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APPARATCHIK

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This is the sixty-eighth issue of a tri-weekly fanzine, edited and published by Andy Hooper, Carl Juarez and Victor Gonzalez, members & founding member fwa, supporters afal, at The Starlitter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. #103, Seattle, WA 98103, also available at fanmailAPH@aol.com. Correspondence 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 #274. **Apparatchiki:** Greg Benford, Randy Byers, Steve Green, Irwin Hirsh, Lesley Reece, Martin Tudor, Pam Welks, Ted White & Shawn Kemp.

Issue #68, October 10th, 1996

Forget the Anal Probe, Just Call my Agent

by Andy Hooper

As Carl and I have been sitting here proofreading the rest of the issue, I've had the television on in the background, listening to the NBC series *ER*. It's kind of a strange episode, featuring a subplot about an escaped kangaroo. And about every eight minutes, the network shows an ad for a movie they're going to air this weekend, a thriller titled *Night Visitors*, involving a TV journalist struggling to bring to light evidence that aliens are *really among us*.

Somehow, this premise doesn't attract my interest as much as it once might have, at least in part because there is some sort of program involving the paranormal or extraterrestrial phenomena on American network television every night. It started two years ago with the surprising success of *The X-Files*, of course, and since then shows like *Sightings*, *The Paranormal Borderline*, *The Burning Zone*, *Dark Skies*, *3rd Rock from the Sun*, and several others I can't think of right now, have all sought to tap into American viewers' surprising appetite for stories about alien visitation. A few weeks ago, ABC even aired a program revisiting Erich Von Däniken's apallingly shabby and crypto-racist theories that attribute the aesthetic and technical achievements of almost every non-European culture to contact with alien visitors, showing that even being jailed by the East German government for fraud and non-payment of taxes can't keep a good pseudo-scientist down.

Admittedly, most of these programs are presented as fiction, and have at least a particle of humor underlying their attitude toward the subject matter. And most of them will be gone very, very soon; there's just so much sinister government conspiracy and rectal exams aboard the mother-ship that a person can watch in a single week. But it's useful to remember that the most successful fiction is that which has the shadow of reality behind it, and people respond most strongly to stories

which have at least some relation to their view of the world. And the rather unsettling conclusion which I draw from this plague of programming is that people have suddenly become quite comfortable with the idea of an alien presence on earth.

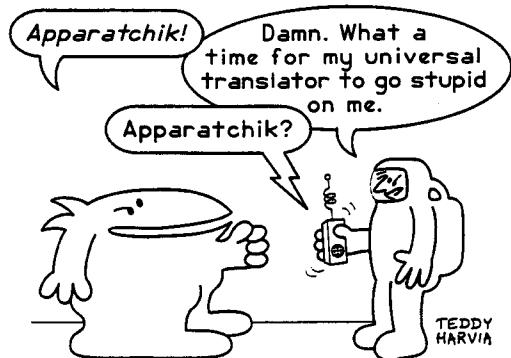
One needs to think about this for a while before the enormity of its implications begins to emerge. People now hardly raise their eyebrows at ideas that used to elicit ridicule and scorn. Where people once hesitated to report a UFO sighting for fear of being committed, they now look for a book/movie deal even before they call MUFON. I'm not sure if this should come as a surprise or not. Even in the absence of a single shred of creditable evidence, if a theory is repeated often enough it will attract a certain number of adherents. How else can we explain organized religion, urban legends, or the Reagan presidency?

From this state of affairs, as Carl surmised, it is easy to imagine alien characters, encounters and plot-lines creeping into ostensibly more mundane programs. What would my favorite crime drama *Homicide* be like, he asked, if the detectives were suddenly visited by their alien masters? I wondered in turn how they might react if they had to solve the murder of an alien, or a case with an alien suspect? People who have to deal with murder committed by dropping a bowling ball off a highway overpass, or snipers killing at random, might not bat an eye at the prospect of a little green suspect, or murderous Men in Black. But that was *before* the implants.

The idea of integrating aliens into other stories is actually rather beguiling. It allows us to let our fellow humans off the hook for all the problems of the world (cf *Sinister Barrier*, Eric Frank Russell) and blame them on the grays. Jury tampering by organized crime figures? You mean jury tampering by aliens. Famine and bitter ethnic warfare? Aliens, not Serbs or Tutsi militia-men, are to blame. Dave Langford wins 13 fan Hugo awards? Certainly no *purely* terrestrial explanation seems credible. Why did I steal the pension fund, take up smoking crack and burn down that orphanage? I cannot lie, your honor: the aliens made me do it.

You may scoff now, but just wait: I'm betting on acquittal.

IN THIS ISSUE: After Andy's observations on the proliferation of alien abduction variety shows, Ted White offers his view that aggressive drivers are good drivers. Then, Victor discusses a brush with censorship along the Mississippi. For notes on recent fan-news as well as some Apak news, check out *The Lake of Fire* on page three. Then Lesley explains her devotion to tabloid journalism and the ways it gives her comfort in an uncertain world. Our readers' letters follow. And the issue finishes up with Andy's countdown of fanzines received since our last issue. *Cartoons and art:* Page one by Teddy Harvia, page two and four by Bill Rotsler, page three by Lesley Reece.



Danger! Hitchhikers who pose as journalists!

Think Fast, Dr. Fandom!

by Ted White

Earlier this year a terrible traffic accident occurred in northern Virginia.

Two cars raced north on the George Washington

Parkway, and, at one point, the white sporty car cut into the left lane ahead of the Jeep Cherokee. The Cherokee hit it, nudging it across the median strip and into the path of two southbound cars, the Cherokee following it across the median. The single drivers in the two southbound cars were killed, as was the driver of the white sporty car. Indeed, the white sporty car was torn in half, front from rear, one half ending up many yards away from the other. Only the driver of the Cherokee survived, with relatively minor injuries.

