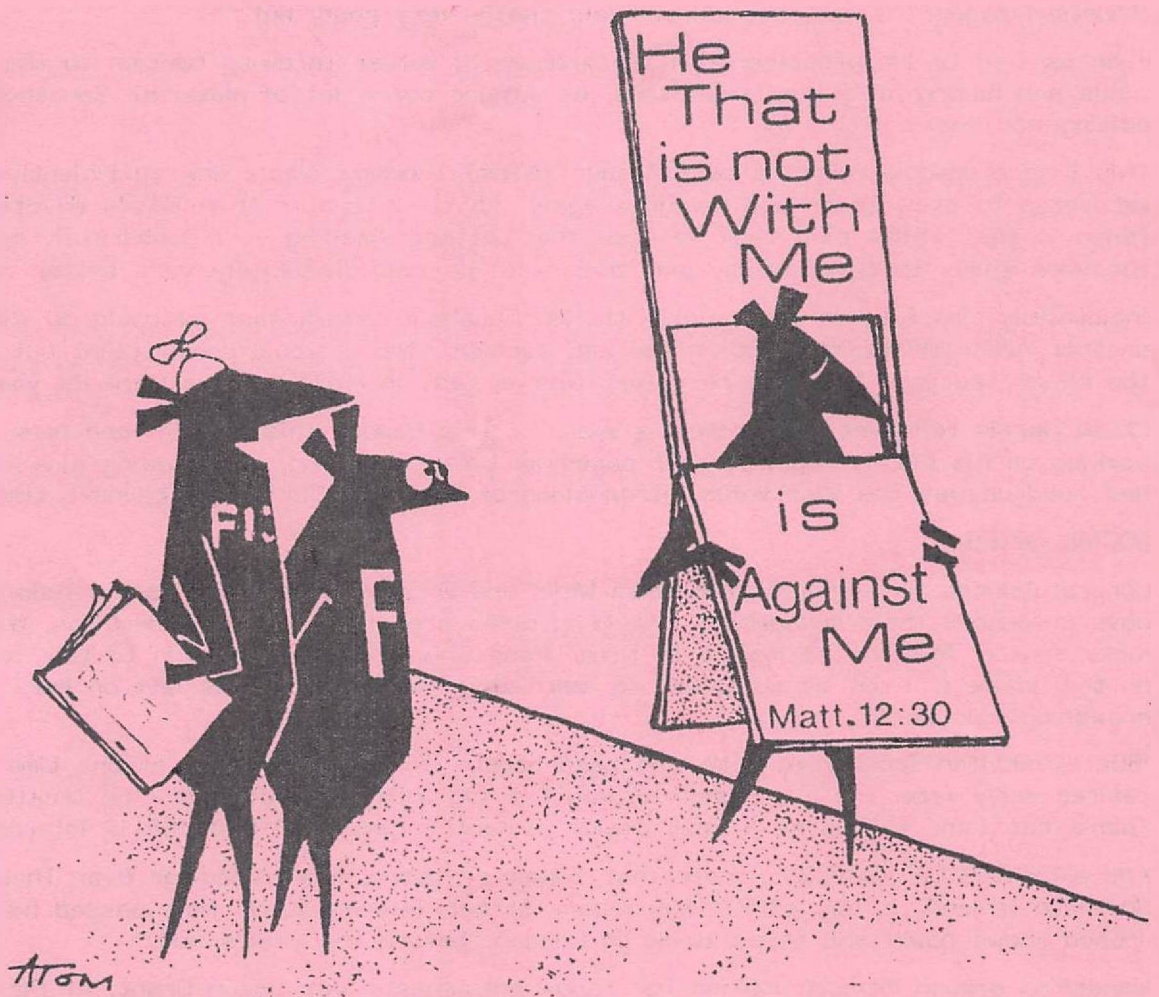


RULP



"Is that a quote from Margaret Thatcher or British Fandom?"

Splinters

Vince Clarke

As you may know, Avedon Carol not only edits the PULP letter column, but sends it to 16WWW already typed, so all I have to do is put it on electro-stencil. Which means that the size of the AVC-edited PULPs is largely guided by the amount of LoCs she sends - I'd like to keep the total size to 28pp for postal/economic reasons.

So a couple of weeks ago I asked her how many pages I could expect this time around.

"Nineteen pages - so far."

"*Nineteen pages?*", I said in italics. "Well, that's very good, but..."

Even as I write I'm wrestling with the problem of either throwing caution to the winds and having an extra-large issue, or cutting out a lot of material. You thought editing was easy?

This time around we welcome back Arthur (ATom) Thomson, who's now sufficiently recovered to draw cover and headings again. A small pointer to Arthur's devotion to fanac is that whilst still weak he drew the 'Letters' heading - "I deliberately made the lines shaky to cover up my own shakiness" he said. Thankfully, he's better now.

Incidentally, I'm fully in agreement with Ken Cheslin's remark that we could do with another ATOM ANTHOLOGY (pp8 in the LoC section), tho' I would gently point out that the classic cartoon to which he refers was in fact in HYPHEN 24, a mere 29 years ago.

Chuch Harris fell over and broke his femur - Trip Report this issue - and he's working on his Corflu Report - 20+ pages at time of writing, and growing. One item I had lined up was the Wait Willis introduction of Chuch to Corflu. Maybe next time.

SOCIAL NOTES

Congratulations to ex-PULP editor Pam Wells and Birmingham actifan Martin Tudor, who have announced their engagement. Wedding plans are still under consideration, but it looks as tho' Pam will be moving to Brum. Fans who have tried in vain to talk to Pam on the 'phone will not be surprised to learn that the proposal was left on her answering machine.

'60s ex-actifan Ian Peters - he was head honcho of OMPA, the APA, at one time - has retired early from the profession of vet (a job with some sf cred - he treated Ted Tubb's cat), and set up as a book dealer in Kent - ring 0892-890-485 if interested.

And a CHANGE OF ADDRESS - note that Tommy Ferguson, lone faneditor Over There in Northern Ireland, is now at 27 Meadowbank Street, Belfast 9, NI. He's passed his exams ("Ghod knows how") and hopes to be in London "before the year's out."

Wandering around Mexicon looking for fellow enthusiasts was Jason Grant, 41 Pleydell Avenue, Upper Norwood, London, SE19 2LN, who runs a STAR WARS club. He'd be delighted to hear of any other such organisation. One of Jason's members had some BBC TV

exposure recently when film reviewer Barry Norman did a few minutes on film fanatics.

I went to ICONOCLASM in Leeds a short time ago, and found I was almost a token fanzine fan. Oh, there were a few of us (including Steve & Jenny Glover who did a marvellous job on the organisational side), but only a handful - all right, two handfuls - compared with the rest. I came home feeling that however much the Convention booklets mention fanzines, we should at least have some sort of -fanzine?-handy which would be freely available, containing a list of current fanzines and addresses and some details of the fanzine scene. And maybe an introduction to the concept - I'll be circulating suggestions to faneds.

Faneds should also note that there are people around who'd like to receive fanzines (odd creatures!). One such is Mark Nelson, 112 Huntley Avenue, Spondon, Derby, DT7 DU, and another is Jason Jarvis, 55 Wickham Lane, Abbey Wood, London, SE2 OXL. First-time 'Wellington' attendee in July, Maki Spanoudis, 332 Willoughby House, Barbican, EC2Y 8BL, works at the Fantasy Inn, Charing Cross Road, can hardly believe that fanzines are available for a show of interest and she's interested. Another first-timer is Joel Nait (c/o Scott Dorwood, 212 Croydon Rd., Beckenham, Kent) who's a cross-over from comics fandom and wants to know more.

Available at ICONOCLASM were leaflets on OCTARINE - "a new organisation devoted to humorous science fiction and fantasy in all their forms." In spite of the name, and the title of a projected fanzine, *The Broken Drum*, "we are not an appreciation society for any one author...." so hard luck, Pratchett. The organisation/fanzine sound like a very good idea - more information from 6, Claude St., Dunkirk, Nottingham, NG7 2LB.

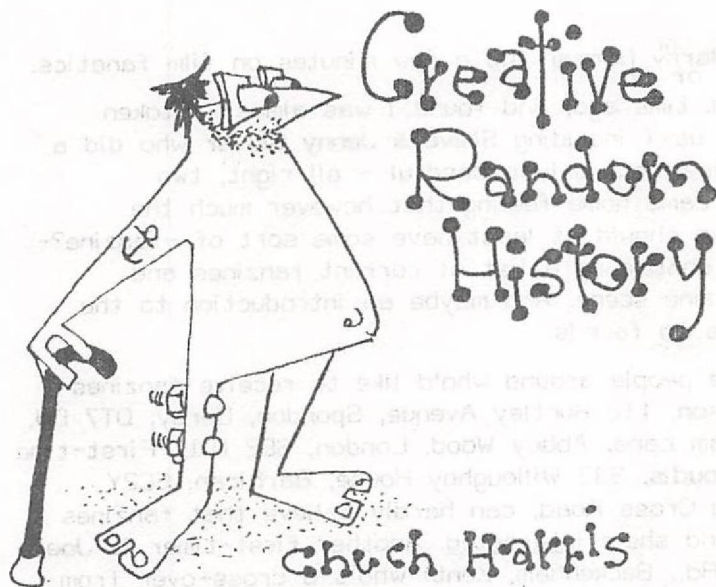
APAs were going to be a subject in this PULP; that's thrown out, but a few compressed notes are in order. Wilf James, 106 Jarden, Letchworth, Herts., SG6 2NZ, is thinking of starting a bilingual APA - INTER*LINGUA - contributions must be in two languages (Faan doesn't count.) Write (or ring (44) 0462 677287) for details. * THE WOMAN'S PERIODICAL ((*women only*)) details from Bridget Wilkinson, 17 Mimosa, 29 Avenue Rd., London, N15 5JF. * THE ORGANISATION - details from Ken McVeigh, 37 Firs Rd., Minthorpe, Cumbria, LA7 7QF. * PIECES OF EIGHT - details from Ian Bambro, Ivy Cottage, Ivy Road, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE3 1DB. * PAPA - details from Mike Figg, 13 Colin Crescent, Colindale, London, NW9 5BP. I'm not sure of the current status of the SOFT TOY APA - it's kept even quieter than most of those above.

