

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# APPARATCHIK

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This is the sixty-second issue of a bi-weekly fanzine, edited and published by Andy Hooper, carl juarez and Victor Gonzalez, members & founding member fwa, supporters afal, at The Starlitter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. #103, Seattle, WA 98103, also available at fanmailAPH@aol.com. Correspondence can be addressed to Victor at 403 1/2 Garfield Street S., #11, Tacoma, WA 98444, and at Gonzalez@tribnet.com. See the back page for availability and trade info, including the addresses of our British and Australian mailing agents. This is Drag Bunt Press Production #265. **Apparatchiki:** Steve Green, Irwin Hirsh, Lesley Reece, Martin Tudor & Pam Wells. Attention: Please do not take glasses into the pool.

## Issue #62, June 20th, 1996

**Don't think I won't hit you**

**Compiled by Andy**

AFTER MONTHS OF LOYAL service to the state, commissar in charge of typographic corrections carl juarez was startled to see a low-slung Zil pull up in front of his apart-

ment house one afternoon last week. Two men in the characteristic paste-board suits of the internal security service got out and walked up the rickety staircase that led to his cold-water flat. What could they want? His mind raced in panic. He had been a good servant of the people! What could they possibly charge him with? Maybe there would be no charges, just a single heavy slug placed just behind his right ear . . .

Could he run? There was no time. Their heavy, scuffed shoes were already thumping up to his door. The knock was staccato, menacing. He opened the door and stepped back into the room, knowing they would need no invitation to enter. One reached into his inside coat pocket. carl shuddered and his vision swam.

He felt a slight tug at the front of his shirt. Then one of the men was shaking his hand. "Congratulations," he said, the motion of his arm causing the gaudy Order of Obliteraya to jangle against carl's chest. "You've been declared a full editor."

Then they were thumping back down the stairs to the street. One paused just long enough to call back over his shoulder, "Remember, your contribution to the operating budget is due every other Thursday!"

I LEAD WITH that humorous interpretation of a real event — one which I think is somewhat overdue, and welcome all the way aboard, carl — because much of the rest of the news is not so happy. From the Internet comes the news that Ethel Lindsay, whose terminal illness was only recently diagnosed, has passed away. I'll hand this over to Dave Langford, who sent the following:

"Ken Slater just phoned. Ethel died soon after 7 this morning, 16 June. It's an extra cruel blow that, when she'd determinedly settled herself to enjoy what was expected to be a short remaining time, there should have been almost no time at all.

"Here's the last letter Ethel sent me (early this month):  
 "As you are on the Net I thought it would be best to write to you first. Could it be possible for you convey my heartfelt thanks to all the good people who sent me cards and letters. They meant so much to me and I was quite overwhelmed by the number of people who took so much trouble — and so quickly! I heard from old friends and new — a magnificent shower. At the moment I am in a McKinnon Hospice where I have had magnificent treatment. I am on a 'driver', which gives me medication quite harass-free. After ages of being in a state of sickness —

now I can eat! Plan is for me to get home soon on all sorts of help . . ."

"Assure everyone their good thoughts have been warmly welcomed and appreciated. Many thanks — Ethel"

It's nice to know that some fans quickly seized the opportunity to communicate with Ethel, and that she had a sense of how many people still thought highly of and cared deeply for her. We will indeed miss her.

WE MUST ALSO offer our very sincere condolences to Nic Farey, famed in these pages for receiving an unorthodox haircut in support of Simo's TAFF candidacy at Novacon last fall, on the sudden and unexpected death of his wife Dee Ann.

Also recently departed: Richard Evans, English editor and Gollancz stalwart, lost May 24th to Pneumonia; Roy Gasson, also a long-time British editor, also in May; Vera Chapman, founder of the Tolkien Society, also in May; and it would be a gross oversight not to note the passing of Dr. Timothy Leary on the 31st of May, who sought to live what most of sf aficionados only wrote or dreamed of.

HUGO-NOMINATED DC AREA fan Joe Mayhew is reported to have suffered his second serious heart attack on Thursday or Friday of last week. The only other news we have is that he sought medical attention quickly and is expected to recover. Get well soon, Joe, we hope to see you in Anaheim.

IN CONTRAST, I am very happy to report the birth of Elias Joseph Hooper-Lane, just under 8 pounds and twenty inches, on the 10th of June, to my sister Elizabeth and her husband Chris. The opinion of his doting Grandmother? "He looks like a Kraut." Despite thirty hours of "non-productive labor" and sundry other insults, mother and son are both said to be doing well, aside from having to live in rural Louisiana. Elias is already reportedly asking where the hell he can get a latte.

THE SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME has announced their first four inductees, to be honored later this year. They are: Hugo Gernsback, John W. Campbell, A.E. Van Vogt, and Jack Williamson. An interesting group, and a good place to start.

**IN THIS ISSUE:** Once we're done with news, turn the page for another delightful installment of Dan Steffan's report on his TAFF trip to Britain last summer. Look at the end of Dan's column for "The Lake of Fire," a new feature which deals with the folly and woe of not writing us often enough. Lesley Reece then shares with some of the dubious joys of insomnia, followed by Irwin Hirsh's thoughts on the definition and status of "The Usual." We've been favored with letters from Murray Moore, Mike McInerny, Dave Rike, Alison Scott, Craig Smith, Steve Stiles, Steve Jeffery and Kevin W. Welch. Then Victor offers his review of the long-awaited Wild Heirs #14, which leads nicely to Andy's fanzine count-down. Share and enjoy.

Like an alligator, he can digest a whole turtle shell.

**TAFFragment #4 —  
Go West, Young Fan**

**by Dan Steffan**

OUR TRIP TO WALES WAS flawless. We pulled into the station right on time. It was a tiny, brick kiosk that seemed indistinguishable from those that had preceded it. Only the small white

signs at either end of the building set it apart from the others. Haverfordwest, the signs said.

The platform was deserted except for our fellow passengers (all five of them). There was no sign of Greg Pickersgill or of anyone who might presumably be his significant other, Catherine MacCauley. Lynn and I had played host to Gregory during his own TAFF trip in 1986, but had never met Catherine — so she could have been *anybody*. I didn't want to look foolish by going home with the wrong Welshman. But since there wasn't anybody waiting for us the point was moot.

It was a warm and bright afternoon in August and Lynn's pale blue hair seemed to be in competition with the cloudless sky. As we stepped out of the station I wondered if we'd look out of place in this little village so far from home. Was this going to be the start of a grand adventure or a pitiful humiliation? Would I regret something as impulsive as this one-day trip to Wales? What if Ed McMahon came to our house with that big check for a million dollars and *we weren't home*? That would just be my goddamn luck.

Moments after hitting the sidewalk in front of the station a small red car stopped in front of us and Greg Pickersgill got out. He looked much like I'd remembered him, with a touch of grey thrown in for drama. Catherine was behind the wheel and greeted us so warmly that I immediately felt a kinship with her.

She explained that they had been delayed because they hadn't been able to decide whether to walk or drive to the station. Their house was so nearby that driving seemed silly, but not knowing how much luggage we might be packing, the car was the logical choice. I was happy to ride to the house, but soon came to understand their debate. The actual trip took no more than two minutes and once we got there I could actually see the train station from their front door. Driving *did* seem silly. Fortunately for everyone involved, I am a very silly person.

Their house at 3 Bethany Row is actually two houses joined by a common wall. They had always been two separate homes until Gregory and Catherine moved in (Greg had actually lived in one side of the house as a child), but since so much room was needed for the library and the computers and the fanzines and the other collections, they moved into both houses. A brilliant solution that provided them adequate space, a big lush garden, separate offices and, luckily for us, a guest room.