Recently the driver of the Jeep Cherokee was found guilty of two counts of involuntary manslaughter.

What had happened was that the drivers of the Cherokee and the white car had pissed each other off, apparently starting with the Jeep (in the left lane) refusing to let the white car (behind it) pass. In the course of the next five to eight miles, the two had jockeyed for the lead, racing with each other at speeds estimated to be between 80 and 100 mph.

The G.W. Parkway was never intended for such speeds. It is a relatively narrow (two lanes, each direction), twisty parkway with few barriers, running along the length of the Potomac River, designed originally for sightseers and maintained by the U.S. Parks Dept., not the state highway agency. Speeds close to 80 mph are dangerous even for good cars with no traffic. In morning rush hour it is a wonder those two fools managed to attain such speeds.

The reason I mention this is because this accident has been widely publicized here as the product of "aggressive driving." I'm an aggressive driver, and I feel this incident gives aggressive driving a bad name.

I have always felt that there are, basically, two kinds of drivers: those who are aggressive and those who are not. Around here the latter heavily outnumber the former.

I first encountered "aggressive driving" the first time I took a taxi in New York City. My driver seemed to ignore lane markings, and to rush at unmoving traffic, but he maneuvered his cab adroitly through impossible openings without losing so much as one chip of paint, and got me where I wanted to go faster than I could have done it myself, had I been brave enough then to consider driving in Manhattan traffic.

New York City drivers intimidated me at first. I was used to drivers who hesitated, never taking the first opportunity to make their moves, and, when they did move, doing it slowly and ponderously. I was used to city traffic that moved like sludge.

But soon I realized that the drivers in NYC were my kind of drivers. (Oh, not all of them, to be sure — there were always those who couldn't keep up with the timed lights on a one-way avenue — but many more than I'd ever encountered before, and enough to dominate the traffic, most of them cabbies.) These drivers were alert and ready to act the instant it was possible to do so (if not just a little ahead of that possibility). Driving in traffic with them was far less frustrating than it had been in any other city; I didn't feel like everyone else was mired in molasses. These drivers gave "aggressive driving" a Good Name.

I learned to drive in northern Virginia, at a time when traffic was a tiny fraction of what it is today, and most local roads were country roads — narrow, high-bowed roads often

flanked by steep ditches. My friends and I, while we were teenagers, practiced skids on dirt roads and iced-over parking lots. We did a lot of foolish things, but we also learned survival instincts, and — with cars far less able to handle sudden circumstances — how to react in emergencies not of our own making.

The only accidents I have ever been in were caused by other drivers, in all but one case while I was stopped at a red light (and rear-ended). However, I've avoided several major accidents — highway pileups involving dozens of other cars.

Rich brown remembers one occasion which happened on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. It was 1965, and I was driving a Chevy Greenbrier van, loaded with six Fanoclasts and heading from New York City for the Midwestcon in Cincinnati. We topped a hill and saw before us a dozen or more cars milling about, spinning around, hitting each other like bumper cars, and totally blocking our way.

I slammed on the brakes, but knew immediately we wouldn't stop in time.

Never stopping, just reacting as I went, I threaded the van through the maze of moving cars, and emerged unscathed on the far side of the accident scene. A mile or two further on was a service area, where we stopped and made a report to the state police, and then sat down to unwind in the restaurant. In the 20 minutes we were there we saw no other vehicles go past in our direction. The road had been blocked.

I won't brag. Ask rich whether he, or anyone else in that car, thinks he could have negotiated a way through that mayhem.

I'm an aggressive driver. That's because I love to drive and am not afraid of traffic — even New York City traffic. To me driving is like a sport, and one at which I am pretty good. Most non-aggressive drivers are, I suspect, basically afraid to drive, or afraid of traffic, or afraid of speed. It may be true, for them, that "speed kills," although I've always thought that a stupid slogan.

Excessive speed kills, sure, but not just "speed." Hey, at one time it was thought that at a speed of 35 mph, people would explode!

And I've encountered my share of what I call roadassholes: drivers whose behavior is, in some respect, obnoxious. On several occasions (most of them when I was 20-odd years younger) I have actually chased and pulled over such drivers. (I would demand to see a driver's license, and on the one occasion it was tendered, I tore it up. Usually I just impressed the other driver with my fully-expressed rage, frightening the hell out of him, and leaving him relieved that I didn't physically attack him.) I don't do that any more. I'm older, and the roadassholes are crazier. Many of them pack guns now.

And the non-aggressive drivers, the ones who won't drive over 55, consider all us aggressive drivers roadassholes, dangerous, scary types who need to be gotten off the roads. The accident on the George Washington Parkway just reinforces their beliefs.

And so it goes.



It wasn't very ladylike of me to hit you with a boiled lobster.

Huck Finn

by Victor M. Gonzalez
Staff Writer

The first real challenge on my new beat came a couple of weeks ago, when the Federal Way schools reporter was out of state on assignment. A woman was complaining that her niece

had to read "The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain.

Her objection was to the word "nigger," which is used by Twain about 200 times through the course of the novel. The woman is her niece's legal guardian; the niece told her aunt that the white kids in the 11th grade class had snickered in class when they came across the word. The niece said she felt hurt and humiliated by the experience. The teacher offered her another book to read — a biography of Malcolm X — but that failed to satisfy the aunt.

The aunt basically sees the book as racist, and asked the school district to remove it from the curriculum, or use a version with the offending term edited out. She pointed out that only three of the students in the class are African American, and that the 20,000-student district is predominantly white.

