
APPARATCHIK

The fortieth 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, also available at APHooper@aol.com. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 229. *Apparatchiki*: Randy Byers, Victor Gonzalez, carl juarez, A.P. McQuiddy & Martin Tudor (British Address: 845 Alum Rock Rd., Ward End, Birmingham B8 2AG UK). Trouble ahead. Trouble behind.

Issue # 40, August 10th, 1995

WELCOME TO THE EXTRA-CHUNKY 40th issue of *APPARATCHIK*! This issue is larger than usual not only because the volume of back-logged mail virtually demanded it, but also to celebrate reaching a fannishly significant issue count. The focal-point fanzine closest to my heart, *Pong*, reached a count of forty issues before completing its initial run, and since I have hit this tape running without any sign of slacking off, it seems like a fit subject for celebration. So here is the first special semi-annual AFAL awards issue, collect them all and bake them in a pie!:

- The John Wesley Hardin Beersnobs' Cup:**
John Berry, for the discovery of Haystack Black Porter
- The Alan Hunter award for obsessive pointillism:**
Mr. D. West
- The Bill Bowers award for Byzantine issue-numbering:**
Dale Speirs
- Best Address change of fiscal 1995:**
Jenny Glover & family
- Walter Breen award for publication in the face of official censorship on the island of Gibraltar:**
Chuck Connor
- The Three-Balloon Watson award:**
The big wooden box on the coffee table

Afal awards are also good for a free wheel alignment kit from your nearest Pamida store, and one free entree with the purchase of any entree of equal or greater value at any Western Sizzlin' Steak House. Cash equivalent, 1/14th zloty.

ANDREW I. PORTER, multiple Hugo-winner and weather-channel addict mentioned in the course of a conversation regarding our imminent journey to Glasgow that **THERE WILL BE A ONE-DAY STRIKE** of both British Rail and British Airways employees on the 25th of August, which happens to be the second day of Intersection. Subsequent conversation with Hope Kiefer, my personal travel advisor, **SUGGESTS THAT THE STRIKE HAS BEEN CALLED OFF**. People planning to travel to the convention that day should presumably take

action to determine which of these interpretations of events is correct. If you're now scrambling to make car rental arrangements, Hope recommends trying a firm known as "Auto Europe," which claims to match any other rental agency's rates. They can be reached toll-free at 1-800-223-5555.

ALL OF JERRY'S KIDS are in mourning tonight; Jerry Garcia died early yesterday morning at the age of 53. I was never a dead head, and I never saw a single show, but I always enjoyed the reverberations from the social phenomenon the Dead represented, and enjoyed their music, when I heard it. I enjoyed Cherry Garcia ice cream. But I guess I was unprepared for the shock wave that his death seems to have sent through the country; I guess I just wasn't aware of what an icon he was.

And everyone who I've spoken to about him since his death has expressed the idea that they thought he was admirable for having enjoyed himself while he was alive. That strikes me as a temptingly simple ambition to carry through life. True, Jerry burned himself at both ends, but it was quite a fire. I'm listening to him play guitar right now. No note ever seems to be held longer than absolutely necessary; only Keith Richards gets more from shorter tones. Lead as rhythm, the note itself, the counterweight of the beat, each note lifting up at the end, a nano-second faster than expected. The fireman screams and the engine just gleams.

ONE OF THE MAIN FEATURES of publishing this fanzine is that it makes me feel a certain amount of pressure, the stress of the deadline, the torrents of verbiage submitted by its readers, and the tension of maintaining a small mailing list in the face of its growing reputation in fandom. I enjoy the pressure, however, as it keeps me writing through periods when I don't have a professional project to put me at the keyboard. **APAK** waxes and wanes between six and ten thousand words per issue, which is enough to keep my long-distance typing skills relatively polished. Meeting the deadline is generally no problem . . . when time grows short, I remember there will always be a chance to publish any left-over material in just two weeks time.

It's far more daunting to consider how much the mailing list has grown since I began publication, how many people have sent in money, and how much more I am likely to spend in the fulfilling their expectations of

Two words: Separate Dumpsters

APAK. Recently I received a subscription check from someone who had read about *Apparatchik* in *Factsheet Five*, which leads me to fear that there may be a steady flow of such requests, from people I do not know and have no immediate prospect of meeting. Will they send in material? If they do, can I find room for it? If they don't send in material or letters of comment, how am I to justify the loss at which each subscription operates? I recall Dan Steffan and Ted White's experience with such silent subscribers, but they were wise enough to set their per-issue price at such a ruinous level that they actually subsidized their fannish correspondents in some measure. The next year of APAK is likely to run me \$2,500, if current activity levels are maintained. Any fannish charity that wants to offer *Apparatchik* a publishing grant is asked to contact party headquarters. I HAD TO PURCHASE A NEW PASSPORT: It was a terrible and wonderful experience.

I called the US Passport information hotline and got the lowdown on replacing my lost passport. I had to fill out a DSP-11 to get the new passport and then a DSP-64 to explain what happened to the old one. I needed a certificate of Live Birth (In Louisiana, a certificate of Live Bait will do), at least one form of picture ID and in my case, a copy of my travel itinerary to qualify for special express expedition of my passport. Plus \$95.00 in check, money order or exact currency.

My first foray into the Seattle Passport Office began at about 2 pm on Thursday before last. I had to pass through the metal detector with the other visitors, and the elevator spoke in a voice that sounded ominously like Pat Harrington in *The President's Analyst*. The corridor on the ninth floor was lined with windowless doors. Down one twisty corridor is the Passport Office, with its display of historical passports, its scuffed-up seven-foot high Denoyer-Geppert Mercator projection, its please-take-a-ticket spitter, which disgorged #76, and the red-numbered digital display that read #53. I waited. Out of all the clerks there, my number was called by the young woman who had to confer with an unseen backroom supervisor an average of three times per customer. My ancient notarized thermofax was not sufficiently legible, my state ID card was too easy to get, I had to send away to emergency express mail birth certificates incorporated of Fowlerville, Michigan, who would bill my Visa or Mastercard, and without further sufficiency of photographic identification it would help if I could bring along someone who would vouch for my U.S. Citizenship.

The second time Carrie actually delayed going into work, and she drove us down into the heart of the downtown district with the scent of the bay mingling with the auto exhaust in a way that always reminds her of San Francisco, her first maritime city. The morning had an odd monochrome glow, and we were in the office of the prefect by 8:05 am, Signor Ugotti having greased our way with a few thousand lira. Even then there were nine people in front of us. I could see other aspirants being turned away. Frustrated and subvocally cursing all government, they stalked through the frosted

glass doors. They did not have their DSP-11, their DSP-64, their cheap little Polaroid photos bought in a gimcrack shop that specialized in personalized key chains and all things with the word "SEATTLE" on them. They did not have Carrie to charm the senior clerk with an offhand way with the approval stamp. We twittered of Grandpa from New Mexico Territory while he initialed my paperwork with a flourish. He accepted my \$95.00 without complaint. My photo and birth certificate would be returned with my new passport. He wished us a pleasant vacation in Scotland. The next afternoon, the new passport arrived in the mail. The next afternoon. Thing go better with Carrie THIS NEW PASSPORT will not expire until the 1st of August, 2005. It's startling to look down at that little diplomatic abbreviation, "AOU 05," and imagine living in the future. Think of all the things that might be accomplished by then. "International Space Station Alpha" should be operational by then, and the X-33 and maybe other cheap delivery systems. Seattle may have won an American League Pennant. OJ Simpson will be nearing the end of the first year of his lifetime sentence. There should be more than 200 channels on American TVs by then, half of them showing haircare infomercials, half featuring talk shows about mothers who don't want their daughters to marry serial killers. Genetic science will have created the perfect chinchilla (the mutant blue). Plus, professional beach volleyball from Myanmar.

I'll be 42 years old, nearly 43, an old fan and tired, I'm sure. *Lan's Lantern* will be appearing on CD-ROM. The third collection of D. West articles will be expected in time for Novacon. Stirrings in the fannish ether will suggest someone may finally complete the first TAFF trip report since Bill Kunkel in 1998. Jeanne Gomoll should be governor of Wisconsin. Dave Langford will have seven more Hugo awards. The Chicago Science Fiction League will be planning to host its third Corflu in the spring of 2006, at Frenchman, Nevada, and fandom will still be buzzing about the third HatClave, a transatlantic fannish event held in Reykjavik, Iceland, where the day programme went on forever, and Greg Pickersgill was forced to sort people out.

FIFTY YEARS AGO NEXT MONDAY, and 17 years to the day before I was born, World War II came to an end. The past six years have been interesting ones, as modern nations and their citizens struggled with the knowledge of what was lost to create what has been built for the past fifty years. And at the very end, the hammer-blow climax, the tortuous immorality of the use of atomic weapons. All of the possible answers to why we used the bombs seem to funnel back toward "Why not?" and the fact that the country expected some return from its \$2,000,000,000 investment. Supine Japan had made us very angry indeed, and we were in a position to deliver a pair of vicious kicks now that they were down. I choose to be glad that we have had the ability to hold our temper since then, and we can celebrate 50 years in which no one else has had to suffer as did the victims of August, fifty years ago.

**The Unabomber: An SF Fan?
(Scrutinizing "Industrial Society and
Its Future")
by Francis Costick**

The Unabomber is capturing headlines, again. This time, with excerpts from his 35,000 word tract, "Industrial Society and Its Future", appearing in both the Washington Post and the New York Times. The FBI and other investigators are clearly stumped, and have resorted to asking the public for help.

Who is the Unabomber? Where should we be looking for him?

Authorities believe the serial bomber was a member of Science for the People, an activist group devoted to further debate on the social implications of science and scientific warfare. If he joined that association, it's not much of a stretch to suggest he would foster affiliations in other loosely-connected pockets of society. Such as SF Fandom.

Fandom is fractured into many diverse cliques. So, what subset of Fandom is the Unabomber most likely to frequent?

Indications are, this individual is a heavy reader. The emphasis on the history of science leads to a startling conclusion: "For the most part," writes Martin Gottlieb (NY Times, Wed.2.Aug.95), "historians who study science look on it as progressive, with its breakthroughs and intellectual triumphs seen as a social boon. But a small subset of scholars has long focused on its social ills and unexpected cultural repercussions, and is sometimes strongly anti-technology."

In other words, the Unabomber reads Cyberpunk.

The Unabomber's manifesto "sneers at scientists, conservatives and particularly liberals, broods about the meaning of freedom and the causes of anomie, and calls for a revolution against a complicated, bureaucratic, technological society that the author maintains robs people of their essence." (ibid.)

Is the Unabomber one of Jerry Pournelle's Libertarians, then?

"When we speak of leftists in this article," the manifesto states, "we have in mind mainly collectivists, Politically Correct types, feminists, gay and disability activists, animal-rights activists and the like . . ."

Maybe he's part of Orson Scott Card's "Secular Humanist Revival"? Card is a published homophobe (the Unabomber tract calls homosexuals "repellent"), and has lampooned those who do not follow his Mormon ways.

Perhaps those subsets of fandom are too broad, too large. After all, the Unabomber prefers to remain "as an individual or as a member of a SMALL group." Of course, a local chapter of a larger network could qualify.

Certainly one of the smaller groups in Fandom -- one that's often on the verge of dying out, in fact -- is Fanzine Fandom. Yet, it is unlikely that the Unabomber is among us, for the manifesto states, "Anyone who has a little money can have something printed, or can distribute it on the Internet or in some such way, but

what he has to say will be swamped by the vast volume of material put out by the media, hence it will have no practical effect."

The Unabomber is likely the child of a scientist, engineer, or mathematician, as he declares that "it isn't natural for an adolescent human being to spend the bulk of his time sitting at a desk absorbed in study," and laments that "in our society children are pushed into studying technical subjects, which most do grudgingly." Sounds like mid-life sour grapes, no?

So, next time you attend an SF gathering -- convention, book signing, or party -- look around you. You might just be staring right into the eyes of the Unabomber.



AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH: I lead off with some letters that have been waiting several weeks to see the light of day. First of all, here's a pleasant and tolerably rare letter from JOHN D. BERRY (525 Nineteenth Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98112) who brings us up to speed on his life these days:]

"The mail arrived before breakfast (an unusual occurrence no matter how late I get up), and it brought a trio of printed pieces: *Adobe Magazine*, *The Nation* and *Apparatchik* 37. You'll be pleased to know that it was only your fanzine which sufficiently invigorated me to get up from the breakfast table with a smile, ready to take on the rest of the day. And this is just from heavy browsing. (No thorough beginning-to-end reading occurs over breakfast -- at least not over my breakfast.)

