

**SERCON  
POPCULT  
LITCRIT  
FANMAG**

**#8**



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Welcome to SERCON POPCULT LITCRIT FANMAG #8 (December 1996), brought to you by Garth Spencer at Box 15335, V.M.P.O., Vancouver, B.C. CANADA V6B 5B1 (hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca), maker of fine fanzines since 1980. All contents copyright (c) 1996 by Stop Press. All copyrights immediately returned to contributors.

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## DEAR DIARY: The Continuing Adventures of Garth Spencer

*Summer, 1996*

You may need to know that Washington state, and the province of British Columbia, have both messed with their area codes. Washington recently limited the 206 area code to Seattle, Tacoma, Lynnwood, Everett, and about half of Bellingham. The rest of the state went to area code 360. (I have this description from Paul Carpentier in Bellingham.) As of October 19th, British Columbia limited the 604 area code to a large patch of the southwestern mainland, from Vancouver as far east as Hope, northeast as far as D'Arcy, and west as far as the Strait of Georgia. Vancouver Island and the rest of B.C. went to area code 250.

*August 1996*

I have been sending out resumes more or less regularly; not many responses come back. When I could no longer afford to finish printing and mailing my zine, my e-mail and fanhistory projects started to become the centre of my life. There were often several days in a row, this fall, when I didn't go out of the house for fear of spending the few dollars I still had. In future I may look on this as a character-building experience.

I also started compiling some articles for my Royal Swiss Navy Web page, and for the HTML-SIG Web page at the Vancouver CommunityNet. By the end of the year these included short articles on the mechanics of incorporating a registered society in B.C., an introductory piece on zines for SIG members unfamiliar with them, and one on the current state of copyright law, now that the Internet appeared to be a new publishing medium.

Somewhere around this time I heard from Dan Dubrick and other people involved in a committee to hold Northstar 1, a new convention in the Lower Mainland. The plan was to hold their new convention in Harrison Hot Springs, a resort town some hours' drive away from Vancouver. Somehow Dan and Shane Conley talked me into working on the program book for Northstar.

I was a little reluctant because (as I recall) I didn't have much confidence in this convention from the start. For one thing, there had been changes in the date and site scheduled for Northstar, and there was still outdated, uncorrected information circulating in *SF Chronicle* and *Locus*. The Northstar Website was not being updated, and was itself replaced by a page at a different URL. Also, when the convention was first proposed, and co-chaired by Craig McLachlan and Dan Dubrick, the planned membership and site seemed wildly grandiose to me. Dan Dubrick kept saying he had talked the remaining chair (Craig) down to a sensible scale, but Harrison still seemed rather distant and expensive. Still: I kept asking would I be held liable for any convention losses, and Dan kept assuring me the committee was protected by the incorporation of the Starwolves Event Services Society.

September 1996

Numerous fanzines came in as I was slowly finishing up SPLF 7.

For example, *The North Wind* (#201 & #202, newsletter of the Barony of Lions Gate), from the local Northern Society for Creative Anachronism. Officers' reports here, notices of upcoming Northwest SCA events, and a few op/ed pieces. It sounds as if the solidarity and goodwill that a society like this runs on is less than it could be; mind you, I think that's a cyclic thing, unavoidable but hardly about to last forever.

I decided to let this subscription run out and stop kidding myself I was getting back into the local SCA ... I finally realized, if I'm not really interested in medieval re-enactment, meeting girls is not a good enough reason to be there. (Not that it worked very well anyway ...) And bluntly, I am pushing forty, I am too old and ought to know better than to go running after twenty-something babes.

And, for example, *Empties* from Martin Tudor (U.K.). Martin's story of meeting and marrying Helena Gough convinces me that I have been something of a coward in the last three years, as I've been avoiding this life experience. (Quite aside from being unemployed for longish spells, I keep running into third-rate Margaret- Thatcher wannabes in disguise. Can't be a habit, can it?)

*Apparatchik* #67, Sept. 19/96: The fanzine that goes too fast for me. Andy Hooper had an amazingly good time at L.A. Con III, this year's Worldcon. Okay, maybe Worldcons \*are\* survivable. Partly his experience may be due to the attendance level; Hooper reports barely 6,000 attending this Worldcon. I'm speculating. What really struck me was this paragraph:

"... aside from the relative ease in getting from place to place, and finding seats at programs, and so on, the convention also had an intangible sense of humanity, of friendship, and positive regard. Lots of little things went wrong or were different from what had been planned, but unlike some Worldcons I've been to, people just seemed to take them in stride, and went on enjoying themselves. This sense of goodwill is something you can't buy for any amount of money, but it's absolutely critical to a great convention. What a contrast from Intersection, where everyone I met went out of their way to bad-mouth the convention and express indignation at its very existence."

Hmm. How do we evoke this insubstantial, essential goodwill? The fact that Hooper can have this experience at a Worldcon is another issue I may comment on elsewhere this issue.

*Apparatchik* #68, Oct. 10/96: Andy Hooper comments on the bumper crop of "aliens are among us" shows on TV, a development of urban folklore that I may comment on elsewhere this issue; Ted White explains how aggressive drivers are

arguably the good drivers among us; letters and short zine reviews.

*Sacred Trust #2* (Sept. 1995) also showed up in my mailbox this month. Twelve months since the cover date; that's not too many. Murray Moore begins with his Ditto 7 con report. There are more visual descriptions of fans and places here than in many reports I read.

Comment hook: this zine describes *The Fanzine Game*, in which players try to match fanzine editors with fanzine titles. Murray notes, "Leah concludes after the game ends that, for a bunch of fanzine fans attending a convention about fanzines, as a group we are unimpressive in our combined knowledge of the current fanzine scene."

Why is this surprising, I wonder? To some extent, being a fanzine fan means being fixed on your own group of correspondents - - I wouldn't go so far as to say fanzine fandom as a whole - and certainly it does not mean relating to \*fandom\* as a whole, which ceased to have a common centre some decades ago. (I make no bones about reserving my attention to a limited scope, myself.) Mediafans generally complain of snobbishness or cliquishness, and probably a good many fans express their limits this way ... but I think you can put it down simply to the fact that you \*can\* only relate to so many people; and fandom became more people and more outlooks than you can relate to, some decades ago.

An increasing amount of my leisure time was occupied this fall by e-mail from two mailing lists, one for Intersmof and the other the Smofs@sflovers.rutgers.edu list. I was hearing less and less from the Timebinders fanhistory mailing list, although Dick Lynch was still plugging away at his outline of 1960s fanhistory.

I was somewhat disappointed in both of the new mailing lists, because they seemed to be talking about Worldcon planning all the time. Firstly, I thought Intersmof was a European e-mail group talking about the planning of a new, regional Eurocon committee. (I finally unsubscribed.) Secondly, I had thought the "Smofs" group were interested in thrashing out the current state of running real cons - not Worldcons. I have this position that what it takes to hold Worldcons has little bearing on the majority of real conventions, held by fans and for fans.

Eventually I was rude enough to tell them so in plain language. Maybe the message got through. Maybe not.

