

FLAG

This is issue #7 of FLAG, a frequent fanzine published by Andy Hooper, from 11032 30th Ave. NE Seattle, WA 98125, email to fanmailaph@aol.com. Member fwa. This is a Drag Bunt Press Production. First copies were finished on July 13th, 2013. FLAG appears only in printed form, and is available for trade, fannish cartoons or letters of comment. The next issue will be out in August, 2013. Art Credit: Ulrika O'Brien: Page 1. Bill Rotsler: Pages 3, 4, 6 & 9. Heroic U.K. Publisher: Mark Plummer. This is all just some sneaky form of faan fiction, you know....

And never was piping so sad, and never was piping so gay

FANDOM AFTER DARK:

Libation -- Conversation -- Editorialization

Although I continue to blunder through its production on my own, FLAG has begun to feel rather too much like APPARATCHIK to me. Those fanzines from the mid-1990s also featured a "Fanzine Countdown," quizzical interlineations, and a burgeoning brawling letter column that always threatened to take over the issue. It was like hosting a brilliant party with just too many people invited – I got to interact with most only briefly, while there were others that I didn't notice at all. And the ensmallled format makes it hard to continue an exchange through multiple issues, as there is always something new to report or share or analyze. Jeez, you'd have to be excused for thinking this was some kind of paying work.

Clearly, the answer is to adopt a bi-weekly schedule. Chris Garcia is almost completely unencumbered by these issues, and his fanzine THE DRINK TANK appears once every 7 to 10 days. At some point, increasing frequency is counter-productive as readers do not have time to respond before the next issue appears. So, just this once, I'm putting together a new issue in just two weeks, in the hope that you won't have time to write a reply to #6 before it arrives. Because, you see, I still have a crush on the letters of comment that you sent me last month, and I'm not ready to let go of them yet.

So we're speeding up to slow down. This isn't one of those hot and noisy convention parties where you wait in line for ten minutes just to get to the bathtub full of lite beer and off-brand lemon-lime soda. And there is no need to flash that brittle smile that always goes along with losing another Hugo award. No, this is more civilized – I'm thinking of the Concierge Suite at the Peabody Hotel at the 1992 Orlando Worldcon. Geri Sullivan's hand-picked beer selection chilling on ice...a breezy balcony escape from the heat...little complimentary skewers of tenderloin and shrimp...the much-missed Roger Weddall rocking a pair of leather pants without a trace of irony...it's a party you should have been at, and you should surely be here now.

Le Pacte de Lupoff

To start the evening, I shambled up to **Dick Lupoff**, who looked very comfortable with a smoky, square-sided glass of something on ice in his hand. I pulled a quote from him at the end of "Color Party" last issue, but now he obligingly repeated his full declamation: *"Just a quick note to thank for the copies of FLAG that you've sent me (as well as for your good contributions to Arnie Katz's fanstuff). FLAG is just the kind of personalzine I enjoyed so much in my own fan days, back before the ice caps melted and when our cousins the Neanderthals roamed the mountains and woodlands of Europe.*

"I'd like to participate in FLAG but I've just got far too much on my plate these days (years) between writing, running a publishing enterprise, and trying to keep up with the rest of life. So please accept my apologies as well as my thanks.

FANVARIETY was rowdy, sloppy and completely loveable



Nose bone into the brain! Skin him and wear him like a costume!

"BTW, you've probably noticed the brief memoirs that I've been contributing to Arnie's ezines and a few others such as Earl Kemp's eI, and occasional book reviews or other items in Locus and elsewhere. These are sort-of fanac but I must confess that I'm assiduously stockpiling them with an eye toward publishing a book of the things Real Soon Now. So I guess they're not quite simon-pure fanac."

This brought a somewhat sheepish smile to my lips as I replied: "Dick, surely there's no need to apologize for anything – your regular contributions to Arnie's zine are a part of what inspired me to start publishing FLAG earlier this year. I'm glad to read that you are considering a collection of those columns. It seems like you virtually invented the practice of repackaging fan articles for a wider audience, so it's actually quite inspiring that you think that is still worth doing. Anyway, I'm glad you like FLAG and hope you can skim through it now and then."

Of course, Dick isn't the sort to let such unctuous hyperbole slide by uncorrected: *"Thanks, but I'm afraid you give me more credit than I ever earned. I certainly did not invent the practice of repackaging fan material for book publication. Alva Rogers' long-running series in Bill Donaho's Habakkuk wound up as a book titled A Requiem for Astounding. That was at least thirty years ago. And even before that by a decade or two, Sam Moskowitz's series of articles on fan history ran in an Atlanta fanzine (title escapes me) and then became a book called The Immortal Storm. And there was the wonderful collection of Terry Carr's "Carl Brandon" writings. There may well have been others, but those three definitely preceded The Best of Xero by many years."*

I hastened to point out that I knew I was exaggerating, nice as it is to bring up SaM, Alva Rogers, et al; "But you might have to take credit for **perfecting** the process, as few fanzines have ever published so much material that was reprinted in book form." Lupoff let me save face briefly, then moved on to the topic that really interested him:

"However, I can report that my own book has suddenly sprung almost full-blown from my brow (wondered where that headache came from) and is well under way. Working title is ALL MY DAZE: A Potpourri of Essays, Memoirs, and Reviews. That's rough-draft stuff, of course. I think it's kinda too long and might cut it off after the word "Potpourri." At the very least, this project has caused me to learn to spell potpourri."

