

PLASMA

Don't get me wrong. I'm thrilled to be a member of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association.

How could it be otherwise? You don't need a second tentacle to count the fan-nish institutions which have attained the ripe age of 61. Besides, not a single one of our officers has been involved in a sex scandal this year. (That we know of.)

So it's an honor and a privilege to be a FAPAn. This thing of ours will probably be here in some form long after all copies of the historic first mailing are dust.

I just wanted to get that straight before proceeding to tales of what some might call official hijinks and laugh-a-minute incompetence among your FAPA executives. Of course, some would call it pre-meditated chicanery and willful malfeasance in office.

Now, I wouldn't call it that. You know how delicate I am about such things. I prefer to think of all the failures of judgement as amusing foibles, jolly quirks if you will.

Let's start with our Official Editor. Ken Forman. At the risk of alienating the fan on whose back FAPA intends to ride into the next millennium, I must loudly protest

Plasma #3, is the FAPA fanzine of Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). It's prepared in high spirits for mailing 242, February, 1998..

The Fanzine That Remembers Wendy O. Williams is a member of the fwa and an admirer of the AFAL. Every issue numbered!

the use of a single corner staple in the last (and mis-numbered) *Fantasy Amateur*. Ken will probably make some excuse about how one corner staple is a conservationist answer to the eternal tug-of-war between the two- and three-staple factions. Alas, like too many fans, that alibi won't wash. Frankly, it's a crock. This is the guy who built his own saddle stapler for all those half-legal fanzines.

Speaking of half-legal, our Secretary-Treasurer Robert Lichtman won't skate on this blanket indictment. Long known as the gray eminence behind the FAPA oligarchy, Mr. Lichtman has grown ever bolder in his flouting of the sacred FAPA constitution,

Hard to believe? A mere mailing ago, I would've cut off your right hand before I credited such charges against FAPA's most celebrated Sec-Treas this side of the grave.

Yet here I am.

I must speak out, because I have incontrovertible proof that he mishandled the dues! What greater crime could there be?

Shocking, yes, but true! I know from my own first-hand observation that he advanced my dues out of his own pocket so that I wouldn't get tossed out of FAPA.

I am inclined to be lenient with him on this one, this one and only time. But let it be known in every musty corner of The Elephants Graveyard (that's FAPA for you newbies) that I have my eye on you, Robert Lichtman, Be warmed: If you ever do something like this again, I will again thank you for saving my miserable ass.

Then there's our Vice President, Dave Rike. I counted on Dave Rike, I can tell you that. "He's a little eccentric," I told fellow FAPANs, "but by Ghu, you can count on Dave Rike."

That was my belief and my conviction. On the other hand, the FAPA Egoboo Poll is a mailing late.

Finally, there is the matter of me, current President of FAPA. The best thing you can say about my regime, besmirched as it now is in

this fanzine, is that I won't be President next year thanks to the far-sighted fans who wrote the sacred FAPA constitution. I've had two consecutive terms, thanks primarily to the fact that no one has bothered to run against me. (Joyce briefly flirted with running against me to stop me at a single term, but she decided to take a nap instead. On such miscalculations in

strategy do political fortunes wax and wane.

The sacred FAPA constitution's framers apparently foresaw this possibility when they limited the Presidency to two consecutive terms.

The Fantasy Amateur 241
Ken Forman)

The quantity continues strong, despite the roster shortfall. I believe the quali-

ty may be rising, too, after a trough of some years. (I *know* there's a pun in there somewhat about casting pearls before swine, but I won't attempt to make it. Can I get half-credit for the concept?)

I think there's a general upward trend in voting participation, too. I'll be looking to see if it holds for our Egoboo Poll.

Welcome Back, Dick Geis

A special welcome to Dick Geis. Not that Roger Wells is not also most welcome, but it is a special joy when a long-tim fan friend resurfaces.

Joyce and I talked about Dick Geis' return the other morning. "I'm really excited to see him back in FAPA," I said. My mind was a whirling reverie of memories of me and REG.

"He hasn't been gone, you know," she contradicted.

"You mean *The Geis Letter*?" I said, a touch contemptuously. "That was no fanzine."

"He sent it to a lot of fan friends," she pointed out.

"Yes, that's true," I conceded. "But it didn't relate to fandom or even science fiction."

"No, it didn't, but..."

"Well, what matters is that he's back," I said, attempting conciliation.

