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VENOM

Contents this issue are rather hodge-podge, but there should be an editorial and trip report by ye publisher, mailing comments by Gordon Eklund, and a selection of reprints from the Cult. If there's a cover, there's a cover and it'll have the artist's name on it; otherwise no art work is contemplated.

And I hope this makes the 110th mailing. All the mimeographs in Berkeley seem on the blink, so unless I can get hold of Ed Meskys out in Livermore, you'll no doubt be reading this in the 111th mailing....

**SILLY SEASON** The silly season is upon us again. This year it seems to have taken the form of idiot FAPA motions. They're funny all right, but the trouble is some, if not all, of them are going to pass. First, we had Sneary's re the Cult. I laughed like hell when Rick showed it to me at the Pacificon, but I wouldn't cosign it. I distrust jokes which might backfire. Besides I could very well see possible brickbats for a Cult co-signer. And Pelz is getting said brickbats I note.

However, once Rick's motion was introduced, everyone seemed to get into the spirit of the thing. Ellington says he's going to introduce a motion banning all multi-apans and Pelz says he going to introduce another one banning all mono-apans. And Rike had a suggestion which appealed to me very much. Dave suggested we introduce a motion banning all Charter Members of SAPS.

An obvious line of campaign presents itself. SAPS as an organization was founded as a criticism of FAPA. The Charter Members of SAPS considered FAPA a dull and stodgy group. They actually dared to criticize FAPA. Down with SAPS! Expel all SAPS members! But on the other hand, let's be fair. Perhaps some modern SAPS don't know the nefarious purpose of the organization, why it was founded. Let's give them the benefit of the doubt. Let's expell only the Charter Members of SAPS.

Are there any other Charter Members of SAPS in FAPA but Sneary?

**RPM, METCALF & ALL THAT** Under ordinary circumstances I wouldn't bother trying to correct a couple of false impressions that seem to have gotten around, figuring it would all come out in the wash, but as Karen says, "Let's lean over backwards this year...." So... As you all know the Cult is an uncouth organization, given to strong language and strange, ingroupish jokes. One of the running Cult gags is the tag, "He lies a lot," first applied—I believe—by Dian to Ed Baker, but since pounced upon with great glee by other Cultists and applied to both themselves and others. In Gordon's mailing comments in ASP last mailing his phrase "Norm Metcalf, who lies a lot," was not meant to be taken literally. It might also be mentioned here that while Gordon, Alva and I had no idea our contributions were going thru FAPA when we sent them to Norm, he did ask our permission before he put RPM in the mailing. (Which I think is leaning over backwards on his part.)

Various people have accused Norm of lying about this or that. Frankly, I've always found him to be truthful to a fault, and I would expect him to tell the truth in situations where this would be very disadvantageous to him. And Norm has an inconveniently retentive memory for the most minor details. He also saves correspondence. I've long since abandoned arguing science fiction with him. And if, in telling a story I say, "One Saturday last month I did such and such" and Norm comes back with, "No, you did it on a Friday, the month before last," I shrug philosophically. He's always right on these little points, drat him.

But perhaps this last example is unfair to Norm. He says that he only picks nits when they are important. Well it seems at least that everything connected in the remotest way with science fiction is important.

Of course Norm's interpretation of what has happened is just as apt to be wrong as anybody else's. And if he threw up to me something I had said in the past, I might try to wiggle out of it by saying, "Is that what I said, or what you thought I said? What were my exact words?" But in remembering the sequence of gross physical events, I believe Norm to always be accurate and reliable. Be it also noted that Norm is well known to be stubborn and tactless, two "faults" oft associated with an addiction to truth.

As for the great \$25.00 Bribery, I wasn't a witness to the scene described by Norm, but I can testify to the following: the version of events printed in RPM is the same version I heard from Norm the day after it happened. And I never heard any other version from him.

Having a robust sense of humor I laughed heartily at Norm's account; however, I did indicate to Norm that I didn't think this sort of behavior was an example of the highest type of ethics. Norm allowed as how he didn't either. (Now I don't exactly call this "giving him hell" and in any case my criticism was about the bribery aspects of the matter. In fact I'm somewhat puzzled as to how I could be in a position to give anyone hell for casting an anti-blackball vote....)

On the other hand, at a later date I was defending Norm to one of Breen's strongest supporters—one who gets along fine with me but doesn't like Norm—and I said, "But I'll have to admit I didn't care for that \$25.00 caper..."

But then the staunch Breen supporter came back with, "Oh well. If that's the only way he could get his money out of Walter..." He still dislikes Norm, you understand, but fair's fair.

Actually I don't think anything like bribery or attempted bribery took place. Both Metcalf and Breen were perfectly aware of what was going on and both were trying to outfox the other for propoganda purposes. And both got burned. But at least Norm got his money.

L-AFFAIRE MEZZANINE Again, I wasn't there. I was bartending for the "Syracuse in '66" party—along with Terry Carr and Jock Root (sneaky ol' Dave Kyle.) Ellington came running in to get me, but by the time I got out there it was all over. However, I have talked with the principals and other eyewitnesses and can safely say that many of the most famous details of the affair just didn't take place.

For one thing, while Gretchen naturally has her own point of view, her account of the facts of the incident is substantially accurate. Halevy feels that it is a loaded account, but the only "factual inaccuracy" he has pointed out is "I didn't do so much running back and forth." Al admits that Buechley didn't reach for Kevin and slip; he grabbed for Gretchen as she was the nearest to him. And Buechley admits that Gretchen did not scratch or claw him. (Evidently this rumor got started because Buechley had cut himself shaving and people, seeing the abrasion on his neck, leaped to the most exciting conclusion.) Nor did Boggs say "Unhand that woman!" However various eyewitness have quoted him as saying, "Kill him!" or "Kill the bastard!" As for Redd and Kevin's not coming to Gretchen's defense, she didn't seem to need them. She was doing quite well on her own. And I rather imagine that if anyone had come to Buechley's defense, things would have gotten even more interesting.

