
APPARATCHIK

The thirty-seventh issue of a bi-weekly fanzine, published by Andy Hooper, member fwa, supporter afal, at The Starlitter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. # 103, Seattle, WA 98103, also available at APHooper@aol.com. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 224. *Apparatchiki*: Victor Gonzalez, Carl Juarez & Martin Tudor (British Address: 84 Alum Rock Rd., Ward End, Birmingham B8 2AG UK). People all around you screaming at the monster, the monster from the USO . . .

Issue # 37, June 29th, 1995

GLORIOUS SUMMER SUN has been streaming through the dirty windows of our rather dingy and ill-used apartment -- you people who keep sending little trinkets and books and subscriptions and things in response to my silly requests at the back of the zine are very nice, but when will one of you pony up some real coin and buy us a house? -- from dawn, around 4:00 am, to dusk, approaching ten at night, for over a week now. This is actually the normal mode of summer in Seattle, as far as my experience has been since moving here, although many people tell me that many seasons have passed without more than a dozen such glorious days between May and October. When such a summer should come to pass once more I will accept same without complaint, but for now, Seattle seems something of a piney promontory thrust unexpectedly onto the Cote D'Azure.

The reason I bring this up is that when I got up this morning, the sun was so transparently, brilliantly, electrically blue, that I couldn't stand the idea of spending the whole day lashed to this keyboard, tapping in ten or more pages of what suddenly seemed to be the most ephemeral drivel ever devised. And before giving in to the fear that this could be one of the warning signs of impending APAK burnout, I decided I'd just get outside and take an excursion somewhere, get a little sun and enjoy the feeling of being able to walk around without layers of oilskin and nylon between me and the outside world. Check out a new neighborhood, go someplace I hadn't been a hundred times.

Which is how I came to be sauntering around Queen Anne hill in the early afternoon, munching on a marvelous double cheeseburger from Kidd Valley (possibly the best burger chain on earth) and enjoying the view of Elliot Bay over the rotating ball that stands atop the Post-Intelligencer building. I chose lower Queen Anne because there is this cool little cluster of used book and record stores, baseball card shops, diners, bars, brew-pubs and ethnic restaurants, centered on Mercer St. and 1st Ave. West, which I'd never really explored.

One of the reasons Seattle is such a marvelous city to live in is that it has such a proliferation of neighborhoods -- walk three blocks and you're usually into a different one. Right where we live, on the southernmost flanks of Phinney Ridge, there's an

argument to be made that we are really in any one of four neighborhoods, Fremont, Wallingford, Phinney Ridge and Ballard. Fremont has the most defensible claim, followed by Phinney, but go three blocks down the hill to the east or west, and you would definitely be in either Ballard or Wallingford. And continuing to walk, you'd end up in Roosevelt, Green Lake, Greenwood, Licton Springs, Crown Hill, Shoreline, Ravenna, the U-District . . . each with its own character and characters. Fortunately, no one sees the need to employ militia gunmen or engage in ethnic cleansing here, or we'd have a hell of a time figuring out where it was safe to go.

Anyway, I was having a marvelous time, grooving on the pleasures of urban life, when I had to go, and ruin it all by thinking about Science Fiction.

There is a very clean and well-maintained used bookstore right on Mercer, called "Titlewave Books." It isn't very big, but it is very well-stocked, and the owner maintains his subject and genre divisions so scrupulously that it was like visiting a small branch library.

I enjoyed picking over his modern literature section; there were an amazing number of slim quality paperback novels with satin-finish covers, a major vice of mine in recent years. I picked out a nearly-new copy of Martin Amis' appallingly nasty *Dead Babies*, A.M. Homes' *Jack*, an appealing spin on contemporary teenage angst, and Shusaku Endo's *doppelgänger* novel *Scandal*. All Vintage Contemporaries and Internationals, naturally, in keeping with my passionate pursuit of my favorite publishers. (One of the reason I love Vintage contemporaries so much is the design on their spines -- usually a white field with the title set in some amusing face, while the author's name appears as white letters in a band of bright color. I keep them arranged chromatically on my shelves.) And as I turned away from the aisle, a Vintage Crime edition of Raymond Chandler's *The Lady in the Lake*, priced at just \$2.50, practically leapt off the mystery shelf into my hands. Now on a roll, I decided to take a look at the Science Fiction section as well. And that's when my mood began to turn sour. This fellow had what I would estimate at forty board feet of science fiction paperbacks, and although I spent almost ten minutes looking them over, I couldn't find a single book that I wanted to buy. Or even one that I would have read if it had been given to me.

I'm a junk-bond king playing Seminole Bingo

Spock Must Eat!

And this naturally led me to start wondering if the fault didn't lie with me somehow, if I hadn't left behind my sense of wonder somewhere on the road. . .

Have you taken a look at the science fiction in the average used book store recently? The first thing that confronts you is a vast array of Piers Anthony novels. This place had about six feet of them. This was followed by a very healthy selection of Asimov novels, memoirs, anthologies, laundry lists and share-cropped sequels to stuff he wrote in 1948. Banks, Bear, Benford, Bishop, Bisson, Blaylock, Bujold and Bull might offer cameo appearances in the average store, but here the selection leapt right to Card, without stopping at Busby, Butler Cadigan, or Campbell. Did Carr, Carrol, Delany, Del Rey, or Dick follow? No, but you know Stephen R. Donaldson was there in force. . .

Well, I said to myself, this is just an artifact of the sort of people who bring in their books to be resold. And it's more encouraging to see all those Piers Anthony novels offered for resale than to imagine them remaining as treasured classics in the original owner's collection. . .

So, I went across the street to Tower Books, on the assumption that among a wide selection of new SF there would be something that I felt like reading, and had not already bought.

This did not make me feel any better.