"Yes," she agreed happily.

"I wonder how long before he does SFR?"

"Or *Richard E Geis*?" Joyce countered.

"I've got an idea for Dick. Maybe this tie, he could pull a gigantic swerve and do it all backwards!"

"What do you mean backwards?" she asked.

"Instead of going through his usual progression, he could go in the opposite direction," I explained. "He could immediately begin publishing *Richard E Geis*, move on to *Science Fiction Review* and wrap it all up with a nice run of *Psychotic*."

"And then he could gafiate until he felt ready to storm the fannish heights again."

"Right!"

"Sounds perfect," she said as she picked up her copy of *Depression Glass Daze*. "Be sure to let me know when he gets to *Psychotic*."

Welcome to the 1998 TAFF Race!

I remember it like it was yesterday, though I believe it was well over a year ago that I made a prediction about the future of TAFF. I prophesied that the rules structure, especially the stipulation that anyone can vote who is known to an administrator, would soon result in a winning candidate with perfunctory fanzine credentials but basically nominated by convention fandom. I've got nothing against Ulrika O'Brien. In fact, I don't know her at all.

As a TAFF candidate, much less a winner, that's what I've got against Ulrika O'Brien. I'm not complaining, because everyone played by the rules, but I am pointing to an evolving trend in TAFF.

I like the idea of exchanging trans-Atlantic visits with British (and European) fanzine fandom, so I'm sorry to see TAFF apparently cease to fulfill that function.

I hope that TAFF, as a democratic institution, has

a wonderful future, but perhaps it's time for fanzine fans to start a special fund or TAFF-like institution that is closer to our needs.

The trips couldn't be as frequent as TAFF trips are these days, but I don't see anything wrong with a more leisurely pace, anyway. I think fanzine fans, through donations, a mail auction and perhaps special issues of their fanzines, could finance such trips without making fund-raising a grind. We could probably handle a trip in each direction within a three-year period, likely sufficient for the purpose.

What do you folks think?

Synapse, Jack Speer

The blurbs for the Creationist books made me laugh and shiver. I'd never try to limit someone else's belief, even if it struck me as peculiar, but I get very nervous when anyone attempt to erect a "science" based on hope and belief,

Though I'm familiar with the corporate name 'Borg Warner,' your mention of it in this mailing inspired the most bizarre mental picture. It was part fandom and part *Star Trek*.

In my day-mere, A shimmering column unexpectedly appears in my office. When the figure coalesces, it turns out to be a strangely transformed Harry Warner! It looks like Harry, except for the bio-mechanical

implants.

Then he speaks. "Resistance is futile! We are here to assimilate your fanzine collection."

When I next lapse into a stupor again, I'll be anxious to find out what happens next.

Personally, I've always felt a little bad for "Tom Wolfe." Only in the most benighted precincts is the author of *The Right Stuff* likely to be referred to as something besides "the other Thomas wolfe."

I think the earth moved, because I just agreed with you about a point of English usage. "Ugh" is precisely my reaction to the ugly-sound "perzine." I'm not sure I'm quite retro enough to embrace "individualzine," but I concede it's preferable to "Perzine." The problem with "Individualzine" is that it is too damn long. Think of how many typos I could make in one tricky word that long.

Here's a thought for you: While reading this section,

Hubris and the Cows

Jack Speer's mention of chickens reminded me of something that happened during his most recent visit to Las Vegas. He and Ruth came to one of the holiday Vegrants meetings, which made the occasion that much more special.

At one point, Joyce asked me to open a jar. It seems that several fans had tried, and failed, to dislodge the lid. One of the failed aspirants was Jack Speer, who indicated that he was prepared for the attempt as a result of many years spent milking cows.

And yet he, too, had to admit defeat.

I've never claimed a multitude of talents, but I am perhaps inordinately proud of the ones I have. One of my husbandly functions is to open the unopenable.

"Years of hand-cranking mimeographs has given me the upper arm strength to open anything," I bragged as I approached the jar. I eyed its thin top speculatively. There wouldn't be a lot of purchase on the thin, slippery lid.

I would've made the attempt anyway, but I surely would not have backed away from the challenge with the surehanded Jack Speer standing right there, ready to record the event in antique grammatical perfection.

So I took the jar in my left hand, grasped the thin metal top with the others and applied my legendary strength to the stubborn jar.