WHO WANTS TO BE AN EDITOR?

I must have 4000+ fanzines in the Fanzine Library, and it's a helluva job keeping track of them....in fact, in spite of help from Roy Hill and Harry Bond (knew his name would get in here somewhere - I went to a post-Con pubcrawl in Leeds, and in the pub a circle of 9 non-fanzine fans were discussing Harry Bond) the last 300-odd zines received are lying around getting dusty....I'm thinking that maybe I should hand my 1/3rd. PULP editorship over to someone else and get on with cataloguing and helping Rob Hansen with his historical research in THEN. I might also totter along to the elephant's graveyard of an APA.

So anyone fancy the job? Aside from getting on well with the other editors, you need an appreciation of fandom past, present and next year, access to a copier or your own duplicator (I'd do electro-stencils for you), and the ability to fork out £60+ every 6 months. It would help if you lived in the vicinity of London or were a regular visitor to the Wellington, or both.

WRITE NOW FOR THIS BARGAIN OFFER!!



((Chuch broke a femur just after Xmas, but as you might expect, merely took the opportunity to write from a hospital bed. Hazel in the following is an air-hostess niece))

Behind the reservoir there is London Airport, where most of the hospital's customers come from. Hazel says there are a surprising amount of minor emergencies in flight - and quite a few major ones too. She dreads the Australian route because there are so many excited old people travelling to see their children and grandchildren that every 6 flights or so somebody snuffs it. If you are all

strapped in and coming in to land all you can do is to throw a blanket over the dear departed and utter a short prayer, but it must be a pretty eerie experience if it happens to be in the middle of a row of seats. The minor ones, fits, falling over in the bog, etc., all finish up in this hospital along with the people who get run over or fall off the escalator or something.

New Year's Day, when I arrived, was a bit special because all the drunks and road accidents were added to the normal workload. Casualty Reception apologised that I'd have to wait a little while until they dealt with the previous customer. He was so full of whisky that he couldn't stand, but had somehow managed to fall through a glass window head first and get a face like a horror video.

He didn't want the glass picked out. He didn't want to be stitched. He wanted his car keys back so he could go home. But the sergeant said NO. The three constables said NO. So did the WPC and the three porters holding him down. The casualty doc, busy with the tweezers, couldn't give him an anaesthetic because of the alcohol. He was saying "Be a big brave boy and I'll give you a sweetie when I've finished."

He didn't want a sweetie either, but when he heard that he would have to have an X-ray to locate the rest of the glass he went berserk. It took the whole lot of them to tie his hands and feet to the stretcher and then cocoon the rest of him in bandages like an Egyptian mummy before the radiologist would let him anywhere near half-a-million quid's worth of machinery.

And then it was my turn. The Doc seemed a bit relieved that I was sober and also a little surprised that altho' I'd broken my femur 13 hours earlier I'd only just gotten around to reporting it, and had spent the day visiting relatives in Essex 90 miles away.

"Didn't it hurt?" he asked.

"Yes," I said, "but my horoscope said today was a good day for travel."

Most of the beds in the fracture ward are empty - partly because the pavements are still frost-free and unslippery - but the other inhabitants are odd.

The first bed in the ward is Teeny Penis, the luckless flasher. He was knocked down by a police van whilst on a pedestrian crossing whilst they were chasing a stolen car.

They were very apologetic - especially as he wasn't flashing at the time - but since he learnt that he's likely to be in hospital until April he passes the time by stripping off bed clothes, pyjamas and every vestige of decency and doing indescribable things to horrify lady visitors. The Ward Sister told him to behave or take it elsewhere, but it's her day off today and Sue says he's giving us all a special matinee. I'm sorry for him, but some of the visitors have enough to worry about without Teeny.

Next to him is Jack - a 70-year old who, en-route to Miami, really did fall down the escalator and hurt his head. Pan Am wanted him checked out before he boarded, and sent him to us. He'd missed the plane so we kept him overnight for observation. I think he is the most obnoxious arrogant Brit I have ever met. Physically there is nothing much wrong with his head - bruises and lacerations - but they swathed him in a plastic and gauze turban to enlist sympathy for him on the journey, booked a taxi and arranged for the driver to hand him over personally to Pan Am. In return he insulted everybody, demanded instant service, demanded IMMEDIATE assistance with his large gold cufflinks whilst the nurse was doing her dispensing round, and fatally, assumed the vacant bed next to him was there for his suitcase to be rested on.

This, in any hospital, is the Ultimate Sin. One Bed, One Body. The Sister took about 3 sentences to completely & totally demolish the little wretch. The Sister vanished into limbo, and he dived under the blanket like a rabbit down a hole.

And at 6am. this morning he woke up everyone except me by demanding his suitcase, his cuff-links, his passport and all his money so that he could get ready for Miami (the taxi was due at 10am.) or as soon as he got back he was going to report staff AND patients to his friend, George Mellor, MP., and see personally that nobody EVER got another rise.

But he didn't put the suitcase on the other bed, though. Ho no!

Next, 3 nonentities, including me, and then the Illustrated Man. Really, he'd be a nonentity too except for his tattoos. He's not quite finished off yet - you could still get a couple of Atomillos on his chest - but his back is one dense Tree of Life with hardly an inch unmarked. Birds, animals, biblical scenes - he has them. Personally, I think tattooing weird and kinky but *chacun à son goût* and so on, but it seems pointless to have such a thing unless it's the best obtainable. This is poor quality Singapore or SF (who specialise in nudes biceps --you flex your biceps and the nudes wiggle), and are no way comparable to the top Hong Kong or Shanghai artists. Occasionally, in the Navy, you would see a back that really was a work of art, but this is just a nothing. Still, anything to cheer a fellow sufferer. I told him he'd make a lovely lampshade and off he went rejoicing.

Opposite me is Eddie the Eagle, 77 years old, totally incontinent, senile, confused, and Nurses Favourite. He has had himself out and the bed linen changed three times today, he wanders around with his walking frame and lives in a perpetual happy daze. The houseman asked him if he knew where he was. "Of course" said Eddie, "I'm in the paper shop."

Now, Eddie has been here six weeks for an operation that normally needs two weeks hospitalisation. I think there is a conspiracy to keep him here for another 6 weeks if the nursing staff can manage it. He has a home and a 88-year old wife, but there is no way they will be able to cope once he is outside again. His wife (who is NOT senile) says she doesn't want him sent away to a nursing home - but this is the sort of thing that makes me uneasy about the NHS. You find dedicated nursing staff, but outside the gate it's still a harsh bleak world for the geriatric sick. I think it's dreadful that the kindest thing I could do for Eddie is to trip him over as he shuffles past, so that

he hurts his leg again and automatically gets another 6 weeks tender loving care.

We share a dayroom with the Women's Fracture Ward, which seems to be full of aged knitters. As soon as they've finished breakfast smokers make a beeline for the dayroom, hoping to bag an armchair, an ashtray and a view of the telly before the ladies.

Until you see it you can hardly believe people's TV addiction. They will watch ANYTHING from 'Morning Services from Chatham Baptist Church' to 'Watch with Mother: Teddy Bear Falls Down'. They accept as normal a grown man standing in front of the set repeatedly pushing every button on the control panel and cursing because he can't get the picture he wants. People, as soon as they recover from the anaesthetic, demand that their BEDS!!! are wheeled into the day room so that they don't miss an episode of East Enders....

((At which point I entered the ward, looked away from Teeny Penis because I didn't want to embarrass him (being unaware of his little quirk, if that's the word) and scooped up Chuch's handwritten mss., so here you've got the original unpolished native product. Chuch, with a steel plate holding his leg together, was soon home, and recovered in time to fly across with Sue to CORFLU, the fanzine fan's Convention in Minneapolis. He was just slightly apprehensive beforehand))

I admit to being a bit worried about San Francisco too. I mean....I've got the lace shirt and the limp wrist and the street cred --- shared rooms with Arthur Thomson, kissed by Joe the Nic, sexually adventurous with aerosols -- but what shall I do about Sue? I can't just tell her it's Lads' Night Out and piss off to SF without her, can I? I mean they're sure to look a little askance at me in the bathhouse with the Little Woman having a fit of the vapours as soon as I whip my tiny towel off. The only thing I can think of right now is that we both convert to agnostic Muslims, and drape her in a black sheet with only the eyes showing. I suppose I could get away with telling them it's Michael Ashley, my live-in lover who has just embraced Mohammedism as well as embracing me, but it could all turn out to be a bit fraught even without having to hand around the sheeps' eyeballs as an aid to authenticity. (There's a very exotic Sainsburys in Rugby so I could always buy a couple of dozen to take with me.....assuming of course I don't get nicked at Customs for illicit transplant trading.)

