

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

APPARATCHIK



This is the sixty-fourth 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. Send correspondence to Victor at 403 1/2 Garfield Street S., #11, Tacoma, WA 98444, and at Gonzalez@beringa.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 #268. **Apparatchiki:** Steve Green, Irwin Hirsh, Lesley Reece, Martin Tudor & Pam Wells. So the whole park is screaming at him, "Go! Go! Go!"

Issue #64, July 18th, 1996

Don't think I won't hit and run

Compiled by Andy

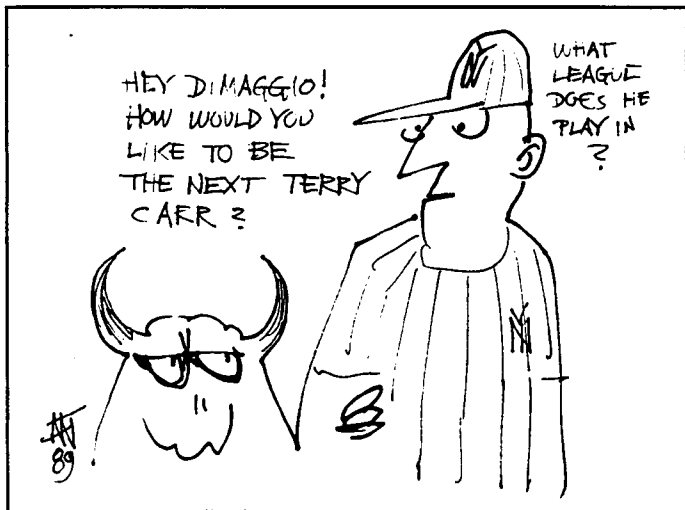
WELCOME TO OUR SPECIAL baseball issue. Baseball seems to be the official sport of Apparatchik, or at least the one we talk about and tend to enjoy together (except for

Carl, who still puts up with us). When Victor and I heard that both Randy and Lesley were preparing articles about the sport, we could hardly resist chiming in as well. But if you hate baseball and feel dismay at our choice of subject matter, there's no need to point that out; we promise to move on to another set of topics next issue, including a brand-new column from Ted White.

The biggest piece of news I have to offer is that beginning with issue #65, Apparatchik is going to convert from a bi-weekly to a tri-weekly schedule. There are lots of reasons for doing this, and we might address them at greater length next time. Publishing once every three weeks will still preserve our status as the most frequent fanzine going, but will add an extra week for our readers to respond, and give us a little more time to prepare our material. We feel that this is an essential step in making Apak the best fanzine we can produce, and we hope that you will eventually agree.

So, since our next issue will be out on August 8th, this is our last chance to encourage you to vote for us — and failing that, at least vote for someone — in the Hugo awards.

Lou Stathis, long-time fan, editor and comics figure, was hospitalized July 2nd when intermittent seizures left him disoriented and asserting that Jimmy Carter was president. Surgeons removed a tumor shaped "like a pancake" from the surface of his brain, but his prognosis is very good, and he is now recovering at the home of his partner, Shelly Roeburg.



Almost everyone who wrote this week offered me two corrections. First, "Quasi-quotes" were invented by Jack Speer, not Terry Carr as I asserted. Don't know where I got that from, but I'm glad to correct the mistake. And second, Gina Clarke is a live and well in Northern Ontario, continues to be involved in certain apas, and has not disappeared after all. The people who put together the Wiscon 20 memory book struggled to find her and could not, and remember having the same troubles around Wiscon 10. I'm happy to point out to Jeanne Gomoll and others that Gina isn't dead, she was just avoiding us. So, does this mean that she quietly resumed her title as "Duchess of Canadian Fandom" or is someone else currently wearing the maple-leaf and Molson bottle-cap tiara?

Another Mistake: Somehow, I got the impression that Farberday had been held on June 21st, when it is in fact to occur this weekend, on July 21st. My request for coverage of this event still stands, however, particularly if they can let us know what sort of words people plan to shave into their heads for the benefit of the Farber Fund.

Briefly, Westercon 49 was hot, tiny (388 attendees) and entertaining. Highlights included a clever new story from Howard Waldrop, a popular and well-attended SF Jeopardy tournament, fun daily newsletters edited by Tom Becker, which graphically parodied various semi-prozines, and a series of well-stocked and congenial bid parties. Westercon 51 will be in San Diego, and will probably draw 5 times as many people, but I won't be one of them. I never did get around to asking them what will happen with the San Diego Comicon, traditionally held on the same weekend . . .

Don Fitch sends a note asking us to bring zines for sale and display in the Worldcon fan room this August. At least 10% of all sales must be donated to a United Fan Fund, while higher percentages (like all of it) are strongly encouraged. There will also be display racks where reading copies can be dropped off, and Don is especially eager to get hard copies of on-line fanzines. More information can be gleaned from him at 3908 Frijole Ave., Covina CA 91722, e-mail to fitchdons@aol.com or Don.Fitch@lacon3.worldcon.org, or call 818-338-3744.

IN THIS ISSUE: After the lazy tour through recent events is over, turn the page for Randy Byers' account of his seduction into baseball fandom. Andy then considers the bucolic delights of a recent minor league ballgame, followed by Lesley's assertion that baseball is the only sport that she could ever get excited about. Then we get all kinds letters, from all kinds of people. Victor confides that the best friend he left behind in New York is Yankee Stadium. And as ever, the issue concludes with Andy's countdown of recent fanzines. *Cartoons and art: page one by Alexis Gilliland, page nine by Lesley Reece.*

All right everybody, up and at 'em! Time for breakfast — hot coffee, hardtack and vitamin pills!

The Making of a Baseball Fan

by Randy Byers

I'VE ALWAYS HATED BASEBALL. I hated it even before a hardball knocked me out at age twelve and Jeff Witbeck, who had been shagging fly balls to me, looked at the seam imprinted on my forehead and said, "Hey, Frankenstein!"

I was a better basketball player. I loved the constant motion and endorphin high of basketball. Baseball was like chess: sudden kills entombed in an eternity of waiting. Baseball was boring.

My attitude toward baseball began to change a few years ago. First, Victor took an interest in it and, with his usual single-mindedness, brought the subject up again and again in conversation, despite my indifference. He always seemed to be following a game on the TV or radio when I was around. Then Andy and Carrie moved to Seattle, bringing with them Andy's fascination for and eloquence about the game. Earnest discussion of baseball trivia was in the air all of a sudden.

The local team, the Seattle Mariners, had become an icon of futility long since. However, their current star of stars, Ken Griffey, Jr., entered the collective unconscious of the city as soon as he joined the team. He was a sports legend in the making, and I became curious. When, a couple of seasons ago, he came close to setting a new record for most consecutive games with a home run, a jaded citizenry took notice.

Meanwhile, Randy Johnson was developing into one of the most dominating pitchers in the game. At 6'10", with long hair, a crazed look in his eyes, and a habit of pounding his chest after a strikeout, Big Unit had a lovely eccentricity about him. Victor had told me, back in the days when Johnson was still decapitating people with his erratic 95 mph fastballs, that Big Unit was a fan of the Dead Kennedys. This was not my father's baseball.

I began to follow the Mariners' box scores in the newspaper Sports pages. I noticed when a less-hyped Mariner named Edgar Martinez won the AL batting championship. I noticed when the team re-signed Jay Buhner, who was the kind of star-in-the-making they were famous for unloading in order to keep the payroll down.