I would certainly have bought a copy of Iain M. Bank's *Feersum Endjinn* if two people had not already sent copies to me in the mail. So I give the field credit for that. But as I left A, B and C in my wake, there was literally nothing else to tempt me. Every other book seemed to feature some kind of anthropomorphic animal on the cover, wearing medieval garb and carrying a sword. Mutant infestations and rapacious cyber-corporations seemed to have a strong hold on the rest of the market. I looked for my favorite authors, hoping that somebody might have brought something out that I hadn't heard of yet. But no luck.

Now, it might sound as though I blame the field for failing to meet my expectations, but that's not the sensation I had. All my fannish life I have been listening to old fen and tired decry the state of SF, blubbering on about how it isn't as exciting as when they were kids, how things were more exciting when brass brassieres and bems were the order of the day. And, now here I am standing in a bookstore wondering where all the new-waveish psycho-social novels with abstract covers are. Where is John Brunner? What's happened to Ursula Le Guin? Where are the ugly chickens? Where are the experimental FTL ships and first contact teams, the sinister dystopias and the psychic resistance cells, the engagingly murderous robots and the women who love them?

Has the field been moving forward while I was standing still?

I guess everyone in fandom has to face this crisis of confidence sooner or later. Most trufen seem to have had

no trouble leaving the genre itself behind, but I have always promised myself that I wouldn't become one of those people who sit around mumbling about how bad contemporary sf and fantasy are, without having any concept of what's really out there to read. I cling to the idea that there is some hard knot of quality writing in the middle of all the cotton candy. The challenge, as it has always been, is to figure out what part of the field is still worth pursuing. And for me, that's central to my definition of myself as a fan.

So the wrong people dominate the genre. That's always been true, more or less. You can go on bitching about what a crime it is that Orson Scott Card outsells Michael Swanwick and Nancy Kress and Pat Murphy, that Piers Anthony has his own 900 number, that most Star Wars and Star Trek novels outsell anything original by a wide margin, but what good has it ever done? It seems to me that we, as fans, have been trying to meet the inadequacies of the field with negative reinforcement for several decades now, and it doesn't appear that this has ever had any positive impact on the situation.

Poor slobs like myself, who remain devoted to the literature that brought us into fandom in the first place, have a serious burden to bear. Gifted with superior taste (of course), we have a responsibility to do what we can to make sure our fellow fen know that there are still some reasons to maintain an interest in science fiction. Even if we consider it a dubious assignment ourselves.

So here is an open challenge to the sf lovers out there on my mailing list. Who is writing the great stories and novels of our age? Where are the fantasy novels that we can read without having to endure the word "Tolkeinesque" somewhere in the jacket cover? If you don't believe they're coming from the people we'd expect, that's all the more reason to write and say so, and let us know where we should be looking.

I've got a candidate right here, if anyone is interested. Barbara Ehrenreich is a Ph.D. in Biology, but she's better known as a social essayist for publications like *The Guardian* and *Time*, and as the author of non-fiction books like *Fear of Falling*, *The Hearts of Men* and *The Worst Years of our Lives*. Her first novel, *Kipper's Game*, was published to little enduring note in 1993, but a 1994 trade paper edition from Harper Collins caught my eye at another used book store recently, and I decided to give it a try. It's kind of like what cyberpunk would be if you boiled off all the mirrored sunglasses and Russian eye implants and vibro-blades, and were left with just the uneasy ethical and psychological territory where cutting-edge science and human lives intersect. It's full of desperate invention and devious people, in pursuit of a mystery that has so far resisted all my efforts to think ahead. I'll be sorry to finish it.

I guess the message I really want to send to people is to keep in mind the inverse implications of Sturgeon's Law, that 2% of everything isn't crap.



I AM SAD TO REPORT the death of one of the better-loved authors in SF, Roger Zelazny. Roger died of kidney failure, a complication arising from his battle with colon/rectal cancer, on the 14th of June in Santa Fe. He was 58 years old. Few fans don't have a favorite Zelazny novel or story; putting together this issue, I mentioned how much I admired "The doors of his face, the lamps of his mouth," while Victor remembered how thoroughly the first three "Amber" novels had turned him on as a young teen-ager. Carl offered praise for *Lord of Light*, which is generally regarded among his most successful novels. *This Immortal*, *Jack of Shadows*, *My Name is Legion*, *Damnation Alley*-- the list goes on for a while. We'll miss him.

He had been scheduled to appear as Guest of Honor at Ad Astra in Toronto just a week before his death; he canceled about three weeks beforehand, but told con organizers that it was his mother who was ill. As such, his death came as a surprise to majority of fans and colleagues. He was also to appear as GoH at Silvercon this autumn; Joe Haldeman has graciously agreed to step in to what Arnie Katz called "his sizable shoes."

MUCH MORE PLEASANT TO REPORT is the fact that writer Octavia Butler has been named a recipient of a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. The foundation is a philanthropic organization that awards people who have made a notable contribution in a variety of fields. Butler was recognized with a \$295,000 cash grant, which she is free to use in any way she sees fit. Aside from the exhilaration which one would expect any science fiction fan to feel, I've been a fan of her work for years, ever since I enjoyed listening to her read and speak at a Wiscon almost 20 years ago. Although she has won both Hugo and Nebula awards, real commercial success, as much as the field can ever afford, has eluded her. Her work does not usually concern swashbuckling aristocratic space captains or sexy cyborg hitmen, so there's little chance she can attract the average arrested adolescent SF consumer. Her receipt of the award ought to reassure us that there is still a chance for authors who don't write down to the lowest common denominator.

ARNIE ANNOUNCES ANOTHER ATTRACTION for readers of the trufannish stripe, designed to encourage more of you to make plans to be in Las Vegas at the end of September: while discussing plans for the con, he mentioned that a celebration is planned to honor Shelby and Suzanne Vick, who intend to renew their marriage vows "in a fannish ceremony" at Silvercon 4. What this will entail is currently open to speculation. But you can be sure that APAK will offer you full coverage; members of the gang of 23 have convinced me to act as the toastmaster at the convention. Given the hard-partying attitude of Las Vegas fandom, this not something I am taking lightly; it might turn out to be a full-time job!

