

## Farber Melts Frost!

Abi hopes to pay, even publish.

by Andy Hooper

Scant hours after issue #69 finally went into the mail, a message arrived from Gary Farber, who is currently visiting Britain through the largesse of the Farber Fund. The message detailed a conversation with the elusive Abi Frost, presently the focus of attention from all corners of fandom in connection with her failure to pass on money entrusted to her through the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund. Gary's eagerly-awaited account of

★ their meeting, dated November 5th, read in part as follows:

★ 'I called Abigail Frost from Avedon and Rob's phone yesterday afternoon; I began leaving a message on her answering machine, but as soon as she heard my voice, she picked right up. She enthusiastically responded to the thought that we might get together the next day, and we set a plan to meet at her Tube Station, Whitechapel, at 11 a.m. this morning, with the idea that she would show me a bit of the East End, and then head off towards the British Museum. Not a word was said by either of us yet about TAFF, but of course we both knew it was on the agenda.

★ 'Abi brought up all the facts with no excuses or hesitation. The owed money is approximately £2,700. I have a check in hand from her, made out to Martin Tudor, for £200, which I will post to him in the morning. She will make payments of £80 a month beginning in two months, which should pay off the debt within three years if all goes as planned.

★ 'She will forward the records of who voted, etc., in the 1996 TAFF race to Martin forthwith. She has them, and feels there will be no problem in now getting that information to him.

★ 'Now, naturally, you are asking, "How and why did all this happen? What is Abi's explanation?"

★ 'Abi had a mental breakdown. She's now under medical treatment, and taking prescribed antidepressants. She described not just the crippling depression I expected, but also confessed that in the past year she had suffered psychotic breaks. She described, in horrific terms, her subjective experience of seeing simple page numbers turn into meaningful messages which were telling her secret things. She hallucinated; she became delusional; she lost ability to cope with reality. She recognized that she was in deep trouble, but by then her depression was so severe that she was unable to bring herself to talk to anyone about it, to ask for the help that would, of course, have been forthcoming. In her current state, under the influence of antidepressants, she recognizes the depths of her insanity over the last year. She minces no words about it, and offers no excuses to avoid her responsibility.

★ 'She gave me a detailed account of financial disasters that struck her. The gist was that work she thought guaranteed, including long-standing commitments, fell through. Expected jobs were lost. Her creditors unexpectedly closed in. She was threatened with legal action to have her house mortgage foreclosed. Her bank account went hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds into the negative.

★ 'She told me how she began to hide from fandom, how she refused to answer the phone, and that fear overwhelmed all her attempts to seek help. She described abortive attempts to try to bring herself to confess to a couple of specific fans, and her collapse and inability to get words out. She described without excuse how she fled. She accepts full responsibility for her repeated failure.

★ 'Whether Abi is realistic in her expectations of being able to begin the payment schedule to TAFF of eighty pounds a month, beginning in January, I cannot say. Time will speak to that. Similarly, she felt there would now be no problem in forwarding the records, and she even felt strong enough to speak of beginning work on her trip report, with the idea that this would bring the various monies promised by fan organizations to TAFF. Again, time will show whether this will happen or not.'

★ I want to emphasize that this is a heavily-edited version of Gary's letter; he also offered numerous assurances that he felt Abi's claims of illness were entirely genuine, that she is very aware of the havoc she caused in fandom, and that he sincerely hoped people would give her a chance to redeem herself.

★ It's most likely that this will be just the opening round in a series of negotiations between Abi and Martin Tudor and various other parties concerned with TAFF, but it comes as an incredible relief to hear *something* from her after so long a silence. It was always hard to believe that she had absconded with the money in a calculated or malicious fashion; with the British TAFF account tipping the scales at £2,700, there was never a chance that fandom could afford to let such a loss go unchallenged. And it made some sense that

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## Issue #70, November 22nd, 1996

This is the **seventieth** 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 Starliter 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 vxg@p.tribnet.com. 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), 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 mere handful of the sleeping giant's eyecrust. See the back page for the addresses of our British and Australian mailing agents. This is Drag Bunt Press Production #279. **Apparatchiki:** Dr. Gregory Benford, Randy Byers, Steve Green, Irwin Hirsh, Lucy Lawless, Lesley Reece, Martin Tudor, Pam Wells & Ted White. **On the Web:** <http://www.oz.net/~cjuarez/APAK> **Art this issue:** Page three, four by Lesley Reece, page three, five by Carl Juarez.

## Now Arriving

by Victor M. Gonzalez  
Staff Writer

Good fanzine writing is mostly good essay writing.

Although humorous vignettes, straight reporting, short-form reviews and interviews also fill up space,

personal writing is the bulk of most fanzines, and is possibly the reason we read and enjoy them. Convention reports, fanzine and book reviews and tales of the household kitty (or mouse) all fall into the "personal essay" category.

I've found that I forget most fan articles within hours of reading them, but that the exceptions are usually what I consider well-written personal essays — Christina Lake's *Never Quite Arriving #5*, for example. It is a rare fanzine. It invariably made me smile, it was educational, and I really dug the writing. Good use of detail, and the right ones, mostly.

Of Monday night at the Los Angeles worldcon: "Even the fan lounge was dismantled, and what was left of the food, chips and beer taken out to the comfy chairs in the foyer where a circle of fans partied unconvincingly to the accompaniment of farewell hugs and smothered yawns."

Of a restaurant near Mexico City: "One the way out we admire the huge vats of soup, where if you watch them being stirred long enough you can see the heads and other parts of animals emerge."

*Never Quite Arriving* is a trip report, as Christina travels the United States and Mexico. It starts near Boston, in a household of computers, children and adults, as Christina buys a car. Then to Las Vegas and Los Angeles, a 12-day party tour. A road trip across the eastern half of the U.S. follows, and some letters round out the fanzine. The Steve Stiles cover — Christina ascending stairs through a trap door, traversing four worlds — is fantastic.

Perhaps the biggest misunderstanding in the reading of fannish essays is the size of the intended audience. I have no problem with those who write for their 20 or 30 closest fan buddies. But I wonder why the same essay is sent to 400 people. Writing for a small group is an example of the beauty that results when a tremendous amount of information is indicated through context without direct statements. To a small audience, the fannish audience, the mention of a name brings forth connotations of personality and character that — if the person isn't known to the reader — would have to be spelled out. If the fanzine is really aimed at 30 people, and you're not one of them, much of the context will go over your head. The more contextual condensation the writer employs without actual description, the smaller the intended audience becomes.

Being outside the audience creates disconnection. Related to that is the level of detail. A conversation aimed for 30, no matter how rife with ennui, insults and knowledge of corruption, is tedious to those outside.

And, by the way, I think this applies regardless of the size of the intended audience. It's fine to write for a smaller group of people, but don't expect the rest of us to understand it. If it's written in Greek, few fans will bother to translate, no matter how funny it is.

It would be too simple to say there is a division in fandom between those who only write about their immediate group and those who expand to appeal to a larger mass; and Christina couldn't have fallen into that trap anyhow, as she was separated from her group. And, I hasten to point out, there are plenty of fannish essays that manage to talk about local events

in an interesting way. Sometimes it is merely a matter of imagining what your fannish friend across the country will get out of what you're writing.