The only real drawback is one of access between the houses. The landlord refused to allow Gregory to put a door in the wall that divides them, which means that one must step outside into the back garden to go from one side of the house to the other. This proved to be something of an annoyance for our hosts, but was only a minor inconvenience for Lynn and I. In fact, we ended up having one of the houses (the right side) to ourselves — the guest bedroom being in one house while Catherine and Greg's room was in the other. Hospitality is one thing, but nobody has ever put us up in an entire house before. I was impressed.

After a few minutes of exploring the house(s) and meeting the cats, our hosts led us on a guided walking tour of their town. We wandered past the train station and down the hill into Haverfordwest. The streets were narrow and would probably be described in *Fodor's* as "quaint and charming," but I couldn't help noticing a quiet sadness about the place. Too many storefronts were closed down and the only people on the streets

seemed to be the young and the elderly. Our journey took us along many picturesque canals and over several old stone bridges that seemed remarkable only because of the presence of an unusual number of shopping carts that lay at the bottom of the shallow water. A testimony to the boredom of Welsh teenagers, no doubt.

The highlight (literally!) of the afternoon's tour of Haverfordwest was our visit to the impressive ruins of the 12th Century Norman castle that dominates the local landscape. Built on a bluff that overlooks the entire countryside, the castle defended the shipping interests of several different conquerors over the centuries. Today, the great skeleton of a fortress is a tourist attraction — when there are any tourists — whose thick stone walls belie any concerns I might have had about the demise of the people of Wales. (As long as that castle stands, there will always be a need for at least one person to cut the grass and pick up the cigarette butts.)

In spite of my cynicism, I was impressed by the ruins. I always get a special feeling when I make contact with aged things and this was no exception. I sometimes imagine that I can detect the latent energy left behind by the centuries of mankind's passing parade. How many feet had walked up the steps of that 800-year-old fortress before mine? How many sets of lungs were left breathless by the incline before mine?

Next to the fortress is another old building that had once been a local prison. (It now houses offices for lawyers or the government or some other appropriately ironic agency.) By coincidence, I had also taken Gregory to visit a local Virginia prison during his TAFF trip. Apparently he had decided to return the favor — though this time we didn't see any sign of E.B. Frohvet's favorite ex-con. I wonder how many other TAFF winners have visited (if you'll excuse the expression) penal facilities during their TAFF trips?

Visiting castles and prisons always gives me a powerful thirst. When I noticed the specks of white foam in the corners of Greg's mouth I knew it was time for a beer. Everyone agreed and Catherine led the way down the hill from the ruins and took us down winding streets to an acceptable pub. Along the way we passed several other establishments that were rejected by our hosts.

"That one's a fucking shithole," said Gregory.

"Yuppie Wine Bar," said Catherine at the next.

"Wannabe Biker Bar," said Gregory about another.

We ended up in a pleasant, but mostly empty pub in the midst of Haverfordwest's shopping district. The booths were comfortable and the drinks were cold. Greg and I gossiped and lied about everyone we could think of. I asked him what Chuck Connors' problem was and he asked me what was wrong with Guy Lillian. Gregory told me about Don West and I told him about Andy Hooper. We talked about fanzines and fandom and all the great things that were going to get done just as soon as one of us won the lottery. I'm not sure what Lynn and Catherine were talking about, but it probably had something to do with what pathetic dreamers fanboys can be and how small our printruns really are. You know, girl talk.

We moved on to another local bar after a short walk along the length of Haverfordwest's impressive Aquatic Shopping Cart Exhibit. It had been an unseasonably hot afternoon and we all welcomed the opportunity to get out of the sun. By this time any apprehensions we'd had about getting along with our hosts had disappeared. We had gotten through the awkward perfunctory conversations — and several pints of Guinness — and found that we still had plenty to talk about. In fact, we didn't shut up until we got back on the train the next morning.

Dinner that night was superb. Catherine's skills in the

kitchen elevated her to goddesshood with every bite I ate. Fresh Cockles and Sea Trout, New Potatoes served with freshly-made Mayonnaise, Salad, and several home-made Pizzas. It was the most memorable meal of our trip, though there were others that I shall never forget.

Gregory and Catherine's house is a treasure trove of fan-nish delights. Everywhere I looked there were books and fanzines. The walls of the bedroom we slept in were layered with interesting Piles O' Stuff. Over by the window was a set of British SF Book Club hardcovers. By the door a probably complete run of the slick music magazine, *Q*. On the nightstand a conveniently located pile of *Hyphen* sat basking in the shadow of a life-size replica of Jophan's Shield of Umor.

Orderly stacks of fanzines huddled on shelves in the hallway that passes Catherine's office. The mixture of dark wood shelving and loud book jackets gave the sitting room a warm, inviting glow. Gregory showed me several paintings by D. West, a man known in some circles for his yellow fingers and his pink eyes.

"This painting proves that Don is really fandom's only true renaissance man," I marvelled.

"Yes, it's true," Greg sighed. "But I just wish he wouldn't go around town in those bloody tights all the time."

"There are some things that man was not meant to know," I agreed.

I met the entire membership of Haverfordwest fandom that night when we were joined by David Redd, noted author and third wheel. He arrived carrying an eight-pack of ale that never seemed to run dry. Before David had arrived we'd finished off a bottle of wine and many bottles of lager, but once he'd joined us the real drinking began. Empty bottles began piling up in the corners. At one point Catherine produced a bottle of locally-made Mead for our consumption. It was astonishingly good. Usually I dislike overly sweet wines and liquors, but that bottle of honey Mead went down like ambrosia. Periodically David would pull another bottle out of his eight-pack and offer it to one of us. Before long his feet became obscured by the pile of little green ale bottles, and yet there was always another lurking inside the box.

David talked about the reality of being a very slow writer while trying to raise a family and the necessity of having a job in the real world to make ends meet. I explained that it was much the same for would-be artists like myself. Between gulps of beer we discussed the frustrating way that working for a living interferes with Real Creativity. Catch-22. David talked eloquently about unfinished short stories and how they are like bouts of unrequited love. I talked drunkenly about unfinished comic strips and how they are like piles of expensive paper sitting in the corner gathering dust. Lynn looked at me like I

was crazy, but handed me another beer anyway.

It was 4:00 a.m. when David took the last couple bottles of his ale and vanished into the night. Greg and I had been sprawled on the floor for several hours by that point, but continued our discourse whenever we made eye contact over the mountains of beer bottles.

We discussed how important it can be to separate a fan's creative endeavors from his often peculiar and sometimes offensive personality. We discussed Richard Bergeron's brilliance as a faneditor and fanzine packager in contrast to his more disappointing personality flaws. Greg talked about getting his copy of *Warhoon* 28 long after the brouhaha known as Topic A had taken place. Despite all that distasteful unpleasantness, he was utterly astonished by the scope and quality of the book he held in his hands. It exhibited none of the bile and bias that, unfortunately, Richard Bergeron is known for today. It was a work filled with love and respect.

"What a fucking waste," Greg sighed. "What a loss to fandom."

"Yes," I agreed. "But you know what this means, don't you?"

"You mean?" Greg asked from somewhere behind a great pile of empties.

"Yes, that's right," I answered. "There's still hope for you and me."

We exchanged many important theories about life that night, and if either of us had been able to remember them the next morning this would be a better world to live in.

