

The forty-fifth issue of a bi-weekly fanzine, published by Andy Hooper, member fwa, supporter afal, at The Starlitter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. # 103, Seattle, WA 98103, also available at APHooper@aol.com. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 236. *Apparatchiki*: Victor Gonzalez, Carl Juarez, A.P. McQuiddy, Lesley Reece & Martin Tudor (British Address: 845 Alum Rock Rd., Ward End, Birmingham B8 2AG UK). Behold, puny earthling scientists!

APPARATCHIK

Issue # 45, October 26th, 1995

IT'S MY SAD DUTY to report the death of another fannish friend. Jeff Ford, scion of Milwaukee fandom, frequent member of the X-con committee through the mid-eighties, and a member of the first APA I ever joined, TAPS, died following a massive heart attack over this past weekend.

Apparently, Jeff suffered a crippling coronary while at home, but was still able to drive himself to the hospital. They discovered that one of his primary blood vessels was totally blocked with the detritus of a typical fannish diet, and performed a successful angioplasty to clear it. Unfortunately, he suffered some kind of an adverse reaction to some medication he had been given, slipped into a coma, and died. As another friend mentioned, the sad thing about this is that there was no one to help him out when this happened; pretty grim having to drive yourself to the hospital in the wake of a heart attack. But it was very much in character for Jeff to decide to drive himself rather than call anyone to help him or even dial 911. He always struck me as a very independent guy when I knew him, and something of a pragmatist behind his goofy exterior. He also had the thickest Milwaukee accent of anyone I ever met in my life. I hadn't seen him in a few years, but he was a good guy, and I'm sorry to see him go.

GIVEN ALL THE TRAVEL AND TURMOIL I've gone through over the past couple months, it's not surprising that a few things have slipped my attention. One of these things, I'm sorry to say, is the upcoming fanzine convention Ditto 8, which will be held in Seattle over the first weekend in November. Hopefully, Alan Rosenthal will have sent out material to most people out of town in regard to this, but if anyone in Seattle wasn't aware of it, the monthly Vanguard party will also be held at Ditto on November 4th, at the Mayflower Hotel, on the corner of 4th Avenue and Olive Street (on the Westlake Mall) in downtown Seattle. Membership for the weekend is \$30, but Alan tells me that people coming to party on Saturday night will not be charged. This is nice, but I think we ought to be prepared to put at least a little money in the kitty to help them pay for the facility. Other features of the convention will include a trip to The Living Museum of Letterpress printing, and auction to benefit TAFF and DUFF, and a fine consuite organized by Marci Malinowycz and Shelly Dutton Berry, which will include several varieties of micro-brew and home-brewed beer. The convention T-shirt will feature art by the convention guest of honor, Taral. Equipment will also be on hand for the production of a convention one-shot. Further information for people still making up their minds can be obtained by phone at (206) 524-1206, or by wire at 73227.2641@compuserve.com or alanro@microsoft.com.

I HAVE TO ADMIT that the whirl of con-going and deadlines over the last two months has left me exhausted. Which may partly explain that while I had a lot of fun at

ReinConation two weeks ago, it left me feeling even more wrung out than usual. Part of this might also have arisen from the fact that I arrived to find that the other Guest of Honor (in my mind, the "real" GoH), Judith Merrill, was sick and unable to attend the convention. A large lump immediately appeared in my throat and remained there for much of the weekend, considering the reaction of people who had showed up to see a real science fiction writer and had to make do with a large bald fan no one had ever heard of instead.

Still, it turned out to be a lot of fun. The production of "Ten Zines that Shook the World" was even a little more successful than the one we presented at SilverCon -- special thanks to Bill Humphries, who turned in an amazing performance as Agent Henry Lippman -- and I understand it was captured on videotape as well, despite the fact that no one asked me or any of the rest of the members of the cast for permission. Memo to the Bozovision people -- I'll let you show this at Minicon if you'll send me a copy! Other programs were fun as well, especially the panel on Fan Dramatics. I've just begun trying to put together some kind of database on fan plays and musicals, and I got a lot of good information at the con. Anyone who can give me names, performance dates, descriptions, etc., of fannish dramatic productions, please don't hesitate to contact me. OH, and I forgot to mention that we'll try to mount a third production of "Ten Zines" at Ditto, assuming I can get enough people together to fill out the case, and have some kind of rehearsal on Saturday afternoon.

The hotel was kind of grim -- there were these yellow stains all over the carpet on the third floor hallway, which I thought looked a lot like patches of monkey vomit -- and the con was a little diffused because a local musician much-beloved of Minneapolis fandom happened to get married that Saturday afternoon, and a lot of people went to the reception instead. But I thought it was still a lot of fun and a very solid convention, and I'm grateful to David Emerson, Barb Jensen, Karen Babich, Geri Sullivan and Jeff Schalles for all their hospitality and help. On the whole, it was my best Guest of Honor gig yet -- and the first one at which people could be seen wearing bright yellow buttons with slogans like "ANDY HOOPER hums the them from Victory at Sea," and "Kill me now, said the Fry Monkey ANDY HOOPER," and "Who the hell is ANDY HOOPER." These were calligraphed by Jae Leslie Adams and produced by Hope Kiefer, and I was quite -- uh -- flattered to see my name on so many chests.