Although most of the attendees seem to feel that this incident was much the best item "on the program" and that it added spice to the con, naturally the con committee can't take



such a detached view. It's a highly embarrassing sort of thing to have happened. While we obviously feel that we have the right to keep non-members out of the con, this did not apply in Gretchen's case and the whole incident was handled most ineptly. And it contained examples of very bad manners. Al has since profusely apologized to Gretchen.

**LYING VS QUIBBLING** While I've always been vaguely aware that fans on the whole are a rather truth-ful lot, recent events have brought to light an attitude that I find most peculiar: lying is bad, but quibbling is all right. This seems strange since quibbling is telling the truth in such a manner that you know you are going to be misunderstood it seems just as "bad" as an outright lie.

Yet most fans seem to have little or no objection to quibbling. One of the more recent Cult sports has been exposing a long line of Breen quibbles, but the same process could be applied to many fans. In the recent fracas the publications of some "extremists" reminded me of the remark someone once made about Mark Twain, "There's no bigger liar than an indignant man," (these fans are in good company anyhow) but it's astonishing how many fans did prefer to mislead through quibbling than to tell a direct lie.

In the midst of it all I wrote a rather emotional letter to Fan A saying that Fan B and Fan C were managing to defend their side without directly lying, but that Fan D was lying. Naturally this got back to the parties concerned. And Fan D apologized profusely; he said he got backed into a corner and felt he had to lie. Fan B and Fan C were quibbling to beat hell of course, but all concerned felt they had the superior virtue.

You understand naturally that while all this was going on in private, in public print we were all yelling at each other. (Fans A, B, C, & D were all on the Other Side.) Or dignifiedly expressing extreme disapproval and/or distaste as suited our individual styles. Later it dawned on me that this is sort of peculiar too. A "Geneva Convention" of fan feuding perhaps?

But why should we feel that quibbling is better than lying? If it were a matter of telling the precise truth and letting your listener misinterpret it if he will, that would be one thing. But logically it would seem that if you deliberately tell the truth in such a manner that you know it will be misinterpreted, it's as bad as lying. But obviously I don't feel that this is so. Nor do a lot of other fans. Why I even caught Norm Metcalf in a quibble once.

**IAGOS IN THE "CLUT"** This reminds me of Harry's remark "There are no Iagos in FAPA," and Breen's reply to him: "I also hope you are right in your Splendid Profession of Faith that 'there are no Iagos in Fapa': lord knows there are several in the Clut, and I fear that several of these may enter FAPA within our lifetimes."

This is very puzzling. Who in hell could he be talking about? Present Cult members on the FAPA waiting list are Patten, Scithers, Tapscott, Fitch, Dian Pelz, and Eklund. None of them seems a likely candidate for the role.

Patten as Iago? This is a concept the mind will not entertain for a moment.

Scithers as Iago? Well my usual reaction to him is, "George, put down that sledge hammer!" rather than thinking of him as a subtle type like Iago. But I suppose if one is being chased by someone with a sledge hammer, a few distortions of concepts may creep in.

Tapscott and Fitch? They have been amongst the Cult neutrals in the recent wars, but of course neither has been 100% behind Breen. Tapscott has asked embarrassing questions too and Fitch has said that he thinks Walter does it and should give some assurances that he plans on stopping. But both refused to sign a Scithers petition to throw Breen out of

the Cult and Fitch was one of the non-disruptive con boycotters. And what anti-Breen sentiments they have always been expressed openly, so it's difficult to see either as Iago.

Dian as Iago? I'm sure she'd make a good one if she ever cared to take on the role. And I can even see her throwing her heart into the part and enjoying it. But she seems to prefer a more direct approach. And in the recent controversy she's been almost as sledgehammerish as George.

Eklund as Iago? Yea gods. Well, now that the idea has been presented to him, he may give it a whirl, but actually the part wouldn't fit very well. But how the party line has changed! The last time I heard, I had brainwashed poor, innocent Gordon. I guess now poor, innocent Gordon has brainwashed me, whispering horrid Seacon stories in my ear no doubt.

DIAPER SNATCHING While I was away on my trip one of the funniest brouhahas of recent months took place. I understand a fuller account of The Great Diaper Snatch is presented elsewhere in the mailing. Some of the details sound too funny to be true or rather they partake of a Higher Truth; they should have happened even if they didn't. I haven't been able to establish whether or not (1) Breen said it was all a plot on the part of the committee to make him look ridiculous. (2) Breen said Phil Dick stole the diapers to give to Al Halevy. (3) Breen told the police that Phil Dick is "queer for dirty diapers." And so I'm keeping an open mind there.

However the following points seem reasonably established: (1) A bundle of dirty diapers was stolen from the Breens' front porch. (2) The neighbors described a "suspicious man" hanging around the neighborhood whose description resembled Philip K. Dick. (3) Breen called the police and turned Phil Dick in. (4) Phil Dick was able to "beat the rap" since he has a beard and the man the neighbors saw doesn't. And lord knows, this is funny enough.

CULT NEWS As Eney's Cultzine AVANC is going through this mailing, most of you are aware that quite properly and legally Dick dropped Breen from the Cult. Breen's F.R. was quite illegal according to the Cult constitution—but then that's nothing new for Walter. Nevertheless, after due consideration, I've decided to co-sign a petition to reinstate Breen. Much of the laughter would be gone from the Cult without him. Besides, I'm leaning over backwards this year.