"Publisher will be either my own imprint, Surinam Turtle Press, or our parent company, Ramble House. You want to know how huge these enterprises are? You know the poem that goes, "Little fleas have littler fleas to bother and to bite 'em; the littler fleas have littler fleas and on ad infinitum?" Ramble House is a little flea and Surinam Turtle Press is a littler flea."

"But it's going to be a big book. I sent an ms. to Fender Tucker, the grand panjandrum of Ramble House. It ran something like 82,000 words / 314 pages. I was afraid Fender would say I'd have to drop some items. As Chandler said, "Kill your darlings." Or was that Faulkner? Or was it Faulkner who wanted to kill Chandler?"

"Instead, Fender said he wanted to make it a bigger book. So I sent him some more stuff. As of now, I don't know how big the book will be. Probably more like 400 pages. Not suitable for bathtub reading. Still, I must confess that some of the contents were originally professionally published. But what the hell, I'm afraid that I lost my amateur status long ago. In which regard, I am not really a virgin."

Tickle Me Emo

I told Dick that I would be interested in ALL MY DAZE, whether it turned out to be a book or a *Jeopardy!* category. Then I excused myself in order to say hello to **Taral Wayne**, who I was stunned to see, because he just doesn't come to parties. As usual, he had been pondering his place in fandom, and sought commiseration.

"A couple of days ago, I obeyed a whim to sketch out the editorial for my next issue. When I finished, I scrapped my usual "idiotorial" title and – for very good reason – substituted "emotorial." I had been brooding, and it fit."

"Of course, I brood a lot, and it isn't always about fandom, but it happens that this time it was. Of late, I just don't seem to be getting that kick from fanzines that is the only valid reason for their existence. They were beginning to seem like just so many pages of stuff that no longer interested me, for one reason or another. It didn't even matter much that some of my own efforts often appeared in those pages. My articles had been glutting fanzines since about 2005. The total number of them must be truly astonishing by now, since a quick calculation tells me it has to be more than 500. That astonishes me, in any case."

What if I had been doing something useful instead?

But lately, I've been feeling as though I'm the only one who's astonished by my output. Chris Garcia puts a good word in for me now and then, and Eric Mayer always comes through with an ego boost. I have a reasonably long letter column in my fanzine, which placed second in the FAAns, if I'm not mistaken. And yet, as I said ... the thrill is gone.



This was delivered so ruefully that I found it hard to suppress a sympathetic nod. "I can't imagine maintaining your level of output for one year, let alone eight. It seems inevitable that it would eventually burn you out. My sense is that that the number of fans writing letters to fanzines is much smaller than it once was, and a tiny group of highly prolific correspondents account for 90% of the published response to all the fanzines you contribute to. You can't blame them for flagging after the literal 100th article you've written."

Taral, to his credit, widened the argument: "In addition to the malaise affecting some fanzine letter columns, there is also an almost total lack of fanzine reviewing. Flag's "Fanzine Countdown" is one of only two review columns that I can bring to mind. The other is Guy Lillian's *The Zine Dump*. As well as providing addresses, fanzine review columns serve a couple of other useful purposes. One of them is to hold successful zines up as examples ... or to encourage les autres, by pointing out the failings of the rest. Another, no less useful purpose review columns serve is to reassure the editors that their efforts have not merely disappeared without a ripple in an ocean of fanac. Yet the burden of all this currently falls on the shoulders of only two reviewers.

"It has occurred to me that perhaps I should throw my own hat into the ring and begin reviewing fanzines again myself. I rejected the idea pretty quickly, though. While the reviewer ought to have likes and dislikes – and not blandly recommend all comers – he should also have a basic sympathy for all fanzines, so that he can perceive virtues that might not correspond specifically to his own interests. In that respect, I don't judge myself a fit reviewer at present."

And now I shook my head at him. "You can talk yourself out of anything. I can tell you from experience, if you want to see more response to your fan-writing, review other people's fanzines. It gets their attention more effectively than ten articles about books, movies or fan politics." I left Taral pondering this as I turned to greet two more Toronto fans who had arrived at the party.

The Toronto Slash

I could hear **Hope Leibowitz** for a few seconds before I saw her, while I didn't know **Charles Levi** was coming until he was in the room. Having recently read five issues of FLAG and shared the experience of Corflu XXX, Hope resumed our Portland conversation without missing a beat: "I vaguely recall that Gary Hunnewell had a Sumner somewhere in his name, but I've always known him as Gary. Is Sumner really his first name? I only use two names as my middle name is Van Duren (mother's maiden name) and I don't care for the initials, though I suppose I could use only V."

