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# APPARATCHIK

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The forty-sixth issue of a bi-weekly fanzine, edited and published by Andy Hooper and Victor Gonzalez, members fwa, supporters 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 # 237. *Apparatchiki*: carl juarez, Lesley Reece & Martin Tudor (British Address: 845 Alum Rock Rd., Ward End, Birmingham B8 2AG UK). Grade D prospect, I would avoid him.

Issue # 46, November 9th, 1995

IN A BLATANT EFFORT TO SEIZE POWER, *Apparatchik* Staff Writer Victor Gonzalez recently called a special emergency meeting of the party leadership to put himself forward for the hitherto undetected position of co-editor of the fanzine. Shivering on the verandah of the party chairman's dacha at 2:00 in the morning, a hastily assembled quorum scowled and chain-smoked little black cigarettes while Tovarish Gonzalez described his plans for the new direction the fanzine would take under his co-editorship. The commissar for gothic fashion fidgeted nervously in a freezing-cold deck chair during the speech, and appeared to wonder where the commissar for pseudonyms was. (Given the latter's open and long-standing opposition to Comrade Gonzalez' policies, it should come as no surprise that he was found stuffed into a gutta-percha-lined Saxophone case behind the glue factory last Thursday morning.)

Everyone braced themselves for a desperate struggle between Gonzalez and the party chairman, but the chairman acquiesced, almost without comment. Political hacks were quick to characterize this as a sign of weakness, until they read the full minutes of the meeting, and it became clear that the Chairman's acceptance was conditional on Gonzalez' department assuming half the burden of the operational budget for the fanzine. Other observers, including members of the chairman's bodyguard, reported that odd laughter was heard drifting from the official residence long into the night.

WELL, THE TRUTH is that Victor offered to become co-editor of *Apparatchik*, to offer some response to the mail, to give input to (read "bitch freely about") the look and layout of the fanzine, and to help me seek new material to take us into the second fifty issues. He's also going to assume part of the burden of paying for the thing, an especially welcome gesture. I had to think about this . . .splitting my ever-dwindling share of egoboo with someone else was nothing to be undertaken lightly. But then, the names of classic fannish teams began to march before me . . .Carr and Graham, brown and Katz, Steffan and White, Lake and Edwards . . .and decided that it was too cool an opportunity to pass up.

We'll still accept correspondence at this address (which I then retype and send to Tacoma via e-mail), but those who want to actually trade with *Apparatchik* need to send copies of their fanzines to both of us (and in case you forgot, his address is: 403½ Garfield St. S. #11, Tacoma, WA, 98444) to be properly credited in the grand karmic monster truck race that is fanzine fandom.

I KNOW THAT PEOPLE are hoping to read a report on Ditto #8, held in Seattle last weekend, but honest to God, what is one supposed to say about a relaxicon? "I got together with some people I liked and we ate and drank for several days and didn't accomplish a whole lot." Which is not to say that Ditto wasn't an entertaining and friendly event; it's just that no one

vomited on me, or battered down a door with their fists or tore the movie screen or scaled the hotel, or did any of the things which are the traditional grist for the riveting convention report. Also, owing to the fact that this was my fifth convention in the last ten weeks, I decided to attend Saturday only, and missed the partying on Friday night.

We did mount another production of "Ten Zines that Shook the World," which I think was the best of the three to date; I finally worked out the worst problems in the script, and while each of the casts had their strengths, several of those involved at Ditto were doing the piece for the second or third time, to the production's obvious benefit. Special thanks to the incomparable David Levine, who read the interpreter Zwotchkoff's tortuous speeches as if Russian was his first language. If anyone is interested, none of my plays have ever appeared in print anywhere . . .

The program was appropriately minimal and fanzine-oriented, but the presence of another panel on the future of electronic fandom gave off such bad vibes that I had to sit in the smoking con suite through much of the afternoon, breathing slowly into a paper bag. I recovered in time for the auction, which netted an impressive \$259 dollars (largely from R. Graeme Cameron) to split between various fan funds, on a very small stock of fanzines.

And the party on Saturday night was a lot of fun, one of the better Vanguards in recent months. Shelly Dutton Berry and Marci Malinowycz did a fine job setting up the hospitality suites, and people brought lots of great desserts to share (And Don Fitch made his usual embarrassingly- generous contributions). There was also some very good home-brewed beer, left over from the Friday-night party, which made me sorry I hadn't showed up for the first night.

Kudos to Alan Rosenthal and Janice Murray for instigating a pretty cool little convention. They successfully held a small convention in the heart of downtown Seattle, which may have implications for future events here.

A MONTH AGO, Victor and I wrote a satirical piece detailing our experiences in the desert. The funny thing is, my reaction to being there was a little stranger than the fiction it inspired. For some reason, the whole thing spooked me. I've spent years reading about strange lights and UFO crashes and mysterious Air Force installations in the Nevada desert, and always retained a skeptical attitude toward the whole phenomenon. But when we got out there -- the Nevada desert is the most desolate place I've ever been, and I'm from Detroit -- it all suddenly seemed a lot more plausible. So I'm trying to catch up on contemporary UFO research, with an eye toward . . .I don't know, fan-writing, fiction, weird journalism. . . . Anyway, more on this in future issues. Oh, and if anyone has a copy of John Keel's book "The Mothman Prophecies" that they would be willing to sell me, I'd appreciate hearing from them.

Welcome back to the cool-down, everybody!

## You know how they talk about little green men? Well, they weren't green.

### Snapshots from Novacon

by Pam Wells

This year Novacon was 25 years old -- the second-longest running annual science fiction convention in the UK, after the Eastercon. This year it moved to a new hotel, the Chamberlain, which was

received with mixed views.

The function space was excellent: operating on a kind of quadrangle effect, with the main programme room and the bar next to each other in the centre, and the restaurant and smaller meeting rooms leading off from a corridor surrounding them. Whichever way you turned, you would eventually end up where you were heading. This was the good part. But the bedrooms were more expensive (unless you were sharing, in which case they were much cheaper than usual) and smaller, with less facilities than we're used to at conventions these days. Where was the hairdrier? the trouser-press? the bath? (showers just ain't the same thing at all, she wails). Also, the restaurant and bars were open to the public, leading to difficulties with security and additional operational problems. And the hotel didn't always serve food when they said they would.

But, by and large, the committee sorted all these problems out, and it was no worse than the Royal Angus -- where most of the Novacons have been held -- on balance. Next year Novacon will be moving again, to the Ibis Hotel in the middle of Birmingham's Chinatown, and this should be another interesting choice.

But what about the convention itself? In some ways, I'm not the best person to write about it, because I had my own problems to deal with, which were brought up into sharp focus by the convention. What do you do when the man you have loved, and who has loved you -- off and on -- for the past ten years, has just found a new and serious partner, and will be bringing her along to the convention? First thought -- don't go to the con, hide your head in the sand, walk away. (Daft, weak, spineless idea: rejected.) Second thought -- go to the con, do the programme item you promised to do, have as good a time as you can manage, and deal with the pain. (Sensible, courageous, ambitious idea: accepted.) It wasn't too bad, but neither was it easy. But I'm glad I went, and happy to have established a working friendship with both my former lover and his new partner. Martin and Helena: be happy.