Seldom-used, but still potent, muscles rippled and an involuntary grunt erupted from my lips as I strained at my task. I tisted and twisted and twisted -- and then I felt something give.

The jar popped open and I presented it triumphantly to Joyce.

Unfortunately, something also gave in my right hand. I've been nursing a sore hand ever since my vainglorious escapade. Now I can barely *lift* the jap, much less open it.

at least five FAPANs thought of, and liked "Me-zine." Well, at least we could call electronic personalzines "mE-zines," which has both clarity and brevity going for it.

What a terrific piece! I mean "One Day in the Life of Samuel Moskowitz." Was it printed at the time? It certainly gives an intriguing picture of the Total Fan Moskowitz. In fact, my chief objection is that it deserved expansion, with somewhat more detail, at a later date when his time permitted.

Derogatory References

#86, Arthur Hlavety

The Microsoft-Apple deal has a certain entertainment value I'll admit. As a long-time Macintosh user (you're reading its word processing right now), I think a realistic view of the situation is that the Macintosh is on a slow, though acceleration, downhill slide.

The Mac had many things going for it, but Apple's failures of vision ultimately proved decisive over its advantages. Mac diehards don't want to hear that the time when the Macintosh could've attained long-term viability is gone, but studying the market leads most people to that conclusion.

It is possible that Apple will emerge from the debris, changed and strengthened, but I don't see a great future for the Macintosh computer. I still prefer it to the PC in many ways, but

my Aptiva is gaining my keyboard time at the Mac's expense. Already I do almost all my gaming and Netting on the Pc. The word processing and desk top publishing will follow when our still-recovering family budget permits..

Some Comments...

Graham Stone

I'm sure your Credentials Committee proposal is well-meant. It's obvious that the idea springs from a genuine desire to see FAPA improve.

That said, I don't believe a Credentials Committee is desirable, workable or useful. I see no benefit issuing from such a set-up through I can readily imagine a world of hurt feelings and, fuggheaded power-mongering.

My opposition begins with the whole concept of arbitrary exclusion I consider voting on prospective FAPA members contrary to the ethics of fandom, which have always strongly favored giving people a chance and not-pre=judging them.

The Credentials Committee is the first step toward censoring FAPA. It would be three people deciding for the rest of us who we want to know and what we want to read. This is intolerable for a group like FAPA, founded on the principles of free speech and independent thought.

Ethically, I consider a FAPA credentials Committee on a par with fraternity rush week and the racial

and ethnic exclusions practiced by prejudice-driven country clubs and the like. I've always thought fandom was a couple of cuts above such bias.

I chose fandom over frats in college, and I would choose fandom over FAPA if the group sprouted a Credentials Committee. The reasons for those two decisions are very similar: I don't want to participate in a group that indulges in such puffed-up bureaucratic snobbery.

Even if a Credentials Committee wasn't an affront to ethics and taste, the idea isn't workable. Since the Committee isn't even elected, it sounds like a cabal of three self-appointed censors to me. That's trouble waiting to happen.

What if the three members of the Credentials Committee, all of whom live close together in Seattle, decide they don't like folks from Las Vegas or New Orleans or even (shudder) Australia? Sounds funny in the abstract, but inter-city fan feuds happen. I wouldn't want FAPA to be a battle ground for such fan-political exercises.

It's all very well to talk of long-time FAPANs, but that hardly guarantees either knowledge or judgement. There are instances of arrent fuggheads staying in FAPA for *decades*.

And haven't many fans maintained a strong connection to FAPA while essential-

ly gaffiating from the rest of fandom? It's likely that at least one member of the Credentials Committee would be unfamiliar with a candidate. The natural desire to make an informed decision would leads to briefs for and against each candidate.

No matter how informal that process was, it would be an insult to the person who wants to join. I also doubt it would stay informal very long in an organization that already saddles itself with the longest constitution this side of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. The prospect of arguing the merits of applicants in this fashion is abhorrent to me. I believe most FAPAns would feel the same.

Finally, I don't think a Credentials Committee would achieve the goal you have set for it. I don't think such judges would actually be able to improve the contents of the mailings in quantity and quality.

First, we would automatically lose some current members solely because of the Credentials Committee. I tell you candidly, that one of those leaving will be me. I don't think I will be alone.

Second, the Credentials Committee would discourage fans from applying for two reasons. Some fans would be opposed, in principle, to the concept of being judged. There are a couple of hundred other apas that limp along without a

Credentials Committee, so anyone who opposes the process has abundant alternatives.