IM EQUALLY HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE that Geri Sullivan and I have asked Lee Hoffman's permission to act as editor/publishers for the 1996 edition of *Science*

Fiction Five Yearly, and she has kindly agreed. Jeff Schalles will act as production editor. Further information, including publication dates, availability, and whether Jeff and Geri can be talked into doing another multi-colored cover, will be announced when it is known.

POLICE BLOTTER: While discussing our plans for SFFY, Geri noted that she and Jeff came home Monday to find that Toad Hall had been broken into! Fortunately, no irreparable damage was done, the priceless Toad Hall collection of fannish curios and marginalia is said to be intact, and the various local fauna emerged unharmed.

THEY WERE LUCKY when compared to the ongoing misfortune that has befallen Nicki & Richard Lynch. Reports have reached me that they still have not been able to move back into their place following the fire in the building early this spring. Understandably, this has stymied their plans to bring out another issue of *Mimosa*. I wanted to mention this in the wake of my comments in regard to the status of their collection and the stock of *Fanthology '90* in the last issue. A caller who wishes to remain anonymous told me that the damage to their belongings was quite extensive, despite their efforts to downplay them and set fan friends at ease, and the process of repairing the building has been going very slowly. They have a lot more important things than fanac to deal with, and I'm sorry for any implication that they were or would ever consider using the fire as an excuse for anything that might have been drawn from my remarks in # 36.

JIM YOUNG, he of Crazy Minneapolis fandom and the U.S. Diplomatic Corps, is currently on tour to promote his SF Novel *Armed Memory*. So far he has passed through New York, Boston, D.C., Chicago, and Minneapolis, and will pass through Seattle and Portland this weekend on his way to San Francisco, Los Angeles and Houston. Sales are said to be brisk, and vast cheering crowds have lined the route of his ceremonial motorcade. Asked for a reaction as Lorraine Tolefson, Miss Wadena County, presented him with the starburst and hot-dish of the Legion of the Loon, Young commented, "Well, it sure ain't like old Hennepin avenue!"

IF YOU ASKED ME to comment on the Seattle bid for Worldcon in 2002, I'd have to say that while the people involved appear to have been involved with some pretty half-assed conventions in the past, the facilities they propose to use are both enormous and convenient to a lot of hotels and cool downtown attractions. As with any Worldcon, the essential people will eventually trickle on to the committee, and worse things have certainly happened to me than having a Worldcon proposed for a site less than four miles from my house, without my having to lift a finger to support it. Those of you who want to crash on our futon before or after the con should get your requests in now, as our space is limited.





Those Goddamn Cars, Part 3:
The Mother of All Fatals

By Victor M. Gonzalez
Staff Writer

I usually start the story this way:

I was asleep on the small bed that Heather and I shared in a little first-floor studio on the downtown side of Capital Hill. Our door -- and through it our bedroom -- opened to the sidewalk; a few feet away, rusted newspaper boxes sat chained to a corner street sign.

I had stayed up far past Heather's bedtime, writing something for a fanzine. Every now and then I stepped outside to smoke part of a Sherman, and I'd watch the traffic on I-5 from my perch on a curved concrete stairway that descended to the next street between shifting evergreens.

So I had about four hours sleep when a loud knock woke us up. Heather put on a white terrycloth robe and cracked open the door. She spoke for a moment, and then closed it.

"There are two cops out there," she whispered.
"They want to talk to you."

"What do they want?"

"I don't know. They're tall."

I sat up, handed the dope tray to Heather so she could hide it, and put on my jeans and my glasses. Heather walked to the bathroom as I opened the door. I identified myself.

They were tall. One said they were state troopers, and asked if my mother's name was Betty Jo Gonzalez.

"Yes," I said. Then I got really worried. "Is something wrong?"

"I'm afraid your mother was involved in an accident," he said. I looked into his eyes and I could tell it was hurting him.

"Is she okay?" I asked. I recall it as shrill.

"I'm afraid she was killed," he said.

My muscles contracted suddenly. I buckled at the waist, as though I'd been hit with a sledgehammer. Heather held me.

I pulled myself straight after a few moments. The trooper had no other details. He passed me his card, the name of a Spokane hospital and a phone number written in pencil on the back. I thanked them and they left.

I sat down on the bed and asked Heather's permission to smoke. I lit a cigarette and picked up our newly-installed phone. My grandparents weren't home. I called my father.

* * *

My mother had been on her way home with her fiancé Allen and his two sons. They were returning from a late-running bridge tournament in the eastern Washington city of Spokane in an American-made station wagon of some kind.

They were driving west on I-90 at about 2 a.m. The plan would have been to turn south to Portland when they hit I-5.

My mother and Allen were sleeping in the back seat. For additional comfort, they had released their seatbelts. The 8-year-old son was in the passenger seat. The 15-year-old son was driving. He had a learner's permit.

I've read the police reports on the accident. It was such a stupid error in judgment that it breaks my heart.

I loved my mother. She was a kind, loving companion through the vast majority of my parents' tempestuous and sometimes downright nasty relationship. They yelled a lot while I grew up. She yelled at him less than he yelled at her. And with a softer voice.

She played the good guy. The Johnson. She tried to shield me from the impact of my father. His ideas of what I should be have never been fulfilled, and he usually reacted to my failures with angry and unforgiving displeasure.

She was of Norwegian ancestry: blonde, about five foot nine, sexy. She was open-minded and sympathetic. She was smart. She cooked well, and felt an enormous sense of responsibility for me.

Her hobbies centered around handicrafts and art: weaving, macramé, pottery. She read a lot. She had a sort of hippie mentality, even though she'd matured a few years before, a part of the Elvis generation.

