

* * * * * The 11th issue of a fanzine by Andrew Hooper
A P P A R A T C H I K member fwa, supporter afal, coming your way
* * * * * from The Starliter, 4228 Francis Ave. N. # 103
11 June 16th, 1994 Seattle, WA 98103. This is Drag Bunt Press
* * * * * Production # 187, and thank you for waiting.

...already I'm stumbling around like a drunk trout...

WHAT, YOU BELIEVED ALL THAT STUFF I SAID ABOUT CONTINUING THIS?

Well, that was a nice break from the constant pressure of having to publish this thing every week. I put up a good front about always having a page or so of things to say, but with all the other commitments I had to take care of leading up to Corflu, it was getting to be something of a strain to keep APAK coming your way every week. You will probably have noticed that the last couple issues were a little slow to get to you; they were mailed several days later than they were dated. But I gather from the tenor of the mail I received during that same period that you were not having all that much fun trying to send out LoCs before another APAK landed in your mailbox, so perhaps this move to bi-weekly publication (for I have decided to make it so) will be as welcome on your end as on mine.

WAS IT MEDIOCRE FOR YOU TOO? The major fannish event of the past month was Corflu NoVa, held in fabulous Crystal City, a cluster of condos, shopping malls and expensive hotels just down the road from the Pentagon. I want to say from the outset that Carrie and I both had a great time. It was wonderful to see so many friends again, and to hang out with some people I have long wanted to spend a week or so with. We are especially grateful to Dan and Lynn Steffan for their kind hospitality in hosting ourselves and Nevenah Smith & Barnabas Rapoport both before and after the convention. I loved spending time with Dan, Lynn, Avedon Carol and Rob Hansen, Ted and Lynda White, Frank Lunney, Robert Lichtman, rich brown, Terry Hughes (gawd!) and others whose names were written on brain cells killed in the line of duty at one of the many parties hosted over the Corflu/Disclave fortnight.

But even though we had a great time, I have to say that Corflu itself did not meet my expectations. There were a lot of problems with the hotel, the banquet, the configuration of the hospitality rooms (the smoking room happened to have no working ventilation system, which made it seem a lot like sitting inside a diesel engine), and other minor elements of the convention. We would certainly have been willing to forgive almost all of these things if there had been some personality hosting the convention, communal or individual, that asked our forbearance and explained why there were a few bugs in the system. But we were left to work things out through rumor and supposition, because there was no effort to invoke the communal spirit of Corflu, nor did anyone step forward to introduce themselves as being responsible for the events of the weekend. This meant that we didn't have a chance to praise the things we liked, either, and made Corflu 11 feel the same as any of a dozen other impersonal conventions within which fanzine fans carve a niche for themselves. I'm afraid that hosting Corflu really is a lot different from chairing a Disclave....

Corflu is a personal occasion, when old acquaintances are renewed, and new ones, born in correspondence, are consummated. But at the same time, Corflu should have some degree of group consciousness, an agenda that underlines our community of fanwriters and readers. The people hosting the convention (note that word, "host") need to project some personality, to welcome the attendees and offer their vision of what the weekend is going to be like. The most important job of a the committee is to provide a grain of sand, around which the pearl of Corflu can eventually form.

ON THE SUBJECT OF YOUR LETTERS, I have done my best to include at least a sampling of the best ones I received, but even so, it seems like a pitifully small slice compared to the enormous number of cards and letters I have received since I was able to print any of them. And there were some letters that I couldn't even begin to take excerpts from, they were so long and involved. One in particular, from rich brown, was worthy of being a major article in somebody's genzine, and I may have to publish one just to be able to run his letter. I mean, it was eight pages long! I can only assume that in sending me something of that length, people understand that I won't be able to publish them, not in APAK at least.

While I have every intention of staying bi-weekly for at least the rest of the summer, I may have to publish another letter supplement next week, just so I can get on top of the mail a little bit. It does no good to tell me that I don't have to publish every letter I receive; I know that secretly the only reason anyone reads my stuff is the off-chance that they might see their name in print, and thereby acquire a small crumb of egoboo. So, no WAHF this time; I'll make another honest effort to bring everyone into print before I give up on anyone's letters. But hey, you would make life a lot easier for me if you would at least try to keep your kind and thoughtful missives from sprawling out to eight pages....

No, but we do have a shop in the hotel where you can rent equipment...