SMOFCon was also being mentioned on the Smofs list at this point. Another member of the Smofs list, John Lorentz, remarked that, well, yes, SMOFCon attendees did seem to acquire this assumption that the conrunners' con was all about Worldcon planning, and he had fought that assumption himself. I was momentarily persuaded it might be useful to attend.

By this point I was leaning pretty heavily into collecting articles on conrunning, and posting them on the RSN Web site. Perhaps more useful is the bibliography I compiled of conrunning articles, with Web links. (About this time I began hearing that the Vancouver CommunityNet was getting strapped for funds and RAM; I let myself be panicked into eliminating a lot of these archives, and have since

had to rebuild them.)

There is a logical conflict that was beginning to bother me: by my standards, only conventions held so that fans can meet each other, with an attendance under 1000, are "real" conventions. And I was involved with Northstar, which (it slowly became clear) didn't qualify as a "real", fannish convention, either.

Craig McLachlan, the remaining chair, was finally challenged at one meeting to define what it was he wanted Northstar to be. Apparently he had generated some conception of a "real" convention as one that appealed to mediafans and gaming fans and advertised much more to mundanes; he had also, it seems, generated some resentment of V-Con, the longstanding local/regional convention in Vancouver. In fact he had a paranoid idea that V-Con 22 committee members were badmouthing Northstar. (In fact the reverse was true; Palle Hoffstein and others were trying to promote Northstar.) Northstar was offering admission tickets, for instance, rather than memberships, and offering them through [Ticketmaster? Community Box Office?], a service that also offered tickets to Vancouver Playhouse productions, and other large events.

Dave "Murdock" Malinski, and other members of the "Orion Consulate" club based in Nanaimo, had pointed out to Craig in early summer that in order to do what he wished, he had to change some of the things he was doing. For one thing, start advertising intensively, and mainly to mundanes — it could not be advertised as SF cons were usually advertised. For another, finalize the contract with the hotel site. And scare up the funds to finance the guests of honour. In fact at the meeting they attended, it developed that they doubted there was time to prepare adequately for a convention in 1996, and recommended holding off for another year. Craig at first agreed, unwillingly.

My own confidence in Northstar was not great. I kept telling myself I was only involved in order to keep myself occupied by doing a program book, I wasn't responsible for anything else. In fact, it appeared, Dan Dubrick was financing Northstar on his own credit card.

### *October*

Craig reversed within days his decision to postpone Northstar, which had been planned for late October 1996. But there was a deadline in early October by which Northstar had to make a minimum number of ticket sales. This didn't happen, and Dan Dubrick decided they had to pull the plug.

Craig persuaded himself later that Northstar had been done in by bad press from V-Con 22 committee members. In fact V-Con concom had been trying to promote Northstar. Northstar was done in by poor promotion, little or late activity on necessary tasks, and changing, conflicting advance information.

Shane Conley told me later that the reason Craig's expectations and ambitions were set too high was, basically, Lorne Jones. While Jones has had experience working

with charitable events in the Vancouver area, he has no experience with SF conventions — in fact, passed up a chance to learn something about them — and was consistently overconfident of the revenues to be gained. The \*one\* time he showed up at a meeting, he struck me as a name-dropper, a little over-impressed with the media Big Names he claimed to know.

Dan Dubrick later decided he could hold quite a different con, Wolfcon, a relaxicon basically for Starwolves members and friends. Kate Smith and I told him repeatedly that Starwolves has little credibility at this point, and I kept telling him to pick a name other than one a Maritime convention is already using.

I might have run in the mayoralty election this month. Brian "Godzilla" Salmi, formerly a member of the absurdist Rhinoceros Party in B.C., launched a campaign to get as many people as possible running for mayor, just to mess with the System on the civic level. Instead of the thousand candidates he hoped for, we got over 40, which I guess is a start. All it took was to fill out a form, cosigned by two nominators. People were running as "Zippy the Circus Chimp" or "Yummy Girl". I was going to run as "Rajiv Witherspoon-Li" but one of my nominators was from outside Vancouver. Ah well.

#### *November*

At the last possible moment, two weeks before SMOFCon, I realized there was no way I could afford to attend. The best I could do was ask for proceedings of the 1996 SMOFCon.

John Mansfield, characteristically, imagined I was "conveniently" backing out. I do not understand the man's attitude.

#### *December*

Steve Brown (of *SF Eye* magazine) contacted Dave Langford, in Dec. 1996, and Langford reported in *Ansible*, that something called the Cult Awareness Network in the US had been forced into bankruptcy this year; apparently, as the *Washington Post* reported (Dec. 1/96), the Church of Scientology had (or members thereof) filed 45 lawsuits against CAN this year. Well, the Cult Awareness Network's assets were put up for auction, and the highest bidder for their name, logo, P.O. Box and phone number turned out to be a Scientologist. Who intends to keep the organization going, but you can imagine the confusion and irony that can result ...

Now, Brown quotes the CAN as saying that throughout their career, "aside from Satanic groups, more callers asked about Scientology than any other group." And coming up is a sale of 600 feet of files on cults accumulated over the years.

The Church of Sci wants these bad. Not only to finger people who have blown the whistle on their own activities, but to get dirt on rival cults. "Scientology will pay anything to get their hands on

those files," said Robert Young, a former Scientologist spokesman who quit and became a major critic, "We always figured CAN was the nexus for all the rest of the problems Scientology had. So the idea of getting the files is similar to the KGB being able to buy the files of the CIA." A judge is thinking this over right now.

In my mail, *Conrunner* #20 and a series of *Bobs* from Ian Sorenson showed up. I sometimes feel like I've been trying to track down this man and his conrunning zine for years; actually I've made sporadic attempts to contact him and Bruce Miller and other sources for some years. From *Conrunner* #20 I learn that selected articles will appear at a Web page -

<http://www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/ftp/pub/SF-Archives/Conrunner/> and the page has been up and running since Christmas, 1996.

**[[WARNING: This Web page seems to have EVAPORATED.]]**

V-Con, Vancouver's annual local convention, has usually been planned over a year in advance, but V-Con 22 was delayed for the longest time in securing a site; potential Lower Mainland sites for weekends in May 1997 were fully booked. Finally, V-Con 22 secured the Surrey Inn, near the King George Skytrain station, for a weekend in April 1997.

I received an invitation to attend a V-Con meeting in early December 1996, and attended with some interest. Like the previous year's concom, V-Con 22's represented an entirely different group of people than had run V-Cons ten years before, college-age people rather than fortysomethings. But many, like David New and Palle Hoffstein, have some continuity with previous BCSFA and ESFCAS groups, and a good deal of intelligence and competence to bring to the committee.

A couple of nights before Christmas there was a late-night ruckus in the downstairs den. It is helpful to know that my landlady was imposed on by some houseguests, who came for a week's visit three months ago and have been here ever since. Apparently one of them (a man suffering from knee surgery) was struggling with the other one, his girlfriend (a lady recovering from cancer), hanging on to her and her handbag and not letting her go upstairs to the bathroom; something convinced him she was about to overdose on her medications. I got fed up and forcibly separated the two of them. This was probably not the smartest thing I could do; I am an out-of-shape typist, he was an ex-con who might have been taking his old lady's medications and overdosing himself, for all I know. Maybe I should have phoned a domestic disturbance in to 911. But I have had a gutful of "not getting involved".