The story was challenging to me for two reasons.

First, it was very difficult for me to take it seriously. The truth is, one shouldn't expect journalists — many of whom have studied literature and all of whom are strong first amendment supporters — to have positive feelings about any question of censorship. It taught me that sometimes one has to force a position of "objectivity" to do a story, rather than following one's instincts. To cover a first-amendment issue with clarity, a reporter must suppress a lot of basic opinions.

Second, I've rarely met a more confrontative person than this woman. She called me up to say that The Seattle Times already had the story. She said there were many community and civic leaders who supported her position, but when I asked who they were she exploded, telling me it wasn't important, and that she would take the case to the Supreme Court if needed.

Then she called me a racist.

I got off the phone and started working on the story. The same issue has come up in many school districts, and a minority of those have chosen to remove the book from the classroom. I called a couple of contacts in nearby school districts and found two black English teachers, both of whom said they taught Huck Finn and didn't like the idea of an expurgated

version. The only person I could find who supported the aunt's position was her mother.

The niece's teacher — white, by the way — explained that he taught the book because it is an excellent example of irony as well as an interesting historical perspective. He said he didn't believe Twain was a racist, and that the book actually was meant to repudiate just those feelings, which were far more prevalent at the time.

I wrote a story. It was well-liked, and even the aunt called me a week later to say that I'd done the best job of all the local media.

That was gratifying, if weird. After doing the first story, I did a similar one a few days later when the district held a hearing where the aunt stated her case about why the book should be removed.

After that, the education reporter returned, and, somewhat relieved, I handed the story back to her. The hearing board met again a week later, and recommended the book stay. That decision then went to the district superintendent, who concurred. The decision has already been appealed to the school board, who will probably uphold it.

The aunt has promised to sue — 14th Amendment, I think — if the board turns her down.

The next week, I realized I had a copy of Huck Finn on my shelves and reread it. It's a fantastic book. Though Jim is portrayed as an idiot at times, the clear message is that he and Huck are more similar than not, and that Huck's racist feelings, evident early, disappear later.

But what sticks with me about doing the story was those initial feelings of disbelief, and then the effort of removing my own feelings. When the receptionist at the paper mentioned the first message from the aunt, telling me it had to do with an expurgated Huck Finn and the school district, I responded (to the receptionist) that the message was probably from someone who wanted all the bad words included, so students could appreciate the whole work.

The receptionist slowly shook her head.



Critics say the new restrictions have hurt morale among CIA spies and hampered efforts to recruit terrorists.

The Lake of Fire

Inflicted by Andy

Packed in the envelope with this issue of Apak is a copy of the 1996 Egoboo Poll, coming to you from Arnie Katz. This does not, as one might expect from

the title, refer to fanac published in 1996; rather, we're asking you to remember stuff that happened in 1995. I know this may be a tall order, but I suggest pulling out your run of Apak to look over the fanzine countdowns as a jog to the memory. Anyway, we're participating in this in order to encourage people to vote Lesley Reece as "Best New Fanzine Fan," and in theory that all egoboo is good egoboo, even if delayed up to 24 months.

Speaking of Lesley, some people have asked for her address so they can send her their fanzines. Lesley is all for this, so make a note of: 15 21 15th Apt. F, Seattle, WA 98122.

Sorry, but we've delayed the list of fanthologies in print one more time; no room this issue, and we're still waiting for a little more information. I promise it will be worth waiting for;

we'll put a box around it and everything.

Get-well wishes go out to Teddy Harvia, who suffered a broken nose off a deflected softball while coaching his daughter Matilda's team. Teddy reports Matilda held his hand and promised him he would be all right, even though it took three hours for the bleeding to stop. Hope she got ice cream too.

John Bangsund sends note of his new e-mail address (bangsund@g130.aone.net.au) and offers it as a place to send birthday wishes to Oz SF author George Turner, whose 80th will be celebrated at Lucy Sussex' Melbourne home on October 19th.

Speaking of Australia, we've sent a few more issues to Australian readers who hadn't responded to us; this really is the last one many of you will see without some response.

We're about to get Apak back on the net in one or more forms; in future, writers who don't want their letters or articles to appear there should let us know.

Suspected site of Martin Tudor Trip Report chapters:
<http://www.ansible.demon.co.uk/TAFFrep.html>

Keeping Tabs
by Lesley Reece

By the time this column is published, we will all be dead.

That's what the October eighth issue of the Sun says. On the cover, against a background of flames, is the

headline "Bible scholars' secret computer probe bares shocking Apocalypse: WORLD WILL END NEXT WEEK!"

"Uh-oh," said the woman behind me in line at the supermarket. "Hope my rent check didn't clear yet." I laughed politely. But I also threw a copy into my cart.

My weakness for tabloid journalism goes back 23 years, to the day I discovered the old black and white National Enquirer. One issue of ominous Jeanne Dixon predictions was all it took to captivate my ten-year-old imagination. After that, I ran to the local Thriftway every Monday, eager to hand over 35 cents in exchange for another week's worth of gory crime-scene photos and pseudo-scholarly discussions of the paranormal. My favorite articles were the ones about spontaneous human combustion: "Mrs. A.J. of Belfast, Ireland, was watching television with her granddaughter when suddenly she began to feel very warm . . ." Usually, there was an artist's conception of the incident, but sometimes they'd run a photo of a pile of ashes on the seat of a slightly-burnt armchair.

The world was about to end in those days, too, but I didn't pay much attention. I was too busy trying to hypnotize my little brother ("Easy instructions on page six!") and wondering whether I had latent psychic abilities ("Do you sometimes know when the phone is about to ring?"). Once, I tried telekinesis on the girl next to me in the school orchestra. It didn't work. Class ended, and her violin was in one piece.

