
APPARATCHIK

The eighteenth issue of a bi-weekly fanzine, published by Andy Hooper, member fwa, supporter afal, at The Starliter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. # 103, Seattle, WA 98103. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 196. Join us this Saturday for the end-of-summer drug seizure and boat auction!

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MY SISTER ELIZABETH and I just got off the phone...in addition to the various tidbits of family news we have to impart to one another, we also compared notes on documentarian Ken Burns' new film *BASEBALL*, a titanic 21.5 hour effort that just finished its initial run on PBS. We opened by agreeing that it was unfair to compare *BASEBALL* to Burns' last work, *THE CIVIL WAR*; the subject matter of the latter film, if presented with any measure of care, would have a galvanic effect on any audience not immediately conversant with all the emotional particulars of that war. the opposite effect was probably at work in *BASEBALL*; if you didn't already like the game in some measure, the whole presentation would probably have seemed interminable (which, at 21.5 hours, it nearly was anyway).

We picked at a few nits. The music sometimes seemed to be poorly suited to the decade being considered (although the selection of Golden Earring's "Radar Love" to represent the Cincinnati Reds "Big Red Machine" of the mid-seventies was oddly appropriate), and from the very beginning of the series, it felt like a lot more attention was paid to players in New York than in the rest of the country. And while it felt right that baseball's long and dismal struggle toward racial integration took center stage through almost the entire series, we wondered why it was so much more heinous to bar blacks from baseball than it was to similarly exclude women. The film simply doesn't have the wrenching emotional impact that *THE CIVIL WAR* did, but I doubt that Burns was interested in creating the same kind of impression anyway.

Also, if you don't live in New York and follow baseball, there's an excellent chance that you didn't get to see your favorite team considered at any length. I'm a life-long Detroit Tigers fan, and for those of you who don't have any familiarity with the sport, Detroit has been one of the more successful franchises in the game, well below the level of brilliance shown by the New York franchises or the St. Louis Cardinals, but right in the lead at the next level down. They have won two world series in my lifetime, and enjoyed consistent success between 1930 and 1945, when they had some of the best players in the game, and were a brilliant club in the first two decades of the century as well.

Burns focused whatever attention Detroit got most closely on Ty Cobb, the Tiger's greatest player, who was one of the most respected and at the same time most despised players in baseball history. As if to balance the black image of Cobb, he gave a few seconds of camera time to Hank Greenberg, a great slugger of the thirties and forties, but he was clearly most interesting because he was the first great Jewish player in major league baseball. No mention of brilliant teammates like Charlie Gehringer, one of the greatest second basemen in history. One would get the impression that no team outside of the

northeastern corridor won any world series between 1927 and 1948, that there were no great hitters outside of Gehrig, Ruth, DiMaggio and Ted Williams. There was mention - briefly - of hitters like Jimmie Foxx and Rogers Hornsby, but none of them were considered worthy of prolonged biographical essays, like the top men were. I understand that it would take thousands of hours to profile all of the talented and noteworthy players that appeared in the major leagues in the past 150 years, and that a film like *BASEBALL* is best seen as a springboard to serious study of its subject matter, not an encyclopedic account. But come on...failing to even mention Stan Musial in the account of either the 1940s or 1950s, bringing him up only in the context of the end of his career in the 1960s? Without Stan Musial, you have nothing approaching an accurate picture of the National League in the 1950s. He was the standard toward which all National League players aspired, like DiMaggio and Williams were in the American league. And while we're on the subject of DiMaggio, how can you fail to make note of the fact that he also had two brothers who played major league baseball? Isn't that worth mentioning in something other than the context of the 1948 pennant race, and for 5 seconds at that?

The thing that really set me off was the account of Bob Gibson's 17 strikeouts in the first game of the 1968 world series. Now, Gibson was a superb, brilliant pitcher, maybe the fastest thrower since Walter Johnson. But after he carried the Cardinals on his back in the first games, Detroit came back. They survived a three games to one deficit to win the series on both the pitching and hitting of Mickey Lolich, who has always been one of my favorites for his rather portly physique. The impression one had from the *BASEBALL* account was that Gibson led his team to a second consecutive world series victory, which just isn't true.

This is the real criticism which one can level at Burns' style; he is interested in telling a story, as well as presenting history; and history comes out second in conflicts between those two goals. If you really enjoy his work, I think you owe it to him to expand your understanding of his subject matter, and to do additional reading so that you can tell the difference between mere reportage, and real art.

Still, over the past ten days, I've been fascinated by the evolution of that game and the parallel advance of its photographic record. The first color films, in the fifth episode, were startling; it was like a reminder that we were actually considering events in the 20th episode after all. But the most stunning pictures were stills; Burns' has a knack for picking out one face in a crowd scene, and focusing closer and closer until something of the inner human being emerges onto the screen. It's a remarkable technique.

Where's the Kaboom? There was supposed to be an earth-shattering Kaboom?

But I haven't got a wicense to shoot a fwicaseeing wabbit...

In the end, I loved the film, and it helped me to focus on the fact that despite this dismal strike, the loss of the first World Series since 1904, and the many other discontents of the modern game, I still love baseball as well, and I always will.