Turns out the incident actually raised my stock with both the landlady and the lady with the handbag. They both gave the great himself a piece of their mind in the days following.

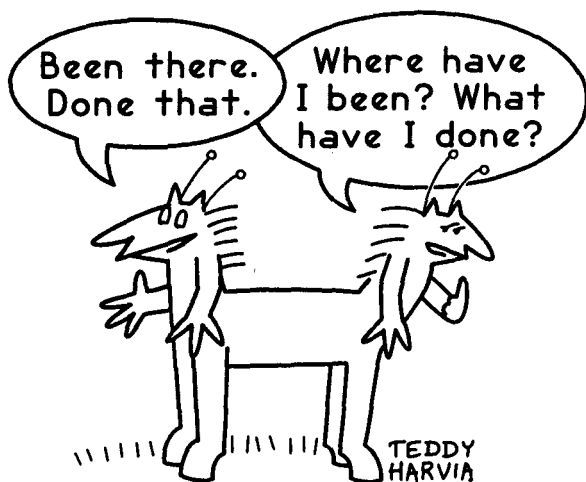
**[[UPDATE: The story gets even better. The great himself convinced himself**



that I was some sort of karate expert!]]

The day after Christmas I attended a small gathering at Dave "Murdock" Malinski's home. Murdock is a founding member of a Star Trek organization called the Orion Consulate, and very interested in the mechanics of conventions. Our conversation ranged over a number of personalities we know, items of fanhistory, and some hot topics in conrunning. Having read *Boom, Bust and Echo*, Murdock is convinced this should be a must-read title for conrunners — he sees a desperate need to emphasize that a) fandom was inundated with Star Trek fans in about 1970-71 precisely because that was when the Baby Boomers imprinted on a TV series \*and\* reached their majority, b) convention attendances (in Canada, at least) have generally been going down because the Boomers are fortysomethings, and the twentysomethings have nothing like as much ready cash, c) after the next seven years, we can expect another boom in leisure activities such as convention attendances ... and no-one quite sees this, or is preparing for it.

Comments?



## LOCS

Gary Farber <gfarber@panix.com>, August 30, 1996

Y'know, I actually read most of this [SPLF 7], but I felt really masochistic doing so. Not because of any failure of your editing do I feel this, but simply because of the length, which is not so pleasant to read on my crappy equipment.

I suggest, as purely my own personal preference, that if you are going to distribute an online zine, you endeavor to produce much shorter issues. Online text works better for me in more discrete chunks.

*((At one sitting you read the whole zine? Wow. I take your point, maybe I should do like Arthur Hlavaty and break it up into two or three bites, even if I do deflate the zine.))*

Lloyd Penny mentioned:

"I suspect it will be a long time before I ever get online. I would need to buy another computer (I have a clunky 286), another monitor (mine's monochrome), a new OS (I have DOS 5.0, I think), a new modem (someone recently took pity on me, and gave me an old 2400 baud modem card), a dedicated phone line and an Internet software package in order to get access on a Freenet. Free? I don't have \$5,000 to blow."

which seems quite bizarre. Why can't he use his 286 with DOS 5 to run a shell account, like zillions of people before him? A 2400 modem is \$3.95 now; I'd give him my spare if he likes, but the postage would be more than it costs to get one. And why a dedicated phone line? I don't have one, though I do use the luxury of Calling Waiting and Call Answering, which works nicely even though it is hardly necessary.

In short, what on earth is he talking about? Are there strange requirements for ISPs in Toronto? No shell accounts available anywhere?

Anyway, thanks for the zine.

*((I rechecked the zine, suspecting there were some dropped lines between Lloyd's comments and my own comments. Nope, those were all Lloyd's comments you quoted. Like you said yourself, I was stunned by the costs Lloyd assumes were part of setting up for the Internet, even through a FreeNet; I must assume that even the Freenet in Toronto requires at least a 286 DX, Windows 3.1, and Netscape capability. Or Lloyd has been talking to space cases. I am beginning to think that there is this Malign and Sinister Force which makes people in Toronto think everything has to be much more expensive than is realistic.*

*((Mind you, I'm no expert myself. I'm unfamiliar with the term "shell account". It may be what I have, in effect, in my Secret Identity as the Royal Swiss Navy.*

*((Lots of other correspondents had your reaction to Lloyd's comments, both in SPLF and in other loccols; Al Macintyre, Steve George, ...))*

Al Macintyre <MacWheel99@aol.com>, August 31, 1996

... Your introductory statements [on SPLF] also need to share the price to get the paper version, and whether there is any content overlap.

*((As to the zine: fanzines (as I imprinted on them) don't normally have prices. The text in this e-zine is identical to the text in the paper version. But you're quite right, it needs stating.*

*((As to the text format: <B> and </B> and similar apparitions are some of the preliminary HTML formatting one actually types into a text file, prior to taking it and posting it on a Web page. WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS has no HTML conversion routine, but it can save a file as ASCII text, and prior to that step I can type in these HTML format codes.*

*((I have even set up macros in WP5.1 to make the HTML formatting go faster.))*

A comment by Julia & Craig Hilton

The Internet is not a great library but a magnet for your time - I paraphrase a bit. The analogy I liked the most is the Internet is a great library in which there are no shelves, but huge piles of books you have to crawl over, and as you dig through mountains of stuff that does not really interest you, sometimes you find a gem, like the old prospectors panning for gold who never knew if they would get anything from the river.

*((I had understood that the great advantage of the Internet -- at least of the World Wide Web, and Hypertext -- is that it eliminates a lot of the combing through irrelevant material to trace a "thread" or topic association through widely-separated documents, very quickly. But the weakness of Hypertext is that it depends on someone having already done the indexing and linking -- the same way all records depend on someone having already done the data entry.))*

Communication Attitudes

Several places there is an expression that if a correspondent does not reply promptly, or neglects to acknowledge all your output, they are some kind of a <censored> slime non-person. By that definition, I am a creature from the slime pits & you just haven't seen my vanishing acts yet, or you appreciate the breathers between my output of 250 pages at a time.

*((You know, you are one of the most \*communicative\* people I have come across. I had to edit your loc quite a bit! I should have made clear, my problem with people not communicating is, almost entirely, with people I deal with face-to-face.))*

1. It is in the nature of my job, common to many technologists & possibly other professions, that we can get buried in "projects" eating 100 hours/week or thereabouts for months on end, in which a social life is non-existent. (My current boss does not approve of this form of burn-out-bait, so it may be a while before I am sucked into one of these again, but they come with the territory, as I am one of the

fortunate few who truly loves my job.)

2. Fans can have many interests & not enough time, or organizational skills, to do justice to them all, so piles develop, and out-of-sight out-of-mind. My piles could more accurately be called mountains of paper.

3. From time to time we find it necessary to migrate to a new abode - I need to remember to try out 1-800-B4-U-MOVE on my next one, and we dig into various address books and send out some kind of a mailing - the last one I did went to over 300 addresses, of which approx 25% came back "moved not forwardable", because the US Post Office only forwards mail for a few months after someone moves (& that assumes the mover filled out the appropriate paperwork), and if you are in contact only once a year or so, a couple of moves & you are out of touch. Long after I left Cincinnati I discovered that you can buy a "foreign" listing in the phone book of about any city, in which it shows the address in the city you now live in & your full phone#.

