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APPARATCHIK
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Issue # 53, February 15th, 1996

APH here: **DATELINE FANDOM:** It is with deep regret that I must report the death of Bob Shaw, on the evening of the 10th of February. Bob had been ill for the better part of a month after the turning of the year, having been hospitalized with acute liver failure and cardiac disease in Michigan, where he had only recently taken up residence with his new wife, Nancy Tucker. Fannish friends of Bob had been buoyed by the news that he had been released from the hospital, and was well enough to fly to Britain to visit family and friends, and to undertake treatment there. It now appears that this was also an effort to say goodbye to the people closest to him; after a last evening at The Red Lion pub in Manchester, Bob passed away in his sleep on Saturday evening.

I have no desire to engage in unsupported speculation in regard to the causes or circumstances of his death, but when I saw Bob at Intersection in September, he did not look very well, and as I commented in my coverage of the convention for Science Fiction Chronicle, his "Serious Scientific Talk" lacked its usual excruciating puns and loopy invention. It felt, at the time, as if he was saying thank you and farewell to the fandom he loved so well; and now, sadly, it appears he was justified in doing so.

Bob Shaw was a remarkable man in many ways, but perhaps his most enduring contribution to our subculture was the seeming ease with which he pursued life as both a fan and professional SF writer. In many ways, he was an ideal role-model for fans who would like to be pros. His fiction, stylish, inventive and accessible, always sold very well in the United Kingdom, and he had a somewhat smaller, but no less ardent following here in the states. The success of his fiction was no doubt enhanced by his friendly and open manner among fans, his ready humor and intelligence in his numerous convention appearances and a passion for good times, usually fueled by good beer, that made him one of the most popular figures at any fannish event. And of course, he collaborated with Walt Willis in the composition of *The Enchanted Duplicator*, the allegorical blueprint for fannish advancement and happiness, for which act alone fandom should treasure his memory and his contributions to the culture.

The echoes of this great loss are only now starting to reverberate among the many fans who knew and admired Bob, and we will probably be hearing a great many tributes to him in the weeks to come. Here at Apparatchik, we'd very much like to hear your favorite memories and appreciations of Bob Shaw, some of which we'll assemble for inclusion in

issue #55, to be distributed at Corflu over the week of March 14th to 16th. The deadline for that issue will be Monday, March 10th. Between now and then, we'll bring you further information regarding other memorials as news of them arrives.

THIS HAS NOT BEEN a very easy winter for another pair of fannish greats, Walt Willis and Chuck Harris. Walt has been back in hospital with a variety of troubling complaints, that have limited his mobility in particular, and Chuck has been treated for some serious damage to his aorta. We wish the both of them the speediest possible recovery. If anyone would like to write to them, but lack their addresses, contact us at Apak, and we'll pass them along. If you're seeking more information about their condition, the person to contact is Geri Sullivan, via gfs@toad-hall.com.

A HAPPY PIECE OF NEWS for a change: I received today an announcement of the impending wedding of Seattle writer and Campbell Award-winner Amy Thomson and independent comics mogul Edd Vick. Alas, the wedding is scheduled for the same Saturday in March as Corflu, which may cause a dilemma for some local fans (well, me, anyway).

VICTOR WOULD LIKE everyone to notice that his e-mail address has changed, following massive software upheavals at the News-Tribune. He can now be reached at VXG@p.tribnet.com. On the other hand, his mailing address has been the same for about seven months now, and yet he still has received very few fanzines in trade for all his work here. Of all the fanzines reviewed in this and last issue, only Tony Berry's *Eyeballs in the Sky* and Simon Ounsley's *Platypus* have found their way to Victor's mailbox.

Well, this will not do. Fanzines sent only to me put me in a bad situation; I would be very ungrateful to cease to trade with people who *are* sending me their fanzines, yet, fanzines sent *only* to me do not count as valid trade for Apparatchik. Fans who are not sending Victor trade copies may well be receiving this fanzine through editorial whim, and you know how easily that can be rescinded. Please, folks, add Victor to your regular mailing list, and we promise you'll get 25 or more issues of Apak per year in trade.

This is the **LAST CHANCE** I'll have to remind everyone to vote for the Fan Activity Achievement Awards; the next issue of Apak will be issued on the day of the deadline! Send your top three choices for best fanzine, fan writer, and fan artist of 1995 to Janice Murray at P.O. Box 75684, Seattle, WA 98125-0684, e-mail at 73227.2641@compuserve.com, by the 29th of February to be counted.

Be warned: This is not your standard vampire story.

**TAFFragment #1:
Riding the Rails**

by Dan Steffan, TAFFboy

THEY ALL LAUGHED at us. All we wanted to do was take the train to Wales, but still they laughed.

"That's a four-and-a-half-or five-hour trip," scoffed John

Harvey, after I'd told him about our travel plans. Lynn and I were sitting in the Harveys' lovely back garden, staring at the fishpond and trying to recover from our overnight flight. We were on our second bottle of white wine, I believe.

"And when are you planning to come back?" Eve asked incredulously.

"The next day," I replied. "We're taking the morning train out of King's Cross for Haverfordwest. We'll stay overnight with Greg and Catherine and then..."

"And then come back the next day?" John sputtered.

"...take the train back to London in time to catch a connection to Stevenage for Precursor," I continued.

"You realize," John said, shaking his head and jerking his thumb over his shoulder, "that Stevenage is about ten minutes away from here, don't you?"

"Of course," I lied. I had absolutely no idea.

"You're only in the country for a day and now you're going to spend most of the next two days sitting on a train?" My host rubbed his temples rhythmically. "I just don't get it," he muttered quietly to himself.

"What my dear, deranged husband means," Eve explained, dropping her cigarette butt into one of the empty wine bottles, "is that you're travelling halfway across the country *and back, just to end up in the Exact Same Place!* It doesn't make any goddamn sense."

"Eve! Listen to me!" I said sternly, grabbing her by her shoulders. "This is Fandom, damn it, it doesn't *have* to make sense." Eve, in turn, gave me her famous Yeah-Right-Pull-The-Other-One look.

So I took a deep breath and tried again. It was really just a matter of context, I explained. To them, our expedition to Wales was a journey of epic proportion—we were travelling most of the way across Britain, and back again, *in only two days*. But to a couple of road-weary Colonials like Lynn and myself, the four-and-a-half-hour train ride was insignificant. In America you can't get anywhere in four-and-a-half hours. A train trip to New York City takes longer than that. Hell, in some parts of the United States it takes longer than that to get a pizza delivered.

The next morning, John and Eve graciously drove us to Stevenage to catch our train into London they had failed to talk us out of our plans. John parked the car and led us towards the station. As we walked across the parking lot he directed my attention to the nearby Tesco supermarket. "The Precursor hotel is over there," he told me, "right behind that market."

"As you can see," Eve joined in, "the station really is right next to the con hotel." There was even a ramp that led directly from the station to the street in front of the Hertfordpark Hotel. "Are you sure you want to take this trip?"

I assured her that our minds were so well made up that they had military corners (and could easily pass the quarter test). But Eve still seemed to doubt our sanity.