(So, for the many people who came up to me during the con and asked me how I was, to receive the answer 'not good, but I'm seeing a really good therapist': now you know a bit more about what I meant.)

The only scheduled programme items I went to were the opening and closing ceremonies, and the programme item I was hosting -- Room 101. I was really looking forward to presenting this item: I'd put a fair amount of time into working out the mechanics of it beforehand (what the good old Gannets used to refer to as 'Fun Engineering'), and had managed to snag some excellent participants: Graham Joyce, Helena Bowles and Iain Banks. In case Room 101 hasn't made it across the Atlantic, I'll give a brief description of where the idea came from. It's a season of half-hour TV programmes here where the host, Nick Hancock, interviews a different guest each week about the items they would most like to send into Room 101, a place to which they will be consigned so that they can be removed from the rest of the world for All Time.

The guest discusses each of their items with the host, with props and examples featuring as well, and then the host decides whether or not to let that item go into Room 101. If

the host rejects the item as not awful enough to be allowed in, the guest is required to take all the props representing it home with them. (In our case, the props which had been bought specially were later auctioned for the fan funds.) I'd asked each of my guests to come up with eight items that they wished to dispense with, and interviewed them in turn about their choices. This was a peach of a programme item to present: all my guests were witty and eloquent, and all their selections were well-chosen. I had decided to allow only half of the items to get into Room 101, for entertainment's sake, though some of my reasons for rejecting them were a little spurious, to say the least. (But I'm rather fond of my reasons for rejecting 'baseball caps worn backwards', one of Graham Joyce's choices. They serve the useful purpose of distinguishing thick people, Americans and people you don't want to have anything to do with from the rest of the world....) Still, it provoked some interesting heckling from the audience (which I always play well with, in front of my home crowd at least), and several people complimented me on the item afterwards. Some others said it went on for too long -- with three guests, it ran for an hour and a half, as planned -- but the critics may well have been right: it's hard to gauge the pacing of something like this from the driving seat. More people still told me that I should run the item again at other conventions, but I think it would seem too repetitive -- in this country, at least. Would it work over there? I'd be happy to give it a try: I know I'd have a bit of trouble getting the audience on my side with the baseball cap insult, but I do a good line in British put-downs as well.... Still, back to Novacon.

The opening ceremony was rather more interesting this year: the committee had got Mike Siddall, dressed up in tails, to introduce them from the lectern in a pompous old-Englishe style, with long and highfalutin words, like that old TV programme *The Good Old Days* (which I'm pretty sure has made the journey across the pond). Siddall, a consummate performer, made this all the more amusing by his own interjections (jestingly insulting a couple of committee members with strategically-placed in-jokes) and his hilarious mispronunciation of many of the more complicated polysyllables.

The closing ceremony at Novacon always doubles as the awards ceremony, at which the annual Nova awards are presented. This year, the voting was particularly active. There were 67 ballots cast, which must be one of the highest voting rates ever, though the numbers have been rising over recent years. Best Fan Artist was D West, with a huge margin over the rest of the field. Best Fan Writer apparently went to three recounts, as the first and second placings were separated by but a single point. The winner was Simon Ounsley, with Dave Langford in second place. And the Best Fanzine award was also pretty close, with just five points (or one first place vote) separating the winner -- *Attitude*, edited by myself, Michael Abbott and John Dallman -- from second-placed *Lagoon*, edited by Simon Ounsley. A full breakdown of the placings is usually printed in the news magazines like *Ansible* and *Critical Wave*, and this is all the information I have for now. (So, how do you share a Nova between three people? Simple: Michael gets to accept it, John gets to keep it afterwards, and I get the warm glow that comes from knowing that we won. Well, OK, I did hug it and giggle maniacally for a few seconds at the end of the ceremony, punching the air and mouthing 'yes!' like a victorious sports person, but you can't be cool all your life.)

I found out afterwards that the Leeds Mafia had been campaigning heavily for *Lagoon* to win -- not everyone here

## This one will bend, it'll go around.

likes *Attitude* and what we're trying to do with it -- and my dear sweet buddy Greg Pickersgill told me what a poor set of results we'd got from the Novas this year. None of the newer fanzines or fan writers were winners, and that was a great disappointment to him. (I say, check out the placings when they're released: we really do have some great fanzine talent in the UK at the moment. It seemed like every other person you met was handing out their fanzine at the convention: I must have come home with at least 20 fanzines. Now, this is wonderful, and reminds me of the energy of fandom when I first met it, in the early 1980s. It's wonderful to be around when all this energy is going into fanzines. Maybe I'll even get it together enough to send you a list of them all for next time. But for now, from memory, I got fanzines from Christina Lake, Tony Berry, Martin Tudor, Maureen Speller, Paul Kincaid, Alison Freebairn, Ian Sorensen, Simo, Doppelganger... Mike Siddall and Alison Freebairn produced not one but two collaboration fanzines, and even Nigel E Richardson had come to the con with his ish all ready to be pubbed. A truly magnificent turnout!)

In addition to the scheduled items, we ran an impromptu auction for the fan funds on Sunday night, during the Beer Tasting, as brave superhero Nic Farey offered to sell his hair, and the right to cut/shave it, provided enough money could be raised. This turned out into a highly raucous and entertaining item that went on for a couple of hours. Alison Scott and I started off by auctioning the beautiful halloween pumpkins that Fran Down had carved for one of the parties, some props from Room 101, the odd book, and then we got Nic to sit in a chair in the centre of the room, a sheet spread on the floor at his feet and another tucked into his collar, as we talked up the deed that was about to be done. Drunken fans (the beer tasting had been going for an hour or so by this time, and all the beer was free) looked on in amazement, as we passed a couple of hats around for contributions. "At least fifty pounds must be in the hat before we do this", I yelled hoarsely (Nic having told me this reserve figure at the outset). Steve Davies, our valiant impromptu treasurer, counted as we went along. We passed fifty pounds, and the notes and coins were still coming. "Right, who wants to pay to get the first cut?" I think Krysia Oborn gave us a fiver for that privilege. Nic had provided a razor and a trimmer, but we really needed scissors to cut his long hair before the shaving could take place. We got handed nail scissors, the scissor attachments from Swiss Army knives, you name it, but sensible Mark Plummer borrowed some proper larger scissors from the hotel, and we were away.

I have never experienced anything quite like this, and I've done a few daft things in my time. Everyone got into it. Money came flying towards me as people grasped the scissors to have a cut. It was really rather primal. Then the hair became shorter, and Alice Lawson and I cut it short all around so that people could start having a go with the trimmer-shaver. Nic was swigging liberally from a hip flask throughout. (Was he perhaps bothered by my call of: "If anyone draws blood, you have to pay us an extra tenner"?) His anxious wife, Dee Ann, wandered off to the bar for some brief sanctuary. And then Rog Peyton piped up: "What about the moustache?". Nic had only wanted his head-hair shaved, but he said he'd let the tache go as well if we raised at least another hundred quid. Rog immediately threw in a tenner, and the hats were passed again. We got the second hundred, and Rog gleefully shaved off Nic's moustache. (Apparently he'd been wanting Nic to lose it ever since he'd met him.)