By the time Victor moved back from New York, I was able to gossip intelligently about the Mariners. We made a pilgrimage to the Kingdome to watch them play the Yankees. Big Unit pitched, and he got murdered. It was probably the last lousy game he pitched. We drank \$4.00 pints of some company's lousy Ice beer and laughed at our poor timing.

I was pretty much hooked by now. I knew the names of all the regular starters and followed the box scores closely enough to know how well each of them was doing. There was cautious optimism among local baseball fen when the '95 season started. The Mariners had one of the best all-around players in Griffey, a potential Cy Young award-winner in Big Unit, and a phenomenal pure hitter in Edgar. At the very least, those three would be interesting to watch. At best . . .

Well, what happened was the best. The Mariners stumbled through the first half of the season, just like the Mariners of old. When Griffey went down with a broken wrist, all hope was lost. The M's were 12 games out of first place, behind a California Angels team that was crushing everybody in sight. Seattle was playing hard and winning some awesome come-from-behind, homer-in-the-ninth-with-two-out victories, but they couldn't seem to get a streak going.

Then Griffey came back, the Angels collapsed, and the Mari-

ners went on a brilliant tear that culminated in their first AL West Division title, their first trip to the playoffs, and the sight of Griffey tearing home from first on yet another of Edgar's doubles to win a playoff series with New York three games to two. I'd been watching an inning here and three innings there on TV throughout the season. For the New York series, I was riveted to the set, sticking through extra-inning games that lasted for four hours. I missed one of the games because we had guests over, but I heard the exultant screams from several neighbors when Edgar hit his game-winning grand slam.

The city had gone Mariners-crazy. Everywhere I went, I chatted baseball with strangers. The Cinderella story ended in the AL Championship, when the Cleveland Indians established the importance of a superior pitching staff. But not before a rookie pitcher named Bob Wolcott squeezed out a surprise victory, and not before Big Unit cemented our adulation with his attempt to single-handedly make up for the ineffectiveness of the other starters.

It was a dramatic season — a real life (if you can call commercial sports "real life") version of the little tailor story. The team's owners had been threatening to move the team to another city all season because of poor fan-support and huge money losses, and when all the shouting was over, not only was the team staying but they were getting a new stadium to boot. Baseball had been saved for Seattle.

Now we're in the middle of a new season. The M's got off to a great start. The pitching was weak, but the hitting and defense was even better than the year before.

Then Big Unit went out with a bad back. The second best pitcher, Chris Bosio, succumbed to his ever-injured knees. When one of the best of the new middle relievers broke a leg, a mediocre pitching staff looked suddenly piss-poor. The starting third baseman went ahead and broke his leg for good measure. As the piece de resistance, Griffey broke a bone for the second year in a row.

Like last year, the rest of the team has stepped up. A 20-year-old shortstop named Alex Rodriguez has blossomed into an All-Star, hitting like Edgar and fielding like Griffey. A middle reliever named Bob Wells was promoted to the starting rotation and won five straight games. The fen are cautious, but the stage has been set for another dramatic race for the pennant when Big Unit and Griffey return later this month.

I'm taking it easy, catching an inning here and three innings there on TV, following the box scores. I still can't sit still for a whole three-and-a-half-hour game. Baseball is still boring, in that way.

But I've taken another fannish step this season: I bought a Mariners cap.

It covers the seam on my forehead.



(Editor's note: Ken Griffey has returned from his injury a week before expected, and clouted a two-run homer in his first game back. At the same time, journeymen pitchers Bob Wolcott and Bob Wells pitched back-to-back complete games, bringing the Mariners within two games of Division-leading Texas. An awful lot of people seem to be buying Mariner caps for the first time.)

I made you welcome to this Earth.

E-5 and Frito Pie

by Andy Hooper

EL PASO IN JULY IS EVERYTHING you think it is, blinding hot and bright, a little smoggy, low prices and lower expectations. The Westcon was pleasant, but underpopulated. At most conventions,

the pros are tossed in a sea of bodies, struggling not to drown in the tide of attention and fan interest. Here, the fan/pro ratio was so low that I think some fans felt guilty and tried hard to pay some attention to various writers glumly wandering the convention center, wondering why they were there.

This is how I was talked into taking a trip to Cohen Stadium, home of the El Paso Diablos, a minor-league affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers. George Alec Effinger and Barbara Hambly wanted to go to a game, and my convention roommate Ed Rush volunteered to organize the trip. Paul Feldbaum, a Philadelphia fan also wanted to go, and Ed had heard me talking about wanting to take in a game . . .

I rushed like mad to get to hotel lobby only 20 minutes late, to find Ed and Paul cooling their heels alone. George was asleep, and Barbara hadn't felt well. We piled into a taxi, just a half-hour before game time, and hit the highway.

Ed and Paul twitched miserably as the meter climbed above \$18.00. "I thought this was supposed to be a \$7.00 cab ride," observed Ed, "that's what we were told at the desk."

"They must have been thinking of the old stadium," replied the cab driver. "The Diablos have a new stadium that just opened last year."

Which was bullshit. Old Dudley Field last saw baseball in 1989. I took in a game at Cohen Field on Cinco de Mayo, 1991, during the El Paso Corflu. I gave the driver a twenty and left the others to produce a tip, then looked for a ticket window.

July 4th, with fireworks promised after the game, was even more crowded than Cinco de Mayo. The only tickets left were described as "general admission and standing room." But having taken a twenty buck cab ride, we were not about to turn back. Paul and Ed shortly found some nice bleacher-type seats, but there was no room for me. I shriveled internally at the thought of trying to press my bulk into a single seat next to some bouncy kids, and decided I would just stand. And as things turned out, I was perfectly happy I did.

Cohen Field is in the foothills of the Franklin range, and the view from the concrete hardstand between the seats and concessions is nothing short of spectacular. The desert, studded with the buildings of Fort Bliss, stretched away for miles, and the setting sun shortly set fire to the whole landscape.

Overselling is apparently a common practice, for numerous Diablo fans had brought folding chairs that they set up right behind the last row of seats. I found a spot next to a light stanchion, and let the river of Tejanos pass around me. The action of the field was good, but it was also fascinating to just watch the crowd going by. Cholos and GIs eyed one another nervously, then smiled in the embrace of their mutual applause of a fine fielding play. Sweating mamacitas let their kids run wild, then gathered them back into their arms as the sun disappeared and batteries ran down. I spent a lot of the game next to a treetop-tall goofy-looking red-neck daddy, whose kids sat on a bench and muttered conspiratorially while he danced and grinned half-drunk at every provocation. He had brought his glove to the park, and was rewarded with a foul ball that spun out of the night toward us. He backed up to make the play, elbowed a few children to the ground, then missed the ball, which smacked against the concrete and bounded up on to the

roof of the concession stands. "It was right there!" he moaned, and I nodded in commiseration. The true game ball, rubbed up with Delaware river mud, thrown and struck at by professionals, can never be replaced with a five-dollar purchase at the concession stand.