"Don't think of it as a journey all the way across the country," Lynn said soothingly, "think of it as the world's longest hotel corridor and we're just going to a party at the far end of the corridor."

"Yeah," I joined in. "We'll be back as soon as the beer runs out." This seemed to soothe her and we were soon on our way.

I loved King's Cross station immediately. As we came up the

stairs from the Underground I suddenly realized just where the hell I was. Great fucking Britain. The U fucking K. I was im-fucking-pressed. It all looked so authentic. The station itself was one of those majestic, arcane structures that just doesn't exist in America. It was part cathedral and part spiderweb—its great arched ceiling a latticework of steel girders. The waiting area was enormous and jammed with people swarming in every direction. Some hurried to catch waiting trains, while others wandered around the many small shops that were set up like native huts in a Tarzan movie across the huge station floor. In the middle of them was a large staircase that descended through an equally large opening in the floor into the station's nether regions.

It was so romantic that it took me quite a while to realize that a few things weren't quite what they seemed. The first thing I noticed were the people themselves; they didn't look right. Everywhere I looked I saw weird people with nose rings and funny hair—and *that was just my wife!* I didn't see one person in a tweed suit. I didn't see any sailors or soldiers on furlough or a single Red Cross nurse. I didn't even see any bowler hats. I didn't see any anguished lovers enveloped in billowing plumes of steam. Hell, I didn't see any billowing plumes of steam, period.

Yeah, that's right. No bloody clouds of steam. What a gyp! And, as if that weren't bad enough, the trains themselves did not have those cool exterior doors either. You know the ones I mean, those doors that open directly into each passenger compartment from the platform. In fact, the trains didn't have compartments at all, just rows of boring seats. I had expected to walk down long, narrow corridors of polished wood, but was crushed to find nothing but a pathetic aisle running down the middle of each car. There were no helpful Negro porters to take our bags, and there was no sign of anybody chasing even one of the Beatles.

What a disappointment. By the time we boarded and found our seats I was an emotional wreck. "Who would have thought," I said to Lynn through my tears, "that England would have forsaken the charms of the Age of Innocence?"

"Queen Victoria is dead, dear," said my wife. "Get over it."

Despite my shattered illusions, rail travel in the UK turned out to be convenient, affordable and, after a fashion, enjoyable. Our trip to Wales presented us with remarkable scenery, including the site of the Reading Festival and the remains of a fortress that Catherine McAuley assured us was called "Castle Llansteffan."

Every inch of the trip was a tableau of the landscapes that made artists like Turner and Constable famous. Everywhere we looked were sheep and farmhouses, sheep and haystacks, sheep and nuclear power plants, sheep and ancient ruins and, of course, sheep. It was a stunning panorama that left me with a real appreciation of the English countryside, and, for some reason, a craving for mint jelly.

My first impression, that we were riding on the European equivalent of Amtrak, was thoroughly dispelled by the unexpected appearance of a BritRail steward pushing a food cart up the aisle towards us. We watched in awestruck silence as he presented us with cold drinks, bags of crisps, and exotic delights like Chicken Tikka sandwiches.

"Toto," I said, nudging my wife, "I don't think we're in Kansas any more."

Even when our transportation *wasn't* ultra-modern it was, at the very least, always interesting—like the train we took on the last leg of our trip to Haverfordwest. Perhaps train is too strong a word to describe the vehicle that transported us out to the westernmost nub of the British Empire. Diesel Bus on Rails would be a better description. We transferred at Swansea taking what appeared to be

You win, young fellow! My mouth's still fresh as a spring morning!

the local commuter train through the Welsh countryside. Perhaps commuter train is too strong a word . . . Trolley Car with a Thyroid Condition would be a better description.

It was a large and awkward contraption that resembled a secondhand Lithuanian streetcar that drove like a dump truck full of gravel. As it propelled itself from village to village and town to town it lurched from side to side and rattled and squeaked like a cow in a blender. Periodically the engineer/driver could be heard actually shifting gears as we approached an incline and would rev up the motor to a deafening roar as we struggled uphill. At one point we actually stopped and turned around. It was the single most entertaining ride I've ever taken outside of an amusement park.

Our trip two weeks later to Scotland was considerably more conventional by comparison. That train was crowded, required reserved seating and seemed to take forever. It was Bank Holiday weekend and the train was jammed with sweaty Londoners trying to get Out of Town. If it weren't for the amusing companionship of Martin "Mr. Baseball" Smith I probably would have slept my way to Glasgow. (Which is, come to think of it, how Lynn got there, but that's another story.)

Glasgow's Central Station was another one of those amazing rail cathedrals with an elaborate glass ceiling and a waiting room the size of Montana. In fact, the waiting room was so large that our hotel, The Central, was tucked away in one corner of it. Our room Number 530, a no (snicker) smoking room looked down on the station's glass and iron roof and provided a stunning view of Glasgow's Victorian roovescape.

At night the station's glass ceiling seemed to glow like a beautiful antique lamp, and in the morning the mellifluous voice of the station announcer would drift up through our window to gently wake us up.

Everywhere we travelled in Britain we travelled by rail. It didn't matter if it was on BritRail, commuter trains, or the Underground, it was immediately obvious that trains are still a vital part of life in the UK. I was greatly impressed by their faith in

rail travel and the way it seemed so integrated into their lives.

In the United States rail travel is a necessary evil that exists to transport the country's underfinanced (and other such chattel) from one decaying urban center to another. The trains are in crappy condition and offer few comforts. If you have a ticket and there aren't any more seats, you are invited to stand in the aisle. If there isn't any room to stand in the aisle, you are told to stand at the end of the car near the toilets. If there is no room there, you can stand between the cars, etc. If you don't like it, tough. Save your money and buy an airplane ticket like normal people.

And another thing: Nobody *ever* comes down the aisle to offer you a yummy Lamb and Chutney sandwich, dammit.

I guess it all comes down to context, really. Just like I told Eve Harvey on our first evening in England. America is just too fucking big to make train travel an efficient means of transportation. It isn't convenient to spend four days on a train to Los Angeles when you can fly there in five or six hours.

Fortunately, the English *are* different. Great Britain is small enough to make it all feasible and reasonable. In five or six hours you can zip from one end of the country to the other and still leave the train with most of the feeling in your extremities. In the States the railroads are considered a leftover artifact from another time. Trains are still in use only because they haven't figured out what to do instead. (Though the bigwigs do have high hopes for that Beam Me Up thingee from *Star Trek*.)

Imagining England without trains is an unthinkable proposition, but in the USA it is inevitable.

Maybe the British haven't forgotten about the Age of Innocence after all.



9 pix from the Wank Series, get 'em fast!

Democracy? Who Needs It?

by George Flynn

ONE NIGHT RECENTLY I couldn't sleep, and as I lay awake I came up with (ahem) a unified field theory of the

Problems of Fannish democracy. Take it for whatever it's worth . . .