We left the next day after a couple cups of coffee and about five hours of sleep. Before leaving I was granted access to Greg's fanzine preservation project, The Memory Hole, and allowed to liberate duplicate copies of many fine fanzines for my own collection. This kind of generosity made me appreciate Gregory and his love of fanzines all over again. His belief in the legitimate power of fanzine publishing inspired me and left me feeling, at the same time, like I was playing out of my league. I have yet to adequately repay him.

As we pulled out of the station for our return trip to London I turned to my wife and smiled with satisfaction. I could hardly believe our good luck. Haverfordwest fandom had welcomed us with open arms and drank with us until we were legless. No one screamed at anyone. No furniture was broken. No one pointed and laughed. No one vomited. No one was glad that we were leaving. It was hard to believe that we'd been in the UK for less than three days.

Our trip to Wales was flawless.



---

## Why, you knew that the big comet struck earth as predicted, didn't you?

---

### THE LAKE OF FIRE

Harvested by Andy

WELCOME TO "THE LAKE OF Fire," a new occasional feature of Apak, in which I'll address annoying little issues like lost and changed addresses, people whose

place on the mailing list is hanging by a thread, and other business which doesn't seem to belong anywhere else.

First of all, this will be the last issue for two people who sent short subscription funds a few weeks back. Stephanie Mortimer and Fred C. Moulton, we need to hear something from you, or you won't hear any more from us.

John Welsey Hardin, late of Las Vegas fandom, has been on the road with his family, searching for a new place to call home.

Sending fanzines in care of Katz or the Formans might eventually work, but for the time being, I'd recommend holding copies for John until we can get you a new address for him.

Christina Lake is currently visiting the United States. For the next sixty days, her mail should be addressed to 21 Sunnyside Place Belmont, MA 02178.

In general, our readership is extremely responsive and generous to us. But there are some — a couple dozen — who have received many issues of this fanzine, and never made any response at all. We're all pretty broke right now, and if you've ever considered sending a subscription, this would be the time. Because quite soon, I'll have to start naming names.

But remember, we'll always prefer letters and trades to money.

## Nocturne

By Lesley Reece

I WASN'T NERVOUS ABOUT THE two-hour final exam I had last Monday. It was for a class in Late Renaissance Poetry, one of my favorite subjects, and I was certainly prepared: I spent all day

Sunday studying, reading Donne and Herbert, Jonson and Marvell. I didn't mind. It was pleasant sitting there in my apartment with my cat purring next to me and Chopin playing on the stereo. I didn't feel tense at all. If anything, I felt a bit guilty for enjoying myself during an activity that was supposed to be stressful.

The exam was at 8:30 am, an hour when I'm barely conscious no matter how much caffeine I've ingested. Getting enough sleep was critical, so I went to bed around midnight, taking my Norton Anthology along. I read a little while longer, then turned out the light. Almost immediately, the cat jumped on my stomach and stood there, mewling peevishly. "Urgh," I said, "What do you want?" She raced out to the kitchen, which is her way of saying, "Hey, you forgot my Fancy Feast!" Sighing heavily, I rose, shuffled out to the kitchen, and turned on the buzzing fluorescent fixture.

Shielding my eyes from the glare, I realized I'd forgotten my glasses. Now where had I put that catfood? I groped around the top of the refrigerator, hoping I'd left it up there. At last, I located a can of Beef-N-Chicken Feast, and plopped the horrid stuff into her bowl. I filled her other bowl with a fresh supply of kitty crunchies so she wouldn't yowl for more in half an hour, then snapped off the light and left her to gulp it down. "Yum yum," I said, stumbling back toward the bedroom.

I got back in bed and laid there looking at the glow-in-the-dark stars on the ceiling. The last tenant put them up. She didn't put them in constellations or anything. She just stuck them all over. I turned on my side. The cat jumped back on the bed, and sat on the pillow next to my head, settling in with a Beef-N-Chicken-scented sigh. "You're on my hair," I said. She didn't move. I moved her. She got back on the pillow and went to sleep right away. Lulled by her quiet breathing, I drifted off.

It was a cold day in England, and Charles the First shivered as he kneeled in front of the hooded executioner. Cromwell stood there on the platform, laughing maniacally. "Well, Mr. King," he chortled, "got anything to say for yourself?"

The king raised his head. He wasn't the king at all, but Johnny Depp, looking very handsome in a flowing white shirt. "Yeah," he said. "I hate to ruin your plans, but you guys already cut my head off once. Look!" He pointed to his right. The crowd gasped. There, on a ten-foot iron pike, was a gory head, complete with a scruffy goatee. It was Johnny, all right, flashing his famous white teeth.

"Hi!" said the head.

Cromwell slapped his hand to his forehead. "Oh great, *now* what?" he said.

I sat up in bed, my head swimming. "Goddamned poetry," I thought. I knew reading Marvell's "Horatian Ode" had done this; there's a verse in it about Roman workers finding a bleeding head when they're building a temple. Well, I've seen a good many slasher movies, too.

I looked at the clock. It was only one-fifteen; I still had enough time to sleep. Every time I closed my eyes, though, I saw the head with the pike stuck all the way through, and the blood dripping, and the little bits of skull and hair on the point. Yuck.

I wondered, why a matinee idol like Johnny Depp? Why not, say, Charlton Heston? He'd make a much better Charles I. The Freudian implications were all too obvious. I began to lament my sanity. Was I really a man-hating serial murderer, Lorena Bobbitt masquerading as a mild-mannered student of poetry?

Depressed, I looked at the clock again. One forty-five.

I decided to get up and paint my nails. That's always relaxing. I heard once that when Patty Hearst was being held hostage by the SLA, she painted her nails again and again to keep herself calm. Patty's color of choice was supposedly a frosty peach, only shades away from my favorite, "Galaxy" by Pro-10.

I put my glasses on and went out to the living room, polish in hand. I took a seat on the couch. My upstairs neighbor was still awake. I could hear music and people walking around, not stomping, obviously trying to be quiet. I like this neighbor better than the last upstairs tenant, a guy who, whenever I sat down to study, would suddenly blast Pansy Division so loud my windows would rattle. He was nice, though. He gave me a bunch of furniture when he moved away to Hong Kong last year.

By two-thirty, my nails looked great. I touched them tentatively. They were dry. I could go back to sleep. I laid down next to the cat, who was still dozing away on the bed. I closed my eyes and saw frosty gold fingernails. Good. I breathed deeply. Gradually, I became aware of a murmuring noise. It was the man and woman next door, talking in their living room. I sprang out of bed and pressed my ear carefully to the wall. If it had been anyone else, I wouldn't have bothered, but I'm wildly curious about these two. I see them sometimes in the hall or the parking lot, walking along, never more than about six inches from each other. They resemble each other so closely they might be brother and sister: both have waist-length, wavy, golden-blond hair, and the same serious, tan face.

I have no idea what their names are, and, strangest of all, though they are always together, I've never heard them speak. Even when they get their mail, they just sort through it and move mutely off down the hall. I'm a little afraid of them, actually. I'm starting to wonder if they aren't a replicant Stepford couple who communicate by telepathy, or maybe operatives of a race of pod people sent to infiltrate my building.

I listened, holding perfectly still. No words came through. Suddenly, there was music, and I realized they'd either left their television on, or — horrors — they were sitting there at three in the morning, staring silently at it. That was too creepy. Now I'd never get to sleep. I went back out to the living room and laid down on the couch.

My couch is just a loveseat, though, and it isn't very comfortable to sleep on, unless you're under five feet tall, which I'm not. I dozed off a few times, but I kept losing the circulation in my legs. I decided to get back in bed and try to forget the Village-of-the-Damned twins next door. The hell with it. I was too tired to be scared.