That is where Christina succeeds. Perhaps because everything she writing about is new to her, it's all presented with enough context for almost anyone to understand.

Writing for a more distant audience is not easy. It isn't always the best thing to do with the material at hand. I believe that a joke capable of making your friends fall off their chairs is worth putting into print, no matter what the venue. But, as D. West put it in that very analytical, personal essay written years ago, it depends on what arena you prefer to play in. If the bigger arena isn't appealing, that's fine with me.

I think Christina's tales of Mexico would be accessible to anyone. The only character she knows that the reader doesn't is exemplified by her rather impulsive actions. The stuff on Toner and the worldcon is accessible to any fan with a basic American fannish education.

Of her confused and delayed meeting with Shrimp Brother One in the Las Vegas airport: "What a relief to finally find a large guy in an olive-green t-shirt waving to me as I got off the bus. Tom Springer, I presume. Well, after that, what could we do but go to meet Tammy and relax with a few beers etc."

That's about all that could be said for Springer, and I even know what "etc." means. So maybe that quote isn't the best example of what I'm talking about.

And in the interests of full disclosure, I admit that my name is mentioned in the fanzine, and *I've never met Christina*.

But, despite being corrupted by knowledge and egoboo, I think Vegas fans are presented as the energetic, unfailingly trufannish souls they are. In her report, Christina says something about what makes the Vegrans interesting, even to those who haven't had the pleasure.

Christina spends some time comparing her impressions in person to those she had encountered in print: "As if they weren't real people but cartoon fan personas who lived the complete fannish life. Not a group of friends socializing who sometimes have a great time and sometimes get stressed with each other, who have jobs to go to, watch TV and get on with life, but Fan Family who quip merrily with each other about Rotsler and Tucker and behave like they're characters in a piece of '50s fan fiction."

I don't think Christina's being critical there, and I'm not either. I enjoy a portion of *Wild Heirs* every issue, and I can't fault Las Vegas fandom for lack of output.

If I were to be critical, I might point out a couple spots in Christina's narrative where I stopped for a few seconds. One is her farewell to Mexico City: "I know there is crime. I've seen all the different kinds of uniformed police and soldiers on the street, seen the beggars, whole families of beggars with young children in tow, but even so, Mexico is beginning to get to me."

And about a belated trip to the AIDS quilt in Washington D.C.: "I walk around in that mellow slanting late afternoon sunlight, feeling both melancholic and uplifted. When most of the quilt pieces have been put away I help in folding one, lifting a corner and laying it down gently in the centre. Then I walk away, back toward the bustle of 'Taste of D.C.,' glad that I had made this little pilgrimage."

Both of these passage seem to resolve themselves a little too simply: open, complex questions that collapse in a few lines of rhetoric.

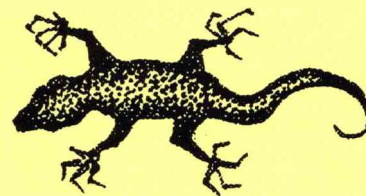
But, I think these things — which just jarred me a little — are indicative of an honest writer. I have the strong sense,

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But if he forgets, and looks quickly up and to the left, he sees this beaver run like lightning across the ceiling.

while I'm reading her fanzine, that Christina is trying to communicate to me the most interesting things she can recall. What flaws exist help say something about her that we didn't know before. And that's a valuable thing, if you give a damn, because no one can be viewed as human if they don't exhibit flaws.

In any case, I ended up giving a damn about Never Quite Arriving. I suspect I'll remember it for a while. I can't say that about most fanzines.



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## In the future, I'll thank you not to cook my wife!

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### Zen Driving

by Jae Leslie Adams

Ted White's column on aggressive driving left me with the plaintive inquiry, where would he have us non-aggressive drivers confine ourselves?

His driving ability is a good thing, but not available to everyone, as witness that pile-up of drivers he was able to thread his way through at high speed, those who had unfortunately not been able to avoid the hazard. We might suppose they would have liked to, if we look on them as persons rather than as objects in a maze.

The machismo in our driving culture is widely complained of but like the weather nobody does anything about it. As a devout Pedestrian I find it a challenge to even notice how I am being suckered into the universal hostility on the road, the competitive street racing. Is it the machines themselves that train the people operating them to act like automatons? As a rule I try to drive my husband's rusting 3/4-ton truck gently, but still it is hard to resist testing the excellent acceleration of its 454. It aggrandizes me to be fastest, even for a block. It feels good. We have generalized from each one's natural self-centered emotion, that one's own vehicle should be foremost and everybody else should get out of the way. This Is What Would Happen If Everybody Did: Hamburger On The Highways.

Without question, the roads must be utilized to their design limits, the machines must run as fast as possible, and we are all expected to function at the extreme limit of our ability. The insanity of this struck me in Portland one day last summer when I was heading for the ocean and got stuck for an hour or so in a slowdown, four packed lanes of drivers matching all their individual speeds to the bumper in front of them, at a huge expense in individual attention, for miles and miles, in a colossal daily waste of human energy and productive capacity.

When I was driving a rental car across Washington and Oregon last summer it was a bit confusing to be from out of state and not know exactly what the local customs were. If I followed the posted speed limits I was one of the slowest vehicles on the road, passed by everything else except a few heavily loaded campers and semis, and holding up traffic. So I followed along at the prevailing speed, in a zenlike state of attention to the present moment.

I can understand Ted's argument that driving well is partly an innate ability. But I have to quarrel with his equation of speed and skill. Driving skill includes higher-level functions besides reaction time and visual acuity, which can be summarized as judgment and luck, and a good reaction time won't make up for excessively poor judgment. Some people live more in the body than others, and everyone uses different configurations of the senses to find their way along. Those muscle-memory reactions which in Ted are apparently on a hair-trigger are considerably slower in many of us. Not all of the fast ones are men, and not all of the slow ones are women. It depends on what kind of car you drive. Is fast better?

I happen to be wired in a kind of slow-firing way myself. I know my spatial perception on the road doesn't take any prizes,

so I take my time. It is better than being a nervous wreck.

That doesn't mean that I think about driving in a ponderous cerebral way. Learning to drive is precisely that process of getting the metal skin connected to our consciousness. Like many overly imaginative people I came to driving late and with difficulty. I've been driving for only 10 years, but having conquered a long-standing phobia I enjoy driving as much as anyone. This is, I enjoy driving on winding country roads at comfortable speeds, faster than my mom would like but slower than, well, than the people who pass me, but I do not much like other drivers, particularly when road conditions are bad. Ted describes a familiar sense of release when the car in front speeds up, and believe me, there is an equally physical sensation in being tailgated by a logging truck on a wet night.

I feel a visceral discomfort when my husband, as is his habit, follows traffic too closely. In spite of my confidence in his driving skills (he was a racer) I find myself hitting the imaginary brakes on the passenger side, but they don't work, and after a while I complain. Why should I have to be tense and uncomfortable as a passenger? On the highway, I match speed competently with vehicles in front of me, but leave a big comfy space in front of me so the hell-for-leather drivers can have some room to come in when they pass me. And you know, we all get there at more or less the same time.

