

philistine quarterly #7
(a journal of the arts)



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PHILISTINE QUARTERLY
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I just got a postcard from Redd Boggs in which he deplores my dastardly attempt to stick him with all of the FAPA offices and then, only two sentences later, solicits my vote for OE. I'm still trying to figure that one out. In the same card, he referred to this publication as "PhQ," which I guess is as good an abbreviation for it as PHIL, which is what I've been using up until now. So as of this moment, the Official Abbreviation for PHILISTINE QUARTERLY is PhQ, pronounced "phuh-cue," accent on the cue.

I guess this is as good a place as any to congratulate Redd and the other winners in the election, except myself, because it's unseemly to congratulate oneself. Instead, I'll simply express astonishment at my own election. With the expected lack of opposition, I figured there might be a pretty good chance for me, but with the calibre of the opponents I did have, I expected to be congratulating the winner right about now. But surprisingly, last night, I got a short note from Dick listing me as the new vice-president. I still don't know how close it was, or how many people voted, but I guess that information will be forthcoming shortly.

This is a singularly good time in my life for me to ascend to the vice-presidency. Never before have I been so closely associated with vice. As you will no doubt discern from the card on my cover, I am now a Porno Czar. About the end of July, I accepted a job running a theater that specializes in hard-core pornography. Not a sleazy 16mm outfit, but a real theater, with 35mm film, a box office, a lobby, and even a popcorn stand. The owner of the place says he'll never get into those cheapshit outfits. He likes owning theaters, but as far as he's concerned, pornography is just a type of movie that makes a lot of money without a lot of capital outlay. When the tastes of the public change, he intends to change with them. This is fine with me, because I've discovered I like the theater business, but am not all that fond of fuck flicks.

From talking with him and a few other people, I gather I have a rosy future ahead of me in this company. He seems to like surrounding himself with talented people of various types, and he's impressed with my writing. He asked me to come up with a couple of catchy slogans for the marquees, but the best one I could think of, "Where the Elite Beat their Meat," didn't go over too well for some reason. (That one is so perfect, I think, that I can't possibly be the first one to think of it. Has anybody heard it?)

Of course, running a porno house has a few unique hassles not shared by other aspects of the theater business. Getting busted springs to mind immediately. If the theater gets raided, I'm the one who has to go to jail. So far, that hasn't happened, but from having watched it at a couple of the other theaters in the chain, I'd say it's the sort of thing that wouldn't be too unbearably unpleasant a limited number of times. Just part of the job. And for the boss, part of the expense of doing business.

And then there's the time someone complained that he couldn't use the toilet. I wondered at first what kind of weirdo I had on my hands, until he managed to get me in to check (his English wasn't too hot). And there was this dude sitting on the john, cheerfully whacking his whang. I told him he'd have to do that elsewhere, because there were other people waiting to use the facilities.

A whole page gone and no mailing comments! Let's take care of that now.

SEEDS AND STEMS (Hughes) Welcome to FAPA, I suppose, even tho you say you've been here a couple of mailings already without so much as saying hello.

There are a lot of things I'd rather do than the job I'm being paid for, no matter what that job might be. Fanac is one of them. I'm lucky right now, because even tho I'm typing this at work (I think I need another Selectric to keep at the theater--but I'm not rolling in that much wealth, even tho I am a Porno Czár), I'm still doing the job I'm being paid to do, which at this exact moment is to be on the premises in case something should happen to come up. (I don't think I'd attempt to write anything more structured than fanzine matter or mailing comments, tho, because these minor emergencies do have a way of happening several times a day.)

Even I groaned when you mentioned that the mainstays of your diet are Coke and cheese crackers, and I'm not even a food fan. (I just eat the stuff.)

Actually, FAPA is less geared to apazines than just about any other apa I've ever seen. There are a few people like you and me (well, at least like me--we'll find out about you as time goes by) who do zines in every mailing that consist mostly of mailing comments, but for the most part, it's a bunch of strangers who never talk to one another. Tho I consider the enjoyment I get out of belonging to FAPA well worth the effort I put into it, I can certainly understand how someone like Dave Hulan, who does as many as 75 pages of comments on a single SFPA mailing and likes to be treated the same way, might lose interest.