I did my best to stay upright in the surf: "I think Sumner is his legal first name, and what he uses for professional work. His fanac is just as likely to be published as 'Hildisfon Took,' so we can be forgiven some confusion. It isn't as simple as knowing the difference between Kate Schaefer and Karen Schaeffer, or how to spell Elinor Busby."

Her eyes lit up: "I was **so** pleased to see Elinor win the Lifetime Achievement Award. And she sure looked surprised! She's so great -- we have met several times, and I read her children's novel *The Throwaway Princess* after Corflu Zed, where she was the GoH and talked about the novel, which sold only around 20 copies, in her GoH speech. My getting it was thanks to Charles (who doesn't live with me) as it was a "print on demand" book and he demanded it from Amazon. But Amazon took four or five months to print it - totally unexpected. Elinor and I had coffee at the Starbucks across the street on the Friday of Corflu XXX - a high point of the con for me."

I glanced above Hope's shoulder to acknowledge **Charles Levi**: "Charles, what a surprise! I was very flattered that you sent a letter of comment on FLAG #5!"

Don't you Americans mix it with cherry pop or Monterey Jack cheese?

He even watches game tape of other players watching game tapes

Charles gave the impression he was almost as surprised as I was: *“That was the first letter of comment I’ve written since 1995, when JEREMIAD was published at University College, Toronto (shout out to jen verschraegen, wherever you are!). But Hope was kind enough to give me the envelope in which you sent FLAG #5, and it was compelling enough to elicit my comments.”*

“Right,” I replied, “so let me –“

“First of all – what a stamp that was! A philatelic ode to world domination – USA Forever Global. Not since those Canadian stamps which showed the British Empire in pink has there been such a clear imperialist statement on a postage stamp. It boggled my mind.”

I looked at him a bit suspiciously, wondering if I was being had. “I’m pretty sure that title of the stamp is meant to indicate that its value is sufficient to send a first class letter anywhere in the world, and will always be good for that purpose, even after postal rates increase. Of course, the Imperialist scenario occurs naturally to you because it is an American stamp – ‘Canada Forever Global’ suggests a more cultural or at least polite standard of conquest.”

This didn’t faze him: *“Then there was the address – Hope Leibowitz/Charles Levi. Finally, I get a notice in slash fiction (or at least slash addressing). It reminded me of that notorious filk tune ‘88 lines about 44 fangirls,’ especially ‘Prue already had a boyfriend/Put my name behind the slash.’*

Again, I wasn’t sure if he was kidding. “I’m not familiar with that – I know ‘88 Lines about 44 Women’ by The Nails, but not any filk version.” But he continued, *“In any case, Hope and I don’t share an address (except for the occasional hotel room in Henderson, Nevada) but we do get each other’s mail. I get the Christmas cards from academics in Cambridge, England, and she gets the zines from U.S. fen. If a Cambridge academic sent us a fanzine from the United States in December, the letter would either clone itself or disintegrate in transit. But it is nice to see the acknowledgment that while Hope has wandered from room to room, I’ve been noticed wandering along behind her.”*

The noise in the room was rising slightly, so I just nodded agreeably as he and Hope moved on to see others at the party. But Charles had one more point of fanmanship to score, calling back over his shoulder, *“Great envelope.”*

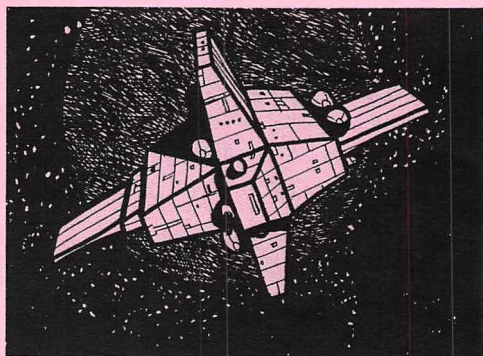
The State of Play

When you publish a frequent fanzine, no one ever has any difficulty thinking of something to talk to you about. I must have done a double-take when **Murray Moore** loomed out of the foyer, thinking that there must be no one left at home in Ontario. But he assumed that I wanted to huddle up with him in his capacity as a member of the Loyal Order of Once and Future FAAn Award Administrators: *“Because of FLAG, next year Mike Meara will have more competition in the Best Personal Fanzine category; too bad that RAUCIUS CAUCUS is not more frequent, i.e. no second issue yet.”*

I agreed that was a shame. “Maybe Pat will publish again in time for Novacon. Putting something out at the end of the year is a good idea if you want attention from FAAn award voters. As for giving Mike Meara competition, it

would be perfectly wonderful to come second to AMfO. Although, I was recently informed that having the second most-popular personal fanzine is not as exciting as you might think. For one thing, I think there is still confusion as to what the real difference is between genzines and ‘personal fanzines,’ which keeps some people from completing a ballot.”