What I go for in my driving is consistency, to be completely predictable for the other drivers on the road. I use my signals compulsively, but I will miss an exit rather than cut off another driver. I allow others to merge. The thing that no one seems to expect is that I yield.

The afternoon I drove up from Portland to Seattle I found a camper traveling at just around 70 mph and followed its lead a long comfortable way. Traffic flowed around and past us, like two stones. Then I found myself following a small cattle trailer of Holsteins, leaking cow fluids out the back, which splattered my windshield at 70-mph trickles. I accelerated toward 80 and passed and maintained a speed around 75, pulling far enough ahead not to annoy the driver I had passed. On a windy day the small rental car I was driving did not feel particularly stable at high speed. The cattle trailer accelerated and passed me very fast, showing off its larger cubic displacement, and came back into the lane directly in front of me.

The drips were still hitting the pavement at speed and splattering high, and if you thought about it they were staying pretty much where they fell as the traffic that followed drove through them. So I slowed, and hung back for a while, way, way back, ran the wipers again, and watched Corvettes (etc.) approach the trailer and wait powerfully and impatiently in the splash zone for their chance to pass. Finally the trailer exited, and I found my camper up ahead again. I wondered about that trailer driver, though, what she thought was going on. It certainly wasn't the cows fault. I guess some of us are just oblivious to the spray we leave behind.



*Farber Melts Frost — continued from page one*

Abigail would be willing to talk with Gary; of all the American fans she met on her 1993 TAFF trip, Farber was among those she got on with the best, and he too, at various times in his life, has suffered from chronic depression.

While this may seem to remove a certain measure of tension from the TAFF equation, I hasten to add that I have no idea what reaction British TAFF administrator Martin Tudor and other fans will ultimately have to this series of secondhand confessions. (We hounded Martin so mercilessly in the process of assembling last issue's TAFF story that we have been quite reluctant to bother him since.) It may be that waiting three years or more to see the funds recovered may not appeal to them; perhaps they feel it would be more appropriate to help Abi secure a loan for the full amount of the fund, and leave it to a bank to enforce her payment schedule. Whatever the eventual outcome to this process, due thanks must go to Gary Farber for helping set it in motion.

On the other hand, even if Abi's proposed schedule of payment is accepted and she follows it to the letter, this still leaves TAFF in a dangerously depleted state. £1,200 were raised at Novacon three weeks ago, but this amount must go to repaying the various loans required to finance Martin and Helena's trip of this past summer. Both American and British TAFF accounts must be paid back up if successful trips are to be made to Eastercon in 1997 and Bucconeer in 1998.

As of this writing, I have heard no official announcement of any 1997 TAFF candidacies, and the deadline, December 2nd, is rapidly approaching. At least three potential candidates have mentioned some intention to stand, one quite seriously; so I hope to be able to report that the race will take place as planned in our next issue. Of course, it is not entirely clear that fandom wants this race to go on as announced; several people, including some previous administrators have suggested that it would be best to skip a year, or perhaps send an American fan to Novacon next November instead of Eastercon this March. Others are equally adamant that TAFF cannot afford a

third postponement in ten years. Whatever happens, we'll cover it here in Apparatchik.

Other news and items of interest:

- We're very concerned about Corflu Wave, originally scheduled for February, in Pacifica, California. The hotel which the convention was scheduled to be held at has since changed hands, and offered new prices not within the committee's budget. While I'm sympathetic to these problems, the original date is now less than 90 days away, and I have had no word from the Corflu committee. I left phone messages asking to be informed of the current situation in time for this issue, but these have not been returned. What's going on, you guys?

- Longtime Midwest fan and 1991 Worldcon Fan GoH Joni Stopa recently suffered a heart attack at Chicago's Windycon, and then a serious stroke while staying in the hospital. Our thoughts are with Jon and Joni and their family and friends.

- In the struggle to assemble #69, we completely forgot to give the address of our pages on the World Wide Web. The great majority of everything in this and the past half-dozen issues of Apak can be found at [www.oz.net/~cjuarez/APAK](http://www.oz.net/~cjuarez/APAK)

**BSFA Awards (for first UK publication in year 1995):**

**Novel:** Stephen Baxter, *The Timeships*

**Short Fiction:** Brian Stableford, "The Hunger and Ecstasy of Vampires" (Interzone)

**Artwork:** Jim Burns, cover for *Seasons of Plenty* by Colin Greenland

**Nova Awards:**

**Fanzine:** Waxen Wings and Banana Skins, Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer

(Second place: Attitude. Third place: Plokta)

**Best Fanwriter:** Alison Freebairn

**Best Fanartist:** D West

(Second place: Dave Mooring.

Third place: Dave Hicks/Sue Mason)

**Best Fan:** (Novacon special award) Bob Shaw

Our thanks to Steve Jeffery for the results.

Don't forget: The deadline for the 1996 egoboo poll is December 15th!

## Wagga Wagga Dreaming

by Andy Hooper

At the last Vanguard, in the midst of savoring the guilty pleasure of watching people's jaws drop as they read

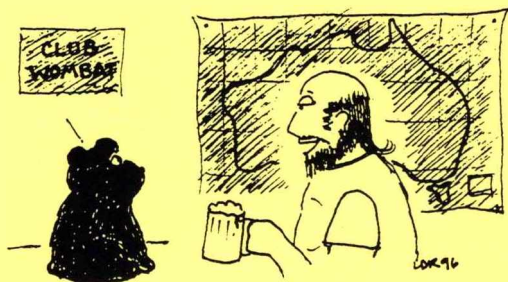
our lead story, I became aware that our friend Janice Murray was not joining in the gleeful gasps and bitter recriminations of her fellow reindeer. When I asked her what was wrong, she explained that if no one stepped forward to oppose her in the current Down-Under Fan Fund race, it would be cancelled, the funds held over, and she would spend the next Australian national convention here in Seattle waiting for the Mariners to

start playing again.

Before I had a chance to really think about what I was doing, I said "Okay. I'll stand for DUFF!"

And, as it turns out, I am. I lined up five nominators, got my \$25 bond together, and right now I'm pondering my 100-word platform. I'm nowhere near as familiar with Australian fans and fandom as Janice is, and I'm planning to vote for her myself, but if I won, I'd make the trip and serve as the fund administrator, as promised. Australia appeals to me as a fascinating and faraway place, where I would have to learn an only-slightly alien language to communicate with the population, and which I am extremely unlikely to reach on my own efforts any time in the foreseeable future. Plus, I want to help continue the tradition of Seattle fans making the trip, walking in the big shoes of John D. Berry and Jerry Kaufman (It might be observed that Janice would do this at least as well as me, and really deserves our support, since she lost by only a single vote the last time she ran, and has hosted and entertained numerous Australian fans visiting Seattle throughout the decade . . .).

And finally, one might consider this my way of pointing out that, in the wake of all the TAFF difficulties, DUFF needs money too, and indeed, always does, as the expense of travel to Australia remains brutally high. So, I hope you will support my candidacy, and vote -- although you might not want to go to the extreme length of actually voting for me.



