Mexico, not too far from Corona. A person could need a few friends as an escort, so as not to just quietly disappear. A person could want to wander around only at night, using night-vision goggles and maybe a UV source (not IR, that's what the Feds would be expecting) to see with... it would be most intriguing to have a few shreds of inexplicable material.

Do you think it would compromise national security to have this out in the open, if in fact there is anything to have out in the open? I haven't given it much thought yet...

Excerpt #6, page 120 (A theoretical recreation of the events leading to the crash): "According to Rickett, LaPaz believed that the stricken craft, which might have been followed by one or two others, had landed once. The crew tried to repair it. When it seemed the craft would fly again, it took off, but as it did, it was destroyed. Maybe it exploded, as some thought, or maybe it just disintegrated, as Rickett believed. It hit about five miles

away, skipped across the ground leaving the debris Mac Brazel found. Later, the majority of the craft, or some kind of an ejection pod, crashed onto the ranch two or three miles away from the debris field.

Andy: If the crash was observed by other craft, why wouldn't their occupants have landed and tried to help the pilot/passengers who punched out of the downed vehicle?

Jon: If we regard their reconstruction of the crash and the spate of accompanying sightings during that short period as accurate, it sounds like nothing so much as a bunch of high school kids borrowing the family car for a joyride, & crashing it on a country lane in a storm, killing Joey and Billy and Franky in the process, as the kids in the other two cars watch helplessly & then run away. I bet their parents and the cops fucking killed them. I bet they don't get to touch a car for the next 10,000 years.



A long flight, back into the gaudy world

AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS

[APH: We've been getting some nice responses to various comment hooks lately, such in this letter from DAVID LEVINE (1905 SE 43rd Ave., Portland, OR 97215, e-mail at davidl@SSD.intel.com) who seems wired into the whole plastic-effigy/paranormal activity/conspiracy theory continuum:]

"Thanks for sending along APAK #49. It knocked loose a number of associations for me.

"The modern equivalent of cereal premiums (the tiny plastic effigies of our youth) is the McDonald's or Burger King 'Happy Meal' toy. I suspect that the reason is economic. Plastic toys cost much more than they used to -- note that Cracker Jack prizes today are generally made of paper, while in our generation they were plastic and in our parents' generation they were metal -- and the hamburger toys A) have a higher profit margin (each one is accompanied by not only a kid's meal but typically one or two adult meals, for a gross of \$15-20 instead of the \$2-5 for a box of cereal), and B) are often subsidized by a major motion picture studio. Today's children will scrounge in tomorrow's flea markets for the 'Lion King' figurine or 'Pinky and the Brain' rolling toy that once filled their toybox with the faint smell of pickles and french fries. (Hell, I've been tempted myself, but the Buzz Lightyear toy was already gone by the time I got to Burger King.)

"By the way, Raw Bits cereal is made of 'oat hulls and wheat CHAFF.' However, 'wheat SHAFTS' sounds much more Calvinistic. In my parents' house, we used the phrase 'twigs and branches' to describe granola or any such healthful cereal. I remember the first time I was actually offered granola; it came in a box designed by Peter Max, and my father chased me around the house with a spoonful of it saying 'it's twig and branch time!' Today, of course, I actually *like* boring cereals like Grape Nuts, Cheerios, and Wheaties (without even sprinkling a tablespoon of sugar on each bowl). But every once in a while when I'm in the cereal aisle my eyes turn into little rotating spirals, and before I know it I'm standing in the checkout line with a box of Lucky Charms or Froot Loops. They aren't the same as they were, though -- the Lucky Charms have too many different marshmallow shapes, and the Froot Loops have gotten all Day-Glo and now have the same gum-ripping texture as Captain Crunch, as well as an overpowering

fruit-like odor that would be more appropriate on a cheap whore.