And Ghod! (I mean Allah!) Supposing one of the lecherous punters, noticing she has a bottom like a peach, fancies his luck, tries a quick grope and, surprise! surprise! discovers Michael has not only suffered an instantaneous sex-change but is about to whack him over the bonce with his/her six-iron and subsequently report him to the Greens Committee?

((He had a superlative time with Geri Sullivan and other fans at CORFLU, and found that they'd not only borrowed a \$6000 computer so that they could 'talk' to him more easily but had 250 special Chuchpads printed.....see next page.

Chuch and Sue are now back home. Chuch is busy writing an account of the Trip ("all these minor irritations that might give me palpitations or otherwise affect my fanac are dealt with by her so that I can concentrate on My Report") but still has a kindly eye on domestic affairs))

"I'm very concerned about Sue. All this lovingkindness for animals is getting a bit out of hand. Yesterday, one of Ziggy's teeth fell out. Sue rescued it, comforted the creature -- who seemed supremely unconcerned in the first place -- and tucked the tooth under its blanket. And, so help me, when the dog was asleep and snoring, she took the tooth out and substituted a mini-Bonio.

I was amazed, Vinnie, amazed. "I am amazed," I told her. "What the bloody hell are you playing at, woman?"

"I am NOT one of your godless scientific fictional fanladies," she said. "I believe there are things beyond our ken, like St. Francis of Assisi and the Tooth Fairy and I will raise my family to share these truths which I believe are self-evident. And that includes Ziggy. Any questions? Any comments?"

"I thought the Tooth Fairy left money," I said.

"Are you stark raving mad?" she said, looking at me very oddly indeed, "What the hell would Ziggy do with 10p, you fool? The Tooth Fairy takes the tooth and leaves a reward....a nice beefy Bonlo. Don't you UNDERSTAND?"

Now if there is one thing I've learnt in the last quarter century it is that theology is a home-wrecker, and if you want peace and quiet, afters with your dinner, and no argy bargy when DALLAS is on, the best thing to do is cock a deaf 'un when the subject comes up.

Of course, dear, of course," I said cravenly, pouring oil on the troubled waters like an Alaskan disaster. "Jolly good idea. Never thought of it like that before."


And I thought that was the end of it.

BUT.

Just now, I zizzed off in the armchair rather than watch NEIGHBOURS inanities, and woke suddenly to find a bag of Spiller's Snackles in my lap and my lower plate missing. Gone, gone with the wind. Missing in action. Gno gnashers at all.

"Now do you REALLY believe in the Tooth Fairy?" she said.

I do, Vinnie, REALLY I do. And these Snackles taste bloody horrible.



inside
coverage

Date: _____

Time: _____

of Corflu 6

<p>Hi <input type="checkbox"/> Chuck <input type="checkbox"/> Chuch <input type="checkbox"/> Chuchy <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. Harris, sir.</p> <p>I'm _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Wanna talk? <input type="checkbox"/> Now? <input type="checkbox"/> Later?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gary Farber says Jon Singer says Fred Haskell says "Hi"</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is it true about _____?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do you want another?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tea <input type="checkbox"/> Gin & Tonic <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee <input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Looking for someone? <input type="checkbox"/> Who? _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Wanna know the latest _____?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> So, when's the next Q coming out?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do you mean that figuratively?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Really? And then what happened?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Could you repeat that?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chuck, that's not a girl.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> That's all very well, but I don't believe a word of it.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gotta go soon/now. <input type="checkbox"/> More later?</p>
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C.R.HARRIS



edited

Avedon
Carol

((Due to timing difficulties, we still have the locs from issue 12 to take care of...))

Glen Warminger
80A Waddington Street
Norwich
NORFOLK NR2 4JS

Thanks for PULP 12. I must admit to being bemused by Mike Christie's charge of your style being too distinctive, too individual. All very strange and meaningless. But your reply where you state that you do have a distinctive style - for a girl! - (my emphasis) was certainly uncalled for. There was nothing in Mike's letter that I could detect to suggest the attitude that this reply alludes to.

On another note: "Calling Harry Bond names may be cruel, because he is striving to improve his standards..." Does this make any sense? In what way is Haz trying to improve his standards, and if he was too shy or incompetent to appear to be doing anything, would it then be less cruel or acceptable to call Harry names? Let me state here (as official Chicken Brother Apologist) that as far as I am concerned, Harry is a good guy and every bit as socially competent as the rest of us.

No doubt to annoy my immediate group of buddies, after the first paragraph, and with reservations, I agree with Owen's letter. I thought all this nonsense about KTF reviews was long dead.

My god, in Tony Chester's letter he almost re-states all the fandom barrier rubbish. I'd love to know how Yorcon II scared off many talented fans. This is the ultimate nonsense, fandom never has, and never will be able to affect the way newcomers "enter" fandom. Only the new fans themselves can do that. Some people seem to treat fandom as if entering it was some sort of physical reality like trying to become a Mason. I was a neo in 1980, and I was treated like an ordinary human being. I made friends - a slow process, but isn't it always?

In your reply to Tony, Avedon, you state clearly why I wrote "Famous for Fifteen Minutes" for LIP 4 (and I'll quote this in my letter to Hazel); to wit: "And contrary to popular reassurances, it is possible for good people to get the wrong idea about you just because they've been given false information..." Too right! What both Alun Harries and Michael Ashley fail to realize is that my letter/article was a personal account. But that should be addressed to LIP, not you.

((Well, I know Mike Christie isn't the kind of guy who automatically feels threatened whenever a woman shows a little spark, if that's what you mean, but

he and I both know that his "too individual" remark was sufficiently meaningless to be suspicious. Like I told him, "I know you're not like that, but you were asking for it." He reckoned he had been.))

Simon Ounsley By all means let's be less vindictive (and that
21 The Village Street should go for off the written page as well as on it),
LEEDS LS4 2PR but if you throw out the character stereotypes, you
 also lose a large part of the fannish humour. Let's
carry on making jokes about each other, but try to do so in such a way that
the butt of the joke thinks it's funny, too.

What is all this stuff of Tony Chester's about the Yorcon II convention scaring off neofans? As one of the organizers of that con, I find this of great concern. I've heard the criticism - from Ian Sorensen, I think - that the con was under-programmed and so neos got bored (and in retrospect, I accept that it was under-programmed, though I know of two neos who attended it as their first con and had a great time). But in the eight years since then, this is the first time I've heard accusations of "nastiness" to neos. I wonder if Tony is thinking of some isolated incident which has soured his opinion of the whole con? I'd sincerely like to know what he's talking about.

PS. Tom Perry on "simultaneous submissions" was hilarious, too.

((Actually, I've heard the charge against Yorcon II a couple of times, and was surprised, since it seems to have had rather a spectacular reputation otherwise. It may take only a single incident to have turned some people off - I remember hearing a young fan say recently that certain attitudes in fannish fandom really turn him off, and when I pointed out that those attitudes were only exemplified by a couple of people, he said, "Yes, and the people who never say anything to disagree with them, and seem to accept them." In other words, those individuals, or those specific incidents, are perceived by "outsiders" as the norm since they don't seem to generate a visible negative reaction within the group.

As to stereotypes - frankly, I find a lot of them objectionable because they seem so shallow, revealing no real insight into the character of the person who is being parodied, but rather demonstrating the lack of depth with which the parodist is able to interpret them. There are limits to how much superficiality I can stand. And I have been honestly offended by the way some people have had the piss taken out of them simply because they were able to do things others could not - for example, the way certain people couldn't resist poking holes in Patrick Nielsen Hayden's willingness to address an issue in depth, accusing him of taking himself too seriously, calling him "Professor" and such. This is rather like the way our neighbours, having caught sight of a small bookshelf in our old flat, started calling Rob "The Professor" - intellect is odd, threatening, and has to be put in its place before it gets out of hand. Reading, thinking, examining issues in any depth - these are things to be ridiculed, punished. I remember this attitude from highschool, and am not entirely surprised to find it in my neighbourhood, but I find it thoroughly out of place in fandom. I get pretty disgusted with watching people get trivialized just because they happen to be interested in something enough to really care about it and spend some time on it, you know?

Harry Warner, Jr.
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USA

The editorial brushes on a topic I rarely see discussed in fanzines. Everyone seems agreed that there aren't as many fanzines as there used to be. But I suspect there has been an even greater drop-off in the number of formal articles published in

fanzines. So much of the remaining fanzine pages is taken up with locs, brief book reviews, opinions on this or that con, listings of forthcoming cons, succinct reviews of other fanzines, news notes, and other small stuff. Hardly anyone writes at any length for fanzines these days. Maybe it's all imagination, but I seem to remember the era when most of the typical fanzine was taken up by a substantial contribution, running to at least three or four pages. The irony of this is the way potential fanzines articles are going to waste by serving as talks at cons, extended statements at con panels, speeches at cons, and so on. Hardly one out of a thousand extended statements or talks or speeches at a con will be preserved on paper or on tape and most of them will be heard by fewer than the typical fanzines's circulation. Why are pros and fans willing to take the trouble to speed into oblivion their thoughts and opinions at cons and won't write similar things for preservation in the pages of fanzines?

At this very moment, I assume, Chuch is engaged in the wildest of revels somewhere in these United States. I hope the fans who meet him find as much pleasure in his personal presence as I did in reading CRH in this PULP.

Skel doesn't speculate on where those most popular children's names came from. I don't believe VCR pre-recorded cassettes have been generally available in England long enough to have inspired two couples to name a newly born girl child Melanie and have her grow up in time to be in this school play. Maybe Gone With the Wind was reissued for theatrical showing at the right time. Dare I hope that Mrs. Emma Peel was the reason three of the participants were named Emma? I can't think of any other Emma who was suddenly in public attention at the right time.