BLACKBALLS & THE WAITING LIST I understand that with the ~~concurrent~~ concurrence of the rest of the FAPA officers the Secretary-Treasurer is—through a legal quibble—reinstating the entire blackballed waiting list. This seems a thoroughly sound decision and one which will be upheld. (And it's a Sneaky Trick worthy of the Cult too.)

However if the blackballs were more selective such a solution might be more difficult. For instance one of the science-fiction fans in our midst is plotting a campaign to blackball all the non science-fiction fans on the waiting list. However, he says gloomily, "It won't do much anyhow. The majority of FAPAs aren't science-fiction fans either."

Of course this would result in such a mass of blackballed waiting-listers that the officers could probably deal with the problem in the same way.

But how would the officers deal with the problem if ten or more FAPAs sort of subtly let it be known that they were going to put all the waiting listers in a hat, draw two or three of them out at random and blackball them? How could the officers tell these from "legitimate" blackballs?? It could be done I guess. The V-P could be on the watch for block voting and/or blackballs of anti-blackballers, but on the other hand such "official reinstatements" would be getting further and further from the constitution. Or "official reinstatement" would get to be such a regular thing that even someone "legitimately" blackballed would be reinstated. Well, no doubt we'll find out.

NOT A SECOND TIMEGordon Eklund

oOo

LIGHTHOUSE 11 (TCarr): I possess a very strong personal interest in newspapers, particularly those that are ancient or, at least, Very Old. Because of this I was quite interested in your description of being turned on by newspaper headlines about the sinking of the battleship Maine and stuff such as this. I even have a tiny collection of recent newspapers, which I save whenever something Really Big happens in the world. I have hopes that someday, after much passing of time, these newspapers will be rare and possess huge amounts of Sense of Wonder. At home I have stored, if they have not been thrown away, copies of the Seattle dailies which first announced stuff like John Glenn's orbital flight, the election of Kennedy in 1960, and Roger Maris' 61st home run (a baseball term). Even here, I have a copy of the November 4, 1964, issue of the San Francisco Chronicle whose rather wordy headline states: "Big Johnson Win; Solid Murphy Lead; Proposition 13 Passes." Very historical stuff.

I have had a few fleeting contacts with really ancient stuff. Enough such moments, at least, to fire my own interest. In junior high school, I had an English teacher who brought all sorts of newspapers to school once, passing them around the class. Most of the papers were of relatively recent vintage, but to a twelve year old the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the first Atom Bomb was history book stuff. I found reading the contemporary accounts far more exciting than the dry history texts I had become accustomed to reading. Even more fascinating was a 1911 newspaper which had somehow become a part of our family collection of Old Stuff. I haven't the slightest idea how it got into our house, and neither of my parents recall either. It was just a typical daily of its era I guess, certainly nothing of any great interest happened that particular day. I did receive a big kick, however, out of reading the box scores of the major league baseball games. Ty Cobb happened to have hit a home run that day. A newspaper containing an account of a Ty Cobb home run was much more exiting to me than discovering a similar account of Thomas E. Dewey's election. I think newspapers are a very important segment of popular American culture. I've occasionally wondered whether there are serious collectors of such material in existence. Are there people who collect newspaper with the same avid interest as a collector of pulp magazines? If not, there definitely should be.

I was about thirteen when I first learned of the existence of Dr. T. O'Connor Sloane, PhD, and prozine editor. Having a rather fond remembrance of both the man and the magazine he edited, I'm happy to note that at least one other person remembers him. I always looked up to Sloane, all through my science fictional youth. I pictured him as a science fictional god, perhaps on a level only one step lower than that occupied by Hugo Gernsback. I had most of my idolization shattered, however, when I happened to come upon the back issue Amazing containing the good Dr's rather nasty denunciation of space-flight. "You stupid prick," I shouted, and stomped out of the room. I quit reading science fiction the following day and began a search for good sex novels.

Did you ever see a photo of Sloane? I did, once. He was a really grand looking old man. The photo was only of his face, but you could tell by his, well, stance that he must be quite tall and sturdy. He doesn't smile. His hair is snow white, and his chin is touched by a small, pure white, terribly Victorian beard. It's really unfortunate that he hated spaceships.

I'm really sorry that my letter in RPI #8 has so completely convinced you that I am nothing more than "a liar, a manipulator, a man not to be trusted." I don't suppose it will be particularly meaningful if I were to state that I disagree pretty thoroughly with your impressions, but just for the record, I do, most strongly with the last charge. But I guess I'm a rather biased party. I can, however, see how you might have gathered somewhat of an impression similar to the one you claim to possess by reading my RPM letter as it was published in FAPA.

The material I had in RPI #8 was quite strong stuff. A great deal of it, however, was meant to be regarded humorously. I realize that a great number of people thoroughly frown on the concept of using a less than deadly serious style and technique to present quite serious thoughts. This method, however, is the one employed for the most part in my RPI contribution. There are a lot of things in that letter not meant to be taken as written. At least one paragraph is a direct parody of something earlier written by John Boardman and published in the Cult. I seem to recall a couple other similar instances, all regarding Boardman, but don't feel like it is necessary to check to be sure. The paragraph that I do remember, however, is almost all Boardman. I substituted a few words, carrying the idea in an opposite direction, thus attempting to show that Boardman's remark is as ridiculous as mine obviously was and is. (The paragraph is the one beginning "STOP PRESS.") Since you had not, so far as I am aware, read any of the previous Cultzines, you could not have realized this. Aside from the direct parodies, like the one outlined above, at least 50% of the seven pages of mine in RPI were attempts to satirize comments and attitudes previously presented in the Cult discussion of Walter Breen. I'm afraid most of this stuff flopped rather badly, anyway, because of my inability to realize what a great emphasis is placed on the use of facial expressions and tone-of-voice to get across tongue-in-cheek type humor on a person-to-person basis.