My parents split when I was 15, shortly after I'd left the house to live with my grandparents. I'd packed my backpack with essentials -- about 20 cassettes and the player -- and I was headed up the hill to the bus stop when Mom drove up. Dad called several hours after we arrived, and begged me to come back.

It was more than three years before I tried to live with him again. It lasted a summer.

After they gave up trying to get back together, Mom finished up her Master's Degree in social work, for which she'd been studying at the University of Washington.

Before, she'd always juggled her studies with working as a secretary and taking care of me. She switched community colleges and universities as often as we switched residences, following my father's career.

Dad was a scientist. She worked while he eventually got his doctorate in high-energy physics, when I was five.

It took her more than a decade to get a bachelor's degree. After more than 20 years of marriage, she finally slipped free into her own life, and had new partners. She graduated in June, 1984, and looked forward to breaking from secretarial work. She was 40 years old. She was about to start as a social worker.

She and Allen were to marry in early 1985. They were kicking bridge butt all over the state, and he was much more laid back, much more mellow, than my dad could ever be. She liked the two boys, although she found the younger one a little slow.

I last saw her about a week before the accident.

It was the only time she ever visited the Deja Vu, where I made money as a disk jockey. It's a strip club just north of the Seattle city limits. I was 18, and had dropped out of school to live with Heather, be faannish and take drugs.

The loud music and the flashing lights surprised her a little. Perhaps also the half-naked women strolling by.

We talked for a few minutes at the side of the booth, while I found and cued records. She and Allen were in town for a bridge tournament. They were going to visit her parents the next day before they headed back to Portland.

I have a faded black and white photo of her riding a stallion beside a fence. She was fifteen or so.

In another picture, Mom is turned toward my buddy Chris and a 10-year-old me. We're sitting on pine needles and dirt under the shade of a tree somewhere on a hike up Suicide, a small southern Californian peak that offered great rock climbing for my dad. She's wearing a white cotton blouse and blue shorts. Her hair is tied in a long flaxen-yellow ponytail. Art, an old graduate-student friend of my father's and my confidante when I was growing up, and his first wife Jerry are also in the picture. So is Jennifer, Chris' little sister. Their mother Louise must be behind the camera. Around us water bottles, backpacks and shoes are scattered in the puddles of sunlight that escaped the tree branches. My father rests on his back in the deeper shade near the pine's base.

She insisted on having me open the deejay booth so she could step in and give me a hug. She and Allen were having fun. I could tell she was happy.

Less than two weeks later, her body lay in the fine-grained wooden casket I picked out. They had done a pretty good job, but under her hair, you could feel that there wasn't much left of the back of her skull. Her rings were still on, and her fingers had been carefully arranged so to not show too clearly the obvious damage they had taken.

The 15-year-old fell asleep at the wheel.

The car left the freeway at about 55 mph, and rolled when it hit the shoulder. My mother and Allen were ejected.

Betty's head hit a rock. The date was October 26, 1984.

The younger boy eventually crawled up to the freeway and flagged down a car. His arm drooped at his side, attached only in fact.

His brother was even more seriously injured. Allen was really fucked up; I eventually saw a scar that ran from his chest to his ankle.

One motorist, one of the first on the scene, said that she could hear Mom breathing. A trooper noted in the accident report that this was probably a misperception based on the wish that it were so. The trooper had seen my mother's head.

Allen and the older boy were airlifted out. All three have recovered as well as one could hope; Allen married a few years ago.

After I talked to dad, I called a commuter airline in Spokane and arranged to have the body shipped home.

* * *

It's hard to find the correct ending.

It was a very difficult thing, telling my grandparents their eldest daughter was dead.

I buried her three days later. I picked the cemetery, the plot and the headstone; black marble with a spray of white flecks, like a night sky.

More than a hundred people attended the funeral.

Before it began, Dad and I walked by the open casket. It was the first body I'd seen. It was horrifying, but I was in a very glazed, empty, unreactive state. Dad sat in the front pew and cried for a long time.

I stood before the open barrow in a new wool suit, bought by my grandparents for the funeral. It drizzled continuously as Chris, Jenny, Louise and countless others came to me crying, offering their sympathies and hugs.

After Dad dropped me off, offering his fullest support, Heather and I returned to our life. After months in New York, Tom Weber had returned, the day after Mom died.

But something happened to me after that. The freedom to experiment that I'd been taking advantage of no longer seemed to be enough. But I certainly played it out until it wore me down, through progressive drug abuse, boredom and depression.

About five years later, I went back to college, and ever since I've been kicking steps in the ice, hauling myself up this grunt of a glacier.

No, I'll never get over it. Every failure, every abandonment, every loss is a reminder of that empty feeling. I have learned to be very respectful to the power of my depression. It scares the shit out of me.

For a time after her death, I had nightmares.

In one, she and I were in her parents' home. It took me a while to realize that this was abnormal. I tried to speak to

her, to get her to explain how she was back. She was mute. She turned away and transformed into a shapeless blob, an embryo in a shapeless blank room.

Then I woke up, screaming, spinning like Linda Blair in my blankets. My grandmother's gray head loomed over me, asking if I was okay.

Then I really woke up, sweating, motionless and alone.

I often get floored by a simple double-take: I think of something to say that would make Mom laugh, something she would really enjoy hearing, and I wonder when I'll get the chance to say it to her.

And then, of course, I realize it can't happen. I can't talk with her anymore.

Life is just so much fucking bullshit.

I usually let it trail off somewhere in here.

~X~

AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH: We'll start off with the latest from JOSEPH NICHOLAS (15 Jansons Rd., South Tottenham, London, N15 4JU U.K.) who checks in with his bi-weekly dose of stick for ignorant colonists:]

"Thanks for APPARATCHIK #35, which I see from its colophon was actually tagged as the thirty-fourth issue and which, photocopied onto A4, now has stupendous margins at the top and bottom of each page. Even more white space for Martin Tudor to get excited about, I imagine . . . although if you intend to continue sending him masters to copy and distribute for the Britons on your mailing list, you might like to give some thought to widening the side margins, since U.S. paper is wider than A4 and the end of some words in your right-hand columns come close to running off the side of the page.