"I had meant to answer your broadcast query about pre-Scottish travel plans two issues back. Yes, Eileen and I intend to be at Precursor, although we haven't yet sent anybody any money or other clues to this intention. It seems the best way to catch up with people who don't intend to travel north to Glasgow; and besides, we're flying in and out of London anyway. At this point we're trying to raise our heads from our respective miasmas of overlapping obligations and deadlines and consider how to see a bit more than just the major cities between cons. Do we throw caution, good sense and money to the winds and try driving a rented car all over the back hills of Scotland, hugging the left hand side of the road for dear life? Or do we behave like civilized Europeans and immerse ourselves in train schedules and stale jokes about British Rail? Time will tell.

"Even higher on my list of intentions is that perennial RealSoonNow, publishing another fanzine. But, as you know, I simply don't have any time for it. For close to two years now I've been house designer for Copper Canyon Press, one of the country's liveliest and most distinguished independent publishers of international poetry. There's plenty of work involved, complicated by the fact that the press is in tiny Port Townsend, on the Olympic Peninsula, while I'm in Seattle (fax, phone and Priority Mail are essential and frequent modes of communication). This is work I love to do, turning out books that last and that deserve to last (I often claim that I am really designing for the person who picks up a battered copy in a used-book store a hundred years from now), but as you can imagine, it's not enough to keep body and soul together. This spring I tried taking on an additional part-time job (an *employee*, for the first time in nine years!), designing still more books, but for a small company that specializes in fancy art books and museum catalogs. Great work, and quite different from what I'd been doing. But the stress level of these

Excuse me sir . . .the Si Fan have returned your lawn mower

two obligations, plus innumerable other, one-shot projects, never seemed to lessen, and after three months I dropped back to doing freelance work entirely (including for the company I'd lately been employed by). If I hadn't immediately gotten sick with some minor but debilitating bug, I might even have caught up by now.

"It doesn't help that I have a penchant for taking on worthy but ill-paid projects from even more infinitesimal publishers, such as Delany's *Atlantis: three tales* for Incunabula (and Wesleyan University Press) and John Clute's *Look at the Evidence* for Serconia Press (and Liverpool University Press)

"Not much of a letter of comment, but I realize that your indecently frequent little fanzine might be the only way I have of reminding people that I haven't vanished from the face of the earth."

[APH: This fanzine has many unseen powers and unusual effects upon fandom, including its value as a dietary supplement. Its arrival has been known to cause fans to question the laws of the fannish universe, as in the case of PAUL SKELTON (25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 5NW United Kingdom) who has a unique reaction to joining the APAK mailing list (also note that this lengthy letter was composed by bolting two separate LoCs together):]

"'Confused' of Offerton here. Well, I answered 'No' to 'all of the above,' but I can't help thinking that you haven't quite grasped this faneditor concept. Joseph explains it fairly succinctly in his letter in APAK 36. If people don't respond to your fanzine you tell them to sling their hook by dropping them. You don't suddenly, with issue #35 of APPARATCHIK, start sending them additional fanzines. Or is my sudden inclusion the result of some degree of autonomy Martin has with regard to your UK mailing list? But that would be equally baffling because I've been every bit as dilatory in responding to his fanzines as yours. Yet #35 arrived before I'd written my first LoC this lustrum to either of you. And now here's my second . . . hmmm, maybe there's something in your unconventional approach after all. I suppose something different is necessary to throw off the twin chains of lethargy and procrastination mentioned by Michael Waite. Odd that we're all so into procrastination. You'd think we'd be temperamentally more suited to fancrastination, wouldn't you?"

"It's difficult to imagine Mike Glicksohn having a long-unfulfilled fannish dream of any kind, but especially so when it turns out to be him getting to 'spend a few days in Seattle.' Not that spending a few days in Seattle isn't fit material for fannish dream. It is in fact one I share, Seattle being one of the cities/areas I'd love to visit (based on accounts in various fanzines) but it's much easier to see why it should be unfulfilled in my case. I don't really know anybody there well enough to impose on their hospitality, and such is the parlous state of our finances, by the time we've paid to get to the US and Canada, and visited the folk who are the main reason for our trips in the first place, and paid for the extra flights around the country, and financed the extended holiday that is essential to make it all possible . . . then imposing on the hospitality of fannish fans is a must. Living in Stockport doesn't help either, because whilst Cas and I are always willing to offer hospitality to visiting foreign fans that we've at least heard of, we are not on the way from anywhere to anywhere else, which means very few fans ever make it up here, so we rarely get to reciprocate any of the hospitality that we've enjoyed in the US. Plus the fact that Cas and I are a couple and as such more than twice the imposition of a single fan.

"Of course, it's true that Mike and Susan are also a couple, but they've only just had their second anniversary. For many years Mike was footloose and fancy-free. . . and is such a big-name fan that he knows everybody. . . so how come he never went to Seattle then? An enquiring fandom wants to know. Even now, as a couple, they're different to us in a significant way. They practically drip money. They'll deny that of course, but when they come to the UK they sometimes stay in hotels. Case proven! Anybody who can afford a night in a hotel in the UK has got to be a zillionaire (a public-service announcement for US fans thinking of attending the Scottish Convention and then ad-libbing their way around the country). When they stay with us they insist on paying for practically everything (I think the only things we ever managed to buy them were a couple of newspapers), whereas when we stayed with them and I tried to buy some groceries or pay for petrol Mike would have an RCMP SWAT team mobilised to pin us down in a hail of bullets whilst they cleared the checkout.

"Unlike Judith Hanna, for me not owning a car is an economic rather than a political statement. I've never figured out how anybody in this country can afford to run a car, not withstanding the fact that everybody else finds it bafflingly easy. I've always either walked or bussed to work, except for the past twelve years or so when I've cycled. Busing was especially practical for my first job as I worked right at the end of the bus route past my home . . . for the bus company, so I traveled for free. As a cyclist it now costs me more, not so much in minor maintenance as in accident repairs. Just recently, I spent several weeks on the bus whilst my bike was hors-de-combat Ford Fiesta. I was doubly lucky in that the accident took place fairly close to the Stockport Infirmary so I was able to pop into their casualty department at the relatively quiet time of 7.15 in the morning, and secondly that I had a just-started Sara Paretsky novel with so that the ensuing three hours didn't hang so heavy.

"Living in Stockport and working in Manchester ought to be a doddle. There is a fast and frequent rail link, and a well-served (every 10 minutes) direct bus route. But the rail link is expensive (not to mention a 30-minute walk away) and the bus route is traffic-congested and relatively slow (and also a 15-minute walk just to get to it). I cycle much of it and trim the bus-journey time by a good thirty minutes (my best time 40 minutes door-to-door as against a minimum of 1 & 1/4 hours when traveling by bus and whilst Stockport-Manchester is less than ten minutes by train, the walk at both ends of the journey adds a minimum of 45 minutes each way. . . and such is the traffic congestion that coming home by car takes up at least 30 minutes. Cycling for me beats all other means of transport all ends up, and as a perennial cyclist I never thought I'd see cyclists as 'The Enemy' . . . until we went to Holland.

"Judith talks of 'Dutch-style traffic calming' in a way that makes it sound something akin to the Nazi's 'Final Solution' to the 'Jewish Problem'. Let me tell you, when you're not used to it having bikes zapping at you from every direction whilst you're walking along can be extremely fraught. It may make life easier for cyclists but it can be hell for pedestrians! I suppose it's different if you're used to it. Our host in Haarlem, Gerald Lawrence, said it was better there than in Amsterdam, where you also had to watch out for the trams. There were no trams in Haarlem. Manchester however is the first UK city to bring back the trams, but at least in Manchester as a cyclist I am part of the problem rather than a death-defying pedestrian.

"They've just introduced 'traffic-calming' on our estate, in the shape of 'sleeping policemen' or bumps in the road. As a

The rest of them are in the envelope-stuffing gulag.

cyclist I never even approach the speed that these things force cars to slow down to, but if badly designed (as in the case of one road I traverse every morning) they can jar a bike to pieces even if it's traveling so slowly as to be officially going backwards. Luckily (and amazingly!) the ones on our estate have been designed properly, in that I can cycle over them without having to slow down whilst less calm cars are caused all sorts of problems.

"Robert Lichtman's speculations about you eventually switching to a monthly schedule seem to have been preempted here in the UK by Martin Tudor. I received 35/36 in the same envelope, and now 37/38 arrive in identical fashion. An eminently sensible move on his part I feel. The problem I have with small frequent fanzines is that they make me feel good, and I want to respond, but each issue taken alone rarely seems to connect quite enough to generate a LoC. A couple of asterisks in the margins, a paragraph of response to each. . . is just an insulting level of response for the pleasure an issue of your fanzine brings.

"Mind you the heat doesn't help. We don't handle heat well in England. We're not geared up to cope with it. We don't get enough of it to make it worthwhile. I don't think I've ever seen air conditioning in a private home over here. So when it comes we just muddle through, just like we muddle through particularly bad winter conditions, which are also too infrequent to justify setting your stall out to cater for them.

"How hot is it? Well, for the first time in my almost 48-year life I am drinking iced sangria as I type these words, which means I have had to fuck up what would have been in other circumstances a perfectly drinkable bottle of wine in order to make something refreshing and cool to pour down my neck. My dictionary listed the ingredients (red wine, orange juice, sugar, soda water, and ice), but didn't list the proportions. I substituted lemonade for the soda water, and didn't bother with the sugar, and opted to experiment with a 1:1:1 ratio of the main ingredients. It is certainly refreshing and is I guess as alcoholic as the average beer, though because it looks so disgusting (a very cloudy purplish pink) I am drinking it more slowly in smaller glasses than would be the case with beer.

"I read very little science fiction these days simply because there is just so much of it out there, and with having become more and more unfamiliar with the field I have simply no idea which unfamiliar writers are worth reading and which aren't. The trouble with recommendations is that generally other readers are more likely to have different rather than similar requirements. I still read SF (and other genres) on a fairly juvenile/simplistic level. I go for the action/adventure stuff, but unfortunately this is the sort of sf that is most overwhelmed by a morass (can you be overwhelmed by a morass?) of inept practitioners. Oddly, whilst the kids have now grown up and left home there doesn't seem to be significantly more money available and what there is has many demands on it. Also there don't seem to be as many sources of used books as there used to be, and as you pointed out those that exist seem to lean heavily toward the unreadable. This means that what books I do buy are usually new and expensive. I did recently come across a copy of 'Feersum Endjinn' in a sale at £7.99 but unfortunately I'd already bought three books that day, all of which were extras to what I'd already spent that month on books and CDs. I was tempted, but all too easily could imagine handing the Access receipts to Cas and hearing her ghasp 'How much?'

Increasingly these days I only seem to buy many books when I'm in the US. Some new, that I can't resist (last time it was Brin's 'Uplift' series, Bujold's 'Vor' books, and any

collection of Dave Barry columns that have come out since I was last over. Mostly though it's either used-books or new ones that are being heavily discounted to shift the remains of large print runs -- Westlake, Paretzky, Parker, McBain and all sorts of one-off sf books (for instance I picked up a new copy of Connie Willis' *Doomsday Book* for four dollars less than a week after it picked up its Hugo. All of this gets shipped back 'M-Bag Rate', at 72 cents per pound (or at least that was the rate in 1993).)

"Nor do I foresee any significant increase in the money available for books here at the Skelhouse. It's true that just yesterday I got a salary hike at work, hence the presence of the wine for the sangria as I bought a couple of bottles to accompany last night's evening meal by way of celebration, but only consumed the one. However, the amount of the raise is almost exactly the amount of increased outlay we'll have every month when we buy our house (as opposed to the existing rent we pay), which course we are currently embarked upon. In fact things are likely to get even tighter because Cas and I have about persuaded ourselves to abandon this perfectly adequate (for our needs) Amstrad PCW9512 word processor and splash out some hitherto unthinkable sum on an almost state-of-the-art 90mhz pentium-based multi-media PC with a quad-speed CD-Rom drive and a color laser printer.

"There's no way on earth we can possibly afford it for at least the next decade, so I suspect it'll be a least a month before we rush out and buy it.

"Then there's the added expense of going on the net, plus signing up for cable TV, which is the only way we're going to be able to watch Manchester United's soccer games. . . and the extra monthly outlay for all this is scaring me shitless. There's no way I'm going to be buying books as well. I guess I'm going to have to get back into fanzines instead.

"I don't want to close though without telling you (and therefore also the author I assume) that I was staggeringly impressed and moved by Victor's piece in #37 on the death of his mother."

[APH: It is amazing the lengths to which some fan editors will go to get a response out a reluctant correspondent, isn't? It's fortunate that you chose to chime in when you did, Skel, for otherwise new issues of APAK would have begun to arrive more and more frequently until it became a half-hourly fanzine, and you would not have been able to open the front door for the bales piled up against it.