THE HOG ON ICE (Thorne) Joseph Heller strikes me as the same sort of writer as Daniel Keyes--somebody with only one novel in him, but that's a good one. FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON was every bit as good in its own way as CATCH-22, but nothing else by him has even come close to it. Still, I guess I'm as interested as anyone else in Heller's later career, if he lives long enough to have one at the rate he writes.

I WATCHED A WILD HOG (Vardeman) While reading your diatribe on cops, I was struck with an idea--if I'm ever robbed or burglarized (they're not the same, Aleister Cooke) for any appreciable amount of money, I think I'll sue the police chief for it, for spending more time busting people like you and me than protecting us from real criminals. Actually, the less truck I have with the police, the better I'll like it. I never see the cop on the beat here except when he wants to gather evidence for a bust or watch the fuck flick free (I never know which it is when he walks through the door without even waving at the ticket lady). It's people like him that give pigs a bad name.

I have no particular objection to bringing Vietnamese babies to America, so long as they're raised by American families. That way, they'll grow up to be Americans. The silliest suggestion on the subject I ever heard was made by a bleeding heart of my acquaintance, who says it's a disservice to these people to deny them their cultural heritage, and that they should be raised by Vietnamese refugees so as to keep intact their racial and genetic ties etc. etc. mumbojumbohubarbrhubarb... Sure, just what we've always wanted--another goddamn minority group.

GLOMMED FROM A DAVE HULAN SFPAZINE: "Frappe frappe!" "Qui va là?" "Alençon." "Alençon qui?" "Allens enfants de la patrie..." (Oh well. I thought it was nice.)

SAMBO (Martinez) I'm with you. I'll probably let the rent on my P.O. box lapse at the end of the year and go back to getting my mail at home (assuming I have a relatively permanent address by that time). \$5.40 a quarter was bearable--no use tying up more money than that, since there weren't any advantages to renting by longer periods, not even any insurance against rising prices, since they said they'd simply bill for the difference anyway. But when they went up to \$25 per year and stopped renting by the quarter at the very same time, I figured there was no use planning on keeping it beyond the current period. If all goes well, I'll have a CoA in the next FAPA mailing.

Fascinating account of exploring your "new" house. Sounds like a lot of fun. Closest I've come to that sort of thing was wondering what would happen if someone tried turning on some of the painted-over switches to gaslights in Faruk von Turk's house. I prefer living in older places myself, if only because they're better built, feel more lived-in (even to the extent where I wouldn't be scared to mar a wall by driving a nail in it to hang a picture), and rent cheaper. The adventure involved is an added attraction.

FRG (Jeeves) You're going to try carbon paper as a substitute for a mimeo stencil? Er...let us know how it works, okay? Also let us know exactly how you typed it. I simply can't visualize it.

The verbs "fix" and "get" have myriad meanings in American. I couldn't begin to explain them to a foreigner like you.

SCIENTIFRICTION (Glyer) I got a submission from Jon Inouye about a year or so ago. I sent it back, informing him that I write practically everything I publish myself, but thanks for the interest. It was only a week or so later that I saw the same piece in another zine. Much too soon for him to have sent it to someone else, even with the lead time of a fanzine, unless the other guy had seen it before I did. I made a mental note right then never to publish anything by him even if I ever do get back into genzine editing. No use stencilling something, getting all set to run it off, and discovering it's already being published by someone else--and even less use finding that out after it's in the mail.

HORIZONS (Warner) Okay, exactly how would you revise the Constitution to revivify FAPA? And more to the point, what recent crises and power ploys are you talking about? In fact, exactly what constitutes a power ploy? How much power is there in FAPA?

Committing crimes against their suppliers strikes me as a rather uncertain way for users to get drugs. That could be why they choose innocent bystanders. And how can you possibly think that the commercial price for, say, grass would be as high as the current black market price when it's no more expensive to produce than tobacco?

"Hagerstown Journal" remains just about the best reading in FAPA.

And that gets me right through the mailing, in a two-sheet zine this time. (Maybe the fact that I was interrupted so often, doing most of it at work, made it shorter than it would have been otherwise.) So now to run it off and send it to Redd, and get to work writing my Vice-President's Report. There won't be a great deal new in it--it's mostly going to be from thoughts in PhQ 5--but I do want to make sure I have it done in time.