We'll start with a general evaluation of APAK, as well as some remembrance of eclipses, from REDD BOGGS, PO Box 441, El Verano, CA 95433: "I am fond of old fannish traditions: interlineations, simplified spelling, scientifi-combinations, ect ect (another old fannish tradition!), but nonstopagraphing, printing on Fibretone, and even weekly fanzines are, perhaps, not where it's at these days. I'd really like to see a more conventional format for APAK, more expensive paper than Fibretone for Spent Brass, and -- as you seem to be planning now -- less frequent but meatier issues of both your fanzines. Nonstopagraphing was meant to save space, but you don't save much space that way, and the format is certainly sloppy. Fibretone is much too close to returning to the dust from which it came -- haven't you seen fanzines on Fibretone already withered and discolored after only a few years of existence? Fibretoned fanzines quickly disintegrate unless the Smithsonian takes care of them. Aren't you publishing for the ages?

"And weekly fanzines are perhaps too much of a good thing, like all-news radio or CNN. For the same postage you could publish an eight-pager once a month instead of a two-pager once a week, and even enclose the fanzine in an envelope to insure a safer and surer trip through the mail. See The Geis Letter for a nice demonstration of this. A single-sheet sent folded and stapled gets pretty beat traveling only from Seattle to El Verano. I can imagine how badly your fanzines fare in the mail when you send them to your eager readers in Ulan Bator." [I think the suggestion about envelopes is a good one, although it does add another step to the process of sending out the zine, and I'd have to put a return address on them as well. As for the rest of it, it seems to me that you've decided that the distinction of being "not where it's at these days" dovetails rather neatly with your own aesthetic and practical values. I'll probably leave Nonstopagraphing behind when we get a new computer RSN, but you know, sometimes people need to make these mistakes for themselves, Redd. And besides, I like CNN --aph]

"Even so, it was pleasant to receive your description of the annular eclipse so soon after the event. I'm not sure which eclipse you're referring to when you mention "a total eclipse, a real one" that you remember from your

boyhood in West Virginia. They have total eclipses in West Virginia? I remember a total eclipse that happened in Minneapolis when I lived there. I believe it was in 1954 -- a long time before the one you mention, no doubt -- and I briefly reported on it in Sky Hook; you could look it up.

"On that occasion I walked out to a park to view the eclipse, I remember, going past houses where at the early hour of the eclipse people were eating breakfast and viewing the eclipse on TV! I thought it amazing that they watched on TV something they could view in person with their own eyes (if perhaps unsafely) by going out into their backyards. But with the annular eclipse of 1994 I myself watched the phenomenon on TV. As could be predicted, the Bay Area was socked in by the usual summer marine layer that morning, and the only glimpse of it one could obtain was on TV, views of it from Mt. Hamilton, El Paso, and somewhere in New England. Very impressive description of your views of eclipses past and present, and even the words of the song from "that old Pink Floyd album" are less inane than most song lyrics...At least whoever wrote the words knew that "the sun is eclipsed by the moon," and that's a small triumph in these ignorant times. He may even know that in a lunar eclipse the moon is eclipsed by the sun. Aha!"

[More Eclipse Notes from JEANNE GOMOLL, 2825 Union St., Madison, WI 53704-5136:] "With the shadow of a brook trout looming over my shoulder these past weeks, I have felt anxious about getting this letter written. Perhaps I will simply hand it to you when you arrive in Madison, to forestall the ignominious fish wallop.

"When I went to work the morning of the eclipse, I cut two pieces of cardboard, white and black, and used a pin to puncture the black piece in preparation for later viewing. As usual, things got busy, and although I had intended to stroll outdoors around 10:30 to watch the progress of the eclipse with my cardboard viewer, I completely forgot about the day's unusual event an hour after arriving at my office. At one point, I was hurrying down a hallway, delivering some camera-ready copy to our printer liaison, when I happened to glance out a window and noticed the eerie darkness. I groaned, at first thinking it was about to rain, and knowing that I had no umbrella at work. but a few seconds later I realized that the eclipse was happening and dashed out the building with my scraps of cardboard.

"The strange light impressed me at first. Everything just seemed completely wrong. But the weirdest thing was the shadows. As I walked across the courtyard outside the office building, the shadows cast by trees and leaves caught my attention. Instead of the normal, negative leaf-shaped pattern of light dappling the concrete, millions of crescent shaped spots of light danced around my feet. I lent co-workers my home-made cardboard viewer while gazed, fascinated, at the pavement, thinking of how many small, seemingly insignificant elements make up our definition of "normality." [Yes, it's a little unsettling to realize that there isn't all that big a difference between one's self and a rooster that is fooled into crowing the dawn in mid-afternoon. Events like eclipses and meteor showers seem to act as powerful stimulus to the lizard-cells in the back-brain. Now, on the subject of APAK itself, here's a little ugly groveling from GARY FARBBER (88 Parkville Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11230), whose badly scrawled pocsarcds arrived without a blanket DNP for a change:--aph]

"Hey Meester! Meester? Yo wanna my seester in return for yo faaaaaanzine, Operatic Chick? I have survived the blow to my ego that I'm not worth it being sent to in the first place, but now, now, I've asked by mail, I've asked in person, and shucks, eet

It's like having Ronald Reagan for a road manager....