When I got to the bedroom, the murmuring had stopped. "They must have gone to bed," I thought with sincere relief. The clock said four-thirty. It was getting light out. Birds were chirping. Bells were ringing. Wait, bells were ringing? The sound was outside the window. I got up and peeked through the blind.

"Gah!" I snarled, startling the cat. My downstairs neighbor, the unofficial landscaper of the strip of rocks and dirt next to the building, had hung up wind chimes. Wind chimes, at four-thirty in the bleeding morning. It was too late to take a Sominex; I'd never make it to school. The cotton balls were still out from my manicure, so I jammed one in each ear, got back in bed, and clapped a pillow over my head. After a minute or two, I slept.

I didn't include a self-addressed envelope with my exam, so I'm not going to get it back. All I remember is sliding into my seat just as the instructor began handing out the questions. What I wrote is just a blur. It must have been all right, though, because I ended up with an A-plus in the course.

I'm sure my professor just skipped right over any references to Johnny Depp.

VUG

By Irwin Hirsh

IT'S TIME TO SORT THROUGH THAT stack of fannish mail. Every fanzine gets thumbed through, a memory prompt which aids in deciding whether to keep it or add it to the pile which will eventually

be donated to a fan fund. I pick up a number of issues of Ethel the Aardvark, the zine of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club. It's quite a good fanzine. Informative and newsy, I imagine it serves the club members well. I'd stopped receiving Ethel some years ago but there were a couple of issues on the freebie table at ARCon, and reading through them I found a few discussion points. Portions of my loc appear in the 64th issue, which was published this past December.

As I dig further into the stack of mail it dawns on me that I haven't received any further issues of Ethel. As the fanzine has the reputation for doing quite well by its bi-monthly schedule my curiosity is aroused. Fortunately before getting hot under the collar about this, I made a polite query and discovered that I should have received another issue or two. I was subject to some hiccup in the mailing list.

In the meantime this got me thinking about the way we approach The Usual, reminding me that every couple of years I encounter someone who applies a tight definition to the term. One loc equals one issue credit, that sort of thing. The closest thing we have to a manifesto for this approach to The Usual is an article by Greg Hills, "Devaluing the Egobuck" which first appeared in the sixth issue of Leah Zeldes Smith's Stet. He later reprinted the piece, unedited, in the first issue of his own fanzine Vapourware, in July, 1993.

It is an intriguing article, a clarion call to reduce the issue credits for fanzine fanac. Greg believes that such an act will attract new readers to fanzines and revitalize the field. He thinks the "too high value of 'the usual' is a major contributing factor to us not getting any new blood." His reasoning for this is that the standard fannish 'usual' sets up a spiral where people are discouraged from doing well, leaving fanzines "(that are) often of interest to few but long established and indoctrinated fans."

I'm not sure we can make such a jump between attitudes attached to 'the usual' and the issue of new blood for fanzines. It doesn't help that Greg has reduced these fanzine attitudes down to a number of gross generalizations and stereotypes. Under 'the usual' "the frequent fanzine publisher is discouraged, and soon discovers that publishing two issues a year nets them as many trades as seven a year ever did. So they cut back." If it only was as simple as that! I guess it was just mere convenience for Greg to ignore that there are other factors which drive people's fan publishing. I'm not sure that any fanzine of value was published purely to net the editor fanzines in return.

At another point he asks, "But when a scribble gets you as many issues as a carefully-considered letter, why bother?" This is posed as a rhetorical question, but I think it gives us a rather narrow view of the LoC-writer. Greg gives no consideration that fanzine readers may want to be join the letter-column discussions, or would want the egoboo of seeing their names and words in print, or . . . As Greg sees them, letter writers want to get as many fanzines as possible for the least possible effort.

Greg wants to reduce issue credits for contributions because of the existence of knee-jerking scribbles. Like him, I've received letters which were nothing more than a one-paragraph letter written for no other purpose than to keep its writer on my mailing list. I was never interested in that sort of response. As a fanzine editor I wanted more, genuine efforts to communicate, a

response to my and my contributors past efforts, a contribution and encouragement to my future efforts. I can't help but feel that if you value your contributors by the lowest common denominator, you encourage response on that level.

Why do we give contributors three or four issue credits? Because they deserve it. Certainly, they should receive the issue in which their article, drawing or letter is published. And as letter-columns are conversation in print, the receipt of further issues allows for the writer/artist to see the continuation of the conversation, the response that their thoughts may have caused, invites them to keep on contributing, and sends the message that the contributor is a valuable part of the fanzine. Seeing the response to one's work should be part of the payment for contribution. Greg thinks that the egoboo attached to seeing one's work in print is enough, and that if you want to see a return on your investment you have to do something else — a cycle where the contributor is always behind.

Also, it takes time to contribute to a fanzine. Greg has considered this, but dismisses it. "You spend a couple of hours of time and a little money for postage and paper and you expect a fair return on your effort. Like several issues of a magazine that is costing the editor hundreds of dollars and weeks of time to produce. Sure." Sure, indeed, for Greg's equation doesn't add up, because he should be dividing the editor's time and money across the whole of the mailing list. If I write an article or a letter of comment I don't want my contribution devalued because the next person in the mailing list did nothing. Add up all the individual hours contributed to any fanzine which is not largely editor-written and you've got a fanzine in which the contributors may have invested as much time as the editor.

And since Greg has brought up the matter of the cost of producing a fanzine . . . The fact is that anyone who contributes to a fanzine is a halfwit, if you consider just the financial aspect of the process. How much does it cost to produce a fanzine? Some carry a price tag of \$2 or \$5 or whatever. An issue of Apparatchik would set you back a whole fifty cents. How long would you have to work to earn that sort of money? Two minutes? Three? If I devoted three minutes to writing a letter of comment, all I would come up with would be an illegible "scribble." Looked at purely in monetary terms the fanzine editor is getting close to slave labor.

By now, Greg is pointing out that I've ignored the cost of his time. It is true that in pricing their fanzine, all the faned recovers is the cost of producing that particular copy and then some. But if they were to put a real dollar value on their time every copy would be priced so that people would have to work two or three hours to purchase a single copy. And would anyone actually buy the fanzine? I know I wouldn't.

But I'm happy to spend two or three hours writing a letter of comment on a fanzine that entertained me.

The three or four issue credit strikes a nice balance. It offers the contributor a reasonable level of attention from the faned, while the latter can expect regular contributions to the fanzine.

In considering only cost and time Greg has said aside most of what I value in fanzines. I like fanzines because of the sense of community I find in their pages. I like them because I can be creative in an art/craft form with a known audience and where I can communicate with friends and acquaintances. I like the labor of love and gift/exchange aspect, where someone would want to give more than money to 'pay' for a magazine. I came away from his article with an image of Greg taking a slide-rule to his daily mail. Never mind the quality, feel the width. I don't know how this would attract new readers to fanzines, because it is not the width which interests us but the quality.

---

It was enclosed in oak paneling to protect it from the heat of re-entry

---

## AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH here: Commentary this week is directed at a scattered series of issues, so we'll be jumping from topic to topic, starting with STEVE JEFFERY's (44 White Way, Kiddington, Oxon OX5 2XA UK) comments on Dan Steffan's Taffragment #3: ]

'Dan Steffan's TAFragment concerning Fun With Taxis while he was over here for Intersection was much enjoyed, and it reminded me of my one act of selfless bravery beyond the call of duty at Intersection: I pushed my way to the head of a long taxi-queue of drunken Glaswegians outside the Central Hotel at midnight (acting as proxy for a friend who really did need a taxi *immediately*, no joking). My experience of taxi-queues elsewhere in Britain led me to expect Trouble; hell, fights quite often break out at the cab-rank in the (otherwise quite safe) centre of Bristol once the pubs have closed. Add to this Glasgow's reputation as a violent city, and you can see why I was half-resigned to suffering a damn good head-butting, followed by a possible cameo appearance as First Corpse in the next series of Taggart. But in fact, everyone in the queue was extraordinarily civil about it when I explained why the taxi was needed Right Now, and I escaped unscathed in the requisitioned taxi. Gives you a warm glow inside; milk of human kindness and all that.'