Another highlight was the Saturday evening slideshow of Garth Danielson's Dead Smurf collection. I was unaware that so many of them had been produced! Garth had some for sale in the art show, and I was able to pick up two more for my collection, the chilling "On the way to Calvary" and the bravura "Tonga Room." I can see them on top of the TV set from here, a fine souvenir of a fine fannish weekend.

I'm a simple cave-man, you honor -- your double-yellow lines confuse me . . .

AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH: The primary obstacle to my plan to make this a short issue may be the volume of mail coming in...not so many letters this time, but I still have some pretty chunky messages to pass on. Let's start with our bordertown correspondent, RICH BRANDT (4740 N Mesa #111 El Paso TX 79912, RBrandt@aol.com):]

"Apropos of Don Fitch's loc in APAK #43:

"A fellow named Saul Jaffe performs a service he calls 'SF Lovers' Digest,' wherein he extracts postings to Usenet newsgroups in the rec.arts.sf hierarchy and e-mails the lot to a list of subscribers. I suppose the intent is to make it available to folks who have a computer, modem and e-mail but who do not have an Internet connection (or whose Internet provider does not offer access to those particular newsgroups). (For those who do have the latter, dealing with the wads of SFLD compilations in your mailbox is not that much less time-consuming than just browsing through all the newsgroup postings...)

"I don't know if it's occurred to these same folks that what could be really useful would be an 'Off-Line Digest' for the benefit of those fans who are not connected to the Information Cowpath. Available in print (or even on disk for those with a computer but no net access), this could reprint the 'best' (editor's prerogative) of what's on-line. This could include Usenet posts, gleanings from Web pages, even GEnie topic postings (even I, who have access to AOL, Compuserve and a free Internet provider, have been dragging my feet about firing up yet another on-line service membership. . .).

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"Would this be a worthy aspiration for some ambitious fan with an overabundance of nervous energy and lots of on-line connections? (Merely the possibility of wielding the editorial blue pencil over Evelyn Leeper might be recompense enough...) Might at least some folks even be willing to subscribe in order to help subsidize its availability to the truly indigent fen among us? Then again are there already more 'zines than some of us can keep up with?

"Well, at least then fans wouldn't have to grouse about missing out on all the "good stuff" online (and for all I know we might be talking about a very slim volume indeed).

"Speaking of disks, by the way, I read in INFOWORLD that it's now more expensive to manufacture a 3.5" diskette than a CD-ROM disc, so my advice is to keep scarfing up those free demo and discarded diskettes while ye may.

"One benefit to readers of the tax laws Don mentioned is that books a year old are increasingly likely to be remaindered at attractive prices. They may also have created a new entrepreneurial niche: those stores full of overstocked or discontinued merchandise where Everything's \$1.00 (including books, tapes, CDs, and software). This may be scant recompense for losing the backlist, though. As I was discussing with Mr. Haldeman

and Mr. Tucker, how is a beginning SF writer to proceed without having access to the genre's seminal works? One writes about telepathy or aliens without having read 'Wild Talent' or 'Seasons' at one's peril.

"Thanks for the exhaustive Silvercon report in APAK #44. So THAT's what I was missing every time I headed out to the Lady Luck. (You know, I like that X-Files show except when it degenerates into a conspiracy theorists' free-for-all...)

"Thanks also for the kind mention of Fanthology '87. I always did enjoy rummaging through thrift shops and library sales in search of a good deal, so....

"Post-Silvercon, we hit the Strip collecting freebies and coupon books, in deference to the late Mr. Wittman. However, Michelle is speaking to me again."

[APH: But Richard...the paranoid conspiracy theory aspect of "X-files" is the part that really makes it fun. Every episode, Carrie and I sit trying to figure out whether it's a paranoid episode, or a liver-fluke episode. I prefer the former, because their plot twists are so much more difficult to anticipate. I mean, you can get a regular old monster movie anywhere, but where else can you see FBI agents with a paranoid fear of the government?

As long as we're talking about crawly things and "Bugs," let's talk to one from across the sea, to wit: BRIDGET HARDCASTLE, 13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London NW3 6PX, email bmh@ee.ic.ac.uk :]

"I feel very remiss that I've managed to stockpile four of your zines with ne'er a reply. If you published annually I'd not feel so bad about sitting on the zine for two months. Still, this is a hobby, I shouldn't get stressed out about it.

"APAK #40: Who is this Unabomber character? It sounds like he's quite a newsworthy chap in the USA, but we've heard nothing of him here.

"I don't believe I had any transcendent reading experiences in my youth. Certainly I read and enjoyed many books but none of them had the impact on me you describe. Tove Jansson's Moomin books were among my favourites though now I reread them I can't see why so much. Sure, they're lovely books, with believable characters and exciting adventures (and the tentative steps into the dark side of winter in the later books), but there's something missing. Probably my Mum, calling me to tea. Other childhood fave books were the Alice books and the Narnia series.

"APAK #41: Big flappy pages, all different sized!

"A look back at Precursor, and a look forward to Intersection. I found my Chinese meal perfectly edible, thank you. If any food has a reputation for damaging stomachs in Britain, it's curries rather than Chinese food. It was nice to meet you, and I hope you enjoyed your stay.