Fandom has developed a number of democratic institutions, which are supposed to represent the views of fans at large: the Hugos; Worldcon site selection; the Worldcon Business Meeting itself; fan funds such as TAFF. At one time or another, they've all been triggers for intense arguments, which ultimately seem to be about the nature and purpose of fandom. Why is this? One might argue that democracy itself is inherently conducive to arguments. But I think that something more than that is involved here.

All the institutions I've named have traditional constituencies whose attitudes have come to diverge, to a greater or lesser degree, from those of fandom as a whole (whatever *that* means). This wasn't always so. They all used to be, if not totally representative, at least much more so than they are today: As late as the early 70's, nearly half the Worldcon membership voted on the Hugos; now it's typically 10-15%. The Business Meeting (and thus site selection) was once a centerpiece of the main Worldcon program, rather than a minor item at a godforsaken hour. And TAFF was once a major fannish concern, rather than the sideshow it's become today.

But it's more accurate to say that fandom-as-a-whole has done the diverging. The cited institutions can all be said — and

certainly are claimed by their defenders — to stand for traditional fannish values. The arguments mostly reduce to tradition versus populism, and when you look at them closely, there's a certain sameness about them. On TAFF, the recurrent fights between "fanzine fans" and "convention fans" are basically over whether written communication should continue to be recognized as the primary form of fanac. On the nature of the Worldcon, the disputes between "literary fans" and "media fans" are similarly over whether written science fiction should continue to be the primary form of SF (or sci-fi, as the case may be). And so forth. It's ironic, of course, that the same people may often be found on the "traditional" side of one argument and the "populist" side of another, but the structure of the arguments tends to be the same.

Some people want to preserve Fandom As They Know [or knew] It; others have adopted another model of fandom, and want to drag it along the fannish institutions; and both sides claim greater legitimacy for their views. It always comes down to legitimacy. The traditional side says, "We're the trufans, because we maintain the *original* meaning of fandom" And the populist side replies, "We're the true fans [not 'trufans,' a term which has itself become a *casus belli* in some quarters], because we represent the views of fandom *now*." And they're both right by their own lights. So they both try impose their own views. Which brings us to politics.

In practical terms, the basic problem is the actual electorate

for each institution is much smaller than the *potential* electorate. This makes the institutions vulnerable to the horrors of Bloc Voting — a dangerous phrase, because it always raises the rhetorical temperature. Those accused of bloc voting can indignantly claim that the term is simply applied to any group of voters whose views the accuser doesn't like. Most people think they know it when they see it, but it's hard to come up with a rigorous definition. For purposes of this discussion, let's say that bloc voting is an organized vote, of significant proportions, by people representing a point of view significantly different from that of those who *usually* vote. (Does that have enough weasel words?) Which causes those who usually vote to cry "Foul!" And the bloc voters in turn cry, "Don't you believe in democracy?"

Well, no. We don't. Not really.

We're all endangered species, and we're trying to preserve the niches to which we've adapted (or which we've adapted to fit us). That's what we really care about, and so much the worse for democracy if it gets in the way. After all, we're in fandom (well, most of us) to enjoy ourselves, not in the service of democracy or any other high principle, even — or perhaps, especially — if we believe that Fandom Is A Way Of Life.

But we can't admit this, even to ourselves, because we're all imbued with the idea that democracy is a Good Thing, and can't bear to think of ourselves as undemocratic. Or if we're on the other side, we can't bear to think that our (actually) democratic position might nevertheless be wrong. So we come up with different, often specious, arguments to show that the other side is Evil, and they come up with arguments of their own, and before you know it the rhetorical temperature has risen to the point that each side can righteously (and accurately) condemn the other for the violence of its arguments, and we all forget what we were arguing about in the first place. But you know how it goes.

In the meantime, whether or not the populists actually

have a chance of changing the status quo, the traditionalists are concerned over the threat. So they come up with defense mechanisms, typically gimmicks that will frustrate the will of the (potential) majority without being obviously unjust. I've described the Hugo gimmicks at length elsewhere; suffice it to say that there are four separate rules intended to encourage victories for "No Award" (rather than some "unworthy" nominee); usually none of them work. (It's especially hard to frustrate popular taste in the Hugos, which were in large part explicitly designed for outreach to the mundane world.) In site selection, we have the voting fee, intended to ensure that only "serious" voters will participate, and the requirement that bidders file months in advance (allowing time to mobilize traditionalist voters.) Similarly, the Business Meeting is often held at hours when only the "serious" voters will be up (though even traditionalists often can't stomach this: they want to sleep too), and also has a deadline for filing motions. And in TAFF we have the requirements that voters be known fans, and that winners receive significant support on both sides of the Atlantic; Arnie Katz's recent suggestions of a fanzine-activity requirement is in the same tradition.

If all these gimmicks fail to resist the tide of change, those who are sufficiently displeased can always go off and found new institutions. (The Nebulas as a response to the Hugos; Corflus as a response to the Worldcon.) But this doesn't remove the old arguments, and may just provide scope for new ones, perhaps recapitulating the original history. (Ditto as a response to Corflu?)

"In the long run, we are all dead." And in the long run, the forces of populism will probably win all these arguments — only to become the traditionalists in new arguments. "The only thing we learn . . ."

(Well, you didn't think I had a *solution* to the problems, did you?)

That was a very bad period, the Eocene, when the piano was domesticated.

Dredge It Up, Boy

by Victor M. Gonzalez
Staff Writer

ANDY WAS SO desperate to get something from Lesley Reece (for this issue) that he even asked her for her college essays. After scoffing at the

lesser subaerial life about the planted feet.
(*The Hamlet*, 47)

idea for some time, I realized there might be one or two of my own college essays I particularly liked.

And, as a break in what threatens to become *The Taff Wars Part II*, I thought I'd go ahead and reprint this, which was written for the modern texts class at Columbia taught by Wallace Gray. This was one of my favorites, anyway.

His comments (except for one series where he notes the lack of mention of specific editions) are printed here as footnotes, with my responses added.

Through vast practice, my writing style has simplified considerably from the day this was written (June 11, 1992), but I haven't changed a word.

Just so you know, Gray liked it; the final comment was: "A keen critical essay. A/A-"

Udderly Feminine: The Bovine Image in Faulkner

A moment later the two girls came to the door and stood, big, identical, like two young tremendous cows, heifers, standing knee-deep in the air as in a stream, a pond, nuzzling into it, the level of the pond fleeing violently and silently to one inhalation, exposing in astounded momentary amaze the teeming

Nowhere so much as here is William Faulkner's connection between the fertile woman and the dumb farm animal so closely drawn. Faulkner's women are various, but mostly fall into two groups: honest, hardworking mothers and wives, and young women falling unwittingly into the fecund biological future. Those in the second group are often used by the author to represent the inevitable forces of sexuality and reproduction, the "earth mother" that bears the world without thought.¹

Dewey Dell is fertile and young, deciding to have sex whimsically,² single-mindedly driven to abort the pregnancy, and ultimately — perhaps signifying the power of nature — unable to. "I feel like a wet seed in the hot blind earth" (*As I Lay Dying*, 58), she thinks in a scene in which she is followed by the family cow: "What you got in you ain't nothing to what I got in me, even if you are a woman too," she says to the cow, who seems to merge³ with her fertile sexuality: "She nuzzles at me, snuffing, blowing her breath in a sweet, hot blast, through my dress, against my hot nakedness, moaning" (56). The cow's unmilked motivation is purely natural and so is Dewey Dell's.⁴ She strives unceasingly to relieve the agony of her unmarried pregnancy. The reaching of the seed for the light requires no contrivance or rationale.⁵