Of course, Skel is right about the fact that fanzine fandom is no longer one community. A few years back, A. Langley Searles revived his famous fanzine of the 1940s, FANTASY COMMENTATOR. It has been appearing with fair regularity ever since and I've never seen it mentioned or reviewed in any other fanzine and I probably wouldn't know much about it if he didn't distribute it via FAPA. Then there's MUNICH ROUND-UP, better known as MRU, the only German fanzine known to me that still runs some English language pages; it seems almost as unknown to most fanzine editors as FANTASY COMMENTATOR. There's a theory that fanzines originated from the desire of isolated fans to establish contact with other fans in larger numbers than could be done by corresponding. If so, what are we to make of the fans who are publishing fanzines only for other fans in their own city and suburban areas via municipal apas, and aren't known to fanzine fandom elsewhere?

Ken Lake
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Am I alone in finding Mike Christie's vituperation illogical childish and offensive? Or should we all sink to the depths of referring to a serious article commissioned and published by VECTOR as "unrepentantly snuffling and snorting in his ideological garbage" when said article brought from Christie little but an unsubstantiated claim that I am unable to

control my anal sphincter? Of course, that could have been caused by Christie finding himself covered in shit after his earlier "ideological garbage" outbursts. My question is: does this sort of unpleasantness do anything for fandom at all, or should Christie take a course in good manners?

Please tell Randy Harris that when I say POUNC has the right of veto over postal rate increases, that is what I mean, and that yes, they have in the past exercised that veto. I usually do mean what I write. No, it's not an elected body, but it does have a balanced representation of interested bodies including the Great British Public.

I'm perplexed about Chuch's claim that, "all of my generation are sexist to a degree," because I really don't understand where "sexism" begins and ends. Let's face it, men and women are different, and seeking to pretend that height, colour, age and intelligence in no way influence the way in which we view specific friends and behave toward them. If sexism means regarding "all" women or "all" men as being separate classes, then again it's only the truth, regardless of the non-A trick of arguing that there are shades of grey and neither black nor white.

What essentially I'm saying, I think, is that the great error of the 20th century is turning that vital word from the field of logic and philosophy, "discrimination," into A Bad Thing. When faced by a lousy cup of coffee, a badly crafted movie, a poor performance in the theatre, one must learn to appreciate good, bad and the bits in between and to exercise one's right, duty and gift by discriminating between them. By recognizing that it was at bottom the un-ticketed hooligans rioting outside the stadium that led to the ill-advised decision to open the gates, one avoids the trap of refusing to condemn illegality because lots of innocent people died; by deliberately hiding the fact that proportionately far more muggings and steamings are carried out by black-skinned people than their presence in the population as a whole should lead us to expect, we do nothing for truth and we handcuff those who seek to solve such problems, be it sociologically or penologically.

I'm all in favour of allowing a thousand blossoms to flourish in fandom - I object simply to the fascism of the left that says "all our flowers must bloom, but we're going to uproot yours and chuck 'em on the garbage heap because we don't like their colour and smell." I hold no brief for the SWP or the NF, but if one has the right to march, demonstrate and infiltrate, so has the other, distasteful though some bigots may and do find it.

But I'd sooner be reading Skel, Chuch, the Great Langford and others any day. So I am not going to be drawn by Avedon's to-my-mind ill-balanced response to Rick Sneary's admirable loc... sorry.

((So, you don't consider it relevant that black people are more involved with crime only to the extent that poor people are involved with crime, and that blacks are over-represented among criminals only to the extent that they are disproportionately poor? Men and women are different, yes - women have babies, women lose bone density faster than men, etc. Do you always give your seat to women, and especially to a woman who appears to be over 30 (the age at which bone density begins its rapid decline in women)? Knowing that women generally have better fine-motor coordination, would you always prefer a woman

surgeon (assuming you had no more specific way to judge capability)? Knowing that women tend to be better at verbal communication, would you tend to give preference to a female (all other qualifications being equal) if you were hiring a writer or someone else who needed good verbal skills (such as an executive)? What possible reason could anyone have for valuing the opinion of a male gynecologist over that of a female gynecologist? The discrimination we are talking about does not realistically reflect the real difference between men and women to begin with, nor is it particularly useful when dealing with individual cases, anyway. And since festival-style seating has resulted in deaths at concerts and sporting events even where there was no criminality (as shown more than once in other parts of the world), I think it's bloody silly to discuss law-breaking as the significant factor at Hillsborough - this only deflects intelligent discussion of the real message of that disaster, which is that festival seating can get people killed.

We live in a world in which qualified and proven talent is rejected because the individual who possesses those qualifications is female or black - that's not reasonable discrimination. On the other hand, the same man who will refuse to recognize the capabilities of a demonstrably capable woman on what he thinks are the perfectly logical grounds that she is, after all, a member of "the weaker sex", will nevertheless keep his seat on the train while little old ladies stand - having little concern for the fact that here, at least, we have a real biological difference in the fact that women are far more likely to break bones and lose mobility - and their lives - as the result of a fall. (I am still waiting for refutation of the theory that high heels were invented by a man who understood this and was hoping to shorten the female life span.)

And finally, you know perfectly well that I am opposed to censorship, so that last bit of yours about the "fascism of the left" is out of line, if it's directed at me.))

Gary Deindorfer
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Another humorous Atom cover. I add my wishes to the voices of the many who hope that Arthur Thomson gets well soon. To see one of his covers is like a nostalgic time machine ride through the olden days when I was a teenaged eructated youth with Atom

covers in my eyes and a glass of Koolaid in my hand. (By the way, I am not sure what "eructated" means but it felt like going there. Unfortunately, my dictionary is stuck in a cardboard box at the bottom of a bunch of books in a closet. Why? I don't know. Maybe I just like to play it ignorant.)

Chuch Harris writes so disarmingly honestly. It's like he's letting you in on the latest mishaps in his life, and his mishaps are so colourful. Or maybe not. Maybe they are quotidian but he writes them up colourfully. Whatever, he's a good read and gives good word. His articles are really letters and they are letters with the intimacy you would expect of a letter except that they have a comprehensiveness to them that I would expect of a Harris letter-to-be-made-into-an-article.

Lessee, I am a white middle-class american male 45 years of age. If that's not a recipe for sexism I don't know what is. But I've worked on it. I'm not as sexist as I was when I was younger, but then I'm not Alan Alda or Phil Donahue, either. Working as I do in a giant office comprised mainly of women,

I have to stand up for my maleness once in a while or I would be ground down into the dirt. But that's not so bad. A couple of them actually make a bit of a cooing fuss over me - you know, the novelty of a man typing, the proverbial "woman's job." And then there's my 22 year old co-worker Beverly. Going to work would be less complicated if I weren't in love with her. Not that anything has come of it, but, as usual, I have my dreams. But what does this have to do with "Creative Random History"? I got into this via Chuch's column and his remarks on sexism and it looks as though the only way I will manage to extricate myself from this contretemps is to say that he writes so wisely, wittily, and well and with such a consummate ease, as though it's all a breeze.

Good to see something from Skel, one of my favourite writers, with a column in PULP. Add Joe Nicholas in the same role and you'll have a fifth column. Skel is right about this new trend which could possibly be viewed with alarm; each fanzine a sealed-off, modular, self-sufficient world unto itself, separate from all other fanzines, like so many peopled asteroids...with a few fanzines such as PULP and TRAPDOOR straddling these discrete readerships. Thank ghod for Mike Glicksohn, at least - truly the cat who walks between fanzine walls. Really, we need more people like him: charming old-timers who travel between the modular insular fanzine communities and reminds the villagers that there are other people out there also in their hobby group. Mike can do this well because he is invested with that most rare fannish trait, open-mindedness.

I hope eventually Dave Langford recovers from his immersion in software processing dialectics. That would be brain rotting in a lesser man. But Dave, being cosmic minded and of broad mental horizons, was actually able to faan in that condition! It is amazing what a superman can do when he puts his mind to it. Not that Dave Langford is a superman, but he's probably closer to it than the average schlub in the street will ever be. And this is the second time in this letter I have used a word of which I am not sure of the meaning.

The Novae Terrae quotation is enormously amusing.

And now to the letter column and the feedback on Michael Ashley. Ashley has become nothing if not controversial. I myself think he has a considerable degree of natural writing talent, but it's in a raw form. Unfortunately, he also has a considerable need to degrade and demean people he doesn't think will stand up to him, and that makes him a bully. You might think of him as D. West without the IQ. but I myself can't get that worked up. I don't see that blow-jobs and being pissed on by teenaged girls can't be matter for fan writing just like anything else. I think fans should be able to write about anything they want. Even if they are exhibitionistic and self-aggrandizing, as Ashley is. I also think fans should be subject to being called on what they write. So Michael Ashley is free to make as big an asshole out of himself in print as he wants to. He is also free to expect backlash.

Good to see something from Ted White. I feel a little bad about downing him for a while back there. Face it, if his arrest and incarceration hadn't followed closely upon a life threatening illness of my mother's, I wouldn't have reacted that way. Well, she's doing fine now and it looks as though Ted is trying to pull together the pieces of his life, so let bygones be bygones. And he does write some of the best damned locs published in fanzines.

But I'm going to close this out now because I want to copy off the radio concert tape for you. Even as the opening backwards strains of Todd Rundgren's self-indulgent (with occasional flashes of raw beauty) solo album TODD come onto the stereo, this letter faces out.