"Was there any desperate partying at Intersection? I didn't see any. I definitely didn't see anyone vomiting on anyone else's shoes, weak-constituted Americans or hardened-to-drink Brits. A major contribution to my lessened drinking habits is the price of alcohol at cons (if they have anything I like), and I find it hard enough to

Perhaps you've seen our milk cartons . . .

get back to my room without being falling down drunk. Boy, I feel old and sensible.

"Sorry to hear about your trouble playing pool. Was it not that you were playing on a CraZy PoolI? table? Why play pool properly when you can have so much more fun with a dodgy table that isn't straight or level, pockets in funny places and balls that are too small to hit, never mind bent cues and a lack of chalk? This way the game becomes one of chance, and you don't have to feel guilty about being competitive in a skillful pursuit, and feel bad when you beat the other person.

"Try CraZy PoolI? today! What with the British self-effacement and it being more polite to fail than to succeed, there are a number of ways to do it. Instead of playing proper golf, crazy golf courses are popular.

Picture it: each game of pool is set up with a number of walls, tunnels and ramps on the table, which itself is unusual in shape. Five sides and a hole in the middle of the table? Careful aiming necessary, and just enough force used to sink the ball into the pocket at the top of a ramp rather than making it fly right over.

Electromagnets positioned in the table to help you swerve the cue ball when you're snookered! Timer springs in the pockets which periodically spew a ball out if you're not sinking them quickly enough! This game could run and run (particularly the way I play it).

If it's an easier variation you're after you could try using one of those gravitational well demonstrators as a pool table - every ball you hit goes into the pocket eventually. At a hands-on science exhibition thingy in Bristol, I saw an elliptical pool table. This worked on the principle that as the table was an ellipse, if you put the cue ball on one focus and the target ball on the other focus, you will always hit the target ball *no matter* which direction you hit the cue ball. This can be scientifically proved. Still, Tommy Ferguson (that well known Irish fanzine repository), in an amazing display of physical impossibility, managed to miss it. You canna change the laws of physics!

Quantum pool could be fun (I'm using "quantum" as shorthand for "quantum chromoelectrodynamics" or something, here): for a start, the balls would only move if you hit them with above a certain energy, so some of the secondary collisions would involve balls staying motionless while the cue ball rebounded from them. As you cannot see overall colour (Hah! And you all thought you could!) (this phenomenon is called "confinement", and could possibly be avoided by using an infinite pool table. This would need infinitely many pockets and would therefore be much in demand as a jacket for conrunners) you would have to start off with, say, six red balls and six antired balls. The white cue ball would comprise an antired, an antiblue, and an antigreen, and the black eightball would be a red, a green and a blue. The "eight" refers to the number of gluon colours knocking around. The aim of the game, as with normal pool, is to get rid of all the balls of your designated colour from the table. This can be complicated in many ways, for example if you are playing extremely energetically you may find new pairs of balls pop into

existence from time to time. Your balls may also decay by emitting a gluon. A red ball could decay to produce (say) a blue ball, another red ball, and an antiblue ball. This would benefit nobody and would clutter up the table. The gluons make playing more than a little sticky too. The factors I have mentioned so far lead to there being more balls on the table after playing for a while than there were when it started (especially if this game is played in space, where there will be pitch invasions by cosmic rays). So, how can the balls be removed? Those who are of a less than honest disposition may attach electromagnets to the pockets, to attract their own balls and repel those of their opponent (as red and antired balls have opposite charges), but this is frowned on in polite society.

"Unfortunately, this is the only way for the coloured (or anticoloured) balls to be cleared independently. Otherwise, they can be got off the table by shooting one into the other where they both disappear amongst a stream of gamma rays (leading to the large, green appearance and short temper of the more experienced players). This should be repeated until the table is clear, or all the balls have become blue or green and somebody else's problem, or they have decayed into electrons and neutrinos which do not interact strongly and which the cue ball passes straight through. The game would end when one player hit the black ball with the cue ball, when they would annihilate in a shower of exotic particles (TRISTAN and PETRA are particularly good at this).

"The best way to detect the motion of the quantum pool balls would be to make a cloud chamber of the pool table. This is easy to do: one would have to saturate the baize of the table with strong alcohol (like that never happens!), and cool it down (difficult in summer), then droplets would condense along the the ionisation trail left by the balls. The difficulty with this is that you can only see *moving* balls, you'd have to remember where the other ones were on the table.

"It's nice to see a mention of freeze drying. That's my job these days, I'm trying to think up innovative things to do with it, and deepen the breadth of man's understanding of it. Reading your zine makes me feel as if I'm doing work in my spare time! I will be doing that next weekend. I'm lucky enough to be studying next door to London's Science Museum, and hope to visit the Star Trek exhibition they're holding while I'm busy working away on Sunday. They have guides in Trek uniform on hand to answer questions, and I want to find out how Star Trek science works and write about it in Obsessions! Hours of fun.

"Road Rage is the reason I don't drive. I have such a deep-seated belief in the basically co-operative, reasonable and good nature of humans that I am always surprised and shocked when one of them cuts me up, or drives through a red light, or parks obstructively. It is such a shock to my system that I sit there, mouth opening and closing in astonishment, instead of concentrating on driving sensibly. If I moved to an out-of-the-way place, where there were few cars and even

We think we may be able to grow noses as well.

less public transport, I might gird my loins sufficiently to start using a car. Being a passenger is no trouble.

