

## Drinking Kava in Fiji

by Christina Lake

On my second day in the village, I was invited up to drink kava. The wooden deck was pleasantly shady and high enough up the hill to catch the breeze from the surrounding mountains. I began to understand why the men spent most of the day there. There were about ten of them now, some in trousers, some in sulas, the tradi-

tional wrap-around skirt of the Fijian islands, all watching intently. Two men held the muslin over the earthenware pot while another poured in the water, and rubbed it through with his hands, like squeezing desiccated coconut through a sieve. Soon there was a large quantity of mud-coloured water in the bottom of the pot. The men continued to pour and rub until they had used up all the water. Then they wrung out the last drops from the muslin and the kava was ready. The man who had been pouring the water said a few words in Fijian; the others responded with a series of claps and shouts. Then it was time to drink.

The kava was scooped out of the pot using shiny black bowls. Coconut shells, I later discovered, which had been buried in mud for several months to give them the dark shiny glaze. The larger scoop was filled with kava and handed out to the oldest man there. Everyone clapped ritualistically as he drained it, then shook out the last few drops on the grass behind to show it was empty. Each man in turn was handed one scoop of kava. For us, the foreign visitors, they used the smaller coconut shell. Full for the Danish boys, Soren and his pale-headed friend with the drag-on tatoos. Half full for me, I was relieved to see. I hoped I would be able to drink it, this cup of what looked like dirty water, otherwise I would mortally offend my hosts. No sipping, I knew. All the liquid had to be drained in one go. "Bula," I said as I took the shell. "Bula," replied the Fijian in return. I put the shell to my lips and began to drink, to the accompaniment of clapping. It tasted slightly liquoricy, not very strong, but not unpleasant. I swallowed, then swallowed again, tipping it down my throat till it was all gone. I shook the bowl behind me, to show there was none left, and the men clapped again, this time in appreciation. I had passed the test. Joined in their ritual. After that, the mood on the deck was mellow. People chatted in a mixture of Fijian and English. The kava bowls went round a couple more times. I felt happy. Relaxed. More ready to talk than before.

Later, in the evening, I went up to the kava deck again, this time with Jennie, an English woman who had come to the village for four nights and was still there after two and a half months. "What do you do here?" I had asked, when I first met her. "Nothing much," she said. "Just read and drink kava. I have a bit of a kava habit," she admitted.

This time there were only three men on the deck and a shallow pool of kava left in the pot. They helped us both to a scoop which I drank with no difficulty. Maybe I was getting a bit of a kava habit too. When it was finished, they asked Jennie if she had any more powder. She didn't, but she gave them \$5 to run down to the village to buy some. A plump young man, with an enthusiasm reminiscent of Tom Springer, came back with a handful of paper packets. This time they simply dumped the powder in the water, without ceremony, and mixed it around a bit. Jennie was given a full bowl, despite of her protests of "lai-lai" (small) and so was I. After that we judged it better to retreat. If you don't want to drink the kava, you don't stay in the kava zone.

I liked going to drink kava, I decided. It had a lot of the attributes I enjoy about smoking dope. The same intimacy, the same sense of communal experience, the same sometimes elaborate preparations. Kava doesn't get you high, per se. Its effects are described as mild euphoria; but for the men in the village it was clearly a ruling passion. Drinking kava seemed to bind their lives together. According to Jennie, the women drink it too, but I never saw them. They had their own in-



*continued on next page*

### Issue #73, January 24th, 1997

This is the seventy-third 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. Carl accepts e-mail at cjuarez@oz.net. **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, a year's worth for \$12.00, a lifetime subscription for \$19.73, or in exchange for a big yellow foam-rubber cheesehead. See the back page for the addresses of our British and Australian mailing agents. This is Drag Bunt Press Production #283. **Apparatchiki:** Jae Leslie Adams, Saint Tom Becker, Gregory Benford, Randy Byers, Steve Green, Irwin Hirsh, Lesley Reece, Martin Tudor, Pam Wells & Ted White. **On the Web:** <http://www.oz.net/~cjuarez/APAK> **Art this issue:** Page one by Bill Rotsler, page two by Lesley Reece.

tense community life, centered round the house, the children and foreign videos (including the blue movie they showed one meal time, much to everyone's disbelief), but no sign of kava.

Kava isn't illegal. You can buy packets of the powdered root at the market in Nadi. Some people say it should be banned, because it encourages the men to sit around drinking it all day instead of working. But then, imagine what it would be like if they sat round drinking beer instead. Kava might make them belch, but it never seemed to make anyone violent. And no

doubt most of the village business is settled over a bowl of kava.

I left the next afternoon, exhausted and muddy, after a long trek through jungle bush to a nearby waterfall. As I set off back to Nadi in the van with the "Indian driver" and the videos, the men were still sitting up on the deck. I couldn't see if they had a kava pot mixed up yet, but some of them waved as I left, as if drinking kava with them had made me in some small way part of their world.

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"Oui, baby. Je suis le wolf."

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## I Need A New Stim

by Victor M. Gonzalez  
Staff Writer

(Note to Michael Rawdon and any other neos who might be reading: This is a mercifully short example of a staple of fannish essay-writing, the whiny explication of personal problems.)

The worst thing about growing older is the decay of my body. While most of us lose the feeling of youthful invulnerability by our mid-20s, it's still a little depressing to realize that just getting out of bed might be painful before we're 35.

Or at least it is to me.

A minor problem with my upper back had bothered me for years: a slight pain in a nerve alongside my spine. But it wasn't a big deal, and I ignored it.

But apparently that pain — probably caused by a slight tendon tear years ago — was lying in wait, slowly allowing the other muscles around it to degenerate. In the end, it only took a couple of innocuous actions to make it poke its head up and force moans from my lips.

The final insult came in December, during our post-Christmas snowstorm, while I was putting chains on my car so I could get to work. The pain started in my upper back and radiated down my left arm and up my neck. It was debilitating; even a few minutes at a computer terminal made me cringe with agony, and various over-the-counter pain pills relieved it only a little.

I was forced to go to a doctor, who referred me to a physical therapist. She has been putting me through an exercise regimen three days a week. I've also been taking codeine, anti-inflammatories and muscle relaxants.

In short, a nerve and blood vessel coming from between my third and fourth cervical vertebrae are being crushed by muscles swollen through overcompensation for the torn tendon.

### THE CORFLU REMINDER BOX

Gleaned from the pages of Wave #1, the Corflu 14 progress report, we offer the following information: Corflu Wave will be held March 13th to 17th (that's right, starting on Thursday, running through Monday!) at the Marriott Hotel in Walnut Creek, California, at 2355 North Main St., 94596. Rooms are \$85 a night, and can be booked by calling 1-510-934-2000 or 1-800-228-9290. Remember to mention Corflu, and ask for the concierge level if you want to be close to the parties. Memberships are \$45 attending, \$10 supporting, checks payable to *Corflu*. Mail these, and any questions, to 999 Perriera Drive, Santa Clara, CA 95051. Or, you can read the Corflu Web page at <http://www.hidden-knowledge.com/corflu>, and send e-mail to [corflu@sfsfc.org](mailto:corflu@sfsfc.org). All the usual Corflu features — the Sunday banquet, fan-fund auction, fanzine programs, and local excursions — will be a part of Corflu Wave. Hope to see you there!