There is often a serenity⁶ that accompanies the fierce determination of these characters; as early as *The Sound and the Fury* Caddy is described by Quentin: "she looked at me then

everything emptied out of her eyes and they looked like the eyes in statues blank and unseeing and serene" (187), as he is extracting her confession of love for Dalton Ames. In Lena Grove we find a woman in a nearly helpless and unprotected position, who has no fear and no second thoughts about her future. Lena searches for her child's father without slack or hesitation, prompting the neighborly Armstid to comment: "I reckon that fellow is fixing to find that he made a bad mistake when he stopped this side of Arkansas, or even Texas." [*Light in August*, 14]. The rational mind should panic when confronted unprepared with childbirth away from all friends and family, yet Lena is surely as confident as the day she left her family's home. It is the serenity of the animal herded unknowing off a cliff.

Dewey Dell is a piker when compared with Faulkner's masterpiece of sedentary femininity, Eula Varner: "Her entire appearance suggested some symbology out of the old Dionysic times — honey in sunlight and bursting grapes, the writhen bleeding of the crushed fecundated vine beneath the rapacious trampling goat-hoof" (*The Hamlet*, 95). She is devoid of all intellectual intelligence, if not technically of intellect, and is disconnected from all around her, listening "with a weary wisdom heired of all mammalian maturity, to the enlarging of her own organs." Her ascendancy in the world will not require any effort at all on her part. "She . . . who had been born already completely equipped . . . to overcome anything," thinks the teacher Labove, "It was as if . . . she possessed life but not sentience" (114). Eula, like the other characters, is fertile, becoming pregnant at the first opportunity.

There are many female characters in Faulkner that are not of this type, such as the farmer's wives he portrays, often the last straw of reason to counter the stupid schemes of their husbands. There is Joanna Burden, Judith Sutpen, Rosa Coldfield, Dilsey, all strong individuals. But in every novel the fecund natural earth shows itself in a woman, never more so than in *The Hamlet*: "She would be still invisible, but he could hear her . . . the warm breath visible among the tearing roots of grass, the warm reek of the urgent milk a cohered shape amid the fluid and abstract earth" (180). Ike Snopes, himself little more than an animal,⁷ meets with his lover in the pre-dawn light, "breathing in the reek, the odor of cows and mares as the successful lover does that of a room filled with women, has the victor's drowning rapport with all anonymous faceless female flesh capable of love walking the female earth." (181) Ike is in love with a cow and is eventually "cured" in the most grotesque moment in Faulkner. His lover is serene and simple, with only the most elemental needs, which even an idiot can fulfill. There is a mindless meeting, a fundamental reflection of the limitations of intellect:

She stands as he left here, tethered, chewing.
Within the mind enormous moist and pupiless globes
he sees himself in twin miniature mirrored by the
inscrutable abstraction; one with that which Juno
might have looked out with, he watches himself
contemplating what those who looked at Juno saw.
(182)

Juno was the Roman goddess of women, marriage, and childbirth. Ike and the cow spend many nights together, he nestling toward "the mammalian attar," but first he is sure to milk her, smelling "the urgent and unimpatient milk as it flows among and about his fingers, hands, wrists, warm and indivisible as the strong inexhaustible life ichor itself, inherently of itself, renewing" (186).

Ike Snopes has no trouble accepting the cow as his mate, his lover, fulfiller of his needs. Fertility and sex need no intelligence, no set of tools or expertise that emerges from the mind of human beings: life is an unquenchable flow. That is the message Faulkner communicates through these characters: a force that transcends manipulation, through Eula and Dewey Dell he speaks not of women, but of reproduction and the sexual urge, of the "urgent and unimpatient" self-propulsion of biology.

FOOTNOTES—

- 1 "Nicely put."
- 2 "Well, not exactly." (He's probably right.)
- 3 "Yes."
- 4 "Good comparison."
- 5 "Not sure what you mean here." (This, I think, is obvious, but might better have been saved for later in the essay. Or maybe it should have been the lead.)
- 6 "Keen perception."
- 7 "Interesting — you present Ike without disparaging him or looking down from a height — as most do."
(Ike is a retarded cow-fucker, so I guess most do tend to look down on him. I found this comment of Gray's to be helpful in looking at my own style of thinking; he may have a point. It has been a source of inspiration.
(By the way, Ike is cured when the ranchers, disgusted at his habits, slaughter his lover in front of him.)



Forming a cube within the octahedron, . . .

FANNISH MEMORY SYNDROME

by Steve Green

LIKE LOW-BUDGET horror movies and cheapshot quizshow concepts, the UK tends to inherit a sizeable proportion of its weather from

our transAtlantic neighbors, and the current cold snap is no exception. But there's another, more personal, reason for the chill in the air as I write this: the demise of one of Britfandom's worst-kept secrets, the MiScons.

Organized by the Midlands-based MiSPiTs, founded in the early 1980s and among that decade's most active groups, the MiScons parallel the longer-established Corflus in size and theme; DNA fingerprinting, however, would pinpoint them as the cultural descendant of an even earlier event, the Silicons hosted

by Newcastle's infamous Gannets from 1976-85. To further cloud the issue, the four members of the MiScon committee (Tony Berry, Helena Bowles, Richard Standage, Martin Tudor) regular occupy posts on Birmingham's Novacons, and in a very real sense have replicated the atmosphere which permeated that larger gathering in its early days.

Although the MiSPiTs pay homage in their title to Mercia, the ancient kingdom which stretched across central England to surround what is now Birmingham, it was one hundred miles to the south-south-west that scouts stumbled upon the Royal Clarence Hotel, a former coaching inn now as firmly wedded to the MiScon mythos as suburban Jesmond's Grosvenor Hotel is to that of the Silicons. A stone's throw from the pier at Burnham-on-Sea, a town which rarely fails to remind me of the final scenes in CARNIVAL OF SOULS, the Royal Clarence brilliantly combines

the spirits of both sf and fannishness by offering both an on-site brewery and a view across Bridgwater Bay of the Hinckley Point nuclear power station. (Now here's a footnote for conspiracy theorists: although it's shown on the 1988 Bartholomew atlas, this local landmark is strangely missing from the 1995 editions of both the Michelin and A-Z — along with many installations linked to Britain's Ministry of Defence. However, the latter organization has assured me this particular omission has no sinister overtones and they'll include it next year, so I guess I'll leave my mark on history as the man who put Hinckley Point back on the map.)