Sangria is a drink I recall with a kind of dim and headachy fondness from my college days. I think the cloudy quality of our batch can be attributed to both the substitution of lemonade and the use of too much orange juice. Party batches used to have a bottle of Everclear mixed in, to ensure maximum brain damage. It was cold, though.

I also tend to buy books on trips, but usually try to patronize convention booksellers when possible. Not only does it feel like I am helping to keep them afloat, but more often than not, they're willing to give me some sort of discount when they see the small mountains of paperbacks I buy.

It is frustrating the way expenses expand to consume whatever advance in income you may make; and God help you if that new income is suddenly terminated. Aside from my own new-found professional income, Carrie and I are waiting patiently for the day that her daughter finishes college - after that, we too will be looking at buying a house, and contemplating what it's like to go into REAL debt.

Now, moving on to other issues raised of late, ALGERNON D'AMASSA (New address at the end of his first paragraph) has

I told you someone was going to pay.

plenty to say in response to Victor and Randy's experiences as recounted in #38:]

"I have moved yet again. This time, I have rented a P.O. Box on the assumption that I will never stay in one place for more than a year at a time. Conveniently located around the corner from the Perishable Theatre (where I have recently marked my first anniversary as a full-time, professional actor calloo callay), my mailing address is: P.O. Box 23101, Providence, RI 02903.

"I share Victor's bafflement with the 'War on Drugs.' I am suspicious, but unsure whether I believe it is a distraction from other more insidious business (scare the public with an exaggerated image of the 'drug problem,' and make a show of enforcing the law) or an instrument to justify more and more intrusive rights of the state to search and seize property. Actually, it is both these things, and more. The war on drugs was even used to justify the highly illegal kidnapping of a Central American dictator, an act which would have been officially condemned in the U.N. if the United States hadn't successfully vetoed it. The War on Drugs reeks of rat, and I suspect the intentions behind it are not democratic.

"Most interesting was a recent report by the World Health Organization which stated explicitly that the United States has also exaggerated the effects of cocaine. Cocaine use is not good for you, of course, but the rate of addiction has been greatly exaggerated, deliberately. The WHO properly did not delve into the politics of it, but stated very clearly that cocaine is not inflicting anything near the kind of damage attributed to it by our government.

"Of course, there is a serious problem related to drugs, but society is not being fucked up by cannabis, or cocaine, or even the synthetic poisons being brewed up in home laboratories and peddled onto the streets to the 'underclass,' the population the state doesn't care about. The crack dealer is our child, and therefore PART of this society. The WAR is what fucks up society.

"The WAR that is creating a high market value for 'escaping,' and which does nothing about the fact that there are too many young people who have no financial opportunities other than crime (or prize-fighting). The WAR which then proceeds to murder these kids and anyone unlucky enough to be standing near them at the time. Urban America has become a nihilistic death culture and all our leaders can do is write more laws, give the cops better guns when they send them out to THEIR deaths, and tell these kids' parents that they are living in tremendous luxury and don't deserve their welfare benefits anymore.

"And incidentally, have you seen the figures of the money being wasted on victimless crimes like pot-smoking? For trials, incarceration, and parole programs? Tens of millions of dollars and overcrowded prisons! And lives taken away by the state for presuming to handle and consume a naturally-growing plant, a plant that grows freely out of the ground we haven't paved over yet or bored holes into looking for oil.

"No answers here, Victor, but I've got lots of questions. Very serious questions."

[APH: And before I was able to publish his letter, Algernon sent another note on subjects raised in #39:]

"I was very sorry to read about your horrifying, unpleasant experience. By now I hope you are well recovered and working hard on the book project you mentioned.

"Dave Rike, and others, ask what can be done about the proliferation of 'assaults' with cars. Unfortunately, there seems to be some inalienable right for any American, regardless of competence, to drive a car. As a result, there are far too many cars on the roads, and far too many people ignorant of the

rules of the road with licenses. State governments demonstrate very little interest in curbing the rate of pollution OR highway deaths: they routinely block motions to tighten emissions standards and impose testing.

"Suggestions that driving tests be more rigorous and frequent are unheard of. If we went after BAD DRIVERS with *half* the vigor we demonstrate in seeking intoxicated drivers, there would be fewer cars, fewer accidents, less pollution, and--by necessity-- more public transportation. There is no longer any good reason to gut the budgets of public transit in favor of encouraging people to drive their own cars. We are spoiled rotten, and don't even notice the toll being taken by the excessive amount of driving in the U.S."

[APH: An interesting point sir, but probably not sexy enough to interest many legislators or other individuals in power. And I probably don't need to say that I share your skepticism in regard to the war on drugs. And congratulations on a year being paid as an actor -- you've moved to make use of your training much more rapidly than I ever did.

Another letter that has been basting for a while comes from DAVE LANGFORD (contacted this time through ansible@cix.compulink.co.uk) who is moved to . . . well . . . just read on:]

"I'm grateful to you and Martin for the new *Apparatchik* distribution system. Clearly implacable conservation laws are at work: the distortion of space/time evidenced by the shrunken top and bottom margins in Janice Murray's US *Ansible* reprints is at last compensated by the oversized margins in your Tudor Architecture edition, and the universe may yet be saved from sentences like this.

"The 'Chairface Chippendale' plot summary in the closing column reminded me somehow of a conversation at this year's Eastercon about the works of UK children's novelist J.P. Martin (1877-1966) and his creation 'Uncle'. JPM is one of the Great Undetected Cult Authors of our time: at the 1994 Eastercon it emerged that Neil Gaiman, Diane Duane and Peter Morwood were all passionate fans (the latter, of course, insisting on reciting bits from memory until gentle hands pushed towels into his mouth). *Ansible's* mention of this discovery led to several letters from people eager to re-acquire copies of these stories, and the revelation that publishers Jonathan Cape decline to reissue them because the books are 'classist'.

"Well, it's like this: the central figure Uncle, a elephant fond of exotic dressing-gowns, is very, very rich and lives in a vast place called Homeward which resembles Gormenghast with high-tech trimmings. Ostensibly Uncle is the noble hero of all the books, but his character flaws (beginning with inordinate vanity and a tendency to patronize) are relentlessly highlighted. Readers develop a sneaking fondness for his deadly enemies in the adjacent fortress-slum of Badfort, who publish anti-Uncle propaganda sheets, deploy sinister weapons like 'duck bombs', wear revolting sack outfits (ably depicted by the splendid illustrator Quentin Blake), drink Black Tom at all hours, and react to insult or defeat by taking out their 'hating books' and writing furiously. Some will not hesitate to identify them with fanzine fans.

"In the bar at Eastercon, Jilly Reed (another Uncle devotee) was holding forth enthusiastically to Peter Weston, Famous TAFF Winner Of Bygone Days, about one of the more surreal and absurdist episodes in the Uncle saga. I could see politesse mingling with alarm on the great man's face, and the remark ascribed to Victor in APAK #36 was clearly trying hard to get out: 'Did anyone ask you to recite any of this?' But I couldn't resist chipping in with a favourite bit of my own, regarding the Haunted Tower at Homeward where each bedroom is labeled with the horrid manifestation to be

The man obviously went to school to do more than eat his lunch.

expected there: 'The White Terror', alas, turns out to be a very small ghost which merely stands on the bedside table muttering in a very small voice, 'I did it! I took the strawberry jam!'

"But I didn't get that far. Peter's expression of dismay was readily decipherable as 'OH MY GOD, LANGFORD'S GONE MAD TOO!' He seized almost desperately on the word 'ghost' and began to babble about his own new house, a young stately home whose frontage goes on forever, and its reputed ghost. Perhaps J.P. Martin is someone you need to read at a sufficiently impressionable age; Peter, I think, is never going to be a convert.

"(Random sample extract. A museum has been discovered among the many unexplored towers of Homeward. Its scope is restricted: 'On the first floor we have nothing but treacle bowls through the ages; on the second a collection of Flemish cooking stoves, all the same size; on the third, nothing but flamingo bird-baths. I assure you that the collection is unique.)

". . . Thanks also for the nice words about *Ansible* 95, o mighty one. I have persuaded D. West to do the tiny cartoon spot for the next several issues."

[APH: Sounds like superb stuff, Dave; yet another author to keep in mind while haunting used book stalls on my upcoming journey. I'd be interested to hear about similar transcendent reading experiences of youth: One book I recall was a quasi-juvenile novel titled *Scratch & Co.*, read at age eight, about an all-cat expedition to scale the HKP (Highest Known Peak), whose characters stayed with me well after Nemo and Mowgli and others had faded from my attention. And after that, I picked up on Tolkien and was well and truly doomed.

Another correspondent whose comments on #36 have been waiting a few weeks is WALT WILLIS (32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, Northern Ireland BT21 OPD), and he writes:]

"I note with interest the fact that you have five days to spare before Intersection, and was tempted to visit us in Northern Ireland. I have resisted the temptation however, partly on the grounds that as we have told everyone else we are planning to move house and partly because although it seems likely we will still be here during Intersection, I am increasingly conscious of the fact that I would be dull company, all of the disabilities you must have noticed in 1992 being still present, only more so. The current one is a tendency to fall while walking due to an arthritis-induced habit of dragging my right foot. I have injured my right knee twice this way during the past week in my own house and garden with the result that I am in effect immobilised.

"I greatly enjoyed reading the letters from Chuck Harris and Greg Benford, the former for his revival of Proxyboo Ltd., which I had almost forgotten, though I recall now that I revived it in *Hyphen* 37. Incidentally, while sorting through my fanzine collection in preparation for handing it over to Tommy Ferguson later this month I found a small cache of copies of *Hyphen* 37 which I didn't know I had, so I'll finally be able to send one to Charles Burbee, as I promised years ago.

"As an admirer of Greg Benford, both fan and pro, I was delighted to learn that he has used my ashtray gag in one of his books. Is there any hope that someone will send me a copy of the book in question (*Artifact*, 1986, in exchange for some *Hyphen*?

"LATER: I've just got a delightful letter from Janice Eisen, in which she says, after some flattering remarks about my writing in *Warhoon* 28, that she has arranged to have me sent a copy of the *Fanthology*, in exchange for either *Hyphen* 20 or 26, and is there anything else she can get me. I have sent her

both issues and asked her to look out for a copy of the Benford book. So all is well, thanks to you."

[APH: I'm happy to hear that's resolved! Must be nice; the only time I've ever appeared in a book, in any way, I had my head taken off with a recoilless rifle round.

Under other circumstances, I'd have been very happy and eager to come see you and Madeleine on your home ground, but I'd hate to be part of a stampede; and given the plethora of American friends who will be virtually in the neighborhood, I imagine you'd have to say no more often than yes. Personally, I find it quite generous enough that you continue to correspond through the sundry complaints and difficulties you've had to face over the past few years. I do find myself wishing that we might have had the perspicacity to install you and Madeleine in a tastefully comfortable hotel suite in Glasgow during the con, so that small groups of fen could visit you for a few hours at a time, thus according you the dignitary status you so richly deserve. Alas, even a committee connected at all times by electronic mail can't think of everything.

Now, let's welcome a new letter-hack to APAK's pages, BRIDGET HARDCASTLE (13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London NW3 6PX United Kingdom, email at bhm@ee.ic.ac.uk), who has a more recent perspective on the process of becoming a fanzine fan than most:]

"I got APAK's 35 & 36 the other day, (via Martin Tudor) for which I thank you! I've heard a lot about Apparatchik but have not seen any until now. I enjoyed reading them, there's a good mixture of personal/anecdotal stuff and talk in the letter column (but with Don Fitch as a loccer, you can't really go wrong).

"I hope Precursor happens, I've heard nothing recently from Martin Smith et al about its demise or imminent happening. It's my birthday on the Sunday of the convention, y'see, and I was looking forward to holding my 5th annual 21st birthday party there (an aside -- I believe Intersection is where the 6-year-old twins, aka Christina Lake and Lillian Edwards hit their joint 21st birthday. Doesn't time fly?)."

[APH: Given that, most likely, I have just handed you this issue at Precursor, it's safe to say that the convention occurred after all. I'm sure we can think of some interesting ways to celebrate your birthday as well . . . back to you:]

"I don't know about revelatory moments when becoming a fanzine fan. It sort of crept up on me gradually. I first saw a fanzine at Novacon 20 in November, 1990 (but it wasn't given to me), I first received a fanzine at Easter '91, I wrote my first letter of comment in November '92 and pubbed my first ish in June '93. (I could go on with these milestones but it would only become tedious.)

"I expect for some people it 'clicks' with the first fanzine they see, that this is what they want to get involved with, but most people I have spoken to about this have been gradually nibbled away at by fanzines until they awake one day with a stack of stuff and realise they're hooked.