Third, anyone without precognition can't predict who will be a valuable member before they join. Putting a

The Hour of the Choosing

I stood on the roof of the Tucker Hotel. I could see their expectant fannish faces when the lightning illuminated them, so briefly.

They had brought me here, the members of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. They had come to me after the FAPA party. They were robed and masked, shadowy figures different from the fun-loving FAPAns of my youth.

"It is the Time of Judgement," they had said in a tone so ponderous I could actual hear the capitalization. "We do not elect, we only select."

I had never heard that phrase spoken aloud, but I knew its meaning. It was the slogan and credo of the most dangerous, most feared entity in all of fanzine fandom... The FAPA Credentials Committee!

Then they described the preparations and the tests which lay before me. Instead of my intended con agenda of meals, side bars and fourth-dimensional crifanac, I would have to undergo rituals of purification and rededication to the Spirit of Trufandom. Only after a period of fasting and collating, my masked visitors assured me, would I even be allowed to try the Test. With a parting "We do not elect, we select," they left me.

Two days later, tired but fannish, I stood on the roof of the Tucker Hotel. I raised my hands to the heavens and silently implored the Spirit of Trufandom to take my hand, show me my Calling.

The air around me crackled. I felt the building fall away beneath me. And then I saw the glowing, ethereal figure of the Spirit of Trufandom.

Instinctively, I reached out my hand. The spirit of Trufandom extended hers. There was still a palpable gap between her fingertips and mine.

"Do you wish it?" she whispered.

"Yes! Oh, yes!" I declared. "Yes!" And with that third affirmation, the gulf between us shrank. I stretched...

Almost... almost...

I felt a jolt of trufannish energy course through me. I lunged into an endless well of exhilaration and lost my connection with the universe.

"You have been chosen," a shrouded FAPAn said as he leaned over me. I had collapsed on the hotel roof. "The Spirit of Trufandom has raised you to the FAPA Credentials Committee!"

My friends half-carried me back to the suite and a celebratory sidebar. Yet as I jested with the other FAPAns, I knew there was prodigious work ahead.

well known fannish name on the roster isn't the same as infusing FAPA with high quality and quantity content.

We've had more than one BNF go three-mailings-and-out or produce a forgettable eight pages a year. There are also some fine FAPA participants who aren't exactly renowned outside the group.

Capping off the whole deal is the fact that it is ludicrous for a group that can't fill its roster to establish a Credentials Committee. FAPA doesn't need to turn away any fan right now. Perhaps some unheralded newcomer will blossom in this environment and produce large, frequent and entertaining FAPazine.

The surest way I know to improve FAPA content is to encourage -- "encourage," not "order" or "force" -- members to hit every mailing. If two-thirds of the roster contributed to four mailings out of five, FAPA would be a lot better.

For FAPA, Eric Lindsay

There have been so many fan deaths in the last year that you forgot your namesake Ethel Lindsay and also Charles Burbee. (And Rotsler died shortly after you wrote.)

As you say, the photocopying equipment you use isn't typical. Most of those who don't patronize a copy shop have access to a small-to-

medium capacity machine. The cost-per-cop on such units is a lot higher than a mimeo.

Once you take a fanzine to a copy shop, labor, overhead and profit margin raise the production cost. There's no opportunity for the fanned to hold down expenses by contributing sweat equity.

Sometimes I go crazy, turn off the duplexer and copy the zines one side at a time. Once I pretended to slip-sheet, but it didn't feel realistic.

Gegenschein #78, Eric Lindsay

I imagine that Joyce and I would have a considerable interest in parts of your fanzine collection. I would very much like to fill the ugly gap in our collection that begins around 1978 and ends circa 1999. We're especially interested in runs of faanish fanzines and fanishly oriented personalzines.

Speaking of old fanzines, the recently announced TAFF mail fanzine auction excited a lot of interest at the last Vegnants meeting. Ken Forman read the list of choice items, while Joyce and I provided fanhistorical footnotes.

I don't know how many of the Vegnants will bid on them, owing mostly to the usual assortment of financial woes, but their keen interest bodes well for the auction's success.

Gegenschein #79, Eric Lindsay

Joyce believes that the postal services of the world are working to isolate and de-internationalize the planet. It's getting harder to mail from the US to foreign countries every year, and you already know what's happening to postage rates.