"APAK #42: While you're all talking of hospitals, I am writing this in one (and typing it up at home (and retyping it at college)). I've had a rather depressing prognosis from the specialist, that I've got dodgy joints (they're blurred in my X-ray) and always will and there's nothing they can do to treat them so I've been discharged. Oh well. I'll just have to keep getting people to drive me everywhere and carry my stuff around for me!

"And not vacuum!

"It might take 40-50 Lindt bars to buy a fan Hugo. I know which I'd rather have!"

[APH: One hardly knows where to begin. First of all, I'm very sorry to hear about the trouble with your joints. I hope that you can find some way to live with them and be comfortable.

Second, "Unabomber" is the name which the media have given to an unknown person who has periodically sent letter-bombs to people involved in high-tech research and heavy industry over the past 17 years, so far killing (I believe) two and maiming several others. He was apparently silent for a number of years, then sent a bomb to a man leading a lobbying concern for the timber industry last spring, which killed the wrong person. Shortly thereafter he made available a 30,000-word "manifesto," and said that he would stop his attacks if certain large newspapers would publish it. The manifesto details his contempt for and the oncoming demise of industrial society, among other things. I guess that Penthouse magazine and The Washington Post published the bulk of this material, largely at the behest of the Justice Department, who apparently decided that it was at least worth a try. Since then, silence, save for the endless debate about whether or not the press ought to be in the business of doing what the Justice Department strongly suggests they do. But this guy is apparently something of a true criminal genius; his bombs are largely composed of wood, and show signs of having been assembled and disassembled over and over again. I think the real problem with the idea that he could be a fan is that, very, very few fans are smart enough to pull something like this off.

I don't recall any of the desperation I witnessed at Intersection as arising from over-consumption of recreational drugs. Most of the difficulties I witnessed were caused by people freaking out under the pressure of the convention itself, although several authors did pull their own heads off when the publisher's party ran out of drink on Friday night.

I will let your observations on quantum pool pass without notice except to note that while God may well not play dice with universe, he or she does seem to shoot a pretty mean stick.

Now, a few notes on the fan fiction perpetrated by Victor and me last issue, from RANDY BYERS (1013 N. 36th Seattle WA 98103, e-mail at rbyers@u.washington.edu):]

"I was deeply disturbed by the report on Silvercon. For one thing, it's obvious that the Mulder character on The X-Files bears an uncanny physical resemblance to

Victor. Your readers should be aware that the breaching of this correspondence in your adoption of personae at the con says a great deal about the true nature of the conspiracy. I was also frightened by the fact that I hadn't, until now, noticed that Nevenah's name is the only slightly garbled answer to the ancient challenge, 'What is the capitol of Assyria?' Tell me *that* isn't significant."

"Yeah, sure, fine, okay, I'm being 'twee' again.

"But seriously, Hooper, the point I'm trying to make is that your soul will surely be damned for that reminder to 'get your characters out of the car first.' These words have compelled me to begin completely restructuring the travelogue I've been working on, which I'd hoped could be salvaged through tweaking a few sentences and adding one or two pithy observations. Sigh. Why didn't you say something earlier?"

[APH: Hmmm . . . just what resemblance does Victor have to Mulder again? I saw him as being a lot more like Scully, with his deeply skeptical nature. On the other hand, the character he MOST reminds me of is "The Smoking Man." (Victor, it's just a JOKE, not an indictment of smokers -- put down that Mac-10 right now, it's not a toy!)

As for the "driving to the story" business, well, as you might have noticed, I do have a tendency to break that rule myself. Of course, when you're driving in a car like the fabled white Corsica, every minute can seem like the climax of the story . . . or at least one's personal story.

I've had this letter from SIMON OUNSLY (25 Park Villa Court, Leeds, LS8 1EB U.K.) for a couple weeks; time I got to it:]

"Reading Victor's piece in APAK 41, made me wish I'd read his articles in issues 37 and 38 before I spoke to him on the terrace at the Vanguard party the other month (I'd brought them with me to read on the plane coming over as it happens, but I got heavily into Banks' *Feersum Endjinn* instead -- I'm sure you understand). This is because I fear my comments to him on that occasion may have been part of what fuelled his talk in issue 41 about a 'lack of fannish resonance' in his articles.

"I can't remember exactly what I said to him at the time but certainly my view then was that his articles seemed a bit out of place in *Apak* -- less because of their content than because of their style.

"Your own writing is quintessentially fannish in that you write in an informal style and clearly have your audience -- perhaps often individual members of it -- in mind when you write. It is material which could not appear anywhere else but in a fanzine and it is the kind of writing which tends to work best in fanzines, because it plays to the strength of the medium. It makes use of the shared knowledge of the readership and it has a directness, a connectedness, which the intimate forum allows (in much the same manner as a small venue for a rock concert, for instance). Victor's writing, on the other hand, seems to have been written more than anyone else for Victor himself. There is no clue, by and large, that he has his fannish audience in mind when he writes. He

. . . she made Su dance a desperate and hopeless jig that shook the house.

could just as easily be writing for the commercial marketplace (assuming he could find a buyer for such weird material). All this does not make it bad writing, but -- at least in stylistic terms -- it is not making the most of the fanzine medium, and is therefore less likely to work well in a fanzine than your own more informal style.