"Reading the continuing discussion of the X-Files and similar UFO nut stories was an intriguing bit of synchronicity, since earlier that same day I'd been discussing the topic with a co-worker. We were talking about various kook pages on the World-Wide Web, such as 'http://www.zonpower.com/' (a great physics/sociology kook), 'http://www.artbell.com/' (the Art Bell radio show, featuring UFOs and suchlike), and 'http://www.xmission.com:80/~seer/jdksoftware/canal.html' (the U.S. conspiracy to take over Canada), and this co-worker mentioned that he thinks he could make a decent amount of money on the conspiracy-theory circuit. (He also mentioned that if this ever actually happens he will have to deny that this conversation ever took place.)

"The human brain is hardwired to form patterns from its inputs, and sometimes this results in seeing patterns where no patterns exist. There are many unexplained things in this world -- some of them are *deliberately* unexplained, because they are considered secret by one government or another -- and wherever there is a blank place on the map the human brain will fill it in with 'here there be dragons.' The art of the conspiracy theorist is to draw *plausible* lines across those blank spaces to connect the known continents on one side with known continents on the other (whether or not such connections actually exist is irrelevant). My co-worker's theory is that if you come up with a conspiracy theory that is plausible enough and scratches the right itches, present it *as entertainment*, and market it carefully, you will sell some copies to people who will *actually believe it* -- these will then be hooked, and will subscribe to your newsletter, buy your books and videos, and otherwise supply you with a tidy supplemental income for as long as you can string them along. I think he has just re-invented the Illuminati or the Church of the SubGenius. However, I pointed out that conspiracy theorists are not usually known for their lavish lifestyles (unlike, say, right-wing evangelists), so I conclude that there isn't really that much money to be made.

"The great thing about conspiracy theories is that they cannot be disproven -- any additional evidence, pro or con, is woven into the theory against its will. For example, take the

Face on Mars. If NASA ignores it, or pooh-poohs the whole idea and refuses to study it any further, it's a 'coverup.' But if NASA takes it seriously enough to present contrary evidence, up to and including sending a special mission to Mars to photograph the area of the Face, when that evidence proves conclusively that no such Face exists the mystery only deepens -- either NASA was so committed to the coverup that they would fake the evidence, or else the Face has mysteriously vanished! NASA cannot win this game.

"About Joseph Nicholas, the less said the better. 'A fanatic is one who can't change his mind and won't change the subject' (Winston Churchill). But I feel I must stand up for Teddy Harvia; I find his cartoons charming and sometimes hilarious. Although his style is very simplified, each line is carefully placed for maximum effect -- this is most evident when he draws real people. For example, I saw a Minicon con report from him (presented as a four-page comic book in multicolor Ditto) in which several well-known fans were presented as funny animals. Stu Shiffman appeared as a unicorn, and despite the fact that the character was a horse with a horn and was drawn with about five lines it had a certain ineffable Stuness that could not be mistaken for anyone else. Also, his art reproduces well, even when reduced, in *any* medium, and his word balloons have an economical and well-considered wit. I firmly believe that he deserved his Fan Artist Hugo.

"P.S. Simo for TAFF!"

[APH: Well, obviously somebody knows who Simo is. Most of the stuff in your letter had me nodding along in agreement with you, David. I agree with you about Harvia's ability to do economical caricatures; he just doesn't get me to laugh as often as he does yourself. Joseph Nicholas, for what it's worth, gets me to laugh pretty often, but not always by design. And as far as conspiracy as a profit-making enterprise goes, I think it fits in with the adage that no one ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the American public. Now, for a much different view of conspiracy and secrecy, let's turn to HARRY WARNER JR. (423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740):]

"I know next to nothing about the Roswell mystery, other than the fact that it seems to figure in about half of the Fox network's prime time programming this season. But the thing that mystifies me about the conspiracy theory is: if debris from an extra-terrestrial spacecraft did fall in the Nevada desert, why would the United States government maintain complete secrecy on the facts in the case for almost a half-century? If fragments of an alien spacecraft were found, wouldn't authorities after time enough for conferences and red tape unraveling tell the public about the discovery and appeal for everyone in the general area to look for additional bits and pieces that might have fallen over a wider area, to assist in the investigation? If this had been done a few weeks or months after the discovery, there would have been negligible danger that people would panic over the thought of an epidemic from BEM germs or a little green man running loose in the suburbs.