Distribution cost is one of the reasons why I believe our fanzine fandom will eventually migrate to the Internet, or at least some form of electronic delivery.

Current technology is still pretty primitive and response is less-than-thoughtful. Some fans may not like the idea of being read by anyone who gets the URL, which makes it hard to build a sense of community.

These are likely to be temporary barriers. I don't think it'll be long until the electronic equivalent of an apa - an Internet Ring -- will announce itself.

From Artifact to Z, Catherine Mintz

The bad re-editing of *Flash Gordon* might be a result of the movie series' origins as a serial. They were edited into theatrically released movies, the classics we both remember. Since the serial footage still exists, however, it's an invitation to an enterprising, if untalented, publisher to re-cut it.

Why all this squeamishness about old Dino dung?

Surely it's a component of a dozen products you probably use regularly.

Ben's Beat #48, Ben Indick

Your cover prompts me to mention that *Amazing Stories* is about to undergo another revival, this time at the hands of Wizards of the Coast. Preliminary plans are for a quarterly that features a blend of fiction, graphics and media-oriented science fiction,

Amazing's last publisher, also a game company, never got on top of the magazine. Editor Kim Mohan did a few good things, but he was not fitted by experience or inclination to acquire and present fiction.

I think the idea of making FAPA membership unlimited, as in the mundane ayjay groups, is very bad. The large membership rosters are one of the reasons why the best ayjay titles don't go through the bundles or to more than a fraction of the members.

I'd hate to see FAPA become that kind of two-level group, where the hardcore got all the zines and the rest got the leavings.

The innovation of limiting the size of an apa, introduced by the founders of this very apa, fostered the "closed circle" environment that made FAPA (and other fan apas) prosper.

King Biscuit Time #30,
Robert Lichtman

If I said I was a semi-hippie fanzine fan" in 1963m I was clearly in error. I was a nice Long Island high school student. Within the next year or so, though, I think I earned that description.

And in the very next line comes evidence that I'm not the only one around here who was having trouble with dates and time-frames. If the last issue of **Crifanac** appeared in 1958, then 40 (not 30) years have passed. If three decades was enough to justify recycling, then that extra decade should satisfy even finicky fans.

I see your point about that 30-year period imperiling your rights to **Frap**. It doesn't seem fair for a good fanzine to have its title recycled. Maybe you could do a one-copy "ashcan" issue to preserve ownership -- and frustrate collectors like Bruce Pelz.

Horizons #226, Harry Warner

I'm pleased to report that despite his eccentric metal fastener proclivities, Ken has really taken to the OEship. He built that mammoth collating station and now he is seldom more than a day or two behind in sorting contributions.

He's such a model of efficiency that he disdains help! Strange, but true! By the deadline, all he has to do is finish *The Fantasy Amateur*, stuff the bundles into the envelopes, affix address labels, return address and

seal the envelopes and *schlep them* to the post office. Hmmm... now that I list it out that way, it still sounds like a lot of work. but he's breezed through it every time.

I tell you all this, both because I'm proud of my friend, and so you won't fret about the safety of the mailings. And I promise that Joyce and I will blitzkrieg the rogue, and after disposing of any bodies, liberate the imperiled mailing.

Joyce will follow up the piece on Poplar Bluff fandom with one specifically devoted to Max Keasler. She's already written it, and it should be in **Wild Heirs #21**.

The similarities and differences in the fan careers of those Poplar Bluff friends, Ray (Dugie) Fisher and Max Keasler, would be fertile material for an article.

Max became one of Sixth Fandom's "big four," and Dugie became a decent enough fan of no particular celebrity. They both gafiated. Ray came back to chair a worldcon and publish a major fanzine, while Max never returned. Today, the Sixth Fandom BNF is probably not nearly as well-remembered as the one who wasn't the proprietor of room 770.

Thank you so much for your kind words about my Moskowitz piece. I wish SaM were around to critique it s

you suggest,

Sansevieria #7, Dale Speirs

I respect your decision not to have a television set.

After all, it's a personal choice. I won't try to argue you into getting one, either.

I won't disturb your video-less idyll if you don't try to take my big screen away.

I imagine you *do* miss a lot of references, though. I hope

my stuff larded with pop cultural references, isn't too opaque to be enjoyable. I like your zines, and I'm egotistical enough to want that to be mutual.