4. From time to time our capability for communications goes down - I have become addicted to using e-mail & word processor in personal communications. My PC was recently down for 3 weeks, which was a painful cold turkey, but nothing like the 6 months of intermittent problems the first time the i/o controller went flaky. The state-of-art of this technology is like a stick of dynamite in which any upgrade or power outage or excessive static electricity may ignite the fuse. My sister is real happy we experts have these problems, it only goes to show that downage is normal.

Career Survival - task requirements are theoretical - do not exist in reality

You say you need to have task requirements spelled out. That means do not even try to get a job in private enterprise unless it is a large publicly owned outfit, in which the job title has some relationship to the work to be done. In smaller outfits, we tend to wear many hats, in which the work gets slopped around into buckets (humans) equal to about 40+ hours/week, and to survive as a productive individual you need to be a self-starter in which you can do a good job with any task and not have to have someone standing over you watching to see you do it Ok. I have seen what goes on in government work, and it is much the same. Task requirements in the work place are like student outlines written after the papers. Sometimes management needs to know how much work is expended in various areas, or they need to place an ad to hire a replacement, so they go around asking the workers to describe the work that they do. Do you read Dilbert? Evil Nasty Attitude, but lots of truths.

In my 30 some years as a computer programmer, I do not believe I have ever had task requirements spelled out, except by people who do not know what they want - like I had one boss who would tell me one thing one day & diametrically opposite the next day, then a perpendicular direction the third day, then repeat the loop & the only way I could please him was to have a set of secret switches labeled "so & so's rule set A B C etc." in the programs I wrote for him, so that every time he ranted and raved about the software being screwed up, I would listen long enough to figure out which scenario he was demanding today, assure him I would fix it, then re-compile the

job stream with the appropriate switch settings - that boss was the reason I left Willis Music after 16 years - when he publicly accused me of inventing conversations about task requirements, I figured that if anyone believed him, then I had no job security - I was extremely pleased that they had to hire 3 people to replace me, then when I paid them a visit 5 years later, they were down to 2 people doing part of my job - some of the stuff had been moved off-line because the replacements could not do with all the stuff I had done for the firm.

*((Mostly my communication problems are interpersonal, but the work-related ones are those I can most easily grasp and point to.))*

I think it is a mistake for an unemployed person to be heavily involved in any hobby volunteerism. You should take a vacation from the con committee, fanzine, web page, etc. and focus on finding a reliable source of income to pay for your leisure interests, and set something aside for future downturns in your personal economy.

*((I sometimes realize what a hole I have dug myself into, but I refuse to feel sorry for myself. After all, I created my own situation, nobody owes me anything. I guess I trust that I will figure out my own solutions in good time. Sometimes I lose faith, that's all.*

*((Yeah, you're probably right, my hobbies are kind of a black hole for time (and, sometimes, money). The motivating factor behind my resorting to the fanzine and web page and fandom thing is, it gets my mind off my problems, when I am only too likely to brood on things to no profit. I get some jobhunting done anyway. But it's time to reassess what direction I am pursuing.))*

Steve George <sgeorge@pangea.ca>, August 31, 1996

WWW: <http://www.pangea.ca/~sgeorge>

I really like your Web site. Speaking as a surfer who uses an entirely TEXT based browser (Lynx), it's nice to actually run into some information instead of a bunch of [IMAGE] boxes! Enjoyed the Canadian Fan History section, too. ... I've added your site to the list of Interesting Links on my own web page. Works with or without the tilde. Look forward to seeing more of your site.

Sept. 1, 1996:

Just a quick LoC to get me back into it. Perhaps a longer one to follow. Obviously Sercon Popcult Litcrit (why can't I ever remember the name of your damned fanzine?) ... has succumbed to the same elephantiasis like disease that afflicts all zines that make the transition to electronic format... unencumbered by concerns about postage costs, the zines explode in size! 77k! That's about the size of 5 chapters in an average genre novel!

I was intrigued by your comments (echoing Lloyd Penney's?) about a class division arising from the difference in cost/capabilities of high-end computer equipment and low-end used equipment, and I don't buy it...hehe. Unless, of course, you already consider the difference in cost between high end cars and low-end beaters a class

division. Or perhaps just different symptoms of the same class division? In both examples cited, however, the vehicles/computers have little to do with WHERE their owners can travel. Beaters and Jags both travel the same highways. The Internet and WWW don't restrict access based on processor power. On the road, one travels with air conditioning, one without. On the net, one with graphics, one without. Big deal. One HUGE benefit that comes of using, say, an XT to browse the web, over a Pentium, is speed. The XT using text based LYNX will beat the Pentium system (weighed down as it is with Windows 95 or OS/2 Warp and Netscape), every single time. Remember, with graphically based browsers, the URLs must be downloaded to the local terminal! Even with a 28.8k modem, graphics can add seconds, even minutes to access time... not to mention the time to build the graphic on screen, which is FAR from instantaneous, even with a Pentium. Another advantage, and perhaps the biggest of all, is that with a text based browser, one very quickly realizes how empty of content nearly every web site is. Links and pictures, links and pictures... give me frigging break! How long can a Pentium user be bamboozled by pretty pictures? A long time, apparently. XT users, on the other hand, gravitate to sites with content. Like your own, for instance. They don't have a choice.

*((Al Macintyre didn't buy the class division thing either. Well, I have to admit I borrowed the idea from John Brunner: not that the New Poor couldn't afford technology, but couldn't afford the current tech. Which sounds like me.))*

I've surfed on everything from an XT with a 2400 baud modem to a 486 with a 28.8k... but most of the time I use a 286 with a 14.4k modem. My Internet account is with a local commercial ISP that offers shell accounts starting at \$4.95 per month, with no sign-up or setup fee.

The Web is a creepy, frustrating kind of place, when you think about it. If you spend any amount of time browsing, following links, you'll quickly discover you're trapped in never-ending linking loops, and pretty soon you're back to where you started. It's like one very close-knit family got together and decided to breed a city. Yeck. Electronic incest! That's progress for you. On the other hand, NOT having a presence on the web can make you almost inaccessible to people who want to reach you, or find out about you. Like it or not, the Internet and the WWW are becoming the first (and sometimes the only) avenue of information retrieval for a lot of people, and if you're not on there, you don't exist for them. Remember the old maxim, "If it's in a newspaper it's true; if it's on television it's important?" Well, now we can add, "If it's on the Web, it's real." For that reason, and that reason alone, I set up my own web page. (It's text based... but at least those who enter my name in one search engine or another will now find references.) I feel like a traitor to the cause of common sense, but hey, gotta make a living!

*((As I said to Al Macintyre, the weakness of Hypertext is that it depends on someone having already done the indexing and linking - the same way all records depend on someone having already done the data entry. I'm reminded of Heinlein's*

characterization of our cultural base as something like the British Museum with only half the acquisitions indexed, most of the index cards scattered on the floor, and much cross-referencing entirely missing.