"ARE YOU SURE BERRY AND KAUFMAN TRAINED THIS WAY?"

## Stairmaster vs the Flying Monkeys

by Lesley Reece

any moment. My parents kept telling me there hadn't been a tornado in Oregon in 200 years of recorded history, but that didn't help a bit. I consoled myself by planning out exactly what I'd do when the winged monkeys came. (I'd reason with them, offering a lifetime supply of bananas to the one who would set me safely down in my front yard.)

When the cold war began to escalate in the early eighties, I was older, but no less paranoid. Every time I heard the Emergency Broadcast System tone coming from a nearby TV or radio, I hit the ceiling, convinced that this time it wasn't "only a test." I made myself a t-shirt with a big target on it and the legend "Drop Bomb Here." I wanted to be the first to go. I figured vaporization would be better than radiation sickness.

I guess I've never been what you'd call balanced in the face of matters like these. And during the Gulf War, I went a little bit insane.

I think what affected me most was watching the conflict unfold on live television. During the first few days of the war, I could barely peel myself away from the set to go to work. I didn't want to miss the announcement of where to tune in for further instructions. One morning, I woke up on the couch — I'd slept there, sitting up all night. My neck was killing me. My hand had little red marks on it from where I'd been clutching the remote.

I knew this conflict could go on as long as Vietnam had, and I couldn't quit my job to spend the next decade glued to CNN. Unless I was ready for the worst, I couldn't live normally. But I didn't know how I could prepare for life after the bomb. Build a shelter? Move to Montana? Learn to eat dogfood, like Mel Gibson in *The Road Warrior*? None of those ideas appealed to my urban vegetarian sensibilities.

A couple of nights later, as I watched some of our troops jogging in formation on the evening news, the solution came to me. I had no major health problems, but I was out of shape. I always had been. I couldn't even run for a bus, let alone hike a hundred miles over a blasted postnuclear landscape to find help or supplies. I decided to join a gym.

I first saw The Wizard of Oz when I was about seven years old. For four or five years afterward, I was convinced that a tornado could come and whisk me away at

The first couple of places I investigated had serious faults. One of them was crammed with men who resembled roast turkeys, all doing one-handed pushups — "one thousand and sixty-seven, one thousand and sixty-eight" — or grunting as they heaved huge barbells over their heads. There were no women in sight. The next place claimed an emphasis on fitness over muscles, but I got intimidated by the woman who showed me around. She looked exactly like a Malibu Barbie, and she kept telling me I could "fix" my lovely gothic pallor if I'd just buy ten visits to their tanning salon. No, thank you.

When I came to the third club, I was greeted by the owner, a tiny woman with hair so big it looked like it might get stuck on the ceiling fan. She wore a purple velour jogging suit and matching mules with three-inch heels. When she sat me down at a little table to go over the membership contract, I saw a pack of More Menthol 100s sticking out of her side pocket. If she can get in shape, I thought, anyone can. I signed up for a year.

I started immediately, exercising every night after work. It kept me away from the TV. I was still reminded of the war by the little yellow ribbons the owner tied all over everything, but I managed to stay focused. Muscles began to appear in locations where I hadn't known there were any — the back of my neck, my arms, my shoulders. After a month I could stay on the exercise bike for half an hour without getting winded. After two months, I could do the same with the stairmaster. By the time was over, I was so happy with my new, functioning body that I'd almost forgotten to worry about the bomb.

Two and a half years ago, I stopped working out so much because school was overwhelming all my free time. I didn't pay attention until one day last summer, when I passed the army surplus store in my neighborhood. I saw all the boxes of "MRE" meals and shelves of durable footwear, and started to feel twitchy. I caught myself wondering whether I could eat Alpo in the event of a disaster. I knew I'd have to make more time for exercise.

I now work out at least five days a week in the campus gym. It's close by, so I don't have to worry about commuting time. The only problem is, it's right next to the campus nuclear reactor. What will I do if there's an earthquake while I'm on the stairmaster? I've been trying not to think about that too much.



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"Buddy," he said, "this is still Milwaukee."

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### AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[ APH: As one might certainly expect, we've had a few letters commenting on the revelation of the missing TAFF money, as covered in issue #69. We start with a letter from DALE SPEIRS (Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta Canada T2P 2E7) who offers an observation on Martin Tudor that has certainly occurred to me too: ]

'Received Apak #69 today, and a real barn-burner of an issue it was. If it weren't for bad luck, Martin Tudor would have no luck at all. I see no problem with the Brits not saying anything about Abi Frost and the missing money until after the TAFF tour. An early start to the controversy would not have resolved matters any sooner and would only have ruined the trip.

'No doubt fanzines will quickly plug up with speculation about how English (not British) law operates. Are there any Britfans with real legal experience who can provide us with details on how matters might proceed? Is TAFF incorporated? Are Tudor and possibly the voters the only ones who can initiate an action? Or can others file a complaint with the police

and have it processed as a criminal action? Or will she declare bankruptcy and gain some sympathy for her suffering? And suffering it must have been, knowing that the truth would be out eventually, that in the meantime she was associating with fandom under false pretenses, that the jig would be up when Martin Tudor came by for the money and the financial records. The estimate of £2,600 works out to roughly \$5,000 to \$6,000 Canadian, prices slightly lower in USA. That is serious money indeed.'

[ APH: These and similar questions occurred to almost everyone interested in TAFF in the wake of the announcement that the money was missing; I think we can be very grateful that many of them did not have to be directly answered. While I'm still quite unhappy with Abi for letting things get so far out of hand, no matter what her mental state may have been, I'm very glad that she has at least made some gesture toward resolving the issue. TAFF constitutes a social contract, not a legal one, and it would be very difficult to prove that she was liable for the missing money if she had chosen to contest any such claim against her. For this reason,

if for no other, I hope we can eventually forgive Abi, and let her do what she can to live these unfortunate events down.

Other writers focused on the decision not to inform "the world" for some months after the truth was known. While no one is really violently perturbed about this, it continues to give some fans, such as TEDDY HARVIA (701 Regency Drive, Hurst, TX 76054-2307), pause: ]

'Thanks for reporting that TAFF loss in detail. In this age of coverups and alleged coverups, I agree that delaying the report did more harm than good. The truth in L.A. would have generated more sympathy and support than argument and re-crimination. Resolution now I think will take longer. In a system based on trust how do we implement safeguards against repeats? Fans are always gafiating and for some poor fans a farewell gift of several thousand dollars is extremely tempting. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Perhaps parallel links might help. Except for fandom's aversion to bureaucracy.'

[ APH: Teddy adds a Koala Bear sticker to his pocsarc'd, who points out that British citizens in financial distress were at one time transported to Australia, leaving open the possibility that Abi might like to stand for GUFF some day.

I agree that fans' reactions would have been 99% positive had Martin made the information public, but I think we should remember that Abi was not communicating with him, nor, as far as could be determined, anyone else. He couldn't have told us the whole story even if he'd wanted to. Also, put yourself in his shoes and imagine meeting people and having to say something to the effect of, "Yes, I am the poor dumb bastard who got the shaft. And how's by you then?" I think I might have made the same decision.