Visions of Paradise #74,

Robert Sabella

Your open admiration for Tom Sadler's audacity in going up to amiable old

Gene Wolfe at his first con left me totally aghast. As a neo, I respected pro authors for their ability to write so creatively (and profitably), but I never thought they were in any sense above or separate from me.

I went up and introduced myself to all the pros who spoke at the first convention I attended, the one-day 1963 Lunacon, and I would've counted it a disappointment if I hadn't.

Besides, I'd met a few professional writers and editors before I walked into Adelphi Hall's meeting room. Lenny Bailes, boyhood friend and fellow neo, had corresponded with CS Lewis and Andre Norton, so I don't think his knees buckled at the sight of Randall Garrett.

Frankly, I never found pro science fiction authors all that unapproachable. I've noticed that some, especially the newer ones, have some affectations and airs, but the field's giants have usually been accessible. (Major exception: Robert A. Heinlein).

The Road Warrior, Tom Feller

You got into fandom by answering a classified ad in *Analog*? As much as you like fandom, I guess it was pretty disappointing when you ripped open the envelope and discovered there was no catalogue of Filipino Women Who Need Love, Too.

Did you catch the two

For All Tomorrow's Fanzines

Vegas Fandom is re-energizing these days, after a lull, and this has sparked many discussions of fandom, fans and fanzines. Tom Springer, Ben Wilson and I talked about fandom as a conduit to future generations, a topic also raised by Dale Speirs in this FAPA mailing, only a few days ago.

Most knowledgeable 30-year-old fanzine fans know a lot more about Los Angeles Fandom in the early '40s than about any other aspect of that era, with the possible exception of the war in Western Europe. They know about it because Laney and others set it down on paper. *Ah, Sweet Idiocy!* preserves a slice of fannish culture, down to the smallest detail.

Fandom appears likely to persist for a long time to come. Ironically, the All Known Fandom I disdain probably insures the perpetuation of the little subculture I personally esteem, our branch of fanzine fandom. Because the larger, increasingly commercial mass market interest exists, it will keep alive the memory of our fandom.

We are the Native Americans of Fandom. Introverted, bookish fanzine fans are the living legends straight out of Science Fiction Fandom's murky, anti-social past.

It won't be long before they put a glass wall on the Worldcon Fanzine Lounge. Then all the middle-of-the-mainstream teenage con-partiers can pause, watch our antics for a minute and continue on to the Gothic Beer Drinking Festival.

Perhaps an enterprising con-runner will hook up a few head-sets with a canned lecture about our quaint customs and activities.

Even if fandom doesn't, I think the literature of fandom is already well enroute to long-term preservation. It's becoming increasingly likely that fanzines, like other forms of limited circulation literature before it, will belong to the ages.

Being a fan has never been cool. That certainly hasn't changed since the '30s.

The difference is that people used to regard science fiction fan as weird, off-the-wall and far outside "polite" society.

That made fandom alluring to a certain type of person: introverted pariahs with high verbal SAT scores. In the '30-'65 period, fandom gave a home to many intelligent, even brilliant, people who were too alienated from society to thrive there.

Fandom's pioneers created a subculture that met their human needs. These include attracting like-minded people to the subculture and repelling the ordinary, "well-adjusted" folks.

The subculture fulfilled its job as a people sieve for many years. The filter clogged in the late '60s and largely stopped working over the next decade or so.

Several factors caused the break-down:

1. **Lower entrance requirements**

Starting with the *Star Trek* craze, literacy and an interest in books were no longer necessary. After the Tolkein boom, neither was an interest in science fiction (as distinguished from fantasy).

2. **The healing power of fandom.**

Fandom served as a halfway house for people who weren't well-socialized to conventional society. It enabled them to master the nuances of human interaction.

Metaphorically, fandom took all the high school wallflowers to dances filled with nothing *but* wallflowers. In that environment, a lot of those wallflowers get out on the floor and dance, make toasts, flirt... In short, they do all the things wallflowers don't get to do at a conventional high school dance. Some of the wallflowers get so good at these practice dances that they can return to the real ones and function more confidently.

Fandom teaches a lot of life lessons along the way. Many long-time fans learned those lessons well enough to become both less alienated from mundane society and more tolerant of people with conventional view-

points. (I'm not calling this good or bad, only offering my observations.)