"So if something mysterious really was found on that occasion, I suspect that it was believed to be from USSR or possibly China, some sort of weapon or surveillance device that had failed during testing, and that the United States Government didn't want the rest of the world to know it had lucked onto evidence of its existence and didn't want to increase the post-war international tension by an announcement that would cause various politicians and veterans' organizations to spout

forth with inflammatory oratory about this secret buildup of weaponry.

"It's not extraordinary that Uncle Sam has burrowed out assorted sites in Nevada to hide undisclosed facilities. Within two dozen miles of Hagerstown are two such establishments, one of them originally intended as the place where the federal government's top leaders would continue to function in case of a nuclear war, another whose purpose has never been officially announced but seems to have had something to do with communication. (The former is no longer fully staffed, now that the cold war has enjoyed an armistice.)

"I wasn't surprised that the 1995 Worldcon got criticized by some United Kingdom fans. Everything gets criticized by some United Kingdom fanzine fans via conditioned reflex. They seem to take turns doing it. I suppose it's linked somehow to the official policy of gloom and despair that the majority of fans enjoy so much.

"It made me a little sad to read about Victor's day at the office. That is because it symbolizes how journalism has changed. During most of my reporting career, we didn't telephone news sources. We went to see them. It made for better coverage because the reporter usually chatted with several persons in every office instead of just the individual who answered a telephone and because it provided better public relations than the disembodied voice on a telephone did. Toward the end of my career, when I had been shifted to column-writing, the telephone had in general replaced in-person news hunting in Hagerstown, too.

"Kim Huett is right about the long ancestry of viewing with alarm the decline and fall of quality. Recently I bought a second-hand copy of one of the old Dell collections of the best science fiction of the past year, from the early 60's if I remember correctly. It contained an introduction by Anthony Boucher lamenting the bad way into which professional science fiction had wandered, during the year which he summarized. It had been the first year in many without a new Heinlein novel and worse yet, he listed about a dozen now sainted golden age writers whose output during the year had been inferior.

"Fanzines that contain no art are welcome to me for one specialized reason. I've never been able to write any adequate comments about art work. I can say it's very good or it should be reproduced in larger dimensions, but I'm hopeless at more specific matters like combining styles or pointing out the excellencies of composition or recommending a different type of shading on the artist. So I feel a vague sense of guilt every time I write a loc on a fanzine that contains a couple of pages about its prose contents and not a word about the pictures which undoubtedly took longer to draw and required more talent than some of the articles did."

[VMG: You are right about the telephone being an inferior means of getting information, for the most part. I go out on a lot of assignments. I tend to identify the one or two interviews critical to a particular story and meet those people personally.

The rest is done on the phone, which generally is faster, cheaper and easier.

The truth of the matter, though, can be found in any comparison of a story done in person and a story done over the phone: the former will always be a little more consistent and believable. Just having the scene in memory will -- in an abstract, unconscious kind of way -- improve the story.

And, ultimately, sometimes the only way you can talk to the

Bordeaux, it would seem, does not travel well.

people you need to talk to is to find them in person. Phones provide too much opportunity to disengage: it's much harder to hang up in person.]

[APH: The theory traditionally advanced to explain government secrecy about UFOs is that they fear the breakdown of social order and the erosion of government's authority if people suddenly became aware that we are not alone in the universe. Because that seems like pretty tenuous reasoning if you think about it for any length of time, contemporary theorists have advanced the notion that the government is actually in cahoots with the aliens, allowing them to abduct and experiment on private citizens in exchange for access to fantastic technology. Personally, I've always felt that the truth about official policy in this area must lie somewhere between the evil conspiracy end of the spectrum and the totally altruistic image that you seem to have of the Federal government. Although, I must say, it is refreshing to hear from someone who doesn't think the government is out to get him.

Now, ROBERT LICHTMAN (P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442) reacts to other pending issues:]

"That's an interesting placement of Martin Tudor's CoA in your colophon, after Pam Wells' name. It makes it look like they've both moved to that address, and could cause some heads to turn since M&P were formerly sweeties. But of course it's Helena Bowles with whom Martin is now happily cohabiting off Clarkes Lane. Not having any idea who might be running against Martin for TAFF, it's too soon to determine whether I'll support him or some other candidate; but I hope that if he wins he keeps his promise to get married in Las Vegas either before or after the Worldcon. With Toner now happening the week before, it sounds like a potentially promising program item. (We should ask Helena now which flavor of pie she wants to employ during the 'traditional' Las Vegas wedding pie-toss.)