Those concession stands were pretty amazing. They didn't have the variety of sausages found in northern parks, but they made up for it with southern treats like cinnamon-sugar churros, industrial-strength nachos and frito pie (fritos layered with lovingly-canned chili and beans, sprinkled with cheese and onions. Howard Waldrop tells me it was a staple of his youth). Plus pizza, hamburgers, hot dogs, popcorn — something to irritate every stomach. To keep my legs springy, I made a trip for food and huge beakers of Coke every other inning.

The game was your usual minor-league train-wreck. The main difference between the majors and the minors is the quality of the fielding, and by the end of the game, El Paso and the San Antonio Missions (better nicknames in the minors, too) had combined for nine errors. The El Paso third baseman made more plays with his chest than his glove, and it seemed like every time I turned around, someone was chasing a bad throw down the right field line.

However, we may also have seen a future star at work. Paul Konerko, the Missions' first baseman, hit two homers, one a majestic, soaring fly, and the other a line-drive that left the park before most fans could turn their heads. Cohen field is small, and its altitude aids the hitter, but Konerko looks like he can really play. Despite his efforts, the Diablos put a lot more weight on their side of the seesaw, banged out five runs in the eighth, and gave the huge crowd a win to celebrate.

All the while, the public address announcer exhorted the crowd to chant for a hit, and was much more a cheerleader than the usual detached observer. Cohen field is home to more quirks and weird promotions than any other baseball stadium I've been to; I mean, my God, they had *five* costumed mascots on the field, one of whom, called "El Macho Gato," was visiting from *Columbia*. I think this must make the Diablos the largest employer of former mime students in west Texas.

There were contests to throw a ball through holes in a sign, to outrun the biggest of the mascots (K.C. the Kentucky-Fried Chicken) around the bases, to spin around with your head on the butt of a bat, then run to first without vomiting, trivia questions, special promos and lucky numbers in your program book — it's amazing that the announcer had time to call the game. The outfield wall was lined with advertising, and in the right field corner was an ad for El Paso's premier bail-bondsman.

In the third inning, I began to see people appearing in front of that bail bonds sign. There were so many extra fans in the park that the team strung ropes in front of the right field fence, and let several hundred fans sit on the warning track. I immediately thought of pictures I've seen of games in the 1880s and 90s, when people would draw up carriages and set out picnics in the outfield, which grew smaller and smaller as the ropes came in to make room for them all. If a ball was hit to the wall, I wondered if the fans would get out of the way for home team fielders, and stay put as the enemy approached.

After the game, I sat down with my back to a wall and enjoyed the fireworks. As the star shells burst over head, and Lee Greenwood wailed how proud he was to be an American, I realized that I was too. No other people on earth are as dangerously weird and wonderful as we. Well, maybe the Japanese. I hear they serve things at their ball parks that could make you long for a nice bowl of greasy frito pie . . .

You made it a charnel house!

Behind in the Count

By Lesley Reece

Dozens of patient people have sat me down and tried to explain it, but I still can't follow a game. To me, it always looks like ten or fifteen big guys are crashing into each other just because they feel like it, with a ball in there someplace for added visual interest, or maybe for crunch, like a crouton.

Basketball I get, but it doesn't really interest me. All that running back and forth with the clock ticking away makes me nervous. It's like they're trying to get to work on time. Add the ceaseless squeaking of those overpriced Nikes the players wear, and it's a recipe for a migraine. I avoid it whenever I can.

Baseball's different. I've always liked it, but it used to be sort of back there in my consciousness behind other stuff I thought was more important. In the past few years, however, it's been moving steadily toward the top of my list. I have caught myself running home from school or rushing through my homework just so I can watch a game. I bring it up in conversations, too; I, who snort derisively at people who greet me by shouting, "How 'bout them Sonics?"

I've also made it my duty to defend baseball against the charges of non-fans, who complain that it's "slow." True, it doesn't have a clock, but that's one of the things I like the most about the game. Everything else in life is so scheduled; why impose yet another clock on a leisure activity? Anyway, football's the really slow game. Geeze, play thirty seconds, show ten commercials for cars and shaving cream. Watch the instant replay of the last thirty seconds, show ten more commercials (this time for beer), then repeat the sequence three hundred times. I've had shorter afternoons at the dentist.

So if I'm not much of a sports fan, why is baseball the one game I like? For one thing, it isn't what I call a "boygame." That is, it focuses on skill rather than territory. In football especially, but to a certain extent in basketball as well, defensive playing consists of trying to block the other team's progress toward a predetermined goal. This means there's always a definite "front," like in a battle, where each team is trying to push the other back, to shove the "enemy" out of space it claims for its own. There's nothing really wrong with this; it just doesn't do much for me. I mean, it looks like a lot of fighting over a pretty small piece of real estate. Besides, if I want to watch men shoving each other, I can go to a bar.

In baseball, the runners are trying to beat an object — the ball — rather than a person. The defensive players in the field are still attempting to stop the runners, but they succeed by controlling where the ball goes instead of by physically blocking the way. That takes quick thinking. Defensive players have to make a lot of instant decisions when a ball's in the air. They have to figure out how far it will go, and how far forward or back they'll have to run if they're going to catch it on the fly. If they have to throw the ball, they need to decide where to throw it and gauge how much force to apply, while at the same time aiming the throw so the ball ends up where it's supposed to be.

This goes far beyond who can take the most territory; it requires a grasp of both math and physics, whether conscious or not. One of my favorite college math teachers won me over completely the day he said, "Imagine, if you were Ken Griffey Jr., you could use a quadratic equation to figure out how far your line drives were going to go." I could just see Griffey

I'VE NEVER PAID THAT MUCH attention to sports. I don't like football. Though I'm not dim-witted by any reasonable standard, I just don't understand it.

standing there, grinning away, busily crunching numbers on a graphing calculator as a homer sailed into the stands.

Without any turf to guard or invade, taking up a lot of physical space isn't necessarily an advantage for players. Consequently, baseball is more democratic in terms of player size than baseball. Take Mariner second baseman Joey Cora. At 5'7", he's two inches shorter than I am. It's okay to be large, though: the tallest Mariner, pitcher Randy Johnson, stands 6'8". In baseball, the only requirement is to be able to play the game. If you can do one thing — steal bases or hit doubles or pitch — better than the other guys, you have a chance.

Since baseball can accommodate a wide variety of DNA, it's also one of America's more ethnically diverse sports. Of course I'm generalizing here, but how many pro basketball players are Asian-American or Latino? Name an ethnic identity, and chances are that major league baseball has a current representative. Besides, for anyone who, like me, is an enthusiast of the male form, the sheer assortment of men adds a lot of flavor to the game. No matter your "type" — tall, dark, short, light, goateed or clean-shaven, muscular or compact — there's someone for you to appreciate.

And baseball builds great legs, as well as truly superior posteriors. (I've often wished I could catch for just one inning.) In contrast to football, you can really see what the players look like, too. Though the caps give most of the guys a terminal case of hat-hair, in addition to covering their faces up somewhat, it's easy to tell whether that fellow who plays so well is a babe in the bargain. I miss former Mariner first baseman Tino Martinez, who got traded to the Yankees this year. In exchange, the M's got pitcher Sterling Hitchcock, who has Spock ears, but frankly, I'm not about to hold that against him when he's 8-3 this season and Johnson's on the disabled list.

