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APPARATCHIK

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This is the sixty-sixth issue of a tri-weekly fanzine, edited and published by Andy Hooper, Carl Juarez and Victor Gonzalez, members & founding member fwa, supporters afa!, at The Starlitter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. #103, Seattle, WA 98103, also available at fanmailAPH@aol.com. Correspondence for Victor should be sent to 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 #272. **Apparatchiki:** Steve Green, Sterling Hitchcock, Irwin Hirsh, Lesley Reece, Martin Tudor, Pam Wells & Ted White.

Issue #66, August 29th, 1996

**Now my charms
are all o'erthrown**

By Andy Hooper

AS WORLDCON APPROACHES, I respond with a last-minute flurry of fanac, not least this issue. The collective glows happily and meets its quota as ever, but the individual editors

and contributors labored mightily to compile this extra-portly issue. Sunday night saw us sprawled around the Apak World HQ, trying to stay awake until we got the lettercol done. We thought of the fans partying in Las Vegas at Toner, and of palm trees, free drinks, and crooked valet parking.

Special Commissioner in Charge of Gothic Fashion Reece broke the delerium. "So what, really, did Gilligan want that he couldn't have on the island? It seems to me his situation was better there than back in the world."

"Oh, Gilligan is a Dionysian figure, no question about it. He is Caliban, the walking id. All he ever wants for is creature comforts, elaborate coconut cream pies, labor-saving devices to spare his scrawny frame. He is gulled by every weird visitor to the island, susceptible to every charm; remember the flying-with-a-big-feather-in-each-hand scene?"

"And he falls prey to ecstatic transports, like the time he joined the bug music band," said Lesley.

"The Mosquitos!" I exclaimed. Commisar Juarez nodded.

"When are the Hugo awards?" asked Victor.

"Sunday night," I replied, "and yes I will log on right away and send the results back to you. If Gilligan is Caliban — they even sound the same — then the Professor is Prospero, who could build a drill derrick with bamboo and twine, but not a boat to get away. His exile is intentional. And Miranda —"

"— is Mary Ann! You must have thought of this before."

"No, it just came to me whole. Ginger is Ariel, The skipper

is Antonio, Mr. and Mrs. Howell are Alonso and Sebastian . . . you can't fill out the cast of the Tempest with the castaways, but I bet Vito Scotti played some useful analogue to each during his dozen or so guest appearances."

"Vito Scotti?"

"Yes, he played about 14 nationalities — the weird Italian guy with the monkey, the Japanese soldier who didn't know the war was over —"

"Martian Bacteria!" someone exclaimed. Someone else shushed me. A science-news summary was starting on CNN. The announcer intoned, "Shakespeare wrote 'What's past is prologue,' but at an ancient shoreline in Tanzania —"

It boiled out of me: "Laetoli! Cool!"

Mary Leakey's group discovered the site at Laetoli, where a family of ancient hominids walked across a lakeside bed of volcanic ash something like 3,000,000 years ago, and left behind footprints that survive to this day. She left it where it was — recovered it with fill, in fact — for ten years, until she had the funding and resources to recover all the tracks. Her team has made resin castings of the tracks, so we should soon be able to find rubber Australopithecine feet at Archie McPhee's.

"Looking at these tracks, you can truly imagine the person that made them, a person not really so different from ourselves." Mary Leakey's voice spoke over a picture of a herdsman in silhouette against a sere landscape, dry grasses with a red scrape of a road arcing across them. It didn't look very different from the hills east of Yakima. But this is one of the secrets of happiness: everywhere you go, things are pretty much the same. Trees, rocks, sky. Some water running through the middle of them if you're lucky, lots of heat and flies if you're not. How would winning the Hugo award address this question, I wondered.

"Can I have another shot of Tequila?" asked Victor

"Is not this Stefano, my drunken Butler?" I replied. But he was already on his way to the kitchen.



IN THIS ISSUE: An amazing troupe of writers follow Andy's foggy introduction. Dan Steffan is up next with the fifth chapter of his TAFF report. Victor explains why he may have chased his last plane-crash, followed by Ted White's first regular column for us. Pam Wells and Steve Green offer news from British fandom, while Mark Manning favors us with a selection from his eclectic reading list. We have a fine selection of letters from correspondents on three continents, but don't forget to look for Lesley Reece's article on the penultimate page. As ever, Andy's fanzine countdown completes the program. *Cartoons and art: page one, four, and six by Lesley Reece, page three by Sue Mason, page nine by Ray Nelson.*

It was them three toes that started me thinking.

**TAFFragment #5 —
Hotel Hansen (The Early Years)**

By Dan Steffan, TAFFboy

FOR THE FIRST TIME, since our arrival in England, I had the feeling that I'd stumbled into an episode of *EastEnders*.

Leaving the Upton Park tube station near Rob and Avedon's house in East Ham was like stepping directly into a version of London life that I'd seen only on television.

Unlike the idyllic suburbia of Stevenage, East Ham was the Real Thing. There were no shiny, modern supermarkets here; no hotels or parking garages, either. Instead, the sidewalks outside the station were crowded with stalls selling fruits and vegetables to the passing parade of little brown women and their little brown children. Cramped shops lined the street selling everything from ugly shoes to ugly fish and chips. Mini-cars jammed themselves into unlikely parking places in between the street vendors, while others honked angrily as they whizzed past us, heading down Green Street in the wrong direction.

I stared in amazement at the wild mixture of ethnicity. African women in Dashikis and Hindu men in Turbans stood elbow-to-elbow with pale Punks and roasted Rastas. It was an exotic stew of different accents, attitudes and aromas. Television had prepared me for the first two ingredients, but I was not prepared for the third. The way the air smelled that afternoon was unforgettable. It was like inhaling next to an incontinent camel standing in the middle of a field of rotting papayas — subtly sweet, yet urine-like. It brings a tear to my eye just thinking about it.

We'd traveled from Stevenage in the company of Andy Hooper and Carrie Root (who also had reservations at the Hotel Hansen for that evening), and Ted and Lynda White, who'd come into London for the day (but were staying with John and Eve Harvey before the worldcon). We'd sent most of our luggage to Rob and Avedon's the previous evening in Jack Heneghan's car, which made the train ride a lot easier and the walk down Plashet Grove to 144 a breeze. Ted led the way. He'd stayed there on a couple of previous visits to Britain and felt confident in his role as Wagon Master. "Fanboys Ho!"

Rob met us at the door and said something about being surprised to actually see me up before Noon. "Ordinarily I don't like to be seen in the daylight," I replied. "It's bad for my tattoos."

"Well, then you've come to the right place," Rob chuckled. But before I could get him to explain himself I heard an impatient whine from over my shoulder.

"Are you two going to stand there trading bon mots all day," asked Andy, "or can the rest of us come in the house, too?"

Rob and Avedon's house sits at the end of a long, curving street lined with identical row houses. Built near the end of the 1800s, the houses have a quaint Victorian charm, marred only by bad paint jobs and needless decay. Like most of the houses we visited in Britain, their house was remarkably narrow. A narrow sitting room, narrow stairs, a narrow dining room, and, as it turned out, a very narrow entrance hall.

"Step aside or I'm going over the top of you," growled Andy.

A glance over my shoulder was met by the sight of five sweaty and frustrated faces — one of which looked a lot like a shaved Polar bear in a baseball cap. Without realizing it, I had

stopped the flow of fannish bodies into the narrow hallway by simply pausing to chat with our host. With an apologetic shrug I stepped out of the way and into the dining room; my embarrassment having had the desired laxative effect. The flow of non-TAFF winners had been restored and soon everybody was able to get inside out of the heat.

We found Avedon sitting at the dining table with a deck of cards in her hand. Smoke from her ever-present cigarette curled lazily through the sunlight that poured through the dining room windows (the advantage of being in the end house) and made me think — just for a nanosecond, mind you — that she had just materialized out of nowhere. She reminded me of a gypsy fortune teller on her day off.

Sitting at the table with her was a friend of Avedon's, a co-conspirator from Women Against Censorship, named Cherie Matrix. Cherie was the reason Rob had told me that I'd "come to the right place." Cherie is, to put it mildly, a strikingly beautiful woman who just happens to be a tattooing and piercing enthusiast. In fact, within minutes of meeting her I realized that I recognized some of her tattoos from books and magazines. The artwork on her body is by some of the best tattoo artists in the world and we immediately fell into a conversation about body art.

"This one is by Alex Binnie," Cherie told me.