"Is one to assume from Steve Green's column that Martin and 'Simo' are the only two people standing for TAFF? If that's the case, the choice is clear: vote for the one you've heard of. I don't recall 'Simo' 's name coming up in British fanzines until sometime earlier this year. If someone like me, who sees quite a few fanzines from over there, is suffering from lack of name recognition when 'Simo' flashes by us in the fannish firmament, what sort of vote-drawing capability can he reasonably expect from North American fans? (Unless, gasp, he's the U.K. equivalent of Samanda b Jeude with a huge underground constituency, in which case there's a certain additional spice added to the TAFF discussion Arnie may engender with his article in the last *Wild Heirs*.)

"Astonishing news about Bob Shaw and Nancy Tucker! Congratulations to the pair. I look forward to BoSh's CoA, and hope he and Nancy make it to Corflu Nashville.

"Victor asks, what are the goals of a faneditor? The goals of faneditors are as varied as the number of faneds extant. Remember the fannish standard number five he quotes later: 'Fandom is made up of individuals. There is no consensus reality.' Even if it would appear that several faneds -- perhaps those who are part of one of those group minds Victor refers to -- might have the same goals in pubbing their respective ishes, but if you were to probe you'd undoubtedly find differences, some subtle and others quite apparent, in both approach and execution. Are there acceptable and unacceptable goals? Well, again, according to whom? I might be less interested in a fanzine devoted to amateur science fiction or perhaps to book

and movie reviews, but going back to fannish standard number five, that's only *my* opinion. A fanzine could be a *very good* one of its type. but be totally in left field for my interests. This doesn't make it unacceptable to those for whom it is done. Who and what do you have to know to 'get in.' I guess that depends on where you want to go. Fandom being such a huge umbrella-like entity these days, the answer is as varied as the number of minority interest groups. (I use the term 'minority interest' intentionally, in that I can't see there's one dominant strain to fandom anymore, not even the love of science fiction.

"Is there a type of fan article that is better than another? This is easier. Yes, it has to be capable of attracting my attention to its subject matter, whatever that might be, and then hold it there with good writing and lack of plonk.

"But Victor gets to the heart of it with the intimidation factor: admitting he felt inadequate as a writer compared to the writing of those he considered the leading lights of the time. So what does he say he did? The same response as everyone who ever set typer to stencil: tried through hard work to do as good as the people he admired, and then perhaps even better.

"It never occurred to me that Paul Feller and his article might be a hoax, though I did notice that the source from which it was reprinted isn't listed in the Pavlat/Swisher/Evans fanzine index and made mention of this in my LoC. I laughed out loud at the antediluvian definition for KTF. There was one passage in the article that could be telling in terms of fanhistorical accuracy: 'Burbee will still be grouching about how Lassfass took away *Shangri-L'affaires*.' Considering Feller wrote this two years before that actually happened, this is one of the most accurate bits of precognition in the piece. Perhaps Feller is a hoax perpetrated by Tom Springer in a variant on the old Leslie Norris hoax?"

[VMG: Your interpretation of what I was trying to say is spot-on, Robert. The goals we set for ourselves as fans vary a great deal. Some want to communicate. Some want to write well. Some want to create a beautiful product. Some just want to see what they can do.

It's funny, though. When all of those elements work together -- communication, good writing and a nice package -- the result is something that goes beyond any one of them. It becomes something that can be enjoyed for a time longer than a month or a year. Such a fanzine can be enjoyed 10 years later, and can add to the understanding of our history as a social group.

It can become an artifact -- quality timebinding.

Also, I think I should point out, I still am intimidated.]

[APH: Well, I'm not. One of the more liberating cognitive leaps I've made in the fannish career was to realize that most people would hate me no matter what I did, or would be at best indifferent to me. The only course of action which made any sense was to please myself and to conform to my own ideas and standards about fanac. Of course, those standards are largely communicated from various fannish forebears, so I suspect the end result is about the same.