I'm not alone in my consideration of these aesthetic factors, either. During one Mariner post-season game last year, I saw a woman holding a sign that said, "I will trade my husband for Tino, Edgar [Martinez], or Joey!" This year I've seen several that were addressed to shortstop Alex Rodriguez, the best one of which read, "Alex my mom says it's okay if we get married." Presumably Mom was either married already, or felt that 20-year-old Alex was a little on the young side for her.

A couple of months ago, Victor and I, and 57,000 other people, went to a Mariner-Yankee game. When he saw the seats I'd selected, above right field in the lower deck, he accused, "You got these tickets so you could look at Jay Buhner's butt!"

"No way," I said, "I want to watch him catch the ball!" I have to admit that Buhner, with his cue-ball 'do, grungy goatee, and puzzled yet flinty blue eyes, gets my vote in the "all-around handsomest Mariner" category. But I'd much rather see him stopping those wannabee home runs in right field than standing around looking gorgeous. If he couldn't play, there'd be no reason to look at him except with distaste.

I love baseball. I love it even though I don't really get the significance of a lot of the statistics. I just ignore them. I love it even though doing so makes me a sports fan. That's a small price to pay. For me, it's everything a game should be: exciting yet relaxing, challenging yet comprehensible. And of course, fun to watch.



You don't need a stereo in Hell, they have Muzak.

AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH here: We start with GARY FARBER (gfarber@panix.com), responding to both my and Kate Schaefer's comments involving the 1977 Worldcon, etc.:]

'You must be reading that "Farberday" publicity rather quickly, as the event won't take place until July 21st. If anyone sends in any reports of how it went, it should be interesting reading.

'I already posted a response to Kate; do I need to find it for you? I in no way meant to call into question her motives in making her error, and I'm not amused by your standard "let's you and he fight" ploy. I've already apologized to Kate for any carelessness in my use of language. And if you prefer rewriting "feminist history" rather than crediting the women who were part of the feminist programming at Suncon, such as Jeanne Gomoll and Avedon Carol, that's your choice. Why let mere facts get in the way of history?'

[APH: I think the most eloquent way for me to show that I did not make those comments in #63 out of malice is to let Gary have the last word (although, anyone who wants to write a report on Farberday without benefit of having been there is encouraged to write us). So let's move on to a new letter from KATE SCHAEFER (4012 Interlake Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98103 e-mail to kate@scn.org):]

'I'm filing my fanzines (in my case, this means taking the stack tossed every which way on top of the box, straightening them out, considering sorting them chronologically, rejecting that notion, regretting the locs unwritten, putting them into the box, and shutting the lid, firmly).

'Apparatchik used to employ much bigger typefaces, but some things never change: "Every week, there seems to be another letter, mostly from Britain, but some from the U.S., which accuses me of being criminally incompetent, malicious, and ignorant on the strength of opinions I have either expressed myself or attributed to other people in the pages of APAK." (Issue #16, September 1st, 1994) Ansible used to employ bigger typefaces in the past as well. It's not my eyes.

'I wrote Apak a loc on August 14, 1994, a fact which fills me with astonishment. We had just returned from Portland and a weekend of watching the Perseids fall on our heads all night long, fetching Glenn's daughter Mary on our way, stopping to hike on Mount Rainier, and I had time to write you a loc and wish you a happy birthday before going to bed from which we were awakened to go assist in the birth of our younger granddaughter, Aurora, followed a day and a half later by the disappearance of Glenn's daughter Ruth and our older granddaughter, Amber. In the middle of the fanzines I found a scribble of Amber's. No doubt I would not continue to treasure it if our house were filled with later masterpieces in crayon, pencil, and magic marker. I'd sure like to have a conversation with the kid in which her side could consist of more than hat, up, purple, baby, no, heart, shoe.

'I think Victor is mistaken in saying that Howard outdoes Gary Deindorfer. They are each originals in related but different genres. It's like speculating on how many Godzillas can dance on the head of a pin and who would be the better kickboxer, Abraham Lincoln or Sarah Bernhardt (before the amputation, of course).

'I am very happy to know why Lesley wears black. My fashion mentor is Eileen Gunn, but if I ever have a vacancy in that area, Lesley would be on the short list.'

[VMG: Sarah would win.]

[APH: I hasten to point out that Ruth departed voluntarily on her journey, albeit under some duress, lest readers think she was abducted or a victim of violence.

Now for a note from CHRISTINA LAKE, (21 Sunnyside Place, Belmont, MA 02178, USA e-mail in care of jenny@w3.org) on sundry features of #63:]

'Thanks for the review of NQA in the latest Apak — it really made my day!

'Thought I'd update you on the availability of the Time-Bytes fanthology. The good news is there are still plenty of copies left. The bad news is that most of them are in storage in Bristol! However, I do have a small number of copies with me that can be purchased for \$10 for both volumes in the USA while stocks last. I also left a box with Pam Wells in the UK, but I'm not sure whether she's planning on handling distribution herself, or is going to get them passed on to Lilian Edwards. But anyone wishing to get hold of copies should contact Pam and she'll let them know. Prices from the UK are £6.00 or \$15 the pair.

'I was rather enjoying the surreal and offbeat style of Heather's cockatiel piece till she came to the bit about the toes. Ugh! How horrible! Just what I wanted to read over my morning cornflakes. And I was feeling nervous enough about being left in charge of 8 guinea pigs and 2 rabbits without having to worry what strange mutilation they might practice on each other. At least the household bird (damned if I know whether it's a cockatiel, or not) has been left in professional care while I'm house-sitting. Since, Pepper, as he is called, keeps trying to mate with my friend Jenny ("He craps on everybody else, but me," Jenny told me proudly, by way of proof as the bird crawled all over her glasses), and there's talk of getting another bird, I shall await any romantic developments with extreme trepidation. A very vivid piece!

'I still wish I could get hold of a copy of the by now legendary issue 60. Maybe it'll arrive by slow steamer from England some day, stamped with several changes of address.

'By the way, do you know who I should contact about any of the car-pooling between Vegas and LA mentioned in the previous issue? I'm hoping to attend Toner and go on to LAcon so if anyone's looking for car-sharers I'd be interested to join in.'

[VMG: Heather had told me that story before, but she either didn't mention the flushing toilet part, or I had managed to block it out of my memory — not such a difficult task in those days. I'm looking forward to more stuff from Heather, who's proven herself a very talented writer.]

[APH: I hesitate to speak for them, but I think the people in Las Vegas would be willing to collect names and put people in touch with one another in regard to various car-pooling schemes. Tom Springer is the ringleader of the whole event, and I published his address last time. People can e-mail me, too. It looks like I'm not going to be able to afford to go myself, but I'd be happy to help anyone who is going contact the proper parties.

All right, Christina, I'll send you a copy of #60! You can stop pining now . . .