"On top of which, I think there was a problem with the content. Victor seemed to be skirting the issue for much of the time, to be drawing back from what he really wanted to say. The reason for this was eventually brought to our attention by Randall Byers and Victor came through with the story of his mother's fatal accident, in a piece which was effective and moving (I agree with Lesley Reece -- A.P. was far too tough on him) and which seemed to act as a double catharsis for Victor. Not only did he get the thing off his chest, it seemed to open him up for further writing which was much more intimate and engaging than what had gone before. His pieces in issues 38 and 40, the ones following the article about his mother's death, were both excellent.

So it's a pity that Victor should be talking in issue 41 about looking critically at his writing and wanting to 'rediscover what it means to write like a fan' just as he's hitting form. And I feel guilty that I may have been partially responsible for this. Ignore us Victor. Just carry on as you are -- you're getting it right now.

"Because Victor's writing may still not be playing on some of the medium's strengths, but it's starting to play on another one: that of the advanced degree of personal revelation which is possible in fanzines. And for all that I like witty con reports and controversial fanzine reviews and so on, it's those top class pieces of intimate writing in fanzines which really stick in the heart and the mind. And, on the evidence of issues 37, 38 and 40, Victor looks on course to produce more of them. I really hope we haven't bashed his rudder too far out of line."

[APH: I am obviously not the person who should be commenting on this, so I'll let it slide except to say that Victor has a unique approach to fanac which is at least partly colored by the stylistic demands of his profession. I think it's hard to lay aside the detachment from the subject which journalism demands, especially when you have as little time to work as Victor usually has when APAK deadlines roll around. Plus, his contact with fandom really seems to be limited to once a month at Vanguard and occasional meetings with other Apparatchiki. If you really want to get him interested in the goings-on of fandom at large, send him your own stuff, people.

Now, another segment in the ongoing debate on the literature of a failed technocracy, from (WAIT FOR IT!) JOSEPH NICHOLAS (15 Jansons Rd., South Tottenham, London N15 4JU, U.K.):]

"The distinction between technology and technocracy is certainly firm enough on a semantic level, but I don't think the division exists quite so clearly in the allegedly real world,' you say, and continue: 'The use of technology requires us to make certain choices in order to enjoy its application and employment, and after we've

made enough of those choices, where is the demonstrable difference between a society which is *de facto* controlled by its own technology and one in which the control is overtly stated in a technocratic world view?' But there is no necessary correlation between use of technology and adoption of a technocratic worldview. For example, the Chinese had technology -- gunpowder, printing -- during what we Europeans call the Middle Ages, but these things were regarded as toys rather than as tools for the development of society, and the culture of the Sung and Ming empires remained dominated by static Confucian principles of order and idealism. Foreign trade, and the knowledge of the outside world and the outside world's innovations which it brought with it, was considered so destabilising that it was eventually banned altogether. (Incidentally, are there any stories based on the 'what-if' premise of Admiral Cheng Ho being permitted to continue his explorations of the Indian Ocean in the early fifteenth century, and perhaps to round the Cape of Good Hope to encounter European explorers from Portugal and Spain? I've seen this discussed on several occasions but can't recall ever reading any fiction about it.) Or, for another example, consider the European Middle Ages themselves: in his *The Medieval Machine*, French historian Jean Gimpel makes out a convincing case for an early 'industrial revolution' during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but these innovations had no impact on the structure and nature of society, it was called 'the Age of Faith' precisely because the world was held to be God-given and unchangeable.

"For most of human history, in fact, societies and social orders have been regarded as essentially changeless, and the principal goal of most philosophical enquiries into what's short-handed as 'the human condition' has been to determine how best we should live in order to secure harmony between the natural and the spiritual worlds. Notions of 'progress' are relatively recent in origin, deriving principally from the Industrial Revolution(s) of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries -- the first period in which change became detectable, so that the world in which one grew old and died was visibly different from that into which one had been born -- and were given their greatest boost during the Victorian period, when Marx, Darwin *et al* sketched out a programme for the development of the human species which conceded implicitly that there was such a thing. That lots of people, in the 'developing' world or elsewhere, continue to believe in 'progress' doesn't make it real, any more than lots of people believe in a god or gods makes them real either."