The only solution is to improve the health of the muscles and tendons so that the torn one can heal and relive the pressure.

Perhaps the most interesting treatment has been the "TENS unit," a small battery-powered device that hooks onto my belt and delivers a small, constant jolt to my back via two sets of electrodes. In the world of physical therapy this is called "stim," short for "electrical stimulation." Larger stim units are used with ice to help temporarily reduce pain and swelling.

The biggest problem with the stim box is getting the electrodes placed properly. They have to be in just the right spots to help the muscles that are really causing the problem; otherwise all I feeling is a tingling on top of the pain.

But there is another factor, that of having to be hooked up to this battery-driven device in order to get through the day. It's better than codeine (which makes me horribly constipated), but I'd hate to have to explain the wires tucked into my pants to someone I was sleeping with for the first time. It's also a hassle to put on each day.

This injury has forced me to take two weeks off from work. This is cool in one way: I got a new laptop for my birthday, and I've had plenty of time to get it loaded up and running just the way I like it.

But I'm starting to get frightened. I have to start work again on Monday, and I still feel a lot of pain when I sit at a computer in the traditional posture. I'm afraid of the pain I'm going to have to suffer through to get my work done.

In the end through, I hope I'll have learned a couple of things: one, to not ignore little troubles, lest they get worse, and two, to keep my upper body in better shape.

My physical therapist said something when she was first evaluating me that has stuck: "This is not a matter of cure, but of management."

So pass me the lumbar pillow and the exercise chart.



HONESTLY, DEAR, DO YOU  
HAVE TO LEAVE YOUR  
ELECTRODES IN THE SINK?

## VUG

### by Irwin Hirsh

Want to build a time machine?  
Become a parent It's as simple as  
that. Watching as my children  
(Adrian is six, and Kieran is two)  
grow and being involved in their

progress has been a great memory prompt to my days as a youngster and the chance to relive my childhood through a mature perspective. Through my sons I've learned how to talk, learn, play, and all that. It has been a great, enthralling experience.

It is through my sons that I've come to realize a reader's Golden Age is before one is literate. Adrian is in his first year of school and I have the feeling that once he's fully learned how to read some of the magic of books will dissipate for him. Want to see sibling rivalry at its purest? Be in our place when Wendy or I read a bedtime story. First we have to deal with whose choice of book gets read. Then it's arbitrating the argument on Who Gets to Turn The Page.

One of the time-travel activities I've been involved in is becoming reacquainted with children's books and games. There are two aspects to this. The first is rereading and remembering the stuff I used to enjoy as a child. I hadn't touched Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* for about 25 years prior to reading it to Adrian. The other aspect to the time-travel is continuing to follow a line which was broken by having grown up. I may have stopped reading Dr. Seuss when I was seven or eight, but that doesn't mean he stopped writing his books.

As a child I never had any of Theodor Geisel's books and I guess he became a favorite somewhat on that basis. I have memories of going to friend's places and spending half the time reading their Seuss collection. I remembered Seuss for his bright, fresh rhyme, for his sense of the ridiculous, and for his little lessons for being a better person. So I was intrigued to discover that with books such as *The Butter Battle Book* and *The Lorax* he'd reached out into big-picture politics.

*The Butter Battle Book* (published in the year I turned 24) is a call for a halt to arms proliferation, and is seen as one of Geisel's glories. It tells the story of the feuding Yooks and Zooks, who in turn develop bigger and better weapons in order to outdo the other. While I admire the author's aim I wonder if it is a good book. There is no character to hook onto and there the middle of the book has a boring repetitiveness to it. The story is told from perspective of the Yooks but none that we meet catch up our sympathies. We're meant to line up with the main character, a soldier in the Yook army, but I don't think it works. He willingly accepts that because the Zooks are different they are bad, proudly signs up to join the border patrol, when feeling down lets the country's national marching band get his spirits up and even on the final page believes he can win — in other words he displays the ugly side of nationalism. The book also has a confused ending, caused by a strange shift from the past to the present, which should've been picked up by the book's editor.

A far better book is *The Lorax*. When we first borrowed it from the library it had a feeling of familiarity. A few pages in I made the connection: I'd seen copies for sale on tables run by environmental and conservation groups. Having finished the book I could see why they were using the book to raise funds: it does a great job in selling their message. A Once-ler comes across a land full of Truffula trees, builds a factory and chops down all the trees to make the yarn necessary for the knitting of thneeds. The Lorax is there as the environment's voice, asking the Once-ler to consider his business activities within the con-

text of all that is around him. But the Once-ler ignores the Lorax's pleas: "Business is business! / And business must grow." And in the end everything is gone: there are no more Truffula trees, and no more of the birds which nested in the trees, the land is barren and bare, and the air and never-by river are polluted. And, as a result, the Once-ler has lost his wealth.

Robert Lichtman of asked a few months ago if "there is any significance to naming this column after a life form in a Phil Dick book?" Now I'm a PKD fan from way back, but I couldn't make Robert's connection. A quick browse through my collection got me none the wiser, and it was taking the question to Bruce Gillespie which got me flicking through my copy of *The Game Players of Titan*. (Mind you, Bruce only proved to be of assistance because the vugs get a mention on the blurb of his copy of the book.)

At first I wondered why anyone would name a fanzine column after something out of Dick's lesser (and in my case, easily forgotten) novels. Then I started considering *Game Players* within the context of Dick's whole body of work. Someone once told me that there are two types of SF readers: those who think *The Man in the High Castle* is Dick's only decent book, and those who are PKD fans. *Martian Time-Slip* is my favorite of his novels, and in a chronological listing of Dick's published works it is *Game Players* which stops *High Castle* from sitting next to *Time-Slip*. In a sense Dick's Vugs bridge the full range of responses to his works, and in retrospect I quite like the idea of giving a "Yes" to Robert's question.

I actually took my column title from the good Dr. Seuss. As I read his books to Adrian I was often taken by the art, and how his style fits the fannish school of illustration. Had time and circumstance intersected Theodor Geisel would've been a welcome addition to a fanzine's list of contributors. This vague grab for Geisel's latent fannish soul was strengthened the first time I read *Oh, The Things That You Can Think* because near the beginning of the book is a paragraph and illustration of a GUFF. As a past winner of that fan fund, linking Australian and European fandoms, I was pleasantly taken-aback with what was on the page before me. TAFF has its Celtic connection, DUFF is Homer Simpson's favorite brew, but GUFF has its own Seuss-creature.

Then one day I'm searching for a fanzine column title, and I'm thinking about Seuss's GUFF creature. If he could give a visual image to something fannish I'll make something fannish out of one of his visual images. I was taken back to the first Seuss book we read to Adrian, *There's A Wocket In My Pocket!* Our copy is hand-me-down and our then-almost-two-year-old soon took to the rhyme easily. It is one of Seuss's no-story, idea-tripping books, in which the narrator takes us on a tour of his home, telling us about the creatures which also live there. There's a ghair which lives under the chair, and a noothgrush that lives on the toothbrush, and a bofa on the sofa, and so on. Some creatures aren't illustrated for us: we don't see the zall as it has scooted down the hall and around a corner, or the quimney as it is up the chimney. And we don't see the vug because it is a lump under a rug.