All of this aside, though, I really wish you'd re-read my letter, in the light of what I've said above. Perhaps my intentions and motives will be a bit clearer now. If not, I guess maybe I am a liar, which is a thought to make me feel rotten as hell.

I'll pretend that I'm kissing.....the lips I am missing -----

DUCK IN THE AFTERNOON (Raeburn & Clarkes): I was quite enthralled by Boyd Raeburn's rather daring description of the affects of keeing and wailing of the almost perfect state. But, sad as it may be to us traditionalists, keeing and wailing seems to be on its way out, sadly following in the wake of the long lamented art of Honking and Screeing. The latest wave, according to my radio, is best described as Shrilling and Crashing. In order to properly have a Shrilling and Crashing

song, one first needs a large batch of female singers, a shrill group of previously out of work musicians, and various sound effects of automobile accidents with numerous sounds of brakes being applied; shrill brakes, of course. I realize that frequently Keening and Wailing has been interspersed by the sounds of the road track, but shrilling and crashing is much more reliably Ethnic, containing as many screams of warning as possible. Shrilling and Crashing also uses female vocalists, a much more realistic act. I am eagerly awaiting the day in which the first concert of Shrilling and Crashing can be given. At the conclusion of the concert, a drunk will be placed inside a semi-truck, which he will then proceed to drive on stage, crashing into the musicians who will give with shrill screams, while the girl singers shout cries of warning and "Isn't that a neat car," and "Who is that driver?" and other bits of ethnic stuff. Great Sounds. Or Something.

DESCANT 12 (Clarkes): Gee, I was an early receptiveness kid myself, so I agree rather strongly with Norm's comment that children should be taught the art of reading at an age earlier than six. I didn't learn to read until I was six or seven myself, but I was early receptive about writing. I used to write pages and pages of letters and stories and jazz criticism, all at the age of four. I wrote enough then to satisfy at least ten years of PAPA requirements, with enough left over to form my own ape. This early receptiveness used to piss my parents off rather fiercely at first. "Stop being so goddam early receptive," they would shout, kicking my young body across a room or two. But, fortunately, for my health and sanity I didn't have the slightest conception of the existence of an alphabet. My "writings" were nothing but scrawls. They were artistic scrawls, though, dammit, and when I become a rich and famous scrawler, I will once again look back on those old days and reminisce and get written up in Playboy.

SELF PRESERVATION 6 (Hoffman): Back a few years ago, when I used to watch television more often than two or three times per year, people like Don "Red" Barry were showing up on the westerns with tremendous frequency. When I'd spot one of the old cowboys, I would shout and scream and kean and wail. Although a child of the television age, much of my early television was dominated by people like Hoot Gibson, Ken Haynard, and Bob Steele. These cowboys were Real to me, and much neater than latecomers like Marshall watzisname and Kitty. Chester as well.

What ever happened to Richard Arlen?

SALUD 20 (EBusby): I think it is usually quite sensible to judge people by first impression and first appearance, especially when one's first impression is one of "This guys an exhibitionist." Exhibitionist must be classed as phonies, right from the start, and this is hardly the type of person one journeys to science fiction conventions in order to meet. There are a lot of colorful and neat eccentrics in the world, I guess, all very much worth meeting, but I don't think one finds a very large number of them at science fiction conventions, either. In fact, I'm fast becoming convinced the one finds goddam few of them anywhere.

ACROSS THE COUNTRY.....

AND INTO THE UNDERGROUND

Early in December I got the opportunity to take a sort-of business-type trip to Toronto. Well, it seemed like a good idea, so I said I'd go. I also decided to drive instead of fly since this would give me the opportunity of making various stops on the way and also of going on to New York if I had time. Also, it was cheaper.

Well naturally one has some anxiety about driving cross country in the middle of winter, so I took the southern route both ways. This worked out well as I only met with bad weather twice. It snowed on me just as I was driving into Montreal and on the trip back I ran into some sleet just outside Amarillo. But in neither case did I have to put on chains.

The basic problem was the vehicle. I have a 1960 Willys Jeep which has good rubber and a recently rebuilt motor so I had no mechanical difficulties and no flats on the entire 8,000 mile jaunt, but I did have constant trouble with the electrical system. However this was more a nuisance than a problem. The main problem was speed. The Jeep has a top speed of about 65 mph, but I've been told to cruise around 50 mph as speeds in excess of this will quickly burn out the motor. So I drove 8,000 cross country cruising at about 45 - 50 mph.

But one can't drive 45 - 50 mph indefinitely. One must stop occasionally. With the best will in the world I couldn't average much more than 38 mph. As my original plans included the hope I would be back in Berkeley before Christmas, I tried to make about 500 miles per day. In order to do this I had to drive 14 - 15 hours a day. And I didn't have a passenger to share the driving or to make conversation. Nor a radio.

At first I didn't much care for the experience, but by the third day I was sort of used to it. But I kept phoning up Betty Kujawa to postpone the date of my arrival in South Bend. And I wrote to Terry Carr saying that I didn't think I would be in New York but a day or two, certainly not over the week-end, so he should abandon plans for that party he suggested throwing for me, but I'd try to see him at least. As it turned out I wound up having to spend three weeks in New York, but c'est la cotton-pickin' vie.