Planned as a "small, informal, cheap relaxcon" with an invitation-only membership, the level of MiSdemeanour's success in 1994 took everyone — especially the committee — by surprise (typical of the praise heaped upon them was Catherine McAulay's splendid "Cider With Stevie" in ATTITUDE #1, wherein she takes especial delight in describing my show trial and subsequent decapitation for crimes against fandom; our resident magician, Ray Bradbury, would have sawn me in half, only he couldn't get the apparatus around my waist). The following year's MiSconstrued was similarly constructed around a special event on the Saturday, a papal debate on the canonisation of Greg Pickersgill (he got his wings, as if anyone ever doubted it), whilst the

forthcoming MiS-saigon offers APAK's own Martin Tudor on trial for witchcraft; Andy and Victor better watch out, lest they be accused of guilt by association.

Ironically, it's their high standards which have doomed the MiScons. As Martin revealed in the final progress report, MiS-saigon reached its sixty-member ceiling a matter of weeks after the invitations went out, and a further seventeen had to be added just to ensure key participants were available for certain of the events. Trouble is, even this slight adjustment threatens the social dynamic of the event, particularly as the newcomers will bring with them artificially enhanced expectations fueled by its predecessors' awesome word-of-mouth.

Which makes the current committee's decision to call it a day by the time you read this a sad but sensible one. The Nova-winning fanzine ATTITUDE was always envisioned as the herald of its own convention and will take up the February slot in Norwich next year, but it's unlikely Burnham will remain safe from fandom for long. A replacement team is already rumored to be waiting in the wings for 1998's instalment, though Messrs Berry, Tudor, Bowles and Standage have done those who follow — or, to be honest, themselves — no favours with the freshness and vitality which underscored their own entries. Sometimes, success can be a real pain in the arse.

Sure, anything, just get out of my office!

AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH: Let's get the most difficult thing out of the way first, responding to this letter from JOSEPH NICHOLAS (15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JU):]

"You are doomed to perpetual disappointment" if "you expect us to print every word that you send to us," says Andy in reply to my letter in Apparatchik 51. Indeed, I do not expect you to print every word I send — but I nevertheless find it interesting that the middle paragraph of my previous letter, refuting his claim that distribution of FTT 17 was held back to prevent North Americans commenting on D-I-Y culture, has entirely vanished. Perhaps he has remembered his own listing of that issue in the fanzine countdown in issue 39, dated 27 July 1995 — some three or four weeks before he was handed his copy of FTT 18 at Precursor.

'Nevertheless, both of you may be even more interested to learn that suppressing certain paragraphs of a letter is exactly the same tactic adopted by Fosfax when confronted with inconvenient facts to which its editors have no rejoinder. (Any paragraph in a subsequent letter which alludes to this is similarly suppressed, since the fact of censorship must itself be censored in order to prevent the policy from coming to light.) Perhaps I should review that line about your ideological kinship, what?

'And if you find that offensive, think on this: I find Andy's allegation that distribution of FTT 17 was deliberately held back until after FTT 18 was published — his words admit of no other interpretation — equally insulting.'

[APH: Well, I guess that tells me off. Actually, I really do owe you an apology, Joseph. My misapprehension about your efforts in mailing FTT arose from a letter you wrote to me in happier days last summer, in which you said that you were steaming ahead with FTT 18 before American fans had actually received, and therefore had a chance to comment on, FTT 17, but well after having sent the earlier issue out. This is a far cry from intentionally closing us out of the debate, and I do sincerely apologize for making this foolish misinterpretation.

On the other hand, your equation of censorship with my

decision to hold the middle paragraph of your last letter until I could dig through my files and find the original comment I had misread strikes me as a trifle histrionic. Your continued evocation of Fosfax in your letters makes me think that you do in fact, at least subconsciously, see parallels between it and this fanzine. If so, this many explain to some degree why you seem to have arrived at such a passionately adversarial relationship with us (although the fact that we are so clearly wrong-headed in everything we say might have something to do with it as well). Alas, this does not seem to be of much interest to the rest of our readers, so I think we will take a little break from our exchange of salvos with you for a few issues. If that is censorship, I can only express my regrets.

But there's one big difference between us and Fosfax for you; you're actually still reading this fanzine.

[VMG: As we say in the United States, Chill Out. Andy made an error, as everyone does, but that doesn't put us in the same boots as Fosfax; there was no motive to suppress your material.

And — should you decide to communicate with us again — please read the colophon closely enough to spell my name right.]

[APH: While we're at it, here is the paragraph of Joseph's previous letter that I was apparently so concerned with. The previous paragraph ended with the line (perhaps I should . . .) "...cease writing letters of comment to US fanzines altogether:]"

'Before I do, however, I want to know what Andy means by his remark that if I was "truly interested" in what people had to say I "wouldn't do things like sending out an issue commenting on ideas raised in the previous number, prior to sending that first issue to North American readers." I had to read this sentence three times before I realised it was a reference to FTT 17 and 18; and it is quite false. The North American copies of 17 were mailed in May 1995; 18 was published in August 1995; am I now to be responsible for the length of time surface mail remains in transit across the Atlantic? That one segment of the readership might not have received the previous issue when the editors publish the next is inevitable where any reasonably frequent fanzine is con-

cerned, and that applies on both sides of the Atlantic. (And "reasonably frequent" in this case includes Apparatchik. That you have a British agent doesn't alter the fact that most of us are at least an issue behind in our responses.) And exactly how and why should discussion of a subject in the previous issue be aborted by publication of the next? "We pride ourselves on draconian and dismissive gestures toward our readership here at APAK." Perhaps you should also pride yourself on ignoring obvious context — I'd have thought it plain that I was attributing the lack of UD comments on D-I-Y culture to lack of awareness of it there, but Andy seems to have read some other comment entirely."

[APH: Let's move now to a letter from KEV MCVEIGH (37 Firs Road, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7QF UK), who returns us to slightly less fractious issues raised by Mr. Nicholas:]

I think Andy's reply to Joseph Nicholas' remarks about the Space Race misses the point by a few degrees. That a few thousand people with Net access were interested in the Galileo probe is not surprising given that the majority of those with Net access are still likely to be of a technophilic inclination. In contrast, I've heard nobody talking about it in the bar I tend. Now, correct me if I'm wrong as I was too young to see for myself, but my impression is of millions of people staying up late, crowded around the neighbor's TV set to watch the first moon landing, and of "everybody" talking about it in the days either side. This is how I interpret Joseph's remarks, ordinary people, on the whole, aren't interested in space.

The one other author writing about big Space Race projects who appears to have seriously considered the validity of the whole concept is Stan Robinson. When I spoke to him about *Red Mars* I asked him not merely if it was possible, but if it was actually a good idea. His response was that it was a very low-priority project, but that it might be the case that in certain circumstances it could be used as a glamour project to kick-start the aerospace industries, and provide impetus for low-energy consumption transport systems, etc. One of the difficulties the collapse of the Soviet bloc has provided all sides is that nobody quite knows how to deal with all these redundant military industries, which if allowed to simply collapse would devastate the economies of all the major nations. Fortunately for our governments so far, the Bosnians and Serbs and Kuwaitis in particular have striven to keep the arms suppliers in business. Presumably that is why George Bush encouraged the Gulf War?