One time Adrian wondered what the vug looked like and pretended to lift the rug in order to sneak a peek. The creature is there on the page but we can't see it, separated from our world by a piece of woven material. It became a standard line between Adrian and I to wonder what the vug looks like. I had my fanzine column title.



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I play an expert in chaos theory, so I figure that qualifies me to speak at an Apple event.

## The Bugtown Hide-away of Dr. Fandom

by Ted White

death, a few days after that reunion, of the father of one of my closest childhood friends, bringing my friend back to the area that weekend. He was (and still is!) two years older than I, and I hadn't seen him since the year before I graduated high school.

I'd last attended a class reunion 20 years ago, in 1976. There was a 30th Reunion, but it took place while I was in jail, and I missed it. So it was with some eagerness that I made it to this one.

It started a couple of days early, with a phone call from Chris Farrell, who had just gotten into town. Chris and I were high school buddies. We'd known each other throughout much of grade school, but in junior high we became part of a small group — four or six of us — who shared a lot of common interests and liked each other. Chris and I both had Salsbury motor-scooters, for instance, and we tore down and rebuilt their engines in his driveway, under his father's watchful eye. And, with Skip Simpson and Jimmy Terrill, we formed the ATL in 8th grade. The Anti-Teacher League's symbol, drawn on blackboards surreptitiously, was a round bomb with a burning fuse. On the last day of school that year we painted a croquet ball black, painted ATL on it in white, and bored out a hole for a small firecracker, to which we attached a big long ropelike fuse (rope, soaked in a solution of potassium nitrate), and suspended it on a high wire between two trees, smoldering and looking ominous. It went off around noon, with a tiny noise, to our vast amusement and the consternation of teachers who'd stood around looking at it and muttering, "Those damned fools!" all morning, unable to reach and deactivate it. Ten years later, and it would have been amateur rocketry, but this was before Sputnik, so we played with our chemistry sets and manufactured nitroglycerine and such things. (One experiment left a sizable crater in an empty field.)

I was stunned to learn that Chris had several degrees, held patents for a number of medical devices, was the pastor of his church, and held a full professorship at a midwestern college. But the same mischievous twinkle was still in his eyes.

We looked forward to getting together with Skip, but Skip never showed up that weekend, despite assurances that he would. "He won't drive his car in the rain," Chris told me. Skip had bought a 1986 Porsche new and had never taken it out of his garage during inclement weather — and it rained much of that weekend. "You know Skip," Chris said, and we laughed.

The real surprise was Jon Sweet. I wrote about Jon back in the mid-80s, in Egoscan. He was the class victim. Bullies loved to pick on him, just to hear him whine and squeal. Our coach liked to pick on him in gym class, and once actually kicked Jon in his shin. Of course Jon squealed. I befriended him out of a desire to stand up for an underdog, and he was delighted to see me again.

But Jon was no longer an underdog. He exuded self-confidence. He'd been enormously successful in business and now had his own place in the deeply rural part of West Virginia. He looked good, and so did his wife.

Our old nemesis, Rodney Phillips, was there. Rodney (now just "Rod" of course) used to call me "Space Boy" and "Mars Boy" with great derision — back in those glorious days when rockets had nothing to push against in space and space travel was obviously impossible. And he liked to physically beat up on

Recently two events occurred, a week apart, which tossed me back 40 years.

The first was my 40th High School Class Reunion. And the second was the

Jon. Rodney is fat, now, and sells insurance for a living. He seemed to want our approval now, an irony which escaped neither Jon nor me.

The Cooper twins were there. I'd known Joanne and Georgena since 2nd grade. They were identical then, but by high school Joanne was taller and thinner. I never thought about them much in school, never entertained romantic fantasies about either one of them. My mistake. They became very attractive women, easy to talk with and imbued with sparkling personalities. I realized this 20 years ago and it was still true this year. Good solid conversations with each were highpoints of both get-togethers.

We met Friday night at Terp Palmer's house. Terp is one of three of us (I'm another) who still lives in Falls Church. And everyone agreed that Terp has changed the least of any of us — still instantly recognizable to all of us.

We all wore name badges, with our high school yearbook photos attached, and that was a good thing. It was only with the help of such photos that I recognized several former classmates, and they me. Mike Morrison had come around a couple of years ago when he was running for Sheriff, and while he remembered me I could not place him then. Once I saw his high school photo, my memory clicked and I knew who he was — or had once been.

All of us were in our late 50s — 57, 58, 59 — for some strange reason, and many of us had totally changed in appearance.

So had our school, which we toured Saturday afternoon. It was hard to find even an untouched spot in the hallways, and were those lockers always so narrow? Jon remembered more details (and teachers' names) than any of the rest of us. Enrollment hasn't changed much, but the school is three times larger. No one has classes in the gym or hallways any more.

Saturday night was the formal dinner, but it wasn't too formal and I had a chance to talk with others there. Jerry Olsen, whom I'd known since kindergarten days (and his mother was Denmother for our Cub Scouts group), laughed and said his teachers always said he had "great personality" before noting that his grades were just above failing. Corky Feagan was a university president, and still had the same hairdo she'd worn in high school. Jim Crooks — class of 1955 — sent a letter and photos of several of us in his old car, a 1939 Cadillac limousine. I loved to ride in that car.

The Heeters lived only a short block up 11th Street from me, and they bought their house in about 1942. Their son, known to his parents and family as Wayne, but to everyone else as Bob or Robert, was older than the handful of us kids who lived then in what was still a semi-rural area. At first we were afraid of him, but our choices were limited, so we made friends with him. I was four or five at that time, Bob six or seven. He Went To School. He was a Big Kid — to us. In the years that followed he was my best friend. I had a bicycle, but hadn't yet learned to ride it (no one had training wheels in those days). When I started in first grade, there were no school buses; like everyone else, I walked the mile to school. But Bob started taking me to school on my bike, me riding the bar between the handlebar and the seat, "sidesaddle." We did this for most of that school year, before Bob finally grew tired of pedaling me everywhere. (I don't think he had his own bike then.) It was in late spring that he decided I needed to learn to ride my own bike, and set out to teach me. "I'll hold onto the back of the seat and run alongside while you get the hang of it," he said. This worked pretty well, and I managed to wobble successfully down 11th Street for half a block or so before asking him,

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We all got lightsabers for Christmas. Mine was red.

"How'm I doing?" There was no answer, so I glanced back over my shoulder, to see him standing back at the beginning of the block, grinning, and shouting, "You're doing fine, Ted!" I made it to the end of the block safely but didn't negotiate the wide turn I attempted. Still, that got me started, and I rode my own bike from then on, except when we both wanted to go somewhere on it.

Bob was not only bigger, he was from his early childhood a very handsome boy, and a skilled athlete. We formed a brains/brawn combination. He kept me from getting beaten up, and I taught him all I knew about weighty topics like sex (I knew where babies came from). By the time we were both in our teens, Bob was chased by the most attractive girls in school, while I had only one date in high school. I envied and resented him for that, of course.