This is one reason why I haven't a whole lot to say for the past two weeks. The one event I can really comment on is the death of Robert Bloch, which is still sad for all that we anticipated it. I've admired Bloch and his writing ever since my earliest days reading sf and fantasy; while I'm not prepared to accept Harlan Ellison's verdict that with his death the golden age of fantasy has past (Bradbury's still around after all), he was certainly one of the best reasons to feel good about the field.

But I think I would argue that his personal contributions to fandom were even greater than his professional work. I wasn't there, so others will have to confirm or deny this, but it seems to me that Bloch was a pioneer in fan/pro relations; he was one of the first to show that professionals could interact with fans as equals, and emerge the greater for the experience. His sardonic take on fandom concealed a genuine affection for us and our foibles; right to the end of his life he continued to correspond with fans, even writing LoCs to fanzines. I got a note from him as recently as last March. I'm sorry I won't be hearing from him anymore.

ON TO THE LETTERS:

We'll start with the newsworthy stuff in the correspondence, to wit the reportage of GEORGE FLYNN, (P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Sq. Station, Cambridge, MA 02142) who expresses amazement at my demands of last issue:]

"What, you wanted me to do a *report* on ConAdian?"

"What am I paying for, man? indeed. Andy Porter asked if I would do a general report, and he *would* have paid. But I declined, correctly anticipating that I wouldn't have time to see much beyond the Business Meeting and associated drudgery (including the time spent hanging around the office waiting for the computer to free up so I could write the agenda). And as for 'break(ing) the silence,' even when I wrote my last letter, sizable amounts of verbiage about the con were already circulating on-line. But anyway, some impressions...."

"On the whole it was a decent Worldcon, neither especially great nor especially terrible. On the smallish side, and a good thing too: more wouldn't have fit. The most entertaining speaker at the Opening Ceremony was the mayor of Winnipeg, which tells you something; but I'm still not sure what the troupe of Ukrainian dancers was doing there. I can't tell you much about the program proper; the only panel I saw was the one I was on (and did we really need a Workshop on Parliamentary Procedure?). Dealer's room and art show were both depressingly small, no doubt because of the border-crossing paranoia; but one rather out-of-place dealer had Poe first editions, and I hear Resnick's Alternate Worldcons sold like hotcakes. The fanzine lounge was pleasant but underutilized, even after they publicized its having the only bar in the convention space. Restaurants were surprisingly good (would you believe one called 'Mother Tucker's?'), hotel elevators unsurprisingly inadequate. The con received rather lavish press coverage, there being not much else happening in Winnipeg.

"As to your questions: Can't remember what Andy Porter wore to the Hugo ceremony; no doubt I was blinded by his grin when he won. Seium awards? Um, I forget, and don't have the newsletters (which were very uneven) handy. San Antonio beat St. Louis for 1997, 915 - 466; GoH's will be Moorcock, Budrys, and Roy Tackett. the new Chicago in 2000 bid officially announced, as did the new Atlanta in 1998 bid (neither to be confused with any previous bids for the same time/places). Hugo voters confounded

complainers about perennial winners by defeating Whelan, Dozois, and *Locus*, leaving Langford as the only surviving bloated Hugocrat. Oh, yes, and you defeated No Award more resoundingly than last year for 5th place. (*Spent Brass* tied with *AQ* for 7th place in the nominations.) How's that?

"The discussion of fanzine criticism continues to be interesting; but I just got through sending Tom Sadler an apologia for the concept of criticism, and I'm talked out on the subject. However, I should note that in my own loc the diffident 'I'd say that he's more ignorant...' somehow mutated into the assertive 'I say that he's even more ignorant...' As Luke said, 'And how successful are we at communicating?'

"Last night on Baseball they quoted a 1914 story from the weekly paper in my home tow. Beware: nothing is too obscure to wind up in history..."

[An apologia to Tom Sadler on the subject of criticism...] Jesus, you do seem to take on thankless tasks, don't you, George. I'll take your word for the dissemination of Worldcon reports on-line...I'm still using the infobahn mostly to send mail I don't feel sufficiently interested in to spend a stamp on. Your report is the first I've gotten. Also, I'm sorry about the typo...pretty egregious. One ought to try and do a little better when letters make up such a big part of one's fanzine...

Let us continue now with some questions and theories from VICKI ROSENZWEIG (33 Indian Road # 6-R, New York, NY 10034) who begins by trying to comfort me (as have many) in the wake of my thin-skinned behavior of late:]

"...Most of us are more practiced at explaining our disagreements at length than at writing in to explain why we think you're exactly right on some point, and disagreement is more likely to produce invective than agreement is to produce rhapsodies. None of this, of course, makes getting rude letters any more pleasant, but do remember that there are people who appreciate what you're doing...."

"...That said, I think it's time for one mild comment and a few heretical questions. The mild comment is that I don't really see any significant difference between Jeanne Mealy's preference for discussing things and people she likes, and, say, Deb Notkin's stated policy of reviewing only science fiction books she likes in her column in *Habakkuk* or my habit of running a 'free plug department' but no 'must avoid section' in my own zine: faced with the sheer amount of material being produced, and Sturgeon's Law, it makes sense to use our limited space to point out some good things rather than criticize the dreck and the merely ordinary. It's also more fun to write a fair review of something you liked; unless the bad work is so bad that any random quote will do to demonstrate its flaws, you're likely to face the unpleasant task of rereading something you didn't even like reading once. Obviously, this approach is different from giving a positive review to things one doesn't like, or praising an unexceptional work as if it were the best of the decade, but I don't think Jeanne Mealy is doing that.