Ted White has had a go at me before for my comments on music in Lagoon and no doubt will disagree with me again now. The trouble with "Free as a Bird" is not whether it sounds Beatley or not, though the dreadful over-production makes it sound like Electric Light Orchestra to me, but that if it had been made by any unknown group it would rightly have been derided as derivative tripe. There is too much bullshit surrounding The Beatles, sure they wrote some great songs, and Lennon (like David Bowie later) was very alert to new ideas so they responded quickly enough that they often looked like innovators, but they also produced far too much drug-addled tripe, and weak copies of true originals. I recently bought a copy of the so-called "White Album" on the strength of its reputation as one of the greatest albums of all time. I almost asked for my money back, there are good songs on it, "Dear Prudence", "Helter Skelter", "Back in the USSR" and others, but they're far outnumbered by the undescribably bad tracks: "Piggies", "Rocky Raccoon", "Bungalow Bill", "Why Don't We Do It In the Road" and almost the entirety of the second half. Apparently George Martin tried to persuade

the Beatles to cut its 30 tracks to 14, and he should have tried harder. As Bill Hicks once said, "the Beatles were so high they even let Ringo sing." But The Beatles sold more records than anyone else, you say, and I ask you why? Why does this matter, and why did it happen? Record sales are no guide to quality, being influenced by too many other factors — large numbers of people buy a record because it is number one, following the herd; other records miss the chart by a handful of copies and get no airplay at all, whilst one place higher is played six times a day, boosting its sales further. If "Free as a Bird" had been released anonymously would Ted White have even heard of it?

[APH: Well, of course not. But it would never even have been recorded if the Beatles were not involved; judging it on purely musical grounds is a fruitless activity, because even if it sounded like three minutes excerpted from "Metal Machine Music", it would still tap into the self-definition which so many people find in the Beatles' music. I agree, it does sound like an odd hybrid between ELO and the Beatles (which is a good definition for everything George Harrison has recorded in the past 15 years), but I still rather enjoyed hearing it.

I find it intriguing that so many people find it necessary to shout slogans like "Phony Beatlemania has bitten the dust" in order to assert their musical and/or aesthetic independence. Doing so strikes me as ascribing a degree of validity to inflated assessments of their stature, which I think most people have moved well beyond, thanks very much. Your unhappiness with the White Album seemingly arises from its inflated reputation; once you get over your disappointment at having been misled, I think you will find it actually is a very interesting and entertaining piece of music. It features one of my favorite "Beatles" songs, "While my guitar gently weeps," which is really a George Harrison song with Eric Clapton in support; that illustrates the main problem with judging the white album alongside other Beatles records, in that it is really a series of solo EPs with the other members of the band brought in as session men. Of course it would have been better as a single album, but one could say that about almost every double album ever made.

I don't think I missed Joseph's point at all; I think we're merely working with different definitions of "interest". I don't think we out to expect people to be as "interested" in space today as they were after a ten-year program of propaganda designed to heighten their acceptance of a dangerous and expensive program like Apollo. Our use of the near-orbit environment and our ability to send unmanned vehicles to investigate the solar neighborhood is now considered a fact of life. If we were to propose the cessation of all space-oriented research, and to cut off all funding for the development of the next generation of space-going vehicles, I think most people would find that an unattractive and disappointing prospect. And that's the level on which I think the average person still has some degree of "interest" in space exploration.

We'll move on now to a new letter from ROBERT LICHTMAN (P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442):

I've been watching the Fanzine Countdown more attentively lately since the arrival in my mail on January 6th of a little fanzine that calls itself *Twink*. "A Fanzine (of Sorts)," its cover proclaimed, and inside the editor — who affects the editorial "we" — identified him/herself as "E. B. Frohvet," and says "We were formerly active in Florida fandom, and even contributed to a few fanzines in our time. We were a committee member on many con-ventions including one Worldcon. (Oddly, no, not Orlando/'92.) Having recently relocated for business reasons, we

Hello, it's the Bad Lifestyle Choices Room!

have a mind to explore a new angle in our fanac." Frohvet goes on to acknowledge that "it is an open secret that E.B. Frohvet is a *nom de plume*," and invites speculation as to the meaning of the initials. "After a while, we will choose our favorite three for each gender and let readers vote on which they like best."

The over all tone is somewhat whimsical, and one of the interior illustrations is a badly reproduced photo of a longhaired woman in a bra. Frohvet chirps: "In lieu of a title page, we figure we can't go too wrong in adding a little beauty to the magazine. Maybe some day, in the interests of equal time, we'll publish a picture of a guy in his underwear." A one-page article called "TOMS" (acronym for totally obedient morons, a subtitle explains) turns out to be a mild rant against what Frohvet perceives as useless or even retro technology, such as seat belt sensors in both front seats of his car requiring him to fasten the passenger seat belt before the alarm will quit. A couple pages of book reviews follows, containing one wonderful image: "Imagine *Genesis* as it might have been written by Alan Ginsburg stoked on absinthe and Robbie Basho records." Then follows a page of rather slight fanzine reviews (reviewing Lan's Lantern and Niekas). There's a final page, in which Frohvet suggests as a topic of discussion whether or not one rereads books and, if so, why, how often, etc.? And if not, why not. There are several illustrations, perhaps by Frohvet, that are a slight step up from L. Garcone, and a recognizable piece of clip art on one page. The format is elite type, double-columned with lines on both sides of the column. A lot of white space. The typeface, style of typing (one space after sentences) and some of the literary allusions made me think of Richard Bergeron, though the anti-technology stuff briefly reminded me of the Unabomber. But I don't want to jump to conclusions.

The address given is 4725 Dorsey Drive, Suite A, Box 700, Ellicott City, MD 21042. I wrote a one-page letter of comment mostly centered on his query about rereading books. (I do, but I'll save my comments for Frohvet's lettercol, if there is one.) The reason I mention this at all is that I didn't see you listing it in any issue since it showed up here. Someone else must have received it besides me?

Let me apologize to Martin Tudor for coupling him in print with the wrong Helena. As for my comment that they "promised" to wed in Las Vegas if he won TAPP, I believe I may have been extrapolating from something I read somewhere, probably in a Las Vegas fanzine. I can quite understand wanting to get married close enough to relatives so that they don't have to bear the expense of travel to the wedding. But regarding those pies, I'm sure that the Fandom of Good Cheer will be happy to accommodate any reasonable request regarding flavor, velocity of toss, timing of program item (a la Vicks), etc.

Looking back, I note that my copy of Blat No. 4 arrived on January 9th, 1995, and as I recall, was sent first class. I considered it a 1995 fanzine in making my FAAA nominations and my Hugo nominations. But I did so knowing it was possible that it might not be Hugo-eligible. So far as "solidifying" the FAAA rules are concerned, since it's a fan-type award presented at Corflu the loose spirit of fandom ought to prevail. After all, who among us hasn't sent out a fanzine well after its published date?

Pam's article about Simo was more interesting for its revelation of humor fandom, something of which I'd previously been unaware. I'd seen the names she mentioned — Dop, Mark Plummer and Claire Brialey — in recent British fanzines, but hadn't quite worked out that they were part of a subset in U.K. fandom.