Of course we'll play Petrushka!

eez steel "no go." Eez eet my breath, my grotesque appearance or was I no good in bed? (Whoops, sorry, question meant for someone else.) I'm giving you one last chance, or in 2 weeks I'm launching Bill Kunkel to projectile vomit on your painted soldiers. In 3 weeks I'm putting the Jack Speer Grammar Checker virus into your computer (you'll be helpless, unable to write anything while it argues with your choices). In 4 weeks, videotapes of the live Lan's Lantern will over ride all ball games on your TV. Remember I am completely serious. Utterly. You Have Been Warned! Harl Vincent, his mark." [Pitiful, isn't? But never let it be said that I am unmoved by the spectacle of a man making an ass of himself. Meanwhile: --aph]

THE TAFF SCUFFLE CONTINUES:

LENNY BAILES, 504 Bartlett St., San Francisco, CA, writes: "Perhaps it would be better to turn TAFF over, in entirety, to the Worldcon, and let the con-members do whatever they want with it. If the issue is the time-honored longing of fanzine fans to cross the great water, why not let one-time funds spring up, as needed, to transport our people to Corflu? If TAFF was formally given to convention fandom to administer, maybe a deal could be struck whereby the worldcon kicks in to help fanzine fans with individual campaigns connected with Corflu.

"The most regret I feel about current fandom is not the gradual dilution of institutions like TAFF or the Hugos, but the alienation of our original band of literary mutants from the main body of convention fandom. I'm old enough to remember the days when conventions were held in one big room: neos off the street, fanzine fans, and sf pros all met together - just to see who we all were and talk to one another.

"I was reading Apparatchik last night in a coffee-house amidst other San Francisco refugees from television and canned media entertainment. As I listened to David Bowie singing 'Starman,' I envisioned a weird fusion program item for a convention -- I saw a Sam Moskowitz /Richard Lupoff-type slide show of 'first contact' S-F covers shown while 'Starman' was piped over the PA. What's it Like Out There?, Star Beast, Leinster's First Contact, The 27th Day, Stranger in a Strange Land, The Man Who Fell to Earth, ET, The Secret Ascension, The Intervention, etc. Because, to me, David Bowie's words link the book readers, fanzine publishers, Diamond Dog stoners, costume freaks and Trekkers together with something we share in common. It would be nice if modern-day convention-goers had access to some kind of high-level timebinding. Some of them might even be curious enough to grow roots into the soil that yielded most of us." [I felt a little of that energy you spoke of as occurring in old-time one-room conventions at Silvercon. With only a few people around, it would have been the height of idiocy not to deal with everyone on an equal footing, from neo to bnf. On the other hand, I don't recall feeling like we were any nearer to beating what I call the "timebinding paradox." We, as students of fannish and stfnal history, understand that the seeds of the future were sown in the past, and that a real understanding of where we are going depends on knowledge of where we have been. But to the casual or inexperienced observer, Stf seems to be such a forward-looking discipline that it flies in the face of people's automatic assumptions to get them to look to the past for clues to it's nature. I'm open to suggestions as to how this can be overcome in the fannish population as a whole. Now, here's a few more thoughts on the TAFF topic, from JEANNE GOMOLL: -- aph]

"It may be too late to get in my two-cents worth on the TAFF destination conversation, but since I don't recall seeing this particular point raised by any of your correspondents, here it is anyway, if only FYI:

XXXXXXXXXXXX

I think the elegant simplicity of TAFF law (as originally described on one side of a sheet by Walt Willis and changed very little since) contains the essence of TAFF's longevity. Its brevity and the fact that it hitchhikes along with every ballot has meant that the rules and organization of TAFF are readily understood by everyone, and more importantly, that the rules do not need to be re-invented every year. Although I sympathize with the idea that a more fannish convention than the worldcon might be a more appropriate TAFF delegate destination, I fear that the introduction of such a destination variable might prove fatal to the TAFF tradition.

"If the rules had been changed to divert the North American TAFF winner to Mexican, as was frequently suggested, administrators would now be scrambling to re-write the rules to accommodate Mexican's erratic schedule [not to mention it's recent demise, as dictated by Greg Pickersgill, the Lord Kitchener of modern fandom --aph], and dealing with the candidates who would be requesting or demanding to travel to conventions of their own choice. When I administered TAFF-US, at least one person who had wanted to run for TAFF asked me if she could be promised to attend a convention that better suited her work schedule, when she could more easily take vacation time from her job. I refused her request. The requirements to run for TAFF are simple and few. One of them is to promise to attend the same specific convention that all other candidates promise to attend. voters are not asked at which convention they wish to meet the TAFF delegate, but who the delegate will be. any election based on the former might well end up turning the TAFF election into a popularity contest of conventions, not fans.