"The first heretical question is: Exactly what is objectionable about the art in *AQ*? It's not in the style typically found in faanish fanzines, but I suspect that has a lot to do with the nature of mimeography as a technology, and little or nothing to do with the important things that make fanzines what they are: given *AQ*'s choice of a different

means of repro, it's appropriate for them to run artwork that uses their medium to best advantage. I'm not thrilled with half of what they've chosen, but that has less to do with style than with the fact that I'm tired of half-naked women doing nothing and wings on creatures that don't have them in real life, whether in fanzines, con art shows, or the mundane world.

"From another angle, I would ask why baseball of volcanoes (to pick topics from recent issues of *Mainstream* and *APAK*, since they come conveniently to mind) are more fannish than the circus. to my ear, Joy Moreau's writings in *AQ* do have the personal touch that I associate with fannish writing: unlike, say, someone discussing the same topics in *The New Yorker*, the fannish writer puts himself or herself into the piece, rather than hiding behind an anonymous 'we.' I'm tempted to ask if Ted, or anyone else, can define the fannish attitude other than recursively: as I understand what Ted has said, he feels that a key point, maybe the key point, is that he is addressing a known audience, a community, when he sends out *BLAT!* If he means that knowing our audience is the point, I think I agree: I write the way I do in *Quipu* because I have an idea of who is getting the zine. I would write differently for strangers, or for relatives, or if I decided to describe a faanish vacation trip for co-workers. But in that sense fannish fanzines aren't different in kind from punk rock or filk zines: The known audience is different, but the fact of shared knowledge and community is largely the same. (I can accept this conclusion: what matters to me is that I have found an accepting community of intelligent, literate people who share many of my interests. ...If, however, as it may look from some angles, he means that certain people and zines are us and others are not-us, something is wrong. I'm part of that community, I think, which is a nice feeling, but 'not one of us' is not what I think of as a fannish concept, however human the temptation to use it.

"The task, I guess, is to figure out, and articulate, what makes a zine fannish, for the benefit of, among others, the readers of *AQ* who either don't see a difference between what they're getting and what Ted and Dan, or Jerry and Suzle, or Bill Donaho, are sending out, or perceive a difference that consists entirely of the other zines containing jokes they don't get. I'm tempted to fall back on pointing at what I mean, along with offers to the curious neofan, but from the outside it doesn't really look all that different from the PTA or railroad enthusiasts: we know who we are and why we're here, and we basically know each other (or at least all know people in common). this is comfortable, and in many ways valuable - I'm still getting over finding my aunt and cousin behind me in line at ReaderCon two months ago - but how is it different from any other group of people that form a community with this large, mobile culture? The only obvious difference I can think of is that we are held together in large part by the postal system, in an age when writing personal letters is considered old-fashioned, if not absurd. The answer may be the same as to 'what is jazz?': if you have to ask, you'll never know. But fanzine fandom is, among other things, a very verbal community, and I have some vague hope that it's

easier for writers to talk about their interests and approaches than it is for saxophonists to describe their music without picking up a saxophone."

[Wow, picking up the subject of "What is fannishness" could sustain us all for the next ten years without respite if we wanted it to...we'll see what kind of further talk this engenders. But since Vicki had the good grace to send Ted a copy of her letter, we'll start with a response from the critic in question, TED WHITE, 1014 N. Tuckahoe, Falls Church, VA 22046:]

"Vicki, you seem to slide into your topic a bit obliquely. Am I to assume an implied criticism because I don't confine myself to the top 10% of fanzines I review in HABAKKUK? (But please remember the first column opened with a long and very favorable review of two Britzines.) I see my reviews as a mode for commentary on contemporary fanzine fandom, among other things; a chance to deal with things which are going on and with which I may or may not necessarily agree. All my reviews are 'fair' in that I do not misrepresent that upon which I comment - as people like Chuck Connor do.

"Exactly what is objectionable about the art in *AQ*? You answer this question in part yourself: 'I'm generally tired of half-naked women doing nothing and wings on creatures that don't have them in real life....'

"Part of the problem with the art in *AQ* is that it's so much the same: almost generic one might say, although it is produced by three different artists. More variety might be more appropriate.

"My personal reaction is that it's second-rate rip-offs of Alicia Austin ripping off Beardsley. I like the style. I just don't like the unimaginative purpose to which it has been put in *AQ*. It's all style-copying, and they're not bad at it, technically. But in the context of a fanzine, it's a bit, ah, twee. I liked it better in *ENERGUMEN* twenty-odd years ago, where Austin contributed but did not dominate. (also - Austin was/is much better.)