"If we are after 'recruitment' we could always arrange for subliminal flashes of fan writing or exhortations to loc, trade or pub your ish in Intersection's opening ceremony or periodically in the video room. Fans with camcorders could make adverts for conventions, local groups, fanzines etc. and show them in the breaks! It's a good job I'm not running a Worldcon, eh?

"You mention shrimp cocktails a few times. What's with them? Are they the US equivalent of garlic mushrooms?

"('I'll have the garlic mushrooms, please!'

'So will I.'

'Garlic Mushrooms for me too, please!'

The guy that could kill you is the guy on the plate.

'I'd like a side salad - and garlic mushrooms.'

'Can I have the soup of the day?'

'Splitter!')

"Um, I don't remember if I sent you Obsessions #4 (my database isn't). If I haven't, and you'd like one, email me at bmh@ee.ic.ac.uk which I read infrequently. If I want to subscribe (as well as locating and trading and passing on any salacious gossip I should chance to hear -- I don't do things by halves, me) should I send money to Martin Tudor?"

[APH: This a good question, and one which I have avoided for several months. Martin is keeping figures on the cost of producing the British Readers Edition, and we plan to confer on the future of this arrangement during my visit to Britain. Right now, I don't know exactly what would be a fair rate for British subscriptions, but getting some would be a veritable Godsend. The process of converting American dollars into pounds sterling and vice versa is far from cost-effective when operating with these relatively small amounts of cash, so any funds drawn in pounds which can be sent Martin's way are extremely welcome. We'll come up with Commonwealth Subscription rates for issue #4 1, how's that?

As to the significance of the Shrimp Cocktail, it sits in the center of a complex nascent fan-mythology sponsored by Dan Steffan and I (The Shrimp Brothers) with a lot of cult-like embellishments from members of Las Vegas fandom. They were a treat enjoyed by Dan and I on our first trip to Las Vegas for Silvercon Four last year, especially at The Golden Gate restaurant, on the corner of Fremont and Main streets. Make a small donation to a fan fund and Dan or I will make you a member of the Intergalactic Brotherhood of Shellfish Gobblers.

And just as I was putting this column to be, another electronic note arrived from Bridget:]

"Coo, Email!

"I continue to be astonished at the numbers of APAKs that come through my letterbox. You say last year you put out three late issues in ten weeks; makes a change from the more usual three times ten weeks late zine. A lot of British zines come out to coincide with two annual British cons, the Eastercon in Easter and the Novacon in November. What you gain in postage savings by handing them out at a con though, you seem to lose in response - people are more likely to loc if a fanzine comes through the post than if they are handed it as one of up to a dozen zines they get over the convention weekends.

"Still, the zine: that was a great description of your abscess treatment, I almost felt I was there myself - ouch! I expect it wasn't that amusing at the time.

"Twinkie tossing? Were you not brought up to not play with your food? Or don't Twinkies count as food? This game sounds like it could escalate (in the hands of us normally food-repressed Brits) into a fully fledged war like the Day of the Fortune Cookies. Back at the '92 Eastercon a great number of fortune cookies (in nice little plastic wrappers) were discovered at a party; they were descended upon as if by gannets or starving people who had not eaten for many years but who in fact had just got back to the hotel after supper, torn open and devoured. A few minutes later the groaning started as the previously optimistic fans found the messages in the fortune cookies were all the same (it took some time, as we had to eat three or four each to make sure), and along the lines of "Chung Kuo - the epic adventure by David Wingrove - no, we really mean it, it's a great book and you should go and buy several copies immediately".

"Then we started testing their aerodynamic qualities. It made a bit of a mess. Ah, I wish I'd kept some for posterity!

Gosh, it's nearly time to go to the pub!

I don't like trade paperbacks. They combine my least favourite properties of hard- and paper-back, ie they are too big to fit in my pocket and the covers crease too easily. I've taken to reading Penguin 60s at the moment, they're a promotional thing where Penguin (after publishing for 60 years) have released 60 titles at 60p (about a dollar) each. They're only short books, 60-100 pages, but they're great to read on a crowded tube train and are a good taster for trying new authors. There's Dick Francis, Poppy Z. Brite, Alasdair Gray, Albert Camus, Raymond Chandler, Spike Milligan... I restrained myself and only bought 10.

Simon Ounsley says "putting daft islands and lumps across the road is cheaper (than decent public transport)" but it's not much. Each road hump costs up to 2000 quid to make and install. <the rest has been deleted as it turned into an unfocused rant>"

[APH: Twinkie-tossing falls into the category of sport, rather than bad table manners. And I shall keep an eye out for those "Penguin 60s" which strike me as a good way fill in the little spaces left in our luggage after we've nearly filled it with larger books.

Now, back to the future . . . GEORGE FLYNN (P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Square Station, Cambridge, MA 02142) writes in regard to issue #38:]

"Randy's article is impressively written (as is Victor's, of course). However, speaking as a 'stereotypically balded' man in my fifties, I am just a tad bothered by the (implied) concept that the security guard's character is prefigured by his appearance . . .

"Robert Lichtman is lucky to be able to work for a city but live outside it. It's becoming increasingly fashionable for cities to require that employees be residents (=voters). In Boston it's become practically political suicide to oppose this policy.

"My own devotion to public transportation continues, in spite of such incidents as the bus that broke down as I was on my way to work last week -- after which a replacement bus finally showed up . . . and the replacement driver proceeded to get lost.

" . . . most Worldcon committees are equally unworthy . . . an idea which will no doubt annoy George Flynn.' You are perhaps under a misapprehension. I am not currently a member of any Worldcon bidding committee, and I think all four of this year's candidates are severely flawed. (OK, I would quibble at the 'equally': some of them *are* worse than others.)

"Yes, you're right about fans finding ways of perverting the preferential-ballot process. In Hugo voting, typically about 20% of the voters 'bullet-vote' for a single candidate in the fiction categories, 30% in the fan categories. Only 30-45% fill out the ballots in full. (My bloated monograph on Hugo voting statistics, which ultimately came to 14 pages in 10-point type -- superficially not unlike an inflated APAK, if you ignore the tables -- has finally appeared in Apa: WSFS.)

"But where would you quarter the 100 Thracian peltasts if you got them?"

[APH: Alas, I have no idea, George; this is just one more example of how it sometimes more pleasant to want something than to have it.

Now, let's get into a funky groove with JOSEPH NICHOLAS (15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JU United Kingdom) who wonders after the fate of his own fanzine:]

"As a matter of interest, was *FTT* 17 one of the five new fanzines which arrived just as you finished *Apparatchik* 38? Posted in late May, received in Late July; two months is about

Four words: Newtie and the Blowfish

par for surface mail from here to North America, although some issues have taken double that, and one, posted a few weeks prior to Christmas one year, seemed to have been posted air express, it reached people so quickly. Mind you, if US readers are receiving their copies around now, they're a month behind the Canadians, who -- from the evidence of their letters -- received their copies in late June.

"My reasoning for mentioning FTT is (a) to see what you'll make of it in your next "Fanzine Countdown", and (b) because, if you've read it yet, you'll know that part of my article therein engages in some sense with your own comments about SF in issue 37. Although you were concerned with actual books and authors, while I adopted a more general and theoretical sweep, we can read off one against the other to arrive at the conclusion that difficulty in finding acceptable SF is not particular to you; that it's the genre as a whole which is at fault rather than you. The 'literature of a failed technocracy', as the sub-title claims; and if the technocratic world-view which informed so much of the twentieth century no longer serves us, then the fiction it spawned will no longer hold its attraction either. A new zeitgeist is evolving, and it doesn't have room for FTL drives.

"I shall be interested to see what US recipients of FTT 17 make of this 'literature of a failed technocracy' argument. given the considerably more technophilic nature of US society in general -- as Arthur C. Clarke has often remarked, the USA wouldn't exist at all were it not for two technological innovations, the telegraph and the steam railway, which helped bind it together -- I wouldn't be surprised to see it rejected as another example of downbeat British dourness and depression (though I would be disappointed at the apparent shallowness of such a dismissal). Heigh-ho; one tries one's best to engage with the higher intellectual functions of one's readers. . . However, there won't be any US responses in the next issue, since the masters for that have been completed and await printing for distribution to select individuals before and after the Worldcon. But such 'late' letters, which I usually dislike in any fanzine, will help keep the debate alive . . .

"Interesting to see the responses to Judith's bit in a previous issue about the pervasiveness of car culture; even more interesting to see how many of the respondees admit that while they'd like to give up their cars they can't because public transport is so awful. To which I respond: that's why public transport is so awful, dunderheads! It won't get any better unless you stand up and demand it . . . although at the same time one has to acknowledge that the USA's geography imposes different constraints: towns and suburbs tend to be more spread out, so increasing travel distance, travel time, and inevitably, travel costs; at longer distances and lower densities, therefore, public transport becomes far less economic. But there's an additional factor which has nothing to do with geography: to wit, US citizens don't pay anything like the correct economic rate for the oil they consume. At the prices you pay, the government and the oil companies are practically giving the stuff away. Increase the price to global levels, and cars would instantly become less attractive, in turn helping to reverse the move to the suburbs and thus making public transport more economic (and therefore more frequent, convenient, user-friendly, and so forth).

"One of Robert Lichtman's comments seems to have completely missed the point, however, when he argues that the question of whether a road is built for speed 'depends on the quality of engineering' in it. By definition, a road built for speed will have its curves and whatnot designed out of it, and there will therefore be no pull-outs, chicanes, wide pavements, road humps, street furniture, obstructed sight-lines, and

everything else which forces drivers to slow down. A fast road is a dangerous road, fullstop."

[APH: Ah, Joseph... Tim Lane warned me there would be days like these. I'm surprised you are willing to buy into the notion that you should pay such ruinous rates for petrol. On what grounds? To protect the profits of international petroleum cartels? The notion that we should be gouged in order to make automobile ownership less attractive is striking in its draconian quality, but if you are that intent on eliminating private car ownership, why not just shoot motorists on sight? It would be faster and help deal with unemployment, as large numbers of otherwise unskilled bully boys would be required to staff all of the anti-automotive death squads.

In this country, we are continually informed of the fantastic rates of profit enjoyed by American oil corporations and the dubious practices which they undertake to preserve them. Rather than give these corporate vampires even more money, I'd prefer to be hit with an equally-punishing public levy to support better public transport, and I suspect most Americans (oh, excuse me, that's an inexact description. How about Frank Lloyd Wright's old phrase, "Usonian") would feel the same way.

Robert was talking about the dangers posed to motorists, while you are talking about the dangers to pedestrians, fullstop.

By now you will have read my thumbnail impression of FTT 17, and noticed that I failed to mention your article at all. I'm sorry about that; I often take my time making an entry into your writing, Joseph, as it can tax my intellectual abilities to the limit.. (And by the way, this is a damn sneaky way of forcing me to LoC your fanzine.)

For example, I'm still struggling with the definition of this "failed technocracy" which you take as the given upon which all your arguments are based. Asserting that technology has failed as an agent of humankind's deliverance because we have not managed to colonize the Moon or Mars in the fifty years since such acts were first seriously proposed seems a little like someone in AD 85 claiming that Christianity was a failure because it hadn't yet stamped out mystic pantheism across the Roman Empire. Perhaps even dour English economists have been so spoiled by the pace of technological advance over the past half-century that they assume that anything not currently within our grasp will never be realized.

Of course, one would be foolish to deny that the image of science and technology as the agents of the species' deliverance into a utopian idyll no longer enjoys much credibility. Such ideas were flawed from the beginning because they relied on a measure of order (those gray-suited technocrats in their identical gray cars) that totalitarianism, let alone technocracy, has never been able to achieve. Science itself is a chaotic system; its methods produce answers, but not to the questions which were originally asked. Technology has transformed human society in ways few SF writers ever visualized, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Does the fact that these changes don't match the visions of speculative writers mean that technology has failed to control our lives? Whether one lives in the technophilic US or the technophobic UK, technology developed in the golden age of "agenda sf" and commercial concerns based on that technology form basic underpinnings of society that most people can't conceive of living without. That doesn't seem like failure to me.

We can leave aside the issue of whether or not technology has failed us, and the extremely arguable assumption that the US space program has been a disappointment, since what we are ostensibly discussing here is science fiction, not science itself. Central to your argument is an assertion that science fiction which supposes continuing progress fueled by technological advance is no longer appealing to readers because it lacks a measure of

I can't believe you were actually talking about the radar system

plausibility that it apparently once possessed. This completely sidesteps the traditional interpretation of SF as "escapist" literature. The problem confronting the modern SF marketer is twofold; images of humans in Jovian orbit have ceased to have any credibility with the small faction of readers who are hard-line rationalists, while those looking for fantastic literature now have a much wider selection -- high fantasy, magical realism, technophile thrillers and nurse novels -- to attract their attention.