Murray knows how much I’d like to expand participation in the awards: *“Might more people vote for the FAAn awards if they were presented with a ballot and a list of choices? This requiring that you invite and count nominations then release a ballot and count the votes, double the work for, most likely, less than a doubling of voters. To do is the only way to know.”*



I nodded, staring as Jeanne Mealy and Roger Weddall did something unwholesome with an inflatable plastic dinosaur on the balcony. "I know it would make Moshe Feder happy if we re-adopted a system of nomination by fans involved in the same disciplines as the nominees. That would obviously add more excitement to the awards, but as you observed, it will take more work, and not all of it by the administrator. Certainly fewer total fans would receive egoboo under that system, so I see it as a mixed blessing at best."

Bob Jennings overheard this exchange, and came up to shake my hand. "*Congratulations on winning best writer and one third credit for best genzine at the Faan Awards this year. Do you mean there was no ornate trophy to go with the awards? Really?*"

I shook my head. "I'm still waiting to see the representation of the awards I won. I think that's traditional, too."

"Bummer. Perhaps somebody could design something new and interesting to revive the trophy tradition for future awards. I nominate a poly-plas-injection-molded statue of Marc Schirmeister's floating alley cat illo from page one of FLAG #5 as an appropriate model for consideration. I feel it displays the perfect spirit of free-wheeling fannish thot."

"You're a closet Insurgent, Bob. When New Fandom comes for us, I expect you to be on the line with me."

That shook loose another association: "*I was interested in your comments on attending Enfilade!, the miniatures gaming convention, particularly the fact that you designed some battle scenarios based on the plays of Shakespeare. That's probably not as difficult as it might seem at first glance, since a lot of Will's works were based on crisis points of major historical and legendary rulers faced with upcoming military confrontations. Still, I would have appreciated a few more details on the subject."*

I rocked on my heels and smirked at him. "Of course you would, Bob, and I would have loved writing it, but 98% of my readers would have skipped straight to the fanzine reviews. There weren't too many details to share, anyway; the game system is *De Bellis Antiquitatis* version 2.2, played on a 2 foot by 2 foot board with just 12 40mm wide "stands" of troops per army. The first side to destroy 4 enemy stands is the winner. The game sets up and plays very quickly; we often run three, four or five matches in an afternoon or evening. We identified the proper armies in the game's historical "lists" of potential belligerents, corresponding to the antagonists in the Tragedies and Histories that Gary Pomeroy and I picked. We created battlefields that seemed to fit the historical context or the description in the plays, but they were simple. No moving Birnam Wood this time."

Murray Moore was still listening: "*I suppose that a street fight between Montagues and Capulets would have been too minor, not sufficiently complicated as Greeks versus Trojans, et cetera, even though derived from a Shakespeare play?*"

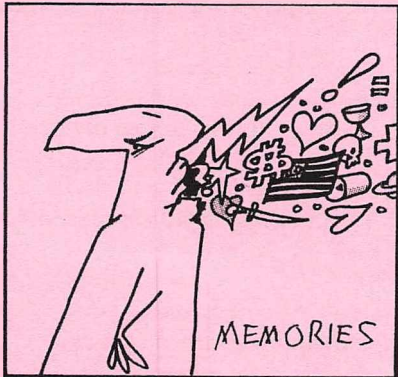
"It's a question of scale, not simplicity," I replied. "This game is used to represent the clash of whole armies; a single stand of figures might represent 1,000 men in the real world. A game that revolved around renaissance street fights would be fought on a "skirmish scale," and each miniature figure would represent one Montague or Capulet, and we would collect and create models to represent a street in 16th Century Verona. You know: the Arena Di Verona, the Piazza Delle Erbe, the Usinger's Sausage Factory...."

And now **Hope** rejoined us, as the mayhem on the balcony reached Jurassic proportions. "*As with so many conventions, I had no idea there were historical miniature gaming cons. Of course, now it's obvious. But I'm curious - what is the approximate percentage of women at these events? Or at the one you go to, anyway?*"

"Overall, gaming is much more gender-balanced than it was, but historical miniature gaming still appeals mostly to men, and the average age is probably north of 40. I think 12% to 15% of the attendees at Enfilade! are female, but that includes a number of women who work with dealers in the vendor areas. But there were also some half dozen girls in their early teens that were there with Dads or Grandfathers, and they played avidly all weekend, in every kind of game offered, from Roman chariot racing to battles between ironclad ships in the 19th Century. You

The older gamers remember him as the King of Tecmo Bowl

It's hard to be gluten free in Nevada



know – the kind of thing Derek Parks-Carter used to draw.”

Bob Jennings jumped back in: “I’ve participated in and put on some gaming cons myself, so I am always interested in reading how any game convention goes these days. I have played miniatures and strategy war games, but my primary gaming interest is always fantasy role playing games. My special favorite remains Call of Cthulhu.”

I eagerly agreed, “Oh, me too! The *Call of Cthulhu* campaigns that I played in when I lived in Wisconsin were just about the best game experiences I can remember. I used to love the SF RPG *Traveller* almost as much, but if I were to start a new game today, I think I would try to organize a *C of C* group.”