Back in the head department, I auctioned the right to shave a slogan into Nic's remaining short crop of hair. Simo

wanted to shave 'Simo for TAFF'; Nic said he'd want quite a lot of money for that privilege, but he'd let Martin shave 'Tudor for TAFF' for a fiver. Martin duly presented his fiver, but his hands were shaking too much to feel comfortable using the trimming device on another person's scalp (I blame the beer), so cool-handed Mike Ford did the deed. It looked really cool, and many people took photos (for which we of course charged a further fee...).

While all this cutting and shaving was going on, Alison Scott and I tried to auction off some more of the other items, but I think everyone in the room had already thrown all their available money into the passing hats. We raised small sums for boxes of chocolates, which got handed around later that night, but nothing significant. Other than the haircut money, the most we raised for a single item was for one of the drawings of Mexicans, from the Mexican Hat party at the Worldcon (which went for fifteen quid). In the end, Nic's head was not completely wet-shaved down to pure baldness, as he'd expected it would be. He went around the rest of the convention with a fuzzily tactile head (very nice to stroke, as many of us found out, repeatedly) bearing the 'Tudor for TAFF' slogan. It actually looked pretty good, too, though Dee Ann was worried what their one-year-old son would make of it -- would he recognise Daddy when he got home?

This was one of the most amazing and enjoyable auctions I have ever been involved with, and it raised just over three hundred pounds for the United Fan Funds (a concept invented by Greg Pickersgill some years ago, with the money being split after the event between causes such as TAFF, GUFF, Fans Across The World, Friends of Foundation, RNIB Talking Books for the Blind, The Mexican Hat, et al, according to the needs of the relative funds and the discretion of the organiser at the time). I'll be taking half of the money for the Mexican Hat, and splitting the remainder between TAFF, GUFF and the Friends of Foundation.

Another highlight of Novacon was the women's party, celebrating 100 issues of TWP (The Women's Periodical apa, the longest-running current British apa, which was launched in 1982, and of which I am a founder member). Lots of women dressed in flamboyant clothing assembled in one of the smaller meeting rooms on Saturday night, sat in a circle (which was quite large by the time I arrived, and reminded me of a rather large group therapy session or encounter group!) and drank wine provided by Krysia Oborn to celebrate her 21 years in fandom, and ate a chocolate cake baked by Helen McNabb to celebrate the apa's longevity. I arrived late, as my programme item had overrun, and because there were so many of us in the room and none of us knew everyone, Alison Scott suggested that we all said our names and two salient and remarkable facts about ourselves. This turned into a weirdly magical bonding ritual, as more and more interesting facts were revealed. Women who wrote amateur pornography. Women who stripped down to their underwear. Women whose costumes had exploded, revealing naked flesh underneath. Women who had fallen asleep during sex. Women who had made a living by providing telephone sex. I felt quite boring by revealing that I had over 70 pairs of shoes. After we'd gone around the room with these revelations, we got people to take photos of us with the cake. And then the men were allowed in, the spell was broken, and I wandered off to interact with the rest of the convention.

This was Saturday night, and I forgot all about the IRC link which had been set up to communicate with Ditto (damn damn damn, and it had even been my idea in the first place), but I heard that it was loads of fun for the people who

## Moving can be stressful, but it doesn't usually involve gunshots

participated. I know Lilian Edwards and Christina Lake had a great time talking with the Seattleites. We attempted to make further link-ups on the Sunday a couple of times, but although it was fun talking to the few people who showed up, no one from Ditto was there. I believe this is the first time an IRC link has been done, and I do hope that simultaneous conventions across the water set up something like this again.

Well, that concludes my photo album of Novacon snaps. I do hope they've all come out OK....



### AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH: We're clearing out the mail backlog this time, heaving all the cards and letters which have waited so patiently at the bottom of the box back into the light of day. By the way, from now on, my comments will be preceded by the initials **APH** as always, while Victor's will be signified by the letters **VMG**. Easy, yes? Well, we'll see. Let's lead-off with a chatty note from **WALT WILLIS** (32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, Northern Ireland BT2 1 OPD):]

"APPARATCHIKs 40 to 42 have arrived in great shape, (rectangular). I was fascinated by the story of how you got your passport. It seems more like something that would have happened in modern Russia than in a Western democracy. It seems that after being frustrated in the official Passport Office you and Carrie bribed your way into some other operation where you got a new passport without trouble. Can this be so?"

"The stampede to Donaghdee by American visitors from Intersection boiled down to three -- Geri Sullivan, Joe Siclari and Edie Stern. We had no trouble coping with Geri, having already fitted up a single bedroom for James White when he stayed here as part of our golden wedding celebrations and she is an experienced house guest here, knowing where everything is and washing the dishes without asking.

"The day after she left Joe and Edie arrived, finding their own way here by car and I arranged their accommodation at a B&B place just round the corner. Joe was just the same as Magicon, but Edie was the new slimline model, except for her bust, which made for an impressive combination. The following day I took them on a guided tour of the local antiquities and sights, including Greyabbey, a ruined Cistercian monastery, Scrabo Tower, original of the Enchanted Duplicator, the Greengraves dolmen, a prehistoric burial place which just sits in the middle of an ordinary field, without notices or anything, the Mount Stewart Gardens, the Giants Ring (a prehistoric burial place just like the Greengraves Dolmen, but surrounded by an impressive earthwork and official notices), and finally Smithfield Market in central Belfast, which used to be a great place for old books until the IRA burned it down but which still has reincarnated bookshops which interested Joe. Next day, having left behind two bottles of white wine, Joe and Edie drove up the Antrim Coast Road, reputed to be the second best coast road in Europe, visiting on the way to James White's house in Portstewart, lesser sights like The Giant's Causeway, Dunluce Castle and the Bushmills Distillery.

"They called me the following morning on their way to the airport to report on their visit to the North and to return a map of North Antrim I had lent them. They seemed pleased with everything.

"My thanks to PNH for his concern about my collection and to Greg Pickersgill for sticking up for Tommy Ferguson.

The transfer of the collection has taken place without any untoward incident, being accomplished by the famous femme fatale Nyree driving a van and taking only a few minutes. It seemed strange to see a large part of my life disappear so suddenly. One felt there should have been some sort of ceremony."

[APH: Indeed, this is another in a long line of fannish milestones which should have been accompanied by a brass band and proclamation from the lord mayor, such as the departure from famous fannish domiciles, the closure of famous P.O. boxes, and the termination of long-running fanzines. In a perfect world, perhaps . . .

I have to admit that once or twice during Intersection I did take a glance down the long path of the Clyde to the sea and sighed wistfully, thinking of the shores such a short pull away from where I stood. . . but so many fine fans have written of your hospitality and described the lovely sights of your district that I hardly feel that I need to actually travel there in person at this point. If I close my eyes, I can see Scrabo Tower on a hill in the distance, or the sylph-like form of George Charters snapping a punishing return shot in a frantic game of ghoodminton, and Chuch Harris demolishing a small mountain of mashed potatoes like Sherman burning through Georgia. We've all been your guests at one time or another Walt.