"Commenting on Precursor, you say that 'most American fans' either won't be in the country for it or have already 'made plans to tour specific places in Britain or Scotland'.

"Oh dear. Oh dear. Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!

"You can't tour Britain or Scotland, because Scotland is part of Britain -- so if you're touring Scotland, then by definition you're touring (part of) Britain. (Although it is of course possible to tour part of Britain without visiting Scotland.) This is just the sort of mistake which brings clouds to the brow and tension to the jaw of even the sunniest disposed of Scots and Welsh, although you're certainly not the first American to make it and at least you didn't commit the common US error of using England as a synonym for Britain. (Why does the name of Fosfax spring so readily to mind as I say this?) It occurs to me to wonder, therefore, whether the following politico-geographical lesson might be of assistance to your US readers as they count down the weeks to their trip, to help them avoid messy *faux pas* on the streets of Glasgow:

" - England (including the Isle of Wight and Cornwall), Scotland (including Orkney) and Wales are the three nations which make up the nation-state of Britain.

" - Great Britain consists of Britain plus Shetland, the Isle of Man (Which has its own parliament, the Tynwald), and the Channel Islands (which call themselves Norman, also have their own assemblies and remain outside the EU).

" - The United Kingdom of Great Britain and northern Ireland consists of precisely what it says it does, and is commonly abbreviated United Kingdom or UK -- the UK being until 1921 the United Kingdom of Great Britain and (the whole of) Ireland.

"As if all this isn't confusing enough, the geographical (as opposed to politico-geographical) term 'British Isles' applies to Britain, the Isle of Man, and (the whole of) Ireland. But readers can avoid all confusion by adopting this simple rule: Use 'British' and 'Briton' (not, please God, the non-existent 'Britisher') at all times when you are using a native or naturalized citizen of these lands! Never, ever, address anyone as 'English' unless you are absolutely three hundred percent certain that the person to whom you speak is a pure-born Englishman. Otherwise, you may find yourself asked to explain what you have against the Welsh or Scots as you pick yourself off the floor with a ringing in your ears and stars in your eyes.

"And Don Fitch can stop feeling 'consternation' about what he perceives as put-downs of *The Scottish Convention* (This computer has no gothic typeface, hence Times Bold Italic Scalable will have to do). This is not a put-down; it is irony -- something which he perhaps fails to detect because it is not immediately apparent from the tone of the writing, and perhaps also because (or so I've been told) Americans don't have a sense of irony. Can this really be true?"

[APH: Yes, that's true, Americans have no sense of irony whatever.

As an American only two generations removed from my origins in Scotland and south-western England, I am already relatively conversant with these facts, but as always, the typing fingers sometimes make bargains the brain cannot keep. Others will probably be more surprised to read these tidbits. I think it's only fair, however, to note that your warnings in regard to the pugilistic proclivities of the average Welshman and Scot are slightly exaggerated. I've never been to Wales, but most of the Scotsmen and women I have ever met were really quite patient about explaining their unique status within the British body-politic to ignorant Americans. In fact, they seem less likely to take offense than most Americans I've known.

On the other hand, it would be best if visitors to Glasgow could keep in mind that Scots are people, while scotch is a drink.

I take your comments about the margins under advisement. Right now, changing the layout of the zine to fit A4 paper would entail a lot of retro-engineering of things

like the title-logo and the colophon, and I haven't really got the time. I hope you'll bear with me. In the meantime, you can use the white space at the top and bottom to check off the number of ironic statements that grace each issue.

Every time I go to press, there are some letters that arrive just 24 hours too late to be included. Usually I find them in the mailbox just as I am leaving to go to the copy center. One such was this letter on APAK #35 from VICKI ROSENZWEIG (33 Indian Rd. #6-R, New York, NY 10034):]

"Victor's article on the accident simulation was excellent. There's one thing I'd like to add: Even here in New York, where people can (and many of us do) live without cars, thanks to a good mass transit system, convictions for DWI don't stop people from driving, there's something beyond need going on here. Maybe it's just perceived convenience, maybe it's the myth of the automobile, or maybe it's that people who drive while drunk have, on the average, poorer judgement than the population as a whole. (Not, note, that I'm saying drinkers have poor judgement, only those who drink and drive: the sensible drinker finds a bar in walking distance of home, or takes mass transit, or gets a friend to be designated driver, or buys a couple of bottles and invites people over for a social evening.)

"It's traditional for European Worldcons to be held slightly before Labor Day, both to fit the British holiday schedule and so that the truly mad can attend both Worldcon and NASFIC. I'll be interested to see if Baltimore, which is bidding for early August, wins the '98 Worldcon, and whether people voted against them because they disliked the date (which the Baltimore bid is trying to present as an advantage, although I believe they were forced into it because the space they wanted was booked for the Labor Day Weekend.)

"What I can't figure out about Scott Patri's zine is whether he is kidding, and if so, where. For example, I'm sure he isn't in touch with a Sasquatch, but I'm not sure why he keeps pretending he is, and writing the Sasquatch articles in an odd mix of pidgin English and SAT test vocabulary. I also suspect he may be trying to create an obnoxious image, either because he plans to reveal himself as a Sensitive Young Fan in another few issues (which probably won't work because by then he'll have irritated too many people) or because he finds it amusing or liberating."