*((Just as you anticipated, some e-mail circles are behaving as though anyone else \*must\* be online to be accessible. Ian Sorenson commented on this happening to Claire Brialey, on the Intersection committee -- so many members were online, they just assumed that any other board member was also online, and as Ian put it, "mysteriously lost the ability to communicate through any other medium".))*

Sept. 10, 1996

Well, here it is at last, my OFFICIAL LoC to SPLF. It occurred to me while reading it that it was the first e-zine I've actually managed to read from beginning to end. Took awhile to get to it, though. Found the file in my download directory, almost deleted it, took a look... oh, THAT. Took me away from work for an hour, anyway, and for that I thank you.

Now that I've actually had a chance to read Lloyd Penney's comments, I'm a bit flabbergasted (as opposed to, say, a lot flabbergasted). Somebody has been feeding him a line, or he has misunderstood how access to the Internet works, or... who knows. As you know, it can be inexpensive, even free. If Lloyd is using a 286, then he can even use a graphical web browser if he chooses (I-COMM), without upgrading to a faster machine. Or he can be satisfied with text based access, which many of us are quite happy with. I access the net on a number of machines, from an XT with a 2400 baud modem to a 486 with 28.8K modem. Using Lynx (a text based browser), there is no appreciable difference in speed from the XT to the 486. ...

Rodney Leighton may be referring to me in his LoC, when he talks about fans who correspond with him and then stop. I've explained many times to him that it has nothing to do with him alienating me, or offending me. I'm quite un-offendable. The problem is, we began exchanging parcels of books and magazines, and this is somewhat problematic for me for a number of reasons (cost, proximity to post office, etc.) I'm a bad correspondent at the best of times, since I tend to wait weeks, even months between letters.... Of course, Rodney is not the only person I've been ignoring. I've wholeheartedly ignored most of my correspondents for the past two years. ...

Your Who's Who of Canadian Fandom sounds intriguing, though I've only seen the mentions of it in this ish. It got me thinking about my own fannish career. I would dearly love to see a bibliography of my fannish publications, in my own zines and in others, but I haven't got a clue. Every ten years or so I purge my files. In past purges I have thrown out all my own zines, all my old fannish writing, etc. It has been nearly ten years since I saw early copies of Zosma. I got a real kick out of seeing my Nick Boxtop interview on your web page. In fact, the only real clues to my fannish past that I have are three hardbound collections of Garth Danielson's Boowatt, Boowatt Weekly, and Miscellaneous Publications (totalling about 1000 pages). These three volumes are a treasure of information about the early days of Decadent Winnipeg

Fandom. Why? Because Garth Danielson wrote about virtually nothing but the day to day minutiae of his life, the DWF meetings, parties, zines, etc. Lately, he calls this kind of writing "Self Historification," and has immersed himself in it even more fully. Back then, he called it a Perzine.

Al Macintyre <MacWheel99@aol.com>, Sept. 1, 1996

There are computer dictionaries that do a decent job with many of the "words" on your glossary, so if any of them are "on-line" you probably want to link<sup>2</sup> to them, and deal with words that are more fannish than mainstream computing. I read a lot of stuff that pokes fun at political correctness, so definitions from me might be insulting to people who take some things more seriously. ...

On your list of fanzines you haven't had time to digest, I once suggested for a con ... that we have a room called a "fanzine library"... Some of my ideas [were] dumb, because what people want, and are willing to do - there is a disconnect there.

*((This is part of the Dark Side of Fandom: people are not as willing to work for things as to expect them.))*

Andrew C Murdock <raven@wolf.spydernet.com>, Sept. 1, 1996

I'll be sure to write a more thorough loc about SPLF 7, but for now, I thought I'd add to the glossary definitions that you asked for in that issue. By the way, I think "Generation-X" should definitely be included in it for consideration! (What gives me a lot of laughs is that I have no idea what Generation-X is, even though I apparently fall into that age range! Goes to show you that it's no big deal...)

Anyway, my proposed definitions...

Goth - n. A person who dresses entirely in black, often with black makeup highlights and fishnet gloves, socializes only at night, and cultivates an aura of depression and hopelessness in a bizarre attempt to be identified with the twelfth through fourteenth centuries and/or a member of a tribe of barbarians.

cyber- (prefix) Added to more established words in order to make something seem high-tech, modern, and, by association, cool. i.e. cyberspace, cybercafe, cyberhaircut, etc.

\*\* social engineering - n. An attempt by the state to cause society to run more smoothly and productively, with less internal disruptions. (See also "ethnic cleansing", "final solution")

politically correct - adj. A manner of communicating in which only those ideas which are deemed to be absolutely inoffensive to any sub-sect of homo sapiens may be broadcast, even at the cost of accuracy. (see also "Orwell, George")

virtual - adj. Of an object, often referring to something generated by or existing solely within a computer. i.e. virtual reality, virtual life, etc.

*((I have to correct your definition of "social engineering". I would intuitively have defined it as you would — but apparently this phrase is being used to mean the old-fashioned con game, especially deception and manipulation as practiced by phreaks.))*



*(I had occasion to outline for Joseph Major, in Kentucky, how distance tends to fragment and isolate Canadian fandom into several municipal groups in sporadic contact with each other. Joseph comments:))*

Joseph Major, 8 Sep 1996

Isn't this a general description of contemporary fandom as a whole? I ought to, but don't, remember where I ran across the forties' (it would have to be that far back) era belief that one could not really be a trufan unless one had read ALL of the science fiction published to date.

But this could indeed be done, admittedly by limiting the definition so as to exclude most of the scientific romances of the last century — they would not have gigged someone for having failed to read the complete Frank Reade, Jr., or for that matter Tom Swift. So they had a unified consistent cultural base from which to work.

Today it would take a lifetime of reading to read all the science fiction published in a single year — and much of it is not "published", as I note when listening in to a fervent conversation between Johnny Carruthers and Jessica Bestler about "Sailor Moon". Not surprisingly, the resultant culture is also fragmented, divided, and "insular".

For at least as long as I have been actively engaged with fandom (I was hearing about such things long before I began my current lochacking career) there have been predictions of the imminent demise of the Worldcon under the stress of these disparate factions. My first introduction to fan politics was over the weeping and wailing of those protesting the arbitrary tyrannical exclusion of Star Trek from the Worldcon. (Scott Patri, since the question comes up, was only about then learning to fling his oatmeal at the screen every time he saw Trek.)

Later on, you find things on the order of "The Men Who Corflued Mohammed", where "those groups" are deemed unworthy of besmirching "our Worldcon" with their presence. Somehow it never occurs to them that con running has become a field of its own. Those calling for the exclusion of groups with no connection to cons as a whole should realise that fanzine fandom can also be considered one.

Indeed, one can even see it among fanzine fandom, where a "small splinter group", media fan fiction fanzines, has become immensely larger than its progenitors. And, in the usual historical oblivion, passes over any such origin. I wonder if anyone is keeping the history of media fan fiction?

And then it doesn't help the case that the true trufans' fannish fanzines are essentially indistinguishable from the vast bulk of "mundane" 'zines so recently all the rage. E.B. Frohvet said in the latest Twink that he/she/it/they was/were "bored to tears" by Mimosa. Frohvet wondered "How does one get nostalgic about people you've never heard of and events decades before you got into fandom?" (Because these people and events shaped the fandom you got into — I must remember that phrase for when I loc Twink.) And this addresses a real problem — that nostalgia is meaningless to those

who aren't already committed.