"I love his work," I told her nonchalantly, trying not to stare. "I'm hoping to get an appointment with him while I'm in London."

"Oh, he's a friend of mine," Cherie replied, flashing the jewelled stud in her tongue. "Maybe I can get you in to see him."

"Hey, Dan!" Avedon broke in, having apparently noticed that I was standing there with my mouth hanging open. "Cherie's got seven rings in her pussy."

"That would be really great," I told her, trying to ignore Avedon's taunts. "Anything you could do would be really — um — great." I was losing my ability to speak.

"He's always booked up for months ahead of time. You'd never get in to see him otherwise," Cherie said, picking up on Avedon's game and tugging on her Labret absentmindedly.

"She's got nipples the size of your thumb, Dan," my hostess cackled, lighting a fresh cigarette. "Her nipple rings actually make 'em bend in the middle."

"Great," I groaned, my knees growing weak. "Grate. Grape. Grphh."

I knew I was through. These two women had reduced me to Jerry Lewis in less than ten minutes. Avedon *really* knows how to make her old friends feel at home. Sigh. I quickly found a nearby chair and sat down to lick my wounds. The next hour was spent quietly playing Fan Tan with the evil (and definitely still rude) Ms. Carol and Cherie's adolescent daughter, Raven Isis.

Naturally, I lost.

Martin Smith arrived soon after my defeat and it was, thankfully, time to venture off for Rob's world famous Fannish Landmarks and Pub Crawl. Avedon and Cherie stayed behind to continue their brainstorming for ways to make the world safe for pornography. The rest of us — including Ted, Lynda, Rob, Martin, Lynn, and Carrie — took the Underground into London to the Forbidden Planet bookstore, where we'd arranged to meet Andy.

He had decided earlier that day to go into London ahead of us to tour a military museum he wanted to see and then join us for the Pub Crawl. We picked Forbidden Planet because it was

Watch out — that way lies Moskowitz!

centrally located (on Oxford Street) and offered lots of distractions to occupy us while we waited for him. But Andy never showed up. Even after ample browsing and generous milling about on the sidewalk, he was still nowhere to be found.

Finally, we decided not to wait any longer. Rob reckoned that Andy would show up eventually and convinced Martin to stay behind to wait for him. Being the only other Native, Martin knew the tour and where to meet up with us when Hapless Hooper finally made an appearance. As we walked away, I looked back in Martin's direction and saw him waving, a brave smile stretched across his little face.

Despite the unseasonable heat, we covered a lot of ground that afternoon. Rob had given this tour on a number of occasions and showed us sights and sites heretofore unknown to most of us — though Ted had gone along in 1987. We saw the Bonnington Hotel, birthplace of TAFF, and the once legendary One Tun. We walked by a nondescript modern building that had been the site of most pre-war English fan meetings, until it was levelled by a buzz bomb, and saw the windows of the top floor apartment where Arthur C. Clarke and Ted Carnell once held court.

Along the way, Lynn stepped into an open utility hole in the sidewalk and tumbled to the pavement, breaking our camera (though we didn't know it until the next day) and scuffing up her shoes. Fortunately, she didn't hurt herself.

We ended up at the Yorkshire Grey, a pub that is the current home to London fandom's weekly gatherings. Moments after our arrival Andy and Martin showed up, having traced our steps from Forbidden Planet. "What the hell happened to you?" I asked a very sweaty Andy, in between gulps of a lovely cold beer. "Did you get lost?"

"No," replied everyone's favorite Shrimp Brother, "it just took a lot longer than I expected to get here from the museum."

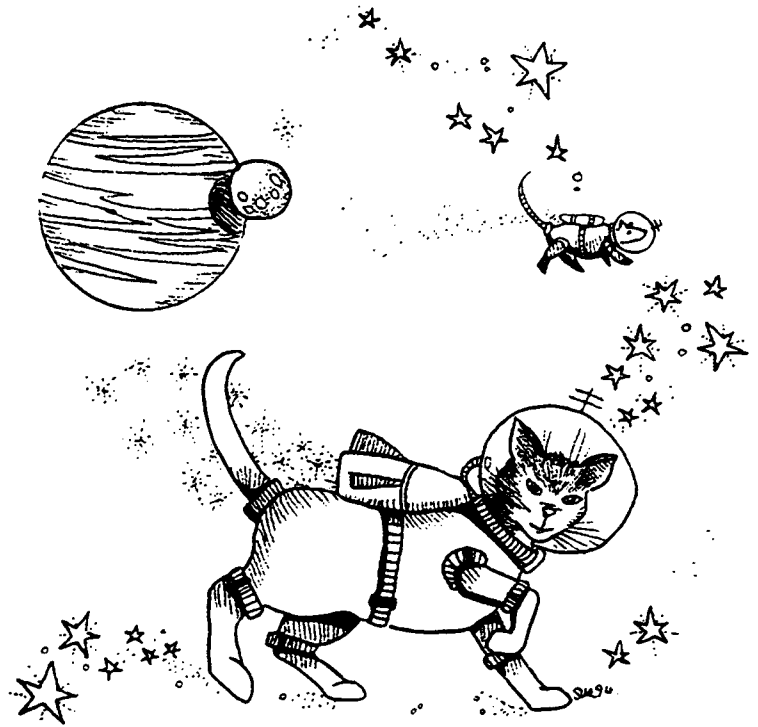
"Why didn't you hop on the subway?" I inquired.

"I didn't think it was going to be that far," Andy sheepishly replied. "It was only about two inches on the map."

We got back to Hotel Hansen around dusk, having said goodbye to Martin and sent Ted and Lynda back to the Harvey's along the way. Cherie and her daughter were still sitting at the dining table with Avedon when we walked in, as was another guest, Neil Rest. Neil had just arrived in London from Amsterdam and was full of stories about the city where All Old Hippies Go To Die. (His anecdotes made me miss my bong.) Naturally, this led to a discussion of dinner and where one could obtain it. The locals compared notes and suggested we go to a nearby Indian and Sri Lankan restaurant that they'd enjoyed in the past. Andy was excited about the prospect of food, as were the rest of us, but the logistics of the situation proved troublesome.

The restaurant was too far away for the nine of us to walk to, but not far away enough to take the Underground. Rob had the only car among us and there was no way we were going to all fit into it at the same time. Hell, Andy and I couldn't fit into it together — forget about an additional six others. We were stymied. Andy sweated, Cherie played with her lip ring, I drooled. Finally Avedon stood up from the table — proving to me for the first time since my arrival that she did indeed still have legs — and solved our problem. "You're just gonna have to make three trips, Hansen," she declared. Which is exactly what happened. She has Rob well trained.

I was part of the last batch of passengers to reach The Yaal, a small eatery located in nearby Barking (home of "Barking Car Sales"). There was only one other couple in the place when we arrived and the rest of our party already had their heads buried



in the menu. A couple of employees stood around waiting to take our order. This was going to be good.

Two hours later, our dinners had yet to arrive.

In the meantime, chaos had broken out at our table. Every scrap of Poori and Chapati had been consumed. Every drop of Raita licked from the bowls, and a few napkins were missing, too. Andy's blood sugar was dropping like the New Year's ball in Times Square. Small talk had been exhausted and we were beginning to learn way too much about each other.

Avedon admitted that she had recently shaved her legs for the first time in more than a decade. Neil talked about being AWOL from the Army and trying to levitate the Pentagon. Cherie talked about ex-boyfriends and bemoaned her one-time choice of Axl Rose over Kurt Cobain. And Andy mentioned something about deep frying rodents during his tenure with Taco Bell. I, on the other hand, had nothing to add to the conversation, preferring to do my impression of The Ugly American by screaming at the waiters.

When the food finally did arrive it was delicious, but by then nobody really seemed to care. Dinner was consumed quickly and silently in an effort to Just Get It Over With.

Outside the restaurant we started to walk, en masse, back to Rob and Avedon's. We'd agreed that Rob should drive Cherie and Isis to the Tube station directly from the restaurant, so they could get home before the Underground shut down for the night. Afterwards, he intercepted us about halfway home and shuttled a second carload back to the house. By the time he came back and got Lynn and I, it was almost Midnight.