The real problem I have with your argument is that it supposes that readers choose their reading matter based on the validity of the hypotheses and speculations presented within. People do care about these issues, of course, but that's only a fraction of what most people look for in a "good book." Perhaps SF is threatened by the slower-than-expected progress of technical advance, but threadbare characterization, listless description and inept plotting strike me as greater concerns. A well-written book like *Red Mars*, for all that it may be based on faulty assumptions, will always be more attractive than tripe like *Fallen Angels*, simply because it is more entertaining and satisfying to read. Or, saying it another way, a really good book about mankind's manifest destiny in space will always be more appealing to me than a poorly-written work that takes a more realistic approach to the future.

I do give you, and Platt, and Ormonde credit for this: Most "hard" sf is written with an assumption that basic human political and social institutions will survive intact into the indistinct future, while proposing a degree of commitment to space exploration and other technological advance which would be impossible under the aegis of those institutions. To my mind, SF errs most egregiously in its failure to think "big" enough. A society willing to devote 25% of its revenue to space exploration that will bear no immediate benefit to its citizens for many generations, would hardly balk at forcing people to give up their cars at gun point for example.

Of course, all of my objections may arise from the fact that I am a gormlessly optimistic American. And it is that optimism which leads me to suggest to you that we shouldn't be counted out yet as far as space travel and finding another home beyond the earth is concerned. But you might have surmised that from my earlier comments based on the expiration date of my new passport.

On the other hand, if it makes you feel better to wallow in Malthusian gloom at the ultimate fate of our fractious and foolish species, I would never presume to try and stop you. It's always difficult to refute a thesis based on the universal idiocy of human behavior.

Now, to support my points about the different tastes of SF readers, here is HARRY WARNER (423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740), who lets us know he's still keeping up with his reading, including APAK:]

"Your 37th issue surprised me with its listing of named neighborhoods in Seattle. I wouldn't have guessed there were so many in a metropolitan city. Hagerstown has been gradually losing its names for neighborhoods, partly because there is no longer the stable population here, generation after generation of families living in the city and passing along the traditional names which don't appear on maps down through the decades, partly because the newspapers never use them any more now that the dailies are staffed exclusively by imports from other parts of the nation who stay only a few years and don't realize some parts of town have possessed distinctive names. It's been years since I heard anyone mention in conversation Honey Hill, just west of the railroad tracks in the steam engine era, where all the white trash lived, or Harrystown (named not for me but a long-ago hatter named John Harry) which is within Hagerstown just as Georgetown is tucked away in Washington, northeast of the downtown

area, or Quality Hill, which got its name from the fact that all the town's most prosperous people lived on it late in the 19th century but today it's all chopped up into low-rent apartments occupied by very dubious individuals.

"You share my general opinion of today's new books shelved in the science fiction section of bookstores. However, I have a different reason for not looking them over. In my case, it isn't the probable lack of originality and quality of the new releases but their price tags. A person on retirement income should be excused for not supporting publishers and writers when he fails to plunk down four or five bucks for even the thin new releases, but waits until they show up at Goodwill Industries or yard sales. I actually did read a science fiction book last week, though, and thereby undoubtedly became the last fan in existence to have read *The Forever War*. It disappointed me terribly. I thought I would like a novel that won both a Hugo and a Nebula. But I found it badly disjointed, perhaps because of its beginning as separate stories, and its denouement became clear to me halfway through the book. All I can deduce is that it was so well-liked because it preaches all the myths that were so prevalent a couple of decades ago about the wonderfulness of drugs, homosexuality, promiscuity, anti-authority, gutter language and so on. I now have a six-volume backlog of Detective Book Club books on hand and I probably won't risk another science fiction book until I've read my way through those.

"Of course, I'm pleased that Octavia Butler has won that \$295,000 from a foundation. She seems to be one of the very few talented and inventive science fiction writers of the day and the award might give other sources of cash awards the notion to do something similar for others in the field. But I can't help thinking one thing. Without taking a paper and pencil and trying to calculate exact figures, I would estimate that \$295,000 is more than was paid to all the men and women who sold stories to the science fiction prozines from the first issue of *Amazing Stories* until sometime in the late 1930s or the early 1940s when the number of titles published began to rise.

"In my wilder moments, I've thought it might be nice to mark my impending gaffiation by leaving fandom as I entered it, with publication of an issue of *Spaceways*, since its first issue was the first thing I did in fanzine fandom. If I understand correctly the discussion of fanzine Hugo rules it would be eligible for Hugo nomination even though the previous 30 issues appeared between 1938 and 1942. This seems wrong.

"Robert Lichtman is a good fan, he publishes a fine fanzine, he helps to keep fannish fandom alive, but he has one fault. He urges you to adopt a smaller typeface. This is blasphemy in the eyes of those who have trouble using those eyes. I think you are one of the very few fans (or rather, with Carrie, two of the very few fans) who manage to make a computer-generated fanzine legible and I'd hate to see you lose that distinction even though I would no longer be able to see very clearly its disappearance.

"My mother died 38 years ago this summer and I still dream about her, perhaps eight or ten times a year. It's always a very bad dream. Either she has disappeared and I don't know where she's gone or she is suffering from some illness or something else nasty is going on. During the dream I'm apparently transferred back in time to some date before 1957 and I'm not surprised that she is still alive during the dream.

"I could get along without an auto, but it would be difficult. Public transportation is very poor in Hagerstown. Some destinations are five or six blocks distant from a city bus stop, the city buses run for the most part only once an hour or once every two hours, there's no service after 6 pm, except to

a couple of shopping centers, no service on Sundays, and taxis are, I'm convinced, more expensive than those in big cities and very undependable. I'm no longer capable of walking long distances in very hot or cold weather, the nearest supermarket is one and one-half miles from my home, even in good weather walking to and from it on the bus takes about 90 minutes. So I continue to drive as long as I feel I'm not a danger to myself and others. But I know that any accident in which I could possibly be charged with some of the blame will probably threaten the loss of my license because old people are stereotyped as bad drivers. I don't think communal ownership and use of an automobile would be practical because of insurance problems. It would probably drive far upward the liability premium if the owners admitted their system and might absolve the insurer of liability to pay if the situation came out only after an accident."

[APH: It's interesting how many ways the insurance industry has of limiting people's freedom in this society. I agree that there would be quite a squawk if people tried to share the ownership and liability for a single car; of course, even if the premiums had to be doubled as a result, it would still cost less when spread among the various communal owners. I still think it would be an interesting thing to try.

This issue has been squeezed down one extra point below APAK's usual size, a move necessitated by the large amount of material appearing here. I'd never go any smaller than this, and I hope you can still read it without too much strain.

Harry, I have never begrudged you your conservative outlook on things. I always figured you were a relatively well-informed person, whose environment and experience had naturally led you to political ideas that were well removed from mine. I have never felt much desire to argue about such things with you, and have always held my tongue when you expressed ideas that I found personally very offensive. For example, you referred to my friend Kate Schaefer as a "baby-killer" in a letter to PULP a few years ago, but I didn't respond, figuring that it made no sense to butt heads over an issue where we had no grounds for compromise. But I have to say that your take on *The Forever War* is one of the worst examples of both poor reading and willful misinterpretation that I have come across in my fannish career. Leaving aside the issue of its serialized origin (although to my mind it is about the best fix-up novel ever published), the idea that it could be construed as "preaching" drug-use, homosexuality, etc., seems quite unlikely to me. The whole point of the book is that the protagonist finds himself estranged from the culture he has fought to protect, and returns from "the field" to find that he has no place in that society. How does this translate to "preaching" those transformations? And granted, the book does have a strongly anti-authoritarian cast to it (in my mind, far from a shortcoming), but what else would you expect from an author relatively fresh from a near-surreal tour with a combat engineer unit in Viet Nam, which culminated in serious and painful wounds? If Joe Haldeman had come out of those experiences ready to embrace social authority, I'd have had little regard for his intelligence.

I think you have let your distaste for the social phenomena you mentioned overwhelm your interest in hearing what the author has to say about military service and the debt which society owes to those who undertake it. In this regard, I put Haldeman alongside James Jones and Erich Maria Remarque, in capturing the tone, the moral center, of a 20th century war, even though he purported to be writing about future events. Of course, I can't really criticize the fact that you found the denouement predictable halfway through the book; I'd say that just indicates you're an experienced reader.

I do not bring these things up to pick on you, Harry. It's just that I imagine you are far from being the last fan who has not yet read the book, and I wanted to be sure to offer a different opinion.

City neighborhoods in Seattle are being preserved because local merchants and chambers of commerce do their best to preserve their identity and create a sense of loyalty in their local customers. I have no idea if the names given to these neighborhoods have been passed down across generations or not, but they are often indicative of a pride which people take in the special character of their surroundings. Plus, in a big city, it helps a lot to use them as a kind of shorthand for directions and description, even when dealing with places like Rainier Valley and the Central District where civic pride is often lacking.

I'm not especially surprised to hear that Hagerstown is losing some of that historical character. During our trip around Maryland and the Virginias in 1994, we passed through Hagerstown and the decay and decline which the city has suffered was obvious. I'm sorry that your hometown has taken such a turn for the worse, Harry, and I hope things have hit bottom and will begin to improve in the future.

Now, a very welcome letter from The Sirdar, GREG PICKERSGILL (3 Bethany Row, Narberth Road, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA61 2XG U.K.) who is a little frustrated with the current prevalence of electronic communication:]

"Four in the afternoon lying on the floor reading APP nos 37 & 38 what done come today, listening to Charlie Parker and thinking well what a wonderful thing APP is and how damned right Robert Lichtman is in his view that it *is* a focal point fanzine like what we don't have anymore, and become so overwhelmed by the wonderfulness of it all I came upstairs and started typing. There were even a few things I wanted to say. God damn.

"We were lounging around louchely at Mr. Langford's some two weeks back and he cared to demonstrate the wonders of Internet to such ignorant souls as ourselves. Much marveling; 'You mean you can bring up book catalogs from American bookstores *and* order books AND they actually arrive?!?! Crikey!' (visions of instant bankruptcy and visit to court looms), and especially at our David's personal mailfile and the like, although this wonderment turned to a sort of abrasive irritation on reading a posting from one Patrick Nielsen Hayden who I recall was once a bignamefan back in the olden days of stencils and duplicators.

"It appeared that Mr. PNH had got his modems in an uproar regarding the imminent change of domicile of Walt Willis' fanzine collection from Donaghadee to some other place in N.I., as noted in Walt's letter in APP 37 which we of course had not seen at that point. Belfast fan Tommy Ferguson was rapidly taking on the mantle of Villain. Who is this Ferguson anyway, machine-gunned PNH, what are his fannish credentials, is he a reliable person, will he simply wrap his potato-peelings in this accumulation of fannish treasure touched by the master's own hands, etc etc, will he indeed abscond from fandom with this precious collection and so on. Going on alarming in fact, getting quite above himself, really, and demanding that someone should be making public facts about whether this Ferguson fella is a fit person to be associated with.

"Quite apart from anything else PNH might well have the idea that WAW's collection is going to be something like a leather-bound gold tooled library of everything of consequence published since 1948. This is not, perhaps surprisingly, the case. WAW was for years in the habit of giving fanzines away to all and sundry, as well as selling them

Including the Chuckalow and the Zion Mid

off to support fanfunds of various kinds. (I know this because he has told me, and because I have a surprisingly large quantity of fanzines originally addressed to Walt already in my collection that I have obtained from a variety of places.) I also know that Walter had intended keeping (no surprise at all, this) a lot of the Really Good Stuff, like OPUS, FANVARIETY, QUANDRY, and so on.

"Whatever is there may well be impregnated with historicity, true, and certainly will be a deeply fascinating and large collection of fanzines, but if it's a comprehensive collection of the best and brightest of the last fifty years you're looking for you better get back on the road.

"And just in case you're wondering, Tommy Ferguson is a Good Man and a Fine Fan (one of the top-five new-ish-wave fanwriters in Britain at the moment in fact, along with Mike Siddall, Ann Green, Bridget Hardcastle and Dave Hicks - and wouldn't an OOPSLA-style fanzine with any-three-out-of-five of them as rotating columnists in each issue be a wonderful thing . . .) who is perfectly well aware of how damned lucky he is and knows exactly the value of what he has been given. And he intends to set up a specific collection of Irish Fandom fanzines and memorabilia using the ex-WAW material as a core. Is that okay by all the Americans? I do hope so. (Is this irony or what?)