I left home on Saturday, December 4th and finally got to South Bend on the following Thursday. Gene and Betty and I had a grand fannish time and I spent about 24 hours with them. They took me to dinner at an Italian restaurant someplace in west Michigan and I confirmed an old theory. European regional cookery varies not only as to region of Europe, but also as to region of the U.S. When it comes to Chinese food, Cantonese cooking is not the same in New York, in Chicago or in San Francisco. Not to mention in places which don't have a large enough foreign colony to develop a tradition of their own. The same can be said for Neapolitan food. And of course most Chinese food in the U.S. is Cantonese and most Italian food is Neapolitan.

As far as I am concerned both the best Chinese food and the best Italian food can be obtained in Chicago. I don't mean that every Chinese or Italian restaurant in Chicago is good, but that the best Italian or Chinese restaurants are found in Chicago. And the best French restaurants are in San Francisco. Of course when it comes to the very expensive restaurants--of any nationality--these are found in New York. But that is a different category entirely. I think New York is very weak on middle-priced restaurants or even ordinary Fancy Expensive ones, except for German restaurants and steak houses.

But this was a very good Italian restaurant. And a most enjoyable evening. I got up late Friday and started onward and eastward. I started to stop in Ann Arbor to see



the Caughrans, but figured Detroit was furtherer, so I'd push on and try to stop to see them coming back. In fact when I saw Jim and Suzanne in New York I promised I would, but....

Anyhow, on to Detroit where no one seemed to be at home. I stayed with Fred Prophet and Saturday night we went out to George and Mary Young's and Dannie Plachetta came over too, but I never did get ahold of Teddy Bear or Tom Seidman or Dick Schultz. Howard was working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, so I didn't get a chance to see him, but we had a long chat over the phone.

Sunday night I drove into Toronto and called Boyd, making tentative arrangements to see him Monday night. But when I took care of my business Monday morning I learned to my dismay that I would have to be in Montreal the next day. So I beat it out of town without seeing Boyd.

I got into Montreal Monday night and had to spend all day Tuesday there, so I was there Tuesday night as well. That was enough for me. It was cold. Anyhow, Montreal is a beautiful city and has some good restaurants, but it seems deadly dull.

Wednesday I had electrical troubles again and didn't get out of Montreal until about 1:00 P.M. If I had only known how close I was to Potsdam that wouldn't have mattered, but somehow I'd gotten the impression that Potsdam was in the western part of the state, near Syracuse or something, and so drove on into New York, planning on visiting the Kyles on my way home, going via the New York Thruway, Potsdam, Ann Arbor and Chicago and/or Wabash. Oh well.....

Anyhow I drove on into New York. I had written the Shaws to expect me some time that week, but as it grew apparent I wasn't going to arrive at a reasonable hour I began to develop qualms about dropping in on them that late. I made a rest stop on the Thruway and tried to call some non-fan friends in New York who keep more night-people-type hours. I dialed the old familiar number and got the answering service of someone I'd never heard of. I tried again. Same result. I look up the number in the current Manhattan phone book. I had the right number. I called Information. They had "no such listing". I know the New York phone company reassigns numbers with indecent haste, but it does seem a bit too much to reassign a number still listed in the current phone book under another listing...

I tried two or three other New York numbers, but got no answer, so I said, "To hell with it," and called the Shaws, warning them of my projected indecently late arrival. They said not to worry about that, but to come on in. So I did and we visited a couple of hours before going to bed.

Thursday I started calling people. The friends with the "no such listing" number had been in Tangiers for six months, but I got hold of several others, fan and non-fan. I promised HABAKKUK-columnist, Eunice Reardon, and her husband, Bob, I'd spend a few days with them and Terry that I'd come over to his place Saturday for a Berkeley-type reunion complete with PeteGraham and Ron Ellik. Ted White urged me to come out to his place Friday evening, both for a Fanoclast meeting and because he wanted me to see his place and, since right after the Fanoclast meeting he was leaving for Chicago and Larry McCombs wedding, he might miss me otherwise. I promised I'd come if Bob and Eunice didn't have other plans for me.

Larry and Noreen and I had another comfortable visit Thursday night and then Friday I went to Bob and Eunice's. Hardly had I gotten in the door when Eunice said, "I won't be able to entertain you for awhile; I have to finish typing this rush manuscript for Lancer books." Eunice and Larry probably met at the Nunnery, but neither remembers the other. Later Eunice started telling me about this rather peculiar literary agent she had just worked for. He sounded familiar, and yes, he turned out to be the same one Carol Carr wrote up in LIGHTHOUSE a couple of mailings back. This seem amazing coincidences, but actually the intellectual-bohemian world is not as large as all that and this sort of "coincidence" happens often....



I didn't make it over to Ted's and the Fanoclasts. Friday night at Bob and Eunice's turned out to be quite a literary evening, winding up in a thoroughly drunken discussion of the role of the artist in society. Bob and his friends and cronies were celebrating the sale of Bob's book Jasper to Morrow. The sale was made to editor Joyce Johnsons who is now quite the fair-haired girl there. She started about a year ago, brought in by a new vice-president who--the theory is--wanted to change Morrow's image. Last year she wanted to bring out three books: Bob's book, something by LeRoi Jones (then unheard of) and a third. None of the other editors liked any of them but let Joyce have her way with the LeRoi Jones, figuring it would have the best chance of selling since it was a violent protest book written by a negro. It sold, starting Mr. Jones on his upward path. And another publishing house took the third book and it turned into a success also. Joyce's stock shot up.

Her selection of a mystery didn't hurt her either. Now Joyce hates mysteries, but was persuaded to bring one out to "balance her list". She chose it on the basis: "This seems less awful than the others." It got rave reviews and Tony called her up to tell her how good he thought it was.

Then Joyce pointed out to Morrow that the other book she wanted was still available, so Jasper is scheduled for publication this October.