'I could also tell you about the taxi-driver who first drove me to my new home when I stepped off the train in Bristol: not only did he play Kenny Rogers' 'Coward of the County' very loudly on the tape-deck, he sang along to it *very badly and loudly* and even tried to get me to sing along (I declined politely). I've only just got over the experience.'

[APH: Taxi drivers can be such a varied lot at least in part because so many of them regard their job as a stepping-stone to some other profession. But the drivers who have made a career of hacking tend to develop even more distinctive quirks and mannerisms as they spend more time behind the wheel. And all of them have to find a way to deal with the challenge of continually interacting with strangers — a penchant for yodeling Kenny Rogers is far from the most disturbing adaptation to this issue that I've ever heard.

Now, a little chat from MURRAY MOORE (377 Manly Street, Midland, Ontario L4R 3E2 Canada, and e-mailing us from [murray.moore@encode.com](mailto:murray.moore@encode.com)): ]

'I arrived home from Ad Astra to find the envelope from you of Wiscon newszines. I shall dive into them soon.

'I can report that the distinguishing event of Ad Astra 16 (guests Larry Niven, James Hogan, David Hartwell) was the showing of "The Marriage of Shon-Da and G'Narr the Victor."

'I quote from the convention guide, "A comedy feature film about a couple getting married at a sci-fi convention. First film ever set at a con!"

'Ninety minutes long, with convention footage from Prime-mia, a media con in Toronto a couple of years ago. "Marriage..." can be very broadly described as the film equivalent of "Bimbos of the Death Sun." Technically competent, ably acted, with a simple plot that makes sense. An insider's movie, because getting all of the jokes requires the viewer to be an experienced sci-fi convention attendee. Con programmers could do much, much worse than show it. I hold back from saying it would be a good addition for a Corflu or a Ditto only because it has no fanzine references.'

[APH: Sounds entertaining, Murray, but I think this is the third or fourth production I've seen that featured the phrase "First film ever set at a con." Did this receive some manner of

commercial distribution? If so, the description might actually apply . . . .

Now, returning after a long absence from this column, is CRAIG SMITH (14155 91st Ct. NE, Bothell, WA 98011): ]

'Many thanks for all the fine issues of Apparatchik and special thanks for keeping me on the mailing list despite my non-response. I really enjoy your fanzine, especially since the majority of 'zines I get come out annually, if that, and the frequent appearance of APAK helps keep up my interest and enthusiasm in fandom and helps along the flood of art (four or five pieces a year at last count!) that pour forth from my fingers. Also your fanzine countdown is much appreciated since besides calling attention to good stuff I don't get, it more importantly lets me know what mailing lists I've been cut off of and prompts a letter like this one.

'Oh, maybe I should mention the writing. Well, I've enjoyed the many superb articles by all involved (special mention should be made of Lesley Reece's really enjoyable, and, her denials to the contrary, fannish stuff) and only have my eyes seize up and refuse to trudge on while reading accounts of behind-the-scene convention politics, voting controversies, of similar stimulating material.

'I've been getting some of my fanzines in order lately and while sorting through my Apparatchiks I noticed Andy's mention of John Keel. I'm not going to beat a dead alien and bring up Roswell again, but being a fan of fringe topics (the more lunatic the better), I'm very familiar with Keel and while I don't have a spare copy of *The Mothman Prophecies* for sale, it brought to mind a bit of trivia you might find of interest.

'According to Keel himself, he was a science fiction fan in the forties and published a fanzine called *The Lunarite*. I'm curious if anyone out there knows anything about it or has ever seen a copy? Also, Andy, if you'd be interested in reading his first book *Jadoo*, "The astounding story of one man's search into the mysteries of lack magic in the orient . . . the truth behind the Indian Rope Trick, living burials, x-ray vision, two-headed snakes and other phenomena," which I know is especially hard to come by, and consists of a bunch of articles first published in *Men's True Guts* type magazines of the fifties, just let me know and I'd be glad to lend you my copy.

'Regarding APAK #59: I see the KTF lessons are finally paying off for Victor.

'Oh, and according to a reliable source from the AL ASHLEY PSYCHIC FAN NETWORK (\$2.00 a minute — call now), E.B. Frohvet is actually Claude Degler, Jr. — just thought you'd like to know.'

[APH: Indeed, Craig, that's as good a theory as anyone else has advanced. And I'd love to see that copy of *Jadoo*. Anyone out there know of the John Keel fanzine Craig mentions?]

GEORGE FLYNN (PO Box 1069, Kendall Square Station, Cambridge, MA 02142) returns with the following: ]

'Thanks for Apparatchik 61 and for the impressive Wiscon newsletters (I'm told that the art on the back of the "addendum" wasn't received by the actual attendees). Yes, doing con newsletters is such fun; at one period I did the Boskone newsletters ("Helmuth, Speaking for Boskone") three years out of five. And this year I had nothing to do with the newsletter officially, but being otherwise uncommitted (consider the obvious pun made), wound up spending half the con helping out on it. Things got especially interesting when the Gestetner broke down and I tried to fill out the print run by feeding pages to the Xerox, until *it* overheated . . . .

---

As Bob approached the cobra, he realized it was an old exhaust pipe.

“outside of New York and parts of Washington DC, subway travel doesn't exist.” Let's see, I've also ridden subways in Boston, Philadelphia, Atlanta, San Francisco . . . and even Seattle.

I see that while I was reporting the “Christian Filksongs” story to you, Janice Eisen trumped me by sending it to Ansible.

“Um, I did relate it highly enough to spend my time reviewing it, which is more than fan editors can say” [sic] is more incoherent than usual.

“Yes, I believe NESFA still has the Bob Shaw/Terry Carr book for sale, at \$15.00 + \$2.00 postage and handling; NESFA, Box 809 Framingham, MA 01701-0203. (I'll get back to you if any of this turns out to be wrong.

“Is “Alva Svoboda” the same as Aljo of that ilk?”

[VMG: Yes, yes, yes. There are more than two subway systems in the United States. But in my experience, only New York's system is really complete. Besides, outside of a few major urban areas, rail travel is not widely provided in this country.

If you rode a subway in Seattle, it was that little underground shuttle between the main terminal and the satellite gates at SeaTac. If you think a one-way train circling between three stops is a subway in any substantial sense, you have my sympathy.]

[APH: Ah, yes, the sentence in question was meant to say “Um, I did rate it highly enough to spend my time reviewing it, which is more than many fan editors can say” But hey, any time George can find just one typo he finds worth his attention, I know we're getting somewhere. As for Alva/Aljo, he'll have to let us know; I just made the best guess I could at reading his handwriting. My money is on your solution, of course.

Now, a letter from DAVE RIKE (P.O. Box 11, Crockett, CA 94525-0011) commenting on a variety of stuff in recent issues of Apak: ]

“Sadly this is not so much another “Year of the Jackpot,” like, say, 1958 was; rather I feel it is evidence that we all are getting older with some of us much older than others. If there are any olde pharts who hang out around your slanshack whose past fanac you've liked, even tho he/she may be a bit over the hill now, be sure to appreciate him/her while you can. After so many years, depending on one's medical condition, it can happen at any time.