Once back at Hotel Hansen, we all just sort of sat around in a daze for a while and then, one by one, took turns standing under the shower. The day's heat had lingered into the evening and had left us all a bit wilted. Nevertheless, fannish responsibility reared its ugly head and, to everyone's amazement, actual fanac took place. Andy had vowed to commit the events of the weekend to paper for an issue of *Apparatchik* he planned to publish when we reached Glasgow and nothing I said could dissuade him. This was his only opportunity, he explained, because he and Carrie would be gone in the morning — off on a

He seems to have fought his way through his own coldness on the strength of a vast self-revulsion.

trip to visit relatives. He was going to pub his ish and nobody was going to stop him. I felt so guilty I volunteered to draw a comic strip for him on the spot. The bastard accepted.

About an hour later, I looked in on him to check up on his progress. When I walked into Avedon's office I felt like I had stepped into an outtake from *Apocalypse Now*. Andy was sitting at the computer like a fannish version of Colonel Kurtz, a white towel wrapped around his head to catch the rivulets of sweat that ran down his face. The room was like an oven and I think I spotted a small lizard clinging to one of the walls. Andy was mumbling to himself. "The horror," he said. "Oh, the horror." I decided not to disturb him after all, figuring that he'd get finished a lot sooner without any interruptions from me.

The evening ended about an hour later. Andy had finished his fit of compulsive fanning and had taken his turn in the shower. Carrie had gone to sleep — she had to get up with the birds the next morning to go get their rental car — followed soon by Rob, who actually had to go to work the next day. Lynn, Neil and Avedon sat around the dining table talking and smoking. I had stepped, half-dressed, out into Rob's backyard to enjoy the slight breeze that I hoped would cool me down enough to go to sleep myself. After a few minutes, Andy joined me.

We talked about the day's events and the fun we'd had at Precursor. We talked about the prospects for the upcoming worldcon and remarked about how weird it was to find ourselves standing around barefoot in Rob and Avedon's driveway, instead of sitting at home in front of the TV wondering how to pay next month's rent.

"It sounds corny," I told Andy, "but we owe it all to Fandom."

"I hate living in a cliché," he chuckled.

"But it's true," I replied. "I literally would not be here if it weren't for Fandom. I already feel the pressure to live up to my responsibilities. It's scary."

"You know what's really scary?" asked my friend.

"Darrell Schweitzer in the nude?" I replied, half-kidding.

"Naw," Andy answered. "What's really scary is the thought of Carrie driving on the left side of the road. That's what's *really* scary."

I could see his point, but assured him that everything would be fine. "Just tell her to hug the curb and I'm sure you'll get to Glasgow in one piece," I told him. "Ghu will protect you, at least until you pub your ish."

"You're right, of course," he answered, heading back into the house. The sweat had finally evaporated from his forehead and he was off to sleep.

I followed a short time later. The last thing I remember as I drifted off to sleep that night was a vision of Cherie's lovely tattooed body mutating into the naked form of Darrell Schweitzer, and the sound of Andy Hooper's voice screaming, "Hug the curb! Hug the curb!"



Removing a bullet without first calling the police!

Farewell, Mayhem

By Victor M. Gonzalez
Staff Writer

MY LAST BIG STORY ON the breaking news beat was an experimental two-seater kit airplane that skinned a moving pickup truck before crashing head-on into a car in an aborted takeoff.

I heard about the crash in the late afternoon, about 20 minutes after it happened, and made a quick pitch to the photo editor for a shooter. The shooter drove us a company car and I navigated through rush-hour traffic to the semi-urban scene in East Pierce County. Meridian Avenue East, a conduit through a small nearby city called Puyallup and the largest north-south arterial in three miles, was shut down in both directions.

The helicopter had left to the trauma center in Seattle with the driver of the car (who, a cell-phone call to the nursing supervisor revealed, was in serious condition with head and chest injuries), but a large crowd gawked from around the strips of yellow tape, neighbors and regulars of a nearby tavern looking at the two wrecked vehicles and the airplane, which had lost its engine compartment, wingtips and landing gear. Weaving through the crowd were the television and radio reporters, cameramen, photographers and writers. We brazenly went past the yellow tape to get better angles. We swarmed around the sheriff's department spokesman and anyone who had been within 300 yards when it happened.

The pilot, by the way, walked away from the wreck.

In the crowd was a short man in a work shirt that said "Steve." He had been driving home when the plane appeared 60 feet above, careening silently into his pickup's windshield.

I interviewed Steve ("The tail caught the front of the truck

... I had glass and blood all over my face"). To my count, at least three of the four TV stations and The Seattle Times also got to him. I didn't notice what The Pierce County Herald did. The P-I combined a short "phoner" with wire copy.

Unlike Steve, the pilot declined to be interviewed at the hospital emergency room where he'd been taken for observation.

Not much of a scoop, but it hit the front page with pictures of Steve, the plane and even a locator map.

But my job position changes this week. No longer will I have a reason to have memorized the numbers to all the corners and most of the hospitals in three counties. No longer will I need to carry thigh high rubber boots, binoculars and a rock hammer in the trunk of my car.

The dreams of scanner calls and endless rainy late-night navigations to deadline double-murder scenes will fade away.

Instead I will cover city council meetings and political picnics in a city of 75,000 called Federal Way, a task that is a little more intellectual and complicated than most mayhem. It's a job that will put more pressure on my writing, as I try to make government issues appear interesting while not oversimplifying.

In a way I look forward to that challenge. But I'm not sure it's going to produce many Apak columns.



The Return of Dr. Fandom

by Ted White

PAGING THROUGH THE WASHINGTON Post today I ran across the following obituary:

MARGUERITE GANSER DORSTE
Singer

That name might not mean much to you — it almost didn't to me, although "Ganser" rang a faint bell. But the first paragraph made it clear when it said of the woman that she was "48, a member of the singing group the Shangri-Las . . ."

And in the second paragraph, "The Shangri-Las got their start at Andrew Jackson High School in Queens in 1964, when twins Marguerite and Mary Ann Ganser teamed up with sisters Mary and Betty Weiss." Okay, then.

And in the final paragraph there is this: "After the group broke up in 1968, Mrs. Dorste got her high school diploma. She married and divorced. She later worked for Nynex." That's the local phone company. She died of breast cancer — at 48.

To appreciate the impact this item had on me, you must know that in 1965 I had a major crush on Mary Weiss. She was the lead singer of the group, in which her younger sister Betty (who was also very attractive) was only a part-time participant. Mary had long straight blonde hair, although I always suspected she had help with its color. The twins — who sang backup — were dark and vaguely glowering, their hair shorter and bobbed, their expressions often sullen. They were taller than Mary, but much less pretty. All of them spoke, and sang, with strong New York/Queens accents, and as a group they projected a somewhat punkish image. They were not one of your Cute Girl Groups, all wholesomeness and dressed in pink, still virginal, still Sweet Sixteen. You got the impression that these girls had been around the block already. They knew the score. Girls grew up fast in New York City in the sixties. The Shangri-Las had.

I collected all their records (the obituary refers to "five albums," but there were only three, not counting Best Of collections — and the best was their first, which collected their singles onto one side, and presented a live concert on the other side) and even followed the career of their producer, Shadow Morton, who learned on the job, their first (hit) single being his first gig as a producer.

The Shangri-Las hit some sort of basic chord with a lot of people — and not just people like me who became smitten with the lead singer. My daughter, Kit, for instance is a big fan of the group. Part of it was the material, but an equal part was the image they projected and the accent and tone of their voices. For a couple of years there, they were Big, they were Hot.

I always wondered what happened to them. The Post says they "broke up in 1968," which doesn't surprise me. I recall hearing in the late 60's of their appearance in a small Brooklyn club and thinking that must be a major comedown for them — they'd once performed on the same bill with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones — they probably put an end to it soon thereafter.

Without a career in showbiz, the Ganser twins must have receded into a more mundane life, with Marguerite ending up at the phone company. Twenty-eight years of Normal Life, after a short time in the Spotlight. I wonder what Mary's doing now.



Whatever happened to Benoit Giraud? And where is THE FROZEN FROG?

I ask this question because the last time I saw Ben was in Scotland, at Intersection, where he appeared healthy and in good spirits. And the last FROZEN FROG I received was before then. A year ago.

Maybe there's an issue in the mails even as I write this. I hope so. Because I'd hate to think that the experience of Intersection had somehow driven Ben into gafia.

I like THE FROZEN FROG. It had become a personal favorite of mine.

Although fandom at any given time will usually be dominated by a few fanzines — the fmz that everyone agrees are the very best — the overall tone of fandom is determined more by the body of fanzines coming out at that time than by those few leading zines. When there are a lot of enjoyable middle-grade fanzines coming out, Fandom Is Good. When there are few such fanzines making regular appearances, fandom suffers.