And the next day was Saturday with a delightful fannish evening at Terry's--we called Berkeley and all--and I'm glad I had the forethought to go on the Subway and not to drive...

Then I sort of vanished from fannish eyes for a couple of weeks. For one thing my business was proving more complicated than I had expected, but it was more than that. To some extent I felt as if I'd entirely left the usual world. I got involved with these strange people who make the kookiest of fans seem sane and rational: the "underground cinema" group. They've been written up in several national magazines recently and have two regular publicity outlets in their magazine FILM CULTURE and Jonas Meeker's column in THE VILLAGE VOICE. They've been labelled "our most avant garde artists" and they are pretty avant all right. Those two weeks were quite an experience.

Unfortunately I just missed the big party given for William Burroughs when he passed through town, but I got loving descriptions of it. It was one of these weird mixtures of high society and upper and lower bohemia where grand dames are given joints as they come in the door. They smoke them too. I've been to this sort of thing myself, but never to one on this scale.

Jerry Jolphin seems to be the film maker whose work is most respected by the rest of the group. He also paints. I didn't dig his stuff, but I did enjoy talking to him. He's quite intelligent, very well educated and knows his onions. I wouldn't be at all surprised if he succeeded in establishing a Cult around himself. He can out manouver Harlan Ellison any day of the week, and Harlan is pretty damn good himself.

But I found Barbara Rubin more fascinating. Barbara is a quite beautiful 19-year old girl who dresses very colorfully and strikingly. In fact, once the New Jersey police escorted her to the New York border, saying, "Go back to the Village. We don't want your kind around here." And she hadn't done anything! They just took one look at her...but their reaction does seem a bit extreme. Barbara had on a blue velvet riding habit, complete with high boots, and she carried a riding crop. A long blue cape and large blue turban completed the ensemble. I had been supposed to go on that N.J. expedition myself, but I slept too late. Damn it. I never have any fun.

Barbara is now making her second film. Her first--whose title I'm afraid I've forgotten--has been an enormous success. At least with the Group. (Unfortunately few underground cinema films succeed in reaching a public showing. It seems there are all sorts of



legal difficulties....) The usual reaction to Barbara's first film is an awestuff gasp and then some nervous comment along the lines, "It's all c---s and c---s, but it isn't the least bit pornographic."

(Both the cinema buffs and my literary contacts were unanimous that any serious portrait of sex, pornographic or otherwise, is O\*U\*T. If sex is shown it has to be either satirized or made fun of. So any serious treatment of a sexual relationship can't actually depict or describe the sex it's based on. If it goes, distortion enters, etc.. But this is in the Arts of course. Sex is doing quite well on the newsstands.)

I liked Barbara's criticisms of her colleagues' work. One of the underground cinema pictures that got a public showing was an 8-hour epic called "Sleep". An unmoving camera was trained on a sleeper from the moment he went to bed until the moment he got up. Then the film was developed and shown. No editing. No cutting. The screening provoked a real riot. Some of the buffs tried to compare it to the riot at the premier of "The Rites of Spring" but I think Barbara's explanation is more realistic. She said, "Everyone with any sense at all left after the first ten minutes. Naturally with only complete idiots left in the audience, anything could happen."

There was another 8-hour epic of the Empire State Building during a typical day. (I swear I'm not making these up.) Barbara didn't even bother going to this one. She said, "They wanted to get pictures of the building swaying. The fools should have known it doesn't sway at ground level."

But Barbara also has a very strange quirk. She won't play anything on her radio but rock and roll and owns no other kind of record. Most of the underground cinema group leaned heavily in this direction though. Some of you will no doubt be gratified to know that now I can recognize the Beatles. I even like them.

Barbara and Allen Ginsberg were having a big fight when I was there. (I took Allen's side which made Barbara furious.) It all started when Ginsberg and Orlovsky went to Boston leaving the key to their apartment with Barbara. If Allen had talked with Barbara as much as I had, he never would have done it. You see Barbara believes you have to trust everyone, even if they've proved unreliable before. It's an offense both against man and yourself to ever doubt anyone. So Barbara's notion of taking care of the apartment was to let anyone and everyone come in and out of it at any hour of the day or night. Naturally the place was completely looted. Barbara was thoroughly shocked. "There was no reason for them to do that. They could come and go any time they wanted. It was their place. There was no reason for them to steal their own stuff."

Then Ginsberg and Orlovsky came back. They weren't so philosophical about it. But perhaps Allen was influenced by the same sort of philosophy. They found out who had stolen the stuff--long since sold and converted to horse of course--but Allen refused to do anything about it. "We won't descend to their level," he said. Peter cried all night, but Allen still wouldn't.

Jerry Jolphin had a similar bit, but he didn't carry it as far as Barbara. Jerry would let anyone steal any of his stuff, even his movie cameras, but if he borrowed something from someone else he would take scrupulous care of it.

During the time I was with the group the news of Ben Rice's death arrived. Ben Rice was a member of the group who had abandoned the crass commercialism of New York and gone to Mexico to make movies. The story was that he had died of pneumononia near Acapulco. There was a large amount of shock: much stronger than any reaction to any fan's death; it's a much smaller group and he was one of them, part of the landscape, considered one of their best, etc. Nevertheless, there was a strong element of doubt about it. Someone



or other was raising a Fund to send to Mexico to pay the medical expenses of Rice's stranded, pregnant wife. There was a general feeling of "Pneumonia? Acapulco???? Well, he might have weakened his condition by overindulging in drugs.... But it would be so like him to use this method to raise money to buy film. And, after all, last month he sent a plea for money for film which was completely ignored of course..."