"It may seem right now that Corflu is a fairly stable convention and perhaps it is reasonable to change the TAFF rules so that delegates sent to North America are sent to Corflu. But what about the years in which, for whatever reason, Corflu attracts few fans? What if we skip a year or two, as Mexican has? Would we leave the problem to be solved by the administrators? Would the likely vote-getters be allowed to attempt to influence the choice of another destination? What if a choice of an alternative site eliminates a possible candidate's ability to run? How should the administrators handle charges of favoritism of fans or cons? How would the TAFF rules be re-written to deal with potential mix-ups when voting deadlines and administrators' terms of office all become fluid [you mean like Abi Frost's apparently unilateral decision that she will serve as U.K. administrator for three years? --aph] -- dependent on the various dates of the destination conventions?

"I am sure that most of these problems would be handled diplomatically and smoothly by most TAFF administrators. However, historically, we have had years in which it's been a very good thing indeed that the rules were essentially idiot-proof. Look what happened to the FAAN awards, because -- I think -- too many creative decisions were required annually of its administrators. Delayed decisions finally resulted in killing off this institution.

"Maybe I'm paranoid, but I would worry that too much tinkering with this incredibly long-lived, essentially unchanged process would quickly destroy it. I like Geri Sullivan's suggestion that new fan funds -- linked to Corflu and Ditto, and other cons like them -- be encouraged, rather than attempting to rebuild TAFF." [I see just as much danger in that course, though -- if all of us get really gung-ho about bringing, say, Simon Ounsley to Corflu, what interest are we likely to have in importing someone who doesn't even want to go there to worldcon? All of these arguments are well-framed and probably quite correct, but I am still moved to question the value of tradition which cannot survive any modification, even temporarily, without being plunged into confusion and eventually running out of steam. --aph]

JANICE MURRAY, PO Box 75684, Seattle, WA 98125-0684, weighs in with a few comments on proposed changes in TAFF: "In APAK 5 Arnie says 'Make publishing a fanzine within the last 2 years a requirement....' Oh, good. Give the people who don't vote because fan funds are too elitist a bit of fuel for the fire. I try every year to get people interested in fan funds & now there's the idea that I shouldn't. Wouldn't you love to be the one to tell Harry Warner Jr. that LoCs don't count and he can't vote?"

"It is also curious to contemplate possibility that under Arnie Katz's proposal, and taking into consideration the accepted definition of 'the usual,' whichever fershlugginer neofan is currently editing Westwind is more qualified to vote than either Alan or I in fan fund races." [Your point is duly noted, and thanks a lot for the sub! -- aph]

[APPARATCHIK IS A REGULAR PICTURESQUE POSTCARDY MOUNTAIN with two big caves for eyes and a cliff for a jaw that would go up and down and whenever it did he'd puff up some dust and hack up a boulder. You can get three months worth of it for \$3.00, or a year's worth for \$12.00, or a lifetime supply for \$19.73, or in exchange for a few published LoCs or maybe you just need to smear Crisco all over your body, roll around in bread crumbs and bake yourself for one hour at 375 degrees until the issues start pouring in. Lifetime Subscribers to date: Don Fitch, Janice Murray, Alan Rosenthal and Geri Sullivan. Thanks to those various fans who sent smaller amounts of money, it all helps.

FANZINES received since last issue: ! # 1.1, Bill Humphries; Baryon # 57, Barry Hunter; BLAT! # 3, Steffan and White; Crawdaddy # 5, Paul Williams; Cube # 52, Hope Kiefer for SF3; De Profundis # 266, Tim Merrigan for LASFS; Egoboo # 17, John Berry & Ted White; Empties # 12 & 13, Martin Tudor; Fanthology 1990, Mark Loney, et al; File 770 # 103, Mike Glycer; FOSFAX # 169, Tim Lane for Fosfa; From Scratch # 3, Nigel Rowe; Joe Wesson Magazine dated 1-18-94, Joe Wesson; Mobius Strip V.2, # 5, Roy Anthony for the El Paso SFFA; Nine Lines Each # 3, Hardin, Springer and Forman; Opuntia # 19, Dale Speirs; Platypus # 1 -- 3, Simon Ounsley; Southern Gothic # 2, Lucy Huntzinger; Sticky Quarters # 23, Brian Earl Brown; Thingummybob # 11, Chuck Connor; Thyme # 97, Alan Stewart; and the sundry contents of the May FAPA mailing. What a haul! You'd think I'd have tried to get some locs out by now...

...in the after fish hold, the ZWICKER could cruise at 9 1/2 knots...

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Address Correction Requested

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