"It also disturbs me that this kind of artwork seems to be identified by some with fannish feminism, making it somehow PC and above (male) criticism. Well, it isn't. And it equally disturbs me that apparently the artists in question regard themselves as above criticism, even from someone who knows art. (And I think Linda Michaels' cartoons are ugly, unfunny, and un-artistic.) "

[Let me be the first to say that I think this supposed double-standard is complete crap, Ted. Give me an example, if you can. If people defend their work against criticism with parochial zeal, I think it has to do more with social and regional loyalties than with any ideological agenda. Separatist and supremacist feminism have as much currency in fandom as the Shaver Mystery; if anything, the opposite is true, as women fall all over themselves to distance themselves from any stain of feminism. If people don't like your criticism, it's because they don't like your criticism, not because they think you are chromosomally-challenged. --aph]

"As for the method of repro, I don't think that has anything to do with it. the fact is that almost all the art in *AQ* could be published in mimeo - even handstencilled. And

On the other hand, who needs reviews like that anyway?

And what did Langford do with the metal shower rail?

fanzines published by 'litho,' offset, etc., have been around since the fifties (hell, when I think back to THE FANSCIENT and its ilk, the forties) - almost none of which relied so heavily on a single, derivative style of art to fill their pages."

"I would ask why baseball or volcanoes...are much more fannish than the circus.' They aren't, of course. It's the approach one brings, as a fan, writing to other fans, that makes it fannish, no matter what the topic is. Steve Brown's 'Circus Hand' which appeared in BOONFARK ten years ago is a good example. (In it he describes working in the Circus, and almost losing his hand in the process.) As I recall, I said I liked Joy's Circus writings, despite the way they roamed across the past without many reference points, but they exist in isolation from her audience. Indeed, one almost feels like an interloper, intruding on a scene where one knows no one and won't get the in-jokes. the woman is not, apparently, a fan, and never refers to the fans who are presumably her audience. I have to doubt that she actually knows who we are, and I'm made doubly suspicious by Joe's refusal to publish her address -- he wants to hold on to her and not allow her to relate directly to fandom; he wants to be her connection to fandom, via AQ."

[Hmmm -- that's one explanation, I suppose. My understanding is that Linda Michaels met Joy Moreau when she was doing some volunteer work at the hospital or nursing home where Joy currently resides, and stumbled upon her wealth of Circus tales almost by accident. Perhaps the idea here is to keep Joy from receiving some of the more unseemly material found in many fannish publications, which might turn her off to contributing further, although I'm sure she would appreciate receiving comments on her work, and I'm equally sure that Joe and Linda pass on letters of praise and appreciation. However benevolent the idea behind Joe's decision to act as a cut-out between Joy and fandom may be, I too find it a little disquieting. The greatest benefit to being a fan writer is the new contacts and correspondence it allows a person to form, and when you withhold their address, I think you remove a large chunk of the reason for contributing to fanzines. Of course, it may also be that Joy requested that her address be withheld...any comment, Joe? -aph]

"Fannishness, as expressed in writing, is also an attitude. Those who possess it - Chuck Harris, say - can write 'fannishly' about virtually anything (and has).

"When you say 'in that sense fannish fanzines aren't different in kind from punk rock or filk zines; the known audience is different, but the fact of shared knowledge and community is largely the same,' I have to disagree. Fandom and fanzines are unique. We are a community still small enough that we know each other, individually. When I write for BLAT! (or HABAKKUK) I quasi-visualize the 200-300 people to whom I am speaking, nodding metaphorically to various among them from time to time. (I often stick in a reference to Gregg Calkins or his OOPSLA!, because I know it gives him a charge to know he hasn't been forgotten....) This is not true of the 'zeens' of other fandoms, most of which are sold, not exchanged, and addressed to a vague and largely unknown audience who are only presumed to share a community, in the same way that ROLLING STONE assumes a community of sorts among its vast readership.

"You recognize the difference in your own writing, whether you are writing to fandom or to 'strangers,' and I think we all understand this point on the gut level.

"I suppose the point of contention, if there is one, is over this 'us' vs. 'not-us' stuff.

"I've heard the theory that most people are not comfortable in social groups of over a certain size, and seek by various devices to limit their circle of acquaintances to that size or less - not consciously, but as a reflection of ease or unease. By no small coincidence, the largest number most people can accept is in the low hundreds - 100 to 300, roughly. And this is also the manageable size for a fanzine's circulation. (We're up to 300 with BLAT!, and I'm here to tell you it verges on the unmanageable. Next issue we trim deadwood from the list, because we keep adding people....)

"Basically, we all exist in situations defined by 'us' and excluding the 'not-us.' We do this because, consciously or not, we require certain limits. Some people do it along family lines. Others by occupation or religion. We do it with fandom.

"When all of fandom fit comfortably between those limits, there are few problems. Despite vast disparities between fans of the thirties and forties, their common love of sf and the loneliness of their positions in their mundane communities brought them into a single community of a few hundred. the truly odd ones, like Degler, were regarded at one time as one might the crazy relative who lived in the attic: still one of us.

"But in the fifties, this began to change. The 1952 Chicon had 1,000 members/attendees: an overwhelming number and an omen. Still, it took a long time for fandom to really grow. That 1,000 represented a lot of people who weren't really into fandom, but read sf. Throughout the fifties fandom was still small and coherent. those who didn't do fanzines were still aware of them; fanzine fandom and fandom as a whole overlapped by over 90%.