By mid-high school I'd found fandom and a whole new community, and we drifted apart, still friends. Bob quit school a couple of weeks before his class graduated, to join the Army. I didn't see him again until the next year, when he stopped by briefly. "Why'd you quit right before graduation?" I asked him. He gave me a slightly pitying smile and said, "Ted, I wasn't going to graduate." I was into jazz by then, and he raved to me about Stan Kenton, which I then rather condescendingly regarded as whitebread jazz.

I didn't see him again until this year.

His father died of cancer, at 92. Bob and his two sisters (attractive women who had been born when we were in our teens and disdainful of the "little brats") came back to see their father on his deathbed. When Bob arrived, his father squeezed his hand and died. The following Sunday Bob's mother held an open house in lieu of a funeral or formal services. I hugged her, greeted the sisters, and then found Bob.

He was as handsome as ever, looking 10 years younger than his real age, but no longer taller or bigger than I. He was delighted to see me, and we laughed and reminisced for as long as we could without being rude to the other guests.

Bob has lived an interesting life. He got his GED (high school equivalency) in the Army, and then went on to college, ending up with a degree in education. He then became a teacher, and, later, vice-principal in a nearby high school. "I enjoyed it until they put me in charge of enforcing discipline," he told me.

"That's ironic, considering how anti-authority you were as a kid," I commented.

He laughed. "And still am! But I knew where my problem kids were coming from." He and his then-wife decided to pull up stakes, quit their jobs, sell their house, and buy a boat to live on, down in the Florida keys. That sounded more like the Bob Heeter I knew. And, along the way, Bob had become a jazz drummer, playing and recording with, among other bands, The Airmen of Note.

"We ended up in the Virgin Islands, running a charter service. It was great — lasted more'n 10 years — until a hurricane wiped us out, destroyed the boat." Currently Bob lives in Florida, teaching again. He has, like me, grown kids in their 20, one of whom — a daughter, almost Kit's age — was with him. Also there was a nephew of his who looked amazingly like Bob as a teenager.

These two events, one week apart, really hit me hard in unexpected ways. It was great to renew acquaintances with childhood friends, 40 years later, but it was also disquieting. A major effect was to remind me of who I'd been 40 years ago. All of us related to each other in ways that had as their starting points the ways we'd related to each other as kids.

Some of us were confident and assured as teenagers. But I was not. My teens were stressful and full of unpleasantness — thank ghod I discovered fandom when I did! — and my self-image was not good. In the interim I've done a lot of growing up, and I did not enjoy the restimulation of my adolescent feelings and doubts.

Nonetheless, I'm really looking forward to our 50th class reunion, in 2006.

We have to get the President's brain back before the Arcturians start working on it!

## Apak Stat Box 2: Writers

A total of 24 people have written articles or columns for Apparatchik from issue #1 (March 17, 1994) through issue #70 (Nov. 22, 1996). Outside of the letter column, Andy Hooper was the only writer until #26. The longest piece ever published in Apak was "The X Fans: Villiany in Vegas" (#44, Oct. 12, 1995), at nine pages.

Pages per writer were recorded to the nearest half-page; pieces smaller than one-half page counted as one-half page. Locs-per-issue stats are included as a basis of comparison, but it is important to note that locs are measured as units, not as pages.

For timebinding purposes, #1 is dated March 17, 1994; #11, June 16; #21, Nov. 17; #31, April 6, 1995; #41, Aug. 24; #51, Jan. 18, 1996; #61, June 7.

### Apak Article and Column Totals, Issues #1-70

	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	Total	Avg.
Total writers	1	1	2	4	6	14	15	24	
Total pages	32	78	56	94	102	96	98	556	7.94
Total article pages	14	21.5	28.5	42.5	47.5	57	65.5	276.5	3.95
Article pages/total	.44	.28	.51	.45	.47	.59	.67	.50	
Total locs	32	57	34	73	80	80	102	458	6.54
Andy Hooper	14	21.5	23.5	27.5	29.5	29	27.5	172.5	2.46
Victor Gonzalez	0	0	5	12	12.5	8.5	9	47	.671
Lesley Reece	0	0	0	0	1	3.5	6.5	11	.157
Dan Steffan	0	0	0	0	0	4.5	4.5	9	.129
Steve Green	0	0	0	0	1	3.5	2.5	7	.100
Ted White	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	.086
Randy Byers	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	4	.057
Pam Wells	0	0	0	0	2	1.5	0.5	4	.057
A.P. McQuiddy	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	.029

In addition, three people (Jon Singer, Dave Langford and Irwin Hirsh) are tied with 1.5 pages, for a total of 4.5 pages; seven people are tied with one page, for a total of seven pages; and five people are tied with .5 pages, for a total of 2.5 pages.

— Compiled by Victor M. Gonzalez



## Potlatch Plans

by Luke McGuff

Potlatch is the West Coast's answer to Wiscon or Readercon: a gathering of science fiction readers and writers to talk about the literature that brought us

together, using science fiction and fantasy as a basis for free-ranging discussions and speculations. There have been six Potlatches so far, in Seattle, the Bay Area, and Portland. Each has had a different feel that still contributes to a Potlatch continuum that makes our convention worth attending and, more important, participating in.

We strive to make this convention as participatory as possible. Programs are suggested by attendees, and developed by the programming committee in close contact with people inspired by the ideas, not just looking for free membership. At Potlatch, writers and readers of science fiction meet as equals. Some topics we'll discuss at Potlatch 6 are "Body Image in Science Fiction," "Electronic Publishing: Primordial Mammal or Giant Death Star?," "Victorian Utopias," and "The Giant Rat of Sumatra."

And if all else fails, there's the dealer's room packed with — unbelievable, but true — actual BOOKS. Not to mention a superb consuite (the actual center of the convention) and a Sat-

urday night dance hosted by DJ Hooper. Potlatch 6 is happening Feb. 28 through March 2, at the University Plaza Hotel in Seattle's lovely University District, high atop scenic Interstate 5. You can call the hotel at 1-800-343-7040. The room rates are very reasonable, 1993 prices: \$65 single or double; \$70/triple, \$75/quad. We'll have a roommate board if you need or want to share space. There will also be a banquet Sunday afternoon, followed by the Clarion West Scholarship Fund Auction.

The Scholarship Fund Auction could be Potlatch's main gift to the larger sf community. All proceeds go directly to Clarion West. The auction is fun, the action is fast and silly, and some of the donated materials are astounding. There are rare collectibles, such as an original manuscript to "Alien Sex" (winner of the World Fantasy Award), or German editions of work by Vonda N. McIntyre or William Gibson, proofs of F&SF cover art from the 60s, signed firsts from Joe Haldeman and others, and much more. There are also trinkets, hand made goodies, and curios. And if that doesn't entice the money out of your wallet, we threat — er, promise that special "challenge grants" will.

If you want further information about Potlatch, visit our web site at <http://www.alexicom.net/potlatch>, email me, the chair, at [luko@oo.net](mailto:luko@oo.net). Or write me at 4121 Interlake Ave. N. Seattle, WA 98103. You'll be glad you did.