[APH: I'll save George Flynn the trouble by pointing out that "SAT test" is a redundant phrase, but your point is still intact. I suspect Scott write like Sasquatch because he think it fun. That we don't isn't necessarily his fault . . . I certainly write with an obnoxious self-image in mind because I find it both liberating and amusing, although I try to understand when people don't share my appreciation of my own glittering wit. One such person is KAREN BABICH (6339 N. Clark, 2nd. floor, Chicago IL 60660-1216, e-mail KAREN@WELL.COM) who chides me for an excess of vitriol while on her way to more substantial issues:]

". . . I think you may indeed be getting paranoid in your old age (you young whippersnapper, you), seeing

the spectres of anti-fanzine-fan sentiments far more often than they actually appear. And then you frequently give in to mini-rants about the [#36] 'creeping and kvetching' of those people living 'sallow live[s]'. Andy, are you suffering from a clinical excess of bile and just forgot to mention it? You're jousting with windmills from your own imagination, no matter how much they may seem to resemble real, live people you may know. Either fess up to the ham act or figure out what you need to get over it. (Or say it to those folk directly: you're shouting in the wrong bucket in APAK.) Besides, I don't want you to die in an apoplectic fit, and I'd much rather see you writing about other things -- things far more interesting than these nasty hiccups.

"Fatal traffic accidents are always horrible, especially the preventable ones. (The driver who killed two and injured seven more did not have to drink and drive that way.) I do not envy Victor the part of his job which requires him to experience these tragedies firsthand. (One advantage of tech writing is that the worst tragedies run to poor project planning resulting in lots of overtime and user frustration (but usually not death).) If exposed to things like this regularly, I doubt I would remain compassionate yet dispatched. And yes, it is not good for people to drive poorly, like the driver who signaled in one direction while changing lanes in another. But is a long cold stare from another driver enough? Why not try to tell the driver their turn signal is on?"

"On a lighter note in this city of slightly crazed and fairly aggressive drivers, I've always appreciated the irony in a particular bumper sticker: 'Caution: I brake for turn signals.' If I ever see some for sale, I'll send you one for Victor. And I truly enjoyed Victor's piece on the ethics of journalism . . .

"Judith Hanna writes saliently about the auto phenomenon. We currently don't own a car. I refuse to pay more than a minimal amount for one. I like the convenience, but not enough to pay lots of cash for it -- Chicago is very spread out, so now I have to rent a car to visit friends in the suburbs, even *en masse* at local cons. Judith is right that people can get by without a car in a large city, but here more and more companies are moving to the suburbs. (My current client is moving to far Northbrook in the fall, and the city folks are either quitting, buying cars, or planning a commute by shuttle bus that will be up to three times as long as their current CTA hops.) If we did have a car in good condition, we'd certainly see a lot more of Madison fandom.

"[#36] I think those dead-Smurf dioramas were created by Garth D. and Karen Trego. I heard that he stopped doing them after Karen died several years ago. (One of the Minneapolitans can confirm this, I'm sure). I'd love to see them again, as I never had the cash to buy art in those days, only enough to get to Minicon for a couple of days. Sounds like a great project for a Worldcon or . . . *Reinconation*??? (Is that why you mentioned it?)

"Oh, and thanks for putting APAK on white paper, which is much easier to leave on one's desk at work

But that was back in the seventies. The fifties were much closer then.

discreetly than, say, a blue sheet with a drawing of a woman wearing a strap-on dildo. And the new copy editor seems to be doing a fine job. (Much as at the first ReinConation performance of 'This is your life, Jophan,' the typos were simultaneously endearing and annoying.)"

[APH: I think the tenor of your anti-diatribes diatribe points out the folly of your demand that I show a sunnier disposition more effectively than I ever could. Who says Americans have no sense of irony? I am what I am, Karen, and if I can live with it, you can too. But hey -- thanks a lot for the Goose Gossage Rookie card you enclosed in your letter! That was a real surprise . . .

Sometimes I think it would be cool to form automotive cooperatives -- for people who don't feel the need to have a car for everyday trips, who would only use it to make visits to points too distant or inconvenient to reach by public transportation. Of course, demand for use on weekends would be fierce, but that might make people plan their trips and reduce the volume of "whim" traffic.

I should have mentioned Karen Trego's contribution to the Smurfing process. I'm not so sure that I had a new show or anything similar in mind, I was just wondering who had bought them, how many were still in good shape, etc. Most of them probably are still in Mipple-Stipple, as you suggest, but I know that there are fans in various corners of the country who bought one . . . this would be a good thing to at least talk about at Reinconation.

Now, WALTER WILLIS (32 Warren Rd., Donaghadee, Northern Ireland, BT21 OPD) writes:]

"Our proposal for Greg Pickersgill to drive over with a van to pick up our fanzine collection has fallen through because of the expense involved, but Tommy Ferguson of Belfast has come forward with an offer to take over the collection and store it in his new house. This seems more prudent during the peace which has broken out here, so I am at the moment engaged in sorting through the Collection. In the course of this I have noticed that we seem to have an undue number of copies of Hyphen 20 and 26, and it occurs to me that maybe one of these was the one that Janice Eisen was willing to bid \$50 for. If so, would you please let her know that she can have it if she would arrange for me to be sent a copy of Fanthology '91, which is available for \$10 from Arnie Katz.

"Your item about Paul Williams has inspired Madeleine to come up with the following contribution: She starts off with a quotation from me:

"To me at any rate the main attraction of fandom is this property it has of being a combined mythology and microcosm -- an artificial private world which does actually have a real existence (but not too real) and in

which one can enjoy a sort of temporary reincarnation. At the very least two lives for the price of one. It could be argued that fandom is not an escapist hobby at all, but almost the reverse -- an overflow outlet for the creative imagination. Fandom is a nocturnal emission.' This was originally published in Skyhook, Redd Boggs, Spring 1952, and reprinted in Warhoon 28, page 440.

"It reminded her of a letter from Paul Williams, which we cannot trace now, but which so impressed her at the time that she copied out this part of it;

"The presence of fandom and fanzine connections in my life is endless, constant, very powerful, and I'm hardly alone in this. What I am getting at, I guess, is the family aspect of fandom; for many of us, that has little to do with whether or not we are active or the reasons one has for being or not being active in a timebinding sense. But fandom is my life and I am in it, apart from the literary, even apart from any interest. It is a web of friendships, common experiences and connections which clearly will be with me as long as I live."