THE FROZEN FROG is an unpretentious, but enjoyable, middle-grade fanzine. It doesn't come out every two or three weeks, but it did in fact come out fairly often...last year. Benoit projects exactly the right tone for the fanzine, and he attracted a number of regular contributors to the FROG's letter column — myself among them. Indeed, in the last issue he announced that he was going to make THE FROZEN FROG into a letterzine since he felt that was its strength and the direction in which it was growing.

You know, what with the trip to UK and Scotland, I never did get around to LOCcing that issue. I had meant to write an encouraging letter, supporting the change. But I did tell Ben how much I enjoyed his zine, and I hope I conveyed to him my pleasure in meeting him as well.

But still . . . Is Ben waiting for letters for his first letterzine, wondering why few or none of his regular letter-writers have written? Or was he blown away by Scotland? Or, has he been publishing regularly all this time, and some irregularity in the Postal Service has diverted my copies to the head of the Make A Wish Foundation?

Tell us what's happening, Ben! Fandom wants to know!



It was Franz Miklis, he of THE GALACTO CELTIC NEWSFLASH fame, who first laid the Dr. Fandom moniker on me.

I tried it out with an "Ask Dr. Fandom" column concept in SPENT BRASS maybe a year ago (maybe more; I feel like I've been travelling faster than light recently, and space-time has been contracting, Einstein-wise, all around me . . . which may explain the ticket I got — for going only 82 mph! — today . . .) which did Not Fly. No one had any questions, for The Doctor, at any rate. Don Fitch used the opportunity to write me a letter, but he asked no questions.

I met Franz at Intersection too. He had paintings in the art show, which impressed me less than some of the others on display, but in person he was bearded and friendly and I'm sorry I didn't spend more time with him.

By the time many of you read this, LACon will be over, and I will have missed it. I regret that, but I don't regret missing out on another chance to stay in the same hotel LACon used in 1984. The first room I was given looked really great. It was a corner room and two walls were mostly glass. But the room

How we retired in 15 years with \$300 a month

was hot when I checked in and it stayed hot all night. The air-conditioning was not adequate and heat was coming through all that glass — even with the drapes drawn — faster than the system could deal with it.

So the next day I had my room switched.

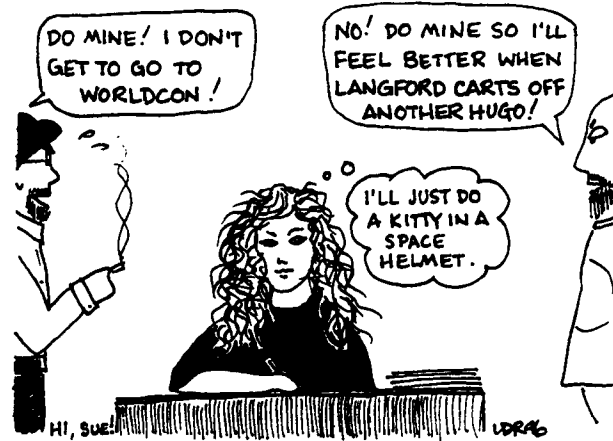
The new room got cool enough, but the air-conditioning had another flaw: it only recirculated existing air in the room, never replacing it with fresh air.

The windows were sealed shut, and the a-c unit, built into the bathroom ceiling, could work only with the air that was already there. Since I had parties in that room every night (the fwa was founded at one of those parties), the air quickly went stale from a combination of tobacco and other smoke and the general use of that air by the many dozens of people who partied each night.

I got used to it, so that I hardly noticed it during the party, but it really hit me the next day. I'd get up, go out, do conventional things, and at some point in the late afternoon or early evening I'd return to my room for some reason and be greeted at the door by a blast of chokingly bad air.

This got worse, day by day, until by the time I checked out there must have been a vanishingly small amount of oxygen left in the room's air. (Indeed, when I first heard this year's Worldcon would use the same hotel, I briefly entertained the fantasy of returning to my old room, only to find the air still as dead after some twelve years....)

A fatal flaw for a hotel, I should think. Corridors that dipped and tilted oddly were a lesser problem for that same hotel, and I've all but forgotten the rumors of construction scandals that were floating around the place in 1984. But it does amaze me the building still stands.



And sitting at the next table was Larry Flynt in a gold wheelchair.

What happened at Farber Day, then?

by Pam Wells

WE ASSEMBLED IN BRIDGET Hardcastle's back garden, set out our stalls and waited for people to come along. The currency of the day was the Farber Dollar (carefully crafted by Steve Davies with a real dollar bill, a photo of Gary, a laser printer and some green paper), at an exchange rate of 50p. Pat McMurray sold wads of these to people as they arrived.

Many planned events didn't happen in the end, but plenty of them did. We got Alison wet with sponges, but failed to throw pies at me. We had a women's round of the erotic fruit eating contest (at which Sue Mason was declared the winner), but the men's round sadly didn't materialise. We carried fried eggs on fishlifters up and down the garden, in a fannish version of an egg and spoon race. We played at racing cockroaches from Brooklyn to Birmingham. We sold burgers and sausages from the Farbercuc (cooked by Barbie-meister McMurray), quiches and cakes on the bake stall (by Bridget Hardcastle and Simon Bradshaw), and plenty of punch (it was a *very* hot day), provided by Brian Ameringen.

We decorated a pair of boxer shorts for Gary to wear at Novacon. We hunted for Gary's fanzines. We bought postcards. We had our fortunes told by Gipsy Rose Sue on the Crystal Lettuce. ('You will be chair of the next British Worldcon,' she said — to all of us!) We had an auction, at which the most prized item was a squawking electric chicken which

laid easter eggs as it waddled. Steve Davies produced a one-shot, and was on the way to a second when the heat overwhelmed his hard disk. Some of us talked to Gary and others via Internet Relay Chat.

We were amazed at people's generosity. Pretty much everything on the day cost money: if it moved, we charged for it. Alison Scott charged 'corkage' to people who brought their own drinks; There were less than 20 people there in all, but we still did much more than break even on the day.

Counting the profits from Farber Day along with all the other sales and donations so far, the fund currently stands at over 600 pounds. We're aiming to raise 800 pounds in all, so that Gary can come over to Novacon and stay in Britain for a month, visiting several fannish centres as he goes.

We're still selling souvenirs of the day for 10 pounds or 15 dollars the set (including airmail postage). This includes a Farber Dollar, four postcards (drawn by D West and Dave Mooring), a set of 12 'little fanzines', and the two newsletters.

I'd like to thank everyone who came to Farber Day, and everyone who already has or will send us a donation for the Fund. Dollar cheques should be made payable to Roger Robinson, or pounds to Bridget Hardcastle, and sent to 13 Lindfield Gardens, London, NW3, United Kingdom.

When we've got Gary's plane tickets booked and a rough idea of his itinerary worked out, I'll ask Andy and Victor to print it here. And then, when he arrives back home again, you can all start bugging him for his trip report!

Fannish Memory Syndrome

by Steve Green

TO THE NATIONAL FILM THEATRE, in the company of Black Lodge colleague Ray Holloway, for a rare British appearance by Italian director Dario Argento to promote his latest *giallo*, THE STENDHAL SYNDROME. As anticipated, the alcohol-enhanced train journey down to London and our pre-screening walkabout of local sf bookshops (every one crammed with INDEPENDENCE DAY spin-offs, a full thirteen days ahead of its UK release) prove rather more entertaining than the film itself, though the surprise appearance by Argento's sylphlike daughter Asia (who portrays the policewoman with a predisposition towards the eponymous psychosis) sends more than a few male hearts fluttering.

No PROFUNDO ROSSO then, or even an OPERA, but any Argento release is guaranteed to drag British gorefans away from their VCRs, which makes the fact that we recognize barely a handful of the audience an intriguing indicator of the difference between this country's sf community and its horror parallel. The phrase *community* itself is a hint: with the exception of the annual Fantastic Film Festival in Manchester (returning next month in spite of the IRA's attempt at urban redevelopment) and occasional one-off screenings, horror fandom lacks the focal events which form the framework of "our" global village. For five years now, I've used my monthly column in THE DARK SIDE (Europe's leading news-stand horror magazine) to cross-pollinate aspects of sf fandom into horrorzines — lettercols, conreps, fanzine reviews — and backed it with an annual open forum at Manchester; much as I

hold most religions in contempt, this is one for which I'm happy to proselytize.