Bob nodded solemnly. “With the continued decline in the number of game stores, or any other retail places that sells games of any kind, I have an uneasy feeling that non-computer/electronic gaming may be in a slow but steady death spiral, so it is always good news when a game convention has a decent turnout.”

That seemed unreasonably dire to me. “You have more recent experience with the vagaries of gaming retail than I do, but in Seattle, we have had several new game shops open in the past few years, and most of them are still in business. There has been a dramatic two-decade shift away from rpgs and hex-grid war games, and toward cards and European-style board games with a million little plastic pieces, but on the whole, gaming seems more popular than ever. We assumed that PC and smartphone games would satiate people’s taste for play, but they just seem to increase the desire to spend more time on competitive amusements of all sorts, from trivia nights to Scrabble and Monopoly clubs. Adults play competitive kick-ball for Ghu’s sake! Gaming has fads and fashions just like music and couture, and individual gamers grow into adult responsibilities and leave the hobby. If you’ve focused your entire business on satisfying their tastes, you may be left holding the bag – which is full of old Judge’s Guild *D&D* adventures and *Villains and Vigilantes* modules.

“Tabletop miniature gaming, on the other hand, is aging as rapidly as science fiction fandom. Every year, several of the Dealer Tables in the main room are used for estate sales – stuff owned by gamers who have died, and whose spouses or families are desperate to liquidate their collections. Games with pre-painted models like *Wings of War* and *Angels 20* have attracted a few new players under 30, but it remains an expensive, obsessive hobby that tends to burn out its young players by the time they go to college.”

Bob appeared slightly pensive as I finished my rant. “I’m surprised -- and pleased -- to hear that Seattle is still a strong gaming region. That isn’t the case for the rest of the nation. In the northeast there are very few game stores left, with no new ones coming along either. The companies that produce games of all kind are in decline, with few new companies being formed. It used to be even five or ten years ago that a new strategy or war game would come out with an initial print run of thirty to sixty thousand copies. Now if a company is able to place ten thousand copies it is considered a major hit.”

I wanted to see the glass as half full. “All that’s true, particularly as applied to hex grid war games. The long recession killed a bunch of companies and retailers alike. Hard cases seem to concentrate on replaying old games, which cost nothing to dust off from their vast collections. Even Games Workshop found that no one wants to buy their overpriced junk, and had to close a lot of stores. At the same time – there are like **seven** board and card games based on *The Song of Ice and Fire* series. Something like a million people have played Alan Moon’s “Ticket to Ride” railroad games, and the games are now sold in Target department stores. This last season, *The Simpsons* made fun of *The Settlers of Catan*. **Hobby Shops**, stores that sell plastic kits and figures and paint and model trains, are dying; **Game Stores**, carrying collectible card games and Zombie games, and games about the German Power Utility Industry, seem to be viable -- at least on the West coast.”

I noticed everyone now seemed to have a faraway look in their eyes. "I'm sorry for geeking out so thoroughly on a different fandom. Aren't we supposed to be grokking a 650-page Epic Hard Science Fiction novel instead?"

Murray Moore had the perfect punctuation for the moment: *"Fandom may be A Way Of Life, but Fandom Is not the only Way of Life."*

The Flashback Society

With no dinosaurs or inflatable cows in sight, it seemed like a good time to step on to the balcony. The heady air of a Florida night 2,000 miles and 21 years in the distance seemed to fill all the pores in my body like an argument with Gary Farber. Walking down to the door to the suite's second room, I found **Robert Lichtman** and **Kim Huett** talking about collectible fanzines. Well, **Robert** was talking, anyway: *"I certainly agree with you that it's entirely my choice about how much I'm willing to spend to purchase a vintage fanzine that interests me in the never-ending flow of eBay auctions. Like you, my patience is endless and I'm occasionally rewarded when a reasonably-priced copy turns up and I'm able to snag it without serious competition from certain other eBay bidders. Most recently I managed to finally complete my run of Al Ashley's estimable '40s FAPAZINE, EN GARDE, when a Portland seller's auction attracted only weak-kneed other bidders. Ashley's image was dealt a cruel blow by Burbee's characterization of him as a buffoon, and anyone encountering these fanzines will find him quite the opposite."*

He continued, *"As for finding 'the first three issues' of Lou Goldstone's FANTASIA 'far less interesting than the description had suggested,' that is always a risk (and there were only those three issues, by the way). I also have a set, two of which were gifted to me by Lou's widow, Cynthia, and the third of which I gladly paid an outrageous sum for in an eBay auction—managing, as I rarely did, to beat out one particular very aggressive British bidder. Yes, Kim, they are no great shakes as fanzines in terms of content—lots of fiction and poetry—but their production values are simply amazing, and they are far from being classifiable as crudzines, especially with all the well-wrought multi-colored silk-screened artwork, entirely by Lou, that graces the covers and interiors of every issue. Since I knew Lou for roughly a quarter century before his premature death in 1983, there's obviously a sentimental value for me in FANTASIA that would not, of course, be present for you."*

During the latter part of this, the ubiquitous **Bob Jennings** ambled in from the other room and joined me in eavesdropping on Robert and Kim. He began to semi-whisper in my ear: *"I have friends who are ardent record collectors, and at least one of them almost never listens to the LPs and records he collects. I used to wonder why he bothered collecting all those records if he really didn't care much for the music, but I have stopped wondering. Music collecting people are nuts anyway."*

"Of course most collectors are nuts, anyway. In addition to people who collect music that they never listen to, I also know people who collect coins they never intend to spend, or antique banks they never intend to put any coins into either, so I guess it evens out in the great scheme of things. And we might as well add in all the science fiction fans who collect fanzines. They read 'em one time, store them away and never look at them again, ever."