[APH: I find this stuff very interesting, Joseph, but I'm not sure how it advances your argument or refutes mine. Obviously, if you have a profoundly anti-technical worldview and social paradigm, admitting a few bottle-rockets and potato-prints into your economy will not do a lot to transform your culture into technocracy overnight. However, here, now, in the 20th century, we've allowed various microwave popcorn and self-steaming pencil-

Only a few are rated as high as "poor," while most are considered "despicable."

sharpener combines to develop so much control over our economic destiny that the whole culture is now something like a shark; if we don't keep moving forward and devouring everything in our paths, we'll sink and die. Or so those parties would like us to believe, in any event. A thing doesn't have to be "real" to have an immense impact on a society, even to the degree of dictating the economic, political and cultural path it will follow, which you support quite eloquently with your remarks about China and the Age of Faith. My point, one more time, was that there are a lot of people in the world who still embrace the technocratic view of "progress," even if great thinkers like the two of us have learned not to do so, and that even if a large number of people feel as we do, and even if technology has failed to deliver many of the things it was expected to, this is not a valid explanation for a slump in the sales of science fiction novels. Science Fiction has always been, in great part, an escapist genre. Dedicated fans and writers and editors may have attempted to keep it married to things which were scientifically possible, but it was bems and brass brassieres that made the genre economically viable. I think science fiction has suffered simply because there are so many robust sub-genres competing for the escapist dollar (or pound) these days, horror, fantasy, Star Trek, and so on. Pick any twenty people you see going into W.H. Smith's to buy some form of genre literature, and I think very few of them would tell you that they had ceased to read science fiction because of the failure of technocracy to deliver them their personal aerocar.

On the other hand, the point about Admiral Cheng Ho is very tempting and intriguing. He was certainly no farther from home than the Portugese were in the Indian Ocean; but it's questionable whether the Chinese would ever have been able to extend hegemony over India or parts of Africa as the Europeans did. Since they had relegated such pointless fripperies as gunpowder to the status of toys and noisemakers, they had a distinct disadvantage when dealing with such barbarian nations as had decided to adopt firearms.

We do seem to be leaping about from subject to subject this issue; we'll grind the gears again with a letter from VICKI ROSENZWEIG (33 Indian Road #6-R, New York, NY 10034), who opines:]

"Once again you prove that every person's Worldcon is different. I spent most of my evenings in the Central, and never heard, saw, or heard about the ninjas, or fleeing gulls, until I got this zine. As for the 'political reliability of people who write skeptical reviews of *Blat!*,' it's a delightful phrase, but I can't figure out what you mean by it. Which people, and what kind of politics? That is, do you mean fannish politics or questions of government policy and the Only Decent Way to Make Clam Chowder? And what's wrong with a bit of skepticism? (I like *Blat!*, but by that very token I feel that it can stand up to questioning and even challenge)"

[APH: In answer to your questions: No.]

"I have very mixed feelings about this e-mail versus paper stuff. I agree that it's a mistake to limit anything

not explicitly computer-related to people with computers, if only because the number of people online, while huge in absolute terms (the last estimate I saw is that about five and a half million Americans use the Internet), is a small percentage of any of the groups it overlaps (geographic, religious, hobby, whatever) with the possible exception of computer programmers. And it's annoying, at best, to ask a simple question like 'where's the such-and-such room party' at a con and be told 'don't you read elbows?' instead of 'room 222.' It's also important to remember that e-mail can be forwarded to other people that the original recipient, or printed and shown around, just as a paper letter or zine can be copied or handed to a friend. The original defined mailing list should be thought of as the minimum group that's seeing your writing, regardless of the medium.

'Td love to commute to work via Zeppelin, but few New York buildings have the mooring towers necessary. Also, some of the cool people live less than a Zeppelin-length from where they work, but this can easily be gotten around: we'll establish Zeppelin-loop routes, and passengers can get on at one stop, ride round, and get off near where they started. It may not be efficient, but it's very cool, especially on a clear May morning.

"I wouldn't drop someone from my mailing list for a three months' silence, unless I'd sent them one copy of my zine on speculation, either because I'd seen their name somewhere or they'd sent a note asking for it, and not gotten a response that first time. And then it wouldn't be the three months as such, but the feeling that not everyone is interested in what I'm publishing, and I'm not going to kill trees to keep sending my stuff to people who haven't expressed an interest in reading it."

[APH: This applies to a few people who have recently joined the APAK mailing list, but I always send a person three or four issues before pulling the plug. We are approaching another mailing-list pruning season, however, so some people who have recently joined the list ought to let me know if they want to go on getting this fanzine.

The phenomenon of people treating you like you're uncool if you're not on-line will probably run its course in another year or two at most. And it's quite correct for people on-line to point out that conducting business via public postings is actually far more accesible than the way things have been done in print or by telephone conversation in the past. The only way I find it really objectionable is when someone on, say, a big convention committee, is making up a program participant list and says, "No, not him, or him, or her; they're not on-line and I would have to actually call them or write a letter to sign them up." I suspect that this isn't a matter of premeditation, it's simply that there are so many people on-line now that any function could easily be filled by the people easily accessible there. Which really does lead to a class difference within even an informal body like fandom.

Moving right along, ROBERT LICHTMAN (P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442) comments on various events of the summer just past:]

"And in this corner, from Jasper, Alabama: The Butterbean!"

"I enjoyed your small memorial to Jerry Garcia in No. 40. I wasn't what you could call a Deadhead, either, but I enjoyed their music -- the perfect accompaniment to any sidebar. The last concert of theirs I attended was in Long Beach (CA) in 1983, and that under unusual circumstances. (I was down south selling books for Paul William's Entwhistle Books and ran into an old Farm friend of mine outside a bookstore. He was driving semi and was stuck in Long Beach waiting for a load. He had two tickets to the concert but his date had bugged out on him and did I want to come? Well, of course. So we drove off in his semi to the concert.) Most of the Dead concerts I attended were the early ones on the panhandle back in the good ol' 60s, though I also saw them a number of times at the Fillmore and the Avalon, and on one particularly memorable occasion at an event called the 'Celestial Synapse' back in early 1969, which was also the first time I laid eyes on Stephen Gaskin, who was months later to play a very important part in my life. (That is, I got into his teachings, into his ingroup, and ultimately into nearly a decade living at The Far, where former fan William 'Bill' Meyers also lived. We used to joke about this being our version of the love camp in the Ozarks.)