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## We all have good intentions / But always strings attached

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## Confessions of a Fringe Fan

by Lesley Reece

After all my complaining about the lack of a Fannish Rule Book, I've discovered one exists after all. Well, sort of. Andy was nice enough to loan me his copy of the guide book for Minicon

26. There, running along the margins (without attribution, unfortunately), is *The Neofan's Guide to Science Fiction*, by Bob Tucker.

Having this a year ago certainly would have saved me from alienating my fannish friends with constant wails of "But what does that mean?" Still, reading it has solved many of the left-over riddles, like "What's the deal with all those propeller beanies?", as well as the always-puzzling "Who the hell is Degler?" Now I'll be able to laugh along with the rest of the Apparatchiki when that name comes up — unlike Randy, I didn't have the cojones to pretend I got the joke.

The Neofan's Guide has also helped me with another important dilemma. In "The President's Address" in *Apak 71*, Randy wrote that a fan is "someone who started out as a fan of SF, then got involved in fanzine fandom and slowly shifted allegiance and attention from SF itself to fandom and to what is written by and about fans." By that definition, I'm not really a fan. I've always been willing to read SF, ever since I discovered Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* some twenty-five years ago, but my reading habits are extremely eclectic. I've never been able to claim SF, or any other category of literature, as a favorite.

Nor do I strictly fit Randy's definition of a fringe fan: "Someone on the margins of fans; that is, someone who enjoys the social environs of fandom but whose primary reason for involvement in fandom is still an interest in SF itself." It's true I enjoy socializing with the fans I've met, but it was really the chance to write that drew me toward the Apparatchiki. I'm interested in SF, of course, but no more or less than I ever have been in the past.

I admit that not caring whether I belong has been one of my afflictions since junior high, when I discovered my social ineptitude. Back then, I figured I could either be at the bottom

of someone else's hierarchy or at the top of my own. Like Milton's Satan, I chose the latter, and I've continued to follow that path. But for an introspective person, the lure of self-definition is irresistible.

That's why, when I first encountered fandom, I was defensive about my "being allowed to play." I wanted to know exactly what made a person a fan before I wrote a single word for anybody. I was ready to leave the whole thing behind in a second if I didn't fit within the accepted parameters. Andy and Victor tried to help by loaning me D. West's "Performance." Reading that did explain a great deal about fandom, but all West's references to "rules" scared me away. What were these rules, and what if I broke a whole bunch of them without knowing?

Finally, I just held my breath and started writing anyway. I thought my initial uncertainty had disappeared altogether, but my lack of conformity to either of Randy's definitions brought it flooding back. I know he wasn't attempting to alienate or discourage me, but still I was left wondering, "What am I doing here?"

I wasn't expecting *The Neofan's Guide* to assist me with any of this neurotic waffling, but it did. The first definition I looked at was "Fringe Fan," because I thought that one would be the most likely to apply to me. It reads in part: "The chap who is content to remain on the outside, looking in and only rarely taking part in some activity; also, fans who are interested in a field only marginally related to SF." Oh great, I thought, this doesn't really describe me, either.

On a whim, I went back to the beginning of the list and looked at the first definition. "Fan," it said. "A follower, a devotee, or an admirer of any sport or diversion. In this instance the diversion is science, fantasy, and weird tales in book and magazine form, in the theatre, or on radio or TV. We assume that you are interested in some facet of it, although you need not prove it — fandom absorbs all kinds."

Even though I sensed that from the beginning, I feel much better now. Good enough, in fact, to go back to my pose. Am I a fan? Don't ask me that. Labels suck, man.

## AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[ APH: HOWARD WALDROP (Box 5103 Oso General Store, 30230 Oso Loop Rd., Arlington, WA 98223) sends his annual flood diary: ]

'Greetings from Snohomish County, home of the Blue Plastic Tarp. A rainy day, no money, and APAK #71. What more can there be to life?

'Stats come very late in the life of a culture (or a fanzine), somewhere between the rise of Caesarian and Second Religiosity, according to Oswald "Sweets" Spengler. You're batting .082 — that stat that counts is 556 pages in 70 issues. (That's like Gehrig's total games started and played.)

'Andy's mound-builder research thing resonated (not just the subject matter — I write a novel about them; the Mormons established a religion), but because of the manner in which Brown got into it. Texas had much the same thing, except in Paleontology — most of the great dinosaur, giant turtle, mammoth/mastodon, dinosaur footprint stuff you see pictures of was found and dug out under the direction of a guy (a friend of the late Chad Oliver, of course) with a high school education and some junior college; the University, and the museums he worked for had him on the staff as essentially Shovel-Gang Foreman or something, since he didn't have any degrees. He could tell plagioclase feldspar from ordinary granite a hundred yards off, and once, driving through NE New Mexico with Chad, described *exactly* what happened the last time the Folsom crater erupted, just by looking around. He did the finding, the excavations, the preservation, etc., and somebody else signed the paperwork. The history of science could probably be written by looking at guys like him and Brown (especially since guys like Marsh and Cope, with the highest academic credentials in the world, used to blow up their digs when they were finished taking the first good stuff out, so nobody *else* could have them . . .)

'Greg Benford's piece reminds me why I only write novels every decade or so.

'I think for APAK #100, you should put out a zine so heavy it takes *two* stamps to mail.

'Does anybody but me find it truly exceptional, that there's a site on the WWW (I wouldn't have seen it unless it was on the computer screen at the New Year's Party) in which is reproduced a piece of art done in 12-color *hectograph*? (Two guys in 1936: "I envision a future, Bob . . ." "What future, Bill?" "A future in which there will be a machine that will reproduce your fanzine The Fan-Comet instantly anywhere in the world, and . . . and . . . you won't have to get jelly on the staples!!")

'*Plus le changé* . . . Today, cheap instant quality reproduction worldwide. But tomorrow, tomorrow . . . *nine* copies, plus one for Tucker, and *two* for Ackerman!

'Have to write a story for the Aussies (and the Feb. rent).'

[ VMG: I agree. History is usually written by those who follow, not those who do. But I'm hoping that the information I've gathered will provide useful as an Apak index — should anyone want to revisit a particular event — as well as being interesting as statistics. The thing that's impressed me the most is not the total number of pages, but the fact that the fanzine has become more consistent over the course of the run.

I hope you survived the floods without much damage to your person or property. Here's to modern technology: telecommunications and the blue plastic tarp. ]

[ APH: The mounds you wrote about in *Them Bones* were part of the Mississippian tradition that stopped just 25 miles south of Madison, at a little town called Lake Mills. I've written a few pieces about that site, too. I feel remarkably lucky to have lived with the opportunity to see both types of mounds in my neighborhood.

JOHN D. BERRY (e-mail to [jdb@jdb.seanet.com](mailto:jdb@jdb.seanet.com)) offers a fast-breaking bulletin on Mr. Waldrop: ]

'I think you should be sure to tap your sometime correspondent Mr. Waldrop for tales of exotic faroff Swancon, which he is en route to even as we type. In fact, if Howard's sense of his schedule and my sense of time zones is correct, he is probably in the middle of the two-cent tour of Sydney at this very moment, during his 10- or 12-hour layover on the way to Perth. Terry Dowling and Nick Stathopoulos, stout men and true, were going to meet him at 6:00 Sunday morning when his plane got in; if there was any sort of fannish or other party the night before, as there may well have been on a Saturday night in midsummer, we can imagine that Howard, Terry, and Nick may be in approximately the same state of exhaustion and hilarity. If so, I wish I could be there to hear the dialog.