3. **SF became respectable.**

Science fiction themes diffused through our mass media so effectively that a mild enthusiasm for it is no longer a bizarre preference. When 59 million Americans claim to like SF, it's no longer unusual.

Now most non-fans, especially those under 30, think being a science fiction fan is lame. The kind of person who might have liked "classic" fandom goes to one convention, meets all the lowbrow conformists and runs screaming.

(Here's where I cement this mailing's award for "Miss Congeniality"...)

If fanzine fandom is organized as a literary salon for those without social skills, then most of the rest of fandom is a Junion Achievement project gone haywire.

Reading science fiction once put fans so far out on the fringe that they automatically rejected social conventions and common denominator thinking.

The thousands who flock to conventions these days are not estranged from society by their interest in science fiction, because everybody has a mild interest in the stuff. It's expected.

Liking a little science fiction especially in movies and games, doesn't make you a rebel. It makes you more or less like everybody else.

Even their rebellions are predictable and social sanctioned. They aren't unique eccentrics; they're lockstep copycats.

Most of what happens at large conventions must seem very mundane to those in search of a genuine alternative. Someone with the same counter-cultural tendencies as classic fans is likely to leave their first (and last) convention with the feeling that it's full of a lot of unimaginative drones.

The classic fans refused to go along with the herd, even at the cost of becoming a focus of derision. Why should nonfans who are like that today buy into it?

I contend they don't.

Stones tribute albums that came out about the time the Bridges to babylon tour started. The better-known one is *Stone Country*, a compilation of Stones covers by country western stars. The better one may well be *Paint It Black*, an anthology of Stones covers by blues and soul artists.

I'll probably work a comparative review into the next **Xtreme**, but I can't resist mentioning Youngblood Harte.

He's the only one with two cuts on the disc. When you hear his renditions of "Sway" and "Moonlight Mile," the reason for singling him out becomes obvious. Youngblood Hart sounds a whole lot like Mick Jaeger.

I liked his performance so much that we bought his album on the Okeh label. The funny thing is that he still sounds like Mick about half the time. This has the awkward effect of making him, occasionally, sound like a black man trying to sound like a white man trying to sound like a black man.

Hart's style is a curious blend of traditional folk blues singing backed by ornate guitar-playing. Kind of what John Fahey might've sounded like if he had the blues in his soul.

Let's see if I get this right... You know all about Capt Kirk's sex life in *Star Trek* and can cite chapter and verse in *Lolita*?

I think it's safe to say that it was high time you got married. So when will you and Anita be visiting us here in the Entertainment Capital?

Sweet Jane #18, Gordon Eklund

It's a good thing I don't wear hats, because I'd have to start buying them at the Big and Fat Head Shop after reading your this **Sweet Jane**. I'm flattered if my encouragement got you to do mailing comments, and such good ones! And your comments about **Guip** and my Moskowitz piece insure that I will be semi-insufferable at the next Vegnants meeting. I may have your paragraph on page five made into a teeshirt.

The luxuries of one generation become the necessities of the next. The writing process appears to follow that paradigm.

When humanity had only stone and chisels, that's how writers did it. When parchment and quill pens became practice, authors used them and lost the ability to use the chisel.

I've written by hand, but I have much more facility with the typewriter. My handwriting is messy and hard for even me to read at times, so I don't like the look of the handwritten sheet when it's done.

Then, too, I'm aware that the editors' expectations have risen in step with tech-

nology, so that few are comfortable *reading* handwritten manuscripts.

I used a typewriter early in my career, because that was the reigning technology. I struggled with its limitations and learned to revise on the fly or forget minor changes to avoid typing the same section more than once.

I switched to word processing, because it gave me editing options. I adjusted my way of writing to exploit those options.

With word processing, my work reads better than when I used a typewriter. If I had to go back to the typewriter, I would find some of my work habits counter-productive.

So it's not that I can't use a typewriter, but rather that I have adjusted my approach to writing so that it's no longer optimized for the typewriter.

This fanzine is done a bit differently than either **Wild Heirs** or **Xtreme**. I'm doing it more the way I did *Electronic Games* magazine a year or two back.

I normally write fan stuff on Microsoft Word, then port copy blocks to a Quark file. With **Plasma** I'm writing directly on the Quark file. It won't be as tight as my general output, for which I apologize, but it makes mcs more spontaneous and discursive.

It also keeps me from writing more than fits on the page. See you in FAPA #243!