There are optimistic signs. Groups such as the Black Lodge are beginning to evolve a social calendar, whilst British horror fans are about to get their first amateur press association (courtesy of sf's own Eunice Pearson, after I gently twisted her arm through the pages of another apa we belong to). More significantly, there's far more good-humoured interaction between the leading fanzines than I encountered back in the spring of 1991. It's life, Jim, and maybe soon as we know it.

THENCE TO BIRMINGHAM, for an intriguing collaboration between this year's TAFF candidates, with B'ham SF Group chair (and victor) Martin J Tudor welcoming SFX staff writer (and loser) Michael J "Simo" Simpson as guest speaker. It makes for an entertaining evening, once Simo overcomes the wave of loathing automatically rolled towards anyone who actually get paid to attend convention (then again, we'll forgive almost any *faux pas* when the perpetrator has been forced to interview Tad Williams).

By the time most of you read this, Marty and his ever-understanding minder Helena will be wandering around the Anaheim Centre in search of a safe corner to ignite a cigarette or imbibe something resembling Real Beer. Stay true to your fannish heart: buy them a drink, roll them a joint, thrust a fanzine into their eager grasp, commune with the wider community. C'mon, we're setting an example here.

[Special thanks to Bernie Evans and Kevin Clarke for their assistance in beaming this column to Andy and Victor during the past year. Are there any charities going yet for the electronically impaired?]

You're not even a ape, you're a media person.

From the Apophthemata

by Mark Manning

FOR RATHER ACCIDENTAL REASONS, mostly concerned with the annual carnival and fund-raiser of a local Greek church, I've been reading a lot of books lately about Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

One of the most famous is the APOPTHEMATA, otherwise known as the SAYINGS OF THE DESERT FATHERS.

Back around the year 150 it seems, various pious Christians began living as hermits in the Sahara Desert. Later on, some of them formed primitive monasteries there. The others began practicing their austere meditations in the deserts of Syria. On the tops of pillars for some reason. Must have been something in the Syrian waters, I guess.

Anyway, the Desert Fathers would stare into the sun, weave baskets, starve themselves, and otherwise act like what we today know as psychotics. Once every so often, someone would see them out there and say to them: "Give me a word, Father." The Father would respond with something considered profound enough to be written down. Their sayings include these examples:

Blessed Archbishop Theophilus, accompanied by a magistrate, came on day to find FATHER ARSENTUS. He questioned the old man, to hear a word from him. After a short silence the old man answered him, "Will you put into practice what I say to you?" They promised him this. So he said, "If you ever hear that Arsenius is anywhere, do not go there!"

A brother asked FATHER POEMEN, "An inheritance has been left me, what should I do?" the old man said, "What should I tell you? If you give it to the church, they'll just have a banquet. If you give it to your relatives, you'll never see a whisper of it. If I tell you to give it to the poor, you won't do it. So do

whatever you feel like with it; it's none of my business."

FATHER ANTHONY said this, "A monk ought to tell his elders confidently how many steps he takes and how many drops of water he drinks, in case there's any question."

A man and his son went to see FATHER SISOES. On the way, the son died. The man wasn't troubled by this, but brought the corpse confidently to the Father, and bowed the body down before him. Then he stood up, leaving the child at the Father's feet, and went outside. The Father, thinking that the boy was merely bowing, shouted at him, "Get up, you, and go on out." Immediately the child stood and went out. At this, the man went back in, amazed, and told the whole story. When he heard this, Father Sisoes was filled with regret.

Two brothers went to see FATHER JOSEPH. He said to one of them, "Tell your friend to saddle that donkey." The monk replied, "Call him by name and he'll be glad to do so." "What is his name?" asked Father Joseph. "I don't know." "How long has he been with you then, that you don't know his name?" "Two years." "Well, then if you haven't needed to know it in two years, I won't learn it for a single day! Tell your friend to saddle that donkey!"

One day, a brother came to FATHER JOHN THE DWARF to get some baskets for sale. The old man came out and asked "What do you want?" "Baskets, Father." Going inside to fetch them, he forgot them and sat down to his daily routine, weaving and stacking his supply of saleable baskets. Again the brother knocked. "Bring me those baskets, Father." The old man went in again, and soon was lost in his daily tasks. Once more the brother knocked. Father John the Dwarf came out. "What do you need?" "Baskets." The old man took his hand gently. "Look, Brother, if you want some baskets just say so, then take them and go away. I really don't have time to waste around here."



AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH: Worldcon is the fannish summer solstice, where the stfnal world reaches its most feverish pace and its members gyre in mad abandon. For those left out, it often seems as though things become unnaturally quiet. GEORGE FLYNN (P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Sq. Strn., Cambridge, MA 02142) feels the vacuum behind the torrent:]

'Thanks for Apak #65. Much of interest, but nothing at all that inspires me to comment. (Previous issues have exhausted my meagre fund of conversation about baseball, and I know even less about Prog Rock.) Lesley's writing continues to be impressive. Not counting local clubzines or Ansible by e-mail, this is the first zine I've gotten in two weeks; what's *happening* out there?'

[APH: It is the usual pre-Worldcon slump, George, happens every year. Fan editors save a little coin by handing round their latest at the convention, which thus becomes a convenient deadline, somewhat suppressing productivity at the end of the summer. Hell, you're almost certainly reading this in the Hilton yourself. . . .]

Some Apak readers feel driven to comment on the issue most recently past; others such as TERRY HORNSBY (66 Johns Ave., Lofthouse, Wakefield WF3 3LU Great Britain) prefer to address us in more generalized terms:]

'It is very difficult to find a hook to make a comment in response to Apparatchik, in fact part of my difficulty is that I don't think the material personal *enough*, but I am intrigued that you think my lettersub is quite strong. Perhaps, unlike the stereotype, you are more reserved than I?! What I do enjoy are your fanzine reviews, which are concise, fun, informative, and well written. Their brevity is appealing, a conservation of words I feel could sometimes be used in the articles. It's also there in your editorial remarks, a gently amused and interested person struggling to to get out. Perhaps the frequency of Apparatchik is ironing out all those witty, perceptive remarks you seem to do so easily in response to letters and to fanzines you receive. I particularly yearn for some nice title bars and creative use of blank space to make it more appealing to read.'

[VMG: Sometimes it seems like everyone imposes their own opinion about what good writing is on the concept of what good fan writing is. It's true that we don't have many introspective soul searchers, but it's not like we reject them either. I guess we're just writing about what interests us right now.]

[APH: Your desire for brevity in the articles will probably bring on a few coronary attacks among our writers, who already groan and complain under the heavy hand of the editorial team. And we rather like our layout, although as you can see, it's always under construction. But if those people who want to see more white space are willing to pick up the extra 20 to 25% additional expense which adding pages would lead to, we'd be happy to oblige.

I appreciate the kind words about the fanzine countdown. I do try to write from my most immediate reactions to zines when reviewing them, and since most are a pleasure to receive, it's easy to find something good to say about many of them.

KIM HUETT (PO Box 679, Woden ACT 2606 Australia) helps us move on to something more culturally significant, like pinball:]

'I see Lesley continues to make subtle moves in the body of

her text. To title her column "Boygames" when in the body of her work she admits to have concluded videogames are genderless after all reads to me like someone out to trip the unwary. Could it be a ploy to see if her editors are on the ball? Might not she be secretly amused that a certain editor fell for her trap on the first page by claiming she "explains the gender-differences implicit in pinball machines versus video-games"? Nah, I'm reading way too much into that, forget I even mentioned it.

'It's not a gender-difference situation to me, rather I see it as a matter of action and reaction. Playing a pinball machine to me is something like masturbation in its self-involvement. From this viewpoint all color and noise in the world can't replace the lack of competition against an outside force. I suspect this also explains to me why I have never been able to involve myself in most pc adventure games. I find them passive in the same way as I do pinball machines. I'm sure there are games I might enjoy but it's all too much bother to search through all the possibilities.'

[APH: I have often found a large measure of direct opposition from the pinball machines I've played, Kim. Perhaps your sense of wonder is simply not engaged by that particular admixture of kitsch and roboticity.

Now, VINCENT CLARKE (16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BN Great Britain, E-mail at vincentian@cix.compulink.co.uk) moves us back to fanzine reviews:]

'Re: Apparatchik 64: Away with false egoboo! I feel as though I am betraying the deepest ethos of fandom, but I can't in all honour permit Apak to print an untruth.