'Pretend this is a letter of comment on Apparatchik. It could be. Keep up the good work.'

[ APH: Speaking of Australia, we have a response on last issue's review of Ethel the Aardvark from CHERYL MORGAN (e-mail to [100610.3413@compuserve.com](mailto:100610.3413@compuserve.com)): ]

'I am most flattered by your kind words about my article in Ethel. I'm glad you found it entertaining, but I hope it will not be unique. One of MSFC's policies in the run-up to Aussiecon Three is to encourage an international outlook amongst Aussie fans. That article is hopefully the first of an occasional series on how clubs in different parts of the world run. My next project is The Tun.'

[ APH: Ah, but you shouldn't warn them you're coming — they'll put their best face on for posterity.

Although this issue has a welcome lack of writing about driving, we continue to get letters on the subject, like this one from CATHY DOYLE (e-mail to [cdoyle@visi.net](mailto:cdoyle@visi.net)): ]

'I'm really enjoying the driving discussion. I think part of the problem (and I haven't read this issue yet, including Ted's comments, in any depth), is that the social contract of the road is breaking down. Roads are just too crowded. Ted may drive safely and I may drive safely, but the idiot in front of us can't be trusted. I would love to develop this theory in greater depth, but it's late and I'm going to bed instead.'

[ VMG: There might be an aspect to being enclosed in a metal shell that allows all of us to be so impolite to each other on the road. In a car, you really can't resolve disputes without risking a life. It's a very strange way for humans to interact.

STEVEN DESJARDINS (e-mail to [steven@desjardins.org](mailto:steven@desjardins.org)) takes up the discussion of the fringe-fan writers of America and ffw past-president Randy Byers: ]

'There's no contradiction in being elected Past Dictator-For-Life. In a mundane organization, of course, one would immediately have to check to see if the unlucky honoree was in fact dead and, if not, dispatch him; but since fandom is incapable of error then any Past Dictators-For-Life may be incontrovertibly presumed dead.

'Very interesting column on the Indian mounds. I read a book called *Fantastic Archaeology* a few years ago that explores

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Semen's dangers are as exaggerated as its reproductive uses.

some of the pseudoscientific ideas you alluded to, which credit these mounds to Vikings or Atlanteans or practically anyone with a white skin. We've advanced beyond that kind of foolishness, thank goodness, but the fact remains that practically nobody among the general public even knows that these incredible mounds exist.'

[APH: Well, I'm working on the problem, Steve. And I want to point out that while I want to attribute these sites to the people who made them, that doesn't mean I reject the idea of Atlanteans or Uzbeks traveling to New Jersey and Hacken-sacking it in the 4th century BC.

BILL BODDEN (e-mail to Bodden@aol.com) has a serious point to make about Corflu: ]

'Thanks for APAK #70. I'm relieved that the Corflu committee finally has settled things, and that we can start making our travel plans to be in the Bay Area in March. One point I would like to add is concern over the lack of a mailing list the last couple of years.

'Since the last time I published was during the Reagan Presidency, my mailing list is understandably somewhat out of date. Since Corflu has the information readily available, it certainly would be wonderful of them to make it available to its members. Certainly every committee has the right to do things as they see fit; however, fans like myself who don't publish often can certainly appreciate the courtesy of making it that much easier to publish. It would also be a tremendous boon in terms of keeping an already extant mailing list current; notoriously difficult no matter how experienced the Faned.'

[APH: The frustration at this state of affairs is increased by the knowledge that publishing the list by both paper and e-mail is so easy. I'm quite sure someone from the Corflu Wave committee is all over this even now.

STEVE STILES (8631 Lucerne Road, Randallstown, MD 21133) addresses the vagaries of life at the millennium: ]

'Re Ted's piece in #72, I really hadn't expected to find myself working in a warehouse at this stage of my life, either; the last time I held a similar job, working in a wire die factory opposite the Empire State Building, was over 30 years ago. But I also hadn't expected the totality of 1996's meltdown of the comics field, the worst since the 50s and still on-going, as well as that coinciding with the simultaneous evaporation of *all* my local illustration gigs. All this after my Best Year Ever, naturally. What I did see coming was the gradual obsolescence of my fall-back trade, pasteup and mechanicals, as well as some other commercial art skills, being replaced by 4-5 computer programs. The Catch-22 was that we didn't have the bread or time to update our computer, buy the programs, or take any training courses. We still don't. As a science fiction fan I find all this somewhat ironic and enjoy a hearty laugh over the whole scenario as I load yet another fucking truck.

'I haven't completely given up my freelance cartooning — I'm working on something now, and will still continue with the annual, award-winning *Xenozoic Tales* (XT #14 is just out now and is just fabulous, darlings). But this is limited to weekends and a few hours in the evenings. As a result, my fan art activities, and other fanac, is bound to suffer. I really hope this doesn't get me cut off any mailing lists — judging from Fanzine Countdown, I'm not on all that many to begin with.'

[APH: The contraction in the comics industry has hurt a lot of our readers and friends. We hope you, and they, will have a better 1997, Steve. For what it's worth, intelligent LoCs like this one are the real key to staying on mailing lists,

at least in my book.

IRWIN HIRSH (26 Jessamine Ave., East Prahran, Victoria 3181 Australia), the antipodean apparatchik, brings our attention to issues Australian: ]

'I'm impressed that Christina Lake has managed to pub her ish while on her travels, and because one issue was published in Australia I'm starting a campaign to get Never Quite Arriving nominated for the Ditmar. A couple of days ago I received a postcard from her, in which she said she'll be in Melbourne in time for Perry Middlemiss and Robyn Mills' New Years Eve party. This puts me in a quandary: I want to see Christina, but I'm not too thrilled about being within earshot of the esteemed Mr. Middlemiss. Last weekend he became chair of the 1999 Worldcon committee, and that's my cue to get out of his way. In our address and telephone book I've already put a circle around his telephone number, with the notation that it is not to be dialed until September, 1999.'

[APH: Lake for the Ditmar! We're enthusiastically in favor of this interpretation of eligibility. Does this make Apak eligible for a Nova?

ROBERT LICHTMAN (P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442) returns for his usual at-bat: ]

'This is my first letter of comment for 1997. Got to get started early so I can move up in the Apak Stat Box, after all. I see that my early strategy of writing letters on a number of issues (when they were more frequent) has failed me now. My miserable showing in issues 11-20 and 31-40 when compared to Slugger Flynn (appellation concept borrowed from Arnie Katz's article in the Corflu Wave progress report) is pathetic in retrospect. Earlier in his lead-off article, Victor asserts that "Apparatchik might be the greatest one-stamp frequent fanzine ever." I would tend to reserve that distinction to Terry Carr & Ron Ellik's Fanac, which won a Hugo for itself in 1959. Or even Pong. Mind you, I don't mean to denigrate Apak by my observations. In fact, I find it to be indispensable and as close to a focal point as we have these days.

