

RULP

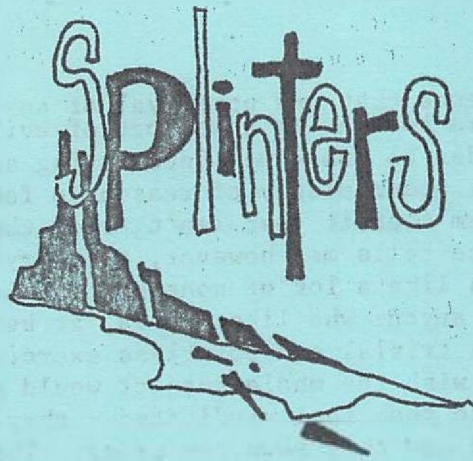
Project for Understanding "Little People"



It's the Cafeteria Society for these little "sim" guys!

putz.

Tres Cool—I'm a MICROCOSMIC FANED!



Avedon Carol

I guess I've gotten to this awfully late, but I've finally managed to start reading Reed Waller & Kate Worley's Omaha the Cat Dancer. I figured it was about time, not only because it always seems to get such good reviews, but because of the effect it seems to have on so many officials. Omaha is a black & white comic book that has gotten a lot of custom people over here and on the US-Canadian border really upset, as well as being the target of a few shop raids that have put comic shops in North America out of business.

The police and customs guys maintain that Omaha is obscene, although having now read it, I can't see how. Oh, sure, there's sex and certain body parts depicted in Omaha, but "obscene"? No way. In fact, Waller & Worley's portrayal of sexuality is so warm and friendly that I would genuinely love to see kids reading this stuff.

But the possibility that kids will read it is exactly what seems to worry the officials. They maintain that it is reasonable to assume that all comics are really aimed at kids, and that the very nature of Omaha's presentation - comic book format featuring people with animal features (the characters are drawn with tails, and individuals have the faces of dogs, cats, etc. - Waller maintains that these are people, not animals, and that this technique is used to enhance characterization) - will very naturally draw the attention of people too young to be exposed to any sexual material.

Those of us who don't necessarily think of sex as something too dirty and yucky to expose children to are often still uncomfortable with the idea of letting kids see pornography, because so much of it carries some pretty sexist messages. Indeed, the evidence is that most porn does make kids uncomfortable, because it is so tacky and makes sex look fairly unpleasant.

But Omaha avoids this problem by putting sex into an environment of some fairly nice people who genuinely like each other - people who are shown doing lots of other things besides having sex (that context which pornography so wholly lacks). Since the sexuality isn't isolated from the relationships and personalities of the people involved, it doesn't have the trivializing and "dirty" effect that is so often inherent in pornographic sex. The sexual relationships in Omaha are presented with such an aura of playful innocence and love that it is hard to imagine anyone finding it offensive.

Unfortunately, society's attitudes about sexuality have already invested erotic material with values it doesn't have on its own. Some women have a

background of such terrible sexual experience that any portrayal of sex as a pleasurable activity for women comes across to them as some sort of evil lie - a pretty story men invent, perhaps, in order to con women into having sex with them. God knows this world gives a lot of women plenty of reason to feel that way, and I wish I knew how to convince them that it just isn't true, that sex doesn't have to be so awful. My experience tells me, however, that trying to tell such women about good sex just sounds like a lot of nonsense to them. Lousy sex has already convinced them that anyone who likes it is, at best, letting themselves get side-tracked into a trivial and pointless exercise. They don't want to know about it and they wish the whole subject would go away. Things like the AIDS scare only make them feel vindicated - they knew all along that sex wasn't a good idea, and now they have the proof. They aren't going to have any time at all for something like Omaha with its friendly lovers who really enjoy getting naked and cuddly together.

But it seems to me that publications carrying this kind of positive image of sexuality are just what this society needs to counteract the numerous negative and misogynistic messages we can find throughout our culture. Yet anti-obscenity laws (which, I repeat, have little real effect on the porn industry anyway, and do nothing to relieve the sexism therein) have been effective in making it difficult to create and distribute (and, as a result, to find) Omaha the Cat Dancer and publications of similar spirit. I think that's a damn shame.

"Tammy Faye Bakker -- Texas Chainsaw Mascara." - R. Hansen

YESTERDAY'S PAPERS I had this little fantasy that Ronald Reagan & friends were right about Nicaragua, and I was breathlessly awaiting this headline news:

"SANDINISTAS WIN NICARGUAN ELECTION - BROWNSVILLE INVADED

"In the wake of their victory over UNO in yesterday's general election, Sandinista forces immediately launched an invasion of Brownsville, Texas, fulfilling the predictions often made by former President Ronald Reagan.

"In a press conference held at his headquarters in Managua, Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega laughed maniacally while boasting that Brownsville was now under full occupation by his troops."

It all puts me in mind of one of my favourite pieces of dialogue from Gagney & Lacey, between the oldest Lacey kid (the one who loves Ollie North) and his father:

Harvey Junior: "Do you know how close Nicaragua is to Texas?!"

Harv Senior: "Did we drop you on your head when you were a baby?!"

* * * * *

WHY IT'S A WAY OF LIFE

When I was a kid I couldn't imagine what the point was of having funerals making a fuss over dead people - which just shows you how little I really understood the whole idea that someone you truly care about can actually die. But over the last decade I've really come to value all of those rituals and things we do to share our grief together. I realize now just how important it is to know that others appreciate the meaning of your loss and that they, too, know that something of value is gone. It may not be able to make up for that loss, but it sure does make the grief a bit easier to live with.

This was never more obvious to me than it has been in the months since Arthur died. I can't begin to tell you what it has meant to me - and I'm sure the rest of the PULP crowd must see this way, too - that so many of you have put your creativity and your humanity into sharing your own sense of loss with us and letting us see that you, too, valued this man we loved.

Fandom, of course, has its own special forms of expression, and I've been grateful that it provided us with the means to have, for example, that wonderful and timely tribute on the cover of Shipyard Blues (the signature credits both Shep Kirkbride, who drew it, and John D. Owen, who commissioned it). John Owen, Andy Porter, and others have published pieces about Arthur and the inspiration he provided them. Dave Hodson, Gregory Pickersgill, Rog Peyton, Dick Jude and the folks from Forbidden Planet, along with all the others who organized, contributed, and turned out for the "Whiz for Atom" benefit for Arthur's family helped, as well as all those who came to Corflu with their checkbooks ready. This goes for the TLC Dan Steffan put into making posters of some of Atom's pieces for auction at Corflu, too.

Vind worked out his own grief by using it to fuel his energies for production of a new anthology of Arthur's work, which is available from him for £3.50 (plus postage and any additional contribution you wish to make) at 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent. On the other side of the Atlantic, Dan Steffan has been organizing a tribute publication which will feature original contributions (I've seen a great little one-page piece of art and text from Steve Stiles that was done for it).

Meanwhile, we still have a few pieces left that Arthur gave us, and Harry Bell not only took the hint, but did so in a way that made clear he knew what no PULP cover would be complete without. And of course, Stu Shiffman didn't wait until it was too late for Arthur to enjoy the cover he did for us.

And your letters have been great, too. We're very glad that throughout PULP's history, we have been able to bring you Arthur's work and share with you some of the pleasure he brought us. And it's great that you've let us know you enjoyed it as much as we did, and that you, too, will miss him.

PULPISH STUFF And now... no, I will resist speculating on John's next marvellous misspelling of Material Star of Loashin. I will go straight to quasi-quotes to laugh at him. Yes, John Harvey converted my WordPerfect files to another program before printing, thus losing the over-strike commands without correcting them. (And yes, Mike Glicksohn, my wordprosser can too make quasi-quotes. Technology itself was not the problem.) "Quasi-quotes"

Creative Random History



chuch Harris

We weren't supposed to go to the funeral, of course. Nobody was. Arf knew we'd be there, though. He wasn't really hoping for a plain van to whip him away when nobody was looking, and perhaps no more than a sigh when we put the ritual black line through his name on the mailing list.

But in the end it damn near happened that none of us were there after all. There were heavy snow flurries - the first of the winter - as I got the car out. I wondered if there would be drifts further down like those that stopped anyone getting to George Charters' funeral, but once on the M1 the sun soon came out to herald a bright hard day.

We drove to Vincent's first. Sue took over the driving from there because she used to live in South London, and is happier in the traffic chaos (and because she gets so cross when I invariably blow my top and lean out of the window to scream and holler at stupid fucking morons, who shouldn't be entrusted with a pogo stick, daring to impede the skilful progress of an automobile maestro like me - 46 years in the business with never so much as a scratched bumper to worry my insurers, and if you get your finger out of your arsehole and onto the steering while we might all get along a bit better... yeah, this finger, sport. Yeah. Etc. And especially the etc.).

Anyway, down Jasper Road, past the Mitcham Mint, past Hung Wan, past Amazing Glazing, to the South London Cemetery and Crematorium. This is an enormous place. There are hearses arriving almost continuously. There are three separate crematorium chapels all working, another chapel for people having burials, and a synagogue and separate burial ground for Jewish people. We were early so, after checking to see if anyone else had arrived, we drove back to the Mitcham Mint for a pint. (Mitcham mints, incidentally, are a traditional sort of breath sweetener peppermint candy.) The name was the only thing I liked about the pub... this was 2:00 PM and their Happy Hour didn't start 'til 3:00.

No time to finish the pint either. We got back to the cemetery just in time to see Rob and Avedon get out of a taxi. Hugs, kisses - and then there was Ted Tubb on his little scooter (he looked a bit odd in his helmet and stuff, but Sue, who used to have one, says scooters are still the most sensible way to drive in London traffic. Personally, I doubt it - the only time I rode pillion with her, I lost my balance and fell off - but I admit they do seem to snake through the traffic jams a lot easier than the Ford Fiesta).

And then Ethel Lindsay arrived, all the way from Scotland. The train fare was too expensive, but she got an overnight coach and managed to sleep all the way down. Ethel is an indomitable woman, and you just have to admire her. She used to be a hospital sister, but she's retired now, and every time I see her she seems to have shrunk a little more. We've known her just about forever, and she was always a good friend of Arf's and myself, and published much of his best artwork in those long gone glory days of Sixth Fandom.

She was going back that night, too - twenty hours on the coach to say good-bye to a friend.

I could write a book about Ethel. She just about comes up to my waist (that was when I still had a waist), and I can sometimes get away with jokes about "Little Sister Ethel Lindsay," but I don't think she really likes the title. She was a feminist before Avedon and Teresa were born, and is one of the kindest and most loved people in Brit Fandom.

And then John Berry and his wife Diane arrived too. I haven't seen either of them for 20 years or more, but recognized them right away. I felt a bit awkward because I'm a little off John's stuff right now, and he provokes me to fury when he writes something like his current piece in STICKY QUARTERS, which purports to be factual reminiscence, and then blithely introduces whimsical typecast silly ass Brit Army officers with swagger sticks who adjust their monocles and mumble, "By Gad," and, "I say, what?"

But this is all nit-picking, and today was Armistice Day. John was a very old and valued mate of Arf's, too, and was here, like all the rest of us, to say good-bye to a valued friend. Today we would have welcomed Richard Bergeron himself.

There was no sign of "our" hearse yet, and it was damn cold standing outside. One of the undertakers told us there was a Waiting Room next to the chapel with Arthur's name on the door - Arthur Myhill Thomson (we've all got these mystery names hidden away; ask me about Randolph some time).

It was warmer in there. We talked around a bit, but Sue wondered why they were running so late. These things have to run like clockwork, right to the very minute, or the day's programme degenerates into chaos. Rob went off to investigate and came back right sharp to say that the hearse had arrived and the coffin was in the chapel along with the family mourners, and the vicar was well into his piece.

The verger who was supposed to have alerted us hadn't bothered to check the waiting room, and we near as dammit missed the whole service. If you listened carefully (as Rob said), you could almost hear the faint laughter and the voice saying, "I told you not to come."

The ten of us crept in, feeling horribly conspicuous, and as quiet as we could be. The vicar paused whilst we found seats, and I lost Sue in the shuffle. She finished up with a whole pew to herself, leaving me behind with Avedon, Rob, Vincent and Ted Tubb.

Really, I wanted to be with Sue. I feel so embarrassed with anyone else at

funerals because I always end up crying. I don't Believe in anything at all. It's all very well parading my intellect, and being ever so rational, and I know it's a proud and lonely thing and all that, but at times like this I wish, Christ how I wish, I believed in life everlasting, and the power of prayer, and the Great Convention in the Sky, and the Tooth Fairy. Most days, of course, it's quite nice to feel smugly superior to the Pope and the Rev Paisley and all the other religious maniacs, but at funerals they all have the edge on me. They have their comforting harps and their halos and all their hopes of heaven, whilst I'm astride Occam's razor, wishing I could make the great leap in the dark, and still snivelling like a baby with the grim finality of it all.

Anyway, nobody was even sure if we were at the right funeral or not. We could only see the backs of people's heads. Vincent asked Rob, who asked Avedon, who wrote it down for me, if Olive was up at the front? He couldn't recognize any of the family at all, and was full of horrific visions of the gang of us being panicked into the wrong chapel instead of waiting calmly where we'd been told.

Now Ol, who is a nice-looking girl, was a blond last time I saw her, and there was certainly no blonde in the front pew. There was no way of telling whether we had chosen the wrong chapel out of the three, and it was far too late to walk out and try elsewhere. Fortunately, I did know just who the immediate family mourners would be. There was definitely no blonde, but the numbers and sexes of the people in the front pew seemed to check out okay, and the back of the head in the far lefthand seat did look just a bit like Olive's as far as I could remember. So, I took a big brave gulp and said yes, I thought I could see Ol over there, before getting down to the serious handkerchief business.