Now, some thoughts from the doughty DAVE HICKS (NOTE THE COA: 22 The Uplands, Rogerstone, Newport, Gwent NP1 9FA U.K.):]

"Dear Andy, it's 6:00 am and I've just run Cat to work, I have an hour to do household shit and a little fanac. Got two fanzines want artwork. Got three fanzines want articles. Got a book to review per *Critical Wave*. Got two inches of overseas fanzines to review for *Critical Wave*. Ought to do another *Moriarty's Revenge* soon or the Great Comeback will be no more. However, locking APAK predates all these on the list, as I addressed the envelope in *April* . . .

"One of the review zines I have is IDEA #9. The advance of technology means editors can finally publish photographs of fans with some degree of fidelity to the actual person. Whether this is a Good Thing is another matter. For instance, your industry this past couple of years had led me to picture you as a compact, lean lightning bolt of creative energy, tapping away at the keyboard, surrounded by huge piles of fanzines, thoughtfully scratching the stubble that comes from not wasting time shaving when you could be fanning . . . Imagine my surprise when I got to Geri's photo section.

"Of course, it ill behooves a man whose bare torso produces in women not lust but a desire to give to famine relief to comment on anyone else's physique.

"Anyway, the sideways compliment above is because I continue to marvel at your regularity (at this point in a letter to a British faned I'd be obliged by law to insert a quip about bowel movements . . .) and quality. Plus APAK's the only zine to mention my name in ages, albeit in a letter from Gregory, who's always, actually -- like Ted -- spent a lot of time praising people, only nobody seems to notice that, only the occasional denunciation.

"Now a pause in the drivel-stream to put in a good word for Victor Gonzalez. The piece in # 41 marvelously captured the sense of "drifting" in and out of fandom that is the common place experience of many fans, myself included. Once it's in the blood it's very difficult to kick fanzines altogether, but very few people are lucky enough to avoid real life sufficiently to remain 100% active for decades. Most of us are either semi-active or semi-gafiated, depending on your

## CANDAT SOTONG (Squid Jigging)

point of view and whether this is positive or negative probably depends on if one looks at a half a pint of beer in a pint glass as half-full or half-empty.

"On the subject of the content of Victor's pieces I've always looked at him as APAK's ace-in-the-hole. Without Victor you have an admittedly shit-hot fannish newzine. This has been done before and it will be again. Victor, however, adds a charm and a continuity to the topical stuff. I was certainly glad of him when you were running all that stuff about the past-presidents of fwa, not that I'm not riveted by such discussions, oh no. By the way, what is the fwa?"

"I now recant the position that I held in my letter to you last year expressing fear that the Worldcon would consume all the active fanzine editors and spit out exhausted wrecks incapable of fanac for months. The last two times we had a Worldcon this happened because mainstream fandom and fannish fandom were still largely one and the same. What I'd failed to grasp in my state of semi-gafia is that through the nineties, fandom got big (there's a naff analogy here -- of proto-big-fandom bursting from the belly of fannish fandom before growing rapidly in the air-ducts of filk/media/etc. and re-emerging all green and slimy to bite our heads off and hatch its young in our dismembered corpses -- but I'd prefer such an idea did not come from me . . .) and consequently Britain finally has the capacity to put on a big show without burning out all available hands. In fact I'm as optimistic now about fanzines as I've ever been, since my resurrection at MISDEMEANOR, when we all said we were gonna pub our ish (Are you listening, Maureen, Paul, Berni . . .).

"PS: Please post the COA nice and big -- people notice stuff in APAK."

[VMG: I can see now that my subtle, crafty and somewhat underhanded trick of whining about all that criticism has actually worked. Ha, ha. In my case, I drifted away for one reason -- drug problem -- and stayed away for another -- achieving a career that is fun and, sort of, pays my bills. I frequently thought of coming back, but just couldn't manage to even think about it considering the other pressures from my education.

Thanks to one person -- Andy Hooper -- there was an easy opportunity to find my way back in when I finally thought I could do it. Hooper, for no good reason, has sent me most Spent Brasses and all of the APAKs he did, even when I hadn't produced anything for years.]

[APH: Oddly enough, I can still think of no particularly good reason for having done that, but posterity may yet judge otherwise. To answer one question, Dave, the fwa is the Fan Writers of America, a largely imaginary organization whose members are entirely self-selecting, and whose sole organized activity is to elect a president for the previous year at every Corflu -- such an anarchic group would never be able to agree on a candidate for the current year, nor would anyone care to serve, so the association restricts itself to assigning blame for the previous year's events. It's a governing body which suits fanzine fandom perfectly.

Thank you for the compliments...it might help your perception of myself as a fannish dynamo if you envisioned me as overflowing with bile rather than crackling with fannish energy. Onward now to the poor dumb bastard running next year's Westercon, RICHARD BRANDT (4740 N Mesa #111 El Paso TX 79912, RBrandt@aol.com):]

"Od's balls! It's another Apparatchik!

"I'm not sure if Simon is on the mark about relating his personal reactions to Victor's articles to some Grand Unified

Theory of appropriate fanwriting. The more he likes Victor's writing, the more appropriate he finds it for fanzines? Personal writing is still personal writing no matter how much of your own emotional involvement seeps in.

"But perhaps I'm just biased. I took so long in writing an article I promised Lichtman that by the time it sees print people will realize it's quite similar in tone to some of what Victor had been writing for Apparatchik . . ."

[VMG: I saw some value in what Simon had to say, and his comments did play a part in my feelings as I wrote the piece. What I wonder is, didn't the Corflu report seem fannish? It seemed that way to me; about a convention in a not atypical style for convention reports, with lots of fans' names, and what Gary Farber described as a fine example of a fannish anecdote. Perhaps he just didn't see that issue.

Next up is DAVID THAYER (701 Regency Drive, Hurst, TX 76054, and available by e-mail at eushar@exu.ericsson.se):]

"Actually, the first sensation I had on reading your review of *Skug* was annoyance; I mean, my God, Gary Mattingly cut me from his mailing list. I never saw the issue you mention.

"I was not upset as much by The Vegrants sucking me into believing a fannish feud between you and them as I was by their spitting me out.

"I've discovered e-mail to be most fun not with strangers but with those I've gotten to know in person and through the mail. I banter in electronic print with Diana Thayer, B. Ware, and Jeanne Mealy, on and off all day. It makes me look busy at the office.

"Thanks for the kind words about my cartoons in the latest *Mimosa*. Dick and Nicki are such wonderful and willing targets. I'm always delighted by the varied reaction my humor elicits. Mailing out the San Antonio PR this last spring took longer than expected because both Randy Shepherd and I kept pausing to read and reread my back cover art, he looking for hidden subtleties, I for missed typos.

"My Spanish is progressing well. I've found a pen pal in Mexico City, an engineer with my company, willing to correct my word choice and syntax. I've already promised Richard Brandt a cartoon for WesterCon en Español. Argh, I just rediscovered in my briefcase the three baseball cartoons I sketched out for you. Opening day of next season soon enough?

[APH: Yes, one might have hoped that the Vegrants might have gone along with the gag and found some way to trump up a feud between us after all . . .but perhaps they're too smart for that kind of thing. After all, I think I CAN body slam anybody in Vegas fandom, even Tom Springer and Su Williams, and what's more, I think it would be fun to try.

Actually, you should send those cartoons as soon as possible. The longer I have had art on hand, the more guilty I feel, and the more likely I'll use it as soon as possible. And I don't feel guilty about not using art left in your briefcase.