A letter now from ALVA SVOBODA (P.O. Box 10604, Oakland, CA 94610), who explains the mystery of Alva/Aljo, as well as making heads swell around Apparatchik Central Command:]

'Should be a new Apparatchik in the mailbox any day now, I'm thinking. Which I'm looking forward to, despite the unfortunate string of great fans' departures marking the past few

issues. The graciousness and generous spirit evinced in Ethel Lindsay's last letter to Dave Langford made an extremely fine memorial to her, at any rate. Thus Apparatchik #62 overcame the bad news in the nick of time to offer me the consolations of philosophy while I endured my own minor tribulations, having to do with an '82 Civic's erratically failing fuel system. I read through most of the issue on a gratuitous mid-morning BART ride, having forgotten to leave the key with the car when I dropped it off at the shop. My spirits were adequately lifted by all the marvelously effective and efficient fanwriting. Dan Steffan and Lesley Reece both manage to sound utterly relaxed and at ease spinning their stories, in spite of which they wrap them up neatly in one or two pages. Victor Gonzalez writes what seems to be a hybrid of review and loc in just half a page, yet it's entirely possible that literary scholars hundreds of years from now will be able to reconstruct Wild Heirs #14 in its entirety from his words alone, assuming the original to be lost in some Library-of-Alexandria-scale destruction. And Irwin Hirsh very usefully extends fannish economic theory to deal with the question of whether fanzines and their byproducts can be properly monetized, given an obviously irrational system of exchange.

Not having seen the original Greg Hills article, I wonder whether Hills considered marginal cost-oriented solutions to the proper incenting of locs, such as sending issues of fanzines out in incremental fragments corresponding to the incremental effort displayed by a given loc-writer. That seems to me the correct way to achieve the right equilibrium between fanzine supply and demand, though presumably on the margin one might find two or three-word locs exchanged for mailing labels alone.

'Aljo Svoboda was a dishearteningly callow young fan with whom I happened to share a body twenty-some years ago. I, on the other hand, am not a fan, not really, and hence I don't feel myself entitled to make use of the lad's moniker. To emphasize the fact, I'm sending along a couple of copies of a zine I do every few months, when I happen to feel like it — you'll note that it's not a fanzine, and I don't intend to offer it in trade for your own fine product, as that would make even less economic sense than marginal-cost loccking.'

[APH: As I point out elsewhere in the issue, even if you choose not to characterize Solitary Pleasures as a fanzine, I found it extremely diverting reading, and an impressive supplement to your kind letter. To my mind, the only useful yardstick for measuring the balance of trade in fanzines is the degree of entertainment and pleasure you derive from the whole process; beyond that, everyone has to set their own level of outlay and expectation of response.

Now, we're happy to see the return of TED WHITE (1014 N. Tuckahoe, Falls Church, VA 22044, e-mailing us from Twhite@logotel.com) to our pages, but sorry to hear of these recent challenges to his health:]

I'm still getting the hang of this *newfangled* mail; bear (or bare) with me . . .

For this communication I'd like to bring you guys up to date on my medical news.

This spring my urologist told me that the antigen levels on my PSA tests for the past two years had been Up, and he wanted to do a biopsy on my prostate. The day before I went in for that I read a newspaper piece to the effect that ejaculation within 48 hours before a PSA (blood) test will raise the level measured. And I knew that at least this year (and maybe last year) I had indeed ejaculated within that 48-hour period. I mentioned this

to my doctor, who agreed with me but felt we should "Just be safe" and do the biopsy anyway. (In preparation, I'd been on antibiotics for a week in advance.)

'A prostate biopsy is done with a device like a spring-loaded gun. It fires a needle into the prostate and extracts tissue. The "gun" is combined with an ultrasound device which provides imaging and tells the doctor where to aim. The device is inserted up one's rectum and is fired six times into six separate parts of the prostate. In addition to the oral antibiotics I'd been taking, I was given a shot of another about half an hour before the actual biopsy, all to avoid infection from the intestine. The whole procedure didn't take long, but once the local anesthetic wore off it felt like I had broken shards of glass up my ass . . . and I peed blood for a couple of days. (I was warned not to have any sex for ten days — "Your ejaculate will be bloody" . . .)

'But. No cancer. That was a relief.

'However, my doctor was still worried about blood in my urine when last tested. He was concerned about the possibility of bladder cancer, I later found out. So he scheduled more tests. *Sigh* . . .

'These tests began with my being told to empty my bladder as much as I could, and then, wearing only one of those paper hospital-gown things that tie in back, I laid down on a big flat cold table that was part of a huge X-ray machine, where I shivered with both cold and nervousness. A catheter was inserted in my urethra and used to drain whatever was left in my bladder. Then a fluid (barium? I don't know, but it was dense to X-rays) was introduced to my bladder until it was full. X-rays were taken. The table was upended, me still on it, until I was virtually standing. The catheter was removed and I was told to let it all out, while more X-rays were taken.

'The X-rays revealed nothing wrong with my bladder (nor did a subsequent optical probe, which left me Walking Like An Old Man and peeing blood & blood-clots for the next 48 hours), but did turn up a surprise: a gallstone.

'I didn't know I had a gallstone, but a sonogram two days later revealed it to be two centimeters (or almost an inch) in diameter — a giant among gallstones!

'I'm told that if one must have a gallstone, bigger is better than smaller, because it's the little ones that lodge in ducts and cause pain and worse. Mine is asymptomatic, which is good and means nothing need be done immediately about it.

'I saw a surgeon last Friday for a consultation, and he told me that the only problem is my diabetes, which could complicate an operation. Gallstones are removed by removing the gallbladder itself (which is regarded as a gallstone-maker). I'm told the surgery is done on an outpatient basis ("Four little holes, one through the navel"), and, unlike what I'd heard elsewhere, has little effect on digestion or diet ("The liver makes the bile, and instead of storing it in the gallbladder, it seeps continuously into the intestines. . .").

'For now, no operation. But ever since I discovered the damned stone, I've imagined I could feel it, and it's hard to separate such "feelings" from normal gas, etc., which complicates matters for me, since I've been charged to "Be very sensitive to any symptoms, don't try to deny them," and I'm caught between wanting to just ignore the whole thing as a non-issue (which it was, until the discovery), and fear that this is itself the rationalization of denial. Foop.

'So, no cancer (that anyone has found), but I still have an enlarged prostate (makes urination occasionally difficult, and always a prolonged procedure), and the annoying gallstone.

I am not enjoying the process of Aging; it seems to be a

Could you call me? I can't find the cordless . . .

matter of various aspects of my body breaking down. (But, as someone always points out, Consider The Alternative And, with the recent deaths of so many of my superiors — in age, and often in status — in fandom, that's not an Alternative that appeals to me.) I'm 58. In my head I'm still The Kid, but the mirror gives the lie to that notion. Oh well.'

[VMG: Jesus, Ted! Six shots into your butt! But what I really want to know is, is bloody ejaculate the only reason not to have sex? I'm not sure that'd stop me. Broken shards of glass up my ass, on the other hand, might stop me.

Seriously, it's been great to hear from you recently — although it sounds like you've been going through the Inquisition. I hope that things are going well otherwise, and that your overall health is okay.

I'm not sure if I'd want my bile seeping anywhere. I prefer to release it in measured doses.

Now, KEVIN WELCH (P.O. Box 2195, Madison, WI 53701-2195) offers a final footnote on my article on the Blue Star Tattoo urban legend:]

'I just want to write one more thing about the urban legend discussion, at the risk of beating a dead horse into the ground. Factoid Press has published *The Big Book of Urban Legends* edited by Jan Harold Brunvand himself. It's a comic book in a big trade paperback format. (I don't know if the word *graphic novel* really applies; on the one hand, none of these things actually ever happened — urban legends, remember? But on the other, the thing is supposed to be a loopy reference book, like those *Karl Marx for Beginners* books of a few years ago. What's the nonfiction equivalent of a graphic novel?) *The Big Book* includes over 200 urban legends presented as comics and now this material is available in a format appropriate for the hard-of-thinking, nobody has any excuse any more.'