[APH: The family aspect of fandom is certainly what keeps me involved. Ironically (that damn word again!), I used to try and keep my family and fandom separate entities, since I always had the impression that they wouldn't exactly approve of one another. Now I have my sister contributing to SPENT BRASS, my dad reads my fanzines, my other sister is a veteran con-gopher, and my mother has taken to sending me rubber-stamp mail-art in trade. People certain can surprise you.

Now, GREG BENFORD (PLEASE NOTE CORRECT E-MAIL ADDRESS: gbenford@uci.edu) reacts to events in the news:]

"Sobering and striking, that two major events in the sf world occurred these last weeks. Roger Zelazny was an old friend. We spent three days together as GoHs at MosCon last year, and he seemed drawn, yet said a tumor had been found and taken out and he was on the mend. Apparently he told no one of the latest trouble and his death of colon cancer was a shock. I found Roger to be one of the few writers who could strike magic from the page. He was solid and true, and I'll miss him.

"The other news, that Octavia Butler had won a MacArthur award, means that the literary establishment has at least noticed sf. It's great news for her, since the award ranges around a quarter to a third of a million dollars spread over five years. I've known 3 or 4 recipients, and there truly are no strings attached. I suspect the lit'ry types will try to disconnect her work from our messy ghetto, but Octavia is too wise to fall for that.

"A mixed season, indeed."

[APH: GEORGE FLYNN (P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Square Station, Cambridge, MA 02142) returns to point out some mistakes in APAK # 36:]

"Sorry, Andy: Members of the previous year's Worldcon are thereby entitled to make Hugo

Interior: A.I. Rykov

nominations in the current year, but not to vote on the final ballot. (Result: last year we had the second-highest nomination count ever, because ConFrancisco sent ballots to all its members; but the lowest final-ballot count for a North American Worldcon since the '60s.)

"I've never owned a car myself. But I must admit that public transportation has been slowly (the *mot juste*) getting less and less adequate.

"I don't know who Chuck Harris has in mind, but I'm pretty sure I didn't pick up the tab for any pizzas in Mpls. (Does this mean I don't get into the film?)

Re Don Fitch's point: The rules for Best Fanzine say 'four or more issues, at least one of which appeared in the previous calendar year.' My interpretation, for what it's worth (and I drafted the parallel language for Best Semiprozine), is that the fourth issue does *not* have to be out by the end of the year, as long as it comes out by the close of nominations. But I believe that other rules mavens disagree with me on this. (Presumably there wasn't occasion for the Hugo administrators to have to rule on the issue.) I could discourse on the legislative history of the wording, which dates from the early '60s (time-binding strikes again), but won't. Anyway, *BLATT 4* had a completion date of December 27 stated in the colophon; I had assumed that some went in the mail before New Year's, and am glad to have this confirmed. Hey, I nominated it.

"Is 'gbeford@uci.edu' perhaps a typo for 'gbenford' etc.? And why are you attributing *The Rogue Raven* to Dale Speirs?"

[APH: Ugh. BAD typos. Greg's correct address appears by his letter this issue; The juxtaposition of Dale's name and address with Frank Denton's fanzine is more troubling. I suspect I corrected some copy left over from the previous issue and then somehow failed to save it properly before exiting the file. Or maybe it was simply the lboga root taking effect . . . Anyway, *The Rogue Raven* can really be obtained by writing to Frank Denton, 14654 8th Ave. SW Seattle, WA 98166

TEDDY HARVIA (701 Regency Drive, Hurst, TX 76054-2307) continues our discussion of fannish portraiture:]

"Most American fans are unwilling to belly up to the table and admit there's a crumb of truth in our stereotype.

"Diana chuckled at your Rotsler remark. As editor of the San Antonio PRs, she's received three full envelopes of his stuff.

"I've had my portrait scribbled by the best -- B. Ware, Alexis Gilliland, Stu Shiffman. But Matilda humbled me when she commented that my WingNuts themselves looked most like me. Just look at their big noses she said. Sniff."

[APH: Most American fan-artists tend to focus on my status among the follicle-impaired. I suppose this

must stand out more than obesity in decadent American fan circles.

Now, a note from JOHN DALLMAN (jgd@cix.compulink.co.uk), one of the *Attitude* triumverate, who really found my piece on the Missouri a springboard for comment:

"Fun article about the Missouri and the Turner Joy; if I ever get to the area I will make sure to see them. A rumour circulates among wargamers over here as to an alternate plan that was mooted for reconditioning those battleships. You see, the rear 16" turret wasn't felt to be needed for shore bombardment. The plan was to take it off, build up the superstructure a few decks to give more space, and substitute nuclear reactors for the boilers to give even more space -- no bunkage needed any more. With all this space you put on another 100 or so Harpoons, an extra 50 Tomahawks, maybe an Aegis SAM system and fifty Harriers. This produces an awesome ship, but, as the wargamer screams out at this point, it's *very* expensive, and attracts tactical nukes, on the grounds that nothing else will deal with it quickly . . ."

[APH: On the contrary; one attack sub could reduce the whole thing to a very expensive barge. Of course, it would be hard for a sub to get through the ASW ships that would be sent out to surround the proposed BBN. And that's where the real problem lies; as ships become more and more elaborate and expensive, the cost of losing them becomes so prohibitive that they can never go to sea without a vast cloud of escort ships orbiting them. This removes the benefit of creating a ship capable of performing so many tasks in the first place, which is why the Navy never really considered it. The part about the Harriers is especially amusing, given the Navy's contempt for what they regard an inferior Marine Corps aircraft . . .

It's also hard to imagine the Navy screwing around with the propulsion systems of the ships which hold the record for highest sustained speed by a major combatant vessel. I suspect that even the most efficient nuclear propulsion system would be unable to develop the kind of speed that the Iowa class always enjoyed with their conventional diesel boilers.