By describing their fanzines as "totally brilliant and totally unconnected with the rest of fandom," Pam set me to remembering the late, lamented Indian Scout, of which I have regrettably have too few in my collection. (If there's anyone out there with a complete run who'd help out with photocopies, I'd be glad to pay expenses and send a list of the issues I already have.)

I'm glad to see you mentioning Ian Gunn's artwork in Thyme. Although I enjoy reading it, I've almost never written a LoC to any editor of Thyme, but as you can see in the lettercol of No. 107 I made an exception to heap egoboo on Gunn's spectacularly faanish wraparound cover on No. 106. I included him on my list of best fan artist nominees for the Hugo, though he didn't quite make the cut on my list for the FAAA ballot.

Let me close by mentioning that FAPA currently has no waiting list. I just filed my report for the February mailing and the roster has only 64 active memberships. Two fans appear on the waiting list, but both have already been invited to join. (The additional space will be made available by the unfortunate departure of Rob Hansen, who has resigned.) If anyone reading Apak would like to be in the grandfather of all fannish apas, with an activity requirement of a mere eight pages *a year*, they are invited to apply to me. As they say in the fine print, some conditions and restrictions apply (as far as qualifying fanac).'

[APH: I'll send this issue of APAK to "Frohvet," Robert, both to give him your appreciative review and to see if we can wangle a pair of copies for ourselves.

For those of you still wanting to get a room at Corflu, I've heard that you're out of luck; still, VICKI ROSENZWEIG (33 Indian Road 6-R, New York, NY 10034) believes otherwise, and suggests a course of action:]

Having dealt with the Clubhouse Inn, I don't believe they're booked up for Corflu weekend. Rather, it seems as though there has been some massive failure of communications between the front desk and the rest of the hotel staff, leading them to refuse to book rooms unless we had the secret code that they hadn't told anyone. This should all be sorted out by now, but if not, either talk to Lucy or call the hotel between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. CST and ask to speak to Natasha.

Mark isn't making up the comic Cyrillic lettering tradition. It is part of a broader tradition of making comic use of unfamiliar alphabets, which also includes signs written in what I can only call pseudo-Yiddish: the usual English alphabet, but with serifs and such designed to make the letters look like the Hebrew alphabet to the casual observer. My father used to refer to a local Russian-language paper as the "Hobo Shlobo": the name is actually something like "Novoe Russky Slovo," meaning "New Russian Voice," but to the casual observer who doesn't know Cyrillic. "Hobo Shlobo" is close. I assume the intention was humorous, since my father's parents were both native speakers of Russian, although he never learned the language.

Exsanguinated parakeets are not horrific, they're absurd.'

[APH: I should certainly hope so. And of course, I was aware of the comic potential of Cyrillic and other alien alphabets, but it seemed useful to play dumb in order to get nice letters like yours. I will remember reading in Harpo Marx's autobiography, *Harpo Speaks*, that the cyrillic spelling of his name on a poster advertising his performance in mid-thirties Moscow looked something like "EXAPNO MAPCASE", a thing which gave him no end of amusement.

On now to the comments of DR. GREGORY BENFORD (gbenford@uci.edu), who calls for organized investigation of some events mentioned in these pages:]

There's no one I'd rather go on a killing spree with.

I like Bob Lichtman's comparison of WILD HEIRS with CRY. And Apparatchik too is similar in the letterhacking sense, and building a diverse community. I agree that WILD HEIRS is a sign of new energy.

Your long piece on UFOs and Roswell makes me rise to object. I don't see why the first wave of sightings were "demonstrably real" — though they excited my interest then & I read all the material.

I'm sympathetic to the argument that nearly half a century after the first "flying saucer scare," we have no solid, physical, generally agreed upon evidence. Studies of ghosts have the same trouble. No data, no science.

Personally, I think the extraterrestrial visitor explanation of the widespread reported sightings is quite unlikely—but not disproved or impossible, and there's the rub. In science, hypotheses must be checked and rechecked. Scientists speak of falsifying theories, not proving them, for no proof is ever final. A theory is only as good as its latest rub against reality.

The alien visitor theory of UFOs has not been falsified, but it has few advocates, perhaps none, among scientists—and they do no research into it. So the subject is mired in The X Files and National Enquirer.

If the alien visitor explanation holds water, then their frequent visits imply a base somewhere in our solar system. (I assume they don't have faster-than-light travel so convenient that zipping across the galaxy for dinner is fashionable.) Obviously, they're making it tough for scientists to get any physical proof of them. Why? We can't say—aliens are tricky.

But they can't brush away all their footprints, and a serious UFO enthusiast should be willing to track them down. That's where scientists come in.

To be taken seriously by scientists, I think UFO fans should support—including funding—research which could uncover convincing evidence. UFOlogists would gain both credibility and, perhaps, some solid arguing points.

They should try thinking like scientists, too. Aliens might do anything, but they need a place to sleep, regroup, refuel. Where?

There are several likely spots where UFOs could conveniently base. Obviously, the moon—probably on the other side, to be secretive. Searching for them there implies a careful analysis of the high resolution mapping data acquired in 1994 by the Clementine spacecraft. Such scrutiny is going on right now, but not with an agenda of searching for a UFO base. For quite small sums, a single data processor could cast a fresh eye at the data and report oddities. There are certain to be some.

Then too, there are convenient places to park a spaceship nearby. The lunar Lagrange points are stable zones, leading and trailing the moon in its orbit. A base left there would not drift from tidal tugs. Are there UFOs lurking there?

In the early 1980s two astronomers looked for shiny objects reflecting sunlight at the Lagrange points and found nothing down to their resolving limit of a few meters. (See Icarus, Vol. 55, p. 453.) They did this without UFO ideas in mind. If the UFO community had supplied the few thousands of dollars their work cost, they would at least have gained some respect.

How about searching further afield? Throughout the 1980s Michael Papagiannis of Boston University argued in scientific journals that starfaring aliens might well use the asteroid belt as an easy residential zone and source of raw materials.

He proposed looking for them by tracking their waste heat; anything using energy eventually generates an infrared glow.

Most asteroids are two hundred degrees colder than freezing, so heat stands out. The proposal was technically sound.

Still, Papagiannis could not get NASA or NSF funding.

Enter the UFOlogists. A foundation dedicated to real, objective research which bears upon UFOs could fund Papagiannis's infrared search, or other such ideas. The foundation would further true scientific research, be cited in publications, and build bridges to a vastly skeptical scientific community.

Odds are, they'll find nothing, of course. That happens all the time to scientists.

But the search itself is noble, progressive, and might just surprise everyone. At least it would produce fresh scientific knowledge, and show that UFO people can be dispassionate in their curiosity.

I've urged the UFO community to consider reaching out in this way. A serious institution would be greeted by far more respect, and would mute the shouting match going on now. Respect is the first step to reasonable dialog, learning and even collaboration. If the UFO point of view is even remotely correct, that has immense consequences for everyone.

Forgive the diatribe . . .

[VMG: I find your analysis refreshing, Greg. You have no idea what it's like to edit a fanzine with someone who finds any of these "events" "demonstrably real."]