Avedon, bless her, seemed to be a bit wet, too, but really I don't know. I just pushed a spare hankie at her and let her dree her own weird.

The service seemed very short - we must have missed a good bit of it - and then the curtains finally closed round the coffin... We filed out, shook hands with the vicar, and found Olive - and breathed a sigh of relief that we were at the right funeral after all.

Sue, who ever since she was Lady Captain is very good at this sort of thing, gets right after the undertaker and the verger and lets them know what a bloody shambles they nearly made of the ceremony. Apologies, promises to do better etc., but funerals cost one hell of a lot of money and you'd think they'd make an effort to do the job properly. For instance, just think how Ethel would have felt if she'd missed it, after coming all the way from Scotland - as well as the rest of us.

Olive introduced us all to the family: her eldest daughter - our Arf would have been a grandfather in a few more months time; his brother who had flown over from the US; his youngest daughter, a pretty vulnerable kid, so grief-stricken she has had to have hospital treatment herself over the trauma; workmates; family friends... shake hands all round, admire flowers - beautiful wreath from Olive, a stunning basket of carnations and stuff from Minneapolis fandom, carnations and freesias from us that would have provoked Arf to fury, and a stack of other wreaths and sprays.

Really, neither Sue nor I approve of flowers, especially in winter weather when the frost kills them within 24 hours, but we thought this time that Olive and the family might find them a comfort, a sort of token of shared grief.

Personally I'd hate it if anyone sent them for me, and would much rather they used the money for a TAFF donation or something. Believers could, I suppose, substitute a gin and tonic libation (with ice and slice), if they so wished, but truly, the deep abiding fond memory is the only immortality I can ever believe in.

Mind you, for me, all the other trappings will be quite okay. By all means bring on the black horses, the sad ostrich plumes, the doleful funeral directors in morning dress and top hats, the crowds of keening women, and the hundreds of rather handsome children with distinctly Semitic noses, all running after the cortege screaming, "Daddy, daddy, daddy, don't leave us!"

(And of course, the Union Jack over the coffin, along with my sailor hat, my Victory Medal if they can find it, and perhaps a single red rose from Princess Margaret...)

Diversions have always been a curse with me... Anyway, I had a quick word with Olive about going over with Vincent pretty soon to clear Arthur's attic, and then the family went home and we all went back to the Mitcham Mint (except the Berrys - we asked them to come for a drink but they weren't able to fit it in or something).

The drink was okay - Sue was driving the first leg home so I was okay for another pint, thank ghod - but the food was atrocious, the very worst I've ever eaten in London: vile and horrible shop-bought chicken pies, full of salmonella and E numbers, without a single solitary recognizable scrap of chicken, together with plastic mashed potato swamped with murky brown gravy.

The talk was good, though. It was nice to chat and unwind, to remember the good times, and laugh about nearly missing the service and everything.

We talked away an hour or so, and Ted startled me - and horrified Avedon - by defending the existing US gun laws. He was against any ban that impinges on the rights and the liberty of the individual.

"Quite right," said Rob, aiming for the jugular. "Personally, I am against the infringements on liberty that prevent us all from having our very own private H-bombs."

Ted seemed very quiet after that.

Arthur, perhaps more than anyone, always shared my taste for the bawdy joke, and would have loved Rob's offering: You have heard of Pamella Bordes - the delectable high class whore who was recently servicing the editors of both The Sunday Times and The Observer? She was very expensive and very, very beautiful. "What is the difference," sez Rob, "between Pamella Bordes and Nelson Mandela?" Pause, and up goes his clenched fist for a gloriously triumphant, "Nelson Mandela is Free!"

It was rush hour time now, and we had to break up. Ted went off on his bike, perhaps still a bit bemused. Sue took Rob, Avedon and Ethel to the station, and then collected Vince and me on her way back. The rush hour traffic was very bad, and things were not helped when we mislaid the South Circular Road and finished up miles away at Crystal Palace whilst searching desperately for Penge - but eventually we found Welling just where we'd left it. There was just time for a quick cuppa, and then it was my turn to drive under the Thames, up the motorways and home to Daventry, to dive into the big green bottle of Chianti Classico that I had ready and waiting, together with a letter from Patrick.

This was an overnigher Airmail Special Delivery from New York that must have cost a week's rent on the new Nielsen Hayden house plus an arm and a leg, but was worth every penny of it. It had arrived that morning, just as I was climbing into the Best Suit and fixing the black tie, ready to drive down to Streatham for the funeral, the very last, never to be repeated, Grande Finale of the Chuck'n'Arfer Show.

It was one of those letters you read and re-read a dozen times. Full of affection, a sort of rueful letter recalling the good times, all the fun times with Arf, the things we'd shared together. It was a fine letter and it helped lift me out of the depths, to forget the bottle and find a sort of emotional catharsis, a way out of the black pit, by writing this all down.

Arf was a very good mate indeed. The very best. Believe me, they don't come better.

- Chuck Harris
February 1990

"If you bombard inert fannish material with fanzines of sufficient velocity, they create minute subatomic particles called 'borons'." - PNH

MOVING RIGHT ALONG : There are no fanzine reviews because by the time I came awake, there were already 42 pages of text. There's no use you whining about how if I'd gotten it out on time I would have been able to hold some of it over for next time - I have all the usual good excuses for it having taken so long and no, I'm not going to bore you with the disgusting details (sick, tired, deaf, sick & tired of being sick & tired, etc.). Also broke, but that's not your problem either. I mean, what do you care? Look, you're getting a fanzine now, anyway. It could be worse. We could have fallen to Kells Syndrome, and made it even bigger and bigger. Fanzine reviews, convention reports - you name it. It would have taken years. But we didn't. So quit your beefing.

Meanwhile, you can all write to Chuck to cheer him up, because aside from losing a close pal, he's still hobbling around and has in-laws to cope with as well. Try and find something with a picture of a goat on it...

Right, so now that Hansen has been duly put in his place by Jonathan White &etc, we return you now to those exciting days of 1984, when fen were fen...

FEAR & LOATHING IN Disneyland®

Rob Hansen

Sunday, 2nd September 1984, and after breakfasting alone in the hotel buffet and checking out the fanroom, I wandered down to the huckster room and over to the tables provided at one end for the use of various convention bidding groups. Britain was bidding for the 1987 Worldcon, so throughout LACON II the Britain In '87 table was manned by various of the British fans over for the con. This naturally included me, and so I relieved Peter Wareham, who must have risen very early that morning to have covered the first shift. No sooner had Peter left than I was joined by fellow-Brit Chris Atkinson and Australian fan Justin Ackroyd. Chris, impressed by Justin's selflessness in helping us, declared:

"I've never met an Australian fan I didn't like."

"I could introduce you to a few," replied Justin.

We sold a few memberships but business was slow, so at noon I wandered over to room Pacific 3B and to a panel titled 'SF and Comics - The Mutual Influence'. This was chaired by Len Wein and featured Marv Wolfman, Marty Pasko, Gerry Conway, Mark Evanier, and Sharman DiVono, the last pair doing most of the talking. DiVono was very beautiful, and presumably reasonably bright if she was making a living as a writer, but this last was a little hard to believe given some of the nonsense she came out with. I found myself muttering quiet retorts to some of what was being said, but not quietly enough that they didn't get an amused response from some of those near me, that response in turn drawing irritated looks from the stage. At one point the various writers were talking about what influenced their writing, which were the sorts of things that influence everybody's writing, but DiVono was having none of this and claimed that she wasn't "...influenced by anything except what's inside of me," (her words).

"I'm a writer, and I write with my heart!" she explained.

"A typewriter would be less messy," I commented, much to the amusement of the guy next to me.

"I wish you were up there instead of some of them," he said.

When people start confusing low sarcasm with high wit it's time to leave. So I did. I'd had enough of the panel anyway. If all this sounds a little ill-tempered, well it was. I still hadn't recovered properly from jet-lag and so was grumpier than I should have been.

The TAFF/DUFF Auction held in the fan lounge at 2:00 PM was a bit of an eye-opener. A few items were sold for TAFF but their number paled into insignificance against the vast amount of material being auctioned off for DUFF.

This was due mainly to the indefatigable Joyce Scrivener who seemed to regard DUFF some sort of pet project and had brought along piles of stuff. However, what little TAFF material there was fetched decent prices. My stick of CHANNELCON '82 rock was bought for some ludicrous amount by Jane Hawkins (possibly my description of it as "this big pink thing" helped the sale) as was my Welsh-English phrasebook, which was knocked down to Amy Thomson. Some months earlier, Graham Charnock had given me six assorted issues of WRINKLED SHREW (none of them the issue I'm missing myself, unfortunately) and these too went for gratifyingly large amounts with the most being paid, not surprisingly, for issue #7, which I regard as quite possibly the best single issue of any fanzine produced in the 1970s. Larry Carmody had deputized Stu Shiffman to go as high as \$15 to get it for him, and in the end he secured it for \$14. Larry later explained that he in turn had been agenting for Alina Chu, a curious arrangement. I wonder if he got an agenting fee?

With all the TAFF material having sold I left the auction early in the company of Rich Coad, Stacy Scott, Sheree Carton, Allyn Cadogan, and Carissa Enzenbacher - the 15 year-old daughter of Allyn's huckster friend, Dale Enzenbacher. It was time for us to head over to Disneyland.

Although Disneyland was on the next lot to the hotel it was not as short a trip from one to the other as I'd have liked since the Disneyland car park lay between them. Bearing in mind the custom such a place attracts, and the fact that everyone in Los Angeles travels by car, you can imagine just how big it was. The heat reflecting off that black asphalt plain was murderous, and as we trekked across those endless acres I thought I was going to die. Nor were matters helped by the fact that I was wearing black shirt and trousers and hefting a heavy tweed jacket. I always wear much the same clothes regardless of the weather (which doesn't really vary vastly in the UK) but I was beginning to think that maybe this wasn't such a sensible policy after all. Disneyland was visible all the while, shimmering through the heat-haze ahead, and - eventually - we reached it. We had an unpleasant surprise waiting for us, however.

At the gate Sheree was refused admission because her mohawk haircut violated Disneyland's 'dress code'. We were all outraged by this and decided that if Sheree wasn't good enough for Disneyland then maybe we weren't either. Sheree would have none of this however, and insisted we go ahead and have a good time since she had been half expecting this reaction anyway. As I watched her set off back across the parking lot, I reflected on how odd it was that a style which wouldn't attract a second glance in London (if not for the fact that Sheree was an attractive woman) should be deemed so outrageous in California of all places, and particularly in Disneyland. Walt may have been a visionary, but it seemed that his heirs were the product of small-minded middle America. (Some years after this, Disney bought the Queen Mary and announced that henceforth all of her crew must be clean-shaven since this too was required by the corporate dress-code. I have nothing but admiration for those of the crew, many of whom who had been with her more than twenty years, who resigned rather than knuckle under to this infringement of their rights. I wonder what the moustachioed Walt would have made of it all?)

While the attitude of Disneyland may have left a bad taste in the mouth, the place itself was incredible. The entrance booths opened out onto 'Main St.,

USA', a highly picturesque representation of homey Americana that featured a series of shops carrying a wide variety of Disney merchandise and other goodies. The extreme heat made ice-cream our first buy. Croggled by the huge queues for most every ride (well it was Labor Day weekend after all, the busiest of the year), we decided to wait in line first for the monorail, all the while watching the submarines on the adjacent ride that travelled on tracks below the water. Actually, the monorail turned out to be a good first choice since its two-and-a-half mile ride out to the Disneyland hotel took in a fair bit of the park itself. From our elevated vantage I was particularly impressed to note how the various rides interacted with one another, a feature which added to the illusion of the park as an organic whole, part of one ride being an element of the scenery for the next.

For our second ride we chose 'Flight to Mars' not, as you might think, because of its obvious SF connection, but because it was close to the monorail exit and didn't have a large queue outside. On entering we were ushered into a room overlooking a full-size replica of NASA's flight control room at Houston where an automaton called 'Mr Smith' led us through the background to our 'flight'. This was my first look at one of Disney's automata, and I was impressed. 'Mr Smith' was obviously not a real human being, but he was still a lot more lifelike than most of Margaret Thatcher's cabinet. The 'flight' itself involved us being led into a circular room, supposedly the interior of a spacecraft, and taking our places in the banks of seats that receded, amphitheatre-style, into its upper reaches. With the aid of a voice-over and images flashed on various screens, we were taken on a short 'flight' to Mars, one given a certain added verisimilitude by the way our seats vibrated on 'take-off' and 'landing'.

"This ride is just an air-conditioned, audio-visual bum-massage!" I commented to Allyn after we'd 'landed'. While entertaining, 'Flight to Mars' was more in the way of an 'educational experience' than a proper ride, an accusation that couldn't be levelled at the next attraction we visited.

Back in Britain, both Alun Harries and Linda Pickersgill had recommended I visit Disney's 'Pirates of the Caribbean' and when I saw the sign outside ('See fun-loving Pirates sack and burn a Caribbean Seaport') I knew that this was the ride for me. And Jophan found that it was so. We climbed into one of the cars and the ride started with a couple of water-chutes before we floated (actually, our car rode underwater rails) into the area where the pirates were sacking the port. The effect was total, a large galleon manned by pirate automata 'sailed' over to the seaport to engage its automata defenders, cannons firing and explosions sending water shooting into the air around us. Overhead, stars appeared to twinkle in a night sky and it would not have been too difficult to imagine that you really were in the middle of a ferocious sea-battle. Amazing.