"But in the late fifties the first signs began to appear of the fragmentation of fanzine fandom itself.

"There had always been more than one stream' of fanzines, once fanzines became common in fandom. Ed Wood is famous for not opening or reading some of the HYPHENS he received; he published a sercon fanzine (CHICAGO SF REVIEW or somesuch; it paled beside Earl Kemp's DESTINIES, another sercon fanzine published in the same city and in a similar - photo-offset - format at the same time) in which there were few signs of 'Sixth Fandom' although it was swirling around him at the time. But when Guy Terwilliger started TWIG, he presaged LAN'S LANTERN by thirty some years. TWIG was named after its editor ("Twig" was Guy's nickname), and it set out to create its own fandom, centered upon itself. As far as TWIG was concerned, there was no fandom, no other fanzines beyond itself. It was entirely self-referential, and its circulation was largely to neofans who knew little or nothing of fandom beyond TWIG either.

'At the same time, an Indiana clubzine was also creating its own fandom. Originally EISFA, it became YANDRO. YANDRO's first issue came out in 1953. By the

late fifties the monthly fanzine had a sizable circulation which overlapped that of other fanzines by no more than 50%. In the sixties it won a Hugo - in the same period when ERBDOM (a fanzine devoted entirely to Edgar Rice Burroughs) also won a Hugo. By then it was obvious that there were many 'streams' of fanzines, and the so-called 'fannish' fanzines were not a majority (if they ever were). Big genzines like XERO and LIGHTHOUSE dominated, followed by 'discussionzines' like HABAKKUK AND KIPPLE (Ted Pauls) and monthlies like CRY and YANDRO.

"To the extent that we could, we read all the fanzines; they were all part of the mix.

" In the seventies fandom, not bloated with Trekkies and Trekzines, fragmented further., Mediocre fanzines like TITLE held sway. Fannish fanzines were (in this country) represented by EGOBOO (early in the decade) and MOTA; there were few others. Many of the brightest fannish fans disappeared into private apas (I was in several).

"When Dan and I started PONG in late 1980, we revived fannish fandom from its slumbers - and degafiated fans like Robert Lichtman and Dave Rike among others. this was bitterly resented by some of those who had come along in the meantime and had assumed for themselves the role of Big Frogs in our little pond: Brian Earl Brown and Eric Mayer in particular. The felt themselves being shoved aside - although in no way did we actively try to do anything of that sort (we thought ourselves to be on friendly terms with both Brown and Mayer).

"At this point, now, fannish fandom is but one of many 'streams' in fandom, and by no mean the biggest. By no real coincidence, it maxes out at about 300 people, and maybe fewer. And although I reiterate that 'fannish fandom' and 'fanzine fandom' are not synonymous terms, I am not surprised that Corflu attracts an average of 100 people: a very comfortable size for a group of people gathered together.

"So now 'us' is a segment of fandom, rather than all of fandom. I see it as the segment which can trace itself all the way back to the beginnings of fandom, the 'core' of fandom, 'trufandom.' But that's my bias. And although they are 'not -us' I am sure that to those other segments of fandom, the con-fans, the filkers, et al, we are the 'not-us,' and they have their own 'us.'

The point of all this is that these terms, 'us' and 'not-us,' are descriptive, not value judgments. Everyone is in an 'us' group; there are uncountable numbers of 'us's. Most of us are in more than one 'us' - I for one am in at least two us's centered on music (the local music scene, in which I am a performer, former radio dee jay, etc., and known as 'Dr. Progresso' world-wide; and also the progressive-music fraternity, in which I am a journeymen, with only somewhat over 2,000 imported CDs of foreign progressive music; I also go back to the late fifties as a jazz critic and recently I was quoted extensively in the liner notes of Blue Note's CHARLES MINGUS 1962 TOWN HALL CONCERT, which I attended and wrote about at the time), and I was a founder of comics fandom in the fifties. So there's nothing

snobbish and exclusionary about the 'us' and 'not-us' thing: it's just a fact of human life.

"Nor do I think fannish fandom is snobbish or exclusionary. To the contrary, it welcomes with open arms all those who are receptive to its basis. I mean, look at the two of you. Andy has encountered little resistance, I think, in his rise to a position of some visibility in fannish fandom (we were all glad to see someone like him put so much energy into the fanzine scene), and you too, Vicki, as you have engaged yourself here have received positive feedback.

"Fannish fandom, to my mind, is a playground for adults. If you want to play with us, we're happy to play with you. It's fun.

"How is (fannish fandom) different from any other group of any other group of people who form a community within this large, mobile culture?' The answer to that question does not lie with externals or statistics; it lies with the content of each of these formed communities: their common bond and shared point of interest. I mean, there is a community - nationwide - devoted to the ownership of a certain brand of car. (There is a community of Corvette owners, another of Edsel owners, another of Thunderbird owners, and maybe even of Saturn owners - who recently held a 'homecoming' at the Saturn plant.) Superficially they have a lot in common with us, including the fact that they keep in touch via correspondence and newsletters, using the postal system. In fact, they have nothing at all in common with us (although some of us might belong to one of their groups too). they are focused on cars. We are focused on fandom."