[APH: I vouch for the quality and user-friendliness of the Paranoia Press books — they're a lot of fun to read, and a great source of linos!

Another letter now from the mysterious, but friendly, E.B. FROHNET (4725 Dorsey Dr., Suite A, Box 700, Ellicott City, MD 21042):]

'Thank you for the material from Wiscon. Of all living SF writers, Ursula K. LeGuin is the one we've never met whom we would most like to meet. *The Left Hand of Darkness* is one of the few SF books, along with *The Martian Chronicles*, which we can fairly say altered our perception of the world.

So here we have a guy from Seattle, in charge of publications for a feminist convention in Wisconsin. This raises the obvious question: huh? Seriously — not to use a word you clearly dislike — we were particularly impressed by your thoughtful essays about "Tiptree" and her work. How is it that someone who can write with such insight, considers "sercon" an insult?

We specially liked the purple paper of #60. Our own next cover will probably be pink, to go with Sheryl Birkhead's neat "pig" cover she did for us. We're still trying to figure out why Sheryl sees us as a pig . . . And Steve Stiles has promised us a cover for our #4 issue. By the way, we received a request for Twink from someone who read about it in Apparatchik; thanks for the publicity.

[APH: No doubt Sheryl rhymed Twink with "oink." And a Stiles cover — hey, you're really moving up in the world, E. B.

As for the stuff about Wiscon: First off, I cut my fannish teeth in Madison, so my participation in Wiscon was a return,

like a salmon, or a dose of malaria. Second, lots of male fans have worked on Wiscon over the years — those who let foolish prejudice or fear of separatism keep them away from it have missed out on a lot of fun. And as far as my "sercon" tendencies go, well, you've put your finger on my dirty secret. No matter how old and tired I may become, I don't seem to be able to leave actual interest in the genre behind. Sercon can be an insult, but I think that depends heavily on context; to me, its just as much a neutral descriptive term.

KIM HUETT (P.O. Box 679, Woden, Act 2606, Australia), is still working his way through the pile of issues accumulated on his trip:]

'Issue #55 is the one I received from your own fair hand at Corflu Andy. Life was busy just then so I didn't read it, just slipped it into my ever growing expanding-file under A. It wasn't till days later that I pulled it out and discovered Bob Shaw had passed on. How did I ever miss out on this news at the con? Well I slept through the Sunday morning programme and if the telling of Bob Shaw stories occurred (as you expected Victor), it was while I was in the other room.

'On a more positive note I'm pleased to see you agree with my contention that new fans continue to appear in our microcosm. As I wrote in *Zugzwang* #2 a few years back our new recruits are smaller in number, in their late twenties or older, and are sucked in gradually. To be perfectly honest I prefer it that way, let the young sprats work their brashness off in cos-tuming or convention running. As you suggest, so long as we have fun a few of these youngsters will find us in the fullness of time.

'Anyway, you can tell Peter Roberts that while Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Conrad Ritblat are certainly names worthy of possessing they just aren't in it in the best names ever stakes. Flicking through my copy of *Remarkable Names of Real People*, compiled by John Train, I find the following: Mrs. Belcher Wack Wack, Epaphroditus Marsh, Gaston J. Feeblebunny, Santiago Nudelman, and Suparporn Poopattana. Call me a fish if you will boys but I can't think of a better name to go through life under than Santiago Nudelman. I just wish I was worthy of living up to the sort of image that name conjures so I could take it. Not a hope really so I must continue to struggle on as I am.

'What I liked better about issue #56 better than anything was that you published the complete details of the FAAN awards. Everybody, even those with no more than a single vote, deserves to be given their share of egoboo.

'Other than that all I can do is second your opinion about Corflu Andy. If I'm lucky enough to attend a North American convention then I want it to be like the Nashville Corflu. So what if there wasn't much in the way of official programming. I created my own, including a fascinating monologue from Peter Roberts about Greg Pickersgill and Ratfandom.'

[APH: Thanks for the entertaining comments, Kim. And by the way, you're a fish.

Now, a quick note from KAREN SCHAFFER (1181 Martin Ave., San Jose, CA 95126, e-mail to kschaffer@earthlink.net) who pumps a little helium into Victor's head:]

'I'd like to tell Victor that I find his stories about life as a reporter to be fascinating! More, more! Liked the Faulkner essay too. How about some musing on the art & craft of writing, learning to write like a journalist? Just an idea. Lesley's pieces are delightful too. Keep encouraging her.'

[VMG: Gosh, Karen — blush — thank you. I enjoy writ-

Will you be found wanting when the metal ones come?

ing about work. It gets some things out of my mind, refines others, and lets me brag a little. Many people, I suspect, find their jobs less fun. Also, I like your idea of writing about writing journalism — it is strange how writing in any genre mutates one's style.

Now, JEANNE BOWMAN (P.O. Box 982, Glen Ellen, CA 95442) has some comments inspired by Andy's review of *Building Burning Man* in last issue:]

'We have a room booked at the nearest motel for the Burning Man. The only "family" excursion we've come up with that pleases everyone. Worldcon just doesn't appeal. Then again, lots more people just go naked in the desert, adorned with jewels and rings in amazing places. We wondered how they get thru metal detectors in airports. Jaime thought one guy had golden pubic hair, but it was half a pound of hoops and rings and studs etc. etc. etc.

'Everyone understands the rituals — no one can explain them. I think "get naked and party" sums it up. I loved the music — Shark Bait and a killer demented polka band performed.

'I think they had an onsite zine — DS Black and Jhim Khennedy were there — I think Black was part of some intellectual salon deal. Jhim just couldn't get laid. I had my hair done and dressed for the occasion.

'They did have an onsite radio station. Way cool. Real time weather reports — "The storm front will be here in 20 minutes; tie everything down." It was exactly right.

'Oh, the effigy is not steel, just wood and combustibles.

'Me, I'll be camped w/my crew by the Doggie Diner heads.'

[APH: Looking at the video, I thought I could see some steel pipes holding up the wooden cross-struts. I stand corrected. We look forward to hearing what you and yours get up to while we're down in Anaheim

Now, the slightly-bedraggled figure making its way into the fanzine is one RICHARD BRANDT (4740 N. Mesa # 111, El Paso, TX 79912), just returning to normal after *Westcon*:]

'While digging my way out from ConDiablo's jetsam, I found odd scattered issues of *Apparatchik* which had separated themselves from the remainder of the herd. So I've been filling in gaps in my indoctrination, as it were.

'Issue #57, for instance: There we find Andy uncovering gems and delights in old digest prozines. An underrated pleasure to be sure. Yea, for our genre's heritage lies within those seldom-turned pages. But hard to believe you hadn't yet seen those Ted White Amazings. Those of us who imprinted upon them found a fanzine fandom for which we had already been conditioned.

'Like Lesley, I disparaged the video game generation — whereas pinball required employment of the laws of physics and manipulation of the physical universe, those electronic whiz kids were losing touch with reality. Computer games I can live with, because they still require manipulation of the physical world — at least getting *DOOM* to run on my 386 within 4 megs of RAM certainly did.

'Once upon a time, when "Light in the Bushel" came out with greater regularity, I received a postcard from Bob Shaw, noting that my title obviously derived from his column "The Glass Bushel" and demanding a share of the profits.