It was in the Enquirer that I first learned of Bigfoot, two-headed babies, and the hole in the ozone layer. There were also regular articles about aliens and UFOs, so I knew about the Roswell incident long before the *X-Files* aired.

Mom didn't approve of my new interest any more than my school friends did. "Nobody believes that stuff! It isn't true," they said.

"So what?" I always said. Narnia wasn't true either, but I liked reading about it. Why should Nostradamus be held to a

higher standard?

As I grew a little older, though, I realized the difference between presenting a story and presenting a fact. C.S. Lewis was writing fantasies that entertained and inspired his readers. That made him literature. The tabloid reporters were lying to their audience. That made them reprehensible. The distinction was, and still is, clear. But it wasn't enough to make me stop reading the tabs. Even when the Enquirer went color about 15 years ago, I simply switched to the Weekly World News.

I'm not stupid. I know extraterrestrials don't have secret meetings with the president. I'm pretty sure Elvis is buried next to his father at Graceland, not zooming his Harley around rural Michigan. The Sun article about the Apocalypse says a "great destroying star that the Bible calls Wormwood" is due to fall into the North Atlantic on Saturday, after which "the people of earth will hear the trumpets that herald our destruction."

The hell you say. I'm shaking in my Doc Martens. But that's the power of those over-the-top headlines; they make it possible for almost anyone to say "Huh! Nobody believes that stuff!" That satisfaction, not the ridiculous "news," is what really sells tabloids, and the publishers know it.

I figured that out one day in 1974. I'd just finished reading an Enquirer piece which claimed that the appearance of the comet Kohoutek signaled the end of the world. We had three weeks left, and I was a bit scared. I was gazing distractedly at the ad on the back page of the issue — the same one for amazing mail-order vitamins that's still there today — when I saw the small print at the bottom of the coupon and laughed out loud.

It said, "Allow six to eight weeks for delivery."
We had at least that long.



Let's see if she can outwit an APB! Come on!

AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH: We start with some comments on #66 that arrived literally just hours too late to go into last issue, from VICKI ROSENZWEIG (33 Indian Road #6-R, New York, NY 10034):]

Dan's TAFF report continues to be a pleasure. It helps that I know some of the people, but Dan writes well enough that it doesn't matter: Cherie, who I never heard of before, is as vivid as Martin Smith, who I know.

Bridget's thoughts on friends through fandom are interesting, but (from my viewpoint at least) slightly erroneous. Friends through fandom are like friends you make through any hobby or activity: there are the ones you see only at cones and the like, who might only be friendly acquaintances, or who might be friends who just live too far away to meet for dinner or a movie, and there are some like to call up and see elsewhere. Actually, looking at her letter again, I think this is the point she is trying to make, to which I will only add that most of us know the difference between a friendly correspondent, who we might agree to meet for dinner if they're visiting our hometown, and a friend we already know and care about. Fandom is, in some ways, a community, but that doesn't mean we're all best friends: a community is going to include the peo-

ple you can't stand, and the ones you have nothing in common with except for some weird reason your brother hangs out with them, and the friend of a friend of a friend with whom you may or may not be able to have a substantive conversation. Fans may sometimes write away for friends, but at least there's a real person writing what goes into the mailbox; this is far better than constructing an emotional life around watching soap operas and worrying about how the characters treat each other.

'I couldn't resist reading Ian's anecdote about the Australian quail aloud to my partner; the giggles were delightful.'

[APH: Now, we quickly move to GEORGE FLYNN (P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Square Station, Cambridge, MA 02142, who has, unsurprisingly, a correction to my Worldcon report:]

'Er, the much-more-than-daily newszine was on the second, not fourth, floor, in the lavish office over behind the elevators. It seemed as if I spent half the con there, waiting for the computers and copiers to be free long enough to produce Business Meeting agendas. (Not counting the Hugo ceremony, I didn't set foot in the Convention Center between Thursday afternoon and Monday morning.) WSFS was assigned one of those little "bolt-hole offices" on the mezzanine, but since they didn't bother to supply us with a key, we didn't dare leave anything there.

"The wonderful people at the post office seem to have lost all the mail that came for me while I was in L.A. (Aug. 27 — Sept. 3). So if anyone sent me a zine around that time, there's a good chance I didn't see it. (I think I loosed all the ones I *did* get.)"

[APH: Hmm. Wonder what that office with all the computers and copiers on the fourth floor was. Well, no time to puzzle, it's on to a note from CHRISTINE M. BZDAWKA (909 Walnut St., Verona, WI 53593), who confirms:]

'Yes folks, there is a Verona Fandom. Headquarters alternate between my bedroom in Verona, Wisconsin in the winter months, and Jill Flores' garage on the north side of Madison during the summer. That's because the membership is required to smoke during meetings, and we must be mindful of non-members in the general vicinity. If we are unable to hold meetings during the week, we also frequent the Crystal Corner Bar in Madison or the Bucket of Blood, a bar in Mazomanie. (It's not really called that, but for the longest time we couldn't remember the real name, and I always wanted to hang out in a bar called the Bucket of Blood, so it was decided.) All members must also be lifetime subscribers to Apparatchik, since that is our main fanac. We did attend Wiscon this year and enjoyed it thoroughly. In fact, we were so impressed by the organization and fellowship surrounding Wiscon that half the membership is currently working on a Worldcon bid — Verona in '04!