This suddenly struck me as an absurd standard of sensibility. "What the hell do you want people to do with them, Bob," I asked, "make paper hats and boats out of them? How many fanzines do **you** read more than once?"

At this point **Robert**, hearing his name, turned in his chair to see us standing behind him. *"Hi, Andy! Congratulations to the editors of CHUNGA on its fourth FAAn award!"*

"Thank you. Congratulations on winning the Harry Warner Junior Award again, and Best Single Issue."

Perhaps for Jennings' benefit, Robert explained, *"The best single issue nod is also Trap Door's fourth, but it's only been two years since the last one."*

Kim appeared to have been slightly flattened by the weight of Robert's earlier lecture, but the subject of the FAAn awards brought him back to convexity: *"I'm pleased the Best Single Issue category was retained and for the sake of clarity it was good to simplify the title, even if (or so I fear) it allows voters to forget one-off publications."*

Only Silverberg has the key, and it is for his exclusive use when he needs a retreat

O'Driscoll scattered the cards/And out of his dream awoke

"It also helps if the categories can be easily defined by potential voters. That the first incarnation of the FAAns included separate categories for humorous and serious fan artists was a mistake, I think. It wasn't always self-evident who belonged where and indeed some artists produced work that made them eligible for both categories. It encouraged indecision and with indecision comes procrastination and missed deadlines."

"Which is why I very much like the inclusion of a 'Best Cover' category in the FAAns this year. To me it opens up the voting a little by implying that layout and graphics can be considered as well as the art without the voter needing to define which is what. This neatly sidesteps the question of whether computer generated art or photos can be compared to drawn material because the only thing which matters is which covers impressed the voter the most. Compared to that defining what constitutes a cover on electronic fanzines will prove a minor issue."

I found his enthusiasm infectious. "Most voters were good enough to list the name of the artist along with the title and issue number of the fanzine whose cover they wanted to pick," I said. "And I have a policy of accepting all votes cast, regardless of how well they fit the theoretical category, so I really don't keep track of the mode of reproduction used. But I also know that there were several gorgeous full-color covers published through eFanzines.com in 2012, covers that their publishers would never be able to afford to reproduce on paper. And people voted for them, without hesitation. That was one new category the voters embraced immediately."

"But do you want to see more awards? Are you against Arnie Katz's proposal to add a permanent Best Fan Humorist award on the grounds that we can't agree on what's funny?"

This brought a laugh from the others, but **Kim** remained earnest: *"I think the key factor isn't how long it takes to present them but how this affects voting. It seems to me a pretty safe bet that the more categories there are the more the process will feel like a chore and the less likely it is that ballots will be completed. In which case, tempting as it is, I don't think it advisable to have more than eight categories on the ballot."*

I sidled toward the door. "I have to check on the Diet Pepsi supply," I said. But before I go, tell everyone what you thought of the references to numbered fandoms in FLAG #1."

Kim actually snorted. *"Arnie Katz must be totally bereft of ideas if he has disinterred such Lamarckian conceits such as numbered fandoms and focal point fanzines. Such topics should be hit with a stick until nothing is left but unrecognizable pulp."*

I ducked back inside before the brawl could begin.

Man, Myth and Magic

The party was in full roar now, and included fans I knew only by name or byline. **John Nielsen Hall** had found my copy of Jo Walton's novel *Among Others* on the display table, and was talking about it to **William Breiding**: *"Did you read Yvonne Rousseau's comments about it in FLAG #6? I found them very interesting. Perhaps I read the book with too psychological an approach as opposed to Yvonne's more academically mystic take, and so I believed that Morganna and Morwenna had, following Morwenna's death, become merged as Morganna or Mori. But I'd have to read it again to see if I misunderstood that, or how I gained that maybe false impression."*

"The business of their names is tricky," I agreed, "and I re-read a number of chapters while working on the long-rumored second draft of 'The Albacon Club.' I think it holds up fine under a second reading, but I doubt it will do anything to solve the puzzles for you."