"It's an interesting thing that Patrick seemed to think it entirely adequate to post his suspicions only on the Internet, instead of actually asking anyone who perhaps knew anything about this (me, like, or Walter, or even Tommy his own self . . .) what was going on. But we three share one thing with each other that we do not with Patrick, and that is that we are *not on* e-mail, and therefore it seems barely in existence at all. Which I guess is more the reason this relatively tiny incident roused my ire so much; it's not that Patrick Nielsen Hayden is worried about who gets Walt's fanzine collection, that's a legitimate concern, but that he can't be fucking bothered to communicate, even by such relatively modern contraptions as the telephone, with those who might easily have set his fevered mind at rest, because we do not live within the hyperactive e-mail whirlwind.

"There's another point here that has grown in importance to the present organization of the Glasgow Worldcon. Most if not all of that 'organisation' is being done with varying degrees of effectiveness via Internet. That's fine to an extent, for speed at least, but it has somehow bred an undercurrent of belief among far too many people both here and in the USA that those who are *not on* e-mail and thus neither part of the discussion process or properly informed of events and activities that may involve them are actually *themselves willfully at fault* for not opening up Internet accounts, lightspeed. ('Post haste' sounds rather quaint in this context).

"So it is in fact *our* fault that we aren't getting all the information, and not part of the game. This is a wonderful thing in itself; I am old and tired enough to remember a time when it was the *organising fan's responsibility* to ensure that everyone concerned was *sent - and received -* copies of fanzines, discussion papers, minutes and so on - that they had cause to see and act on. *Not sending them -* deliberately restricting and concealing information - was one of the most heinous crimes in the fanworld. That's all gone by the bye than, it is now the *individual's responsibility* to put *themselves* into a position to *receive* the communication, and if they're not on the right lines, tuff luck. This is a sort of crazy Thatcherite/ libertarian bullshit that obviously creates a two-tier system within a society where previously anyone could - given the goodwill of the originator - receive anything. By the

postal service, in case there are people who've forgotten what I'm on about there.

"There's something fucking wrong here. Are we in a world where to have a successful fanning life you *have to have* a PC, a modem, and an Internet account? That's a lot goddamn different to a notepad, and a biro and a bag of stamps, which although rudimentary was actually all that was required hitherto. And yeah yeah, I know the price of equipment is dropping like a stone, but when you have little or no money any extra expense is too much. Perhaps some of the more obnoxious critics of fandom are horribly right - it is a game for middle-class university-graduate whiteboysandgirls. How galling.

"Internet may be a marvel, and it may be the biggest apa in the world, but it'll never replace communication or the fanzine.

"And in the event anyone was wondering, I was supposed to take over Walt's fanzine collection as part of the Memory Hole project. But the ferry rates for a van were fucking astronomical and with van-hire costs and subsistence and so on we never got enough unallocated cash together (and believe me we tried . . .) and after a year of farting about I had to admit to Walt that everything had toppled apart at my end and advised he should once again consider Tommy who had in fact been his first choice some time ago anyway, before Memory Hole and me came along making foolish promises we couldn't keep. So take it easy everything's alright.

"I share your sci-fi horror indeed, although I would go further and say that my ennui extends to most modern fiction in general. I am as sick of exquisite character studies or raging psychopaths in finance house as I am of furry elves and female spaceship captains. I have in general solved this by turning mostly to reference books on home economics for light reading, with a sidebar in old aviation magazines. Well, no I'm lying, I haven't turned away from science fiction altogether, but what I do read is usually within the magazines, and even then it's almost always those from the 1950-1970 period. (And hasn't that bloody woman Rusch *ruined* F&SF with her infantile editorials, *and* she has the cheek to continuously buy her own inane fiction, and *where* they get those cover artists from lordhelpusandsaveus . . . it wasn't like that when Ted White was in charge . . .). I could go further and admit I usually read only the editorials, letters and book reviews, but that might be too revealing. No, I think the neurons that are susceptible to the general run of sf are already occupied in my brain, although I do occasionally wander aimlessly among those bright shelves as you do moping on how all our dreams of *whole shops* of nothing but *science fiction* have come to *this* (but then as Catherine always says, there never *was* much science fiction anyway, most of it always was fantasy of one stripe or another - but there was less *fur* back then . . .). I do re-read a lot, and often find that in opposition to the usual received wisdom that the golden age of sf is twelve, too many books were read at too early (or unaware) an age and too much was missed. Better the second, third, or fourth time around.

"I'm not sure we should go, as we came perilously close to going at the last MisCon in Burnham, as far as claiming that the state of sf would be just fine today if everything since H.G. Wells suddenly ceased to exist. But as a concept it has a neatness and simplicity that somehow appeals, much as I'd miss Charles Harness and Phil Dick. (Not to mention Joel Townsley Rogers . . .). And similarly all jazz bar Miles Davis.

"But really, who fucking cares about new sf anyway, only the people paid to produce it. And publicise it between polishing their Hugos. On realistic reflection - and until you take into account actually real scientific advance which is of

Bosnian Breakdown: The Unpronounceable Beat Of Sarajevo

course the real motor of sf anyway - there is already more excellent sf in existence (though not necessarily *in print*) than any reasonable person might ever want. (Perhaps you should contact David Redd and persuade him to *actually write* the monograph proving that scifi readers today *actually cannot read* any sf published more than ten years ago that he is always alluding gnominically to.)

"And fucking hell, most of the time I read fanzines anyway. Why read 200 pages of commercial tripe when you can re-read AL ASHLEY - ELFIN EDISON or KEPNER WHERE ARE YOU? Or even old issues of APPARATCHIK, which I am sure now will pass all the tests of good fannishness and be just as readable and interesting thirty years on as it is today. Bloody well done that man.

"Only four and a bit weeks to the green light over Glasgow as I write this and I'm saying nothing. I *will* be there, and I intend, given the chance and proper direction, to work like a nut ('Too right', says Catherine cynically) for the Fan Room and Fan Program teams and will commit absolutely to doing my best to make the event a success in fanzine-fan terms. But there are a few unresolved mysteries that may be followed up later. But let's get the drop over with first shall we, and count the casualties later."

[APH: It seems to me that all Worldcons commit some sort of foolish act or heinous crime along the way; I agree that at this point it is best just to accept it and go with as positive an attitude as possible. I'm just glad "The Scottish Convention" doesn't have the pejorative cast which "Confiasco" or "NolaCon North" had, and that there is at least a chance that some people will attend the con with an open mind.

The only difficulty I have with your take on Patrick's question is that I you don't make it clear if this was personal mail to Dave Langford or a general posting for public consumption. If the former, well, I'd think a person ought to be able to ask whatever foolish questions that come into their head without having to justify it to the rest of us. If the latter case applies, well, I know from personal experience how unsettling it is to be discussed over the Internet without anyone having the courtesy to let you know what is being said about you. Unfortunately, such actions do seem to be endemic to the Internet, where an awful lot of common sense and most human manners have been suspended indefinitely. For future reference, net heads, my e-mail address appears in the colophon of each issue, and I'd appreciate it if the various libels directed at me could somehow find their way into my mailbox. After all, don't you want to make me feel as hated as possible?

It strikes me, though, that this arrogance based on the electric medium arises more from the pace of the exchange than from a conscious decision to disenfranchise those of us who aren't on line. The whole point of e-mail is speed . . . no time to consider how rude or idiotic what you've written may be, just zap it out and take advantage of the ability to make an ass of yourself *instantaneously*. If you take the time to make copies and mail them to people who aren't in the loop, why bother with e-mail in the first place, right?

I'm not always a paragon of responsible and universal communication myself (heh, heh . . . why are you looking at me like that?), but I think it's important that some standards of courtesy and ethics in fanac be maintained, and your points in that regard are well-taken. Life in fandom is much more pleasant when you assume that everything you write about a person will eventually be seen by them, and the best way to be sure of this is to send them your stuff yourself. We (including me) will probably never be perfect in this regard, but it always feels better to know that you have tried.

Now, some comments on recent columns by DR. GREGORY BENFORD (coming to us this time from molsen@uci.edu):]

"Victor Gonzalez writes effectively about his mother's death & effects on him. I haven't lost a parent yet but my subconscious has a standard way to deal with deaths of friends. I begin to dream of them, like Victor.

For Terry Carr I had for months a recurrent theme of going for a walk in the redwoods near his house, with him telling me witty, laconic remarks--which I of course never could recall in the morning. With Heinlein he was always sitting with me, leaning forward earnestly and trying to tell me something. I've now had two Zelazny dreams, each of meeting him on a street and going for a plane ride. He was telling me the plot of a really fine sf novel titled DONNERJACK.

Used bookstores carry plenty of Card, Anthony and Asimov apparently because these are readily taken up by people whose attention to the genre wanes, so they move on. I'm rather happy to not find my own novels in those stores . . .

Rcvd AFP 39, which provokes a side comment: It strikes me that often a writer's essential flavor can be summed up by one of his book titles. Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*. William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*. Hemingway, *In Our Time*.

In sf, I picked *The Stars My Destination* for Alfred Bester, *Star Maker* for Olaf Stapledon, *Childhood's End* for Arthur Clarke. Ursula LeGuin, *The Word for World is Forest*. Poul Anderson, *Time and Stars*. Tom Disch, *Camp Concentration*.

Then I thought of that ceaseless advocate of the space program, Robert Heinlein. Surely his mood and attitude is captured by *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*. Space as gritty, huge, hard, real. Similarly, James Gunn's definitive treatment of the radio search for intelligent life, *The Listeners*--not a bad title choice for his essential theme, since Gunn is one of our best social critics.

In this spirit, I welcome title nominations from others.

[APH: This seems like a fun idea, but not many leap immediately to my mind. Oh, wait, I did just think of one: Suzette Haden Elgin is well-served by her novel *Native Tongue*. Maybe other readers will come up with some for #42 and beyond.

And now some comments on the most recent issue of APAK, from GEORGE FLYNN (P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Square Station, Cambridge, MA 02142) who is preparing to depart for Britain as are many of us:]

"*Apparatchik* 39 received. This will presumably be my last response before Intersection, since in two weeks I'll be somewhere in Britain. (To be precise, two weeks from today we arrive in Peebles: we'll be commuting from there to Edinburgh, since it seems that Edinburgh is full.) And as for Tony and Martin's party, that's the day I'm flying back. *Sigh*

"Actually, 'the nethermost region of the body that [I] can imagine' is the soles of the feet, but that's probably not what you had in mind. And I'll resist the temptation to parse 'uro-genitive superstructure' . . .

"For my sins, I've gotten onto the Intersection committee e-mail list. Yes, they do rather go on . . . (Of course, as with most Internet traffic, about 95% of the verbiage is either headers or quotes of previous messages. But still.)

"As for Britfannish regionalism, Andy Porter recently told me that he'd gotten a non-fan to do his report on Glasgow (which will probably be mailed after most of us who're going have left) because there weren't any fans in Glasgow. As it happened, the very next day I encountered a traveling Glasgow fan (and I note another in the FIT lettercol).

"Dubious hypothesis on 'the overall toll that Worldcon takes on its organizers': There are people who have a tendency to burn themselves out; if it weren't on the Worldcon, it'd be

The Teen Trash From Psychedelic Tokyo Series

something else (though probably not so visibly). As with water flowing downhill, we might as well get useful work out of them in the process."

[APH: As long as we are on the subject of Worldcons, here is a brief note from DAVID THAYER (701 Regency Drive, Hurst, TX 76054-2307) on the issue of moving the date of the event:]

"Even moving Worldcon in North America one week earlier would not accommodate some parents and teachers. Here in Texas school is starting as early as mid-August. The summers of my youth are no longer sacred. But then I knew that when I entered the working world. I started another new job on Monday."

[APH: And ROBERT LICHTMAN (P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442) returns with a new letter in response to various points discussed in #39:]

"The summer heat affects my interest and ability to write letters of comment just as you mention it having the potential to disturb your publishing schedule. This is the first night in quite some time the temperature in my office has been below 80° at any point during the evening. If the prognosticators are to be believed, this is at best a one- or two-day respite before another heat wave. Well, at least my tomato plants like it -- I finally had my first ripe ones this week.

"I hate to think of your temporarily expanded nethermost region, but I'm glad to read that you pulled through it. Your mention of eating yogurt to regenerate your intestinal flora reminds me that I, too, am going through Medical Stuff. I had a spider bite on my inner right calf about six weeks ago that didn't heal. Well, it started to -- and then it took off and got larger, red around the edges, and sprouted little spots like a mushroom circle around its perimeter. My doctor put me on anti-biotics, too, though not the dread amoxycilin -- and I'm taking acidophilus tablets with each dose to keep my intestinal flora in good shape. In order to keep the bite area from constantly descabbing due to my pants leg, I also get to fool around with semi-permeable gel-like patches that I have to cover with gauze and tape, carefully, around the edges. This is a pain in the ass to do every day, and I'll be glad when it's all over. There's a remote possibility that I may have to have the offending spot D & C'd if it doesn't go away soon, a prospect that fills me with the expected measure of dread and relief.