'In your fanzine reviews, you give me kudos (and very pleasant tasting they are too) for the duplication of The Bleary Eyes. Not so. I cut the electro-stencils, but the actual duplication (on what turned out to be too-thin paper, but Ken Cheslin's finances permitted none better) was done by the man himself.

'I have a great admiration for Ken. Years n' years ago he had his right hand torn off in a machinery accident, not long after he enetered fandom. He used some of the compensation money to buy himself a Gestetner, and then produced scores of fanzines and APAzines. I'm not saying that they were *great* fanzines, but, by Ghod, he's turned them out for forty-odd years. So credit where credit is due!

'Otherwise, most of the contents were too strange to comment on. Baseball, an adult version of our "Rounders", has never caught on over here, but even the enthusiasm you and others show is amazing. I don't think many British fans are sports oriented — I've only met one who was a genuine football (soccer) fan as well, and enthusiasm for other sports is minimal. We play a good keyboard, tho.

'Apak is a fine fanzine, with its marvellous letters from Warner, Lichtman, etc. I don't think I've read anywhere of how much of your time it actually takes up — possibly you could enlighten me/us?'

[APH: Apak now takes me about four two-hour composition sessions, followed by about 8 hours layout and proof-reading, 2 hours to the copy shops and back, and 2 hours of labeling, stamping, folding and walking to the mailbox on the corner of 43rd and Phinney in front of Lighthouse Coffee Roasters. But that's just my time — when you add in Carl and Victor and Lesley and all the columnists and contributors and Letterhacks, each issue of Apak takes well over 60 person-hours.

Now, HARRY WARNER (423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740) takes us back to the baseball issue, via Jack Speer

I would describe the cinematography as Joycean.

and quasi-quotes:]

'The main effect of your decision to go tri-weekly is relief that my guilt content will be slightly diluted. But I hope to be more consistent in writing in the future, because some of the mundane problems that have plagued me for the past six months are receding.

'You failed to mention in the references to quasi-quotes that they should be typed with a special form of quote marks, like this: The tree that fell in the forest where nobody could hear it said "ouch!" This was the key part of Jack Speer's invention of quasi-quotes: a method of making it plain to readers that the quotations didn't necessarily coincide with exactly what people said. Since the coming of computer generated fanzines, this seems to have become quite difficult to accomplish. I've skipped hundreds of words of learned discussions of how it can be done with a computer or why it can't be done with the writer's own particular brand of computer. Once I asked someone if it wouldn't be simpler to use ordinary quotation marks and put the horizontal lines under them with a pen on the printout, but I was given a sound scolding about how this would be cheating.

'The only thing I sometimes dislike about black clothing is the way it can make the wearer look cadaverous, if he or she happens to be pale by nature. I suspect that this was a big advantage of black garments for women back at the start of the century, because society considered a pale woman to be an interesting and fashionable woman. Black dresses and coats made her look even more so. The fad for tanned faces was still several decades in the future, and maybe it's ending now that medical science has issued so many warnings about the danger of too much sunshine on human skin.

'Arnie's new diary publication reminds me of a newspaper article I read some months back. It's about a Baltimore area man who is supposed to be writing the most extensive diary in history. It runs to many thousands of words every day, contains a description of everything he does, even trips to the bathroom as well as what happened there, pins down every small event in his life to the minute at which it occurred. I wish I had saved the clipping because now I'm not sure if I remember correctly that the fellow is in law enforcement.

'I'm glad baseball continues to be favored in the Seattle area. But I have been very angry recently with a trend in baseball telecasts. I think it started about a year ago on ESPN and the Fox network has imitated it on its Saturday telecasts this season, but so far the Baltimore Orioles television network is fairly free from the contagion. It's the new fad of using dugout shots after almost every pitch. Nothing is more boring to me than several score of shots of Bobby Cox staring motionless into

space or a couple of players on the bench eating sunflower seeds. I can't believe the average viewer is really interested in the dugout because when I attend a game in person, I never see the people around me staring in that direction. The more extreme use of dugout shots makes it almost impossible to see what the catcher's fingers are signalling for the next pitch, if the batter has slightly changed his stance, how far the outfielders are shifted, and the other subtle hints about what



may happen next. I suppose this is an offshoot of the endless shots of the sidelines in basketball and football telecasts. But coaches in those sports are in a perpetual state of terminal hysteria while baseball managers and players are stoic and expressionless most of the time.'

[VMG: We're glad you have more time to write, and we certainly encourage you to do so. I agree, by the way — Fox's baseball coverage messes up the opportunity to see what's going on in a futile attempt to make the game more "interesting." A person either finds the game interesting or doesn't; seeing a manager scowling in the dugout doesn't really tell me much.

ALISON SCOTT (e-mail: alison@fuggles.demon.co.uk) also begins with her reaction to the change of frequency:]

'Slightly sad to hear that you're going to 3-weekly publication, but perhaps this means I'll have time to digest one issue before the next arrives. Plokta, meanwhile, is confident that it will be able to maintain its avowed intent of being published precisely whenever the editors feel like it.

'"Cockatiel Toes" was a sudden, unassuming piece of horror; would like to see more from Heather Wright. Two of the great pub discussion questions in London are "Why do you never see baby pigeons?" and "Why do so many pigeons have deformed feet?" It's possible that this article has gone some way towards answering both of them.

'Your confusion between Judith and Julian Hanna has been repeated in Alison Freebairn's fanzine reviews in Attitude 8. Quite bizarre, really, though I find Joseph's high dudgeon at the thought that reviewers might not entrust his glorious fanzine with the attention it deserved amusing (and unsurprising).

'Frito pies! Gosh, that takes me back. I'm pretty certain I haven't had a frito pie since leaving Houston in 1982, but I can still remember the feeling of utter wickedness inspired by eating a dish which is produced by cutting open the side of a packet of Fritos and ladling in all the other goodies. None of these namby pamby bowls for us. At the time I thought they were jolly nice.

'Baseball a slow game? Gosh. I was instantly attracted to baseball when I first discovered it, because it's such a quick game when compared to cricket. Much later, I realised that cricket is in fact intolerable except when taken with goodly amounts of real ale, at which point it all makes Much More Sense.'

[APH: I have even more trouble with you and Allison Freebairn than with Judith and Julian Hanna, so I think I ought to avoid further comment.

Now BRIDGET HARDCASTLE (13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London NW3 6PX GB, e-mail to bmh@ee.ic.ac.uk) offers her own thoughts on painting it black:]

'For a period of around ten years (mid teens to a year ago) I too wore black, to the exception of all other colours (there was great joy when I discovered black underwear!), and for much the same reasons as Lesley Reece.

'Wearing black had become such a way of life that I found myself unable to tell what other colours suited me, and could only buy the black. I'm trying to wean myself onto colours, and used to be pleased with a brown/cream/russet outfit. Now, however, I know the truth — when I walk into a room, they're all muttering to each other, "Here comes Bridget in that awful brown skirt again!"

'Diverting tale of cockatiels. Our gerbils ate their own toes once; their back legs had become paralysed from too many ropeless bungees from our shoulders, and I found one once

Have you ever had unkind thoughts about Dianetics?

sitting in a corner of the cage, unable to get up. It had obviously got peckish, and started nibbling on the nearest thing to hand, viz. its feet.

'Walt Willis' letter to Ethel Lindsay struck a chord with me, I feel very isolated when my back trouble keeps me in the house, and having fandom around (particularly fanzines) helps a lot to keep the loneliness at bay. Or does this just prove that fans are just sad and lonely people, who have no friends and have to write off for them? There seems to be a different quality between fandom friends and so-called "real" friends. The friends through fandom are, almost by definition, only there when it is convenient for them — they meet at the pub when they have a spare evening, they loc fanzines in their spare time, they go to conventions on their weekends off. They're friendly while they're around, but there are few of them I'd feel comfortable about contacting "out of hours" as 'twere. Fanzine friends in particular. There is a great difference between written and spoken communication, and worry that off-the-cuff remarks will not live up to the eloquence of their hard-written prose seems to put some fans off actually talking to people! "Real" friends on the other hand, are ones who are there when you need them, even if they can't be there (if you get what I mean). A lot of my "real" friends started out as being friends in fandom, but there is the myth that all of fandom is like that, a huge, international, community. And it's not. Always.