The more self-referential the tru trufans become, the more isolated and insular they will become. I noticed this when reading about Lucy Huntzinger complaining about Nashville not having a fan community. This struck me as being about as absurd a statement as one could possibly make; Nashville has not one but two large fan clubs, and I mean SF, not Trek, Who, SCA, etc., that moreover exist in amity. But then they don't have the tru trufaaanish sort of fan community.

*((Thank you for the loc. Yes, the fragmentation in Canadian fandom is typical of fandom as a whole. And you're quite right about the insularity effect; in fact that was my point.*

*((See, not only do people imprint on the fandom they entered, as you point out. I figure people "can" only stretch themselves to relate to so many people at a go, and sooner or later, you reach your limit.*

*((Fandom exceeded the limit. Even without the massive influx of mediafans in the early to mid-1970s, this would have happened. It's probably inevitable in any mass-culture, mass-media phenomenon.*

*((So what's the next step? Or to follow the Prophet Sturgeon's dictum, "Ask the next question", what's the next question before us? — Joseph replied that he doesn't know ...))*

Joseph Major, 18 Sept. 1996

*Science Fiction Review Issue Number 48, Fall 1983: This has a review on page 35 of Richard Bowker's *Forbidden Sanctuary*. The review itself is by one Garth Spencer. Surely there are not two Garth Spencers.*

*((Oh, surely there are! I don't remember submitting anything to SFR, let alone reading that title, but I wouldn't be surprised if there are several other Garth Spencers in North American fandom. Further: I browsed the Web for mentions of my name and discovered a Dr. H. Garth Spencer, a physicist, with a lot of publications to his credit.*

*((And then there's the fact that every fan in Canada has a double in southern Ontario, and vice versa. Indeed do many things come to pass.))*

I had found the box with my SFR's some time ago but only recently had started rereading them; they were stored in more or less chronological order so I started with the last one and worked backwards in time. It is interesting to see Geis's predictions of economic doom slip. Not to mention other things, like the announcement of the five new Harlan Ellison books turned in to the publisher, including a SF novel, a mundane novel, and *The Last Dangerous Visions*. And many other abortive plans and hopes.

The ones I read included Orson Scott Card's short fiction review column. It is interesting — I think this is what you could say — to note how few of the writers he reviews are still writing, and we are only talking some twelve years ago.

They also included John Brunner's infamous "Noise Level" columns wherein

he defended the Soviet Union's civilizing mission in Afghanistan, and the general yearning for peace the Soviet People evinced. In his last column in Niekas he denied such thoughts. Was Winston Smith ghosting for him?

There had been, back early on in the run, an article by Mack Reynolds on the dearth of plausible social speculation in SF. Future societies were monarchies, or tyrannies, or robber-baron capitalistic dominions.

To Reynolds's credit, he was thinking in other terms. To his discredit, he wasn't thinking very well.

One of his chronic anecdotes, told over and over again, to describe the degree to which the global corporations ("cosmocorps" he called them) controlled the activities of government, he described how, at the beginning of the First World War, the Germans had not shelled the French-owned steel mills in the Ruhr.

Didn't anyone ever show him a map? Why would the Germans shell a French-owned, or indeed any steel mill, or any kind of industrial plant at all, that was IN GERMANY?

Mack Reynolds was a lifelong member of the Socialist Labor Party, a Marxist splinter group. More precisely, Marxist-DeLeonist, following the thoughts of Daniel DeLeon, a thinker so mainstream that he accused Marx himself of being a deviationist. If comments on the order of "not shelling the French-owned steel mills" are the level of their thought, I wonder about them.

*(John Brunner, like several other people who ought to have known better, seems to have viewed a few things through rose-coloured glasses — not only the USSR, but also his recollection of things he had said or written. Mack Reynolds seems to have done something similar, and I would broaden the behaviour we're seeing here to reconstructing our memories, or our perceptions of events, to suit our hopes or our preferences. Put that way, it doesn't seem to be a foible limited to the left-wing politically-correct subculture, now does it ... It strikes me as just too human.*

*(I repeat, I just view this foible as human. One of the things I've come to expect, that is.)*

Sept. 21/96:

Well, actually Geis discontinued *Science Fiction Review* in 1986. His associate Elton Elliott sort of continued it as a semi-professional magazine with professional distribution, slick color covers, and so on, and that lasted about six or eight issues before collapsing. ...

*(I thought Geis had started it up again? I saw ads in SF Chronicle and Locus for SFR, as of 1995 and 1996.)*

In another note, checking the Brunner columns in SFR I note that he did observe the vast poverty in the Soviet Union — he characterized it, in effect, as a "third world nation". He didn't, as most of the people I have seen who made this observation do, go on to say that this was a third world nation with a first world

army.

But I think you got the point, that often people are preconditioned to see what they want to see. ...

Beth Miller, PO Box 8521, Moscow, ID 83843 (11/20/96)

Dear Garth,

I got SPLF #7 in yesterday's mail and just read it in the bathtub, a trait I seem to share with Brad Foster.

How in the world did you get to be 39? In my mind you will always be 30. How things do change. I bet you're not wearing your tuxedo, either. You and Fred Astaire are the only souls in the universe that actually look GOOD in a tuxedo.

Yes, things change in the technological world, but people tend to overlook one fact. That XT you are using is exactly as useful and efficient as it was the day it was cutting edge technology. The old manual typewriter still types, too (even if the R does stick). Yes, the world turns and people keep inventing new things and improving existing things, but that doesn't change the things that ARE.

The problem comes when the infrastructure for repairs and maintenance changes. It is no longer economically feasible for the local repair shop to carry exactly the right size and shape of spring necessary to fix my old "Underwood Noiseless". (It's black and shiny and reminds me of an upright piano. It once belonged to my grandmother.) I guess it will have to be a glorious paperweight now, unless I get the urge to track down a tinkerer. He will disappear into his shop, conjure up the necessary part (or a reasonable facsimile) from old refrigerator parts or out of one of several mysterious junk boxes. He will also charge me more than a new typewriter costs.

Re: your quest for words that rhyme with orange — I guess it all depends on what you mean by "rhyme". If "Encyclopedia" rhymes with "eat your wheaties-a", then I guess orange rhymes with melange. I wait with great impatience to see what sort of poem you write when you finish collecting these words and start using them.