I'm sorry about any confusion which the juxtaposition of Martin and Pam might have cause, but I think most people who care are sufficiently aware of the score that they won't be fooled. Damn that alphabetical order anyhow!

About the "Feller Hoax," I'll have more to say after we hear from DON FITCH (3908 Frijo, Covina, CA 91722:)]

"If Martin Tudor and (& his unnamed bride-to-be) establish the tradition that there must be a wedding at some

. . . why this is Avalon, and over there are the seven cities of Cibola.

'Vegas convention every year there may need to be more recruiting of younger (or at least un-married & eligible) fans . . . unless, of course, some sort of Ceremony in which the couple announce 'we're not getting married, but we expect to Mess Around a lot this weekend' would be adequate.

"Claire Brialey's 'I'd like to play . . .' struck me as being much too perfect a presentation of the dilemma confronting neos to have been written by a neo. I think maybe what's involved is mostly Customs, rather than Rules (though Victor gets good mileage out of the apt ones he's codified) and that it doesn't take a reasonably intelligent person long to figure out the more important ones . . . or to discover that an adequately-talented person can ignore most any of them.

"I'm enchanted by Jon Singer's suggestion that the government would much rather have us think that they're covering up various Alien/UFO Contacts than that they're covering up the things they actually are trying to hide (most likely rather spectacular, but routine, incompetences). It sounds so very *right* . . . and leaves just enough room for a bit of conspiracy paranoia.

"That piece by Paul Feller (reprinted in *Heirlooms* #3) left me Wondering, too. I didn't get into the LASFS until the late '50's, but hung out a lot with Burbee (though more in a Dixieland than a fan-writing context), Cy Condra, Ed Cox, the Moffatts, & other old-timers/Insurgents, and with Bruce Pelz and with a few other fanzine- and history-oriented newer members. I do not recall hearing the name 'Paul Feller' ever mentioned, nor do I recall reading/noticing that name in any of the stacks of old fanzines I pored over. Neither do I recall a fanzine titled *Fantasy Dimensions*, though that doesn't mean much -- there were lots of slim (and sometimes nearly illegible) zines that didn't go beyond 3 or 4 issues, in the mid 40's. I think the period was covered in the Pavlat-Swisher checklist, &/or you might want to email a query to Pelz (bep@deltanet.com, I think).

"Actually a negative answer wouldn't prove anything -- there's no such thing as an even reason-ably-complete checklist of fanzines, but . . . There may be some chronological clues I didn't catch (was Burb already the ex-editor of Shaggy in '45?) but there are certainly some word usages and turns of phrase that simply don't sound like mid-40's to me, and too many predictions that are either too right or too wrong, for me to think that the article is anything but a hoax -- most probably written by Arnie. (Yeah, I know; this paragraph has been dreadfully sercon and unfannish -- I should'a made up a bunch of confirmative details . . . oh well . . .)"

[VMG: Unfortunately, I reject everything I said in that article. Having read some of Patrick's comments in some of his more philosophical pieces in TELos and Izzard I am backing off to re-evaluate the question of fannish standards. I would, of course, encourage Claire Brialey to remain in fandom and get more involved.]

[APH: Yes, coupled with Robert's earlier comments, the points you make in regard to the "Feller" piece have me largely convinced that this it's a hoax as well.

I think the line about "KTF" is what clinches it for me; that kind of parallel invention is usually confined to third-season *Star Trek* episodes.

I hope that we will hear something about this from the putative author of the hoax soon; if Arnie or someone in the Vegas group didn't make it up, they should be able to come up

with a facsimile of the original publication . . . unless the hoax goes so deep that they have a convincing forgery of a 1945 fanzine in hand.

My suspicion in regard to Claire Brialey is that she has a fairly solid innate grasp of fandom and its precepts, and has taken this pose of neohood in order to make some points about the "closed" quality of fanzine circles. Since everyone is talking about her, and Pam Wells is now encouraging people to put her on mailing lists, we might see some change in her opinions about the relative accessibility of fanzine fandom at some point in the near future.