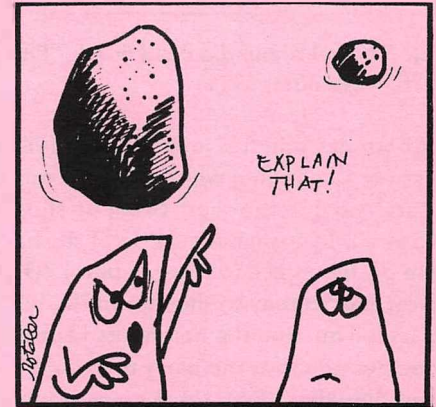
John looked like he might open the book and begin reading it again right there, but continued: *"Another thing I believe, with possibly no justification whatever, is that the novel is autobiographical. I think that must be true in regard to the SF referenced, and, since I know nothing of the real Jo Walton, who knows what else in the story it could be true of. If it is, then the fairies are much more personal and hence unlikely to conform to the Western tradition or any other- and all the better for that. They are Mori's fairies, and nobody else's."*

I decided to ignore the impulse to stand on some skeptical point, and concentrated on what I knew: "Jo has acknowledged that the family experiences and Mori's relationship with her reading list are all closely derived from events in her own life. But I'm afraid she has gently resisted the notion that the fairies and the magical interactions that

Mori has with them, are anything other than fictional. Parts of it are, as Mori warns at the beginning of the story, not to be trusted.”

Mr. Breiding, showing no ill effects from his trans-temporal teleportation from 21st Century West Virginia, also seemed tempted to grab the book and use it to become invisible, then hide for generations under a misty mountain: “When we left off last, I’d just gotten Jo Walton’s *Among Others* from the library. Thank you for steering me to this book. Gorgeous, deceptively simple, entirely complex, and, really pretty fucking amazing. I read it and then loaned it to my 91 year-old mom, who also adored it.”

The conversation now expanded to include **Jerry Kaufman**, whom I now realized had always been there. Jerry has also read Jo Walton’s book: “I thought Yvonne Rousseau’s insights on *Among Others* were wonderful. I wonder whether she has written enough criticism to make up a book? I’m sure it would be a brilliant read.”



I sat in silence for a moment, wondering if I might somehow bid Yvonne to appear. Best not to fall asleep in a dream, I thought. “That’s a good question. I had the same thought about Doug Bell’s writing about music in his blog, *Klang Forum*. He’s only getting started, but I can easily imagine him composing a book. I like what he’s doing – and it’s fun tracking down the music he writes about.”

Jerry enthusiastically agreed: “I’m still trying out new stuff. I tend to garage and indie bands, some singer-songwriters, Celtic. Not much in the way of rap, though I like the way the Gorillaz combined hip hop, rap, electronica and Damon Albarn’s nonsense lyrics, and a few other random cuts.”

Bill Breiding offered his two cents: “I try to stay semi-current on the music scene, but my tastes don’t run to the rap/hip-hop genre and its permutations. In old age, I find myself becoming more adventurous and have begun listening to classical, especially string quartets. And also some jazz. But my tastes remain **incredibly white**.”

I felt awfully pale myself, but then I started this. “You can assume that Sturgeon’s Law applies to hip-hop as it does any creative genre. But I hear such interesting things – I can’t be the only one.” A spectral beat box counted off in my head, joined by an unseen piano: “I am the stone that the builder refused/I am the visual, the inspiration/That made Lady sing the Blues. I am the spark that makes your idea bright/The same spark that lights the dark/so that you can know your left from your right. I am the ballot in the box, the bullet in the gun/The inner glow that lets you know to call your brother son. The story that’s just begun, the promise of what’s to come/ And I’mma remain a soldier till the war is won.”

Asheru’s lyrics had the expected effect – they dispelled the glamour that had taken us to the Concierge Suite, leaving me back at my present day desk in Seattle. I shrugged my shoulders: “Well, I thought it was cool, anyway.”
(COLOR PARTY will return next issue, with the usual non-fictionalized LoCs and corresponding addresses.)

A Key to the linos published in FLAG #6

Page 1: “It’s the standard – many crews try to set it, but they must be overdosing on that local anesthetic.”

Lyric from “The Standard,” by Atlanta hip-hop trio Psyche Origami.

Page 1: “Beloved men, realize what is true – this world is in haste, and the end approaches.”

Part of the “Sermon of the Wolf,” issued by Archbishop Wulfstan of York in 1041 CE.

Page 2: “When you lose the moral high ground to Dick Cheney, it’s time to rethink your entire life.”

Attributed to Senator John McCain’s aide Mark Salter, in the HBO film *Game Change*.

Page 5: “She was also the daughter of the circus bear-leader, and had led a life full of license, vice, and crime.” Historian John Fines describing the origins of the Eastern Roman Empress Theodora.

Page 6: “Your Novacon report is dire beyond belief”

From a letter of comment by Joseph Nicholas, on Jeff Suter’s fanzine PERIPHERY #2 (1980).

Page 7: “Nothing cheers you up like being in a pawn shop. Because, chances are, you’re going to see a Flintstones alarm clock.” CIA man Stan Smith looks on the bright side on Seth MacFarlane’s *American Dad*.

Page 8: “His voice makes Enya sound like a Russian couple arguing at the bowling alley.”