"It's awesome to think that, even as I write, Simon Ounsley is in Seattle -- and Mike and Susan Glicksohn are expected in a few weeks. This is one down-side of the demise of the Bay Area as a thriving center of fanzine fan activity. Other than the occasional TAFF or DUFF winner who pays the semi-obligatory visit to Glen Ellen, we don't see many out of town fans these days. Of course, I don't help my situation much by not going to local cons like the Potlatch that happened here some months ago.

"And speaking of Simon, thanks to him for pointing out that it was Don Fitch who started up this discussion about the alleged 'friction' between the various geographic groups of British fandom. Simon does make me wonder what he's thinking of when he refers to 'long-standing frictions of Intersection' being 'based not on racism' -- like you, it made me wonder if he considers Scots to be another race. As to your 'little joke about SuperMancon,' its being missed or misconstrued by some of your readers probably has less to do with 'Americans having no sense of irony (or humor)' about such matters as it does with the likelihood that some of your readers have no memory of SuperMancon. Either they weren't in fandom at the time (1954, I think) or they haven't sufficiently read fanhistory. Either way, you're right: who gives a fuck, anyway?

"Simon's description of the 'traffic-calming' set of barriers and islands on the road near him is true madness in the name of traffic engineering. He's quite right to point out that such impediments to travel create their own problems such as noise from engines revving and brakes being grudgingly applied and loss of fuel economy. But such things rarely bother the 'good citizens' who insist their local municipalities install such crap. As I said in my previous letter, I'm the front line for people calling in to the City of Santa Rosa to make traffic-related complaints. You would not believe -- well, maybe you would -- some of the things we get asked to do by people who presumably have good intentions. Install speed bumps on a four-lane divided arterial road, someone insisted. Put four-way stop signs at the intersection of heavily-traveled street and a minor residential street that happens to be half a block away from a traffic-signalized intersection which is accessible to those same streets by driving half a block in another direction. The list goes on. It's easy to get cynical, especially since a lot of these requesters are probably the same people who want to Get Government Off Our Backs.

"And it's not true that speed bumps make cars go away. They were installed on a route through a residential neighborhood that forms the long side of a triangle, the other two sides of which are arterial streets. Far from making cars go away, the counts stayed pretty much the same -- and now we get complaints about people making braking noises and acceleration noises. You can't win.

"Before I forget, I had one change of address notice I wanted to share with you in case you hadn't also received it: Charles and Cora Burbee are vacating their post office box and returning to their street address of 46749 Pala Road, Temecula, CA 92592. This is effective September 1st."

[APH: Thanks for that update; I'll enter into my mailing list forthwith. It's always amazing to me how much havoc a little thing like a spider can cause to the human body, even to people who are not especially susceptible or allergic to their venom. I mean, with something like a big tarantula or banana spider, it seems perfectly understandable, but I'm always amazed the little ones can break the skin. But, as your experience obviously points out, they can.

I also sympathize with your dressing rituals; for a week I had to cut myself padding out of disposable diapers and tape them into my underwear. It was uncomfortable, certainly, but nothing compared to removing the first bandage the nurse applied after the operation, which was attached directly to elements of the aforementioned superstructures with adhesive tape. And I tried to keep thoughts that this might be a preview of daily rituals in the distant future at bay.

Now, RANDY BYERS (most readily reached at rbyers@u.washington.edu) fires another round in the ongoing struggle between smokers and non-smokers (and how did we ever get on this anyway?):]

"So far, the people who have commented on the S/NS issue have been the people who can swing both ways, as it were. It's time for a nicotine addict to get in his two cents.

"It's really very simple. When I'm at a party, if someone whom I've been trying to avoid all evening suddenly pounces on me and--eyes aglitter with social paranoia asks, "Why didn't you invite me to your last party?", I want to be standing or, preferably, sitting in an area where I can swiftly fire up a cigarette, break into a series of racking coughs, and mutter gloomily, "I've really *got* to quit these things someday."

"In your response to AP, you nudge the discussion back in the direction of Don's original point, which was that a gaping hole is left in Sober conversation when people like you go off and get sercon.

I can't find my keys -- quickly, to the airport!

"However, you evoke the ghost of Don's point only to make the lame claim that if anybody really wanted to hang out with you, they'd brave the smoke and surrealism to stand by their man. Balderdash and pettifoggery! The fact is that the smoking of certain substances is known to produce a kind of adhesive that leaves the smoker stuck to his or her seat, and some people simply become embarrassed when they see their friends stuck in this way.

"Lastly, I would guess that Jane and Denys find similar conversations in the Sober and the Not-Sober parties because they are both so good at directing conversations into areas that interest them.

"AP should give up his shamefully passive behavior and learn to shape the events around him.

"Hah!--as Luke says.

"I hope you're feeling well. Sorry about my idiotic blurtation at the Clarion party in re: your "vile" surgery.

[APH: Ah . . . yes, it is a valid point to make that smokers of certain herbal preparations do undergo a behavioral change after they've have their medicine. Generally, given that we are talking about party/convention settings here, this change is for the good in my opinion, leaving the subject more relaxed and malleable to my manipulative schemes to control the course of fandom as we know it. But some people find the sight of people who are drunk or stoned or otherwise inebriated to be distasteful in the extreme, and would do well to stay well clear of the dark corners of the average fan party in the light of this effect. Which . . . uh . . . might cover what you were talking about there.

I should explain that Randy was apologizing for the way he greeted me at the final Clarion West Party of the summer, when he walked up to me and said in a loud voice "Hi, how're ya doing, I heard you were sick and had to have surgery, what PART of you did they have to operate on?" Or something to that effect. Anyway, don't worry Randy, I thought it was funny about thirty seconds later.

It's inevitable that we would begin to see letters that comment heavily on other people's LoCs; one such comes from LESLEY REECE (from lreece01@scccd.sccd.ctc.edu) who has also been concerned with my recent health problems:]

"I'm glad to see you are recuperating nicely after your unexpected urogenitive superstructure troubles. I see also that you heeded my advice about eating yogurt. Humans have lots of benevolent intestinal bacteria, some of which actually manufacture B-Complex vitamins, so it's important to try to replace the little guys after a series of amoxicillin bombs has killed them off.

"I've really been enjoying APAK. It's so nice to open my little brass mailbox and find something that isn't a bill or another importunate flyer from TCI (I'm "differently cabled"-- I can't afford it). Also, thanks to your benevolence in printing my address a few ishes back, I've been getting other people's fanzines and enjoying those as well (*Attitude 5* in particular). I must admit that I have been a bit overwhelmed by fandom. I knew very little of it until a relatively short time ago. You're right, though, that new fans shouldn't try to contemplate the big picture all at once. It's too much, and the tendency is to freeze in the face of the oncoming stampede. My disorientation, however, is disappearing as I gain more exposure and meet more people. I certainly hope that I no longer have what AP McQuiddy oh-so-tactfully describes as that "carp-eyed" look.

"I have another quibble with AP, and that's his criticism in APAK 38 of Victor Gonzalez's piece, "The Mother of All Fatales." "Victor's said it all before," AP writes. "We're getting

nothing fresh here." So Victor's dad should die, too, and we can have another essay? Honestly, I thought the first line of the piece, "I usually start the story this way," conveyed exactly how sick Victor is of reliving those events as well as how painful it is for him. It's like when you have a cast on, and everyone asks you why. Every time you tell the story, you get another chance to wish the whole thing had never happened. The weary quality of the piece, far from making it "smack of leftovers" as AP suggests, gave it more emotional impact. For Victor, this is a cast that will never come off.

"While I'm on the same subject (sort of), Denys Howard gets a saucer of milk for his intimation that Victor is working off bad karma in his new career as a journalist. However Denys feels about journalism (and he does admit to "implacable self-righteousness"), he cannot deny that a large part of the dialogue in the letter-column he found interesting enough to read late into the night was initiated by Victor's 'Goddamn Cars' pieces. Perhaps he should begin availing himself of Victor's writings."

[APH: Victor's writing elicits an odd variety of response. He sticks his chin out there and some people can't resist taking a swing at it. And when he chooses to consider a topic that most people don't much want to confront (I mean, honestly, do you read fanzines to confront death? We see enough of it with all the people that slipped away since the last British Worldcon: ATom, Elmer Perdue, Roger Weddal, Lee Pelton, Sandy Sanderson, Rick Sneary, Adreinne Fein, Bob Pavlat, Sadie Shaw . . . the list goes on and on), I'm not surprised the volume of response was not that great. But I thought it was a superbly evocative piece of writing, and I was very proud to run it in APAK. I think it caused most readers to think of something traumatic or someone they've lost from their own lives. Egoboo is only one of many benefits which writing that kind of material can produce.

I might take just a minute, while I am talking about the staff columnist, to mention some elements of what passes for my editorial policy regarding outside submissions. Basically, I'm looking for material which concerns fandom first and foremost, since it is most likely to be of interest to members of the APAK mailing list. In addition, writing on any subject that is likely to excite comment from the apparatchiki mundi is almost certainly welcome, although things which personally gross me out or fear imprisonment will probably be returned with encouragement to submit something else. And anything that can be construed as personal fan memoir would likely be accepted as well. I might even accept a well-turned and constructed piece of fan fiction, since that is an art which is always in need of patronage. Actual fiction - such as convention committee notes, or Helms/Thurmond pornography, or tales of winsome teddy-bear like aliens who turn out to be vicious organ-legging space ghouls - will have to find another venue in the cold world beyond the party-congress walls. You do not have to join the party in order to submit material, but it wouldn't hurt your chances.

Also, a note in regard to e-mail: If you would like to be a class act and have your postal address published alongside your e-mail address, do me a favor and attach it somewhere in your text so I don't have to open my address database every time I publish one of your letters. It might save me five minutes per issue and severely reduce the chance that I'll typo your address.

Victor says I should never make this known, but I don't care, it's the truth and I feel like I ought to admit it: letters sent by e-mail are substantively more likely to be published uncut, since I don't have to re-type them. I'm not proud of that fact, but I'm willing to live with the consequences.



Lung Cheese

By Victor M. Gonzalez
Staff Writer

The fluid began to build up during two Summer weeks I spent in Miami.

On vacation, and enjoying a truly steamy affair, I spent the days lazily

going back and forth from the muggy daytime into air-conditioned buildings or cars. I always tried to be inside for the ritual 4 p.m. thunderstorm, when the water-saturated air finally condensed and fell in a steaming torrent.

In the evenings I hung out with Madeleine in South Beach bars and coffee shops. It was my first successful affair in a couple of years. Once drunk, we would slip down to the beach and watch heat-lightning flash in the roiling clouds that always hovered just off the coast. Then we would fuck on a blanket in the sand, watchfully but intensely.

I would fall into bed at 4 a.m., after switching on the air-conditioner and smoking a final cigarette while the room cooled.

I smoked my usual two packs a day, and after a week my cough deepened, and I had to use nasal spray to clear my head.

When I got back to Morningside Heights the cold seemed to fade. I threw myself into the new semester with the usual masochistic abandon.

And, with a relationship on mind to erase the smell of desperation that had been clinging to my body for a long time, I quickly fell into a more significant relationship with a woman I had met a couple of times before.

Anne was a tall, thin blond, a former model, and a headstrong post-punk individualist who owned a car and an apartment. She was also a writing student at Columbia, but she lived in the East Village and she loved to drink and be seen in the rock clubs.

We would drink for hours, finishing up with Stoly from her freezer and acrobatic sex.

Sunday afternoons, when I finally managed to drag my hung-over ass off her king-sized mattress, are what I remember best. Long walks to the subway through a muggy and yet chilly New York fall. I would wear a sweater until I was soaked, and then I'd freeze for a few minutes after I took it off.

When I got to my room near Columbia, stress took the form of a pile of homework due Monday morning.

About a month after the beginning of the term, the cold re-emerged, and a week later a fever cropped up. My sinuses were hopelessly stuffed, and when I coughed my head would explode with pain. The nasal spray didn't help much anymore.

I have a tendency to deny illness. In my first year back at school, I came down with a serious cold, and I remember my instructor asking if I was okay, and my reply that I was just fine, while I wiped the slime from my nose with a tattered, wet tissue and blinked moisture from my red, tired eyes.

When the fever kicked in, I didn't go to school -- I was just too sick -- but I didn't go to the doctor either, until it was clear I wouldn't get better on my own. My phlegm was a vivid yellow color, and my temperature crested at 101 degrees despite a constant stream of aspirin.

After the physical examination, but before the x-rays came back, the doctor gave me a list of options.