Now, a letter from KEN FORMAN (7215 Nordic Lights Drive Las Vegas, NV 89119-0335, e-mail at kforman@wizard.com) shows that he shares my obsession with marketing minutiae:]

"Once again, the world's most frequent and fannish fanzine graces my steps. I applaud your diligence and determination, guys. I know how difficult it is to publish on such a schedule, after all, Nine Line Each was weekly for a couple of weeks.

"Your ruminations about little plastic toys found in cereal boxes got me to thinking about my own childhood. There were four siblings in my family. We were all very competitive, especially when it came to owning 'cool stuff' like the little premiums that came out of breakfast boxes. My parents, the ever-ready diplomats that they were, instigated a hard and fast rule for the disposition of the prizes: Whoever gets the toy in their bowl at breakfast gets to keep it. No one was allowed to reach into the box to alter the chances. I remember shaking the box and bending the sides in an attempt to move the premium to a more favorable position. I'm sure my fellow sibs did the same because by the end of the box (a week or so later) the sides would be mangled until the container became distinctly unbox-like.

"On the subject of premiums, do you remember when Reese's Peanut Butter Cups came singly? The cardboard stiffener under the cup had a denomination on it (something like 25 or 50 cents)? If you collected a certain total value -- \$5.00?-- and sent it into the company they would reward you somehow. Once, when I was about six, I collected enough to receive a case of candy from Reese. That's when I learned about sugar rushes.

"I've gotta say I lv Art Wdnnr's style of ritng!

"When I noticed the backwards 'R' in the title, I thought you and Andy had decided it would qualify for art.

"Joseph Nicholas sez that ' . . . perhaps I just don't know enough about Las Vegas fandom to grasp the in-jokes . . . ' What a minute. A couple of months ago, in a recent *Wild Heirs*, Bill Kunkel complained that we Las Vegans spend too much time writing about ourselves. Now which is it?

"Both Ted White and Andy comment about Teddy Harvia's computer art. His work is often flat and lifeless, lacking character and warmth. The jokes are cute, but rarely inspired. At first I thought it might be the medium, I didn't used to expect too much out of a home computer. But considering the touch that Ross Chamberlain has with digitized pixels, I can no longer blame the silicon."

[VMG: You've come closer than anyone to solving the mysterious backwards 'R' -- the winner will get a copy of the entire APAK run, each issue signed by different famous champion spelunkers.

Which is it? In-jokes or more about the outside world? You

There are things in the Cross Plains Dairy Queen that are better left unspoken.

tell me, Ken. Perhaps both are appropriate in some settings; perhaps the best fanzine manages both to solidify their social spheres with "in" jokes while also bringing in others from outside using material that addresses wider topics. Perhaps the best fanarticle is a clever combination of the two.

But I really don't know about all of that stuff.]

[APH: I think that the distinction is in some ways quite spurious, Ken, and that Mr. Kunkel's comments really addressed a kind of stagnation of style and concept more than they do a particular choice of subject matter. There has been a kind of sameness to some of the stuff coming out of Vegas fandom — not least because everything is extruded from the same Macintosh software, but also because it is illustrated by the same artists, and generally features the same people as characters — which one could either characterize as being boring or comforting, depending on one's point of view. For people who are just getting used to the process of fanac, it's probably hard to see exactly what Bill is on about, but a confirmed adrenalin freak like Kunkel needs more variety — terror, danger, loathing, simony — than Wild Heirs has been providing of late.

Whatever you choose to write about, there is no reason that you can't make things clear enough that people living on other continents will glean some understanding of why things are supposed to be funny. "The X-Fans" was a special case, in that obfuscation and half-truth were part of the premise from the beginning, so I assume that a number of people probably had the same reaction as Joseph. But there's a fannish saying, "The more you know, the more jokes you get", and I think one goal of the writer is to assist the reader as much as they can in giving them the background they need to figure out what's going on. Then again, one of the nice things about fandom is that there is the assumption of some commonality of experience, so that certain touchstones and shibboleths can be taken as read. Keeping all this stuff in balance isn't easy, and in the end, I think you'll end up concluding that you have to write to your own aesthetic first, and worry about Bill Kunkel's second.