Still a little stunned after the last ride, we wandered along one of the paths bordering the circular 'river' around which a full-sized galleon and paddle-steamer rode majestically, even such large craft as these riding on underwater rails. Disneyland is divided into a number of smaller theme-parks called 'Tomorrowland', 'Frontierland', 'Adventureland', and 'Fantasyland' with smaller areas called 'Bear Country', 'Main Street, and 'New Orleans Square' in between. 'Flight to Mars' had been in 'Tomorrowland' and 'Pirates of the

Caribbean' off 'New Orleans Square', but now our wanderings took us into 'Bear Country' and specifically to something called the 'Indian Trader Shop'. We stopped to stock up on souvenir junk and I made sure to pick up enough postcards showing views of Disneyland to both send to people in the UK and to augment the photos I was taking. Allyn came up and began looking at the cards on an adjacent rack that featured early photographs taken of various American Indian tribes. She choose one and went over to the counter to pay for it. Watching her had made something click into place in my mind, and I turned to Rich.

"Is Allyn part-Indian?" I asked him, contemplating her striking features.
"No, she's French-Canadian," he assured me.

Seconds later Allyn returned and showed us her purchase: a photo of a Hunkpapa Sioux.

"Look," she said, "a genuine picture of one of my ancestors!"

Chortling, I jotted down this exchange in my notebook. Rich looked disgusted.

"Are you really gonna write about something that makes me look real dumb?" he asked.

"Yep," I replied, smugly.

After a round of cheeseburgers (called 'Lumberjacks') at the Hungry Bear Restaurant we started to tire of the relentless backwoods-style of Bear Country and so wandered back towards New Orleans Square. On the way we stopped at 'Haunted Mansion' and, after waiting in another huge queue, took a fascinating ride. It wasn't in the least frightening - nor intended to be, I imagine, given the number of infants who visit it - but some of the effects were very impressive, particularly the hologram ghost that materialized between you and the person next to you at one point, or at so it appeared in your reflection in the mirror.

By the time we emerged it was close to 8:00 PM and we had to decide whether to rush back to the hotel to catch the Hugo Awards ceremony or to stay on in Disneyland. Being trufans all we had no real choice of course...we stayed at Disneyland.

After riding the Mark Twain Riverboat, we realized that the moment of truth had arrived. It was time to ride one of the two rollercoasters, 'Space Mountain' or 'The Matterhorn', even though these had the biggest queues of any of the rides. We chose The Matterhorn, mainly so that we'd be in a good position to watch the firework display that went off over the 'Sleeping Beauty Castle' at 9:00 PM every night, the same display that had greeted me on my way in from the airport three days earlier. This was even more spectacular up close than it had been from Harbor Boulevard, and in the middle of it all 'Tinkerbell' flew overhead, about 60 - 80 feet above us, riding down a wire stretched between the tip of the Matterhorn and the top of the castle.

The rollercoaster ride, when we eventually made it to the front of the queue, was exhilarating if - ah - violent. I came out with a headache, Rich with a dislodged contact lens, and Allyn with a sore mouth where Carrissa's head had

been thrown backwards and butted her. A great ride! Nursing our wounds, we wandered back to Main Street and joined a queue for food.

"This is just like Soviet Russia," grumbled Rich, voicing a criticism seldom if ever made of Disneyland. I asked him to explain.

"You have to queue for everything!" he wailed.

It was getting late, so Rich and I decided to return to the hotel for some serious partying. Carrissa was already in line for the Matterhorn again so Stacy and Allyn elected to stay with her. As we left the Magic Kingdom, Rich and I bought Donald Duck hats, baseball-style caps with Donald's bill forming the peak, his eyes peering over it, and a 'tuft' on top.

"Hey, these are really cool!" Rich enthused, looking as ridiculous in his hat as I probably looked in mine. I'd enjoyed Disneyland, but I couldn't forget the way Sharee had been refused entry. In its way Disneyland, for all its high-tech gadgetry, is a temple to the values of 1950s America and to that period's vision of the perfect family. Given such a rigid and conservative mindset, I was not surprised that some months after I returned to the UK those who make the fantasy work, the staff of Disneyland, went on strike citing such real-world concerns as low pay and lousy conditions. "Mickey Mouse is a Republican!" Roy Disney declared during the 1988 Presidential election. I rather fear he may be right.

Rich and I parted in the hotel and, having been in Disneyland when 'the word' was passed along the grapevine, I then spent ages wandering corridors in search of a party. Noticing movement on the fourth floor I investigated and bumped into Larry Carmody, who furnished me with a list of the night's parties. Thus armed, I dropped in briefly at the Australian party before settling in at the Britain In '87 soiree. Collapsing into a chair, I decided to let people come to me (and they did, too).

After a while a sizeable contingent of those present moved off to Ted White's room, and soon after we got there Allyn and Stacy returned from Disneyland. They insisted on telling me how much better a rollercoaster than the 'Matterhorn' 'Space Mountain' was. Yeah, sure.

This was the end of LACON II. Tomorrow everyone would be going home and some of them, I realized in an uncharacteristic moment of misty-eyed sentimentality, I was unlikely ever to see again. This trip, and this convention, would almost certainly be one of the high points of my life, one of those memories that looms large for the rest of your days. Standing back, I gazed about the room drinking it all in, taking a mental photograph of an event that was all too fleeting. Already it was breaking up, and I found myself saying my goodbyes to those who were flying out early the next day, including Larry and Alina who wouldn't be returning to New York until after my visit to that city.

I stayed up as long as I could, taking in as much as I could, but the party like the convention was drawing inexorably to its close. At 2:30 PM, wistful but content, I retired to my room for the final time.

Next: New York, New York.

Jetbuff Ltd

Cuisine Unauthentique: Dave Langford

"Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are," said famous food junkie Anthelme Brillat-Savarin in 1825 (only I gather he said it in French). Looking at my friends, I doubt that this means of psychoanalysis is reliable.

Chris Priest, for example, used to moan to me about his local Chinese restaurants, on the ground that they're too good. "I like Chinese junk food," he wailed, "the sort of dishes they never actually made in China, things like instant chop suey...." I daren't ask if he's also addicted to those greasy chunks of fried pork coated in bullet-proof layers of calorific batter with thin red sugary slime drooled all over the starch-laden result, the whole mess whimsically called "sweet and sour".

This came to mind when the 1987 World SF Convention asked for a contribution to its planned fannish cookbook. A little essay on unauthentic cuisine sounded just the thing, and if a few other things hadn't got in the way (like putting together a 40,000 word fan room booklet all by myself -- more fool I for volunteering) I'd probably have contributed more than the recipe for "Sinister Langford Apple Chutney" therein.

For example, when Hazel and I feel all upmarket and sufficiently demented to have more than one course at dinner, it's usually the work of a moment to nip round to the local Asian grocer's (mysteriously called "Eurofoods") for some big squidgy avocado pears. This fruit is almost my sole concession to the weird notion that raw green vegetable things are in fact suitable for human consumption.

Well, everyone knows how to cut them up (an axe is not advised), to balance the hard bit in a bottle of water and to overrun the house with tall weedy avocado plants each having exactly two leaves at the end of a long naked bumpy stem... but the eating part involves decisions. Hotels usually fill the unfortunate avocado with a curdled pink mess, studded with shrimp which have not led cleanly lives. The alternative tends to be some species of French dressing, which as far as this picky household is concerned Does Not Quite Work in the unique post-structural context of the avocado. Hence the development in our mighty research laboratories of...

Hazel's Stupendously Unauthentic Non-Vinaigrette For Avocados

Take:

A lot of soy sauce.

A lot of sesame oil.

About one-sixth of a lot of vinegar.

About one-fifteenth of a lot of Lea & Perrin's Worcester Sauce.

Mix together in any order and with any variations suggested by prejudice or experience... shaken, not stirred. Put in a bottle or something, and give one last vigorous shake at the table. (This offers incentives for good discipline in the careful replacement of bottle tops. Either that or it offers an interestingly brown-spotted ceiling, like ours.) Pour quite a lot into the hollow of your half-avocado. Sensuously carve out drenched gobbets of avocado flesh with a spoon. Put in mouth, masticate, etc. (Why do recipes always stop just before the interesting bit? You never even get three asterisks and a new paragraph starting with "Afterwards".)

The stuff stays usable for strange aeons, except when avocados are in season, and can even seem to improve with time. Try with various grades of soy sauce, from Dilute Tea to Creosote. There is probably no real substitute for the Worcester sauce, but fans with cosmic minds might prove me wrong.

My thoughts on green things remind me of the conceptual salad which my old pal Martin Hoare and I have elaborated from time to time, when we're in pubs far away from the potential threat of a kitchen. Never actually created in cold blood, the Langford/Hoare salad is a thought experiment in the avoidance of "rabbit food". Both of us were heavily conditioned against this at university, thanks to a college chef who believed that limp lettuce had inadequate protein value and preferred to beef it up with some nice meaty slugs and greenfly.

If it were ever to emerge from its ideal niche among the Platonic Forms, this salad would very probably include grated cheese, cold boiled new potatoes, hard-boiled eggs, sliced red and green peppers, lumps of avocado (a hot point of contention -- Martin suspects this of being rabbit food), chopped onions of various kinds, radishes, sweetcorn, garlic, chives, and some suitable admixture of cold cooked meat or fish.... Perhaps it would be easier to list the items which would not feature, such as lettuce, tomato, cucumber, olives, mayonnaise of any description, vinegar in greater than homeopathic doses, or any of the horrible sticky proprietary messes which are called salad dressing. ("Aye," said a sceptical Macbeth, "in the catalogue ye go for salad dressing....")

STOP PRESS: Martin now claims to have consumed the ideal salad, but carping critics (me) suspect that there is a degree of unauthenticity which violates even our fuzzy definition of salad. "It was great," Martin enthuses: "We made it from a pound of beef and a lot of onions and nothing else."

Sometimes one does need to abandon these dizzy theoretical speculations, narrow one's focus from its habitual cosmos-wide scope, and tackle the problem of giving visitors some actual food. Hazel usually falls back on the all-purpose roast recipe whereby you take a chicken (or equivalent mass of pork, beef, lamb or honey-smearred peacock stuffed with larks' tongues and fattened dormice) and put it in the oven for hours and hours, while I try to remember dear old Professor Kurti's differential equation which gives the precise cooking time provided only that you have a perfectly spherical joint. But

Chris Priest Memorial Chinese Casseroled Thing

(as never actually thrust upon Chris, but see my opening paragraphs)

This is guaranteed to be as authentically Oriental as Charlie Chan, the insidious Dr Fu-Manchu, or my pal Martin when he had jaundice. You need something suitable for lengthy cooking, e.g. quite a lot of cheap nasty belly pork (remove any fat, curly tails or nose-rings), or a similar amount of better pork when you feel solvent, modulating into stringy chicken should you feel bored with pork, or kosher, or whatever. The last time I cooked this, some 2 1/2 pounds of pork filled four people very full. You also need:

1 enormous onion (actually optional).

1 1/2 cups of Unauthentic Sauce. This is made by looking up Kenneth Lo's classic sweet-sour recipe in one of his cookbooks, which then reminds me of all the ways in which I do it differently (i.e. wrong). In the following, a "tbsp" is a tablespoon and a "tsp" a teaspoon. These are not exacty SI units: for the rigorous, I've consulted Katharine Whitehorn's deeply cheering book of desperate improvisations, How To Survive In The Kitchen, and she says that 1 tbsp equals 4 tsp, while 1 cup equals 5 tbsp of flour, sugar etc. but 10 tbsp of liquid (since flour protrudes obscenely to form a "rounded tablespoon" while liquids are perforce confined to a humble "level tablespoon" unless possessing staggering viscosity or amazing surface tension). 1 cup is about a quarter of a pint, a pint being 20 fluid ounces (if you wish to use the puny short measure on non-Imperial pints, do your own conversion), and can I please skip the metric equivalentents of all these? Thank you for this small kindness.

Where was I? Ah, the sauce....

2 tbsp brown sugar.

1 tbsp cornflour (or less, and it's optional anyway).

4 tbsp water or, better, chicken stock.

2 tbsp orange or pineapple juice (in juiceless times I have been known to throw in some crushed pineapple instead).

2 tbsp soy sauce.

2 tbsp medium-dry sherry. The technical term for this variety is, "For the love of God, Montresor!"

2 tbsp vinegar.

2 tbsp tomato purée. Tomato sauce may be substituted, but don't let the People's Republic hear about it. If you compromise by whizzing a tomato in the electric blender, the result will be more dilute than real purée -- reduce the water/stock content as suggested by sheer guesswork. NB: I'm switching to tsp units now. This warning might seem needless and fussy, but I remember the chutney I made using tablespoons rather than teaspoons of powdered cloves. It was good for applying to hollow teeth.

1 tsp sesame oil.

1/2 tsp chilli powder. (Or more. Or lots more.)

1/2 tsp five-spice powder.

Stir all sauce ingredients together until Godot arrives or obvious lumps have departed, whichever occurs first. Put meat in a suitable casserole with a lid, together with the chopped huge onion, which I have just decided is probably optional too. Pour on sauce, thrust into a coolish oven (Eminent authority in the form of K.Whitehorn says this means 225°F or 110°C, but I doubt that it's necessary for you to check this to 0.5° precision with a

pyrometer) and leave to its own devices for say 4 hours. As the moment of truth approaches, have a look under the lid and -- if the gooey parts seem a bit thin and runny -- add more cornflour stirred into sherry. (Add some sherry anyway. Have fun.) Wait a few minutes more, serve with rice, and be sure to use a washable tablecloth.