If I was going to the El Paso Westercon I guess I'd fill up some fan programming with discourses on Redd Boggs, Charles Burbee, and Dr. Sam Moskowitz, plus maybe others. However, I did read Moskowitz's essay that Norm Metcalf published. I declare, it is certainly pure unalloyed Moskowitz. It stirs up old memories of those wonderful days of yesteryear (more than 40) when I first read of the heroic exploits of New Fandom vs. the Futurians in *The Immortal Storm* (Atlanta, hb, 1954). It must've been a big thing in Moskowitz's life because he keeps bringing it up every time he can. Three or four years ago Dave Kyle recounted his version of the Exclusion Act in the pages of *Mimosa*. Moskowitz penned a rejoinder which the Lynchses declined to publish, so Norm Metcalf came to the rescue and published it for him.

“And now, SaM does it again. But the more recent iterations have a difference from the earlier version in that little or no mention is being made any more of James V. Taurasi or Will B. Sykora. I wonder why. I hope that SaM gets around to penning memoirs about them. I wrote him and asked if he could write

something about Redd Boggs, especially during the 50s when SaM declared Redd to be the only publisher he had left in fandom. This is not to voice disagreement with brothers Lichtman and Bratman, SaM's piece is everything they said it was and even more, rather I delight in reading again SaM's accounts of ancient fan feuds rendered as epic poetry, much like it must've been back in Greece listening to Homer recite again and again his stories of the Trojan War. However, as much as I appreciate it as literature, I do feel that thorough documentation is required, and why does SaM continue with this when I recall not long ago reading SaM writing about how he and Wollheim made up and ended their feud back in 1946, and this was right around the time when Wollheim and friends tried to scuttle Fapa, quit and formed Vanguard Apa. Perhaps it appeared in *After All These Years: Sam Moskowitz on his science fiction career* based upon a postal interview conducted by Jeffrey Elliot, 1991, wraps, from Niekas Publications, RFD #2, Box 63, Center Harbor, NH 03226-9729 for \$5.95 + \$1.50 s&h.

“Thanks again for the Wiscon daily zines. Wish I had attended since I would have loved to ask Judy Merrill about how it was to have been the only Trotskyite among all of those Stalinist Futurians, even tho, as John Michel told Larry Shaw when he wanted to go to an anti-Jim Crow demonstration in Washington, DC (which would have been merely a weekend jaunt for those of us during the 60s), “Don't go Larry. You see, we merely sit around and talk about these things, we don't do anything.” (It's mentioned in Damon Knight's *The Futurians* in case you want to check it out.)

“Yes, Victor, these LSD lick-&-stick tattoo stories are mere urban folklore. Tho, I do know someone who boasted to me how he made a fast trip to Bangkok and came back with a bunch of blotter acid which was on hotel stationery interleaved in a Thai newspaper which the customs didn't check out.”

[VMG: We've heard that story about the blotter paper before. Only that time it was a hotel in India. Watch out — you also may be fooled.]

[APH: I think we all understand that an increase in the death rate is an inevitable consequence of the aging of fandom. Perhaps the recent string of departures is within the bounds of normal random distribution, but it sure seems as if someone suddenly has it in for fans.

Now, MIKE MCINERNY (83 Shakespeare St., Daly City, CA 94014) sends a note along with a videotape made at Corflu Vegas. Some sections do appear to portray Arnie Katz squinting at a sheet of paper in a particularly dim coal mine, but others are quite thoroughly watchable and amusing — thanks, Mike! It's great just to know this tape exists: ]

“Thank you for sending me so many copies of the world's most frequent fanzine. Congrats on winning the FAAN awards and I wish you luck with the Hugo too. I read each issue as soon as it arrives and I hope you keep sending it to me as it is my main source for faanish news.

I don't have any news to send you as the only fan I've seen recently was Lenny Kaye who used to publish a zine called *Obelisk* when he lived in New Jersey in the 1960's. He used to write a fanzine review column called “Dust of the Ages” for my genzine *HKLPLD* (also in the 60's). Lenny is a big time rock star, lead guitarist for Patti Smith Group, record producer and rock historian. The Patti Smith Group just played a very hot set at the Warfield with songs dedicated to Kurt Cobain, Fred “Sonic” Smith (ex-MC5 lead), and Jerry Garcia. Great version of “Not Fade Away.” Lenny expressed some interest in reviewing

fanzines for me again. Maybe you could send him a copy or 2 to Lenny Kaye, P.O. Box 407, Murray Hill Station, NY NY, 10156. Maybe you could mention him in Apak please!

I thank you also for the Wiscon Newszines. I have the James Tiptree Jr. Arkham House books and have read and enjoyed the stories very much. Still it seems *strange* that an author who hid the fact of her femaleness should be so revered by feminists. She didn't want anyone to *know* that she was a woman instead of being proud of being a strong woman writer. I guess she didn't think the publishers, editors, and readers would accept her under her right name. Too bad.'

[VMG: Thanks for your kind words. I remember tales told at LACon in 1984 about the never-empty McInerney pipe.

Lenny Kaye would be a great addition to the mailing list; I've enjoyed his music for many years, and though I knew he had been a fan, I guess I'm surprised he still wants to be one. Cool!]

[APH: Alice Sheldon was James Tiptree Jr. for many reasons, some of them economic and dictated by the conventions of the field at the time, but also in part because she wanted to take on an alter-ego and say things that would have been inconvenient to have attributed to her. I think her and her husband's status in the American intelligence community dictated this far more effectively than any supposed lack of confidence or pride in her sex. Regardless of the shibboleth of her pseudonymity, the ideas in her fiction were important to women looking for a feminist sensibility in speculative fiction during the seventies, and for this she will always have an avid audience among readers to whom such things matter. I think she was among the best writers of short fiction in any genre during her most productive period, and count her among my favorite 20th century authors.

Now, a letter from a correspondent brought to us by rich brown's Internet fanzine listings, KEVIN W. WELCH (P.O. Box 2195, Madison, WI 53701-2195): ]

'I received your Apparatchik #60 and enjoyed it, especially the letter column. Lesley Reece's column was particularly interesting, because I think she has some of the concerns and problems with fandom that I have, since she is only a little more experienced with fandom than myself.

I share her problem with the acronyms and neologisms you see in fan writing, but I have found that if you read enough of this stuff and try to figure it out you can catch on quickly. Internet news groups (rec.arts.sf.fandom and rec.arts.sf.written) are useful in this regard, as are certain websites (e.g. the Mimosa site). Hell, I would never have heard of your fine fanzine were it not for a posting by rich brown, aka Dr. Gafia. I've always liked the Internet newsgroup culture, and I've found the give and take and the sheer volume of correspondence exciting. However, you can only get so much out of the newsgroups. Lesley describes your letter column (or any letter column) as listening to a bunch of conversations in the next room. A newsgroup is like that to the Nth degree, because of the high rate of information transmission; anybody can contribute on the spur of the moment and just about anybody does.

'For some (me, anyway) the zine is the next logical stage beyond the Internet newsgroup. If you just have the itch to say something you can do it on the Internet, but the transitory nature of the medium means that your writing is just so much hot gas on a cold day. But in a fanzine, hey, your writing is right there in front of you on lavender paper. It has presence. Maybe just anybody can write for a fanzine, but if you do, you have to sit down and think about what it is you're writing. It takes some

time. It takes some effort. The Internet is too easy. I think you find a higher grade of company in zine fandom.

'But then again, I'm new at this and I could be wrong.