"My oldest son, Ben, was/is a considerable Deadhead, and was making a lot of his income from traveling around with the show and vending (cool-looking batik and tie-dye teeshirts, etc.). He's been busily figuring out his New Life lately, and in the process being rather more broke than usual.

"I'm going to jump ahead to No. 43 and Kim Huett's letter about that article in a 1961 *Shaggy* by Joe Gibson. I don't have a copy of that issue, either, but I knew Joe Gibson in 1961 -- in fact, he was my boss (see my column in *Wild Heirs* #8.5 for details) -- and I know that he disliked Walter Breen. If Kim Huett would favor us with a copy of Joe's article, I could possibly comment further.

"Are you referring to anyone in particular on Page 1 where you write, 'the political reliability of people who write skeptical reviews of *Blat!*' "

[APH: Not really.]

"In Victor's column, I can definitely relate to Simon Ounsley's notion of 'self-controlled realities,' particularly (in fact) where finding good parking spaces is concerned. I supplement my own supreme good luck and confidence (in 1970 I pulled up to the corner of Bleeker and MacDougal in the heart of Greenwich Village -- this on a drive down from Poughkeepsie on the eve before the great cross-country trek with the Lupoffs and their two kids and assorted other passengers in two Volvos, one of which I got to keep for my trouble -- but back to the parking space: I pulled up to the corner and just as I got there the car in the space right on the corner pulled out and I got it!) with a Native American car fetish. Carol and I ran across Lorenzo, a Zuni-Apache living in the Sierra foothills, an artisan who writes poems and songs and puts out his own cassettes, and also carves the good parking karma car fetishes. We were so taken

with them that Carol got me one for my shortly upcoming birthday -- and it seemed to work. I've had good luck finding parking around the university in Berkeley, even on football game days, and in the North Beach/Telegraph Hill part of San Francisco, an even more challenging parking situation. It was mounted on the dash of my car with Velcro, a sort of beacon pointing the way to good parking. Was, because about a year ago the cord binding the various attachments -- arrowhead, feather, small turquoise beads -- to the main body of the car snapped. I took it in and have it safe in a box, always intending to write Lorenzo to see if he'll repair it, perhaps putting on a fresh feather. Meanwhile, there seems to be a residual effect I can't explain. Perhaps I can get on 'Sightings.'

"If I'm going to get this off to you, I got to end now. In addition to what I said above, got to note that I really liked the gritty spontaneity of the second half of issue #41. I also found Dale Speirs' history of the hektograph fascinating. And, finally, belated congratulations on 'attaining forty issues.'"

[APH: Thanks for the praise. Some people seem to have an innate genius in regard to parking, while others can JUST MISS space after space, until they end up parking in a different sip code from where they want to be. Carrie is what I would call a streak parker; we'll have weeks where the right space is always open to us, and others where we clearly should have stayed at home. She's a gambler, too; we'll pass a perfectly good space fifty yards or so from the place we're going into, but she'll keep searching in hopes of finding one right in front of it. And when we're on a bad streak, the original space is always gone when we return to it.

I think I really need to get a copy of this Gibson article, since so many people have made reference to it. More later.

Now, in case anyone was still wondering about the actual nature of my relationship with Las Vegas fandom, we'll finish with a note from ARNIE KATZ (coming to us from Crossfire @aol.com) :]

"Great piece of faan fiction you and Victor did in A'chik 44. The only thing that would have made it even better would be if you'd sent it to WILD HEIRS. We all laughed Many Times.

"If Teddy/David isn't pulling your leg about his imagined battle between you and Las Vegas fandom, it might be time to say explicitly what we Vegrants thought EVERYone understood: Andy Hooper is one of our favorite people in fandom. What we are doing is intended merely as friendly banter and a bit of myth-making, not as an attack on any level.

"We all read, and greatly enjoy, A'chik. It's also terrific source material for WILD HEIRS covers."

[APH: Thanks, Arnie. More mail pending, and we'll see it in two short weeks. Thanks to everyone who wrote!]



FANZINE COUNTDOWN, October 11th to 25th

#1) Mimosa #17, edited by Nicki & Richard Lynch, P.O. Box 1350, Germantown, MD 20875: I have said a few less-than-complimentary things about this fanzine in the past; it seemed to me over the past couple issues that the Lynches were sort of going through the motions, and that the zine lacked a certain snap. I'm very happy to say that, whatever the reason, *Mimosa* seems to be its old self again. Perhaps surviving the fire (which appears to have been a lot worse than we were originally told) which has driven them into a motel for months on end has communicated a new sense of urgency to the editor's fanac. Or it could simply be an improvement in the level of material submitted: This issue has memories of Bloch by Dean Grennell and Esther Cole (Es Cole!), entertaining pieces from Willis, John Berry, Ben Zuhl and Ahrvid Engholm (I), a very accessible account of his summer at Clarion by Michael Burstein, and some of the best art the zine has ever had. Especially the stuff by Teddy Harvia; his cartoons in this issue are just about the best work I've seen by him, especially his little caricatures of Nicki and Richard, which captured them perfectly and had me laughing hysterically. The letter column is still a little moribund, but on the whole, this is the best issue since the one full of work-horror stories (and I was in that one, natch). And though they didn't get to use their usual mimeograph because of the fire, the issue looks just great. A fine, fine issue.