One of the great secrets of unauthentic cooking is that most ingredients, all proportions and all cooking times are negotiable... so don't fret about precise chronology and amounts. This is one of those squidgy dishes which anyway never turn out the same twice running -- largely because in spite of those frighteningly scientific tbsps and tps, one ends up (a) judging half the quantities by eye, and (b) throwing in interesting-looking extras for luck. Water chestnuts and cashews were both Good Ideas. Sugar-coated fennel seeds, Asian style, were agreed to be a mistake. (I'd actually been reaching for the next jar along. This sort of thing used to happen all the time when I worked with nuclear explosives.)

I think I'll skip the Langford pear wine recipe, since it may only work with the peculiarly vile and maggot-ridden pears produced by our garden, and winemaking technicalities are even more tedious than tbsps, and -- the clinching argument -- I've lost the bloody recipe anyway. It would, however, be unBritish to close without some vaguely booze-related items. The following have been tested on recent overnight visitors, and provide ideal conversation pieces at breakfast. They can also be eaten, on toast....

Really Quite Authentic Post-Party Welsh Rarebit

This comes with an epigraph from Don Marquis ("the bilge and belch of the glutton Welsh as they smelted their warlock cheese / surged to and fro where the grinding floe wrenched at the headlands knees") and shows how Britons can bring themselves to consume beer even for breakfast, with the aid of:

Cheese, the delicate variety known here as "mousetrap", i.e. case-hardened old cheddar from the fridge, and any and all wizened, dried-up bits left over from last night's party food. Only good cheese is verboden.

Black pepper, to taste.

An egg. Maybe two if you're making an awful lot.

Bread.

A little bitter beer (if none is available fresh, there are the dregs of glasses and bottles from that party, and after that you can start shaking and smelling abandoned cans to verify that they contain some stale beer but have not been adapted as impromptu ashtrays. As you see, we're talking real sleaze here).

Grate all the cheese and moisten the resulting flakes with the quantity of beer considered to be "enough", producing muck of sufficiently stiff consistency that it can be spread on toast but will not flow off it while cold. (Think "slime mould".) Stir in either the tediously separated yolk of the egg -- which is marginally more authentic -- or the egg's entire contents: in either case, this is what keeps the spread from flowing merrily off the toast when it is cooked. Slice and toast some bread; spread with goop; sprinkle with pepper etc. as desired; grill until brown and bubbly; eat.

than you expect, even when you know what to expect; but people are generally happy to carry on eating the result until supplies fail. "God help us, for we knew the worst too young."

It was famous Aussie fan Judith Hanna who forced the invention of this succulent slime, one groan-laden morning after a Langford party. She started converting odd remnants of cheese, milk and things into a sort of breakfast fondue. After long stirring and perspiring comments of "I'm sure this is the right way to do it," she found herself with a revolting viscous mass which squatted sullenly in the pan and refused point-blank to dissolve in an orderly fashion into the thin steaming pus which surrounded it. Before starting again and coming up with unauthentic rarebit as above, we poured the results of Judith's alchemy into an unloved tree-stump which had persistently refused to stop sending up shoots. It died within a month.

Meanwhile, for those with a sweet tooth, there is always...

Langford Patent Juniper And Quinine Lemon Marmalade

The ingredients are even less rigorously quantitative than before:

Many lemons.

Quite a lot of white sugar.

Some water.

Some more water (solid phase).

The all-important MARINADE.

This is not a recipe for the faint-hearted. Our most recent batch of this marmalade was two years in the making. (You will need a spare corner in the freezer, by the way.) It is the marinade which makes the process such a prolonged one, since only a small amount of lemon can be properly treated at one time.

The marinade should be prepared in the six- or eight-ounce liquor glass of your choice; it consists of approximately one part of gin to four (or two, or six, or one; who am I to cramp your culinary style?) of a good proprietary tonic water. "Diet" tonic water will completely ruin the flavour, although the marmalade will probably turn out OK. Ice may be added, and one slice of lemon is then slid delicately into the glass.

(Americans sometimes seem puzzled by subtle allusions to tonic water. Soda water might be good enough for T.S.Eliot's foot-bath, but is not the same: you want the stuff which is or used to be flavoured with quinine. Throw away those malaria chills, and walk again.)

It is a well-known phenomenon, extensively documented by Charles Fort, that this marinade evaporates with startling swiftness. Quite soon the prepared lemon slice can be removed from your suddenly empty glass and dropped into a plastic bag in the freezer. It is now permissible to treat another slice... and so on while supplies of marinade ingredients hold out and the cook can remain upright.

An admixture of non-marinated lemon is permissible: our 1987 batch of this fine preserve gained additional, subtle flavour from the inclusion of (a)

fine preserve gained additional, subtle flavour from the inclusion of (a) partially mildewed half-lemons discovered in the fridge after periods of slackness in marinade treatments; (b) lemon slices included with takeaway Indian meals, and thus interestingly flavoured with a soupçon of tandoori sauce; (c) country-of-origin labels accidentally left sticking to the occasional lemon rind.

When "enough" has been accumulated -- meaning that the plastic bag is full, the previous batch has run out, or one's spouse is complaining loudly about lack of space in the freezer -- the final preparations are easy. All the lemon shards are thawed, pips and things (especially moving things) removed, and the whole lot chopped thinly (perfectionist method) or shoved brutally through a mincer (my method).

It all goes in a big pan with the amount of water indicated above, being as little as will see you through the next stage. Bring to the boil and simmer for an hour or two, stirring with lackadaisical grace, until the bits are soft. During this period you are free to realize that you should have shut the doors and windows, since the penetrating smell acts as a long-range lure for enormous kamikaze wasps. Add exactly the amount of sugar specified above... no, I tell a lie, we just tip in more sugar until it tastes "right", meaning not too bitter to be eaten thinly spread on the substrate of your choice. Another half-hour of simmering and it can be ladled via a large jam funnel into previously heated jars. Put on the lids before too many loathsome spores drift in, hoping to surprise Sir Alexander Fleming.

(Our 1987 batch behaved in a semi-miraculous way: on the third day, instead of rising, it finally condescended to set.)

Certain aspects of the procedure are sufficiently boring -- especially the long simmering and the even longer wait for the stuff to set firmly enough to be tried -- that to pass the time one finds oneself irresistibly impelled to start work anew, marinating lemons for the next batch. Any fan wishing to drop in and help, thus cutting down that two-year preparation time, will be very welcome. Bring your own marinade ingredients.

Scholarly references:

Kingsley Amis: On Drink, 1972; Every Day Drinking, 1983.

M.F.K.Fisher: anything and everything.

Maurice Healy: Stay me with Flagons, 1940.

George Saintsbury: Notes on a Cellar-Book, 1920.

Katherine Whitehorn: How to Survive in the Kitchen, 1979.

Colin Wilson: A Book of Booze, 1974.

"You can't have a tasty donkey - it's a contradiction in terms!"

NOT A DIPLOMAT "I would like to see the US offer to take in the residents of Hong Kong written off by the shithead Brits who 'can't assimilate them.' (Notice that the Portuguese are managing to assimilate the

it would be an enormous humiliation to have an influx of people who can think, hustle, work, and generate capital.

"I know it would add up to quite a crowd, but I have a solution for that. The solution was suggested to me by Janice Willard, who spoke of an Idaho bumper sticker reading, 'Welcome to Idaho. Set your clock back 30 years.' Or something like that. Well, I suggest we take them in and give them Idaho. If any group could bring Idaho up to date, it would be this one. The whole US could use the capital. After all, Idaho isn't good for much else.

"The mafia was a pretty small time outfit, and they managed to put Nevada on the map. Okay, Los Vegas is pretty tawdry, but the mafia wasn't known for its taste. My guess is that the residents of Hong Kong have better taste than some bent-nosed guy named Vinnie; at least China has a more elaborate cuisine.

"Everybody I've spoken with who has been there says that Hong Kong is the shopping capital of the known universe. Even my kid, who hates to shop, says shopping in Hong Kong is great. And everybody says the food is glorious. How about the slogan: Bring it to Boise.

"Of course, some schmuck is going to ask why we don't turn over a really useless part of the US to Hong Kongers. Some place like one of the Dakotas, for instance, or Detroit. Well, if we want them to be good citizens and like living here, it wouldn't do to insult them too much, would it?

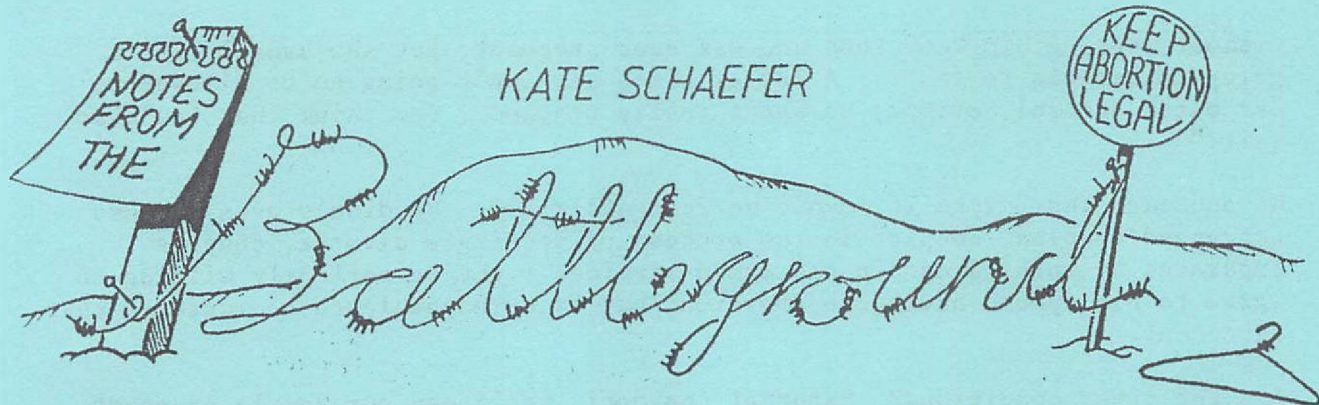
"Idaho has some spectacular scenery and is close enough to Oregon and Washington to encourage newcomers to establish civilization there. There is no reason to assume that since the current natives haven't done much with it there is not much to be done. After all, these are the natives who just passed the nation's most restrictive abortion law, taking the decision for abortion out of the hands of women and putting it in the hands of the largely male medical profession.

"The males of Idaho couldn't have passed this law alone. This means that the women of Idaho think they are too dumb to take the responsibility for their own pregnancies. They have put these decisions into the hands of men who, knowing what we know about genetics and the heritability of intelligence, are just as stupid as they are. Idaho badly needs an improvement in its gene pool. The residents of Hong Kong would provide that.

"And think of how terrific it would be if a whole bunch of people came in and reminded Americans that it is possible to make a living by actually manufacturing things rather than, say, by logging.

"Transport Hong Kong to Idaho. There is absolutely no down side to this. Freedom-loving people get a new home. Idaho gets a boost in IQ and an improvement in cuisine. The whole US gets a bunch of productive citizens with capital."

- Diane White
from Publicas Iamdudum Defututus Est
in A Woman's Age #81



I have been collecting signatures for the National Abortion Rights Action League recently - a development that might surprise some people I knew ten or fifteen years ago. I used to oppose abortion on fairly standard, somewhat naive grounds. My opinions were challenged by Anne-Laurie Logan and Avedon Carol, among others, and I was forced to re-examine them. I changed my mind.

Now I believe a different collection of fairly standard, somewhat less naive things. No one is in favour of abortion as birth control; abortion is an option of last resort, a least bad choice in many situations. Politically, the choice is not between legal abortions and no abortions; it's between legal abortions and illegal abortions. Given that abortion is legal, the political distinctions are drawn between private and public funding; minors and adults; married people and single people; first, second, and third trimesters; rape and incest victims versus women who voluntarily have sex; women in physical danger from pregnancy, and women who would probably survive pregnancy; women likely to bear a healthy child, and women likely to bear a child with serious birth defects. Who gets to make those political distinctions? It isn't going to be me, and I don't want it to be you, either. Or them.

Washington state's law, passed in 1970, allowed abortion in the first 16 weeks, with spousal consent for married women, parental consent for minors, and a 90-day residency requirement. It was a liberal law for the time. It was set aside by Roe v. Wade, but would go back into effect if Roe v. Wade were overturned. I was telling a male friend about this law, and he said it didn't sound bad to him. A female friend jumped on him right away.

"Spousal consent doesn't sound bad to you?"

"No, it seems fair that the father should get to have some say in what happens to the kid --"

"Maybe in a good relationship that would be fair, but let's say there's a woman trapped in an abusive relationship with more children than she can cope with already. You think that woman is going to get consent from her husband?"

"Well, no, but she could leave and get a divorce--" He didn't get to finish a whole lot of sentences in that conversation.

"Look, one of the things that defines an abusive relationship is the inability of the woman to leave. Maybe she can defy the man enough to get an abortion

without letting him know that she was ever pregnant, but she usually isn't going to be able to leave. A lot of times she isn't going to be allowed to use birth control, either, so she's really trapped. You think that law's so fair?"

He conceded that maybe it wasn't so fair after all. We didn't even discuss estranged couples, couples in the process of getting a divorce, couples separated by work; a man in the armed services might be perfectly willing to agree to his spouse having an abortion, but be unreachable to communicate that agreement.

And the other conditions? Parental consent? Let's say our sample pregnant woman is a child of 13, a victim of incest. Is the incestuous parent going to be a safe confidant for her? Is the non-protective parent? And what about the child of very religious parents who has different beliefs from theirs and wants to act as she believes, not as they do? How much consent is consent? Does the young woman need to get consent from one, or from both? If from both and only one agrees, it's emotional football time.

The first 16 weeks, also know as the first trimester? For most voluntary abortions, that should allow enough time to make the decision. First trimester abortions are the safest and easiest as well, requiring no hospitalization and minimal anaesthesia. Unfortunately, if the decision to abort is based on health considerations, either the mother's or that of the foetus, the information needed to make the decision is usually not available until the second trimester.