More from Stan Smith, this time discussing lead singer Jim James of *My Morning Jacket*.

Page 9: “It was a rhetorical question, Errol. What have I told you about thinking?”

Alan Ford as the villainous promoter and fixer “Brick Top” in Guy Ritchie’s caper picture *Snatch*.

FANZINE FLASHDOWN: Excerpts from Favorite Fanzines of the Past

1.) "The quick and the dead drunk," Rich Elsberry, QUANDRY #15, November, 1951

"About five minutes later the roof fell in. Nearly twenty people all carrying whiskey, gin or mix bottles come marching into the room to set up shop. Our room is the largest one available outside of the hall so they thought it'd be the perfect place to throw a party. (Dietz's room got crowded, so they so they stood the bed on end. Some of the slats fell out and the neighbors kept calling up so we decided to move the party to a more suitable location.) At one time that night, there were as many as 39 people in that room, and most of them with a drink in their hands. About sixty people or more passed in and out of the room that night and morning.

"The din was terrible! People laid on the beds, floors, furniture, and anything else we had around. Ice and mix flowed up to the room in a nearly continuous stream. You could hear the party all the way down and it was a wonder that the house detective wasn't up there to stop the thing. When Max and Hickman came into the hotel around two o'clock (where had they been?), Max asked for the key to 770. The desk clerk told him there was a wild party going on up there."

2.) "Good Intentions Should Count for Something," Bjo Trimble, THE BEST OF APA-L, 1966

"So when we got the car loaded again, Barbara (Gratz - ed.) drove around Berkeley, up one street and down another, while I tried to tell her that the freeway was That Way. Finally she admitted she knew where the freeway was. 'Then... then why aren't we on our way?' I inquired in a mildly hysterical voice. 'I'm trying to use up all the gas in the car so I can get some more,' says Barbara. There was a stunned silence until Forry timidly asked why for on that, so Barbara patiently explained that she didn't want to mix the regular gas she planned to buy with the ethyl gas which was now in the tank, so she was using the ethyl all up first. 'You see,' said Barbara, who had been studying this all morning, and had figured out the car's problems, 'the ethyl is too thick.' 'Too thick?' gurgled Forry. 'Yes, and that makes it clog up the spark plugs, so that the car overheats, you see?'

"Well, we finally got her on the way down the freeway, and just past Bradley, the car broke down completely & refused to budge. Barbara admitted that the 'tune-up' hadn't happened, either; she'd intended to take the car into the garage, and that should count for something! Miriam and I broke the single aspirin in the car in half, and with great ceremony, swallowed our respective shares of said pill."

3.) SON OF WHY BOTHER, John Brosnan, Anzapa #62, June, 1978

"Those Anzapans who know of my drinking habits no doubt think that the name of my street - Lushington Road - is very appropriate. But while the name may conjure up a picture of quaint, tipsy charm, the reality is quite different. Lushington Road is a bleak, featureless little street in one of West London's most depressing areas. In fact, it's such a grotty place that some residents have painted COME BACK LUFTWAFFE, ALL IS FORGIVEN on their roofs."

4.) "Thank You Girls," Chris Priest, CHUCH, 1986

"John Lennon dominated everything between numbers, but whenever the band was playing he receded into the group identity. Like everyone there I was thrilled and intimidated by Lennon's raucous threats and announcements, but when the music started I stared in a kind of wild trance at the whole group. Gerry and the Pacemakers had been loud, raw, chummy and incompetent. The Beatles were about twenty-five thousand feet higher in the sky. They looked aggressive and uncouth, they lit cigarettes between numbers, they abused the audience. But they were also highly professional: the songs were well-rehearsed and played, they had a conscious group image, they were totally at ease with the audience they so roundly insulted. They wore white shirts, leather waistcoats and trousers, heeled boots. They had their hair combed forward. (*Heeled boots! Hair combed forward!*) They grinned at each other as they played, moved their bodies in time with the music, shook their heads when they chorused. The overall effect was to create a feeling such as I had never known before. It was a blend of contradictions. Part of me deeply resented them: I wanted to resist the powerful effect their music had on me, I disliked the way they intimidated me, I was jealous of the way they made the girls' eyes glow.... But at the same time, I could not stop staring at them, I wanted the music never to stop, I felt a close rapport with them, an identification with what they seemed, obscurely, to stand for. It was all potent stuff, incomprehensible in the heat of the moment, and all I could do was stand there in silent rapture, feeling the music battering the side of my head."

5.) "Several Days in May," Dave Langford, SGLODION #1, 1989

"The subterranean journey is of course punctuated by loud encounters which are doubtless thrillingly choreographed were it possible to see anything. Magical types fire off mystic cap-pistols, and there is a disquieting move towards audience participation. I enjoy the sadistic spectacle of a Radio Midlands chap being stripped of his symbiotic tape recorder and thrust whimpering into the darkness to hit things with a padded stick."

Ornithischian? Carapaced? Anodized? Write to 11032 30th Ave. NE Seattle, WA 98125, or email fanmailaph@aol.com.