And, speaking of electronic chats, here's some observations on the topic from LEAH SMITH (reached at both leah@smith.chi.il.us and 410 W. Willow Road, Prospect Heights IL 60070-1250):]

"Thanks for the latest App, and all the ones that have gone before. I'm finally feeling guilty enough to send one of my very rare locs. Between all the family deaths and illnesses and our obligations to Australian fan concerns, we unfortunately seem to have fallen way behind on fanzines.

## BUBU LIPAT KETAM (Collapsible Crab Trap)

"Jeff Ford is a sad and untimely loss. I had heard of his heart attack, but not his subsequent death. He was one of those people whom I always meant to get to know better one day....

"If you are collecting fannish dramatic productions, you need to get your hands on a set of Larry Tucker's videos, the most important of which is FAANS, filmed at a dozen or so Midwestern conventions over the course of two years in the '80s, with Roger Sims as the dreaded hotel detective, Mundane, and a cast of, well, tens of fans.

"Creating a printed 'Best of rec.arts.sf.\*' or even a 'Best of rec.arts.sf.fandom,' as Richard Brandt suggests, would be incredibly useful, not only to those who aren't on-line, but also to those who are but haven't time or patience to wade through the morass of trivial idiocy in order to find the gems. Unfortunately, compiling it would be a massive amount of work, and I don't suppose Richard is volunteering.

"I have hopes for Faye Manning's project, however. She will be editing a compilation of the highlights of the Timebinders' electronic mailing list for inclusion in the new fan history apa, FHAPA (those who want the unbowdlerized version can subscribe by sending a message, 'subscribe timebinders [your real name],' to timebinders-request@smith.chi.il.us).

"As someone who's been online for a decade, more or less, I've been both bemused and amused by the Net's recent explosion. It's been especially amusing to watch faanish fandom discover it and see how much their net-newbie behavior resembles that of neofans, complete with complaints about the customs and use of jargon, weird spelling and punctuation conventions, and insistence that they know better how things ought to be organized. Ah, well, we were all neos once.

"In terms of the world, I imagine that the spreading of Internet connectivity must be very like the period when the telephone was being introduced, with people who could be reached by phone being, perhaps not consciously, favored over those who had to be contacted by mail or messenger. I see people sending messages by e-mail to people who aren't on-line via their friends who live nearby, just as people not on the phone once got telephone messages via their neighbors or the corner store.

[APH: I think that's probably a pretty apt comparison, although it is instructive to recall that the phone company used to come out to your home and install the equipment required for you, and very little capitol outlay on the part of the subscriber. Most people are looking at an investment of at least \$1,000 to get daily Internet access ( well, assuming you have to provide your own computer and modem, anyway), and a lot of tasks and entertainments require somewhat more money than that.

I appreciate your jogging my memory about Larry Tucker's productions, but having seen them in a tape-room at some X-con about a decade ago, I could never possibly forget them. They were genuinely funny and well-produced, and deserve a prominent place in any list of fannish dramatics.

As long as we were are talking about the price of modern technologies, let's observe this little e-mail message from GREG BENFORD (gbenford@uci.edu), in regard to my recent debates with Joseph Nicholas:]

"Your contention with Joseph Nicholas arises from fundamentally different world views. I've followed his well written comments for years and can only gather that he yearns for a sort of socialist middle ages, with stasis enshrined as long as people really want it. He seems to feel the entire

paradigm of the west, with its expansion of human horizons, has come at too high a cost.

"To sf fans this is heresy, but it is a common attitude in Europe. The static state with comfy communities is of course understood to come with full mod cons, vaccines and email and much etc. But no more, please, and also knock down that highway.

"I think it's far too late for any settled-in, complacent equilibrium in societies, for we are all in close contact. Whoever doesn't elect for stasis will out distance the rest, as Europe did to China, per your discussion."

[APH: Hmmm...this strikes me as a gross oversimplification, if not an outright misinterpretation, of Joseph's arguments on this subject. You imply, without being forthright enough to state it openly, that Joseph's attitudes toward these issues are driven by effete, aesthetic ideals, which have no basis in reality, and in fact, largely ignore fundamental truths of commerce and technology. I agree that since technology and all its discontents and benefits are now largely "out of the bag," it would be a dreadful job trying to put it back in again. But I don't think Joseph is approaching this from an attitude of personal indulgence which exempts him from the social and economic changes he would like to undertake. What ever else you may think of him, Joseph has always been willing to put his lifestyle where his mouth is. He'd be willing to pedal the bike to run the generator to run the 40-watt bulbs and the tiny crystal set that would bring in the BBC Home Service, quite late into the night.

Mr. Nicholas' concerns arise from a deeply-held conviction that we in the west have adopted a pattern of economic growth based on technological innovation that we will find it impossible to maintain into the next century. As populations continue to rise, and the consumption of resources accelerate, the finite store of the latter commodities WILL eventually force a massive increase in the proportion of human beings forced to live as members of the underclass, a process which we are speeding up through political means in this country, as has been the policy in the United Kingdom for almost two decades now. If you have a plan that can refute these Iron Equations, I do wish you'd share it with us, as time is growing short.

Speaking of conspicuous consumption, a few lines come our way from ROBERT LICHTMAN (P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442), in regard to the hearts and minds of fandom:]

"It was sad to read you fulfilling your sad duty in reporting the death of Jeff Ford, of whom I'd never previously heard but who sounded like a Nice Guy. You didn't mention his age, and I wondered. I also wondered what you meant by 'typical fannish diet.' I suppose probably a high-fat diet of the sort found in convention hotel coffee shops, but in fact fans have a wide variety of dietary preferences. On one end of the spectrum, I've known fans who were total vegans (vegetarian, no dairy products), and on the other there were those who seemingly never ate anything but \*meat & potatoes\*. You've only seen me in a food context in places like L.A. and Las Vegas -- I don't eat deli food at home much. Here it's tofu, rice, pasta and veggies, mostly. If I ate Canter's-type food all the time, I'd probably already be dead or at least have had my first bypass operation.

"I suppose this will arrive during or shortly after Ditto, and look forward to your report on it. Particularly interesting in your write-up was the mention of The Living Museum of Letterpress Printing. Would this be something presented by old-time ayjayer Ralph Babcock, who lives in Oak Harbor? Mark Manning had had contact with him, as have I. I



## **Big Squirts is a really confusing video with no plot whatsoever.**

managed several years ago to get the last available copy of his anthology *Your Thoughts*, a 1 and 1/4 inch thick collection of ayjay writing from over many decades. Among the contributors whose names you (as a connoisseur of old fanzine and fans) might recognize: Burton Crane, Alvin Fick, Mike Horvat, Helen Wesson, and H.P. Lovecraft. Or, returning to the LMolP, was it someone else?

"I'm looking forward to Bridget Hardcastle's report on 'how Star Trek science works,' which she proposes to learn from 'guides in Trek uniforms' at the London Science Museum. I think I could get by without a replicator and I certainly don't mind that I have to type instructions for my computer, but I've always wanted a tricorder -- they look so useful!