'I read the disagreements between you and Joseph Nicholas about whether what he writes in FTT is a "column". Under the circumstances, I think describing it as a "row" might be more apt. (Snigger!)

[APH: No comment. But here, IAN GUNN (P.O.Box 567, Blackburn 3130 Australia) also leads with black and other monochromatic fashions:]

'I applaud Lesley Reece's individualism in dress, although she's not alone. Neil Gaiman, comics author and recent GoH at Australia's NatCon in Perth last Easter, also has a penchant for black clothing — it causes some comment, but as he says, it's quite practical and goes with anything, particularly black.

'Adopting an individual style of clothing will cause comment no matter what colour you choose. My partner, Karen, for example, just loves the colour pink. It dominates her wardrobe (and what isn't pink is usually bright and boldly patterned red, purple, green, black . . .) and her two fanzines are called Pink and Pinkette. She wears a lot of jangly jewelry, too, plus bright ear-rings and lots of enamel buttons and badges, which tends to disturb the twin-set-and-pearls superiors in the library where she works. Her floral Doc Martens are a wonder to behold.

'In one respect, it's her way of deliberately overcoming her natural shyness: when she tells people how shy she really is, they don't believe her!

'It does make her easy to spot in a crowd. On our way to Intersection, I lost her in Narita Airport, but not for long. I easily spotted her across the enormous departure lounge. She's a big girl, particularly by Japanese standards, but the luminous pink scarf tied around her ponytail was a dead giveaway.

'She's convinced that there's a conspiracy among clothing manufacturers to only make larger sizes in dull browns. Why can't fat ladies dress happy?

'I really liked Heather Wright's writing style, and I'd like to see more. I suppose this is an excuse for my own bird anecdote? Well, when I was a teenager we had a ramshackle aviary built out of scrap timber. Finches, a grass parrot with a bent wing, and quail. Australian king quail are tiny beggars, smaller than sparrows. They don't so much fly as flutter their little

wings in panic, leap seven feet into the air, look around, drift with the wind, land and run away. They do this when startled. They're not very bright. They startle easily. They always attain an altitude of seven feet. The ceiling on our aviary was six feet, six inches high. Flutter flutter THUMP! Flutter flutter THUMP! We soon had a bewildered flock of feathered monks with bright red tonsures. Not a bird with a great survival instinct.'

[APH: Colorful letter, Ian. Even more beasts and floral prints from PETER ROBERTS (e-mailing from P.Roberts@lion.rbgkw.org.uk:]

'Andy's suggestion that a Mokele-Mbembe came out of the river and ate my bananas is a little disturbing. Consulting my cryptozoological literature, I see that this particular monster emerges from rivers to eat fruit, a nice touch which I put down to your superior fannish erudition. I also note that the monster is African, and though I didn't mention I was in Africa at the time, I can put this down to an educated guess on your part. Specifically the Mokele-Mbembe lives in the south and west of Cameroon, and since I was in the South West Province of Cameroon at the time, I can put this down to amazing coincidence. But even more specifically, according to Roy Mackal's Searching for Hidden Animals, the Mokele-Mbembe lives in the Mainyu River. . . and now we're getting really spooky, since you can guess which shrimp-filled river I was beside.

'The River Mana actually, but you had me worriedly looking at maps to check that wasn't just an alternative spelling. As it is, the Mainyu isn't all that far to the north . . . quite conceivably within monster lumbering distance. I'm supposed to be going back there next year. Guess I'd better take a camera and an extra big bunch of bananas.'

[APH: While cryptozoology is not really my field, I still quietly mutter that I had most often read of the Mokele-mbembe in connection with Lake Tele in — uh — Zaire? But I feel certain you're capable of manufacturing these fortean coincidences without any help from me.

TED WHITE (1016 N. Tuckahoe, Falls Church, VA 22044, e-mail at twhite@logotel.com) brings us back to earth and Apak #65's lettercol:]

'Jae Leslie Adams thinks "the design of BLAT! owes something to the professional expertise of its editors." And, "the same might be said of Telos and Izzard." Well, yes and no.

'Yes, Dan and I do have "professional expertise." Dan was a professional magazine designer in the 80s. I designed the covers for 9 years of Amazing and Fantastic, supervised the redesign of Heavy Metal in 1980, and created the design for Stardate in 1984.

'But, I believe that Blat! would have been designed much the same had Dan and I only fanzine-publishing experience. Look at my fanzines, going back to the mid-50s Stellar. Look at Dan's Boonfark. There is a steady evolution of design, based on common principles. In Blat! we had access to areas we'd not previously used — summed up as DTP — but our challenge, as we saw it, was to maintain a "fannish" air with these new tools. And I think Dan's art-direction choices in who to use to illustrate what played a big role. Dan belongs to the subcommunity of fanartists, and is able to draw upon the best of his fellow fanartists...and to bring out the best in them.

'As for Telos and Izzard, they were published long before the Neilsen Haydens had "turned pro," although of course Teresa had her art background to draw upon. But my impression (they can correct me if I'm wrong here) is that the NHs were also drawing upon fanzine traditions in the way they presented their fanzines.

Holy Christ! Rotslers!

'I mean, you can look at any number of really great fanzines of the past, from Skyhook to Quandry to Outworlds for ideas. From SKHK I learned crisp, neat presentation. From Q I learned warmth and fannish informality. Glom a file of Voids and observe how I was applying those lessons 35 years ago.'

[VMG: I agree that the good design of Blat! and other zines comes not from "professional experience," though that helps, but from an idea of what a fanzine should look like. Using DTP templates is a way of eliminating the very process by which one learns how to do design. It is a shortcut that can remove all individuality from any fanzine, no matter how good the writing and art.

KATE SCHAEFER (e-mailing from kate@scn.org) now joins us with comments on # 65:]

'I thoroughly enjoyed the baseball issue of Apparatchik. The next baseball game I attend, I'm going to make sure to sit with Lesley and discuss the relative babehood of the players, instead of sitting with Andy and putting labels on envelopes.

'Don't let Victor make any more pronouncements about your mission. He wasn't meant to be a pompous kind of guy, and the strain shows. Oh, wait; perhaps it was a humor piece? Every time I read that Victor's contributions required more authority, I do fall over laughing. How much authority does a fanzine require? Does Victor now have more moral leverage over Andy than he had before? Does Carl? Or is the rest of the world supposed to recognize that authority? Do strangers on the bus offer Victor their seats because he's co-editor of Apparatchik?

'Speaking of strangers on the bus, I try to avoid them as well. Lesley's Norbert sounds a lot like The Man Who Rides the Number Six Bus, except I don't think The Man is capable of holding a job. He talks non-stop, about the FBI and the teller at his bank who was conspiring with the FBI and how he was exposed to kryptonite and can't be Superman any more and how the elders

of Zion secretly selected him to be the new messiah only the CIA put a stop to that and you can always tell who the CIA agent on the bus is but you can't tell who the FBI agent is because the FBI is smarter than the CIA but the CIA has better weapons and it's a bad idea to eat fresh vegetables but frozen ones are okay'

[VMG: How much authority does a fanzine contributor require? Well, Kate, that is an interesting question. I realize that your comments were meant in fun — as are many fanzine criticisms. Ever notice that many feuds are started by letters that take a humorous, ironic and yet deprecatory tone?

First of all, I don't ride the bus.

Second, no one gains moral leverage against a man who has no morals.

Third, and *actually* (I must admit, it makes me tremble to think that I might be responding seriously to something meant only in jest — something essentially useless), what I was getting at is that I needed more authority to direct the fanzine. In other words, my increasing criticisms of the fanzine encountered roadblocks, and in the face of Andy's statements that I should start my own zine, I proposed instead that we should form an editorial team. The fact that the inches devoted to columns now outnumber those given to letters is my fault; and the fact that several of our newer writers are women is also my fault. So there you go; the authority I wield may be unnecessary — even pompous — but it is evident. I'm sure that were you to do a fanzine, the rather "yang" concept of editorial authority wouldn't be needed.

On the other hand, your opinion that I wasn't "meant" to be pompous (implying a superior authority) does not appear to be widely shared.]

[APH: And that's all this time. See you in September!]

There must be a sinister explanation.

About Time

By Lesley Reece

UNTIL A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, I never wore a watch because I didn't need one. At my various jobs, there was always a clock hanging nearby, just in case I

wondered how many minutes had crawled past since the last time I looked at it. On weekends, I found I could usually guess what time it was if I thought about it for a minute. If I couldn't, it didn't matter anyway, since no one was expecting me to show up anywhere.