[I think you're right on the mark here in noting that it doesn't require any special degree of maliciousness or arrogance to develop a special identification, and by extension, preference, for one's own circle of acquaintance. The only thing I found myself wondering about here was your defense of the special qualities of fandom. There are plenty of people in those other fandoms who don't sell their fanzines, and who see the primary interest in their social group to be the people in that group themselves, rather than the cars or punk rock or whatever drew them together to begin with. It seems a little like the sum of your argument is that fandom is special because it is fandom...a zen-like position which I have to admit is generally unassailable on logical grounds.

I have a long missive from rich brown on hand where he essentially echoes some of your narrative on the evolution of fandom, but he concludes that snobbery is its inevitable and desirable consequence. I don't have room to run it this issue, so we'll pick it up again in two weeks....

Now, we'll move directly to the climax of a letter from ALGERNON D'AMMASSA (134 George M. Cohan Blvd., Providence, RI 02903) who isn't sure if he likes criticism, but is sure he doesn't like Ted White:]

"...Another distinction to make concerns 'criticism.' No one seems to be saying we should do away with negative, or even harsh reviews, of our creative work. Some of us are deflecting the real issue here. Ted White's review of the fanzine Challenger he little to do with the fanzine and Ted is perfectly aware of it. This piece of 'criticism' was, to look at it plainly, a long, trivial screed against Guy Lillian. Himself. The man, alone; his very existence in fandom. The question is

And again, mostly on the left jab...

If I were the commissioner, I would worry about the safety of my wife and kids...

not about criticism - Ted offered none of that. Ted was out to 'nail' Guy Lillian. This argument about KTF reviews is a smoke-screen; the question was, why do I open a fanzine and find myself reading trivial, adolescent indictments of such and such an odious person the writer doesn't like?

"One more distinction, if I may: new fandom. Ted White is a skilled pundit, and a key tool in strident punditry is the abstract shorthand. It's a way to lead your audience away from someplace you don't go. If I refer to a statement someone else has made as being 'pc,' then you're getting a very subtle cue. PC means 'oh, more of that.' We all know what that is, or so we think, so we know not to waste our time thinking about it for ourselves. We trust the conclusion of the pundit who wields the abstract with authority. New Fandom is the same thing - Ted made it up. Now it's easy to throw up our hands and say, Gee, these New Fandomites talk about non-conflict and being nice and, and they don't like criticism (this generally comes, by the way, in response to criticism).

"If there is a new attitude emerging in fandom about negativity and feuding, an inclination to make friends rather than go on dividing up the community in jubilant verbiage, it could be a natural outgrowth of a general cultural shift, a reaction to fractious political dialogue and racial tensions in every major city and all the poisons of hatred and dishonesty. It would be only natural for these inquiries to enter into fandom, and I would expect it to have no easier a time there than anywhere else in our culture."

[Hmmm...well, if you ask me, I'd say that your offering some evidence for Ted's theories about New Fandom with your statements you just put a different spin on those values, you pundit you. I agree with you about the general use of the phrase PC, but, but I doubt Ted has such a considered agenda in mind. And as for the ad hominem nature of that fateful review in HABAKKUK, well, welcome to fandom son. People are judged on the level of their work and their words in fandom; a good example would be your estimation of Mr. White, I believe....

Now, DAVID THAYER (701 Regency Drive, Hurst, TX 76054) sends along a note on the back of a cartoon pocsarcd announcing his marriage: "Diana, Moon deity, falls for David, class M planet."]

"Dennis Virzi, my rep at Conadian, just told the Hugo results. I knew when he didn't call me right away that I hadn't won.

"I spent last weekend getting married to a woman who knows and likes my fannish friends and wants to attend cons with me. She went to my writer's group and read from her fantasy novel in progress. I wish I could write as well as she. Nice being close to someone who's not an alter ego."

[Congratulations, David! Carrie and I wish you all the best. How many odd anagrams can you come up with for your new wife's name?

Now, a few more words on recent topics by the princely DON FITCH (3908 Frijo, Covina, CA 91722) who seems equally concerned with all these semantic gyrations:]

"...in defining something like 'KTF'...You're right, I think, in establishing that it's largely subjective, and generally pejorative.

"If you're counting heads, in order to refine this, my personal definition seems to run along the lines of: 'An

adverse, extensive, critical review, using language much stronger than seems to be called for by the item being reviewed or needed to make the reviewer's points; frequently stretching to cover aspects of the writer's life not clearly pertinent to the material purportedly under review; assuming that the reviewer's tastes are not merely superior but are the only possible acceptable ones; generally giving the average reader the impression that the reviewer is largely concerned with giving a dazzling and pyrotechnic display of skill at writing scathing vituperation; and usually having little effect other than causing neos who are the object of it to either be silent or go away, and established fans (who have, generally, already decided what they want to do and how they want to do things) to become strongly (and often permanently) angry at the reviewer.

"(Though perhaps it's not part of the 'definition', I rather suspect that KTF reviews tend to convince the less-bright readers that the material thus reviewed is totally worthless dreck and the writer of it a nincompoop, and to lead more perceptive readers to think the reviewer might be an arrogant/insecure bastard whose wordsmithing skills would better be directed into more productive and creative literary forms.