*((Closest I've gotten is an English surname, Gorringe. I could always claim that it was an obscure Newfoundland brand of bagpipe, or an 18th-century Acadian dish made with dulce seaweed. In any case I am now looking for any word that rhymes with "month".))*

Ian Gunn, P.O.Box 567, Blackburn 3130, Australia,

<fiawol@bluesky.net.au> 10 Dec 1996

Dear Garth,

Here's a few more words that didn't exist in their present form thirty years ago (unless I'm mistaken): action figure, actor (formerly "actress"), afro, Afro-American, AIDS, anime, arcade game, assembler, cassette, CGI, channel surfing, Chernobyl, cola wars, compiler, crop circle, couch potato, cyberpunk, cyberspace, digital, disco, dolphin friendly, drive, ecofreak, ecovandal, fast food, fax, feed, friendly fire, funk, game boy,

gamer, (-)gate, gay, gulf war syndrome, heavy metal, HIV, icon, infomercial, keyboard, kiwifruit, line dancing, megabucks, manga, microwave, mobile, modem, mohawk, morph, mosh pit, mouse, mouse pad, netsurfing, new age, online, organic, ozone friendly, ozone hole, PC, PC, peircing, post-it notes, pro-choice, punk, pythonesque, quadraphonic, RAM, rap, reaganomics, remote, right-to-lifer, role play game, SCUD, smart(-), smoke-free, space shuttle, spin-doctor, star wars, streetwise, styrofoam, Swatch, tagging, techno music, technonerd, teflon, treehugger, trekkie, valley girl, VCR, velcro, video, video game, waitperson, walkman, Watergate, Woodstock, X-gen.

Most of them tend to originate from technology or youth culture, but I guess that's always been true when it comes to the creation of new words.

Others refer to events: I've heard "Watergate" and "Chernobyl" used in a comparative context. "A potential Chernobyl..."

Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, AB T2P 2E7, Oct. 25, 1996

... I'm still not computerized at home, not just because the mortgage takes priority, but because the University of Calgary library has free Internet access on their catalogue terminals via Netscape 2.01 and a T1 line. I can't send or receive e-mail because I'm not student or staff, but I do a bit of lurking. Your Web page is one of them. I don't know if you track the addresses of those who click on your page, but any hit you get from a U of C Library terminal on a Sunday morning is from me. One word of advice though. I noticed that if I go from your main page to a sub-page, then jump back to the main page, your Web counter records that as another visit, even though I never left your site. You might want to check on that. The page is informative, and you actually seem better at Canfan news than any of the other sites. ...

*(I may be multiplying the number of recorded "hits" on the RSN site myself, as I update parts of it weekly, if not daily. Since you wrote I eliminated the "What's New" section to save space; by way of contrast, I have barely touched my lists of clubs and zines since I put them up, and only updated the lists of conventions at need.)*

In the loccol, the Hiltons mention long waits for downloads. Don't be too quick to blame your modem. The U of C Library uses a T1 line, and still I sit and wait. It doesn't matter how fast your modem is if the other end is puttering along at 9600, or not even connected because of traffic jams. I've discovered that during the summer, when North American universities are out of session, I don't have that many serious waits. When classes are in, and all those students have those 'free' accounts, everything slows to a crawl. I find that I have to be at the Library when it opens at 10h00 because by about noon (early afternoon EST), the Internet slows noticeably as all the easterners come on line. If I wait to about middle afternoon, I can get on the European sites without much trouble because they have little traffic after midnight Sunday their time.

The longevity of paper depends too on where the items are stored. I find that

exposure to light is the most damaging factor. Calgary has low humidity year-round, which makes it an archivist's delight. None of my collections have foxing or mould.

Additional words for your modern glossary: spamming, cross-post, flaming, newbie, click, hit, home page, configure. Try and explain some of those to Dr. Johnson!

Peter Motte, Geraardsbergen, Belgium Nov. 4, 1996

Again, an interesting SPLF. I wonder how you manage it. SPLF is one of the smallest sized fanzines I ever got, but it is probably the most interesting one.

So, you do your thing in networking with DOS-XT computers? My providers and so on are always trying to sell me a bigger computer - they always fail. ... Did you get on Internet with your installation? ...

There is a lot going on in fandom which disturbs me. I am an X-Files fan myself, but if I notice how the X-Files cons are organized, then I wonder whether there is any place left for real fans in fandom. Penney's observation that communication is not important for many areas of fandom, does strike a chord here. Basically a lot of 'fans' are nothing but consumers who want more of the same. ConFusion in Geraardsbergen (Belgium) [mind you, not Confusion in the USA] never got attention from Star Trek fans, although we screened all ST-movies, among other things. The problem was, I think, that we didn't have anything FOR SALE which they didn't already own. I thought they would come if we could offer them something which they would enjoy, but what they are looking for is a place to buy more goodies. Actually, they are firmly in the hands of the companies.

*((Sometimes I wonder how I manage it, too. All I do is put together stuff that interests me in what I hope is a readable structure. Some people respond to what I offer.*

*((Yes, I can communicate on the Internet with the 16-year-old equipment I've got; in fact this fanzine has been circulated by e-mail for the last two or three issues, which is where a lot of the letter column comes from, not to mention a number of the fanzines reviewed here. Internet communication also helps out my SF writers' market research a lot. Note, however, that my satisfaction with what computers do is purpose-oriented, not process-oriented, and text- rather than graphics-oriented. Hence I am reasonably satisfied with what I can access, via 16-year-old equipment, but I recognize I am limited to what I can access with text-oriented software such as Lynx. Some people will stick with DOS 5.0 software while the technology marches on; increasing numbers of Webmasters, however, only cater to graphics- and frame-oriented Web browsers, such as Netscape.*

*((We've been over the trends in fandom several times in this lettercolumn, and I think now I am resigned to the fact that we're basically facing several different fandoms, not one. And the level of communication, or the degree of overlap and intersection between them, is not great. It sounds like you are only now perceiving the shift from participatory to consumer-oriented fandom, from a text- to visual-oriented generation, from original stories and SF ideas to familiar ones, and so on and so forth. If the only model or paradigm*

available to new fans for SF activities is market-driven, then that's the one they will resort to. After that point, something like market forces simply are going to shape the emerging fandom, and it seems that the most "successful", or prevailing, of the available concepts for fandom are the ones offered by Paramount, and its competitors. I have laboured long - like yourself, I guess - to make other concepts available; apparently, they don't attract. Or else I didn't promote things very well.

*((I was somewhat heartened by a conversation I had with David "Murdock" Malinski about these issues the day after Christmas; somewhat heartened, but not very much.))*

Some people claim that fanzines originate in sfandom. Is that true? I think the base was amateur journalism outside fandom. The history can be a bit difficult to trace ... It was William 'Bill' Mildew Danner, the editor-publisher of the fanzine *STEFantasy* (where does the name derive from?), who first drew my attention to the connection with amateur journalism.

*((This is one of the sort-of-controversies that pop up occasionally on the Internet. Basically, there were amateur publications about as long as there were ditto and mimeograph machines, but the first things called "fanzines", as far as we know, were SF fanzines. Every so often somebody complains mildly about the fact that when the recent zine explosion is covered in mainstream media, nobody connects it to its real origins; Rob Hansen, most recently, sent a short article/letter on the issue to William Safire, the language columnist in the U.S. I have written a short article on zines for a local HTML editors' group; see*

*<http://www.vcn.bc.ca/sig/htmlsig>.*

**[[UPDATE: you should now look for these articles at [\*\(\("STEFantasy" is probably one of the early, clumsy acronyms for science fiction, fantasy, and generally speculative fiction that were tried out in the 1930s and 1940s. "Scientifiction" was another.\)\)\*](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/sig/rsn/fanpub.]]</a></b></p></div><div data-bbox=)**

Rodney Leighton's anxiety about fans who don't answer anymore is rather pointless. The problem is: you are dealing with fans. They don't have any real obligation to answer anybody's letters. At a certain moment they feel the urge to get in touch with other fans. They meet them at cons or they send letters to addresses they pick up at various occasions. At first, they contact a lot of people. Then, noticing the amount of work and money involved in keeping in touch with everybody, and noticing the ascending redundancy in answers, they start to select. They end up with an amount of penfriends and fanzines which they can handle, and it is almost impossible to say why they've chosen who. My interest in SPLF is based on the fact that it is a Canadian fanzine, and - curiously - on the fact that I don't know anything about Canada. Also, I think you should do something to keep their interest going. ...