[APH: I hope you boys are having fun with your little jokes. I rise to object myself at your mutual interpretation of my words. When I stated that I felt the initial flap of UFO sightings from 1947 to 1953 were "demonstrably real," my meaning was that many of the people involved were actually seeing something in the air which they could not explain, as opposed to creating stories out of whole cloth and hoaxing, although there was plenty of that going on too. My assertion was, and is, that people were actually seeing things which they could not easily explain. This does not translate into a belief that these observations constituted evidence for visitation of the earth by extraterrestrials; indeed, that's pretty far down on my list of probabilities.

A good example of what I mean can be found in the "Lubbock Lights" case of the mid-fifties. Our pal Howard Waldrop told us that when he was a youth, he observed the phenomenon himself, odd streaks of light zipping overhead, often performing maneuvers that appeared impossible for any known aircraft. It turned out that these were the undersides of migrating plovers, spotted as they flew high overhead, reflecting the lights of the city on the white feathers of their bellies. So the Lubbock Lights were very real; they just turned out to have a mundane explanation.

As far as the Roswell event is concerned, the whole thing has such a cloud of weirdness around it that the idea of alien intelligence being involved seems only slightly less plausible than most of the more prosaic explanations offered. But Victor's reaction goes a long way toward explaining why no one was willing to fund Papagiannis's infrared search, or to undertake other experiments designed to refute or confirm the alien hypothesis; anyone who expresses anything other than total skepticism is immediately charged with being a "Believer," and loses credibility with their peers. Worse still — and this is what I live in fear of — they are often embraced by the believer community as "one of them," and sucked into the tortuous chicanes of the UFO debate against their will. So, honestly, I find your points quite cogent and certainly have no interest in trying to speak against them.

WAFH: Karen Pender-Gunn, Don Fitch, George Flynn, Murray Moore and Jim Young.]

Migraine Boy, you give love a bad name.

**FANZINE COUNTDOWN,
February 1st to 14th**

1.) Ansible # 103, edited by Dave Langford, 94 London Rd. Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU UK: Another helping of useful tidbits from the murky world of British SF and cheery notes from Langford's unofficial club-mates. Notable bits: Charles Platt's ecstasy at being treated like a Real Author and having his dinner tab picked up by a group of friendly editors in Tokyo, a brief obituary for Walter M. Miller, who scuttled hopes for a sequel to "A Canticle for Leibowitz" by ending his own life in January, and a briefer one for Burne Hogarth, a bona-fide titan in the comics world. David also reports that "Simo" has taken to smuggling little slogans endorsing his TAFF candidacy into his work at SFX, an act of desperate hubris that does even more to improve our opinion of the man. Were he to take over printing and distributing our fanzine gratis, our backing for Martin Tudor would surely stand on very shaky ground.

2.) Legal Limit #3, edited by Peter Larsen, et al, For Dreamhaven Books Uptown, 1403 West Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55408: This is actually more a catalogue than a fanzine, listing some of the new and notable books and other things to arrive at Minneapolis' best science fiction/fantasy/slipstream book store, but it also contains some personal book reviews and other material special to this issue. The highlight to this one is an essay titled "Dress", written by Chris Wilde, editor of a well-regarded queerpunk zine, Abrupt Lane Edge, about his formative experiences with transgender attire. I also liked Chris Conroy's review of the new trade paper releases of Edward Gorey's *Amphigorey*, *Amphigorey Too*, and *Amphigorey Also*, and the deeply twisted influence they have had on his life. Plus, a very curious cover by Brad Ball. All this should come as no surprise to people who know Peter Larsen; his contact with fandom has often been fleeting and abrasive, but every he does has a certain panache that attracts even those who disagree with everything he says.

3.) From Sunday to Saturday (Electronic Edition) # 1-8, published by Don Fitch, available from fitchdons@aol.com, paper mail at 3908 North Frijo Ave., Covina, CA 91722-3810: Don has decided to celebrate his arrival in the world of on-line communications by creating a small and very fast version of his long-running apa/perzine; last week, these things were arriving at a rate of one per day, although he has since backed away from that frenzied pace. Much of these issues are concerned with the strengths and dissatisfactions of producing material for on-line consumption, as opposed to the expense and trouble of producing traditional, paper fanzines, and most of the people who sent letters commented on this issue. Plus, there's a few notes on the debate on the future of fannish travel funds. Don faces the same trouble that all producers of fast and frequent fanzines do, in that choosing or writing material of sufficient brevity to conform to the rapid publication schedule tends to produce a very slight fanzine; all eight issues taken together have about as much material in them as one issue of Don's regular paper titles. Even so, it was kind of cool logging on to find a new one every day, and I look forward to seeing what else Don can do with the medium.

4.) Pinkette #15b, written and edited by Karen Pender-Gunn, P.O. Box 567, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia: Another issue of Karen's smallish perzine that rings the changes between issues of her larger archival fanzine *Pink*. This one has a few observations of the pleasures of her and Ian's Gunn's GUFF trip to the U.K., and a cautionary note on the prospects for employment for women with college degrees by Wynne Jones. A pleasant little offering.

5.) Science Fiction Chronicle # 188, edited by Andrew Porter, P.O. Box 022730, Brooklyn, NY 11202-0056: Not strictly a fanzine, of course, but Andy sends it to me in trade for *Apak*, and I do like having the opportunity to keep up with events in the genre. Quite a cover by Ed Emshwiller too, and I enjoyed the interview with Octavia Butler by Allison Stein Best. It's sad that so much of the useful news in SFC seems to consist of obituaries; I had not been aware of the death of G.C. Edmondson, author of some of the better sf potboilers of my youth. And I was unaware that he had been born Jose Mario Garry Ordonez Edmondson y Cotton. Don D'Amassa offers a good obituary of Walter M. Miller, but really, Mr. Porter, heading the cover with the words "SUICIDE: *Canticle for Leibowitz* Author Kills Himself"? What price the rocket . . .

Also Received:

DeProfundis #186, edited by Tim Merrigan for the LASFS. *Mobius Strip*, dated January, 1996, edited Alexandra Ceely for the EPSFFS; *Situation Normal??*, dated January, 1996, edited by Aileen Forman for SNAFFU. All Fanzines reviewed by Andy; of the eight listed, none were received by Victor.

— APH



APPARATCHIK is just another lost and unreported legionnaire of fandom, scrabbling out a minimal existence in the rocky soil of a forsaken outpost, smelling snow on the breeze and wistfully humming the chorus of that old marching song: *When you go by the Via Aurelia, / As thousands have traveled before, / Remember the Luck of the Soldier, / Who never saw Rome any more! / Oh dear was the sweetheart that kissed him / And dear was the mother that bore, / But his shield was picked up in the heather, / And he never saw Rome any more!* 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 VXG@p.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 tribute of pearl, silver and lapis lazuli. 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, Tracy Benton, Richard Brandt, Steve Brewster, Scott Custis, Don Fitch, Jill Flores, 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, Dale Speirs Geri Sullivan, Steve Swartz, Michael Waite, and Art Widner. No other writer can so elegantly walk the tightrope of madness.