'Perhaps because of our newness to fandom, isolation and small membership, we are largely removed from what Victor calls "pungent hysterics" in fandom. Funny, I've always considered it playful ribbing among friends. You mean, those feuds are for real? Wow. I guess we're so used to the kind of feuds related to the nuts & bolts of life, like those between siblings, partners, plaintiffs and defendants, etc., that ideological disputes at cons, the perfection of a clubzine, and personality conflicts are more fun than serious. I'm sure that if our Worldcon bid is accepted or our level of fanac grows, we will change our tune.'

[VMG: I must admit I often have doubts about whether what seems like a feud really is. Much of it, indeed, is "playful ribbing." But, as it can with friends and siblings, playful ribbing can lead to misunderstandings and fights. It's much easier to resolve the difference between a joke and a comment meant seriously when you know personally the person who said it. When a person is familiar with the tone and nature of another person, it often becomes easier to solve disputes and work out whatever is really being said. Thus, it's easier when your knowledge of fandom is limited to those you know in person.

As I've said before, without that personal knowledge, it's very easy to take comments meant in humor as assaults. And there seems to be a tendency in fandom to play up that fact: ironic statements that are critical, but can be defended as humor. Often these are among the least well-reasoned of criticisms. I should know, having fallen victim to many.

And on the topic of acquaintance with fandom, we've a new letter from E.B. FROHNET (4725 Dorsey Dr, Suite A, Box 700, Ellicott City, MD 21042) to consider:]

'I apologize for being so long between letters, but I was waiting for the Hugo results: disappointing but not surprising, most fans vote with their reflexes and not their minds.

'Let me respond briefly to Victor's comments on Twink. Most people who start up a fanzine have a certain amount of background. As a neo *editor* (not a neo *fan*) I simply jumped in blind, and made a lot of mistakes. With the help of constructive

criticism and suggestions from more experienced editors as Elizabeth Garrott and yourself, I am, as you say, slowly "learning to walk". The next issue will see the departure of the much-hated black column lines, together with a Steve Stiles cover, LOC's from such as Lois McMaster Bujold (the author of that string of books you haven't read), etc. Perhaps it will be more to your taste.

'Concerning two artists: Note I didn't mention their names, and I would hardly rate one fan withholding patronage of one vote in the Hugo process as a "threat". I was pissed, and I think deservedly pissed. I asked two people for help. One did not bother to reply at all, the other sent what I construed as a snotty note. A minimum of a civil response would have been more appropriate. However, I fully understand that no one is *obligated* to contribute.

'Whatever my differences with Joseph Nicholas, they are differences of opinion regarding context. I fell no personal grudge or animosity toward Joseph, and our exchange of letters remains polite and cordial even though we are "agreeing to disagree" on some points. George Scithers used to quote the old dictum about writers' workshops, which could apply equally to fanzines: "We are not criticizing you; we are criticizing pieces of paper you have typed upon."

'I always enjoy Lesley's contributions to Apparatchik, both prose and artistic, and hope she does more.'

[VMG: I'm happy to hear of the upcoming improvements to Twink, and I look forward to seeing the next issue.

I still think you overreacted to the fact that you couldn't get art from those two artists. As much as people deny it, there is such a thing as reputation and prestige in fandom, and it's something that has to be earned. You've barely begun.

I would suggest that if it happens again, you keep your resentments to yourself. Complaining that people haven't responded, or haven't responded the way you want certainly won't encourage contributions from those people or others. It just isn't in your best interest.

And a threat is still a threat, no matter how trivial.]

[APH: I think it's perfectly reasonable to be hacked at people who don't come through, but it's very important to keep such disputes between the two of you. We have contributions blow off our deadlines all the time, but excoriating them publicly would do nothing more than assure that they would never write anything for us again — and if we did so without naming names, we might lose *all* our columnists.

I agree that it would be best if everyone could follow the advice offered by Mr. Scithers and others, but human nature being what it is, it should come as no surprise that many writers don't. One needs to keep that in mind as well, when offering criticism.

Some echoes of this, as well as comments on other topics in #67, come from ROBERT LICHTMAN (P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442):]

'Yes, I think it was me to whom you turned on whatever night it was and said, "You know, I'm having an amazingly good time." And I recall agreeing with you. The bonhomie and sense of goodwill that pervaded the convention was obvious to me, too, though I'm sure we missed something we'll get to read about in future issues of File 770 (well, or maybe not, considering who the editor is). Like you, I spent a lot of time in and around the fan lounge. I was pleased to read that I wasn't the only person who was uncomfortable with Connie Willis tedious and occasionally embarrassing toastpersoning. Please let

us know when the rest of your Worldcon account will appear in SFC. Did you see the Sci-Fi Channel's special on the Worldcon? Mostly it was media crap, but there was one delicious brief interlude with a sercon-looking Neil Rest and a number of good chunks of an interview with James White.

I haven't gotten around to reading Twink #2 yet — it came two days after my return from Toner and Worldcon, and is caught up in the huge backlog of fanzine reading I'm working my way through — but Frohvet's remarks about his treatment by several unnamed fan artists do leave a bad taste in one's mouth. Victor is quite correct that "what we get from our contributors is a gift," and that applies equally to all fanzine editors. I could get worked up over E.B.'s attitude, but instead I think I'll send him an envelope full of Rotsler illos so he'll have something other than his own squids to break up the text.

Enjoyed Randy's "Worldcon Snapshots" and thanks for the note later on that he was also one of the original fwa founders. Thanks to Ted White for the update in just what it is he does for a living these days. I'd been hearing third-hand reports of his job's convolutions and changes, so it was good to have a direct account. I'm glad that e-mail is making it possible for Ted to participate more in fanac. Was amused of how he speaks of Blat! No. 5 in the third person.'

[APH: Being a prisoner of TCI cable, I did not get to see the Sci-Fi (*shudder*) Channel's coverage. If anyone in the Seattle area made a tape of it, maybe they could bring it to the next Vanguard party?