"I agree with Simon that a case could be made for Victor's articles in APAK being 'a bit out of place' primarily on the basis of style. There've been few of them that I wouldn't have been pleased to run in *Trap Door*, where they would fit right in. What Simon seems to be objecting to is the juxtaposition of your 'quintessentially fannish' writing style with Victor's well-wrought personal essays. But I disagree with Simon that Victor doesn't have his 'fannish audience in mind' when he writes; though his pieces aren't informal and chatty, there's a definite attempt to communicate. And a successful one, by and large, I believe.

"Notions of 'progress' are not only 'relatively recent in origin' (as per Joseph Nicholas) but they seem to apply mainly to scientific and technological advances. It's true, as Joseph says, that from the late 18th century on the acceleration of positive results for mankind (in terms of mitigating our formerly short, brutish, unchanged condition) from science and technology resulted in 'the world in which one grew old and died [being] visibly different from that into which one had been born.' Ghod knows you can hardly recognize one decade from another these days in that respect. but when you look at our cultural and political institutions, and how well we're doing in eradicating poverty, greed, racism and all the other shit that plagues mankind on a global scale, we're not much better off than we were in the Middle Ages. In this country, for example, it's clear that the Robber Barons are back.

"I imagine Paul Williams will be surprised to learn of his co-editors, but maybe Arnie & Joyce can help him get *Crawdaddy!* out more frequently.

"Looking back at No. 44, I can only echo Arnie in No. 45's lettercol about 'The X-Fans: Villainy in Vegas': I laughed Many Times."

[APH: Oh, damnable typo. This is the province of Commissar Juarez (do you guys know how often I stop and wonder if I am publishing this zine in revolutionary Nicaragua?), but I undermine his job by refusing to let him actually proofread the entire zine, since large chunks of my material are still unwritten when he can come by to do the work. This does not mean he is absolved from blame, however, since the Party demands results and slackers and weaklings will be sent to the mailing label gulag, and I'm not about to take credit for the failure...so it is up to Apparatchik readers not to point out these egregious errors, since it could actively impinge on another human being's well-being.

Alas, since I did not attend the tour of the LMolPP, since I arrived at the convention on Saturday, too late to make the trip, and therefore, am unfamiliar with its curator (whom, Commissar Juarez has just informed me, is not in fact named Babcock). Perhaps Alan or Janice will favor us with an answer for the next issue.

I don't know much about Jeff Ford's diet one way or another, but the few times I ate with him he favored large, greasy

hamburgers (the state bird of Wisconsin). His diet, as you seem to be intimating, is less at issue than my characterization of the typical fan diet, and of course, upon inspection, we will find that there really is no such thing. But let us say that I was referring to the diet of the stereotypical American fan as portrayed in many English fanzines, overweight, unkempt, fashion-impaired and anorak-encased (although few American fans could even spell "anorak"), or the kind of food we've been eating on our trips to Las Vegas the last few years. Victor, for example, seemed to subsist entirely on French dip sandwiches and filtered Camels during our trip back from Vegas in October . . . .

As you say, the tricorder is a very interesting device, flashing lights and twittering sounds aside. Just what are the three things that it is purported to measure, anyway? Why does no one ever seem to squint while reading that tiny little screen? And is it a passive device, which would make it incredibly advanced indeed, or an active sensor, with measurable emissions which might be very dangerous to spray around indiscriminately in an unknown environment? Perhaps Bridget will be able to supply answers to these questions; perhaps not.

Thus, BRIDGET HARDCASTLE, (13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London NW3 6PX U.K.), also known on the Internet as Mr. K.P. Shupke, perversely comments on other matters altogether:]

"Gosh, no sooner do I dash off a LoC than another couple of APAKs comes through . . .

"Those people clambering about the outside of the Central Hotel; not looking for Banksie, were they? I believe the Central was the site of Iain's alleged Spiderman impersonation.

"Yes! Let us determine the size of fanzine fandom once and for all! Call your fanned chums, search far, search wide; all of you, send your mailing lists to Andy Hooper so he can pore over them, noting new names, removing duplicates, and consolidate all mailing lists into The One True List of All Fanzine Fans! Then we shall know the size of our community. It won't take a minute, Andy!

"Oh, and how can Fox Muldy tear open a Manila envelope while unlocking a door?"

[VMG: Muldy is a man with many abilities. I like the idea of the APAK list becoming a mailing "canon" for all fans. The destruction of any single fan could then be accomplished much more easily.]

[APH: I envision Mr. Muldy entering the apartment with the envelope clenched in his teeth, tearing off the end with his free hand and opening the apartment door with the other. Did you mean to suggest that you found the chemical transformation of an FBI agent into a giant gecko unworthy of comment, while the performance of two tasks at once is beyond the limited abilities of mortal man?

My understanding was that Mr. Banks had, in his declining years, decided to give up hotel ascents, and one would think that if I knew this, mysterious ninja-like drunkards would know it as well. Perhaps hope springs eternal.

We seem to have reached an appropriately-splintered level of consciousness to consider the words of MR. GEORGE FLYNN (P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Sq. Station Cambridge, MA 02142), assembled from several recent letters:]

"Apparatchik 43 received (on the day the Mariners lost their first game to the Yankees).

"In response to Don Fitch's analysis of the 'Scottish Convention' talk, I suspect that it gave a completely different impression to readers who were and weren't familiar with the tradition of calling *Macbeth* 'The Scottish Play' (The former

## We remind you that offlining during a White House address is a Federal offense.

considering it a mildly lame joke, the latter seeking hidden meanings). Thus does a lack of shared cultural background lead to failure to communicate. And as Don implies, the differences in information available to those who are and aren't on-line are likely to lead to a similar lack of communication.

"It does surprise me that Don thinks Intersection was preceded by 'Strikingly more carping and Dire Predicting than [he's] heard before any previous Worldcon.' It seems to me that many Worldcons had worse advance predictions: Consider Nolacon, to take a particularly egregious example. But of course, in the pre on-line days, such misgivings were less widely circulated outside the smof circuit, so here's another way in which communications technology have drastically altered, if not reality, at least the perception thereof.

"In my letter, the phrase 'shop where I worked' should read 'work'; why are you trying to make me unemployed? (And the path in Cardiff was the Taff, not TAFF, trail, since it runs beside the river Taff.) I thought I'd been clear: the stamps my shop works on are indeed for 'large stamp-producing syndicate countries,' of which there are more than you wit of -- in our case, Tanzania, Abkhazia, Montserrat, . . . Right, the subjects of U.S. Stamps must be dead (see, there's *something* good about the Nixon stamp).

"The difference between a letter-substitute and the average perzine is that the former is intended to get one out of the state you describe in your response to Janice Eisen, feeling that you'll never get caught up. (Indeed, that's how I jump-started my current run of reasonably intense fanac: with a letter-substitute after the, um, 1992 Corflu.)

"Meanwhile, back in Britain, the Intersection Committee mailing list (still up and running) has recently been obsessed with the question of obtaining the approval of British fandom for a future (hypothetical) Worldcon bid; the concept of such approval is one of those things that sound great in the abstract, but tends to dissolve into chaos when one tries to consider actual mechanisms . . .

"Apparatchik 44 received. But what was Silvercon *really* like? (Great story anyway)

"Pace Greg Benford, they already made a movie of The High Crusade a couple of years ago. In Germany. There was a poster for it ('*Abentauer in Weltraum* or some such) mounted on the wall of the office at ConFrancisco. Meanwhile, *Space: Above and Beyond* appears to be the illegitimate offspring of *Starship Troopers* and *Top Gun*, done on the cheap.