Now, weighing in with an observation on the ongoing debate over smoking rooms is A. P. McQuiddy (824 NE 45th St. #26, Seattle, WA 98105-4713), a recent addition to the mailing list:]

"There was much for me to identify with in APAK 36; from the folks-who-bitch-for-not-being-on-the-mailing-list to eavesdropping on the apparatchiki in Orson W. Lundeen's I HAVE NO ENDING AND I MUST VAMP.

"Like Fran Dowd (via Murray Moore's LoC), I have a tendency to pull a sour-grapesque nose-in-the-air

FANZINE COUNTDOWN, JUNE 15TH TO 28TH:

#1: Project Z #1.3, Luke McGuff. [One good thing about receiving only two fanzines in the two weeks since I published last is that it gives me the chance to write somewhat more extensively about the material I did receive. But Luke McGuff's latest effort might have come out first in a fortnight with forty fanzines. Luke doesn't focus his work on the trufannish community; in fact, his love-hate relationship with fandom has kept him from ever really trying to join the Roscoe-worshipping conga-line. I think this gives his work a very refreshing quality, while continuing to use a basic vocabulary of personal memoir and general criticism that anyone familiar with fannish fanzines ought to be able to enjoy. With Project Z, Luke is remaking the traditional perzine to fit his own images and ideas, and doing a very good job so far. Issue # 1.3 touches on his continuing fascination with media hypnosis and American complacency, but the bulk of it concerns essayist/novelist Seymour Krim, and Luke's reactions to his work. He manages to tell us a great deal about Krim in the process, but even more about himself, which is perhaps the balance which every essayist is trying to achieve. Luke's style is somewhat less idiosyncratic than it once was, but has the same wit and energy that has always been his trademark. Plus, I think he may be the most honest person in all of fandom. If you're not on his mailing list, I highly recommend you write and ask him for a copy. He accepts the usual, or will send out one issue for a buck. Hah!]

#2: File 770 #109, Mike Glycer [Mike continues to do his thing as he has for more than a decade, although he has long since scaled back to a quarterly schedule. Oddly enough, given his focus on Smoffery and the grey twilight that exists between fandom and the world of the pros, this seems to be a very adequate pace. After all, there's only one meeting per year that is really worth his time to report on . . . No, that's a cheap shot. Mike remains dedicated to presenting as much useful and important news about fandom and the world of science fiction as he can. It was in this zine that I first got word of Roger Zelazny's death, and there's always something I haven't read before in every issue. Of course, there is also something in every issue that irritates the hell out of me. This time, he devotes about three pages to Evelyn Leeper's view of Boskone 32, which piece she characterizes as being a major departure from her usual method of recounting every event she attended in minute (not to mention tedious) detail, and featuring her subjective impressions of things instead. The primary virtue of this to my eyes is that it is about one-third as long as her usual stuff. She also expresses astonishment that Rob Hansen has only now published his 1984 TAFF reports, and notes that if she ever won, she'd publish the fastest trip report in history. Ah, but would anyone be able to lift it?]

ALSO RECEIVED: Building Burning Man, the Newsletter of the Burning Man Project, Summer 1995.

(I'm also shooting for the Most Hyphens in One Missive record) when left out of the tight little world called Fanzine Fandom. Partly, it's jealousy -- I've had a lifetime of being the odd-man-out, but it really takes work to be the odd-man-out among a network of folks who are all odd-men-out! -- and partly it's a matter of having too many interests. I just don't have time for everything I'd like to participate in. (I know, I know -- I'm not looking for sympathy!)

"Don Fitch's comments re: the division of parties into the Smoking Crowd and the Non-Smoking Crowd, and the tendency not to mingle fits neatly over Vanguard's [APH: The monthly Seattle fan party] façade. Why do I attend the smoking party and rarely venture over into the NSP? Well, it's where the folks I want to hang out with hang! There are few people in the NSP that I actually want to talk to and some that I actively wish to avoid. Occasionally -- very rarely in fact -- I wander into the VNSP and have a good conversation. Most times I'm bored witless. It's simply a matter of taste in people, and that, yes, as hackneyed as it sounds, there are 'types' of people who tend to be NSers and there are types who tend to smoke. I prefer the latter."

[APH: I guess I feel largely the same way, although more often than not the smoke actively bothers me, and I wish we could be sitting outside. The whole point I'd like to make in regard to this issue is that people tend to be self-selecting in these matters, and attempting to make them hang around with the "other" sort of people in the interest of a more complete group dynamic is just going to be a disaster. Not that anyone has really suggested that, except in a very tact and subtle fashion . . .]

I have a really great letter from Robert Lichtman left to publish here, and rather than try to cram it into a tiny space in 4-point type, I think I'd rather just hold it off to lead the lettercol next time. Thanks to everyone for continuing to make this a pleasure to write and publish.]

APPARATCHIK is the Beastie Boys of fandom; never mind the innate ridiculousness of being a white rapper, or worry about what kind of cultural taboos you may be trampling all over; just keep kicking out the jams and spinning those dope rhymes, and you can't go wrong. It's still available for the usual, or you can get APPARATCHIK for \$3.00 for a three month supply, or a year's worth for \$12.00 or a life-time subscription for \$19.73, or in exchange for a 1st Nebraska infantry regiment card from the Shiloh card set. Lifetime subscribers are Tom Becker, Richard Brandt and Michelle Lyons, Don Fitch, Lucy Huntzinger, Robert Lichtman, Luke McGuff, Janice Murray, Greg Pickersgill, Alan Rosenthal, Anita Rowland, Karen Schaffer, Geri Sullivan, Michael Waite, and Art Widner. Addresses of fanzines reviewed at left: Project Z #1.3, Luke McGuff, P.O. Box 31848, Seattle, WA 98103-1848; File 770 #109, Mike Glycer, P.O. Box 1056, Sierra Madre, CA 91025. You've just paid \$2.00 for a bottle of tap water, and you're happy about it.