'If your publication is operating at a loss," he concluded, "please disregard this postcard."

'At a loss, indeed.'

[APH: Everyone really does have a Bob Shaw story.

We finish with a letter from ROBERT LICHTMAN (P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442):]

'By some of the comments Lesley Reece makes on the article on selecting clothing in a 1912 women's magazine, I imagine that her study of US cultural history is limited to such perusal. Otherwise she would know that Lots of Poor People is hardly a recent phenomenon, but more the norm back then than even now. I have to agree with her that black is an eminently practical color for one's clothing, and in fact the majority of my pants are various shades of black (depending on age and how faded they've become from multiple washings). I own a few black teeshirts, but usually wear them only as an undershirt in the coldest winter months. When it's teeshirt weather around here — a sizable chunk of the year — one wouldn't want to swelter additionally by wearing a black shirt.

'Like Walt, I too wrote a letter to Ethel Lindsay that could not possibly have reached her in time. I appreciate Walt's quoting Ethel's letter from Hyphen 22. And speaking of Walt, I'm sure I speak for everyone in fandom in hoping his operation this month is a success.

'Me the Fanthologist laureate? The mind boggles.

'Dale Speirs had more or less the same response to Irwin Hirsh's comments on Greg Hills' article in *Stet* No. 6 about re-defining the Usual that I did: that no fanzine editor is obligated to put anyone they don't want to on their mailing list, and that editorial capriciousness in such matters is okay. In this regard I like to tell the story of one particularly obnoxious UK fan whose main activity was in the 80's, who seems to have entirely disappeared these days, and who would have been characterized further back in fanhistory, when the terminology was more acceptable, as a borderline fugghead. This fan was pointedly *not* on my mailing list for, having read her letters in other fanzines, I determined that I had no desire to obtain my own personal supply of same. She located a copy of *Trap Door* No. 3 somehow, though, and wrote me a (rather uninteresting) letter of comment on it, chortling that "now you'll have to put me on your mailing list." In fact, I tossed her letter in the trash with a malignant laugh. There's an east coast fan who's sent me sticky bucks on several occasions over the years to obtain a copy of *Trap Door* and then written a lame half-page "letter of comment." That hasn't gotten him anywhere, either. As I've said on a number of occasions, a fanzine is sort of a party in print, and the editor gets to issue the invitations.

'Regarding Arnie's Vegas Fan Diary, I would suggest to Victor that such a publication is perhaps not the best to show someone you are trying to entice into further fan activity. A run of *Apak* would be a better choice, or perhaps several recent issues of *Trap Door*. I agree with your (Andy) assessment of VFD that it's one of the more successful of Arnie's sideline fanzine efforts, and is better than his 70's diary effort, *Log*, which as he says saw only three issues.

'I agree that Christina Lake is "one of the more underrated fan writers working today." Not in my estimation, however: I've always found Christina's writing both technically proficient and highly engaging, and her fanzine editing skills likewise. Back in the 80's when she and Lilian Edwards were turning out semi-regular issues of *This Never Happens* (the other TNH, as it was sometimes referred to), I looked forward to every issue for her (and, not to slight her, Lil's) pieces in particular.

'I liked your review of Redd Boggs' final issue of *Famous Fantastic Mouse Stories* but was surprised you didn't also mention the last issue of *Spirochete*, which was also in that FAPA mailing. You refer to FFMS' contents as a reprint, which mystified me. Do you know something I don't about its origins? You

(Next page please ~~---~~)

And of course, robots steal old people's medicine for fuel.

Aesthetics and Statistics

by Victor M. Gonzalez
Staff Writer

ONE OF THE THINGS I regretted when I moved back to Seattle from New York was the loss of Yankee Stadium.

After a hard day at school, there was nothing like walking through the campus gate right into a Yellow Cab and saying "Take me to Yankee Stadium." One time I did that and the cabbie turned to me with amazement.

"That's the first time anyone's said that to me in 15 years," he said.

I got the impression (maybe because he talked baseball all the way to the Bronx) that I'd made his day.

I often, though not always, went alone, and got the nicest seat I could, usually on the second deck at the first base line. The scene from there was great: right down on the field, with an excellent view of both home plate and the outfield. Also, though I had a great view of the sky from there, the third deck kept me from getting wet when it rained. It really seemed perfect, a far cry from most seats in the Kingdome.

One day I went for an afternoon game against the Mariners. I always caught at least one game every time they came to town for a series, and I got a great seat in the front row of the second deck. There were many empty seats, and I noticed a man in a several-hundred-dollar suit sitting a few seats away.

The Mariners took control of the game pretty early, and he and I started talking. I mentioned that I was a Columbia grad and a Mariners fan, and that I liked seeing games at the stadium, especially the Mariners. He said he was also a Columbia grad, circa 1969 from the now-defunct School of Pharmacology. We laughed and joked and chatted.

I asked him if he was a pharmacologist, and he smiled and said no, he'd gone into finance. That made sense. Then in the seventh inning, he said it was clear that the Yankees would lose, and he was taking off. I thanked him for the conversation.

He leaned over me and asked if I would have the afternoon free the next day. I said I thought I did, and he whipped out his wallet and handed me a ticket for the game.

"I've got all four of your seats," he said, motioning to the empty chairs around him. "Have fun."

And I did. Now I hear that Rudolph Giuliani, New York's happy-go-lucky mayor, is seriously proposing that a new sta-

dium be built for the Yankees in the old train yards around West 34th Street. Aargh!



My serious interest in baseball began about the same time I entered fandom around 1984. With Tom Weber, Don Keller and Steven Bryan Bieler constantly talking about the game, I found it literally impossible not to learn something.

At some point, I watched a game and got emotionally involved. As my understanding of the game increased, so did my interest — and seeing games with Tom and Don always added to that understanding.

I went to a game at Fenway Park with Don and Tom and Steve Swartz, the very night that Bart Giamatti died. Giamatti had been the commissioner of baseball, and was the one who tossed Pete Rose. Boston is where he grew up. The announcer spelled out the facts for the fans, and then the packed stadium went completely silent for a long time. Talk about emotion.

Swartz, by the way, denies knowledge about the game, the fact that he later wrote about it, or that he had ever been within 100 miles of Boston.



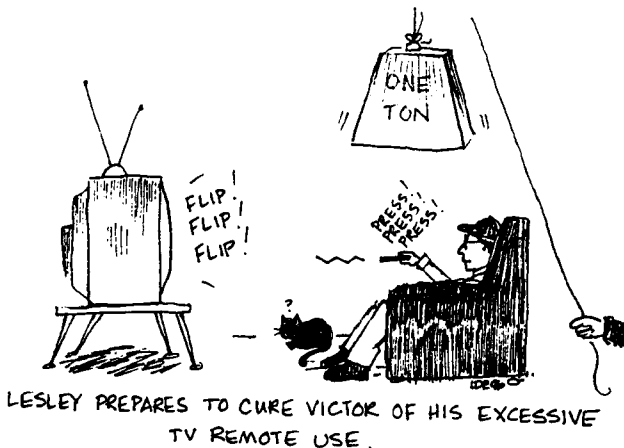
I go to a lot of games now; I find even the tawdry Kingdome is a pleasant place to put my feet up, watch a game, and sip a beer. Truly relaxing, I've found no other sport I enjoy so much.