((Ahem. Hey, Gary, you don't think I object to Ashley's talking about his sex life, do you? This is me you're talking to, remember? Frankly, I'm surprised when people complain that he's writing about shoplifting or blow-jobs or something - none of that shocks me (although I never realized shoplifting was considered interesting enough to write about - after all, it's something a lot of middle-class teenagers and housewives do, and it's really not all as horrible as some people make out). I just wish Ashley didn't have to put KEEP OUT signs all over everything he writes and screw it up with all that defensiveness all the time. We had fun at Corflu discussing the theory that Ashley's alleged articles are actually written by someone much older who considers things like blow-jobs and shoplifting shocking, and he just uses Ashley's name. Maybe we should have a contest to figure out who really writes the "Michael Ashley" articles... Hmmm... Now, who would consider fellatio and teenage sex to be Absolutely Outrageous topics? I think I'll keep my suspicions to myself, for the time being...))

Oh, yeah, thanks for the jazz tape.))

Ethel Lindsay
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I have just been reading a biography of Sinatra and the mention of Harlan in PULP reminded me that Harlan once had a go at him, I think in a restaurant. This must have been pretty brave of him considering the muscle that always surrounds Sinatra

I have no doubt that Chuck's story about St. Andrews is true - a sniffy lot! Here in Carnoustie the Ladies have their own golf club...just as old as any of the men's.

Skel's feelings about the "fanzine universe" no longer being cohesive is surely only another symptom of the fact that nowadays fandom is too big. Take Chuck's mention of Elda. I haven't a clue what that is all about. Time was when I would have known.

Whichever of you wrote that reply to Rick explaining the difference between Thatcher and Reagan did it brilliantly. So concise and yet so clear! I think that never was a better point made that what we need is a Charter of rights.

Ken Cheslin
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I'm not sure that your thumb-nail reply to Rick Sneary makes it clear what Maggie is like. I put this down to thinking that it would take several PULP pages of examples and explanations to begin to describe the situation. Atilla the Hen she's been called, and maybe Shiva the Destroyer would be appropriate. How to describe her effect on the weak, the poor, the helpless; the dictatorial and callous way she approaches everything...? If you can't pay for it you can't have it, taken to extremes undreamt of by Victorian mill owners. It beats me... let them eat cake.

For Atom my very warmest regards and sincere best wishes, and the hope that he makes a speedy and thorough recovery. It's been a long time since the Atom anthology (organized, I think, by Ella Parker). Someone recently suggested another was due, and indeed it's a shame that all of his artwork hasn't been collected together. My thoughts in this direction are partly sparked off by the PULP 12 cover and the remark that it was made up of fillos, and partly by reading THEN, where at one stage I remembered the classic SKYRACK cartoon: two beanie'd fans reading a letter, with the caption something like, "It says that SFCol disputes are a thing of the past and harmony will in future prevail... and the rest of the letter is obscured by bloodstains." The point being that a lot of this stuff only got used once, and unless collected may be lost to posterity. Hmm... in fact, Atomillos can be re-used...

Skel's comparison of contributors to the two zines was very interesting, though I wonder, perhaps straying from the point, what a similar survey might show using 10 zines. Skel's remarks about the lack of overlap gave me, at least, food for thought.

((Actually, I'd be really entertained if people would send in their gripes about Thatcher. Like this week, hearing her on the radio while stuck in traffic during the latest strike day, raving about how inconsiderate it is of the rail & tube workers to inconvenience their fellow citizens just because they want trivial things like a living wage and safe working conditions...))

Janice M. Eisen
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On a recent trip to California, I saw the infamous Harlan Ellison car commercial (they're only showing it on the West Coast). It does indeed refer to him as a "noted futurist". What you may not have known is that they were offering a copy of his latest book, Angry Candy, to anyone who took a test drive of the cars.

Harlan's spent a lot of ink lately justifying his decision to do these commercials - how the car is ecologically sound, and so forth. I think he'd have been better off saying, "Hey, it paid well, and it was good promotion for my book." (Apparently, the "Noted Futurist" caption was the ad agency's idea; Harlan hasn't even tried to defend that.)

I'm afraid the first part of Chuch's piece went over my head, with its combination of (I presume) British references and fannish in-jokes. As for the golfing story - well, not to sound humourless, but if that sign had read, say, "No dogs, no Jews admitted," I doubt Chuch would have written of it in a tone of such tolerant amusement.

Dave Langford was hilarious as always, even to someone who's managed to avoid programming computers for the past seven years.

One comment on Maggie Thatcher: I visited England during all the hype about her 10th anniversary in office, and what struck me most were the comments about what a looker she was ("Legs like Dietrich," for example). I guess it just goes to prove that even having a woman PM in charge for 10 years makes not a dent in sexism. I don't think Rick Sneary's representative, by the way; I hold no brief for Ronnie, and neither do the liberal types I know. Presumably, we don't read the same magazines he does.

R. Coulson
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Loved Harria's golf anecdotes. I quit playing when I got married; Juanita would have wanted to go with me, and it wouldn't be right to take a woman on the course...

I sympathize with Sue; I've been in hospitals with bad asthma attacks myself, though not recently - cromolyn sodium cleared it up for me. It takes a while, since it's a preventive rather than a cure, and apparently you have to get your body saturated with it, but after two weeks I noticed a difference and after six months I quit having bad attacks. The year before I started taking it, I was in hospital twice. Now I just go in for near-fatal heart attacks and stuff like that.

I've never been in BSFAN because nobody ever sent me a copy. Not that receipt of a copy automatically assures that I'll have a letter in the next issue, but it is a big step in the right direction. I'm much too lazy to do the work required to loc a fanzine I've never seen.

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I just knew that short-handing a comment would lead to misinterpretation, but what the hell, I thought, everyone knows the Lee Hoffman Story so well that I needn't spell it out for the Nth time. So I wrote, "And, likewise, Lee Hoffman could let even her

correspondents think she was male and in the process become a BNF." It occurred to me, even as I wrote that line, that someone might think that "in the process become a BNF" meant that I thought this was how she became a BNF, or, worse, that indeed it was how she become one. But the grammar of the sentence dictated the tense of the phrase, and - unwisely, I guess - I assumed that no one would read it so literally.

Avedon knows better, and her two "possible interpretations" indicate that she simply doesn't care; she'd rather flog her own straw horse. Avedon suggest that "either (a) Lee Hoffman was only able to become a BNF because she concealed her sex from others (who would otherwise have devalued her work) or (b) it was the fact that she turned out to be female, rather than her actual performance, which made her interesting in her fandom." But, as Avedon very well knows, neither "(a)" nor "(b)" is actually true. Lee Hoffman became a BNF because of her work - primarily but not exclusively QUANDRY - and her personality (which won her the friendship of people like Tucker and Willis - a friendship which continues to this day). Neither of these depended on her gender, and neither were affected by the announcement that she was not male. Her fanzine, QUANDRY, was considered the best, the top fanzine, both before and after Labor Day Weekend, 1951.

((In all the time I've known you, that's the most you've said about LeeH's work. And don't kid yourself that, "everyone knows the Lee Hoffman Story so well," Ted. I know it because Patrick & Gary used to enthuse about her a lot around me, but in all the talking you do about important fans of that era - and at some length, too - you never gave me even as much information about Lee as you have here. I wasn't saying that Lee was only able to become a respected fan because she concealed her sex - I was saying that this is the way you made it sound (although, it should be noted, there is no way to prove that concealing her sex didn't help). I know that the impact of QUANDRY - and of

it's demise - was enormous, but I don't imagine for a minute that "everyone" knows it, and they certainly would never guess it from the fact that her name most often comes up in the "yes there were women in fandom" context, as if The Woman Question must come up before someone remembers to mention her. I have noticed a very strong streak of this in you, too - as I have tried to point out to you before, but you still don't seem able to catch yourself doing it.))

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Well, hear hear for your comment about getting sick of the idea that writing should be detached from reality and emotion. For one thing, it never is. The whole concept of objectivity is such a lie! And when made a pseudo-aesthetic value, it's a joke.

I'm in my little cubbyhole cackling insanely already at page one of Chuck Harris' piece. What's a lycanthropogist? It's, um, not someone who eats werewolves, not someone who treats werewolves' feet... I give up. Where's my dictionary of word roots when I need it?

The sign over the door at St. Andrews golf clubhouse carries me back into San Francisco's Fillmore District of the late '70s, before it got tarted up with health food stores and the like; back when the intersection of Haight & Fillmore had the highest murder rate of any area in the city... every time I went downtown I used to pass by the world's grungiest hole-in-the-wall bar, one of those whose entrance seems to be sunken in its socket. You knew instinctively this was the ghetto's heart. Nailed up beside its door was a painted board with the crudely lettered legend: NO JUNKIES. NO DOGS. NO WOMEN. Presumably, St. Andrews has nothing against junkies. Otherwise, I see nothing to choose between the two clubs' moral aromas. At the end of the tale, I could only wonder why the drenched women didn't instantly form an impenetrable barrier before the windows so that the nice dry men inside would, at least, not be able to enjoy their selfishness.

I've noted, by the way, that very few people ever refer to sexism and racism by that word, which is, after all, the core of the matter, the impulse all the huge cultural smother springs from - just greedy selfish grabbing of the goodies by those who have the muscle (read: "money", these last few millennia) to get away with it. Calling it by another name is already halfway to dignifying it, really, when what it actually is is low, mean and skulking.

Mindboggling, Skel's column, where he says, "Yesterday comes Avedon's request for this column." Would that people I solicit would sit down so docilely and immediately to write. Or draw.