Anyhow it was quite a group and I sort of got enmeshed. On New Years Eve several of us planned to go out to Stoney Point for the big New Years Eve party. (There is an upper bohemian enclave out there, the principal leaders of which are John Cage and some architect whose name I forget.) But as it approached time to go I began to feel strange fannish hankerings. After all, New Years Eve is a special occasion, not some weekend when it doesn't much matter what party you go to....

I figured there'd be a Fanoclast party of some sort and tried to get hold of Ted. I had lost his number in my various peripatations around town and as it is an unlisted number I couldn't get it from information. I called Terry. No answer. I called Boardman. He was civil, but not very productive. I finally got it from Rich Brown, called Ted, learned the Fanoclast party was at his place, had dinner, and took myself thither.

It was a very fine party and included out-of-towners like Ellik, the Caughrans and Meskys (But McInnerney has printed a list of the attendees.) There were various people missing I would have liked to see again or to meet, but someone misses every party. Meskys invited me to a party at his place the following day, but unfortunately I couldn't make it. However, I did at last find time to start calling other fans like Ted and Jean Engel and I made arrangements with Meskys to go to the ESFA meeting with him the following Sunday where I saw Belle Dietz, Sam and Chris Moskowitz, Mike Deckinger, Frank Dietz, Walt Cole, Allan Howard and others. I especially enjoyed visiting with Sam and Chris.

By this time my business was at last completed and I was impatient to get home and also had the definite feeling that absence from underground cinema would make my heart grow fonder. I didn't phone anybody to say goodbye; I just left. I did stay all night with the Shaws again, but then took off like a scaled duck. I was so impatient to get home that I took the shortest route and even then contacted no fans along the way. However by the time I got to Albuquerque I was feeling more relaxed--or tired of driving or something--so I goofed off several hours, having coffee with Gretchen and visitings with the Tacketts whom I had not met before. They were as nice as I was expecting, but I did get one surprise. I was expecting Chrystal to be Southern, and she's Western to the core.....

Then I scooted on home, driving the last 900 miles from Winslow, Arizona in one stretch, and getting into Berkeley in time to have breakfast with the Ellingtons on Tuesday, January 12th.

I had a good time, but I don't know how's I'd recommend it for all the family.... But I hope to be able to make a more conventional type trip back East this Spring or early Summer.



REFRINTS FROM THE CULT

As most of you new Cult members are probably aware in the Cult an F.R. is published every three weeks. And in between times quite often members publish f/r's or fractionals. So discussions are vigorous and continuing. And much is written with the assumption that your audience not only has read all the previous discussion--and remembers it--but is also aware of the various personalities involved. Therefore non-members who encounter a Cultzine are frequently unaware of what the Hell is going on.

I understand that Eney is sending the current AVANC through FAPA. Many of the discussions going on are self-explanatory, but in a couple of cases a little further background may be useful.

To properly understand my remarks to Tapscott in AVANC, reference is made to previous remarks of Don Fitch and Scotty Tapscott. First, from Fitch's f/r 153.3908:

I have been informed that the parents of a fanzine editor (who is under 21) have been sent a letter vaguely suggesting legal Action (what it actually said was more along the lines of "No legal action is contemplated immediately against your son...", but the effect will almost certainly be serious Parent Trouble) because of a letter of comment from me which he published in September. I feel much regret at being partially responsible for involving an innocent person in such a distressing situation (as well as much surprise that he was not given the opportunity to rectify the situation by apologizing in print or promising not to touch on the matter again), and of course I am apprehensive that legal action may be taken against me. Pending several weeks of careful consideration of the matter, and of the advisability of dropping fan activity completely (I do not, at the present moment, think it will be tolerable, for a person who likes to speak his mind, such as it is, as freely as I do, to remain in an environment in which it is necessary to guard continually against writing or saying anything which might possibly lead to a lawsuit for libel, slander, or defamation of character..... It is abundantly clear that the much-vaunted Freedom of Expression, Honest speaking-forth of ideas and opinions and beliefs, and Open Communication which supposedly exist in fandom are in fact at least as severely limited and constrained as they are in "mundane" life, and until I can readjust to this hypocritical approach (or decide to reject it outright), I shall adopt the policy of wisdom and proceed with extreme caution.

And then in Walter Breen's F.R., KIZMAIZ #5, Tapscott asked Fitch:

I'd like to hear details about the harassment you mention in f/r 153.3908. Who is it that's talking about legal action now? This lawsuit syndrome seems to be spreading, and if anything is likely to kill fanpub this is it. Bah. Sometimes fans make me sick.

To which Breen inserted an editorial comment: Why are you staying in the Cult, then?

And Eklund's comments to me in AVANC, plus Eklund's and my comments to Lichtman all grew out of my comments to Breen on his and Marion's "Unwillingly to School" which appeared in the last FAPA mailing, Fitch's entering into this discussion and Lichtman's remarks on Fitch's methods of commenting as exemplified by that. First my comments to Breen in Don Fitch's F.R., UNMENTIONABLE #1, Part A.

"Unwillingly to School" provoked much discussion in and around Berkeley. Do you remember Bradbury's "The Playground"? That was truly a grisly work. I don't suppose that you'll be too surprised to learn that most people did not accept your point of



view. For one thing Bradbury is right as is "Lord of the Flies." Children are like that, at least in our Culture. And not just "rough" underprivileged kids either. And I don't think you realize that the Berkeley schools are much better in this respect than most cities in the country. The only places that are better—and they may very well have other drawbacks which more than compensate for their advantages—are places which still observe old-fashioned, strict discipline and beat the hell out of the kids if they step out of line. Like in Texas.