JERRY KAUFMAN (3522 N.E. 123rd St., Seattle, WA 98125 e-mail to JAKaufman@aol.com) spoke for many of us in his bafflement: ]

'You entirely flabbergasted me with actual news. 2600 pounds; that's close to \$5,000, isn't it? I don't know Abi Frost at all well, but I've enjoyed our meetings in Britain and here in Seattle. Now to hear this news, and to infer that she made all that money disappear (and was, as Dan seems to imply, angling for more), is deeply disappointing and even shocking. I don't want to believe it of her, and would be glad to hear what Abi might have to say.

'For years I've been very proud of the way fandom in the form of TAFF, DUFF and other fan funds have been able to operate on faith, outside of laws and regulations. This may be at an end. It may be time to put TAFF, DUFF, etc. under the wing of some existing non-profit organization, or create one just for each fan fund. Of course, this may create much more paperwork than any two administrators care to handle, and the difficulties of running such a creation internationally may be more than such a small enterprise can survive.

'Here's some stray wonderings I've been wondering at: TAFF, often embattled in the last ten or fifteen years, has four candidates (I hear), while DUFF, a relatively calm and exotic fund, has only one candidate and has extended the deadline for nominations . . . Of the four candidates whose names were spoken at Vanguard, two are Seattle residents and two are making serious noises about moving here sooner or later. Why are these things true?

'I read several paragraphs of the lead story to Suzie over the phone during Vanguard, and described Lesley's cartoon as well, but after only a bit of thought, I've decided that it depicts a premature burial. TAFF has walked out of burning buildings,

flooded tanks, crashing planes, and other Saturday serial cliff-hangers. This is going to be a tougher struggle, but I expect the tombstone will tumble and the coffin lid will creak open.

'Moving on to Randy Byers, I find myself quoted, and wishing I remembered I'd said that line about the New Fen going directly from neohood to gafiation. I must have said it; it sounds just like me. Of course, I was working a change on an Oscar Wilde line about America having gone from barbarism to decadence without having had civilization in between.

'Sharee Carton. Mamma mia. I understand your longing.

'I saw *The Valdez Horses*, the movie based on LeeH's book, many years ago. I think it starred Charles Bronson, but I don't remember another thing about it.'

[ APH: The movie you are speaking of was released with the title *Chino*, and re-titled *The Valdez Horses* on video.

Directed by John Sturges, and starring Charles Bronson and the late Jill Ireland, it was shot by an Italian company and featured an Italian supporting cast. It was made in 1973, but not released until 1976 in the U.S. Considering the near total dearth of westerns during that period, it should be no surprise that it played very, very briefly.

DUFF has at least one more candidate now; see page four.

My only reservation about creating a supervisory body to deal with the fan funds is that dealing with these issues is one of the things which an administrator is supposed to do in exchange for the honor of receiving the fund. It makes sense to me to create a kind of legal contract for the fund-winner to sign before they receive any of the money, but I think the responsibilities — and perogatives — of the administrator ought to remain much as they are now.

Many of our correspondents were reluctant to comment on the TAFF issue until they had more of the story, and, like TED WHITE (1014 N. Tuckahoe, Falls Church, VA, e-mail to twhite@logotel.com), focused on other elements of #69: ]

'Ah, the perils of frequent publication and deadlines! I had but received Apak 69 in the mail when I received the latest e-mail from Gary Farber, in England, detailing his contact with Abi Frost. I'm sure you did too. It's all moving too fast for me — but in the right direction, we can hope. I'll forego all public comment until things have sorted themselves out.

'I was fascinated by Randy Byers' take on the 1984 LACon, and amused by his statement that, at that con, I "was cultivating Victor." At the time I thought it was the other way around, mind you, but that convention began my acquaintance with Victor — an acquaintance which has with time (and certain substances) developed into a solid long-term friendship. The parties Randy mentioned were indeed in my (increasingly) smoke-filled room, and the "sheaves of paper" pertaining to Topic A were mine (correspondence between the various parties concerned). I enjoyed the party at which we created the fwa a lot more. (I believe it was Avedon who was selected the first Past President.) I'm reassured to hear that "Wit flowed like wine," and all I wish is that I (or someone) could recall enough of it to quote. \*Sigh\* . . .

'I was very pleased to see Bob Tucker writing at some length about Lee Hoffman's westerns. They are all well worth reading. I can take minor credit for them: I was writing my first books (for Ace and Lancer) and bubbling over with my involvement in the process at every fannish social occasion, particularly Fanoclast meetings (at my Brooklyn apartment). Lee had been toying with writing various things before then (and had already revealed herself in the bits she showed some

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If they got a dollar an hour, the boys might buy narcotics.

of us to be a better writer than I was) and I think I goaded her into finishing her first western novel, which I read in manuscript. I raved about it to people, among them Terry Carr (then at Ace), and that led to his commissioning her to write *Blackjack Sam*. (The details are foggy now; no doubt Lee remembers them better — is she on your mailing list? — maybe it was Wollheim rather than Carr who commissioned the book . . .) She sold several westerns to Ace before doing *The Valdez Horses* as a hardcover, and I read them all with much pleasure. I have always thought Lee an excellent professional writer, intensely readable . . . although I had trouble with the formula she used in her “Savannah York” novels . . . She and I tried twice to sell collaborations: a mundane juvenile (hardcover) series set in NYC (Crown asked for it and rejected it when they abandoned their juvenile line), and an SF/western (time-travel between the late 20th century — aha! — and the 1880s, presenting the Old West as it Really Was, complete with English tourists), which fell between the cracks for every editor who saw it (none could get beyond Categories). I regret that, because I really enjoyed working professionally with Lee.

‘Publishing for the Web is a lot like putting magazines out in national (or international) distribution, as I used to do with *Amazing and Fantastic*: anyone *might* read it, but do you care? Don’t admit to illegal practices and it hardly matters.

‘The real question is, do you consider that vast, blank-faced audience when putting together an issue? Or are you writing/editing for your known audience? I hope it is the latter; let the faceless Others peer over the shoulders of your known audience, even as generations to come who may find old copies at Convention Auctions or in someone’s attic or basement will. Or, even as you did, reading a back file of Pongs. If someone reads this fanzine on the Net and feels an urge to respond and join in, fine. Otherwise, they are ethereal and without form or substance, as far as I am concerned.’

[ VMG: The whole story would take thousands of words, of course, but I also remember that fwa party fondly, if disjointedly. What I remember best was the huge quantity of Topic A correspondence I went through, and the many friends I met. It was my first worldcon. It may have been that Jerry Jacks was cultivating both of us. ]

[ APH: We don’t have Lee on the mailing list, as other fans advised me that she was no longer sufficiently intent on fandom to want to read a then bi-weekly fanzine. Seeing as we’re talking about her so much, I think I’ll package up the last few issues and send them to her.

Now, a letter with more TAFF-related content, from ROBERT LICHTMAN (P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442): ]

‘When I first heard of the missing TAFF funds and Abi’s seeming disappearance, my first concern was that I hoped she was all right. So it was with considerable relief that I received the news in your phone call on November 7th telling me Gary Farber had succeeded in making contact, that everything was explained insofar as why the funds are missing and that (no matter what one thinks about her using them in the fashion she did) repayment has already begun. With a TAFF race looming on the horizon, it would be good to put this matter to rest, to not plunge all fandom into war, to take Abi’s promise to repay at face value, and to focus on TAFF’s positive aspects.