'The best part of Ted's column this time was his discussion of "gender" vs. "sex." Ted's comments on their usage agreed with my own, but just to be sure I checked with my own local grammar purist, reading Ted's words to her, and she confirmed what Ted said as well. His reference to "the Beavises among us" who snigger at the mere mention of the word "sex" made me think that as an evolving language, English may eventually include the verb, "to beavis," meaning to snigger at the mention of sex. Used in a sentence: "The audience beavisied loudly at the stand-up's crude sexual innuendo."

'Good to read that Janice Eisen is moving somewhere there are other fans, since one of her complaints about Johnstown was the lack of fellow fen. Like Victor, I also hope her headaches have backed off some, and to hear from her in your pages (or anywhere else) more often.

'Re Victor's observation that a driver who was Nestoring, pulled into the fast lane, and got hit by another motorist would be at fault: he's right. There is language in the California Vehicle Code allowing police officers to ticket a vehicle moving slower than the normal flow of vehicles in other than the right-most lane on a multi-lane facility. Signs are posted along most such advising that slower moving vehicles should stay to the right. Whether or not the Nestoring driver was hit by another motorist, he's still at fault.

'Probably Harry Warner Jr. or some other truly vintage fan will provide a better answer than me, but in response to Mur-

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They are much smaller than the Earth-to-Mars monsters we have to fence off to keep the cattle from rubbin' on 'em.



ray Moore's question about when *The Usual* became the usual way to obtain a fanzine, I suspect it was in the 50s. By the time I got into fandom in late 1958, it was definitely the currency, though sending money for one's first issue was *de rigueur* and most faneds didn't actively discourage subber-drones. (Gregg Calkins published lists of subscribers in *Opsla*, for that matter.)

[VMG: Well, thank God for words like "might." When Andy read the "lead-off" article, he said something about me "waving my dick in the air," and I'm sure there's something to that. Apak publishes a lot — it's got a big dick. That, I admit, doesn't mean all derive satisfaction from it. I will also admit that Pong (of which I've read the entire run), and probably Fanac (of which I haven't), are better. But I'm a little too close to judge. That said, thanks for the kind words.

Yes, Ted's right about "sex" and "gender." Janice Eisen should get better and assume her role as fandom's leading reviewer. And Nestoring is Bad and Dangerous and Down-right Fucking Illegal, so get the fuck out of my way you idiot asshole! Ah, driving.

— MURRAY MOORE (377 Manly Street, Midland, Ontario L4R 3E2 Canada, e-mail to [murray.moore@encode.com](mailto:murray.moore@encode.com)) has a few reactions to #72: ]

'A reaction of mine to fHapa 2, not mentioned by Andy in *Fanzine Countdown*, was to notice the contributions were supplied by two Brits, one Australian, one Swede, two Canadians, and two Americans. A regular fannish United Nations.

'Coincidentally, a few days before receiving APAK 72 and reading Victor's Apak statistics, I counted my locs for 1996. I loxed 40 fanzines with 99 locs. By far the most loxed fanzine was Apak, with 15 locs, thus the reason my name appears in Apak's equivalent of agate type in Victor's summary.

'I self-servedly suggest a most unpublished letters stat: either way, I benefit. I look forward to Letters to Apak: *The Index. Coming Real Soon Now: Murray Moore's Collected WAHF Locs to Apparatchik.*

[APH: From a frequent loccer to a first timer, here is MICHAEL RAWDON (444 West Wilson #305 Madison, WI 53703 e-mail to [rawdon@msn.fullfeed.com](mailto:rawdon@msn.fullfeed.com)): ]

'Well, I think it's time for me to jump into this LoC thing, now that I've got at least a little something to say.

'As a near-total newbie (or is that "neo"? ) in the world of non-APA fanzine fandom, I feel like I subscribed to Apak at about the right time, particularly given Victor's "Fanzine Counts" in #72. I enjoy statistical info, no matter how minor, and I quite enjoyed the historical perspective given by the article. I'm looking forward to further installments of this.

'Other bits of education for me have included Murray Moore's LoC in #72, and learning what TAFF and DUFF are. Not to mention Randy Byers' two fwa articles, which articulated some of my own thoughts about fandom (or my perception of it). I sometimes make the distinction between people who are "in fandom for SF" and people who are "in fandom for fandom."

'Now (just — I imagine — to confirm my newbie status) if I can just figure out what 'afai' is, I'll be all set . . .

'Regarding the ongoing "driving wars": I was once one of those people who would resolutely drive in the left-hand lane of the highway, although in this case the highways were the Interstates in the Boston-Chicago-New Orleans "triangle." But my reasoning had nothing to do with obeying the speed limit (in fact, I believe the speed limit of nearly every stretch of Interstate I've driven on should be no less than 75 mph), but because I theorized that driving on the left-hand side would

give me some small "protection" from radar detectors on the right side of the highway, by having cars between me and the side of the road. (Did it work? Well, I never got a ticket, but then I rarely drove faster than 75.)

[VMG: My, you are new. Well sit back, enjoy, and keep writing letters. I found your comments on avoiding radar traps interesting. When I'm on the freeway, that occupies part of my time too. Having a car at a safe distance behind you is a good idea, because the cop will probably pull them over. The worst thing is to stand out, either by being the only car on the road, or by drawing attention to yourself with frequent passing.

By the way, it's "Academy of Fannish Arts and Letters." And it's not meant to be taken seriously. ]

ERIC LINDSAY (P.O. Box 744, Ryde, New South Wales 2112 Australia, e-mail to [eric@maths.uts.edu.au](mailto:eric@maths.uts.edu.au)) finishes up for us this time with a chunk from a much larger letter: ]

'I liked your description of the fan/pro ratio at Westercon in #64. I'd be pretty happy if we had that sort of ratio at Aussiecon Three, nor does it seem entirely unlikely. The trick will be to ensure that the budgets are in line with the membership numbers. Unlike you, I wouldn't have left to visit a baseball game, nor go off with Perry Middlemiss to the football, which would perhaps be the local equivalent. Although I think Walter Jon Williams gave the best answer to question of whether Aussie Rules was like gridiron without the pads. "No," he answered, "it's like Mad Max without the cars."

'I thought you have been acting exceedingly well in promoting Janice Murray for DUFF, while standing yourself. But perhaps there will be another year in which you will take the field more actively?

'I'll be visiting the USA again in February. I'll hit Boskone first. I hope that I get to see you at Potlatch, and maybe at Corflu as well.

'My time seems to have been devoted to doing things for Aussiecon Three for much of the year. As you can imagine, we are very short of volunteers in some areas, especially those involving day-to-day bookwork that doesn't have the fannish kudos of a more visible job at the con. So far we don't even have a volunteer to look after the volunteers. I'm nominally treasurer, but since I'm in a different city, I don't do the banking. I do the budget projections and spreadsheets, and scream a lot if anyone suggests spending money.

'In December a freak violent hailstorm smashed through the Faulconbridge area. 13 of my 15 skylight tiles were broken, as were the skylight diffusers, and some concrete tiles also broke. I had minor flooding, and unfortunately lost some fanzines. My wooden balcony at the back was damaged beyond repair, and I appear to have lost a lot of the garden. Repairs so far have cost \$2,000, but are mostly complete.