Let us now, as Lester Bangs once said, praise famous death dwarves and GEORGE FLYNN (P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Square Station, Cambridge, MA 02142), who writes:]

"Thanks for *Apparatchik* #49. ' . . . irrefutable evidence of alien visitation of the earth': You mean the aliens *didn't* insert the backwards 'R'? (But I won't revel this if you won't allude further to the conspiracy between Art Widner and me to Cyrilicize *APAK*.)

"Was the Star Trek etc. weapon actually 'Phasar' instead of 'Phaser'?"

"Joseph states his views eloquently, but I couldn't help wondering why the 'political will' to completely overturn the world economy is any likelier to be realized than the political will to pay for space exploration (which at least doesn't threaten as many entrenched interests). But turning the page, I see that Andy has made much the same point.

"I had a good deal of interaction with Brits at Intersection, but it was mostly in the context of getting the Business Meeting agendas printed. (The technology level available was rather low, so a lot of improvisation was required.) Or else hanging around the fanzine sales table, pressing money upon Greg Pickersgill or others.

"I pretty much agree with what Andy said about Teddy Harvia. With possible relevance to the reported 'slightings' between him and Ted, I have the theory that in-person fanac

suffers from more than its share of reserve misperceived as standoffishness. (Cf. Andy's comment on Michael Ashley's comment on the Pender-Gunns.) For what it's worth.

"Meanwhile, the smofs mailing list has of late been bloated by yet another outbreak of the war between 'fanzine fans' and 'convention fans' over the future of TAFF, with much idiocy espoused on both sides. The center is having trouble holding . . .

[APH: I refuse to get involved in that dubious discussion; in the final analysis, all anyone can do is vote, anyway. Good observation about people misunderstanding each other and assuming that the other has hostile intentions. Of course, no one makes these mistakes regarding NIGEL RICHARDSON (e-mail at nigel@impolex.demon.co.uk), whose intentions are generally displayed on his latex sleeves . . .]

"Thanks for A48... well I suppose I should thank Martin really, but he's off-line and therefore a non-person to us wired guys. Really have lost the knack of writing snailmail letters since getting on the net. All that printing and finding an envelope and find a stamp and going out through the rain to the post box.... Such a chore.

"Good to see Avedon in her usual incisive form. It must be neat to have made your mind up about everything back in the 70s and never feel the need to let in any new input or ideas or - God forbid - doubts. If she'd actually read what I'd written she might have realised that the whole point of the piece was to re-examine the reasons *why* I've harped on and on for the last decade about the way fans look and act. Maybe in the next *Anorak Redemption* I should do a piece about why I get such strong kneejerk reaction from certain people. I know that what I say must be loathsome and ungrateful to some, but I just wish they'd make a bit of an effort to respond rather than just churn out the tired insults. (And seeing as she hasn't seen me for five years, whilst I've seen her on many of her relentless TV appearances as spokesperson for FAC, perhaps she should be a bit wary about jibes about how I look.)

"Don't think I'll be sending out AR via e-mail again. It just doesn't feel right reading a fanzine of any size on-screen, and if you print it off it always seems to come out in the most displeasing format possible. And using *_this_* for italics and **this** to show emboldening is like going back to the most primitive of typewriting methods. So I think I'll stick to a paper-based version in future. Although an e-zine that is specifically (and only) an e-zine could work. But I have to admit that of all the e-zines I've seen, I've only conscientiously read about 5%. Usually I just scroll through and if nothing leaps out I save it to diskette and file away for later....

"Putting a zine on the web might be better as you have some control over layout and readability, but then it's open to everyone to read. For example, I had an embarrassing experience earlier in the month when some fink at the office searched the Web for my name and found an apazine from earlier in the year in which I made pretty clear that I didn't quite love my job and the people I worked with in the quite the socially-acceptable manner. (The apazine had made its way onto the web due to a misunderstanding that has since been sorted out with minimal tears, gnashing of teeth and seppuku.)"

[APH: Ugh! This is just the sort of nightmare I fear when I contemplate public postings. As for you and Avedon, I guess it is my cross to bear that I rather like both of you, although, reading the shit you write about each other, God alone knows why.