I think that having the fan lounge in the middle of the convention does tend to attract people who might not show up there otherwise. Whether this is a good thing or a bad thing is of course debatable.

"If . . . we are entering a period where the Worldcon will be run as a commercial concern designed to attract 20,000 people . . . I really don't see that happening. People mobilized in horror (and a good deal of paranoia) at the thought that Atlanta in '98 might be intending something like that, and they wound up getting only 13% of the vote. There are certainly people around who'd like to do that sort of thing, but so far they're thoroughly marginalized. (Of course, that's what I used to think about Newt Gingrich.)

"I take a very dim view of the retro-Hugos: I think that hardly anyone is genuinely qualified to judge the output of fifty years ago, and that nearly all the final votes are to be based on name recognition. But we'll see.

"Most often, the defining characteristic of a true sf novel is the presence of a Michael Whelan painting on the cover.' Actually, I think he does more fantasy than sf these days.

"Langostinos! Another shellfish heard from?"

[APH: I must agree with you in regard to the pre-convention rhetoric surrounding Intersection. First of all, much of the commentary offered in the U.K. was actually very mild by the standards of criticism in that country, yet, as far as I could tell, was sufficiently lively that most Americans seem to have simply held their tongues. "The Scottish Convention" was, by contemporary standards, a remarkably subtle epithet, requiring a knowledge of the legend of ill fortune accorded to Macbeth to see its real, and rather ironic, pejorative potential. Contrast this with "ConFiasco," or, to take more recent example, "ManureCon." So far, as far as I can tell, Intersection is skating away on the thin ice of a new day.

While many fans corresponding with this fanzine obviously regard the prospect of another British Worldcon with horror, I must say that it strikes me as being something of an inevitability. Even as early as Sunday of this year's convention, I could hear people talking about "next time" in bars and restaurants. British fandom has now grown sufficiently to support an entirely independent population of con-runners, whose most heartfelt fannish aspiration will be to bring the circus back to town. As far as I can tell, you can suppress such ambitions for only so long.

I've always been fascinated by the proliferation of American images on foreign stamps, and the idea that American stamp collectors could be so numerous and economically useful that other countries would design and issue stamps almost entirely for their benefit. It always struck me as a slightly stfnal concept, like something from Pohl and Kornbluth.

Now, briefly, (ARNIE KATZ (reached at Crossfire@aol.com, among other places) writes:]

"Just a brief note to pass on some fannish information . . .

"We're going to host a small fanzine fan convention here in Vegas on the weekend prior to LACon 3. Tom is the Ringleader, Geri Sullivan is our Special Invited Guest. We hope to attract about 70 fans, including the locals.

It will be hospitality, partying, and a small, choice program. (Incidentally, if you have an idea for a program item, I would love to hear about it.) Any chance you'd be able to come down here and join us? I'm sure you know how much we'd like to have you join us.

"And meanwhile, you COULD write a letter of comment, you know. Not actually illegal in this state."

[APH: I have to say, I don't think it looks too good for me to come down to Vegas next summer, since I have foolishly agreed to head the fan program for Westercon in El Paso over the fourth of July (won't someone please kill me?) and I doubt I'll be able to hit another con just a month and a half later. I'm much more focused toward seeing people at Westercon and Corflu and Wiscon 20 over the first half of next year. Plus, it's been several years since I've made it to either Orycon (this very weekend, alas) or ArmadilloCon, and if I can fit in a fourth convention it will probably be one of those. Of course, if somebody in Vegas should have use of more of my writing in the future, in a professional context, it might be necessary for me to pass through town for business purposes right around that time . . . .

To be serious for a moment, I hope that this venture will prove to be a success. Given the limited attendance required to make a relaxicon work, I'm sure you'll get more than enough attendees. But I hope that no one attends in the expectation that going to two cons, including the Worldcon, on consecutive weekends, is easy. The consumption of deli food alone could kill many a lesser fan . . . .

Next time, folks.]



Has fanzine fandom made a comeback? Are the dire predictions of slow heat death unfounded?

"The paper party is going full blast again," wrote Arnie Katz in the latest *Wild Heirs*. "We've gone from a doom-crying in 1990 to serious talk of a Golden Age in 1995."

"Suffice to say that the return to activity of some former gafiates, the flowering of Las Vegas fandom and revived interest on the part of some who reduced activity after (the TAFF) war have energized fanzine fandom," he wrote.

This essay, perhaps the most interesting part of another fine fanzine from the Vegrants, talks not only about the history that has led to this renaissance, but also of how the modern neofan is created, how gafiation is an impermanent affair, and how various attempts to draw in new energy have failed.

One thing is sure: *Wild Heirs* and APAK are playing a big role in the rebirth, if there is one. Regular fanzines may stress out fans who can't find the time to respond to every issue, but it's certainly better than not having a fanzine to respond to.

And the writing in both fanzines -- and here I speak of Hooper rather than myself -- is great: fans like Tom Springer can spring up anytime they want, in my opinion.

That is, after all, what raises fan writing above the usual crap.

*Wild Heirs* does have its flaws: layout that is not bad, but uninspired, as though it's run out of the same template every time (not, I might add, unlike APAK, which suffers from a lack of art that makes WH almost vibrant in comparison). Also, the writing jam that takes the place of an editorial pinpoints the ridiculous idea of having 23 editors. There's nothing wrong with 23 (or more) contributors, but I think two editors is just about right.

The editorial lacks the kind of focus that might make it really interesting, although independent sections are often quite entertaining.

It's just that I don't get a really coherent picture of anything, except maybe a very smoked-out bunch of folks.

Also, the editorial frequently takes on a back patting tone:

"No one could've predicted the phenomenal growth and surprising accomplishments of the Vegrants back then . . ."

Or: "We've had three increasingly successful Silvercons and a Corflu, produced an array of popular fanzines including *Wild Heirs*, and made ourselves known throughout the microcosm. . . . I can't help but wonder what marvels lie ahead for this remarkable gang of trufans."

"Arnie and Joyce keep telling me how Vegas fandom is the best they've ever experienced."

It's all true. But I wonder how long the Vegrants will need to compliment themselves, and what purpose it really serves. Surely, in time, a certain independence will arise among these individuals, a true sense of self-worth that needn't be expressed in every issue.

But who's to criticize such a fine fanzine?

In *Wild Heirs* 10, Springer spends four pages on an artfully crafted plonker battle within the already splintered Vegas fandom over veggie restaurant going.

Joyce Katz recounts Springer's tremulous moments in the desert and how he saved fandom by rediscovering fire, heh-heh.

Ken Forman, who's been having a little conflict with the rest of the Vegrants, wrote an excellent piece about a friend with no brain -- very similar to many of the police reports I read in Tacoma each day.

Ray Nelson writes of gender confusion among fannish men. Not whether one is a man, but whether one feels like one.

And then the letter column, which is good, but could be edited more tightly.

But the standout piece in the issue is still Arnie's. One of the points that got me was that fanzines are actually very elaborate productions and hard to do with experience and considerable effort: "It takes self-confidence and some natural talent for a first-timer to produce a creditable fanzine by today's standards."