#2) Crowdaddy # 9 & 10, edited by Paul Williams, P.O. Box 231135, Encinitas, CA 92023; Joyce and Arnie Katz, Suite 152, 330 S. Decatur, Las Vegas, NV 89107; I was sitting here pondering why I like *Crowdaddy* so much. It's a little puzzling to me, because Paul's attitudes and opinions on music are pretty divergent . . . for example, I really liked REM's "Monster," while believing that the world would have been well-served if Dylan had been run over by a bus after finishing "Desire," ideas which are not in line with Paul's thinking. But Paul manages to synthesize so many ideas and emotions in his writing about music, appearing as both an insider and a fan, an expert on many things and a novice with others, that there really seems like there is something for everyone in the average issue of his magazine. #9 features memories of the late Paul Rothchild and Jerry Garcia, excellent writing on both; #10 is a celebration of live music recently enjoyed by Paul, and features some reviews by columnists Steve Rostkoski and Carsten Baumann. Paul is clearly recovered pretty well from his accident of this spring, having seen more than ten bands in ten days during early September, including Patti Smith, Los Lobos, Zappa disciple Mike Keneally and the amazing Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, the greatest living qawwali (a kind of ecstatic Sufi-muslim gospel music) singer and the Elvis of Pakistan. Each issue is also chockablock with Donna Nassar's superb eraser-carving illos, which do a lot to give *Crowdaddy* a unique look and feel. 4 issues are \$12.00, and well worth the price. I

encourage anyone interested in contemporary music to check it out!

#3) Wild Heirs #10, edited by 23 dangerous deviants, C/O 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107; In addition to a creditable lack of mention of yours truly, this issue has a good article from Ray Nelson, "Fannish Sex," the usual degeneracy from Charles Randolph Harris and a very snappy piece of fan fic from Tom Springer, to be continued next ish. Plus, Bill Kunkel's cartoons seem even a little more unhinged than usual. *Wild Heirs* is now the best frequent fanzine being published in fandom today.

#4) Ansible #99, edited by Dave Langford, 94 London Rd., Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU, U.K.; Ho-hum, another exercise in the usual routine brilliance. I might not have listed it here at all were it not for the fact that it contains the utterly earth-rending news that the lovely Jackie McRoberts and Ian Sorenson have broken up; while they remain friends, both are back on the open market. As Langford says himself, "The queue forms on the left." I also loved the bit about how Ian Watson's "Warhammer 40,000" novels have sold so well that the company now fears that they will compete with the gaming material and have banned them from their own shops. Ah, good old Games Workshop, known to gamers far and near as "The House of Cheese."

#5) Skug #11, edited by Gary Mattingly, 7501 Honey Ct., Dublin, CA 94568; Actually, the first sensation I had on reading this issue was annoyance; I mean, my God, a report on the Minneapolis Corflu, from 1989? Then it occurred to me that the great virtue of any fanzine material received this late is that is essentially self-timebinding. Cool! Plus, a spooky camping memoir from Bill Breiding, review of the San Francisco International film Festival by Bruce Townley and another entry in the recent spate of porn-movie-making memoirs to grace fandom, this one by Rich Coad. My favorite part is the spurious beer labels created by Jay Kinney, including "Flaid the Inhaler Scottish Ale." A good laugh all around.

ALSO RECEIVED: *The Flying Pig* #35, Darroll Pardoe; *Hairlooms* #2, Arnie Katz, et al; *Situation Normal!!??*, edited by Joyce Katz for SNAFFU; *De Profundis* #282, edited by Tim Merrigan for the LASFS; *The Reluctant Famulus* #41, edited by Tom Sadler.

APPARATCHIK lies at the top of the zircon stairs, the tower-chamber of fandom, where was done the very ancient and secret rite in detestation of Bokrug the water-lizard. Nice paneling, too. It's still available for the usual, or you can get APPARATCHIK for \$3.00 for a three month supply, or a year's worth for \$12.00 or a life-time subscription for \$19.73, or in exchange for a little green rosetta. For readers in the United Kingdom, Martin Tudor will accept £10.00 for an annual subscription, £19.37 for a lifetime sub, see his address in the colophon on the front cover. Lifetime subscribers include Tom Becker, Judy Bemis, Richard Brandt, Scott Custis, Don Fitch, Ken Forman, Lucy Huntzinger, Nancy Lebovitz, Robert Lichtman, Michelle Lyons, Luke McGuff, Janice Murray, Tony Parker, Greg Pickersgill, Barnaby Rapoport, Alan Rosenthal, Anita Rowland, Karen Schaffer, Leslie Smith, Nevenah Smith, Geri Sullivan, Steve Swartz, Michael Waite, and Art Widner. No hope, radio.