Next, HARRY WARNER JR. (423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740) also celebrates the aftermath of Worldcon:]

I trust you are all returned by now to the plains of normal fanac, after such rarefied heights of the Worldcon weekend, and are again paying attention to such minor aspects of fandom as locs. I doubt if you've published more than six or seven issues of Apparatchik this month and I can find only the two most recent issues for a sufficient quantity of comment hooks.

Your reaction to the con seems to be typical. I've read one detailed account of the event and I've heard spoken descriptions of it from two other sources so far. All of them have expressed much the same barely qualified happiness at how things were done in Los Angeles this summer.

I hope E.B. Frohvet won't be hurt if he ever learns whom he reminds me of: John B. Bristol. John was a sudden newcomer to fandom, just like E.B., and I seem to remember that his writings and opinions were somewhat similar to the editor of Twink. Eventually, Jack Speer confessed that he had animated a nonexistent fan for hoax purposes. I don't really think that Speer could be doing it again with another name, considering his age and lack of participation in most aspects of fanzine fandom. But I can't break away from the thought.

Lesley's complaint about the scarcity of analog watches reminds me of a problem I'm having with my half-formed intention to buy a receiver to replace my separate pre-amplifier, amp and tuner which are now more than one third of a century old and gradually breaking down. No matter how hard I look in stores and in catalogs, I can't find a good quality receiver whose tuner section can be manipulated by hand across a dial. Instead, everything available has an LED display of frequencies which are set by the innards of the receiver and move by jumps from one frequency to another. The trouble with this is the fact that some AM stations are barely audible because they're too close to more powerful or nearer transmitters on adjoining frequencies, but can be heard fairly well if the frequency can be adjusted by hand and the weaker station is tuned just a little off

its exact frequency, away from the stronger signal. There's some loss of fidelity, but comprehension of the weak station is improved. This can't be done with electronic frequency settings.'

[VMG: It's true that receivers tend to be digital these days, and that most can't tune an AM frequency more precisely than every 10 kilohertz. However, there are others who want the same as you do, and I wouldn't be surprised if a high-end stereo manufacturer has provided stereo receivers with finer tuning.

The terrible fact at the base of it all is that AM has been the last priority for most stereo manufacturers for decades. Most AM tuners in stereos are rotten receivers, no matter how precise they are.

So, I'd suggest another alternative, if you're willing to pay for another box: a decent short-wave radio will cover the AM bands, and should allow tuning accurate to one kilohertz or better. These radios are designed to pick up low-level signals, even if there is a strong competing signal. Good luck.

Now, a new correspondent, TOM FELLER (P.O. Box 13626 Jackson, MS 39236) joins us:]

I bought a bunch of issues at Worldcon and enjoyed them very much.

'Comments on #57: Dave Rike's comments on the attitude of Star Trek fans reminds me of meeting the local chapter of Starfleet, the international ST club with chapters all over the world. A newcomer to the city has just formed the chapter. (They start out as "shuttles" and graduate to "starships". I am still not clear on the difference.) As I often do with small, local clubs, I bought a membership to be supportive, but I declined to join *Starfleet International*, having no interest. The leader commented, "You realize, of course, that you can never be promoted." This was just after I became president of the Southern Fandom Confederation and joined the Lone StarCon II committee. It was all I could do to keep from laughing. I did reply that the position I wanted was "Unpaid Scientific Advisor", but they didn't get the joke.

'#58: A few years ago, my company owned the Ramada Inn of Houma, Louisiana, under a managerial contract. I think every corporate staff person, including me, got lost in that area. We used to joke that if you didn't know the roads well enough to not need road signs, you weren't welcome.

I can understand the plight of Andy's sister and brother-in-law. It's very hard to become a member of a community where everyone has family and friendship ties measured in centuries. I grew up in a comparable environment (though measured in decades rather than centuries). In addition, Liz and Chris are members of the *intelligentsia* in a working class/*petit bourgeois* atmosphere. It's not easy to bridge class differences.

I've lived in the south for 20 years and still feel like an outsider. This is mostly due to not having grown up in the region and gone to certain colleges and universities. However, I have experience little artificial friendliness (or perhaps I am too insensitive to realize it is artificial). What I have seen is a defensiveness that is I think partly the result of media images of the South as backward and primitive.

'On the other hand, I've enjoyed living here. But of course all my local friends (aside from some co-workers) are either fans or fringe fans (Trekkies, gamers, etc.).

'#62: One of my first FAPA mailings included Sam Moskowitz and somebody else arguing about what really happened at the first Worldcon. "Jesus," I thought, "What am I getting myself into?"'

Clinton, against the clear will of the people, has made baby-killing the law of the land.

{ APH: Ah, Tom . . . can I be the only one who wonders what evidence you might offer to support your implication that being president of a regional fan-club and participation on a Worldcon committee is an innately more worthy application of one's time than scrabbling for rank in *Starfleet International*?

While we puzzle this out, DAVE HICKS (1 St Woolos Place, Newport, South Wales NP9 4GQ United Kingdom, e-mail at little.jim@dial.pipex.com) gives testimony as to why I want paper-mail addresses attached to e-mail sent our way:]

'First a serious and grown-up type commendation for the policy of continuing to include postal addresses for fans e-mailing their comments to you. Of all the electronic dooms forecast for fandom it never occurred to me until quite recently that the dog-eared pile of index cards that is every fan's first mailing list (and indeed my current one) can only be compiled from letter columns with genuine postal addresses on them. Letterhacks are letterhacks because they want to go on receiving stuff, and how are they ever going to see Little Jimmy Fan with his brand new eight page wonder all about how all us old fuckers have got to go 'cause we don't see the true meaning of *The Number Of The Beast* going to get together a decent distribution list without proper addresses in the letter columns? It would be tragic.