Arnie goes on to say that the fanzines young fans used to try to match were much worse than they are today, which makes young people less likely to become fans. The modern neo is an older person. And fandom is frequently adding former gafiates to its ranks.

This piece, as fan analysis doesn't rank in the same league as, say, *Performance*, but it is a fascinating look at what may be happening as fanzine fandom finally reacts to losing its preeminence in fandom as a whole, and the new patterns of energy we are experiencing.

In my opinion, it's just such energy as *Wild Heirs* that is making fanzines interesting again. I get a few fanzines now, but the writing in only one in ten is really gripping; the others are tedious, or simply badly written.

I hope that the energy created in Vegas doesn't fade away with the inevitable collapse of their tight social structure. Interplay, intelligent conversation, and an absolute hatred of that which has been done before is necessary to keep me interested, anyway.

The Center of the Universe

by Victor M Gonzalez  
Staff Writer



**FANZINE COUNTDOWN, October 26th to November 8th**

**#1) Anorak Redemption #1**, written and edited by Nigel Richardson, 35 Cricketers Way, Kirkstall Lane, Leeds, LS5 3RJ U.K., available through e-mail at [nigel@impolex.demon.co.uk](mailto:nigel@impolex.demon.co.uk); Sometimes, I think I would really enjoy taking a sharpened three-foot steel rod and driving it through one of Nigel Richardson's temples and out the other. When he really gets wound up in his "Fans are just TOO dreadful for words" pose, I think there are a lot of fat, bearded, tee-shirt and badge-wearing geeks who would love to join me in that effort, followed by a joyful parade through Leeds (the East Gary, Indiana of England) with his Doc Martens, and his rubber kit and his delicately-severed head borne before us on poles. But just when I am deriving an amazing degree of pleasure from this image, he'll say something all soft and squishy like "And yet for all the variety, weirdness and drug-addled transvestite poetry I got in exchange for the last few Slubbs, I have to admit there was something missing -- that slippery sense of community, the shared mythologies and semantic codes that most other zine cultures are only just beginning to acquire." Yes, here's another nail-bomb of a fanzine from Nigel, this one zipping across the Atlantic in an electronic text format, just cutting under the wire and grabbing the top spot in this issue's countdown. I don't know why he thought it necessary to come up with a new title, since this is much the same mix we have enjoyed for several years in *Slubberdegullion*, scornful noises at fandom, Worldcon, Americans, Thatcher, Blur and Avedon Carol. Vague fetishistic longing, but this time backed up with a heart-warming story of how he actually met his dream girl, via the net, and how she came to see him all the way from New York. Has this done anything to moderate his outlook on life? God, no. And I hope nothing ever does. His prose is endlessly fascinating to me, like the aftermath of an auto wreck or a gas main explosion, and I can always depend on him to adopt a pose just a trifle more fearless than I could ever manage. It's nice to see something new from him.

**#2) Yhos # 54**, edited by Art Widner, P.O. Box 5122, Gualala, CA 95445; Time certainly flies: I had no idea it had been two years since we had been graced with an issue from Art. I've seen him like 6 or 7 times in the past two years, but reading through this issue seemed like a more involved conversation than we'd been able to have in all those visits. He's been traveling, traveling, as always, plus there's a new lady in his life, and things seem to be generally looking up for him. This issue also includes the first half of a piece by Lucy Huntzinger on her trip to Kenya, which is very entertaining, but alas, ends with those grim words TO BE CONTINUED. Someone who has put out one ish in two years hardly needs that sort of pressure. And there was actually one rather fascinatingly contentious point; turns out that Mike Glycer responded to rich brown's characterization of Corflu 9 in the last issue of *YHOS* by requesting to be removed from the mailing list. Mr. Glycer seems to be finding a number of ways to separate himself from nasty old fanzine fandom these days, and I'll be interested to see what response he makes to Art's comments on the issue. One point I take issue with: what is this "general consensus that Corflu 12 was the best ever"? How can Art turn his back on that sterling El Paso Corflu, when he took the line drive off his knee?

**#3) Balloons over Bristol #9**, edited by Christina Lake, 12 Hatherly Rd., Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8QA U.K.; What a very pleasant surprise; Christina's apparently still riding that heavy wave of fannish energy that allowed her to crank out so

much stuff just before Intersection; either that or she's slumped over dead in the cab, and the flywheel continues to pay out line due to inertia. Another pretty sharp issue; more of Tim Goodrick's "Miss Lee" letters, some happily self-serving commentary on Intersection, reviews of bands still obscure enough to be cool by Simon Lake. I'm especially glad for the sprightly lettercol, in which several otherwise intelligent British fans express their agreement with Christina's comments on the allegedly excessive size of American fanzines, and portray themselves as dangerous dingbats in the process. And I forgive you for reprinting sections of my reviews from APAK without my permission, Christina.

**#4) Zorn #3**, edited by Mike Scott, 2 Craithie Road, Chester CH3 5JL U.K.; Ah, time to get out those pocsarcads and purple crayons, folks; three issues out now, and Mike is already threatening to hack us all off his mailing list. Things move swiftly in fanzine fandom's new golden age. Mike admits here to having a very good time with the zine, but I think I might have noticed this without being told. Three issues in three months is a good sign. This one favors us with a story of spiders in the bathtub, the exact sort of thing which would have given me utterly godawful nightmares when I was 11. He also offers an editorial on the specter of consumerism in fandom which is pretty close thematically to the average Scott Patri anti-Trekkie rant. Tough talk by someone who makes reference, albeit satirically, to "those elitist fanzine fans" right on page one. Get down with your bad self, Mike!

**#5) Gegenschein #72**, written and edited by Eric Lindsay, 7 Nicoll Avenue, Ryde, New South Wales 2112, Australia; Actually, I can hardly make a decision between this and Jean Weber's *Weber Woman's Wrevenge* #48, which was handed to me at almost the same moment last weekend, and which has some good stuff on the Tiptree Awards and a very cool article by Paula Johansen. But, I rate this one a tiny notch higher because Eric has included a number of photos taken at Thylacon, this year's Australian national convention, and fanzines with photos of fans in them are an invaluable resource to the fan historians among us. Lots of little book reviews too, which at least appear to do no perceptible harm.

**ALSO RECEIVED:** *Weber Woman's Wrevenge* #48, Jean Weber; *Muse* #134, Steve desJardins; *Situation Normal!??*, November 1995, edited by Joyce Katz for SNAFFU; *Corflu 13 Progress Report #1*, Lucy Huntzinger; *Zero-G Lavatory* #5, Scott Patri. *Remember to send trades to both Victor and I in the future!*

APPARATCHIK is the Major Jesse Marcel of fandom, posing with a few shreds of torn targeting balloon in his hands and a dumb look on his face. No sign of the wreckage or the military recovery operation remains. It's still available for the usual, but note that trades must now be sent to both Andy and Victor (Victor can be reached at 403 1/2 Garfield Street S., #11, Tacoma, WA 98444, electronically at [Gonzalez@tribnet.com](mailto:Gonzalez@tribnet.com)), 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 an Anthony Dilweg rookie card. 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. September 15th, 1957: Ubatuba, Brazil.