But I've had a hard fact of baseball proven to me this year: just because you bat .350 doesn't mean you'll get a hit in the next 10 at-bats. While the Mariners have won more than half their games, they've lost seven of the nine I've seen, the exceptions being a 10 to 4 win over the Yankees and a 4 to 3 win over Oakland.

My average was never so bad before I got traded.



Jose Canseco took *three months* to come back from the same injury!



(from page 8)

know, of course, that "Frank Argenbright" was one of the many noms de plume (and other uses) of Redd's along with "Rufo La Cienaga" whose quote heads up "The Ocean and the Stars" in that final Spirochete.'

[APH: I wasn't fooled by Frank Argenbright, but the note on page three that referred to "100% recycled words" did catch me. I should have known that it wasn't recycled from old copies of the Cosmic Commentator, either

I think you might have a care in making assumptions about Lesley's cultural awareness, since the passages in question were meant to refer to her mindset as a twelve-year-old. I assure you that she knows plenty about being poor, too.

We're still working on Wil Tenino. So far, his favorite title is Lagoon, which he referred to as "nearly gothic in its implications." I don't know what he means, but it's promising.

WAHF: Don Fitch, George Flynn, Irwin Hirsh, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, and Jean Weber. See you in three weeks!]

1.) **The Bleary Eyes, Volume 5**, edited by John Berry and Ken Cheslin, #4, Chilterns, South Hatfield, Herts., AL10 8JU GB (Berry), and 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 1LA GB (Cheslin): Quite a treat to receive another collection of Goon Bleary tales, as I had figured that Ken's poor financial straits would prevent him from producing another this year. My pleasure was doubled when I noted that John Berry has written a new Goon story, "Oh, Calcutta", presumably just for this collection. It lacks a certain measure of the unhinged energy that characterized the Goon in his heyday, but it's still very clever, and relies less on the sort of in-reference which led to such promiscuous footnoting in previous volumes. Greg Benford and Wally Weber also make an appearance, but my favorite piece was "We All Killed Bradbury", by Ron Bennet. The usual generous larding of ATom illos helps to capture the flavor of the era, supplemented by a few pieces by Steve Jeffery that also look very much like ATom's work. Kudos also to Vince Clarke, whose mimeography is generally quite good, and which helps set that historic atmosphere. Both Ken and John state that this will be the last volume in the series, at least partly due to lack of funds, but I would think that if Ken wanted to do more of this sort of thing, some fan groups in this country — or perhaps the Mexican hat fund — would find it a worthy project to sponsor.

2.) **A Backwater of Fandom #1**, edited by Dan Harper, P.O. Box 194, Concord, MA 01742-0194: This is my new find of the month. Dan Harper takes pains to characterize himself as a "backwater" kind of fan, distancing himself from the active hierarchy of NESEA for example, but his observations on books and conventions are very sharp, and remind me of Barnaby Rapoport in their style and content. More than anything else, Dan seems to be a confirmed bibliophile, the sort of person that can turn a brief visit to a used bookstore into a tiny piece of time-travel fiction, and sees an ocean of pathos in the sight of some books left for the taking by the side of the road in the wake of a local library sale. The fanzine itself is curious in its landscape-format layout, but still quite attractive. And even though he portrays himself as being outside any fannish mainstream, Dan knows enough to offer ABWoF for the usual. I'm adding him to the Apak list, and look forward to seeing more from him in the future.

3. **Gradient #14**, edited by Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Ct., Budd Lake, NJ 07828-1023: Part of a small downpour of sercon fanzines I've received lately, Gradient is notable for the way it considers SE, comic books, and Robert's latest interest, Chinese culture and literature, with no sense of defensiveness or apologism about its topical focus. And good for him; this is cogent, accessible material, in which Robert tells us a good deal about himself as well as the material which has caught his interest. He never seems to adopt the kind of detached, pedantic voice which is the bane of a lot of sercon fan writing. I was less interested and impressed by Steve Carper's consideration of the contemporary incarnations of Superman, but his writing is not bad either. My only advice: knock the type down a point or two and squeeze those big margins out a little, and this 32 pager could fit into 26. Interesting letter column, too, which allows me to make this observation: Joseph Major and I have very different political attitudes and rather divergent tastes in fiction, too, but I think it may be time to crown him the hardest working letter-hack in fandom.

4.) **Ansible #108**, edited by Dave Langford, 94 London Rd, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU GB: My jealousy grows exponentially. Not only are Langford's fan-noodlings soon to be published in trade paper, he has the brass to press various big-time sfnal figures for log-rolling cover blurbs. My fave: Joe Haldeman's, "David Langford writes like a pixie with very sharp teeth. Perhaps rabies." Sums it up nicely. Rather too many of them to fit on the back jacket, so one suspects Dave will take the rest and cobble them into some sort of article that can then be used to lead off yet another collection, which in turn . . . Elsewhere, nice to see George Alec Effinger, whom I noticed slowly withering in the El Paso sun last week like a slug on a hot griddle, rise to defend himself against the rough handling he received from Charles Platt in the previous issue. Lots of other interesting stuff — disaffected mutterings about the Wellington, upheavals certain to follow — and congratulations, most sincere, to Dave and Hazel for marking 20 years of marriage.

5.) **Solitary Pleasures, June 1996**, written and edited by Alva Svoboda, P.O. Box 10604, Oakland, CA 94610: Alva hastens to point out that this is not a fanzine, but I'm notorious for my elastic definition of the term, and this is too good a publication to ignore. It's nothing more than a series of book reviews, but Svoboda chooses such interesting books, and brings such a wealth of insight to his reading of them that I simply couldn't put it down. I don't get any other zines that consider books like James Brook and Iain A. Boal's *Resisting the Virtual Life*, and Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Unconsoled*, the follow-up to his *The Remains of the Day*. I hope I don't get into hot water by listing it here, but I really enjoyed Alva's observations, and wanted to point them out to that majority of our readers who say they've moved beyond SF in their literary tastes.

Also Received:

The Flying Pig #37, Darrol Pardoe; Dreamberry Wine, June/July 1996, Mike Don; The Knarley Knews #58, Henry & Letha Welch; Baryon #61, Barry Hunter.

— Andy Hooper

APPARATCHIK is the Jason Sprinkle of fandom, a guerilla artist and founder of The Fabricators of the Attachment, who yesterday drove a brightly-painted pickup truck, a giant fiberglass human heart in the bed and the word "bomb" improvidently buried in a lengthy skein of graffiti on one fender, into the middle of Westlake Park, dead center downtown Seattle, and then deflated its tires. He's in jail now, of course. Apak is still available for the usual, but note that trades must be sent to both Andy and Victor (Carl just wants the good ones) (see the front colophon for 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 Gaboon Viper. -/- 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 \$4.50, \$17.00 and \$28.09 Australian. Lifetime subscribers: Tom Becker, Judy Bemis, Tracy Benton, Richard Brandt, Steve Brewster, Chris Bzdawka, Vince Clarke, Scott Custis, John Dallman, Bruce Durocher, Don Fitch, Jill Flores, Ken Forman, John Foyster, Margaret Organ Kean, John Hertz, 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, Alva Svoboda, Steve Swartz, David Thayer, Tom Whitmore and Art Widner.

Looks like a canoe to me.