‘Victor’s assertion to the contrary, I find it quite reasonable that knowledge of the absence of the British TAFF funds was kept private until after Martin and Helena’s trip was behind them. As even he acknowledges, Martin’s trip would have been “compromised” in that it would have turned into an

endless round of his having to explain the situation rather than a chance to meet and hang out with American fans. I’m personally very happy that I didn’t have to feel compelled to hear him relate the tale. Instead, I helped him sort and prioritize a huge batch of auction material he was traveling with, and later bought some of it. It didn’t make one bit of difference to me that complete information about the state of the British half of the fund wasn’t known. Fundraising is fundraising.

‘Good article by Randy Byers, and not just cause he springboarded off my comment. However, regarding that, I was being pretty expansive in including him as one of the fwa founders for the reasons he describes here: he was just following Victor around after his failure to connect with Sharee Carton, and happened to be led to some good parties where Deep Fan Shit was being discussed. I felt I got to know him better at this Worldcon, despite his characterizing himself as a fringe fan. Some of my best friends are fringe fans.

‘I love it that Carl voted for Elmer Perdue for best fanwriter in last year’s FAAN awards. Whether fan or fowl, Carl has good taste.

‘Regarding your surmise that it was Greg Shaw’s *Who Put the Bomp* that I was referring to when I reminded you that he more or less simultaneously with Paul Williams invented the rock fanzine, it was *Mojo Navigator Rock ‘n’ Roll News*.’

[ VMG: “Even” I admitted the trip would be compromised. I don’t really feel the need to belabor this point, but sometimes you just have to write what you feel. Sometimes all the answers work out, and there’s no one to blame, but there’s still something wrong. I expressed my feelings, and to some degree, I still have them. If it happened again, would you also think it right to keep the knowledge away from the majority of the fans who put the money there in the first place? Maybe so. I have the greatest sympathy for Martin and Helena, whose visit in Seattle I enjoyed. I wouldn’t have wished them a terrible trip. And yet, something sticks in my craw. ]

[ APH: I think it is to fandom’s general credit that when many fans heard of Abi’s problems with the fund, their first concern was for her well-being.

Also bringing me to task for my assumptions in regard to music fanzines was HARRY WARNER (423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740): ]

‘Paul Williams was a little late to have invented music fanzines. The first periodical of that sort I’ve read about was *Musica Critica*, produced by Mattheseon, a musicologist and composer, starting in 1722. English language music fanzines, according to *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, began with *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, which first appeared in 1818. The list of types of material it desired is almost identical with the wishes of a sercon science fiction fanzine: letters to the editor, reviews, articles, criticism and poetry. Well, not many fanzines nowadays run poetry but it appears in Langley Searles’ *Fantasy Commentator* every issue. *The Musical World* came along in 1844, and must have been more like our faannish fanzines, because the *Grove’s* article says: “Few periodicals have embraced a more varied and curious mass of literature more or less directly connected with music, and in a great measure of a humorous, often Rabelaisian cast.” “Clever humorous caricatures” were also published in it, although Bill Rotsler wasn’t around yet to help out. There were even subfandoms in music fandom. *The Meister* was a Wagner fandom publication that first appeared in 1888 in England (and an American Wagner Society is still publishing a quarterly zine.) *Journal Spécial de Musique Militaire* was a long-lived

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Also present was his mad mistress, Ida Gekko, the acrobat-chanteuse.

French periodical specializing in military music. In the United States, Grove says, there existed in 1906 "about sixty weekly, semi-monthly and monthly journals ostensibly devoted to music," including some that catered to banjo and mandolin clubs, small dance orchestras "and the like".

[ APH: I stand both corrected and delighted, Harry; thank your for the information.

Also commenting on recent literary references, among other things, is GEORGE FLYNN (P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Sq. Station, Cambridge, MA 02142): ]

'Thanks for Apparatchik 69. Disturbing news about TAFF. As far as I know, DUFF is solvent, but the problem there seems to be a dearth of candidates who are both qualified and willing: we had a lot of discussion about this at Ditto.

'By the way, Ditto was quite pleasant, in spite of? because of? having only 13 attendees (including three Hugo administrators). Most of us spent nearly all our time together, including going to Mexico *en masse*; they let us back in, too. One of the main activities was reading copies of 1945 fanzines.

'One other caution on the Webbing of locs: I know a number of people who don't mind having their (physical) address printed in a fanzine, but are very paranoid about having it appear online.

"Finn is an Irish Name." You're probably right, though the only concrete evidence I recall is the term "Mickey Finn."

[ VMG: Finn is also the name of a mythical Irish house-painter who was (in the song of old) killed in a fall. Lying in state, his friends and relations gather to mourn him in the traditional way, with singing, dancing and liberal drinking. One of the mourners accidentally knocks a whiskey jug over onto the corpse, and Finn rises from the dead to dance and drink again.

That is *the* central tale of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Thus the lack of an apostrophe: Finn Again Wakes. ]

[ APH: Ted White's columns on driving have really hit a nerve with lots of our readers, including VICKI ROSENZWEIG (33 Indian Road # 6R, New York, NY 10034): ]

'What worries me about Ted's discussion of aggressive driving is a statistic that I came across some years back, to the effect that 80 percent of Americans consider themselves above-average drivers. At least some of those people are mistaken, but may be encouraged in their recklessness by an assertion that aggressive driving is good driving. While I think Ted has many of his facts right, it might be wiser for him to emphasize that an alert driver is a good driver, and an experienced driver is a good driver. (In a country where a couple of hundred people were fatally shot last year by fellow drivers who disapproved of their driving, "aggressive" has unfortunate connotations.) If fast reflexes were enough, drivers under 25 would get better auto insurance rates than older people, instead of worse. With regard to Dale's letter, I don't see how driving at the speed limit, and thereby forcing the people to do the same, endangers anyone. I assume that he would pull over for an ambulance if one came up behind him with its siren running. I also find it disconcerting that so many people believe that there is a portion of the highway reserved for those who are breaking the law. I believe that the left lane is supposed to be a passing lane, not a "going at 85 unless the state troopers show up" lane. When an even flow of vehicles generally desirable, the faster the flow is, the greater the danger if something goes wrong — your tire blows out, or the driver ahead of you has a heart attack.'

[ VMG: Your points about driving deserve a response.

The Speed Limit is one obvious point on which Ted (I'm

guessing) and I will not agree with you. There is a deep disrespect in this nation for the speed limit. It should be that the same moral imperative that keeps us from murder would also keep us from speeding, but it doesn't. The roads allow for fast travel, the cars have no problem with it, and even cops not on a call speed. One can argue that this is wrong, but one can't make it go away without increasing the penalties significantly.