I liked Victor's acid tattoo story, and I was interested in hearing that Jan Harold Brunvand was retiring. I remember when his books, *The Vanishing Hitchhiker* and so on came out in the early or mid 80s. They created a fuss and he appeared on the old Letterman show a few times to talk about urban legends.

'Brunvand did an immense public service for those of us committed to Reason and Sanity in Everyday Conversation. Used to be, we'd encounter a nincompoop at the office coffee machine or whatever, and s/he would start talking about Acid Tattoos or Gang Initiation Nights or Dying Boy Wants Postcards or Exploding Microwaved Poodles or Welcome to the Wonderful World of AIDS, and we'd have to say something like, "Well, I don't know, that doesn't sound right to me," or something and we conceded victory to the nincompoops.

'After Brunvand, we had a name for all this nonsense and we got to retort, "You know what that sounds like? That sounds like an URBAN LEGEND to me, pal." It reduced the Nincompoop Quotient in my life by a factor of two. Brunvand deserves some kind of prize for this, like the Turning Back the Tide with a Teaspoon Award.'

[VMG: Indeed. I began thinking after a couple of people in the newsroom actually showed signs of taking the tattoo thing seriously. Journalists should have to read those books so they won't get fooled. (One of the funnier parts of the Blue Star tattoo web page is the text of many newspaper stories that took it at face value.) Which reminds me, Brunvand said he had just completed a multi-year project: an encyclopedia of urban folklore. Now that should be required reading.

By the way, my article on the legend is now available on that web page.

STEVE STILES (8631 Lucerne Rd. Randallstown, MD 21133) kindly favors us with the following image: ]

I just got in from mowing the grass — and, it turned out, a very large toad; gads this moment is now forever burned into my mind (and, by extension, yours) . . .

'Anyway, thanks for so kindly sending us the WisCon newsletters. Just at a preliminary glance the newsletters seem far more readable than the average convention bulletins — the Tiptree pieces, for example, the article on Susan Wood.

'I probably won't get around to reading them for a few weeks, most likely; we were at Disclave last weekend and aside from the usual stack of pbs we picked up (quite a few by George Turner, a new favorite of mine), I was handed a thick envelope, containing numerous frnz that were mailed to our old Baltimore address. Fortunately the present occupant of 3003 Ellerslie is a fan — unfortunately she only turns them over to us at cons she knows we're going to be at. This has been going on for years now, 2-3 bundles per year, and mailing out our "new" address here in Randallstown never seems to work. This current package contained, among others, Bob #4, Eyeballs in the Sky #7 and Conrunner #18 — all dating back to 1992. The most recent fanzine was Waxen Wings & Banana Skins #2 which looks to be well done and interesting. But I often wonder if the level of my fanac might've taken a better turn if this long-ago mail mix-up hadn't happened. I know for the first few years of our move, I harbored a mild paranoia about having been forgotten by U.K. fandom, which is where the majority of the misdirected fanzines come from. I also suspect that there are British faneds who now consider me to be a total loss.'

*continued on page 9*

---

God is simply too sick to be out on the streets

---



## Any Evidence of Recent Carnality

by Victor M. Gonzalez

THERE'S ONE GOOD thing about a fanzine with many editors: conflicts of opinion are to be expected.

While Arnie Katz

uses my previous review of *Wild Heirs* as a springboard to a piece about baseball roleplaying ("While he fixed his eye firmly on the admittedly frightening spectre of SNAFFU, a bunch of us found an entirely different time-waster to soak up hours that might otherwise generate fanzines"), the latest issue of WH also sports Tom Springer's comments that I'm "the only fan of late I can find who's doing fanzine reviews."

Go wipe that spot off your nose, Springer.

Anyway, here's another one. Despite being a little thinner and a little later than most recent issues, WH #14 follows the usual format in terms of layout, organization and style. There appear to be 22 editors, down one from the usual number, and twelve total contributors, including artists (Ross Chamberlain cover, stuff by Rotsler, Bill Kunkel, Steve Stiles and Ray Nelson) but not letter writers.

In general, it's pretty good. The editorial jam is short and mostly concerned with recent fan happenings in Las Vegas, plus a rather nice reminiscence by Nelson about an early fanzine team he was in. "I'm driving my Studebaker four-door, . . ." one sentence begins. Next is Springer's column about the lack of fanzine reviews in WH and other places. He also talks about a recent SNAFFU meeting — thrillville — and also addresses the "cats versus dogs" quality pets competition.

In a later column, Springer labels fandom sexually somnambulant, calling on fans to fuck a lot more and a lot more often. Three pages of this, I feel compelled to point out. The Vegrants are doing the best they can, Tom insists. An example: "Any signs of or evidence of recent carnality should be applauded with much vigor. . . . Even enduring the agony of 17 tooth extractions hasn't kept Ben away from Cathi. . . . In a new apartment, with a new kitty, and spring in the air, the Wilson waterbed is filled with waves of love."

Shades of Andrew Marvell, I say.

Chuch Harris writes about some confusion and quandaries regarding fan history; Ross Chamberlain about Stravinsky; Marcy Waldie exposts on deposits reminiscent of ManureCon;

Ken Forman says the names for rock bands are only getting stupider; Joyce Katz is somewhere in the ionosphere with a piece that might have something to do with the SNAFFU coup; and Aileen Forman has a solid article about trying to find her birth parents.

Whew. Pretty good issue. Oh yeah, there's also something by Joyce about the relationship between science fiction and fandom, and how new fans are attracted. Really, what more do you need? Fannish humor, fan fiction, personal essays, fan criticism and of course sex.

But where's JoIn Hardin? And is Bill Kunkel so far gone he can't remember how to write anything longer than a word balloon? And — for the true low point in this zine — the letter column seemed stale and overlong to me. Not that the overall space given to the column was too much, but that the letters do not appear to be edited for interest.

I admit that's a difficult aspect to make an objective case for, so I won't try. But I did note that only one letter commented on the annish, WH 13. And they can't say they printed everything they had; I have it on good authority they didn't run a "rather elaborate" loc from a certain co-editor.

As a letter column is often the most dynamic part of a fanzine, with fresh angles and comments, and debate enlivening the issues, it's unfortunate that WH is so far behind. They lose energy when they get so backlogged; they should either print everything and catch up, or dump the older letters.

But the issue holds up pretty well. Vegas fandom is adjusting to some personal (and personnel) changes, and a slowdown is only to be expected. The younger fans (I've pretty much given up on the older ones; well, Arnie anyway) still need to learn how to talk to the fan world outside of Vegas. As Springer notes, there should be fanzine reviews in WH. And he's the one to do them.

But, thank God, despite roleplaying baseball, whatever's been delaying the usual vast river of material doesn't seem terminal.



---

He lived all alone, except for his little dog, James Kenneth Polk . . .

---

[APH: Hopefully people reading this will double-check their listing for you and put an end to such doubts, Steve. I should think that a letter of this sort would help convince people that you are far from being a total loss.

We finish up now with an e-loc from ALISON SCOTT (alison@fuggles.demon.co.uk), who addresses my review of her and Steve Davies' zine *Plokta* thusly: ]

'We're fresh out of bushy-tailed young neofans here, y'know; *Plokta* is produced entirely by tedious old farts. We didn't use to do fanzines because we used to run conventions (though four of the six of us have produced at least one fanzine previously, and Sue Mason's art turns up in all sorts of places). In fact, the *Plokta* cabal is almost entirely contiguous with the committee of the 1995 Eastercon, Confabulation, whose publication *A Load of Old BoSh* is so favourably mentioned in your pages. (Incidentally, have you mentioned that the entire cover price of *A Load of Old BoSh* goes to the Royal National Institute for the Blind? The money raised will be used to record more sf talking books.)