I was astounded by Mike Christie's comment on Dave Langford's writing. Langford is brilliant, for ghdosake. What in the hell kind of literary judgement is it that can't perceive - if structure is your thing - the purely structural ingenuity of even so light a piece as "Jetbuff Ltd"? Or that, more importantly, perceives humour as inherently lesser than the great mass of sophomoric Serious Writing so tediously in evidence at every turn? Arrghh. Anyone who thinks it is easy to write something really funny - or, rather, to write many things, one after another, that are really funny - is no writer. I want to put this with devastating force and point, and I'm not succeeding. Try this: I'm not saying, "Aw, let's be nice to our second-class citizens,

the humour writers." I am saying, "Solemnity is fucking over-rated as a criterion for greatness."

Ted White: the way one is treated at a party, or the assumptions revealed in casual conversation - those are Opportunity Denied. Those are the things that make you know, deep in your heart where it hurts, you are a second-class being who will never be perceived as really valuable in the same way a man (a white, a Christian, an Aryan or what-have-you) will be - never. And that happened before anyone got into Paper Fandom, and it told women and the 13% of fandom that ought to be black in the US, that they weren't wanted; told them - us, I mean - not even "Keep Out" but "For You, This Doesn't Exist".

I don't quite like Terry Broome's remark on fans liking to read about "cruelty and sex". Like the traditional "sex and violence", it bugs me in its assumption that one is as reprehensible as the other - that it is somehow sordid to want to read about sex or see it and that people who do want to can automatically be scorned. And I'd object to that even if I weren't the editor of a sex fanzine.

((That's an important point, although I'm not absolutely certain it was what Terry meant. He might have been saying that people are so avid to read about sex that it will serve as an excuse for the cruelty, or cause people to overlook it. It certainly doesn't help that the male writer in British fandom who is most willing to write about sex usually seems unable to do so without also aiming some sort of emotional violence at individuals in his fannish audience. "Sex&Violence": the placement of the two elements together is more offensive and insidious than the portrayal of violence alone. I don't like the idea of using sex as a vehicle for promoting or portraying otherwise offensive material, and I loathe the treatment of sex as something which must be inextricably linked with violence, exploitation, oppression. All too many people already share this warped perception of sex, and I'd just as soon not see it encouraged. On the other hand, I am appalled to see people objecting even to non-violent, non-exploitative portrayals of sexuality, and am offended when they, too, react against "sex&violence" as if these were one and the same - and also trying to attach their anti-sex crusades to anti-violence campaigns, exploiting the understandable revulsion of people who are disgusted with continuous portrayals of violence which is often shown as linked to sex. But this is predictable when they are surrounded by media where the distinction between sex and these other forms of violence and exploitation has been blurred to extinction.

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This belated multi-purpose loc is ample evidence of the alarming fact that no matter how inadequate the postal system might be, the fannish delivery network is even worse. The delightful package of THEN 2, PULP 12 and the Ace Double of BletaNT finally reached me on June 10th, thanks to the various services of fans from four different countries. PULP 13 arrived in the mail on June 12th, rendering any loc I might write on its predecessor somewhat redundant (not that this will stop me, of course).

Chuch's column was as amusing and insightful as ever but he lost me with the Elda Wheeler section and the Scottish vegetarian. Does this indicate that

British fandom has changed since I last looked at it? (Actually, the biggest change I can imagine in fandom would be for me to be conceived of as believing that fandom is immutable. Where did such a strange conceit come from?)

Are there fans who actually watch golf? Playing golf I can understand as it's a very demanding game and can provide a nice social context and some healthy activity but watching it? There's more entertainment watching paint thicken on the top of open paint cans.

I was delighted to see Skel appear as a columnist and hope that he'll be a regular contributor. (And it had nothing to do with the fact that he mentioned my name. No, of course not, out of the question.) His observation that even fanzine fandom has become increasingly fragmented is not exactly a penetrating new insight but it's certainly valid. I made a similar comment in a recent letter to FOSFAX - which Avedon mentioned in BLATANT as being a pretty good energetic fanzine. I observed that despite its enthusiastic (if unrestrained) lettercolumn, FOSFAX appears to exist in a vacuum as far as fanzine fandom is concerned. Many of the names that you expect to see in other fanzines appear there but there's no emotional connection to the rest of fandom. FOSFAX's strength is the intellectual intensity of the wide-ranging discussions in its lettercol, but there's no sense of it being a part of a larger whole. And even though fandom is essentially a cyclic phenomenon, I'm not sure we'll ever be able to recapture that sense of community that Skel is remembering and missing. And that would be a damn shame.

To Owen I would say that I'd like to believe that I'm not perceived as a KTF type letter writer and that by and large even when I criticize a fanzine I do it with some grace and style. I may not have Harry's total ability to always find something positive to say but I like to think my criticisms are constructive. And if a fanzine editorial includes information about the personal problems the faned has undergone then naturally one moderates one's reaction to the faults that fanzine might demonstrate. All I was suggesting is that when someone sends me a fanzine it ought to carry with it an unstated rider saying "This represents the best I can do and I'd like your honest opinion of it," and as a letter writer, I ought to have the right to return that honest reaction without being expected to falsify my opinions. Naturally, the manner in which those honest opinions are expressed is important, too, but I really don't believe I err too much in such matters.

Lovely cover by Harry Bell on PULP 13 (and good to see his work again after what seems to be a far too long absence). Evidently the natives of Atom Island have not been idle while the Master himself was recuperating.

For the sake of scientific accuracy one should point out to John that he and Eve actually gained twelve pounds of mass, not weight. If all knowledge is to be contained in fanzines one should try to make it truthful, eh wot?

John's editorial not only points up the differences between UK and Australian cons and their attitudes towards the hotel bar but while doing so reinforces the differences between both types of cons and their US counterparts where the "con suite" with its (usually) free supply of alcohol is the social focus of the weekend. I don't think I'm being parochial when I observe that I still prefer the way it's done on this side of the Atlantic. I often wonder how

British fans can both drink and buy books in the dealer's room at any given con.

Jonathan's the only report on the Jersey Eastercon I've seen and it seems to have avoided being the disaster that some people seemed to think it would be during the controversy that raged before and after the bid was won. There are some similarities with last year's worldcon where the mere fact that it was held in the exotic and fascinating city of New Orleans seemed to ensure that all but the most curmudgeonly of attendees would have a great time, but the con itself (unlike Nolacon) seems to have been quite successfully organized and run. Personally I'm not entranced by six stream programming but John seems to summarize the situation quite well in his post-report comments on the politics of selecting Eastercons. My own inclination would be to let that group of neos try and run a multi-media three-ring circus and see what happens when they lose their financial shirts and destroy their fannish credibility, but that's pretty easy to say when I'll never have to attend their con or live with the consequences. The other alternative is to simply stop going if the nature of the con no longer appeals to you and attend a few smaller regionals instead. But once again, that may be an easier option to adopt in North America than it is in Britain.

A column that begins with such an awful pun and ends with such a quietly passionate appeal for integrity in the sf community is the best possible evidence for the fact that Langford is more deserving than Topic B for any award fandom has to offer. Enough said. (Well, almost enough. Why would a Brit talk about someone being beaten with a baseball bat? Is the legacy of Al Capone really that all-pervasive in the western world? Or is this some subtle comment on the general inefficiency of British cricketers to hit anything at all?)

More good stuff by Chuch. I hope some future issue will contain some of his reactions to Corflu and his trip to the US. And an odd piece by Taral - I've never worried about how I'll die (probably from cirrhosis so some of my acquaintances can make good use of their supplies of "I told you so"s) but occasionally I ponder how I'd like to go out. Ideally, I'd like to throw my own wake, just to be sure it gets done correctly. Unfortunately, this requires some forwarning, which doesn't come to the majority of mortal coil shufflers, but one never knows. And that's enough morbidity for the nonce, if you don't mind.

Abigail Frost
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I shall affect not to understand why a lack of US letters on PULP 11 led to a complete lack of letters in PULP 13. Don't British readers write you locs? Or aren't you interested in them?

In PULP 13 you repeat an allegation you made to me during private correspondence in April. I repeat here, straight from the disk, an extract from my reply:

'When you say you were (of course) referring to text-editing, you are asking me to "read far more into "Going Nova" than is there". (Intentions I can only infer from the text I see.) "We would hope others would have the taste and sense not to put it in their fanzines" (all you actually

say) still reads to me more like a call not to publish articles such as "What I Did..." than a simple request for text-editing. One more sentence would have made your intention crystal clear.'

I leave your readers to make up their own minds about who's right and who's wrong there.

((The way you originally put it was, "If that's not a call for editors to boycott Ashley's work I don't know what is." (Actually, I would have thought something like, "Editors should boycott Ashley's work," would have been such a call, but I guess I'm just naive.)

The original 'allegation' still stands: You accused me of calling for a wholesale boycott of all work by Ashley, although I was not referring to all work by Ashley, and in fact made no prescription whatsoever regarding the elimination of the sort of thing I was objecting to - gratuitous public humiliation of individual fans. I never said I expected you to figure out exactly how I would have handled "What I Did..." (or any other Ashley work) had it been submitted to me - but given that there were quite a number of possibilities, you had no business fixing on the most extreme and least likely method and accusing me of advocating that tactic. Or are you really so short-sighted that you cannot imagine publishing "What I Did..." without the offending bits at the end about Harry Bond? Your apparent assumption that the only alternative to printing every word of "What I Did..." as it appeared in LIP is to refuse to publish any material of Ashley's makes you sound more simple-minded than I can credit. Surely it is not beyond the scope of your imagination that effective use of a red pencil could have removed everything I found offensive in Ashley's piece without harming the main body of the article?