"New Fandom"? Jeeze, Andy, do we gotta start working on another new buzz-word before 'KTF' is decently buried? Ted's tangential references don't build up to a clear & precise definition in my mind, and the phrase itself looks inherently vague (like 'Postmodern') ...some might insist that what we have now is actually 'Newer New Fandom' ('Newest New Fandom') probably won't appear for another three years). Ted's definition seems to center on bland, innocuous writing by fans of mediocre talent & imagination...something that's been quite common in fandom since at least 9 Aug. 1959 (the approximate date of my first encounter with a stack of fanzines.) Ted, I suppose, exemplifies the swashbuckling, cut-and-slash school of fan writingviewing...which does in fact appear to be fading into the background as a newer generation prevails - one which, except for Political Correctness & similar ideologues, places a higher value on civility and amiability, and which more often works on the basis of rewarding 'desirable' qualities with praise, and of gently chiding (at least to start with) the 'undesirable' ones. I suppose most of the members of this 'New Fandom' (as I tend to use the phrase) went to a kindergarten where they absorbed the idea 'It's not smart to get any of the other kids *too* mad at you, if you can avoid it.'

'Various elements in fandoms seem to have encouraged this, in waves - the one I remember most clearly was the Boondoggle/Breenigan affair, which led a lot of fans to think seriously (but, in many cases, too late) about whether or not a difference on some point of Principle was really important enough to allow this to destroy long-standing interpersonal relationships. What 'New Fandom' (of one version or another) would probably call 'KTF reviews seem roughly parallel to 'Political Correctness', in that they are thoroughly intolerant of deviation from the Standards which the practitioners of them have established. Gee...maybe I'm

part of this 'New Fandom'...by nature, I find it quite easy to *like* many fanzines (and people) without actually *admiring* them a whole lot, and generally am not strongly moved to insist vigorously that they live up to whatever Standards I may hold most admirable."

[Ah, but most serious schools of criticism, in art, literature, whatever, champion values which are well beyond the concerns of the average fan in the street. I would hope that there would be a middle ground between the polar opposites we seem to be working toward here, that one could have some critical standards and values without being judged socially unrepresentable, and that one could conceivably object to abusive and hurtful criticism without being a gormless idiot.... Of course, the problem here is in defining just what is hurtful and abusive, isn't it? Perhaps one more attribute we can assign to our pejorative picture of 'KTF' is that one is seldom in any doubt that a certain amount of abuse is intended by it...

While we're on the subject of KTF, I'm still hoping that we will get some comments from British fans on the subject of its modern estimation (To be honest, I assume that British fans are going to tell us that KTF is a spectre from the distant past, a term which no one uses in any context at all.), but I have uncovered some notes on the origin and meaning of the term in Rob Hansen's THEN #4 (I found my copy, huzzah!) and I'll share them with you now:

"March 1977 was a classic month for fanzines... The first major column of fanzine criticism by D. West had appeared in TRUE RAT 8, during the brief period that [Roy] Kettle converted his fanzine into a large scale production with lengthy outside contributions, and the second in WRINKLED SHREW 7. They weighed in at over twenty pages apiece, leading to much amused comment about west getting others to publish and distribute his fanzine for him, disguised as columns in theirs. Playing along, West subsequently declared that, yes, these columns had in fact been the second and third issues of DAISNAID, with the next issue he published himself, later that year, being DAISNAID 4 (though, confusingly, called SCAB TREK). West's criticism was solidly in the tradition established by Jim Linwood and Greg Pickersgill, but went much further. His WRINKLED SHREW piece, 'The State of the Art,' was later described by US fan Patrick Nielsen Hayden as '...a white-heat manifesto that nonetheless showed all the signs of having been rewritten several times, and the way to a ripping sensawonder-inspiring conclusion. It crogged us all.' Yes, indeed. It deservedly topped the 'Best Article' category in the 1977 CHECKPOINT Fan Poll and was largely responsible for Pickersgill's decision to stop writing fanzine criticism. As he explained: '...with the advent of D. West, who is just about the Master as regards fanzine criticism, any gestures I had left to make were rapidly becoming redundant.' though Pickersgill soon bowed out gracefully there were others who fancied themselves fanzine critics of the same stripe and whose efforts would ultimately discredit this whole style of reviewing (which was known as KTF, or 'Kill The Fuckers'), at least in the eyes of some. Not that everyone was enamored of it even at this point. In the course of his review of MAYA 12/13 and of Peter Weston's column therein, West revealed that his sympathies lay entirely with Charles Platt vis-à-vis Walt Willis, and then

launched into his own attack on Willis. This was too much for at least one fan who had been around since Willis' heyday....

"Tom Perry's QUARK had published four installments of Walt Willis' US column during the early 1960s. In QUARK 14 (Apr '77), the second of two issues published in the UK, Perry reminisced about returning to fandom, though attending MANCON 5, after a decade away and the differences he had found. He wrote of West's criticism that they...