Residency requirements just seem like an assertion of privilege to me. If a woman is so foolish as to live in primitive Idaho rather than enlightened Washington, she can just suffer the consequences and go through her pregnancy. It would be possible to move to Washington already pregnant and get an abortion under the 16 week limit and after the 90-day residency requirement, but one would have to move without knowing oneself to be pregnant, as the 22-day margin would usually not allow time to miss a period and get a positive pregnancy test. Certainly in 1970 it wouldn't have been possible; pregnancy testing was not nearly as advanced as it is now. When I thought I was pregnant in 1975, I was told I would have to be six weeks along before a reliable result could be obtained.

I've provided emotional support for a few people going through abortion decisions, funded a couple (and been paid back), and held the hand (and shoulders - abortion is not a painless or easy procedure) of a woman during the operation itself. I've been fortunate enough never to have become pregnant myself the few times I've thought I was, my period started right after getting negative results on the pregnancy test. If I were to get pregnant now, I would try to carry to term, but a few years back, in shaky financial and emotional circs - well, I think I would have gone ahead and tried to carry to term anyway. But it would have been my decision.

My elder stepdaughter and her roommate have been serving as escorts at the women's clinic in Portland, where Operation Rescue (the Right to Life group staging sit-ins, currently) has been quite active. After hearing them talk about their experiences, I decided to volunteer too, but hadn't yet done so

when I went to see the dentist and found the building surrounded by Operation Rescue picketing my doctor, whose office is in the same building. I found myself shaking, crying, furious. Mingling with the Operation Rescue types were NARAL members, escorting patients into the building and quietly getting signatures supporting the right to abortion. I signed. I signed up.

The next day Glenn Hackney (my spouse) and I collected signatures at Green Lake, the most popular park in Seattle. We were terrified. What if somebody spat at us? What if they called us babykillers? What if they beat us up?

Nobody beat us up, nobody spat at us, and nobody called us babykillers, though a couple of people muttered about murder as they walked by. One man stood at his female companion's side muttering, "Babykiller." She poked him sharply with her elbow and said, "Shut up," and continued signing. A couple rollerskated by as we gave our spiel; the man said, "Not today, we're too busy." The woman said, "I want to sign!" She grabbed the back of his jeans and brought them both to a halt. He signed, too. Women with babies signed; an elderly Catholic woman signed; young men signed. Our first signature came from a street person: "Hold my bottle and lemme read that. I'm not drunk yet, I know what I'm doing, and I want to sign."

We collected 130 signatures in an hour and twenty minutes. I could not count the number of women who thanked us for being there, the number who signed and said, "God, not this fight again, I thought we had won years ago."

A few weeks later I collected signatures at a Women & Business conference. Most of the afternoon I was alone; for about half an hour a law student from the University of Washington joined me. Women stood in line to sign the petition. No one said anything even the slightest bit negative all afternoon. Women signed and told me stories: familiar stories about illegal abortions, friends who died, friends who were sterile, friends who had their babies and lost their chances at college. And they told me about their daughters, who assumed that of course they had the right to abortion, of course it would be affordable, of course they wouldn't have to leave town to get it, and of course they would live through it. Of course. The mothers would shake their heads. "I want my daughter to be able to go on thinking that way," one of them said.

Nobody had to convince these women that to stay in business they needed the right to control their own bodies.

The law student was depressed by the conference. She said she had expected it to be more political. The NARAL booth was the only political booth there. I was a bit disappointed, myself. I had expected a few other political booths; I had expected the gay and lesbian business group to have a booth. Instead, there were Mary Kay Cosmetics and Weight Watchers across the aisle from us, a sweatshirt dealer to one side, a women's self-defence videotape and seminar dealer to the other. Throughout the hall, clothing, cosmetics, accessories, and food/diet booths far outnumbered financial advisors, stockbrokers, and computer consultants. I was cheered to find the Sound Savings booth; Sound Savings is a predominantly women-run and women-oriented bank, started about the same time as the First Women's Bank in New York. I was depressed to find a booth for a women's recovery centre for substance abuse.

I told the law student that the conference was really different from what it would have been like in my day. She was amused. "In your day? You're not that much older than me."

"Well, let's just say 15 years ago. Fifteen years ago there wasn't such a conference - this is only the twelfth - but if there had been, it would have been 80% political, and at least 50% lesbian. There isn't a woman here who's obviously lesbian."

"Yeah, that must have been great."

"No, no, no! I mean, yes, yes, yes, but this is great too. All these businesses, as trivial as they seem, are real businesses, run by real women. Fifteen years ago they wouldn't have existed. These women would all have been home raising their kids or working as secretaries for other people - for men. Fifteen years ago you had to be really political and radical to attend anything that said women had the right to do things men did, like make money."

"Huh." She politely turned back to her studies. I could tell she didn't really believe that the Women & Business conference represented anything political at all. When she left a few minutes later, she said, "Good luck with these - these Republicans!"

"Republicans? They're mostly not Republicans. What makes you think that?"

"Well, just look at how they're dressed." The women attending the conference were dressed like businesswomen, naturally, in standard business drag.

I laughed. "That's camouflage. They dress like that to survive. I dress like that to survive." At least, I thought what I was wearing looked like normal business clothing. Had I been out of the business world long enough that I looked that different? No; she just saw me behind the booth, so I had automatic liberal credentials.

"Huh. See you around." she left, carrying away her ideals and her youthful sullenness and preconceived notions. I turned to the sweatshirt dealer (her shirts said, "Relax, there's a woman in charge") and shrugged. She shrugged back.

I had to cancel my next signature-gathering commitment because I was ill. I went in to see my doctor. We discussed my health; she prescribed big vitamins, pushing fluids, and big rest. As she always does at the end of the exam, she said, "is there anything else you'd like to discuss?" and I told her about volunteering for NARAL.

She nearly cried. She thanked me for supporting her. She said she'd had a lot of hate mail since the original sit-in. She said her malpractice insurance premiums were double what they would be if she didn't do abortions, and she often considered giving it up because of the extra trouble and expense. She told me about the patients who were barred from the clinic that day, none of whom were scheduled for abortions, one of whom was a woman having a miscarriage which might have been prevented if she'd been able to get to her doctor. She said she wouldn't quit, she wouldn't be frightened away by

Operation Rescue, she was just made more angry and determined, and it really helped to know that she wasn't alone.

In July, the Webster decision came down. It was mixed. We went to a rally on the 4th of July. People talked about freedom, and whether we had any. Foolish analogies between flags and women were made (after all, the Supreme Court hadn't protected the flag from burning; they protected the right of free speech symbolized by burning the flag. It was Congress and the President who got all bent out of shape about the flag).

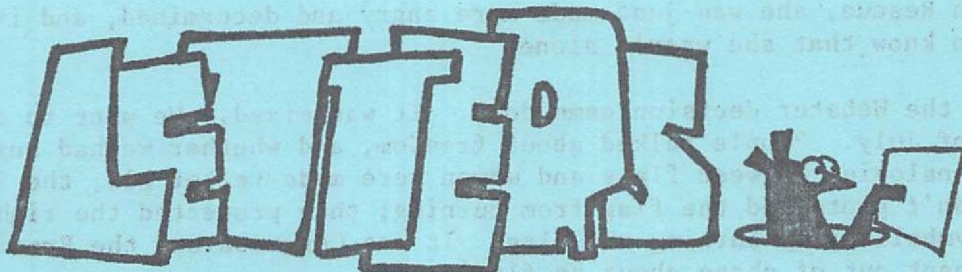
In October, we went to a rally and march to demonstrate our support of abortion rights. Bella Abzug was the keynote speaker. (Talk about the warm-up speaker, a warm, vibrant, excited black woman who left the mostly white Protestant crowd politely cold, then followed by Abzug, who knew what to do with a crowd like that" get them to recite a pledge after her. You know, like the Apostle's Creed or responsive readings. Talk about the death threat. Talk about feeling terrified, and deciding to march anyway; considering going to join the women with obvious lesbian identification, because they were the ones with the direct threat; deciding against it because the crowd was really too thick, and a terrorist like that would probably think we were all lesbians anyway. Talk about the counter-demonstrators, and Glenn facing down the woman with the baby praying over us. Talk about the cold, and running into people we knew.)

What happens next? Whatever it is, I know that it won't be the end. There won't be an end to the abortion fight until there is a perfectly controllable, perfectly available, perfectly functioning form of birth control that never, never, never fails. And maybe not even then. Anyway, I'll be out there, doing what I can to keep abortion legal. Would you like to sign a petition? Buy a button? How about a t-shirt, or this nice informative poster?

* * * * *

QUOTE: "The salient characteristic of Tobias' letter is that he's irked not because of the content of the opinion expressed, but by the very idea that an opinion could carry with it moral conviction and therefore be perceived as superior to an opposing opinion. This is precisely the kind of spineless relativism prophesized by Nietzsche over a hundred years ago. Tobias' implicit tolerance of racism represents a tolerance so protean as to castrate and nullify any expression of conviction. ...Tobias equates racism with communism, capitalism, Satanism, Judaism and drugs; Satanism and Judaism...should lay the same claim to our conscience as racism. Tolerance becomes an ideology, an end in itself, a morally empty belief that never has to justify itself because it is free of content. It's rightness never has to be proved in any context; it simply is. In the end this doctrine of tolerance is a debasement of liberalism because it devalues the commitment of values over and against opposing values. Any argument more serious than an intellectual parlor game is ultimately dealt with by those who can't bother to make up their mind by the simple expedient of embracing contradictory moral and philosophical positions simultaneously."

- Gary Groth, replying to a letter-writer's criticism of criticism
in The Comica Journal, #136



Lucy Huntzinger
2523 Sunset Place
Nashville, TN 37212
USA

Thank you for PULP 15. I felt real nostalgia for the good old, bad old days of 1984 as I read Rob's trip report. That was a particularly momentous year for me and it all went downhill after LACon. But not permanently. Still, the con was something of a last hurrah and it's pleasant to see someone else's perspective on it. How life has changed since then. The last time I saw Norman Spinrad was last summer in Paris. He gave a speech, in French, to the Cosmos 2000 Book Award ceremony on the subject of L. Ron Hubbard representing de-evolution. I applauded, of course. The local New Era people did not.

And me, six years after, I'm living in the buckle on the Bible Belt. It's weird as hell, a bit like going back 30 years into a suburban nightmare of noisy neighbours, thinly-veiled racism, and a deep distrust of anything unfamiliar. To combat this, I am about to enroll in travel agent school, on the theory that I can live anywhere as long as I can leave it regularly. Superficially, it's just another mid-sized American town, happily living outside the global consciousness. Big issues here are the landfill (no one wants a new one, the old one is used up), labelling of music (remember Tipper Gore? This is her husband's state), and the new Billboard Country Music chart. Mercy.

I also enjoyed Avedon's rant, the style being particularly suitable to the subject. The issue was pleasingly solid, not something I always require from a fanzine but something I've come to expect from PULP.

Robert Lichtman
PO Box 30
Glen Ellen, CA 95442
USA

Good to read more of Rob's TAFF report, especially as this is the portion partially paralleling my own experiences at LAConII. That first party was being held by CRAPA-PI, I believe, one of the hundreds of American apas. I don't remember much about that party, but perhaps we didn't stay long. You certainly don't dwell on it beyond your description of Amy Thomson's attire. I mostly remember Ted's party as a great blur of smoke and letter files. It was Topic A Central, the peak of my Topic A Experience. All that and good company, too. I seem to remember a bit of the convention much later that evening, well after Ted's party was history, where you and I ran into Sharee Carton in a stairwell, stopped and smoked some dope with her, and then went on. But I could be mixing conventions and people. Do you recall anything like this?

Liked Jeanne's speech. Skills I picked up in fandom definitely crop up in my everyday life. Because of putting out fanzines for over 30 years, I'm very quick to be able to visualize a new form, a table or chart, an interesting format for a batch of statistics, and so I'm the lead word processor where I work and get to spend a lot of unstructured time just screwing around. (This week WordPerfect 5.1 got put on the computer network and I'm playing around with it. It has a wonderful new mailing label generation utility that I wish I'd had a couple weeks ago when I was hand-perfecting the placement of my labels for TRAP DOOR.)

I don't really have much trouble explaining various aspects of fandom to people. Mostly this happens at work, where because of my TAFF trip quite a few are aware of my hobby. A number of them know that I publish a fanzine and that I basically send it out in response for trades, letters and contributions. They understand when I say that while I make it available for money, I don't feel obligated to necessarily put anyone who locs on that basis on my mailing list unless I'm interested in what they have to say. I tell them that putting out a fanzine on that basis is sort of like holding a party through the mails, and just like with any party, the host gets to pick and choose who to invite. People can relate to this sort of explanation.

Avedon, hooray for your editorial! I was particularly taken by the procession of six Dale Spenders. Ghod, has it really been going on that long without sticking? When will "men" get their act together and allow women the same freedom they expect for themselves? On other fronts, of course, when will rich people stop manipulating economic reality in their attempts to preserve their richness? I hope to hell the American electorate won't re-elect Bush in '92, but I have my doubts. Several generations of TV-brainwashed Americans may be too stupid to vote of their true best interests anymore. Kornbluth's "Marching Morons" was definitely on track. On other fronts, the circus-like atmosphere of the so-called war on drugs, with drugs ballyhooed as the big national scandal instead of the spectacle of white men grabbing off huge sums of money in savings and loan "scandal", golden parachutes from companies going under (the Drexel Burnham Lambert "scandal"), and the like continues to nauseate. George plugs himself as the education president, but there's no additional money for education; as the environment president, but opposes a strict clean air law because of the cost to comply for business - and so on and on. The same group of people includes realtors, who've removed basic housing from the realm of basic need to the realm of investment potential, so that the rich bid it up and the ghod of Market Value prevails in an incredible inflation. Medical professionals who charge more and more for less and less. Attorneys who pimp for obviously guilty people. In general, an orgy of unregulated greed has swept over the nation and stands an excellent chance of taking it down.