'During repairs, the vibrations from demolishing the balcony encouraged shelves to leap from the bookcase, so I had an eight metre long bookcase with 2400 scifi books self-destruct in front of me. I usually have a few books on the floor, but this is really ridiculous. I nearly got pulped. Jean said she thought the bookcase was looming over her more than usual, and I thought she was imagining it. She will never let me live that down.'

[WAHF: Tom Becker (who subscribed again, which is why he is the Honorary Apparatchik of the month in the front colophon), George Flynn, Garth Spencer, Candi Strecker, Bruce Townley & Shelby Vick. ]

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Thus, I was particularly pleased to be invited, on New Year's Day, to witness the death of liberalism on CNN's *Crossfire*.

1.) **FTT #21**, edited by Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Rd., South Tottenham, London N15 4JU UK: Here is a late contender for best single fan-article of the year, Joseph's magnificently cheerful "First, Last and Always," inspired by the trip he and Judith took to Kensal Green Cemetery's annual Open Day. Considering first the historical and contemporary context of the cemetery, he moves on to a consideration of death and mass death in general, almost palpably rubbing his hands with glee at the prospect of new and newly drug-resistant strains of disease that will help control human populations. Completely fascinating stuff, and a stylistic triumph. Joseph's supportive statements on the pseudonymity of E. B. Frohvet has already borne fruit, as Frohvet offers an account of his visit to Ft. McHenry. The issue is quite full of travel writing, which seems to be an FTT staple: Judith presents some correspondence she had with her sister Roslyn, concerning the habits of hippos and other animals observed in east Africa, while Andy Sawyer describes some sights from a trip to Tunisia. Judith's own memoir of her life in rural Australia, mostly a consideration of the local flora, is utterly charming, and one wishes for more. The lettercol has a few loud exchanges, especially those regarding Julian Hanna's article on American travel in #20, but all in all, this issue is an unalloyed pleasure. Superb.

2.) **File 770 #115**, edited by Mike Glycer, P.O. Box 1056, Sierra Madre, CA 91025: Well, first off, this is a fanhistorically essential issue of F770, being the official narrative of a Worldcon chairman's experience of said Big Event. There's also a lot of felicitous, blissed-out web-chat from LACon attendees studying Mike's narrative, but at least he admits that he sees the conflict between printing a lot of politically efficacious praise for the event and wanting to be a tough newszine editor ferreting out the march of fannish folly. Mike has a few tangy words for First Fandom, grasping costumers, and the brutal raise in Worldcon membership costs put forth by the AussieCon III committee. But mostly, it's a love-feast. Patty Wells' tale from inside the "Audrey III" costume she wore during the Romm/Levine-produced opening ceremonies is certainly not to be found elsewhere. Lots of cool numbers in boxes, winners and losers. And somehow, John Hertz's report on the tiny, eccentric El Paso Westercon (Yes, it HAS been a while since we've seen an F770) carries over some of the giddy energy of the rest of the issue, reminding me only of the nice parts of that event. Even Roger Sims' obituary for Lynn Hickman seems more celebratory than mourning; this is the happiest issue I've seen from Mike Glycer in a decade.

3.) **BOB #9, 10 & 11**, written and edited by Ian Sorensen, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton ML3 7HY, UK: Every fanzine deserves to be reviewed on its own, and as regular readers will attest, I do my best. But when 18 months worth of fanzines arrive in a single envelope, I can't afford to spend the space considering each one in the depth it deserves. BOB is essentially a narrative perzine, Ian's progress through the wide world of fandom, and seeing as he appears to move widely in UK fan circles,

a wide variety of Britfan characters make their appearances. His Intersection aftermath (#9) and Leeds safari/Bob Shaw wake (#10) accounts are toothsome little morsels, frosted with frequent D. West cartoons and entertainingly composed. The more introspective and personal material in #11 is somewhat harder going — I fear I felt uncomfortably squirmy at a few points, especially when Ian chimes in with his endorsement of the notion that white male professionals are the most oppressed people in society — and his Eastercon memories skate on the ragged edge of coherence, as one must assume Ian did himself at the event in question. The issue is quite redeemed by his blistering abuse of Vince Docherty and Intersection through the medium of a "skit" performed at Eastercon — most cathartic for those assembled, I would assume. The lettercol mutates from issue to issue, sometimes snipped and focused on specific issues under subheads, then featuring virgin letters structured as written, and finally a kind of loc file summary, providing a narrative of the mail received punctuated with specific quotes. The overall impression received may depend on how much the reader personally likes Ian and his sense of humor — I find them pleasant, but not especially likely to draw a response.

4.) **Twink #4**, edited by E.B. Frohvet, 4725 Dorsey Hall drive, Box # A-700, Ellicott City, MD 21042: Twink continues to be a source of topical interest and design confusion. People have badly misjudged the tenor of my thoughts on Mr. Frohvet's pseudonymity. I submit that it continues to be the most remarkable thing about him and his fanac — how many fans have placed such a successful barrier between their written and face-to-face fanactivity? Who has wanted to? — but this does not detract in any way from the value of the work he does in Twink, which continues to improve. E.B. and guest editorialist Kevin Welch hurl themselves into the jaws of *Dhalgren*, and struggle manfully with the arms of criticism, with E.B. taking on *The Dispossessed*, Le Guin's socialist reconstruction of *Innocents Abroad*, in the bargain. Welch's essay offers a glimpse into his personal mythology, and pleases more with those insights than with his juxtaposition of Delany and Phil Dick's *A Scanner Darkly*. Frohvet has received a fat envelope of Rotsler cartoons, 12 pages of letters, and has lost the tentative quality that marked the first few issues. He also exhibits a wide knowledge of science fiction with his capsule reviews. Twink is establishing an identity as a resolutely sercon fanzine, and Frohvet sets a lively but courteous tone in his interplay with his readers. His popularity should ultimately be limited only by the size of his mailing list. But who will show up to accept the Hugo?

**Also Received:** Texas SF Inquirer #55, Brad & Cindy Foster for FACT; The Unpaved Road #2, Joshua Peck & Laura Bailey; An-sible #114, Dave Langford; Wave 1, Alyson Abramowitz; Opuntia #29.2, 29.5 & Canadian Journal of Detournement #16, Dale Speirs; Scotland, HO!, Ian Hagemann; Challenger #5, Guy Lillian; Fanfare (in F) #1, Dave Wittmann; PhiloSfY #4, Alexander Slate; Out of James' Attic #1 & 2, James Walton.

— Andy Hooper

APPARATCHIK is the Stephen Jacob Weinberg of fandom, another Brooklyn-born hoaxer, who impersonated the US Consul to Morocco, a Romanian envoy, a Serbian military attache, a lieutenant in both the navy and the air corps, actress Pola Negri's personal physician, and who once scammed \$10,000 out of Princess Fatima of Afghanistan. Ironically, he was killed trying to stop a bank heist. 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: Harry Andruschak, John Bangsund, Tom Becker, Judy Bemis, Tracy Benton, Bill Bodden, 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, Michael Rawdon, Alan Rosenthal, Anita Rowland, Karen Schaffer, Leslie Smith, Nevenah Smith, Dale Speirs, Candi Strecker, Geri Sullivan, Alva Svoboda, Steve Swartz, David Thayer, Tom Whitmore and Art Widner.