It should also be noted that speeding includes the range of speed higher than the speed limit; there's a lot of difference between 70 and 85 mph. Speed has a lot to do with the mayhem created, obviously. So, for that matter, does the vehicle's mass (should that also be regulated?). But I do think that "forcing" anybody to do anything on the road is foolish. I sometimes don't feel like driving my typical 70 mph. But I don't drive in the fast lane when I'm doing 60. Thus, those who want to speed aren't frustrated by my laziness, and I'm not threatened by their speed. Although freak events like tire blowouts and heart attacks do cause crashes, most accidents are caused by people who don't know what's going on around them. The best drivers are very aware of other vehicles, and work hard to reduce the chances of an accident by keeping themselves out of potentially dangerous situations. I would submit that changing lanes to the fast lane in heavy traffic, while doing the speed limit, is an inherently dangerous and stupid act that might kill not only the "good" (non-lawbreaking) driver, but also the evil one, his three kids, and the bunch of stoned kids in the VW bus one lane over. ]

[ APH: Okay, let's adopt your position for the sake of argument. Speeding is bad. People should not do it. Does this fact keep them from doing it anyway? No. Should one cruise along in the passing lane, where people are frequently known to drive 80 miles per hour without much care, in a freelance effort to enforce the speed limit? I agree that it would be better on the whole if people obeyed the law, but assuming that they will or attempting to coerce them into doing so seems the height of folly to me.

Speaking of which, Here's MIKE SIDDALL (133, Duke Street, Askam in Furness, Cumbria, LA16 7AE UK, e-mail to mds@askamite.demon.co.uk): ]

'Dear Fanzinemeisters of Apparatchik,

'I write to inform you that you have been the victims of a cruel and probably libellous deception. I refer of course to the foul slurs with which a certain Mr. D. Hicks recently sullied the fair pages of your excellent publication.

'In particular I refer to his comment that I was "livid" on hearing of your praise for his fanzine column. This is does not quite accord with my recollection. As I remember I called him on another matter, and asked in passing if he had seen the latest Apparatchik, to which he replied that he "might have glanced at it".

"Dave," I said, "how can you be so cool? The mighty Hooper has declared yours to be 'the only serious fanzine column in England' . . ." I was interrupted by a distinctly sniffy tone, "What he *actually* said was 'fanzine column in the English-speaking world', so get it right you poor, sad little unmentioned tosser."

'Of course there are two ways of looking at this; one is that Dave was unbalanced by such heady praise in such a prestigious publication as yours, the other is that Hicks is a monstrous egomaniac given to unwarranted abuse of harmless, innocent bystanders such as myself.

'You must choose which you believe, but bear in mind

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I noticed Spaak across the room attempting to stuff the required 4 million marks into the gumball machine



that, notwithstanding the unfortunate demise of Critical Wave, there are Plans Afoot to keep the Hicks fanzine column alive. In this matter the stance taken by Seattle fandom could tip the scales. Fanzine reviewing stands in balance.

'You have a grave responsibility to discharge.'

[ APH: And that's not all I have to discharge, Sunny Jim. Personally, I'd love to see all of the current English writers given to writing fanzine reviews anthologized in a quarterly bulletin of some sort, so all the egoboo and lumps could be doled in out one massive dog-choking wad. Then, someone could review the collection in turn, and . . .

We turn now to one of the Apparatchiki, LESLEY REECE (1521 15th Ave. Apt. F, Seattle, WA 98122, e-mail to lreece@u.washington.edu) also moved to comment by Ted White's article in #69: ]

'I knew by the "disclaimer" at the head of Ted White's "Dr. Fandom Shifts on the Fly" that something fantastic was coming up. I was correct. His claim that he has a certain "instinct" about driving that allows him to "react immediately," without thinking about it first, isn't unbelievable. But the idea that this could possibly be a "hard-wired" male genetic trait is.

'I do have to give Ted credit for backpedaling. It means he realized that among Apak's readership there would be a female who would come galloping up crying "Ted, you're wrong!" I am she.

'I won't drive, but I am a jaywalker par excellence. I became one by using the very thing Ted describes, a certain internalized skill in judging speed and distance that tells me when it's safe to go and when it isn't, regardless of what the traffic lights say. Often, my plans are foiled by the other type of driver Ted mentions, the kind who have to "consciously consider" what they're doing. These are the people who screech unnecessarily to a halt in front of me, thus changing all the variables in the equation and screwing things up for me and others on the road.

'The same ability of being able to "sense" what you are doing without thinking about it comes in handy in a lot of other areas of life. When I worked in a shipping room, I was the fastest box-taper there, because I just taped the things up without wondering "Is the tape going to stick right? Will it hold the box closed? Is it straight?" Box-taping might not seem very significant, but it's harder than it looks, and when you have to do something for eight hours every day you want it to be as painless as possible.

'I'm not convinced that this "sense" is something I was born with. (There's always the possibility that I'm an xy female, but let's assume for the moment that I'm a standard xx version.) I do think, however, that many women possess this trait and either don't know about it or are afraid to use it. Standard socialization for women in America usually includes endorsements of passivity. Many women get the message that they should think of themselves last, and making a turn without considering how the other drivers might feel about it therefore goes against their training. In other words, being aggressive just isn't "nice." Maybe that's what accounts for Ted's not knowing of any women who share his ability.'

[ APH: Finally, covering issues 66 to 68 is CHRISTINE BZDAWKA (909 Walnut St., Verona, WI 53593): ]

'Why do aliens perform rectal exams? You'd think another orifice, closer to the brain, would be the hole of choice. (Perhaps that's where they think our brains are — is it that obvious?) Or, is this just another example of our own fears, "personified?" Isn't most/all sensational fiction based on subconscious cultural concerns or fears? Also, do you think that people

who don't have time to burn, like the Somalians or Bosnians, gather together on Friday nights to watch the *X-Files* or the latest "aliens are really among us" program? . . .

'Mr. White's story about winding his way through the pile-up reminded me of an incident this last Christmas on the way to my mom's house in Milwaukee. It was snowing, with a little freezing rain, on I-94, when we came over this rise, doing about 50 mph, and there in front of us were a number of cars strewn around the highway and in the ditches. I told the boys to hang on, tried the brake, and felt the fish-tailing start. So I ignored the brake, shifted into low gear (on an automatic), and slowed down just enough to maneuver around the cars without incident. It took about five miles, going about 20 mph, to stop breathing like a winded horse and forget the roaring in my ears, but we were safe (yippee!). I must take issue with Mr. White's characterization of those who won't drive as "non-aggressive" — there are many reason for aggressive drivers to maintain speeds under 55, like their car won't go any faster.

'I'm sure that nipples the size of thumbs are entrancing, but I can't help wondering if they feel good to the owner, especially in the cold. I'd love to hear from Cherie (or anyone else with this trait) about the practicality of having nipples the size of thumbs. Also, does anyone ever look her in the eye? . . .

'I'd just like to thank Ted White for clearing up a long-standing conundrum for me. I have loved this particular song heard on '60s radio for years, but always seemed to miss the announcer's identification of this girl group. Alas, it was the Shangri-Las (now I need to identify the song). The singer is speaking to a guy spreading rumors while her boyfriend is away, and tells said guy that he "bedder shutch yer mout" — exact words. Mr. White's description is totally correct — these girls were tough and ready to kick some ass, or get their boyfriends to do it if they were feeling kind of feminine that day. I've got to find their Best of collection. Thank you, again.'