'Dan Steffan's TAFF pieces have been excellent. There's a refreshing charm and openness in the way he's replayed my own country back to me. It's quite startling to find someone taking pleasure in British Rail, which the British look upon less as a transport system and more as a metaphor for our entire post-imperial decline. The most recent fragment had me spending the day trying to come up with snappy replies to Avedon's "Cherie's got seven rings in her pussy", although the best I could manage was well let's get some hooks and hang the curtains . . .

'I figure I ought to thank you for the "only serious ongoing fanzine criticism column in the English-speaking world" comment as well, not primarily for the heady buzz of the egoboo so much as when Critical Wave's alternate reviewer Mike Siddall happened upon it he was livid. Besides, the only really ongoing review column with genuine regularity is in Apparatchik, you should sit down with six or seven issues and just read the back pages in sequence and the individual snapshot reviews coalesce into a more coherent overview (with a little work). Throw in Christina Lake and Paul Kincaid and Attitude's floating talent pool (they'd get Dr Frederick Wertham if they could . . .) and I figure there's as much reviewing, and nearly as much thought collectively going into fanzine criticism as — ooh — half a Don West article. Which is actually quite a lot.

'All the work by Andy and Carl and particularly Victor, whose Staff Writer column, far from attracting nonsensical "is this fan writing?" type correspondence has now been going on for so long as to be a minor fannish institution (which is where we'll all end up, no doubt) deserves far more comment. However, what you'd really like is if I get off my arse and start publishing fanzines again, isn't it? So maybe, real soon now, I'll have something to trade with again. I get a fourth issue out and the ratio drops from one for 22 to one for 16 and a half fanzines. Fair exchange is no robbery.'

[VMG: Frankly, I'm not sure that I wouldn't like to hear more about how wonderful my column is . . . Give up those damn fanzines and write locs, I say.]

[APH: I'm sorry for slighting Mike Siddall, but honestly, how seriously should I take a fanzine criticism column that

claims "shooting's too good" for me?

Here's someone else who is hard to take seriously, ROB HANSEN (144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London E6 1AB United Kingdom, e-mail to rob@fiawol.demon.co.uk):]

'Just finished reading the latest fine issue of yr zine. Not surprisingly, the bit I found most interesting was Dan's account of your visit to us here at 144 last year. I feel I should add a correction and a confirmation. First the correction. Actually, Dan, the group Avedon and Cherie belong to is not *Women Against Censorship* but *Feminists Against Censorship*. I'm currently putting together a web-site for them, one deliberately low on graphics and high on text, which should be up and running at <http://www.fiawol.demon.co.uk/FAC/index.html> by the time anyone reads this (assuming Andy & co run this LoC).

'Secondly, the correction. Yes, Dan, Avedon was indeed telling the truth when she told you that Cherie's nipples are as big as your thumb. I know, for I have personally witnessed these twin marvels and regard them as one of the great wonders of the world, right up there with Stonehenge, the pyramids, and WARHOON #28. I was acting as (don't laugh) bodyguard/bouncer at a fund-raising fetish affair, strutting around in a rugby jersey and trying to look considerably more mean, moody, and menacing than I am, when Cherie walked in wearing these thigh-length high-heel boots, all manner of fancy metalwork inserted in multiple piercings, and a skimpy latex costume that showed off her tattoos and included a bra with cut-outs through which those incredible nipples protruded (stop drooling, Dan). Truly, she was a glorious sight to behold, and I was grateful to be one of those doing the beholding. (You can put your tongue back in now, Dan.)'

[APH: This, I fear, admits no comment. On to STEVE JEFFERY (44 White Way, Kiddington, Oxon OX5 2XA United Kingdom, e-mail to JEFFERY_STEVE@CTC-COOKSON.CCMAIL.CompuServe.COM) who recalls Ted White's column in #65:]

'Didn't think I'd see an article on prog rock in a fanzine, and a U.S. fanzine at that (and certainly not a mention of Porcupine Tree). Ted is definitely right about Crimson, who manage to completely reinvent themselves every few years (or decades perhaps), while lots of other bands have fallen by the wayside. Who remembers, or sheds a tear for, Camel for example. And does anyone remember a blatant Yes rip-off band called Starcastle? I think they only did the one eponymous album, back around '75 or '76, timed just as punk was breaking.

'What I was amazed to find (or to have found for me, by Dave Wingrove) was a CD reissue of a very obscure 1973 album *Odgipig* by a band called Sindelfingen. Partly because that was an old school band at the time, and as far as I was aware there were only 300 copies made as a private pressing. Strange how things turn up out of the past.'

[APH: What can I say but "Cool!" Quick now, a request for our readers from MURRAY MOORE (377 Manly Street, Midland, Ontario, Canada, e-mail at murray.moore@encode.com) to finish off the letters for this time:]

'Having read Apparatchik 67, I am moved to ask, what are Lee Hoffman's best westerns? (Answer to the question, What is a non-sequitur?) I have been scanning the western section in local used book stores. Several of her westerns are available. Which titles do I want?

'It goes without saying that I assume that one or more readers of this slim but frequent journal will be able to wax authoritative on the best-to-read pro writing of the editor of *Quandry*.'

[WAHF: John Bangsund & Kim Huett]

He waved the poker, holding it in a big asbestos mitten.