Janice M. Eisen
225 State Street #454
Schenectady, NY 12305
USA

I appreciated your editorial about (among other things) anti-sex feminists. So far as I know, Andrea Dworkin is the most prominent such thinker in these parts; her most recent book, titled Intercourse, is indeed based on the premise that heterosexual sex is inherently oppressive. A number of years ago she was quoted as saying that heterosex was all right as long as the man didn't get an erection. I leave you to furnish details.

Dworkin, of course, is also heavily involved in efforts to censor pornography. Those of us feminists who have qualms about any type of censorship are often treated as traitors, or at the very least co-opted by men. (We probably even have sex with men!) At college I attended the first meeting of a newly-formed feminist group, and was made to feel so unwelcome because of my position on censorship that I never returned.

And on a related note, I recently saw a rather strange essay by our old friend Phyllis Schlafly. There has apparently been some debate over whether private military academies, like the Virginia Military Institute and the Citadel, should be forced to admit women. Phyllis, that dear soul, spent paragraphs explaining that women don't want to have their hair cut close to the scalp, or to be called "Brother Rat", or...Well, you get the idea.

Admittedly, I'm not so keen on any of those fine military traditions myself - but then, I don't know too many men who want to be treated that way. But of course, the fundamental problem with Phyllis's dissertation on "what women want" is that some women must want those experiences, or the issue wouldn't have come up.

So from both ends of the spectrum, I'm being told what I really want, or what I should want, and I'm tired of it.

Re-reading Rob Hansen's report on LACon is particularly interesting since I've just got back from my first trip to the LA area. I had a good time, but the scariest thing I saw was a billboard reading as follows: "L.Ron Hubbard. 22 international best-sellers, and more to come..."

On the same trip, I had the opportunity to try out the car Harlan Ellison was shilling for; our rental car was a Geo Prizm (sic). It's a nice little car, actually - it's comfortable, it handles well, and it gets great gas mileage. It's no muscle car, of course, but it's not an underpowered tin box either. ~~Hmmmm~~, maybe they'll hire me to do some commercials now: Janice M. Eisen, noted driver...

I may not have taken a test drive, as Kev McVeigh suggests, but I do have a copy of Angry Candy. And I think Harlan Ellison's supposed failings are by definition irrelevant to the quality of his art. Plenty of brilliant art has been produced by scoundrels or worse. (I do not mean to imply that Ellison is a scoundrel; I don't know the man and so can't make any such judgments.)

I do want to make clear to Ken Cheslin that the description of Margaret Thatcher as a "looker" was not mine, but that of various newspapers I read while I was in England. I don't think she's terribly good looking, but then, that's not relevant, is it? And, unfortunately, I don't remember who it was who said she had "legs like Dietrich" - either a Tory politician or a columnist for one of the tabloids, but I don't remember which.

I was terribly sorry to hear of Atom's death when I'd hoped he was continuing to do better. I didn't know him personally, but I'll miss his contribution to fandom.

((I suppose I ought to take this opportunity to offer our readership the

opportunity to make out cheques to Feminists Against Censorship, which can be forwarded through this address. -ac))

Ian Bambro
Ivy Cottage
Ivy Road
Gosforth
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE3 1DB

Notwithstanding the excellence of the Harry Bell cover, I can only look at it with sadness, having just heard from Vinç of the death of Arthur Thomson. Harry told me a few days ago - I don't think he will mind me repeating this - that if it were not for Atom, he himself might not have become a fan artist. As a relative newcomer and no artist myself, all I can say is that I've never seen an Atom illo that did not give me pleasure both by its professional finish and its (occasionally wry) good humour. How much greater the sense of loss must be for those who knew and worked with him.

Richard Brandt
4740 N. Mesa #111
El Paso, TX 79912
USA

I just spent a week on a grand tour of the Permian Basin, which means this loc on PULP 15 is even later than it might regularly be, inconceivable as that must hitherto have seemed. (You must admit, slogging through the oilfields beats the usual excuses; you know, the post office has been stolen and all that.) I would have been remiss, however, not to write in praise of Harry Bell's cover, or to applaud your publication of Jeanne Gomoll's Toastmaster speech - even hearing it, I was struck with admiration for the quality of her writing; it was, like its subject, elegant and seamless.

I see in the news that Maggie pushed through her scheme to tax those populations the heaviest who are forced to crowd into the smallest living spaces, with riots ensuing. Am I interpreting that correctly?

Chuch Harris' story sounds like some kind of stf novel. Deadly Litter, maybe.

And as for Geogre Bondar's comment on Ellis Bell: haven't the Bronte sisters claimed Jane Eyre's autobiography as their own work for long enough already?

Mike Glicksohn
508 Windermere Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
CANADA M6S 3L6

Many thanks for PULP #16, despite the sadness which surrounds the issue. I'm glad you had an Atom cover for the issue dedicated to his memory; that seems the only way it could have been done. Rob's obituary seemed a little dry and factual for a fanzine that was closely associated with Atom's renaissance as a fan, but perhaps the more emotional tributes are being saved for the memorial fanzine. I trust you'll publicize that issue when it appears for overseas readers who would like to have a copy. I regret that I never knew Atom personally, but he certainly made a strong positive impression on me through his generosity and talent and, like everyone else who has ever fund fanzine fandom a rewarding and enjoyable place to be, I'll miss the sense of joy he contributed to our common milieu.

Despite Mister Harvey's glib editorializing, I stand by my statement: your weight may change but you gain or lose mass. Semantics, I guess, since the latter is a measured quantity and the former is a measured influence.

Enjoyable little typical-work-tale by Marc. I'm not sure whether to be sad that I never seem to get anecdotal material out of my own classes or happy

that there's very little chance that a mistake made (either by a student or by myself) is going to result in the loss of limbs, eyes or life. All in all I'd rather teach math; it's safer, easier and smells a lot better.

Sorry for that short delay - I had to unstaple the fanzine, switch the first page of Rob's TAFF report section around and re-staple it. It's really hard to find decent collating help nowadays, isn't it?

A good solid piece of fannish reporting by Rob. Lots of names, fannish references, irony, anecdotes with just a leavening of reaction/interpretation. And of course, I'm still delighted Rob is continuing to work on the report and look forward to adding the single volume complete edition to my fanzine library Real Soon Now!

Should Alan Sullivan decide to spend all that money to attend a US con, he ought to be warned in advance to attend something like Corflu or Ditto or Midwestcon or, if he really must see a 2000+ person con, then Minicon. Of course it is "just getting into the right group of people that makes a con", but more and more the right groups of people either aren't at the worldcon or can't be found when they are there.

Best media-oriented button of the year award goes to "My name is Batman. You killed my father. Prepare to die."

rich brown
508 N. Highland #B4
Arlington, VA 22201
USA

I continue to enjoy your convention report immensely, Rob, but in defence of that strange Scots-American fan you mention, I must say that here in the States "Scotch" seems to be used interchangeably with "Scottish," no matter how strange or wrong that may actually be. Neither Scotch tape nor Scotch broth contain a drop of alcohol, sad to say. But you're right about people here in the States claiming to be "from" places they and none of their immediate family have ever been to, just because someone far back in their family tree came from there. That's in part, though, because the only "real" Americans are Indians - otherwise everyone here ultimately "came" from somewhere else. I can honestly claim to be $1/16$ th American - my great-great grandmother was full-blooded Comanche. You couldn't tell that by looking at my father, but it really showed up in my grandfather. Then too, while "American" tends to be the tag placed on people from the United States (because "United Statesian" is unwieldy), Canadians, Mexicans, Brazilians, Peruvians, Salvadoreans, etc., are all American in that sense, too. Here in the States, people are further tagged by regions ("Southerner," "Midwesterner," etc.) and states. By birth I'm a Texan/ Californian (my parents were both born in Texas, I in California), and by residence I've been both a New Yorker and a Virginian.

Langford is superb and should have his posterior pickled or something. His research on punctuation, particularly with respect to the semicolon, reminds me of the earlier illuminated work of Dr. Sidney Coleman having to do with what is sometimes known as the "comma fault" - the placement of a comma where a semicolon belongs, thus producing the run-on sentence which in turn touches on Things Man Was Not Meant To Know - or at least becomes so incomprehensible that it becomes Something Man Can't Possibly Figure Out. For all that Coleman presented a convincing case for the utter purity of the semicolon, his work

was not of what you would call a break-through nature; he admitted being influenced by teachers who demonstrated their horror and disgust at the comma fault by refusing to refer to it by name, instead calling it "37x". In Dr. Coleman's immortal words, "Some people commit 37x like Earl Kemp has harpies." As I recall, the good doctor also included an illustration of Mary Worth with a goatee as proof of his contention that Earl Kemp "made Mary Worth look like the Marquis de Sade".

Sue Thomason
111 Albermarle Road
York
NORTH YORKSHIRE YO2 1EP

I'm happy to join you in remembering and praising the (now completed) life and work of Atom. His artwork has given me much pleasure, many wry smiles in recognizing the familiar/unfamiliar perversity of the universe. The typical little Atom-sentient is feeling somewhere between slightly and very put-upon, dealing with an unexpected or surprising situation, but retains its basic good humour and optimism. I shall continue to enjoy many Atom cartoons for many years.

Dave Langford has now done for punctuation what Terry Pratchett has done for Macbeth, and Chuch Harris has done for Neighbourhood Watch. Marc Ortlieb has done for chickens, and I expect someone will now do for me (and I don't mean char-ing, I mean being charred; roasted, barbecued, fried, parboiled even. Hey, this free-association humour is kinda fun, and possible even at 5:48 PM naughtily "at work" but secretly loccing in the firm's time while not occupied moving round all the filmstrips so they'll fit in the smaller filing cabinet's drawers. There should be a) in there somewhere, so use that one. How about @ as a creative random punctuation sign@ On my w@p monitor it looks rather like a beansprout@ Now that I try it@ it@s actually quite hard to avoid putting in the usual dots and dashes @@ the urge to punctuate is evidently quite strong@

((If that was intended as a pre-emptive strike, it obviously didn't work - Langford was ready for you. - ac))

David Langford
94 London Road
Reading
BERKSHIRE RG1 5AU

"I capitulate? *I have been completely =.won.= over by Sue Tomason/s argument] that rigid rules of)) punctuation[(are a fas*cist straightjacket &&& Down with them+ In fact? one could say the same of <spelling> and ff in future ff I won t let the IMPACT of my writ,ing be -lessened- by mng wrxbl fniop lhooq u dirboggly quirax Sue yb ptuid\$ @

Rick Sneary
2962 Santa Ana Street
South Gate, CA 90280
USA

The way I have been feeling lately, nothing gets done - or at least, not very quickly - around here. The trouble with my lungs gets slowly worse, and necessitates my planning to move to Nevada next year, to be near my sister and large family. Someone to call on when I need help. And while these regrettable but necessary changes are acceptable to my conscious brain, the thought of moving from where I was born and lived all my life seems to have affected my sub-conscious mind, and the psychosomatic spells leave me panting for breath, and too tired to even read at times. I'm not getting done the things I need to do, to prepare for the move, much less keep up with fanac. But PULP #16 came a few days ago, and as I have missed writing to give thanks for what has been my favourite of the

current fanzines, I'm bumping everything else to get in a quick response. Langford was enjoyable, though brief. Surely the brave Oregonians got more than this from their guest...* You will pardon me if I don't take sides in all this talk about punk-u-nations and free-hand spelling. Jack Speer told me 45 years ago that I should stay away from a typewriter until I learned to write and spell. Given a choice of writing or learning to write, I choose to write. I am not pleased to be ill-educated, but I have enjoyed myself - and now this electronic typewriter helps with the spelling.

The tribute to Arthur Thomson was very good. I never corresponded with him much, but I think I enjoyed the time spent with him, when he was here, more than with any of the other male Brits I have met. (Of course, never had the opportunity with most of them.) For forty years fanzines have been made more fun by his cartoons. He and Rotaler became Masters of the mimeo art form. Their seemingly simple drawings, done with minimal lines, could be copied onto stencil by the most ham-fisted fanned, and still look good. I have said before that Atom was more responsible for our getting the 1958 worldcon than anyone else. I started it in 1948 as a serious but humorous idea, to bring the Con to South Gate in '58 - it was a catchy slogan, and soon it started showing up in Atom cartoons. A crowded room would have a little sign on the wall, a mob scene would have a little man with a sign... It, like Kilroy, was everywhere, and by 1956 we Outlanders found fandom in England helped, too. (That, and being unopposed.) But Arthur not only helped sell fandom on the idea, but convinced us that we should do it.

Kev P. McVeigh
37 Firs Road
Milnthorpe
CUMBRIA LA7 7QF

I think 'I've filed the latest PULP under the Chinese alphabet system, because I can't find it to write this loc, so here is the latest news on disintegrating condoms:

First up is a report from new Zealand, where 36% of recent pregnancies are alleged to have been conceived whilst using a Durex condom. Follow-up tests showed a 7% failure rate - how do they test them anyway? It seems that NZ authorities had taken Durex's word for it, because of their good name, and had allowed them to be imported without checking them. Oops!

Meanwhile, in Britain, researchers are attempting to produce the dissolving condom. Apparently when we all flush them down the toilet they pass unscathed through sewage treatment plants, and end up trapped on rocks in our rivers. Ecology-minded scientists are aiming to produce a sheath which is photo-sensitive and begins to degrade when exposed to light. Needless to say, some people are worried about this.