It might be Legionnaires Disease, he said. He smiled when I started, and added that the disease was well understood now, and I shouldn't be scared. That's what made me think about the air-conditioner in Miami, the water condensing out of the cooling air, hanging in drops off the coils, breeding bacteria.

Then he gave me the second possibility, hepatitis. I groaned. That would kill the semester, and could wipe me out for six months.

The third option followed quickly: bacterial pneumonia. I hoped that's all it was, and I nearly laughed with delight when my chest x-ray came back as foggy as London.

The doctor prescribed penicillin pills and told me to come back in a couple of days, when the fever should have gone. My request for a codeine-based painkiller to kill the fever and the sinus pressure was turned down, however, because it would "depress my respiratory system," he said.

I thought my troubles were almost over.

The next three days brought Anne and I near the breaking point, as the medicine seemed to have little impact, and she was being called on to do more and more for me.

Having finally thrown up a dose of the antibiotic that wasn't doing any good anyway, I returned to the campus health center. The doctor saw me from across the room and whisked me past the line into his office. He made arrangements for me to enter the hospital, and apologetically offered the codeine he had before refused to give.

I went home to wait for a bed to open up at the hospital. I was burning up when Anne arrived with the filled codeine prescription. I cried out from the intense pain in my head and muscles. I ground up two of the Tylenol 3s between two spoons and washed the powder down with water. Anne took my temperature and called the hospital, furiously demanding a bed, when she read 103 degrees.

The next half-hour was a wonderful transition, as the agony that had engulfed me for a week slipped away, my fever breaking like a wave on a sandbar.

She offered to hail a cab, or even to call an ambulance, but I cheerfully walked the few blocks to St. Luke's Hospital, smoking my last cigarette, and checked in.

One nurse, confused by my carefree attitude, admonished me not to take any drugs not given to me in the hospital. I nodded my head sincerely.

As soon as she left, I hid the bottle of codeine pills in a sock.

As the first dose started wearing off, I became weary of the endless blood tests they were giving me. I wanted to be alone, or rather, alone with my roommate, a very old and frail man in the bed on the other side of a curtain. His oxygen tank, as tall as I, wheezed and clicked as he breathed. I gathered that his name was Earnest from the nurse, who talked to him as she changed his sheets or whatever.

I paid \$20 to a man with a receipt book, and he turned on my television. I had to pay for the phone, too. Really, it was a pretty cruddy Manhattan hospital. I was in constant fear I would catch an unkillable strain of tuberculosis.

The Clarence Thomas hearings were on, but I was more interested in the baseball playoff game coming up.

It was then that a nurse stuck the IV into my left arm.

The penicillin was replaced with another antibiotic, erythromycin, well known to be as irritating to the body as to bacteria. The nurse knew exactly what she was doing.

The drip was extra slow, she said, because otherwise it hurt too much. The fluid dripped in, like an injection of hot lead, or an acid, slowly travelling up my wrist, eventually reaching the elbow.

It was the Inquisition, the Star Chamber. My eyes fixed on the IV bag, counting the drops as they fell.

The ball game had begun when she finally disconnected me, two hours later. The nurse said they would be doing that to me every six hours until I checked out.

As soon as she left the room, I reached for the sock.

Many people say televised baseball is boring, but I found it plenty entertaining though the codeine glaze. The Pirates were playing the Braves, and the game was relaxing.

Sometime around the sixth inning I sensed nurses on the other side of the curtain, and I could hear the crackle of plastic and the sound of tape being unrolled. When I visited the bathroom I passed Earnest's bed. Two orderlies were packaging him up, wrapping each arm and leg individually. They turned him into a modern mummy.

The equipment around him was disconnected, the oxygen tank silent. But his penis, dark and engorged, still wore a catheter. His face, before sunken, pale and motionless, was covered in vaguely featured white plastic. I never learned what was wrong with him.

The game was over before they wheeled him out, and I fell asleep, to be awakened by the nurse at midnight for another IV treatment. And again at 6 a.m.

My mornings in the hospital started horribly, but improved slowly after the IV was empty. Breakfast -- not really anything but tasteless, saltless mush -- would arrive, and Bugs Bunny would come on. After that, the hearings were on all day and much of the evening, and then there was baseball. Anne would visit once every evening, and spend some time looking great and chatting with me. She brought me stuff.

Nurses constantly took blood or demanded phlegm or urine, or put dabs of grease and electrodes on by bare chest.

The bed beside mine remained empty for about 12 hours before a young man was brought in, complaining loudly. He demanded Demerol, and was very upset he didn't have it.

He was a sickle-cell anemia victim -- he was what the doctors call a screamer -- and the doctor did allow him a big shot every two hours.

I had a Demerol shot once, when I'd been in an emergency room in severe pain. The only thing I remember about it was looking up at a full IV bag, blinking, and finding that the bag was empty.

I just can't imagine what this guy was going through. His boxes screamed from the inside, he told me.

He haggled for larger and more frequent doses, and a half-hour before his shot, he would start to moan and cry. When he pushed his nurse call button before he was due, they would ignore him. Then the yelling would start.

He was also very poor, and couldn't afford the television until some friends chipped in for him. I got the impression that his friends were bringing him some smack off the street to help

him along, as well.

I let him use my phone a couple of times.

At one point, I called my grandparents house to tell them I'd been really sick but was all better.

My cousin answered the phone. I asked if my grandfather was there.

"Well," Jennifer said, "Grandma and Grampa are with my dad. He had a heart attack last night."

"Uh, tell them I called."

The antibiotics were working. After two days, my fever started to drop. I was taking the codeine for the IV by then, not the fever.

I had discovered how to adjust the drip myself, and choosing -- naturally -- intensity over duration, I sped it up. That way, the torture only lasted an hour instead of two. I draped warm washcloths over my arm to soothe it. The vein the IV had penetrated became stiff, like a ball-point pen, several inches up my arm. After two days, the nurses were forced to switch arms.

I thought a lot about the Miami vacation, the evenings spent lying on white-sand beaches below the art-deco electricity, watching warm storm fronts lie off the coast, half-hidden explosions of heat lightning illuminating the damp air.

Judge Thomas and the Braves were both winning, which depressed me. The IV was tearing me apart.

After spending a total of three nights at St. Lukes, I looked like Keith Richards shortly before a complete blood transfusion. My hair was long, dirty and stuck out in all directions. I had a four-day growth of beard and I stank.

Anne simply couldn't put up with it, and the night before I checked out she brought a bag filled with toiletries: a safety razor, a tube of old-fashioned shaving cream and shampoo. The IV treatment was over for a few hours, and my sickle-cell friend was well-dosed.

The two of us sneaked past his sleeping form into the bathroom and locked it from inside. We took our clothes off and got into the shower. Clean, we got back out and I shaved, lathering up my cheeks and feeling the cool steel wipe the hair away.

Then, with Anne sitting back on the toilet seat, I opened her legs and shaved her, and then bent her long form over the sink and fucked her from behind, carefully keeping her head from hitting the mirror and my sore right wrist, the IV needle still inserted, from banging against anything.

I was feeling much better. Anne was very proud of her boyfriend. My writing program buddies, several of whom had previously dropped in to see me, talked about that fuck for a long time.

I checked out in a flurry one morning, ate real food, and nearly retched from the salt in it. I chose not to start smoking, having traversed the withdrawal opiated (a resolution that failed 14 months later during finals in my last semester). My term had fallen apart, and since I couldn't afford to drop any classes, I salvaged what credit I could.

It took me three weeks to write a paper without the usual one cigarette per page.

But the best thing is, I bought a herringbone tweed with the money I saved from cigarettes.

FANZINE COUNTDOWN, JULY 28th to AUGUST 9TH

#1) Lagoon #7, Simon Ounsley, available for the usual from 25 Park Villa Court, Leeds, LS8 1EB, UK: One of the great benefits of Simon's recent visit to Seattle is that he brought a small supply of *Lagoon* #7 with him, which he kindly handed round to various apparatchiki at last week's Vanguard. Issue #6 was impressive; #7 strikes me as being dead brilliant. Simon is now rather well-known for his forays into self-healing and a kind of workman-like mysticism, but his memoir "The last time I saw Richard" breaks new ground, telling us a great deal about what kind of person he is and something of how he got to be that way. It's the best personal essay I've seen in a fanzine (other than this one, natch) since Luke McGuff's "For my Father in the Failure Business", earlier this summer. Plus, Simon is certainly not backing away from his efforts to plow through his personal toxic sandstorm. Far from seeming like a loony, I get a feeling of quiet intelligence and honesty from both Simon and his writing; no wonder he has made off with the last few Nova Awards for fan writing. And that's not all! There's lots of D. West art, some of it even by D. West, plus a lengthy lettercol. Half of this concerns Don's article on fan art in #6, revealing that all of art he considered in issue #6 was actually pastiche of his own devising; I hadn't been aware that this was a great revelation, since I'd seen Taral do the same thing some years ago, with equally transparent results. This is of no consequence; Don's response to the various mail his article inspired is even better than the original piece, and the issue is wrapped in two extremely fine examples of his art. I'm not sure if they were done direct to stencil or not ("D. West is GOD!" says Victor) but it doesn't really matter. Fine, fine efforts by two of fandom's best, plus a very springy lettercol. I am very impressed.

#2) BOB #8, Ian Sorensen, available for the usual from 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton, ML3 7HY UK: This a cheerful little perzine which manages to please despite an unfortunate cover referring to John Wayne Bobbit. Ian carries on about con-running at considerable length, but unlike many pundits on the subject, has a firm grip on the absurdity of the practice. I shall always be grateful to him for confirming that some of the criticisms leveled against the Intersection committee seem to have had some basis in fact after all. Take this quote from Oliver Gruter-Andrew for example: "It's the process that's important," he argued. "The way in which we organise the convention is what we should be most concerned with, not the actual convention. You are just too product oriented, Ian." Being as Ian is in charge of producing the pocket program for Intersection, we should be glad he did not take this advice to heart.

#3) Monkey Mind #2, Jerry Kaufman, available for the usual from 8618 Linden Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98103, by e-mail at jakaufman@aol.com or Jerry Kaufman@medio.net: I was very pleased to see a second issue of this breezy perzine from Jerry; just as I was on the verge of writing him off as a fanzine fan, he comes waltzing back to us with some entertaining anecdotes about life in the Emerald City and some nice letters on issue #1. I'm glad it turned out not to be a one-shot, and hope that Jerry

will favor us with a few more while we wait for *Mainstream* to return from the oort cloud once again.

#4) Opuntia #24, Dale Speirs, available for the usual from Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2E7: This is a particularly strong issue of a fanzine that sometimes comes out as frequently as APAK. Much of the issue is occupied by letters on previous issues, but Dale also offers the results of his research on the history of the hectograph (which I found fascinating, anyway), reprints a newspaper article on Torcon II and finishes with a review of Bob Tucker's Ice and Iron. Fun stuff, with an amusing Teddy Harvia cover.

#5) Situation Normal!?? dated August, 1995, edited by Joyce Katz for SNAFFU, available to members and fannish ghods from 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. Business as usual in Vegas; convention preparations, book review, fan fic, a reprint of Tucker quotations from the last issue of Stet (so far) and a commendable lack of amateur SF. This alone puts it ahead of most of the other club zines received over the past two weeks.

ALSO RECEIVED: Msfire Vol.1, #4, edited by persons unknown for Milwaukee Science fiction Services; Convention Log #64, edited by R-Laurraine Tutihasi; Nemo, The Magazine of Modern Pulp, Vol.2, #2, edited by Neal Patterson. Plus Garth Spencer sent me an electronic version of the latest Sercon PopCult LitCrit FanMag, which I may eventually read if I can wade through all the headers and footers. Thanks to all!

Odd-numbered world wars start in the Balkans

APPARATCHIK is the Gottfried Heinrich of fandom, Count zu und von Pappenheim, who rose through the ranks to become one of the great captains of the Hapsburg cause. A reckless leader who was always at the front, Pappenheim refined the art of looting, but was noted for the degree of care he showed for the men under his command. Shot during a cavalry charge at the battle Luetzen in 1632, he bled to death in a gilded carriage. If you're still with me, it's 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 5,000 copies of the lyrics of "Will 'ye no come back again," printed in time to serenade the Intersection committee at the opening ceremony. Lifetime subscribers include Tom Becker, Judy Bemis and Tony Parker, Richard Brandt and Michelle Lyons, Scott Custis, Don Fitch, Lucy Huntzinger, Robert Lichtman, Luke McGuff, Janice Murray, Greg Pickersgill, Alan Rosenthal, Anita Rowland, Karen Schaffer, Leslie Smith, Geri Sullivan, Steve Swartz, Michael Waite, Art Widner, and one anonymous donor. The manual says it should start with the push of a button