1.) **Crawdaddy! #14**, edited by Paul Williams, P.O. Box 231155, Encinitas, CA 92023: Every now and then, when chatting with Paul at one convention or another, I get this little shiver: Fuck, man, this is *Paul Williams* I'm sitting next to! The guy who basically invented the music fanzine, who hobnobbed with Phil Dick and Tim Leary, and as related in this issue, John Lennon and Yoko Ono. Paul seems to be inserting at least one historical article along with the reviews of contemporary music and musicians; the gem this time out is a memoir of his trip to Montreal John and Yoko's second "Bed-in for Peace" and the recording of "Give Peace a Chance" at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel. Paul is visible in the tape clip of the recording which shows up on VH-1 every now and then. Also noteworthy are Lewis Shiner's thoughts on Maria McKee, Mark Hagen's report on seeing the Sex Pistols Reunion Tour (which still sounds like a hoax to me, even after having seen them on Letterman last month), and brand-new Seattle resident Michaelangelo Matos' lengthy consideration of James Brown and his place in recent musical and cultural history. Matos comes up with just a few insights that I had not seen other writers offer, but his powerful, passionate love and respect for Brown's work burns like an arc-light and kept me reading all the way to the end. An up-and-comer I expect to see more from in the future.

2.) **Ansible #111**, edited by Dave Langford, 94 London Rd., Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU UK: The most notable news in this issue, to my eye, is the word that Martin Tudor and Steve Green have finally knuckled-under to the inexorable pressure of their financial wounds, and will cease publication of *Critical Wave* after one more issue. One can't blame them, certainly, but it will be terribly sad to see the end of a decade-plus era. Langford also notes the departure of Kris Rusch from the editorial helm of *F & SE*, the completion of the *Fantasy Encyclopedia* (Clute, Grant, et al), the apparent recovery of Pat ("You Dog!") Cadi-gan from gall bladder surgery, and openly repeats rumors that his more famous brother Jon Langford is hung like a musk-ox. Has the man no shame? Less amusing is the story of a massive net-borne virus hoax perpetrated by Penguin Books to flog an interactive novel assembled by Stephen Baxter, editor Hugh Barnes and electronic publicity boffin Guy Gadney. Mr. Baxter protests his innocence in the affair, while Barnes seems to have remained wisely mute, and Gadney has confirmed his status as a low-grade moron by expressing surprise that this bright idea ended up causing something of a panic. Oh, brave new world.

3.) **VFD #4**, edited by Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur Blvd. Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107: In many ways, VFD has become the fanzine I've wished Arnie Katz would do ever since I first became aware of his return to fandom, nearly five years ago. Through his pursuit of a dialogue with his letter-writers, he is able to make excellent use of his vast experience and knowledge of fandom and its history, and the both the prodding of the readership and his desire to recount daily events in Las Vegas fandom keep Arnie away from the more indulgent discursions which have been a feature of his prose in the past. In the editorial passage which opens the issue, Arnie confirms that this is no accident; he notes that last year's perzine, *Swoon*, was too close in style to his work in *Wild Heirs*, and that he really wanted to do something different this time. I think he has succeeded. His discussion of the reasons why he hasn't embraced fandom on the Internet ought to be eloquent enough to keep him from being assigned to any electronic fandom panels in the future. And I was quite taken with his discussion with

rich brown about the place of amateurism in fandom, Laney's homophobia, and his report on events at Toner, where things seem to have been quite entertaining enough without any need for instant mythologizing. I could do without the imaginary correspondence between the cats, but that's a minor complaint. This is a good fanzine, which shows what a strong writer Arnie can be.

4.) **Australian SF Bullsheet #63**, edited by Marc Ortlieb, P.O. Box 215, Forest Hill, Victoria 3131 Australia, on the web at <http://www.vicnet.net.au/~sfz/bullsheets.htm>: This is the last issue of Marc's bulletin of doings in the antipodean science fiction community, and I am seriously considering sending him the ten dollars he wants for a lifetime subscription. While *Thyme* remains a more exhaustive and certainly more physically-impressive document of Australian fandom, the fact that this appears so quickly gives it a unique utility. Someone in the U.S. really ought to do something like it — we need a real newszine so that I can stop feeling so guilty about not providing our readers with more breaking news.

5.) **The Flying Pig #39**, edited by Darroll Pardoe, 36 Hamilton St., Hoole, Chester CH2 3JQ UK: The one drawback to the letter-zine format which Darroll pursues here is that we get to see all too little of his own writing as a result. Interesting as everyone's response is to Ro's previous comments on leaving her prosthesis behind, I was even more fascinated by Darroll's brief observation on the parallels between his late-sixties experiments with multigraphing and those pursued at the San Francisco Oracle. And his memories of "The Perfumed Garden," a show hosted by John Peel on the late, lamented Pirate Radio London, was even more fascinating to me. I could have read eight pages on that alone. But the beauty of the letter zine form is that with subsequent issues, I may yet have the opportunity to do so.

Also Received: *De Profundis* #292 & 293, Tim Merrigan for the LASFS.

— Andy Hooper

APPARATCHIK is the Jeffery Maier of fandom, a twelve-year-old boy from Old Tappan, New Jersey, who reached out with his glove in the 7th inning of a play-off game between New York and Baltimore in Yankee stadium, and stole the ball from enemy fielder Tony Tarasco. The umpire incorrectly called the ball a home-run, making Jeffery an instant hero. But it's worth noting that someone stole the ball from him, and they now plan to sell it to the highest bidder. 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 page 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 Al Capp's jawbone. /-/ 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 Rowland, Karen Schaffer, Leslie Smith, Nevenah Smith, Dale Speirs, Geri Sullivan, Alva Svoboda, Steve Swartz, David "Bucket of Blood" Thayer, Tom Whitmore and Art Widner.

One woman, a hundred thousand cold dinners.