Also, kids don't just automatically pick on other kids, they pick on other kids whose appearance, speech, personality, etc. they don't like. One fan parent remarked that her child was going through a pompous, smart-alecky stage now and was naturally "picked-on". She tells him it is his own fault. And as far as I can tell it is, although he may not be able to help it, of course. But the other kids are reacting to the messages he sends them, not jumping on him at random.

David isn't a pompous smart-alec, of course. But he has the physical appearance of a "born victim." Dany says that he wouldn't have lasted two days in any school that Danny ever went to and that it's a pity because when you get to talk to the kid he isn't like that at all.

I went to school in Texas myself and if David had gone to any of the schools I went to there would have been no physical violence. But we had our own techniques. There would have been a certain amount of verbal slanging and almost total social non-acceptance. Anyone who looked like this would not have been able to get involved in any of the normal cliques of childhood unless his cliquemates were also oddballs and misfits (perhaps one might call them fannish types) who were also on the bottom of the school's pecking order.

But you do have a problem.

(Actually I was trying to be very tactful in my comments there. I also feel that the attitudes expressed in "Unwillingly to School" were narrow and undemocratic and that the methods the Breens adopted to deal with the situation, far from helping the situation, were making it much worse. It seemed to me that they basically had two choices: (1) Yank David completely out of the school immediately or (2) Let him get his lumps, giving him support and comfort at home and advice about how to carry it off best, but to rush back and forth to the school and to pull him in and out like a yo-yo would not only make that situation much worse, but would create trouble for a child who already had a fairly good adjustment to the school).

Anyhow, Don Fitch commented on my comments.

Considering Walter's apparent belief in the individuality and rationality of human beings regardless of age, I suppose that he recognizes that it's David's problem. Besides, Walter has worked himself into a corner there; his obsessive dislike of any sort of institutionalized authority makes it difficult for him to expect the school officials to limit the freedom of action of their students by preventing them from taking direct action against people (other kids) they don't like, and of course it's impossible for him to appeal to the ~~the~~ police for protection. And the suggestion (Tapscott's?) that a kid who is much picked-upon by his peers would be well-advised to take up weight-lifting and boxing would mean using force, which is unthinkable. Apparently, the only solution is to Deplore, verbosely, and say how much better things ought to be.

Then in Breen's F.R., KIZMAIZ #5, Lichtman commented to me.

At most of the schools I went to, David (Bradley) would have lasted, all right, but he would have been unhappy and occasionally physically threatened. Partly

because of my height, partly because I was quite introverted in certain areas, I was in much the same situation as David during much of my school days. I think, in retrospect, it was a positive thing in certain ways, since in me at least it reinforced antimilitaristic and anti-violent ideas I'd had all along, as well as giving me some background on a personal level with which to reflect about what Negro life is like in the culture as a whole. But despite this apparent gain, I hated it and wish something could be done about it, since whatever one gains from it is far less than the hurt involved when you are there. Not just the physical hurt, but the psychological hurt of nonacceptance.

It's tempting to point out at length how Fitch's comment at the tail end of Donaho's letter takes off from a lot of (assumptions on) his part and goes on through these assumptions, adding further assumptions as he goes along, to his snide conclusion. This seems to be the Fitch method of commenting, and the one-paragraph example here is one of the more typical samplings. The Fitch method pays no attention to what you've said, but goes on hazy preconceptions and faint misrecollections of past comments of one's (or thing(s) others have said about one) and ignores and avoids that which is being said in what he is ostensibly commenting on. The method is a shrewd one, because it throws up a verbal and contextual haze which obfuscates further argument, rebuttal or comment, in that it is <sup>done</sup> with such authority and polish that it is difficult to take apart and refute without going to more length and pains than it is worth. But I refer you to my letters which ought to be (.d.v.) appearing in Part 2 of Fitch's FR next week.

(Several weeks later while rumors that Part 2 of Fitch's FR has come out have reached Berkeley, Part 2 of Fitch's FR has not. O.A. Eney was sent a copy and all Cult members in L.A. were handed one, but evidently Don hasn't gotten around to sending out the others yet. ((Since all Official Business was taken care of in Part 1, this isn't illegal or anything; in fact he never has to publish Part 2 if he doesn't want to.)) I wish he'd hurry up and mail it. I'm faunching to read Lichtman's compleat analysis of Fitch and Fitch's reply.)

Well, we can't have all this blank white space so in the remaining lines I'll quote as much as possible of Prentiss Choate's letter in Breen's same F.R.

The "soul" theory—and the words is not one I would choose, due to a wealth of Xian overtones that have nothing to do with what I'm talking about—is simply the idea that the center of consciousness of each of us is not something dependent for its existence on a physical vehicle. That is, the "I" that is aware of being aware is an incorporeal Atman, rather than a product of some pattern of neural impulses. Therefore the demand to "show me a soul" is rather like asking to see the retina of your own eye. Trouble is, the theory that matter/energy is the only ultimately real thing in the cosmós, and that consciousness is some sort of excrescence or byproduct (epiphenomenon is the usual word among behaviorists & logical-positivist duckspeak specialists) of the mechanical interaction of particles, is so well built into the structure of western thought that the notion of something real yet incorporeal is wellnigh inconceivable for many people.

However, there is the alternate theory that consciousness or intelligence is at least as ultimate a part of reality as is matter/energy. You and I, as intelligent entities, are a part of this, as far as our basic nature is concerned, rather than a part of the world of particles and mechanics. Obviously I can't prove such a theory to you, nor do I think you can disprove it—or prove the physical theory either. But I can indicate a number of phenomena that point in this direction. Have you ever done any reading in (not merely about) the field of psychical research? There is quite a bit of well-authenticated material that pretty clearly calls for a nonmaterialist explanation.....