Get serious. "What I Did...", even without all the crap in the Wellington at the end, has a lot of very sensitive material in it - material which a lot of people may take the wrong way and fail to understand unless they have some reason to remain open to it. I've already seen reviews of the article, and heard discussion of it, which react negatively to that content in ways I suspect the reviewers would not have if they'd had any reason to feel any sympathy with the author. Ashley described a love affair of some complexity - yet one reviewer trivialized it as "statutory rape". This sort of simplistic reaction is inevitable with some people, but Ashley went out of his way to alienate even those members of his audience who might otherwise have been willing to accept the terms of his story.

But the crap with Harry Bond really creates a problem. Here's Ashley, deep in the throes of a broken heart - and yet, in a stunning show of uncomprehending mean-spiritedness, he ridicules Bond for not getting laid! Does he imagine that Harry's state of un-matedness is any more intentional than his own? Compounding the error, he makes a false comparison of Harry with himself at that age - a false and ridiculous comparison, because no matter how dorky Harry may look to Michael, there are plenty of guys out there who were dumpy virgins at 18 and became attractive and accomplished lovers by the time they were 21, a claim Ashley has already made clear he can't make.

It's not Ashley's limited musical knowledge, his sexual problems, his interest in a woman considerably (in relative terms) younger than himself, or even his

kinky sexual preferences that make him look like an asshole. It's his astonishingly shallow interpretation of everyone else's lives and motives and his need to parade these stunningly petty and inept perceptions before the world that do him in. His apparent insights into his relationship lose all meaning in the face of his demonstrated lack of insight into lives and relationships we all know well - our own. In other words, "What I Did..." had the makings of a good piece of personal writing until he screwed it up with that tedious rubbish about Harry Bond and a lot of other people he only thinks he knows, and as soon as he did that, he popped his own balloon. This is where he lost what was potentially his most sympathetic audience.

He didn't have to, though. If Ashley didn't have the sense to leave that stuff out, a good editor might have explained to him how much weaker it made the piece, how it deflected attention away from the body of the article and made a farce of what went before. As I wrote nothing in "Going Nova" that excludes the possibility of having done just such a thing, you were out of line in assuming the exclusion of that strategy or any other sort of full-scale boycott. That may be the way you think, but I can see plenty of ground between All and None. Are you telling me that this capability marks me as such a towering genius that it's unrealistic to expect others to be able to do the same?

As to why a lack of US letters on PULP 11 led to a complete lack of letters in PULP 13 - well, you certainly have caught us out, Abi. I realize that explaining it in the editorial as well as apologizing publicly to numerous people over it was awfully devious and secretive of us, but you saw right through this subterfuge to a less than hard-assed administrative policy here at our one-third of the PULP circulation offices. UK locs on PULP 11 had already been published in PULP 12 (US locs usually come later and end up being published in the issue that follows the one in which UK locs on the same issue were published, as would have happened here if something weird hadn't happened to US distribution of 11), but as PULP 12 had not yet been mailed out, there were no locs on it. We mailed it immediately before we left for the States, so we couldn't very well produce a loccol on it for John before we left. Yes, by god, it's All Our Fault for having mailed it out so late.))

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Well, I must say, Dave Langford is a man of his word. I remember the drive well, over which I castigated him for mentioning Gamma at the World Fantasy Convention ('88) while bemoaning the lack of fans at the event. "But Dave, I was there," quoth I. "So

you were," he recalled. "Never mind, I'll put you in the next Jetbuff." And so he did.

So scientology rears its ugly head again. I'd had a premonition...

OK, first bit: Writers of the Future, as a competition, is no worse than any other literary competition (in fact, it's better than some, e.g. the Ian St. James Trust - see CRITICAL WAVE for info). WotF, as an organization, sponsors writers' workshops in a country sadly lacking very many. The principle objections to WotF are (1) that it is financed by Scientology, and "evil" organization that makes its money from brainwashed (in the sense of programmed) members of the cult - sorry, church (hurrrp - spit!); and (2) WotF is

being used to "sanitize" the odious name of L. Ron Hubbard. My thoughts on this are (1) if the money was badly come by, and we can assume that it will not be refunded to its source, then all the more reason why it should be used to achieve something "good"; and (2) I have difficulty in believing in the concept of "sanitizing" a name (whether for philanthropy or whatever) by strong association with the SF field - haven't SF authors been complaining, loudly, for years, that no one takes them seriously...?

Second bit: Dave did not misrepresent me. I did indeed say those things, but (if Dave can recall), it was during a conversation about my being verbally (and nearly physically) abused, by an American fanzine editor, at Conspiracy. Somehow this person had heard I'd spent the four days previous to the con at a WotF workshop, with Algis Budrys and Ian Watson, and proceeded to try to convince me - over two hours of accelerating deranged-ness - how I'd been secretly brainwashed by the Scientologists. I was simply commenting that there was no exposure (other than the presence of Robert Springall, who did nothing more sinister than make coffee)(Ah! But what was in it?)(Milk). At the time it was "the point" in the conversation I thought we were having, but I take your point.

Third bit: Scientology is certainly a fucked-up and sinister cult, and it should be avoided like the plague. I would back Dave's recommendation of Miller's fascinating book, Bare Faced Messiah, now available in paperback (Andromeda has them if you're interested). My problem with most of what Dave & Co. have been going on about is this: if you really want to attack Scientology, by all means do so, but don't waste your time doing it via WotF. If a man is coming at you with a gun in his hand, you don't shoot him in the foot, but the head. I'm also somewhat concerned to know the motives of the people involved in attacking Scientology; there are, after all, many nut cults - both more & less offensive than Scientology - why the sudden concern about this particular one? There has been little or no response to, say, the Moonies. Could it be that people in SFandom think that they are somehow responsible - "old L.Ron is one of ours gone bad" - and so they're cleaning up one of "our" messes? Are they worried that SF could be "tainted" by its association with L.Ron? (I really don't think our rep as juvenile dreamers could be worse.) Do they just think that this is a "front" on which they can be useful in this "war"? In which case...

Fourth bit: An injection of reality. As stated, Scientology is a horrible thing and, if you want to fight its advance, please do. But, if you're worried about nut cults generally, then here are some names to consider: Graham, Bakker, Swaggart, & Robertson. I don't know about you, kids, but the thought of President Robertson being voted on by all those Born Again Assholes ('92? '96?) scares me a hell of a lot more than ol' L.Ron ever will.

Final bit: Dave is, obviously, free to write about whatever he chooses, but I can't help thinking that things like the last jetbuff (especially on the pages of PULP) are "preaching to the converted" and that fandom has adequately covered the ground (CONSPIRACY THEORIES, the extended debate in A FREE LUNCH, etc.). Dave, next time you include me in Jetbuff, please choose a subject other than Scientology, or (alternatively) paraphrase my arguments from this letter - and save me having to write it again.

((Tony, if a guy is coming at you with a gun, don't you think it would be more effective to try to shoot the part you can see? Leaving aside all considerations of whether a shot to the foot might, realistically, do just as well as a head-shot on the man in your analogy, even if it might not have the same effect on Scientology or any other organized religion...))

Actually, we Converted take a certain comfort and inspiration from being preached to, you know. (I'd rather listen to "Tramp the Dirt Down" than to "Ballad of the Green Berets", for example.)

But, somehow, I get the feeling Dave's point regarding Scientology might well be more obvious to you and others if WotF were a creation of Bakker, Swaggart, Robertson, or even the Pope. How would you feel if the Moonies suddenly started trying to co-opt SF and fandom in this way? I think you - and most of us - would be even less tolerant of that.))

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At long last, a loc. I've been intending to send a letter to every issue since the first and never quite got round to it, which seems to be the norm for today's fandom. I'm firmly of the opinion that the on/off death of the fanzine is solely predicated on the dearth of the loc.

It is purely coincidental that the first article in PULP 13 concerned the Eastercon bidding session where I had the central role of presenting the Speculation bid for Glasgow in 1991. I think Jonathan over-estimates the crossover between the Eastercon and Elydore attendees and thus ascribes the lack of support for Speculation to dissatisfaction with the "single stream programme" - a point picked up by John in his editorial comments. I agree that at the bidding session there were people who voiced concern over the proposed structure of the programme, but it was emphasized that the programme would not be a single literary-slanted stream, but an attempt to cover all the aspects of SF - film, TV, book, comic, gaming, fannish - in a variety of different programme styles. I'll let those interested in the mechanics of how it works read more either in the Speculation PR1 or in CONRUNNER 12 in November.

No, the main reason for Speculation struggling to win the bid against "Hold Over" was given by John on his comments at the end - the bidding session is normally a major programme item with around 400-500 attending it. At Contrivance there were only 150 who troubled to attend and, at the risk of being accused of the sort of distortion usually only heard from losing parties after by-elections, I'd suggest that the people who didn't turn up to vote were happy with the Speculation bid as presented in our flier. All of the matters which concerned people at the bidding session have now been resolved; there will now be single rooms available in the main hotel and beds in the overflow hotels have been reserved.

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Liked the cover of PULP 13. (Nothing against Atom, and I hope he's feeling better... but a little variety adds interest.)

On Skel's and Harry Bond's comments on new fan

*Guardian
June
89*

Nigel for Newcastle

NIGEL LAWSON, please become manager of Newcastle United. This football club has won no domestic trophy since 1955 and has just been relegated to the second division of the Football League. Believe it or not, some of the Moaning Minnies up here are calling this failure.