Damn! Out of space. Back in two weeks.]

It looked exactly like an ANALOG cover

Good Editor, Bad Editor

from the mind of Reece

"ALL right, Ms. Reece," Detective Hooper said. "Perhaps you'd like to tell us the reason why you don't want to be a fanzine fan."

"I told you guys in the car on the way down here, I never said that. All I said was—"

"Yeah, right," interrupted Detective Gonzalez. "We know what you said. I believe it was something like" — his voice became a wispy falsetto — "Why would anyone want to read anything I wrote? Nobody wants me to be a fan, they're all way too big and important for little old me!"

"Hey!" she said. "That wasn't it. I just wondered why fandom would be interested in what I have to say, since I haven't been around it that long." She twisted nervously in her chair. The harsh light that hung from the ceiling of the Apparatchik Central Interrogation room glared off the stainless steel tabletop. Her eyes were beginning to hurt. "Could I please have some coffee?" she finished in a much smaller voice.

Hooper took a seat across the table from her. "As we explained to you before," he sighed, "fans simply aren't having children fast enough to replace the ones who stop writing, or gafiate altogether. That's why we provided you with a copy of Performance. We hoped you'd read it, then discover all the wonderful things fandom has to offer, like full mailboxes, new friends, an opportunity to publish your writing."

"But I did read it, and D. West said that fans were elitist wankers with their own bunch of rules. Since nobody explained what the rules were, I figured I wasn't supposed to know and I should just forget the whole thing."

"That's crap!" cried Gonzalez, flapping his arms wildly. "Everyone gets a copy of the Fannish Rule Book! I suppose you're going to tell me your cat ate your copy or something. Sounds like typical neofannish whining to me!"

Hooper silenced him with a look. "What I believe Detective Gonzalez is trying to say, albeit not very tactfully, is that many new fans like yourself are somewhat, er, intimidated by fandom. They believe they aren't going to be accepted; they fear that people won't like them." He smiled benevolently. His tone was calm. "That is a perfectly understandable feeling. No jury would hold it against you."

Reece twitched a little. She looked at her watch. The X-Files was already over, and if this took much longer, she was going to miss Sightings, too. She sighed. "That isn't it, you guys. You don't understand. I don't care what people think, and I don't want them to think that I do."

"Hah!" said Gonzalez triumphantly, "So you do care what people think!"

Trapped in a snarl of logic, Reece paused. Was that what had been holding her back all along? If Gonzalez was right, and she suspected with some chagrin that he was, she hadn't a leg to stand on.

"Okay," she said. "Maybe. But why me?"

"Why not you? Why not anyone?" Hooper said.

Gonzalez loomed at her through a haze of Camel smoke. "What we are trying to tell you, if you'd ever listen to us instead of whining, is that people who say fandom is closed are wrong. It's completely open to anyone who is willing to write to and for fanzines."

"We've done everything we could to make this easy for you," Hooper continued. "Didn't we publish your address so people would send you things? Didn't we loan you all those mildewed copies of Telos? Come on, I know you weren't just watching soap operas all day, since you don't like them. You must have gotten some idea of what you're supposed to be doing." He leaned forward a little. "Remember, we are the people who are in a position to help you right now."

"All right, all right, I'll make a deal, whatever you want, just quit pestering me," Reece groaned. "Where do I sign?"

Hooper beamed. "I knew you'd make the morally responsible decision," he said. "Detective Gonzalez, perhaps now would be a good time for you to accompany Ms. Reece to the word processing gulag in Block 12."

"But what do you want me to write?"

"Just make sure it's done by Tuesday," said Hooper.



APPARATCHIK is the Honorary Consul of fandom, in a way more difficult to get rid of than a career man. He can't be transferred. That word honorary . . . it's a bit bogus when you come to think of it. APAK is 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 life-time subscription for \$19.73, or in exchange for a certain ineluctable quality of sadness, not actual despair, more like the feeling you get when contemplating an ambition you once held to be hollow, but which now drives your every waking thought and gesture. 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. Is he one of your martyrs?