[ carl sez: Your personification hypothesis resembles one I've seen suggesting that the now-generic reports of abduction and bodily invasion in some way work on a trans-personal level as a reflection of our "alienated" technocratic selves. Or perhaps this is all just a massive covert response to a impending epidemic of colorectal cancer, and the Grays are trying to help us contain our health care costs.

Skeptics might note that the current blooming of the alien cultural trope was predicted twenty years ago by Jacques Vallee, who argues in *Messengers of Deception* that whatever we may think of the *reality* of the phenomenon or its origins (to this day there is no compelling evidence of extraterrestrial origin), *belief* in UFOs has successfully incorporated itself into our society as a shared cultural metaphor not despite but *because* of its irrational qualities. Such qualities repel "serious" investigators, leaving a wide open field for hoaxers, cultists, profiteers, and the willfully credulous. ]

[ APH: The song in question is "My Boyfriend's Back." I'd like to note in closing that we received more than 25 letters and cards between last issue and this one, giving us a response rate of greater than 10% of the mailing list. No fanzine could hope for better than that; I only wish we had room to print all (well, almost all) of them.

WAHF: Jae Leslie Adams, Harry Andruschak, Pamela Boal, rich brown, Garth Danielson, Tom Feller, Tommy Ferguson, Mike Glicksohn, Steve Jeffries, Eric Lindsay, Murray Moore, Joseph Nicholas, Greg Pickersgill, and Dave Rike. Thank you all for taking the time to write. ]

1.) **Never Quite Arriving #5**, written and edited by Christina Lake, 57 Edwards Rd., Wahroonga, New South Wales 2076 Australia: Take one of the better fan writers of the era and set her loose on an extended trip that will take her to four continents in a year, and one might hope a personalzine this good might be the result. NQA #5 covers the North American portion of Christina's trip, and she has succeeded in communicating how alien our culture is to her without descending into gratuitous insult or complaint. Various American fan personalities make neatly-drawn appearances in her report on Toner and the Worldcon, one of the better accounts of those events published to date. Christina also throws in an account of a visit to Mexico City, and a driving trip from Washington DC to Louisiana and back. And, perhaps most impressive of all, she has managed to assemble a letter-column while thousands of miles from home, and edited it quite well in the bargain. This would be an great fanzine from someone sitting at home with their regular equipment and copy-source, but from someone fluttering from time-zone to time-zone, it's simply staggering. (See Victor's column for more thoughts on this fanzine).

2.) **Attitude #9**, edited by Michael Abbott, John Dallman and Pam Wells, 102 William Smith Close, Cambridge CB1 3QF United Kingdom: One or two issues of Attitude have seemed as though they were put together out of large, unfinished slabs of writing, as if one had to bolt them together and apply an all-weather stain before reading. This issue, on the other hand, seems to have the fine grain and shiny veneer of a \$5,000 desk set, and may be the single finest genzine of the year. After reading the preview of the programs to be presented at Attitude: The Convention (Feb. 14th to 16th, 1997), I feel both a desire to be there and some sense that I don't need to be, as each program's originator has covered their topic remarkably well. Other remarkable material comes from Lynne Anne Morse, on her experience with The Livingroom Project, a safe place for Dutch prostitutes to spend a few hours away from the street; Helena Bowles, with a thoughtful refutation of anti-pornography theory; some solid fanzine reviews from Michael Abbot, bouncing thematically off of Paul Kincaid's review column in Waxen Wings, etc. #3, and including an entertaining "Chinese Portrait" of some contemporary fanzines; and as usual, one of the most engrossing letter columns in fandom. We only get three more issues of this fine fanzine, so enjoy it while you can, folks.

3.) **Banana Wings #4**, edited by Claire Brialey (26 Northampton Rd., Croydon, Surrey CR0 7HA UK) and Mark Plummer (14 Northway Rd., Croydon, Surrey CR0 6JE UK): I am in danger of succumbing to cyclical feedback here, as this issue has adopted as a major portion of its editorial focus my one-paragraph review of its second issue in Apak #60. Contrast this with Mr. Paul Kincaid's assault on Apak in his review column, which will have no perceptible effect on our philosophy and execution. Contrary to his assertion that this column is fundamentally worthless, I find that I accomplish just about as much in one page as he has here in five, and I never resort to the use

of the word "hagiography." But, Paul does manage to point me towards Ian Williams' fanzine Siddhartha, which sounds well worth getting a copy of, so all is forgiven. Besides, if a fanzine which has now run 70 issues can't withstand the panning of one of them, something is seriously wrong. Oh, and the rest of it? The editors are both talented, thoughtful writers, able to handle humour and weighty issues of fannish philosophy with equal aplomb. They *are* younger fan-writers in the sense that they are still relatively new to the field, despite being well-experienced in fandom and informed enough to choose what traditions they like and which ones they think are just silly — or perhaps it's just that they are the opposite of old and tired, whatever one wishes to call that. The first three fanzines in this countdown are damn near a dead-heat, if anyone's interested, and I recommend getting on the BW mailing list as enthusiastically as any current fanzine.

4.) **The Reluctant Famulus #46**, edited by Tom Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian, MI 49221-1627: I have hacked rather dispassionately at this fanzine's failings in the past, but this issue is pretty good. It still seems to speak largely to a community of midwestern science fiction fans of which I am resolutely no part, but both the level of written material and the physical presentation of the zine have improved perceptibly in recent issues. Too bad that Tom claims exhaustion and the need to take a few months off from publishing; after 46 issues, he's really hitting his stride well. I quite liked Ken Cheslin's article on his experiences in the RAF, as well as another installment of Terry Jeeves' wartime recollections. And I also enjoyed an article from an author I'd not heard of before, Arlan Andrews, detailing some common elements of UFO sightings over military bases. And Tom's begun to commission art specifically to illustrate articles, which makes an amazing difference in the apparent premeditation of the fanzine. One caveat: I wish he wouldn't indulge his habit of inserting editorial comments after other writers' articles quite so much. If he feels that this stuff really can't stand on its own, it's no wonder he gives special emphasis to his need for new written material and artwork in the colophon.

5.) **Ansible #112**, edited by Dave Langford, 94 London Rd., Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU UK: As I expected, Mr. Langford's coverage of the recent TAFF disaster was accurate without being inflammatory, and he gives it exactly as much of his fanzine as it deserves. Dave also offers a few more words of follow-up on the dreadful publicity stunt by Penguin Books which had half the computer owners in Britain desperately scrambling to purge their systems of non-existent viruses. And, Aha! the return of postal stalker "Rachel Oliver," this time menacing the usually harmless Robert L. Forward. Whoever this person is, he or she seems to favor menacing the careers and sanity of "hard" sf writers far more than fantasists or magical realists; Dr. Benford, beware.

**Also Received:** Glamour #2, Aileen Forman; SF Chronicle #190, Andrew I. Porter; Vanamonde #182, John Hertz for Apak; Situation Normal??, Vol. 7, #11, Aileen Forman for SNAFFU.

— Andy Hooper

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