'Also, nobody on the *Plokta* cabal is imaginary, though

most of us are inebriate.

'I enjoyed the tales of not seeing Wiscon because of doing a newsletter all the time. Evolution was a bit like this for us, especially because we hadn't got the hang of incorporating the digital photos then and the laser printer was playing up and our most expert Speaker to Computers decided to go off for a shag at an inconvenient moment so we had to wait until he returned, several hours later, in order to actually finish printing the issue.

'I have had a great many weird beers in my time, and I am by no means convinced that Seagram's Cherry Chocolate Jubilee malt beverage is the weirdest. Some you might like to keep an eye out for:

'Fraoch Heather Ale; bittered with heather instead of hops  
'De Troch Banana "lambic"; not a *proper* lambic, certainly.  
'Minty mint beer. This is vile.

'Hoskins and Oldfield Christmas Noggin; a fine brewery who ought to know better, and this tastes like a mixture of Christmas pudding and stilton. True.'

[APH: And on that shuddery note, we're through. WAHF: Teddy Harvia and Irwin Hirsh.]

1.) **Wild Heirs #14**, edited by the Bridgeglenn Pirates, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89108: Another excellent issue of the Vegrant fanzine with all those editors. Actually, as time goes by, Tom Springer is assuming more and more of the traditional editorial duties associated with fanzine publishing, and along with Mr. Katz, seems to be providing a lot of the impetus that gets this thing out. His material is featured throughout, most notably his sardonic take on a SNAFFU meeting (although his thoughts on the need for more sex in fandom shows that Burbee has a worthy successor to carry on his work), and he has done a fine job of editing the letter column. Other notable contributions include Aileen Forman's superb and moving consideration of her search for a daughter she gave up for adoption, counter-pointed with her own search for her "natural" mother, Ken Forman's riff on bad band names, and Ray Nelson's account of how he helped convince sixth-fandom legend Max Keasler to pub his ish. Perhaps the pace of this fanzine has slowed down somewhat, but they have countered that by printing material that is less time-sensitive; as the contributors become more comfortable with writing in a discursive, time-binding fashion, the change will fit the fanzine well.

2.) **The Wrath of Ghu #1 - 6**, edited by Steve Davies, Alison Scot, Steven Cain, Giulia de Cesare, Mike Scott, Patty Wells and Shaggy the Moose, for Evolution, the 1996 Eastercon; *and*

**Primordial Slime #2 - 7**, edited by Bridget Wilkinson, Jan van't Ent, and Alex Stewart, for Evolution, the 1996 Eastercon: One of my guilty pleasures in fandom is the convention newszine. Aside from being dead useful at the convention itself, they often contain an encoded account of events both public and private for the erudition of those who were not in attendance. When coupled with a "hoax" or "alternative" version of the "official" newszine, convention zines can provide a remarkably complete picture of a con, or at least communicate some sense of the fun and anguish such events usually entail. British conventions seem to produce especially good con zines, at least in part because some of the better British fan writers and editors seem to think they are worth the time. These zines, forwarded to me by Pam Wells (But argh!, no issue # 1 of PS! Can anyone assist?), are especially charming; Primordial Slime, the official newszine is far more subversive than one would expect to see at an American con, and the alternate newsletter, The Wrath of Ghu, is engagingly clever and studded with digital photos taken right there at the convention. Technology and fannishness combined to reach new heights of self-referentiality. I especially liked this poem, from PS #5:

I met a traveler from an antique Con,  
Who said "Two vast and formless Programme Streams  
Stand in the main hall. Near them, on the Stands  
Half drunk, a shattered bid committee sits,  
Whose vacant gaze and slackly drooling jaws  
Show that last night's parties well these drunkards knew  
That here remain slumping like lifeless things.  
And on the flyers still these words appear:  
"My name is mighty Illingworth, Smof of Smofs.  
Look on my WSFS minutes and despair."  
Nothing beside remains. In every bar  
The sane and prudent fans keep far away.

3.) **Ansible #107**, edited by Dave Langford, 94 London Rd., Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU UK; Dave contributes to the overall cloud of doom hanging over fandom by publishing obituaries for a number of English fan/pro figures we have also lost in recent weeks, but his network of wise-cracking fellow travelers offer enough humorous asides that one is still happy to see Ansible slipped under the door. Charles Platt is heavily featured in this latest number, mostly commenting on the pleasures and calumnies of the recent Nebula awards function in Long Beach. Aside from clinging to the outdated SFWA where SFFWA (or "Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Nurse Novel Writers Association" as Joe Haldeman likes to call it) is now the vogue, Platt's indictments are fun because they have nothing to do with us; he'll make less headway slugging George Alec Effinger, a popular figure among the unwashed of American fandom.

4.) **World Domination Review #19**, edited by Larry Taylor, P.O. Box 823, Madison, WI 53701-0823: Larry Taylor is one of those self-appointed gadflies who decry government malfeasance and conspiracy, while relying on it for humor and some sense of purpose. His fanzine, WDR, is a shifting melange of jokes, cartoons, reviews, mock interviews, lists and one-liners, and every issue has at least one or two solid laughs in it. Great source of linos, and Clay Butler's cartoons are great. But I must admit that over 19 issues, I have pretty much gotten the point, and subsequent efforts strike me as redundant.

5.) **Duff Talk-About #2**, edited by Pat & Roger Sims, 34 Creekwood Square, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45426-3811: List of voters, Perry Middlemiss' DUFF victory quantified, along with a warning to potential candidates from Roger; don't stand for a fan fund if you don't want a hundred crates full of moldering fanzines cluttering up your abode for a year after you get back.

**ALSO RECEIVED:** Mark of the Umpyre # 9-17, Arnie Katz for the Las Virtual Baseball Association; Toner Flyer Mk. III, Tom Springer for Toner, 2255 E. Sunset #2030, Las Vegas, NV 89119.

— Andy Hooper

APPARATCHIK is the Bill Brassky of fandom; about eight foot seven, 560 pounds, broke me like a pencil, sold my wife into slavery, grilled and ate my kids, but he was the best damn salesman I ever saw. Apak is still available for the usual, but note that trades must be sent to both Andy and Victor (see the front colophon for both our addresses), and/or you can get Apparatchik for \$3.00 for a 3 month supply, or a year's worth for \$12.00 or a lifetime subscription for \$19.73, or in exchange for a goddamn stapler that works. For readers in the United Kingdom, Martin Tudor will accept £10.00 for an annual subscription, £19.37 for a lifetime sub, from 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Off Clarke's Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX, UK. Australian Readers can subscribe through Irwin Hirsh, 26 Jessamine Ave. East Prahran, Victoria 3181 Australia, for \$4.00, \$16.00 and \$26.31 Australian. Lifetime subscribers: Tom Becker, Judy Bemis, Tracy Benton, Richard Brandt, Steve Brewster, Vince Clarke, Scott Custis, John Dallman, Bruce Durocher, Don Fitch, Jill Flores, Ken Forman, Margaret Organ Kean, Lucy Huntzinger, Nancy Lebovitz, Robert Lichtman, Michelle Lyons, Luke McGuff, Janice Murray, Tony Parker, Greg Pickersgill, Mark Plummer, Barnaby Rapoport, Alan Rosenthal, Anita Rowland, Karen Schaffer, Leslie Smith, Nevenah Smith, Dale Speirs, Geri Sullivan, Steve Swartz, Tom Whitmore and Art Widner. Yang fu?