It is basically a presentational problem. The policies of the club are correct but they need a skilled communicator well used to throwing tired old clichés to lap-dog journalists. The Newcastle public will thrill to your "a blip in FA Cup results since the Fifties," "we have exported more Beardsleys, Gascoignes and Waddles than any other football club," "the rate of interest on the terraces is the lowest in Europe," and "we recognise that visiting teams need incentives and so we always give them a free goal per match."

So Nigel, come to Newcastle. Tell us that the points amassed by Liverpool and Arsenal will eventually filter down to the lower divisions. Stun us with the revelation that, seasonally adjusted, we won the League in 1983 and 1987. We need a firm hand on the helm as the team plummets down through the divisions and into oblivion. Long-term you can turn the ground into a Pizzeria-Wine Bar-Car Park, as you've done to the rest of the economy. Apply straight away. Remember, it is always best to try for a new job while you are still in work.
Aidan F. Clarke.
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Kev McVeigh
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the absence of Britzines of similar standards, ignoring several fine zines in this section (CRYSTAL SHIP, CAPRICIAN, A FREE LUNCH, EMPTYIES and others). He cites infrequency as a point against several otherwise worthy zines, yet lists NUTZ (one ish in several years?). VILE ANCHORS is said to defy categorization

editors: Interesting, but a little irritating in places. Similar features have recently appeared in THE CAPRICIAN and SHIPYARD BLUES. (This is starting to get rather tedious!) The tones of the reviews in general are rather lofty and high-handed. Specific and helpful advice are conspicuous by their absence. Whether or not a reviewer feels the fanzine pool has been better in past days or mourns the lack of 'sense of community' in fanzines may be relevant to the reviewer but may not be terribly relevant to the fan editor. It depends on the fan editor's motivation for putting the thing out. Could be they want their creation to have a real impact on the community of fandom - could be they find the exercise of interest and hope it leads to swapzines and more mail. It would certainly be irrelevant (and somewhat un-charitable) to pronounce that a fan editor is disappointing because of their failure to achieve standards and goals, when such standards and goals may never have been the fan editor's aim. (You can't fail at something you are not attempting to do!) It would be like condemning PULP because it does not include the quantity and type of art that CRYSTAL SHIP does.

I, too, find what seems unprovoked and vicious ridicule of bystanders rather distasteful. Also counter-productive in personal writing. The growing distaste for the writer's tendency to lapse into "bloodsport" isn't terribly compatible with developing any sense of empathy with them - and surely, writing on a very personal level can only work by evoking some degree of empathic response in the reader.

((If someone says they found someone else's zine "disappointing", I guess they were disappointed. You might say their expectations were unrealistic or that they have projected their own interests onto the editor, but that's really another issue, isn't it? I must agree with you, though, that there doesn't seem to be much in the way of helpful advice showing up in review columns these days.))

At the risk of sounding petty, I would like to reply to some of Harry Bond's comments on fanzines in PULP 13. Harry starts by reasonably describing the ascendance of PULP in fanzine circles with reference to a strong editorial personality. Then he mentions

by a system Harry fails to define. What do you mean, Harry? Is it good, bad, or indifferent? Does he know?

Harry compounds these errors with a pointless list of so called "second rank" zines, without explaining the reasons for this. Indeed, it is easily shown that most of the faneds listed have very clear editorial personae - Terry Broome, Mike Gould, Alan Sullivan, Jenny Glover in particular. Each produces a strong, consistent style, something which is a major problem in some writers. Most are consistent in producing regular zines - two or three per year, usually. So where did we go wrong?

Perhaps it is in production values that our zines fall down, as Harry goes on to criticize Alan and Mike for this; yet just one of Harry's zines has been at all legible and well produced - the one which was sorely lacking in editorial presence. Or is it the way we as individuals fail to have "proper respect" for fannish traditions, our refusal to worship Walt Willis' staples, our collective failure to insert spurious Hs in fannish whords? If only Harry had made himself clear, we could have aspired to greater things with increased knowledge of the "Rules". WHAT FUCKING RULES! I publish what I want to publish because I want to say things, to communicate, to write. And to trade for zines like those I've mentioned with people I call friends. It is why I travel up to 300 miles to the Wellington or the MiSFiTs or the Leeds Group, or TANSTAAFL, and go to cons, to see the same people. I don't do it to try to impress people, to become a part of a clique. Those who don't like me let me know, and I don't go back, consider it their loss. Perhaps this is what Harry doesn't like? His insecurities are offended by the courage of the people he attacks to be themselves in fanzines rather than trying to be somebody else, somebody from the distant past.

It is even more depressing when Harry proves his real talent in VSOP and the odd other piece. he can write well, but he needs to learn to control it. he needs to give himself space to develop in as Harry Bond, not as a faint clone of somebody else, or worse, a hideous conglomerate of older fans' cast offs. Then Harry might produce a zine to rank in the second row, or if we're lucky, the front rank.

It will take a realization that he is writing in 1989, that he is Harry Bond, that clichés don't work. It is, apart from the imprecision of the criticism, the abundance of cliché and juvenile inanity, which mar "The Poor Man's Picture Gallery."

I think at this point I ought to say two things: one is that my own fanzines as seen by Harry at the time he wrote the article had generally been dreadful, so that I was flattered to be in such esteemed company as Harry's list. But since then I have put out a far superior sercon zine, and two slim perzines which I believe are far better work than anything I have done before, though they are still flawed.

The other thing is that in looking at Harry as a person, as a fan, I feel like I am sometimes looking into a mirror of Bob Shaw's Slow Glass. Not a pleasant experience.

WARF: **Brian Earl Brown** ("There are so many different groups of 200 to send one's zines to."); **Richard Brandt** ("Nix on John Harvey and his class-conscious remarks; 'commoner', indeed," and: "Has Norman Mailer written anything important in the last 10 years?"); **Buck Coulson** ("Not being an autograph collector, I thought Langford's spurious signatures were funny. I do collect autographs from authors I admire, but paying a premium for a batch of pre-signed signatures is a habit that deserves whatever it gets."); **Arthur Thomson** ("Chuch is writing more brilliantly than ever..."); **Andy Sawyer** (whose loc was taped so securely to the hand-made envelope that getting it out nearly destroyed it); **David Bell**; **Allan Burrows**; **Terry Jeeves**; **Ken Lake** (again); **Cardinal Cox** ("Best cover ever, brilliant, should be given a Hugo, an Ernest, or whatever the name is, award"); **Alexis Gilliland** (who sent a button that says "Macho Slut", raved about the cover, and said "Langford, as always, is terribly entertaining"); **Sid Birchby** ("a good issue. Please tell John Harvey so); **Pamela Boal**; **Andy Sawyer** (again - re Langford: "I wouldn't disagree, except to remark that there are people who would look askance at writing competitions/novels/etc. sponsored by any religious organization. And quite right, too."); **Ethel Lindsay** ("My biggest complaint about fanzines these days is that feuds and fusses and whatnot are sprung at me without any background data. What we badly need is a newszine - will no-one take up where Dave Langford left off? Without one I feel very out of touch way up here!"); **Ken Cheslin** ("It's a bad thing to promote Scientology," and, re Taral - "Me, I'd like something very quick and painless, like sitting on an A-bomb at ground zero"); **Allan D. Burrows** (who complained that a mere two fanzines is not a large enough statistical sample on which to base any conclusions); & **Richard Brandt** ("Chuch's column is quite cleverly constructed, notably in the way he rails against the ingrained assumptions of sexism while barely managing to drop a casual mention that his wife is being wheeled off in a gurney").

§ §

R.I.P. "The most buoyant of the holdouts, and probably the most influential do-it-yourselfer of the Fifties, was the one-man grouplet I.F. Stone, who started his four-page Weekly newsletter in 1953 with 5,300 subscribers and his wife as circulation manager. "Izzy" specialized in ferreting out neglected facts in government hearings and wire-service reports, making sense of the news, showing week to week how the government fudged and obfuscated. Gradually he built up his mailing list with reports on the McCarthyite persecutions and a running critique of the Eisenhower-Dulles foreign policy; he survived some four hundred cancellations in 1956 when he went to Moscow for the Party Congress and painted an unpretty picture of the Soviet Union. Willfully uninterested in the Left's internal polemics, Jeffersonian about civil liberties, Marxist (but not Leninist) in his hopes for a socialist working class, a romantic of the heart and an Enlightenment skeptic of the head, Izzy had formed his political views as a partisan of the Popular Front against fascism; he saw no reason to change now. Unlike the socialist intellectuals of New York, he had grown up in a small town and he was used to living in the wilderness. In an America of giant news corporations, he was an authentic loner, something of a holdover from the America of Charles Erskine Scott Wood. The Weekly was appealing partly because Stone's colorful, literate prose style didn't sound like a corporate product; it read like something edited at home, which it was."

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Some of you

Cover Artwork and interior headings
by Arthur (ATom) Thomson

This is the JULY 1989 edition of
PULP, produced by A.Vincent Clarke

PULP is published bi-monthly (it
says here) by Vince Clarke, Rob
Hansen & Avedon Carol, and John
Harvey. It is available for 'The
Usual', ie. LoCs, fanzines in trade,
(copy to all three editorial
addresses please) and editorial
whim (lot of those).

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Rob & Avedon will be editing the
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this issue, contributions, etc., to

144 Plashet Grove,
East Ham,
London, E6 1AB

PULP 14 from:
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16 Wenderover Way,
WELLING,
Kent, DA16 2BN

Deadline for the next issue is
(roughly) September 1st, but don't
let that stop you from writing
from overseas.