'...resemble Norman Mailer's forays into the New Journalism - in fact, they're just what Mailer might write if he ever turned to fanzine reviewing. Beautiful metaphors, sustained diatribes, enviable invective, all in support of opinions that you may agree or disagree with. If you haven't seen the fanzine under discussion you can still enjoy what West has to say about it, but you'll come away knowing more about West than the fanzine.

'West spends three pages venting rage at Walt Willis, largely on the basis of Weston's MAYA column. the vehemence of the attack interests me more than anything he had to say, for unfortunately there's little intellectual content in those three pages...Don's censure is too violent. And there's no evidence he has any but the vaguest idea of what he's attacking...West has put all his might into several savage blows - all ineffective because Willis wasn't where they happened to land..'"

Now, since I am a reasonably smart lad, when I had the opportunity to purchase a copy of West's mammoth collection FANZINES IN THEORY AND PRACTICE at the Conspiracy fanroom, I laid down oddly-colored foreign money without complaint, and therefore have at hand the review mentioned in the Hansen/Weston quotes. I just read it...it's a remarkable piece of writing, supremely cogent and carefully constructed, one of the best pieces of fannish criticism I've ever read. If this is what KTF embodies, I wish we had more of it. As for the offending passages about Willis, here's a few lines:

"All the reports I have ever heard concerning Walt Willis suggest that he is quiet, gentle, kindly, courteous, witty, and in many ways an admirable character. All of his writing that I have ever read suggests that he himself is in full agreement with his admirers. Consciously or unconsciously, Willis long ago adopted the role of Perfect Gentleman. This is not an ignoble ideal to aim for, but even allowing that such model behavior is praiseworthy the final judgement on this social mask is unlikely to be favourable if one vital element is lacking: modesty.

"Willis has about as much real modesty as a neon sign blushing red. Charles Platt attacked his 'falsest of false modesties' and the words are entirely justified. willis's every piece of writing declares: I'm not going to come right out with it - my modesty forbids - but I'm The Man, you know, and this is The Word.'

"...Well, it's all so long ago, what does it matter? not much. It wouldn't matter at all but for the fact that the Willis legend has grown rather than declined in his absence. Willis is the all-time over-rated fannish writer, That he ever attained such a reputation for genius says more about the

...but in effect he was saying that the lower classes are no longer necessary...

competition (and much more about the critics) than his own talents; that he continues to be ranked so high is an indication of the power of mythology and the readiness of many people to take their opinions secondhand. Willis's brilliance is all sham: hollow as a gaudy glass bauble hanging on a Christmas tree. The outside is smooth, bright and glittering; inside is only emptiness. He'd have been found out long ago...if he hadn;t taken himself off the scene and thus acquired the sort of Late Great Charisma that attaches itself to dead pop stars. A talent limited to laboured lightness, style without substance, READERS DIGEST type aphorisms, Public Speakers' quips and the kind of puns Mike Glicksohn regrets when sober doesn't look so hot against today's competition.

"The pity of it is that people continue to accept the myth. Platt rightly attacked Willis because he saw him as an obstructive irrelevance, a brake on progress. If Willis was the highest level to which fandom could aspire then there was fuck-all to be hoped for from fandom: it was just a bunch of idiots with here and there a bright boy demonstrating how cute he was with the mannered prose."

Well, this is undeniably harsh stuff, and it clearly focuses on the person as much as his work. But it doesn't have the tone of gratuitous abuse which I think we have been attributing to KTF criticism. Perhaps this is because West is one of the originators of the franchise, instead of an imitator. I happen to think that he was wrong about Willis, that he assumed a degree of investment in his own status that Walt just doesn't possess. But the fact remains that Don is clearly pursuing a more complicated agenda than merely putting the boot in, and it stands as the first piece of dependable evidence I've found lately

for a descriptive, rather than pejorative, use of the phrase KTF. More to follow, certainly.

I'm going to wind it up for this issue; these big 10- and 12-page APAKs have been taking a bigger bite from my budget that I feel very comfortable with, so I'll save a certain amount of material -- rich brown's letter, those bowling scores I mentioned last time, and some other things for # 19. But before we go, we have time for a pair of little notes, the first from VICTOR GONZALEZ (9238 4TH Ave. SW, Seattle, WA 98106) who observes:]

"Dear Hooper: I'm not a reporter, but I play one in a bowling alley.

"Actually, I'm trying to follow in the illustrious footsteps of my father-old artificer; forging in the smithy of my soul the unborn fetuses of my ideas - I speak of none other than Harry Warner Jr.

"And then I drop some thorazine to wash away the LSD and write another ridiculous story about foriegn-language book distributors or geese migration (Canadian or European) or some such nonsense. By the way, the "Razorbill" was the best thing I've seen in APAK. Too bad it was a reprint."

[I suspect Victor is starting crack under the strain of working at the cutting edge of American journalism, the Seattle Times. Nice of him to scrawl me a note and hand it across the lane to me, though. Now, here's something from one CHARLES BURBEE (Box 2284, Temecula, CA 92593):]

"Congrats on the 17th issue of APAK. Haven't seen such fannish energy since Dunk's FANNESCARD."

[Ah, at last a specific fannish niche into which I can settle...the Walter Dunkelberger of the 1990s. -aph]

The Earth? Oh, the Earth will be destroyed in just a few minutes...

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