When I went back to college, though, I discovered that due to some campus-wide wiring defect, hardly any of the clocks at school worked. Those that did were completely untrustworthy; no two of them told the same time.

"No problem," I reasoned, "I'll wear a watch." I did have seven of them, after all. Over the years, people had kept on giving them to me, apparently thinking that the reason I didn't wear a watch was simply that I didn't have one. I dug them all out of my jewelry box and looked at them. Some of them were pretty darn ugly. Most of them looked as if they wouldn't work even if I got batteries for them. I decided that getting a new one would probably be easier.

It wasn't. All I wanted was an analog watch with a small face that wouldn't overwhelm my other jewelry. Eight stores and three days into my search, I was beginning to wonder if the manufacturers had decreed that henceforth all reasonably-priced watches would have digital displays that could be seen from at least fifty yards away in a thick fog. By the time I got to the ninth store, I was ready to buy a travel alarm clock and

wear it around my neck on a piece of string. But I was lucky. I only had to pester the clerk a little bit before he stomped off to the stockroom and came back holding exactly what I wanted. I put it on before I even paid for it.

After that, I was able to get to class more or less on time. Unfortunately, I also discovered that the question among watch wearers is not what time it is, but exactly what time it is. What I mean is, if I'm standing around with a few watch-wearing friends and someone asks us for the time, that person will get as many answers as there are watches. Then there always follows a short yet pointed discussion about which time is "correct." I usually defer in these mini-debates, mostly because I've taken to setting my watch five minutes ahead in an attempt to make myself be on time. (It seems like that wouldn't fool me after two years, but it still does.)

This "correct" time phenomenon has made me realize that even though I wear a watch now, I've always thought of time as a basically arbitrary construction. Victor once told me about an incredibly accurate atomic clock somewhere around Denver, which works by counting the number of particles emitted by radioactive atoms as they decay. I wondered about that; I mean, who needs to know the exact time that badly?

I suppose the military would be able to use it for a lot of different things. And there's always that guy on "Mission: Impossible," the one who always had "exactly five seconds" before whatever it was he was holding would "self-destruct." If that were me, I'd want to make damned sure I had a watch that wasn't slow. Until that day comes, though, I think I'll just hang on to the one I've got.

1.) **Attitude #8**, edited by Michael Abbott, John Dallman & Pam Wells, 102 William Smith Close, Cambridge, CBI 3QF Great Britain: It's very hard to pick between this and a new issue of Trap Door, but I must give Attitude #8 the nod. This is simply the best genzine being produced on a regular basis, and note well: We will only see four more issues before they cease publication. So if you have a fan article over 1,000 words that you would like to appear sometime in the next six to 12 months, this is where I would try to place it first. Another solidly built issue this, with stone and steel piers extending 40 feet below the surface of the fanzine. Thus, the stout foundation of boiler-plate like Rhodri James filk convention report, Taral's lengthy and annotated discussion of the Lion King, and editor Dallman's plodding defense of role-playing games are there to hold up the abruptly-rising curtain wall papered with Anne Wilson's discussion of Sheri Tepper, Martin Tudor's vestigial boy's adventure discourse on Alexander the Great, crowned by the crenelations and murder-holes of Allison Freebairn's fanzine reviews, Caroline Mullan's con reports and the exhaustively diverting "Legel Briefs," by Mike Siddall and Michael Abbott. All this ought to be driven down into the swamp by the 19 pages of letter column and five more pages of group editorial, but there's the miracle: The whole tottering edifice floats like an aerogel Taj Mahal, held aloft by mysterious stellar conjunctions and plenty of bluetack. Look upon the wonder of the age.

2.) **Trap Door #16**, edited by Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95422: One doesn't receive a fanzine featuring a previously unpublished chapter in Charle's Burbee's series of Al Ashley adventures every day. Every issue of Trap Door is a critical fanhistorical resource, as it provides the only source of contact between contemporary fandom and many venerable fans who do not appear in or receive many other fanzines. The downside of that familiarity with earlier fan generations is revealed in the large number of people whom Robert has had to say goodbye to in the last few months: Redd Boggs, Ethel Lindsay, Burbee himself and Robert's own father, and that's not a complete list. So this installment of "Penseroso" by Boggs is quite literally elegaic, and Burbee's memories of the late Elmer Perdue seem less funny than they ought to. Amid all this age and wisdom, Gary Hubbard's account of his experiences as GoH at Corflu Vegas feels positively sprightly, and Dale Speirs' memories of boyhood on a farm in Red Deer, Alberta seem right at home. A healthy letter column lets a number of writers deliver personal updates before their comments on #15; yet another way TD keeps tabs on the pulse of gafia. And yet, Robert's is the most respected long-running count of fanzines published from year to year. He'll surprise you, that Lichtman.

3.) **Plokta Vol. 1, #2**, edited by Steve Davies (52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, Berkshire RG30 2RP, GB) and Alison Scott, (42 Tower Hamlets Rd., Walthamstow, London E17 4RH, GB): For all that they protest at my characterization of them as "either neofans or a hoax," Plokta continues to show the kind of manic energy one associates with teenage gamers on speed. Although they have been running conventions and enjoying a variety of activities in fandom for years, Scott and Davies are relatively unknown over here, and ought to have expected a few people would look up at their juggernaut as it careened by and ask "Who ARE these people?" Any lingering question ought to be settled by the larding of digital photos and the raft of personal detail apparent in Alison's slightly nauseated account of her current pregnancy, and Steve's equally queasy memories of his work on the Intersection newsletter. Lots of

funny stuff here, superfluous technology, tennis-ball cannons, half-nekkid second-generation fan-cuties and a letter from Mae Stelkov. We may not know what it is, but Plokta still tastes Ploktariffic.

4.) **Quipu #6**, written and edited by Vicki Rosenzweig, 33 Indian Rd. # 6-R, New York, NY 10034: Another issue of a thoughtful and well-written personalzine. Vicki offers some thoughts on the Martian Bacteria Flap, offers a report on Wiscon 20 that moves quickly from scene to scene and spends very little time on the trip to the convention (always a good sign), and describes a visit to the butterfly exhibit at the Bronx Zoo. Just six pages, but exactly the right six pages. A good example of what the personal essay can achieve in the fannish idiom.

5.) **The Best of Anzapa, Vol. 15, 1982/83**, edited by Perry Middlemiss, GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne, Victoria 30001, Australia: Perry Middlemiss, current DUFF-traveler and future administrator, continues his vast project to reprint the best material from Anzapa, the longest-running apa in Australian Fanhistory. 1982 and 1983 saw contributions by John D. Berry, David Grig, Judith Hanna, Joseph Nicholas, John Bangsund, Bruce Gillespie and numerous others. Most noteworthy here are Allan Bray's "For Sale," detailing the history and particulars of his grandfather's home, and John Berry's breezy Thirsty Boots #14, a very model of a good con report twined with some very good ideas about fanzines and fandom. As always, the layout is simple and attractive, and Perry is to be praised for another fine installment in this intriguing series.

Also Received: Ansible #109, Dave Langford; Canadian Journal of Detournement #12, Dale Speirs; File 770 #114, Mike Glycer; Empties #17, Martin Tudor; Lettersub #10, Terry Hornsby; Opuntia #28.1B, Dale Speirs; Brum Group News #299, Martin Tudor for the BSEF; The Australian Science Fiction Bullsheet #58 & 59, Marc Ortlieb; T.R.'s Zine #5, T.R. Miller; Situation Normal?? Vol. 7, #8, Aileen Forman for SNAFFU; K65, dated August 1996, A. Vincent Clarke for Pieces of Eight; Stairway to Cleveland #2, Marc Ortlieb for ANZAPA.

— Andy Hooper

APPARATCHIK is the Roy Munson of fandom, one-time Iowa State Bowling champion, gifted with almost unlimited potential, all thrown away on a quick hustle that ended with an unfortunate ball-return maiming. We here at Apak honor Roy for his never-say-bar-time spirit, and the worst comb-over on the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Johnstown circuit. 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, sent care of Andy) (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 rubbing of Vincent Price's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. /-/ 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: John Bangsund, 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, 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 Sullowland, Karen Schaffer, Leslie Smith, Nevenah Smith, Dale Speirs, Geri Sullivan, Alva Svoboda, Steve Swartz, David Thayer, Tom Whitmore and Art Widner.

Stefan, we have what we came for — the cornerstone of a new social structure!