However, there is other opposition. Some ecologists feel that since most sewage is only detectable by chemical testing, the existence of condoms in rivers is visible evidence of sewage contamination, and hence of potential poisons.

I wonder, myself, whether both these arguments don't make certain assumptions about people's sexual behaviour - the first suggests that people always make

*They did - and some of it was published by Dave Wood in XYSER.

love in the dark; whilst the second neglects those condoms thrown directly into streams, etc., in the absence of a convenient toilet/sewage works by couples out in the woods.

Writing this, I've had thoughts about surveying Britfandom as a whole about condoms, and devoting a fanzine to the results. What do you think?

((I think you should survey Britfandom as a whole about condoms and send the resulting article to PULP. I also think - and I hadn't realized that this might be a radical idea, but you know how loony-left-raving-feminist-crazy I am - people should try throwing their condoms in the trash bin. - ac))

Allan D. Burrows
320 Maple Grove Avenue
Mississauga, Ontario
CANADA L5A 1Y2

Why did nobody warn Rob Hansen about American beer? Coors, for instance, is both undrinkable (I know, I've tried) and politically incorrect. The manufacturers, as I hear, are union busters and advocate male chauvinism.

Oh, there are microbreweries in Wisconsin that brew up some very palatable suds indeed (as I learned at Corflu 6), but the big breweries turn perfectly good cereal grains into perfectly awful beer - and even Canada's two big companies make better ale and lager than Coors!

Back last summer or so, Canada's Fannish Newszine, MLR, published an article by an anthropologist who is also a fan and has been observing the fannish scene for some time. His remarks about conventions came awfully close to Rob's description of the LAcon art show. There's a lack of originality in fandom these days, he said. Everything's derivative and we're more concerned with reinforcing our own consensual "self-image" than doing anything creative. We don't even set standards for the pros anymore, we're too concerned with identifying ourselves with each other. He said all this at length and in proper High Falutin', of course. What scared me is, it rings true!

Ron Salomon
1014 Concord Street
Framingham, MA 01701
USA

Jim Henson died today and I feel sad, having met the man at a skiffy con several years ago. Was it the same LAcon Rob writes about? Anyways, Henson was a nice guy in my dealings with him, and I of course worry about Where This Leaves Kermit. Actually, my first thought at hearing he died mysteriously shortly after being admitted to a Manhattan hospital was: could they have put him in the Andy Warhol Memorial Hospital Suite? Didn't Andy Warhol's doctor once say, "Everyone's alive for fifteen minutes and then they're dead"? But, anyhow, being a now-regular viewer of Sesame Street and seeing all the sly adult stuff they sneak into the show, it really is a perpetual wonder to see all the Muppets, and also to know they are perpetual.

But what has this got to do with the zine at hand? Well, pardon my topicality, but I did integrate the remarks with fannishness, yes?

Still on the subject of death, I also met Atom once, at a con, briefly, and also have a nice memory of him. Maybe if I wasn't so archetypically Shy and Sensitive I wouldn't interacted more and had great tales to tell of both gentlemen. But no, no Typical American slap-on-the-back effusiveness here, no

Sir and Ma'am. No "Hihowareya how'd you get your teeth that colour?" opener. Never had the stomach to blithely glide over and start the Conversation on my end. Well.

I thought (silly me!) Neighbo(u)rhood Watch was an Amurrican invention (since we supposedly cornered the market on crime). Oh.

"When the ~~best~~ beer ran out we grabbed Rich Coad..." Well, it took me a while to finish the sentence as the imagery is so strong.

A lovely and long lettercol. Yes, enjoyable. Everything cycles, yes. think right now (uh, totally unscientific, non-provable words here) in the '90s, more women have been brainwashed to want men to masturbate in them, and accept that as something satisfying, than say 10-20 years ago. Many men have always preferred masturbating in(to) women than off on their own. Yes. Them guys are the ultimate reactionaries. Maybe I've been listening too much to my newly-purchased CD version of St. Pepper and Abbey Road, but I think Woodstockers at least pretended, and sometimes even meant to have, mutual love-making rather than today's mechanical non-emotional crap. So OK, bring back Flowerpower, eh? More people today (he continued) are more afraid to find their own emotions because they know it can lead to other emotions appearing. My Ghu, then we'd have people caring about things. Other than internal/selfish. That leads to frustration, yes, but some action, too.

((Actually, if Flowerpower boys had been all that great at love-making, Flowerpower girls might not have turned into such angry feminists (and political lesbians) so fast. Nah - I think in every generation so far, there have always been those men who bought any rubbish about women they heard, those men who have never forgiven their mothers for raising them - but also those men who never learned how to be contemptuous of women. Being a better class of guy, they very probably did experiment with drugs in the '60s, grow out their hair, and get into the Grateful Dead and the Jefferson Airplane (and probably still do) and take a more sincere approach to the better ideology of the period. But a lot of guys just used that rhetoric as an excuse to hassle women into having sex with them and were idiots, just like we've always seen. For all I know, younger good guys could be neo-flower children, but they could just as easily be the guys who wore blue mohawks or heavy metal kids or even kids who wear suits. I'm not sure you could ever pick them out of the crowd just by looking at them. You have to remember that, then and now, the idea that a woman's sexuality is the property of her husband or lover, and that sex is something women "have" that men have to "get" from them, has always been the most pervasive ideology. This has not been significantly changed by the sexual freedom movement of the '60s or by the feminist movement of the last 20 years. Sure, there are plenty of guys who don't go along with it, but they haven't had much of an effect on changing the laws or the centre of discourse when related subjects are discussed in the news, by our legislators, or from the court benches. Whether things are any different in the boys' lockerrooms in the high school gym remains to be seen, but I doubt it.

Of course, one could always view the fact that younger men seem to be much more interested in older women lately as evidence that the younger generation is actually smarter than ours was. But that's probably a whole 'nother matter. - ac)

Brian Earl Brown
11675 Beaconsfield
Detroit, MI 48224
USA

Kev's point about Axl Rose should be put in light of the current debate over Rap Music. It's getting attacked from several directions for promoting race hatred (of whites and Jews), violence and misogyny. But missing from this is any discussion of the race

hatred, violence and misogyny of white-oriented heavy metal acts. Thus these attacks on rap music, a genre I loathe, appear to be racist. An album by the rap group 2 Live Crew has been declared pornographic in several counties in Florida with record merchants being hauled off to jail for selling it (before it was declared obscene, of course, a classic double-bind.)

Mark Greener
38 Dumow Road
Bishops Stortford
HERTS

Kev McVeigh asks what can we do? I'll tell you. Make a stand. Object to racism. Object to sexism. If that gives you a bad reputation, so be it. Yes, we must boycott records by Guns'n'Roses in the same way we boycott South African fruit. The attitudes

underlying each are the same. Note: not similar; the same.

Sexism is a more difficult problem. Like it or not, men and women are biologically different. The bottom line must be that women are not punished either financially or socially for their biological functions - and that includes childbirth. There should be adequate childcare provision so that if a woman wants to return to work she can. If she, or her partner, wants to remain at home, that should be ok, too. The choice should be that of that family. The reaction against the mother at home which is beginning to evolve, that there is something wrong with staying at home, is just as silly - and I mean silly - as old-fashioned attitudes about men not staying at home or women's place being in the kitchen and bedroom.

The biological function of childbirth is the basis of a woman's psychology - and probably men's as well. Freud was right in this at least. In men it is just more deeply hidden. As I type, I'm balancing my six month old daughter on my knee. Her birth forced a reassessment of my attitudes in a way no dry political polemic could. I suspect that once we get a non-sexist approach to childcare, once either parent can look after the child or the woman return to work (or not) without social stigma, the remaining sexist institutions will be easier to destroy. Hit the foundations and even the strongest castle will topple. Working for such a change will be of far more value than worrying about sexist language in a magazine.

((I think it's still worth worrying about sexist language in magazines - after all, your kid may get some of her ideas about people from those magazines, and so may the people she has to interact with (some of whom might be, you know, teachers, doctors, rapists, etc.).

"Hit the foundations," you say, but what about this theory that says the "foundations" are found in the family, in the way women stay at home and take the nurturing role while men don't? Some people believe this can only be solved by equal roles among men and women at home, and others believe that children should get their primary care from the parent of the same sex, in order to defeat sexist socialization. Certainly, that is contradicted when you say that whether or not the woman stays home with the child is a "silly" concern. What if it is causal to sexism if women are the primary nurturers of

males? Then the idea that maybe mother's shouldn't become "housewives" isn't such a "silly" idea. - ac))

Eunice Pearson
20 Birch Terrace
Birtley
CO. DURHAM DH3 1JL

Pamela Boal writes, "There may be periods when one's fanaticism is very minimal, but those strands are always there forming a warm, welcoming weave if and when one becomes more active again." And I'm finding out how true that is. I retired when I became pregnant with

Elizabeth, apart from a few apas, and now I'm slowly coming back into fandom again. Just looking through the loccol of PULP was a delight, seeing so many familiar names. I've vague plans for doing a fanzine again and it would be nice to introduce Elizabeth to cons (she's interested in apas!).

Elizabeth (now aged 3 1/2) is discovering punctuation. She is eager to learn to read so she watches very carefully when I point to words as I'm reading to her. My father explained full stops and commas to her and now she's interested in question marks! (Oh, and exclamation marks, too.) Well, it makes a change from her endless questions about how the heart works.

John: I used to be an addicted user of the dreadful double-hyphens, but after exercising my will-power I was able to give them up. Now I use semicolons instead. (And I'm kind to them, so Dave Langford needn't worry.)

I didn't know Arthur Thomson very well, apart from a nice letter he sent me for one of my zines. I didn't even know he'd died until I got PULP 16. FAPA is like that, so many nice older fans and it's awful when they've gone. (Elmer Perdue was becoming one of my favourites and then he died, and there's Harry Warner saying he won't be around in the year 2000.) Death just isn't fair. But at least we had Atom for a while, to enjoy his funny long-nosed creatures. Heather Thomson's letter is lovely. I'm glad it was included.

Alexis Gilliland
4030 8th Street South
Arlington, VA 22204
USA

Alas for Marc Ortlieb, potassium formate (methanoate, an alternate name, is sanctified by usage much as muriatic acid remains a synonym for hydrochloric acid) is written HCOOK, with the H on the other side of the C from the O, where it is found in nature, and

the K rubbing up against the furthestmost O. Still, much fun is to be had from simple chemicals, such as KH(SO₄), famously a "half-acid" salt. And doggerel from my college days sticks with me like burrs on a sheepdog. "Oh weep for little Willy/He won't be seen again/For what he thought was MSG/Was really KCN." Not to mention "Ferrous Wheels," and the sublimation of silver hypoiodate (a compound about as plausible as thiotimoline)... "HI-O-Silver, awaaaay!" And who can forget the witty repartee in the classroom or laboratory? Tony Scarpone (repeating P-Chem for the sixth time): "Up thine with Iodine!" Professor Hunt: "Up your own with acetophenone." Yes, sir, Indiana in the early 50's was at least as hip as... as, well, never mind. It is a sign you are getting old when the bright sayings of your own youth strike you as moronic folly.

The commentary on Do Not Quote (DNQ), Do Not Attribute (DNA?), and Do No Print is interesting in that it points out how much we depend on the kindness of strangers. The attribution of a degree of civility to fandom, which is more or less expected to honour these requests, isn't totally wrong, but even the

Do Not Print request is hardly more than the basis for an eventual lawsuit. My own practice, namby-pamby though it may seem, is simply not to write anything I don't want quoted or attributed. Mild paranoia worries about the Fanzine Dept. of the FBI (should Bruce Pelz file a Freedom of Information act to root out their excruciatingly complete list of every fanzine ever printed?), while profound paranoia worries about impending catastrophes such as the PTL's Holy Inquisition rooting out secular humanists.

Andy Sawyer
1 The Flaxyard
Woodfall Lane
Little Neston
SOUTH WIRRAL L64 4BT

March Ortlieb's chemistry lessons sound fun; I'm now waiting for the opportunity to work his conclusions into conversation. It's going to have to be a long, involved and probably drunken conversation, but I'm sure I'll get there someday.

A chance remark in Sue Thomason's letter sparked my brain into an unusual direction (normality? - who said that!). Not long ago, I was reading an article which pointed out that the vast majority of words of abuse stemming from a part of the body or a sexual function refer to those possessed by females. And even if you can call someone a 'prick' or a 'cunt', it's obvious which is more insulting. Nothing particularly original about this, it's just a depressing fact of human language use which says a lot about how many people think - or rather fail to think - when they're speaking. Yet when Sue believes that something is rubbish, she uses the expression 'balls'. That's the only instance I can think of where the male anatomy is used as an exclusive image of something worthless or disgusting - people may take from that what they will.

It's interesting, though, how much people are trapped by language use. At the college where my wife works, there's a certain group of senior male staff who refer to their female colleagues as 'girls', which annoys a lot of them, the constant use of the term being seen as disparaging. No one ever, at meetings, says, "Now, what do the boys think about this issue?" (although, apparently, it has now been decided to start doing this and see if anyone notices, and if they do, what their reaction is.) We had a long argument recently on this topic: basically, I was trying to stir, but I pointed out that it's actually seen as very macho to refer to yourselves as "the lads", and that many groups of women do actually refer to themselves as 'girls'. (This is certainly the case in my workplace.) Not college lecturers, apparently... I retreated, licking my wounds.

The scene now changes to a recent conversation about an estate agent (female) coming to value a friend's house. For various reasons, we knew that it would have been a difficult valuation.

Mary: "The girl was completely baffled..."

Me (jumping up and down with glee, pointing finger, nyaa, nyaa, nyaa, etc.):
You said it, you said it!"

Mary: "What - 'baffled'?"

... I have no idea why 'baffled' should be a word not used in polite company. Perhaps I should investigate this...

One suspects, humbly and with all possible consideration, that we are observing a class-related phenomenon here. I dredge up memories of my early school days in what was then a British colony: a teacher striding down the corridor of my primary school shouting for assistance from what would nowadays be referred to as a 'janitor' or 'caretaker' but in this case was simply

"Boy! Boy!"

The 'boy' in question was a full-grown adult, probably not much, if at all, younger than her, but of course, he was a menial, and Native Malay (or possibly Indian) to boot.

I refrain from wondering whether college lecturers think of estate agents in the same way, lest I be accused of talking complete balls...

SKEL
25 Bowland Close
Offerton
Stockport
CHESHIRE SK2 5NW

It's nice to see "'til" on the second line of Rob's eulogy to Atom. Most places it's misrepresented as "till" (particularly in song titles I recall observing on occasions when I've been writing out the contents listings of cassettes I've recently recorded). I was beginning to think I was marching

to the beat of a different grammar. Then again, it might have been worth putting up with the latter if we could have been thus spared even a single instance of the apostrophically jarring typeface used in PULP 16 ('Splinters' excepted). Each one of these punctuation marks was in fact a cata(po)strophy, particularly when going round in pairs like Jehovah's Witnesses, pretending to be quotation marks. Dave Langford just doesn't go far enough. It isn't enough for punctuation to be correct, it should also be aesthetically pleasing (not to mention being reproduced in environmentally friendly materials).

There's not a lot one can say about Marc Ortlieb's piece except to point out that it isn't as innovative and ground-breaking as one might suppose. I think it was Carl Sagan who first published the information that the chemical makeup of Earth's primitive oceans was not dissimilar to Knorr Chicken Soup. Of course, Marc has provided the chemically-sound explanation as to why this should be, but I'm afraid Mr. Sagan's priority of publication will ensure him at least a share of this particular Nobel Prize. Science red in tooth and claw.

"A lot of fanzine reviewers and critics state their criteria at immense length," writes Harry before proceeding to set out his own reviewing ethos at an equally immense whathaveyou. "It is not The Word of God," he continues somewhat unnecessarily. Believe it or not, Harry, we'd already figured this out for ourselves. If it had been, it would have been headed 'The Poor Man's Picture Gallery - by God'. So, unless he's started knocking off fanzine articles under the pseudonym 'Harry Bond', it's a safe bet it isn't the word of God. And how can we be sure such pseudonymity is not the case? Well, if you were omnipotent and omniscient, would you call yourself 'Harry Bond'? He may move in mysterious ways, but nobody ever claimed he was brain-damaged.

Then again, surely only God, who sees the sparrow fall, could find redeeming qualities in Keith Walker. Perhaps I should hedge my bets here by adding that

the reviews themselves, when they arrived on stage (beating Godot by a short head), were interesting enough.

As indeed was the whole issue.

((Look, I hope this isn't going to lead to a lot of controversy about primordial motzah balls or anything...))

Oooh, here comes another letter from Richard Brandt, on the plane home from Corflu, where he'd received the last issue...))

Richard Brandt
4740 N. Mesa #111
El Paso, TX 79912
USA

Atom's cover is such a brilliant riposte to that of the issue previous, the continuity between issues so perfect, it's difficult to accept what has happened in the meantime. What, one asks ruefully, is one to do with the egoboo?

Another fine piece by Chuch, particularly the surgically precise dissection of his neighbours' character with a few swift strokes.

Marc Ortlieb evokes (more impressively than my memories of Honors Chemistry and the discovery of What Causes Hangovers) my own high school chemistry classes, especially the immersion of perhaps too much potassium in a dish of water, resulting in a propulsive rocketing of bits of reactive metal to the ceiling, to which many pieces adhered, spitting out sparks, accompanied by a mushroom cloud which spread in stately fashion across the width and breadth of the ceiling. Now, that's soup for you!

Compliments to the typesetting of Rob's TAFF instalment - referring to the manner in which one must turn to page 13 to find the punch-line to the sentence lying in ambush. (My fellow passengers Viewed With Alarm my reaction.)

Pace Kev McVeigh, the Brit group Def Leppard, at a concert in Arizona, mentioned they'd just been in El Paso - "You know, the place with all the greasy Mexicans." This caused such a furore in town that the mayor called for record stores and radio stations to boycott the band's records (aha! The proper politically correct response: censorship!). Singer Joe Elliott, who made the fatal quip, apologized for his naive attempt at humour, and offered a sizeable contribution to some of the city's Hispanic charities, but the city stood firm.

Until, of course, the whole thing was forgotten with the passing of time, and Def Leppard's music once again rides Sun City's airwaves. A reporter friend of mine thought of producing t-shirts whose front would read:

IT'S OKAY TO BE A BIGOT
IF YOU LIKE ROCK'N'ROLL

and on the reverse:

"I'm really, really sorry."
Joe Elliott

Some time after, I had occasion to interview Richard "Cheech" Marin of Cheech & Chong fame, and brought up this incident, seeing how Joe Elliott had cited C&C as influences who had led him to believe this was acceptable subversive humour. I asked, in particular, if in the course of his long career, he ever took any heat for portraying a particular brand of Chicano stereotype.

He thought it over for an instant, and replied, "Only from those Jew cocksuckers."

Currently, the most vehement overt racism in pop music seems to come from the rappers, one group in particular who seem to be that other kind of Holocaust revisionist - those who admit it happened, but aren't sure it was such a bad idea.

Margaret Hall reminds me that my own sister, who, aside from a radical feminist is, after all, my baby sister, is preggers now, and I'm reacting in typical confused patriarchal fashion. I fall short of the attitude of Eve Ackerman's brother, who on the occasion of her second pregnancy, called her husband and warned, "This is the second time I know of that you've fucked my sister, and I want it to stop."

I'm sure you have heard of the Florida jury which acquitted a rapist because the victim "dressed provocatively" in lace miniskirt with no underwear. Few papers carried a fuller account of the defence's argument - essentially a superb case of character assassination, contending that the victim had agreed to sex in exchange for \$100 and some cocaine, then changed her mind once in the defendant's car - but even if they accepted this version of events, the jury conveniently overlooked the fact that the lady had said "No."

Let us not forget also recent events in Boston, illustrating how amazingly widespread the assumption must be that "a husband wouldn't do something like that to his wife."

R. Coulson
2677-W-500N

Hartford City, IN 47348
USA

No, the "ignorant brutal section of the male sex" isn't growing; it's becoming more violent as a reaction to more feminine opposition. Just as racist violence in our south grew dramatically as a result of blacks demanding their rights. Lynchings were

actually pretty rare in the years before the marches and demonstrations; they weren't needed as long as blacks "knew their place". The propensity for violence was always there. It's still there, in fact, though it's died down since blacks have achieved most of what they wanted; it's a reaction to changes in the status quo, and usually held in check when conditions are static. (Racial violence is now on the increase in the north, because of black demands about jobs and housing.) Humans resist change, even when change will be beneficial in the long run. Humans with a penchant for violence resist change violently. Doesn't matter if they're black, white, male or female. We're all people, and we all react to change. You can see it in fandom, in the occasional bitterness between "fanzine fans" and "convention fans"; fortunately, fans mostly take it out in words. But their resistance to change is quite human. Remember the "New Wave"?

Why does Alan Sullivan believe that oppression, suppression, and subjugation can't go on forever? It has gone on forever, or at least to date. Education can make a dent in it, but how much of the world is educated? Most people enjoy oppressing others, and most of the oppressed don't want oppression stopped; they want their turn on top.

"If you're OK about black people, you don't call them niggers." Right. Of course, if you are black, you do call your fellow blacks niggers. It's a word that is insulting only when used by a non-member of the group. One of our friends said she'd never heard such constant use of "nigger" until she began working with a group of blacks. Like "you old bastard", it can be a friendly insult as well as a deadly one. Fans tend to believe too much in absolutes; perhaps it's all this reading about imaginary worlds. Life is much trickier than that. (Our friend said she was afraid that she'd absent-mindedly use the term nigger herself, after hearing it so much.)

Well, diets can work. Mine is not so much medically approved as medically insisted upon, and my food intake is weighed to the gram. Fortunately, Juanita is willing to do this - last night I watched her weighing out portions of a meat loaf, to be heated for my subsequent meals. Also, my aversion to dropping dead from either heart trouble or diabetes (take your choice) is sufficient to keep me on the diet most of the time. I do get breaks at conventions and visits. I also eat broiled fish for breakfast five days a week. But most people don't have my incentives, and are not immediately threatened by not dieting, and there's no special reason why they should diet.

(Most people don't have Juanita to weigh out every gram they eat, either. I think a lot of us would find it considerably easier to diet efficiently if we only had a wife who could and was willing to prepare meals according to those diets. Research on survival after a first heart-attack shows that, although men are more prone to heart-attack, they also tend to do better afterwards than women do, because, as the researchers put it, the wives of heart-attack victims make sure their husbands get the right diets, but female heart-attack victims "don't take care of themselves." In other words, men are more likely to have wives who take care of them than women are.)

Don't be sure that there is universal agreement among American blacks that it's fine and dandy for black people to call each other "niggers" - not all of them feel that way. For example, I've seen an article by a black woman about black women who say they used to think it was perfectly all right to refer to a man as "this fine nigger", until they met one they really liked and respected, and discovered they didn't feel comfortable referring to them that way.)

Steve Bream
33 Scott Road
Olton
Solihull
WEST MIDLANDS B92 7LQ

Much as I appreciate Avedon's generous offer to contribute a guide on the grammatical glitches rampant in fandom (as elsewhere, particularly the advertising industry), I regret my time is rather more limited than she presumably realizes.

However, I would refer her to the excellent 13-point shortlist which the late Ernest Tucker, then assistant editor on the old Chicago American, used to issue to his writers. Journalists obviously work under different rules than,

say, columnists for fanzines such as PULP, but the rules are broadly relevant.

1. Don't use no double negatives.
2. Make each pronoun agree with their antecedents.
3. Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.
4. About them sentence fragments.
5. When dangling, watch your participles.
6. Verbs has got to agree with their subjects.
7. Just between you and I, case is important.
8. Don't write run-on sentences when they are hard to read.
9. Don't use commas, which aren't necessary.
10. Try to not ever split infinitives.
11. It is important to use your apostrophe's correctly.
12. Proofread your writing to see if you any words out.
13. Correct speling is essential.

((Oh, I learned it as: "Never misspell." Same difference. And don't be foolish, Steve, I reckon you have about as much copious free time as the rest of us (i.e., I can't imagine where you get the time to write us all these letters!). Well, I guess it's down to me to write, using your original word, "Illiteracy in fandom as seen in CRITICAL WAVE columns."))

Harry Bell
9 Lincoln Street
Gateshead
TYNE & WEAR NE8 4EE

Another good issue of PULP, clouded only by the passing of Atom. I have no hesitation in saying that without Atom's example, I wouldn't have become a cartoonist.

And I'm still a cartoonist, despite Mike Glicksohn's (and Pamela Boal's) suspicions to the contrary. It's not my fault that cartoons I did five years ago appear in today's fanzines. Had they been published at the time I did them... The PULP 15 cover in its original form was given to Alyson Abramowitz in 1985. Despairing of ever seeing it in print, I played around with it on the office copier and added the PULP logo. It's unfortunate that others I've done are not available for similar treatment, but I've only been copying the artwork as a matter of course in the last two years. It would be nice to recover artwork sent to Terry Hill for MICROWAVE, Linda Bushyager for DUPRASS (the only example of a Canfield/Bell collaboration, incidentally) and others I don't even remember. Meanwhile, when I can, I intend to re-work old drawings and, on occasion, provide new ones (see enclosed - hope you can use it*).

WAHF: Harry Andruschak; George Flynn ("Then there's spelling, but it would be rude to discuss this in responding to a zine that contains the phrase 'Cover by Arthur Thomsom'."); Ken Cheslin ("Does Asterix the Gaul count?"); Elaine Stiles; Steve Stiles ("Say, that Maggie Thatcher really is a jerk, isn't she?"); Iain Byers (who speculated on creating an award called "The Atom", to be represented by a 3-D Atom-type figure - but then decided that fandom was currently in "no fit state" for any new awards, "so any such award would likely be a disservice to Arthur. He belonged to a different, even a better, fannish age."); Pascal Thomas; Margaret Hall (who, for some reason, thinks that learning Welsh is not a fannish activity); and Caroline Mullan.

*We can and we will - coming soon to a PULP cover in your neighbourhood.

PULP 17

SPLINTERS	1
Avedon Carol	
CREATIVE RANDOM HISTORY	4
Chuch Harris	
FEAR & LOATHING IN DISNEYLAND	9
Rob Hansen	
JETBUFF LTD	14
Dave Langford	
NOTES FROM THE BATTLEGROUND	21
Kate Schaefer	
LETTERS	26

Cover by Stu Shiffman
Headings by Arthur Thomson (Atom)
& Rob Hansen.

Editorial address for letters:

PULP
Avedon Carol & Rob Hansen
144 Plashet Grove
East Ham
LONDON E6 1AB

PULP is published by Avedon Carol & Rob Hansen (as above), and John Harvey (see below) with a rotating editorship, and available for the usual (trades to go to both addresses, please).

This July 1990 issue edited by Avedon Carol & Rob Hansen.

Next issue edited by John Harvey -
submissions to him at: 8 The Orchard,
Tonwell, HERTS SG12 OHR, by
1 September 1990.