*((That's about what I was going to say, only with less emphasis on seeing that your*

*time and money and energy are fully absorbed, and more on just sort of running out of time or forgetting people without meaning to.))*

In reaction to Harry Warner Jr.'s letter dated May 15, 1996, I'd like to state that there are a lot of positive notions about SF and fans which I left [?] in the course of the years during which I was in fandom - and I'm in it for over 10 years now. I do not hold the idea, for example, that fans are faster to pick up new ideas than mundanes; sometimes I have the idea that fans are much more conservative than mundanes. The only notion I hold on, however, is that fans are on average more intelligent than other people. However, I also believe that they are much worse informed. And that could explain why such a lot of silly ideas tour [?] in fandom. Partly, the straightforward explanation is that lots of fans are actually teenagers, and teenagers haven't completed their education yet, nor have they a lot of experience. Unfortunately, the way some grown-up SF fans deal with SF supports the feeling that they also lack quality information. I guess that in some cases it has something to do with their social background.

The problem could be further analyzed: is there an evolution in the social background of SF fans since the late 1920s? The source of SF, pulp magazines, suggests a low social background originally. ...

*((You won't find any argument from Dale Speirs, who publishes my fanhistory articles. In fact Dale is pretty convinced fans are less open to new ideas than mundanes. Dale probably grasps, and sometimes I wonder if John Mansfield does, a level of irony in fans' self-image versus their reality. It's probably truest to say that a significant majority of fans, today as in the beginning of fandom, were people with a different take on things, different sense of humour, different ideas and jokes that they had to explain to others or pass over but couldn't count on others already knowing and understanding; a different, but not a greater intelligence. Fandom as I know it is partly some people who like playing with ideas, but mostly people whose preferred leisure activity is gaming or Star Trek costuming or fanfiction, and sometimes aspiring entrepreneurs, or even writers. I used to think fans were vocal and opinionated; now I think fans are just liable to form a lot of opinions; I don't see a lot of fans going to the library and doing documentary research.*

*((Rather than a social background, you may wish to look at the income level, or relative population, of fans in different decades. Dave "Murdock" Malinski pointed out to me that the nature of fandom and the changes in fandom over time can be viewed demographically, and while the shrinking of convention attendances in North America over the past ten years can be viewed as a natural product of the fall in the teen/college-age population, we can also expect a boom in that market segment seven years from now. But I must have covered this earlier in this zine.))*

Could somebody give me an idea of the common values that fans are, or were, supposed to share? I'd like to dive deeper into that.

*((AHA! Now we hit the nail on the head. Best thing is to look at the Neofan*



Guide from SCIFI [Los Angeles], or the Trufan Advisor [from Arnie Katz in Las Vegas].

*((My own take on the issues: Once, I gather, fandom and SF alike were about reasoned speculation; fandom further developed a serious&constructive phase, then a "fannish" or non-serious, lighthearted, ironic phase; then New Wave, cyberpunk, and Goth phases. I gather — and this is a demographic phenomenon, dating to about 1970/71 — that fandom went in several different directions at once, concurrent with a vast increase in population. Right now, the only thing all fans have in common is conventions, and there's damn-all consensus as to what conventions are, or should be.))*

*(Peter Motte also included a bio, which may appear in my next incompleat "Who's Who in Fandom" posting on <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/sig/rsn>.)*

Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, Y012 5RQ, U.K.  
(undated)

... I was interested to read your'comments on the Net, but personally, I'm deterred by the cash outlay required in buying a modem, getting it linked to my PC, running a phone line up here, paying a Net server and a higher phone bill. Still, it sounds like fun. I'm a bit puzzled by the list of neologisms - surely 'address, corrupted, code, post' etc. don't qualify?

*((Any time I hear a familiar word being used in a confusing way, I reckon I'm hearing a new word.))*

Nice of you to publish my letter detailing my medical troubles. I'm pleased to say that I'm more or less healthy again ...

Cheer making news. On the morning of October 22nd, a bulky package arrived from the USA. It contained several complimentary copies of the September issue of *Tomorrow* with my "Einstein Instant" as the first yarn therein. Nicely illustrated too ... What staggered me was the fact that also enclosed was an invitation to join the prestigious Science Fiction Writers of America. A great honour, but sadly, one which I had to decline - I can't afford \$45.00 a year dues. ...

WAHF: Rodney Leighton, Lyn McConchie



## FANZINES RECEIVED

I begin this column in September 1996, once more \*determined\* to do justice to the mass of text, ideas and information that appears in my mail. I have not by any means managed to review or even mention all the zines I have received.

I don't know, guys. I need a new plan. What do you suggest?

*Ansible* 110 (Sept. 1996) to 113 (Dec. 1996), from Fanwriter Hugo winner Dave Langford; E-mail [ansible@cix.compulink.co.uk](mailto:ansible@cix.compulink.co.uk). Available for SAE or a cure for triskaidekahugophobia. Samples of hot news: "NEWT GINGRICH's ghosted sf novel 1945 failed to become a US best-seller, with 81% returns and 97,000 copies now clogging the warehouse shelves. Mighty publisher Jim Baen swiftly turned this to good account and guaranteed himself national US coverage from Newt-haters ... by announcing that the books might well be pulped and become, ultimately, toilet paper. ..." You can see why I look to *Ansible* for publishing news as well as belly laughs, can't you?

*Apparatchik*: Andy Hooper, Carl Juarez & Victor Gonzalez; 4228 Francis Ave. N. #103, Seattle, WA 98103, and 403 1/2 Garfield Street S., #11, Tacoma, WA 98444; available also at [fanmailAPH@aol.com](mailto:fanmailAPH@aol.com).

*BCSFazine* #280 & #281, from John Wong (ye ed.): c/o #110 - 1855 West 2nd Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1J1. This is what I get for contributing lists of Web page URLs and an article on the Royal Swiss Navy. These days *BCSFazine* is in full-page rather than digest size (actually, two 11x17 sheets, folded once; saves a lot of trouble binding the copies). Club news, con listings, self-referential alias humour, furry fandom, media reports, PageMaker layout, artwork.

*Derogatory Reference* #81 - #84 (Sept./Oct. 1996) from Arthur Hlavaty, the continuing adventures of Arthur Hlavaty in darkest Yonkers. Sample adventure: "I interviewed for a job with \*Penthouse Variations\*, and the test was material that turned out to be harder-core than the actual publication. I also wrote a sample page of hot throbbing prose, since part of the job was turning out Authentic Reader Letters." I "thought" so!

*Empties* #17 from Martin Tudor: COA 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands WV13 1HX, U.K. How Martin fell in love and got married. Martin's story convinces me that I have been something of a coward in the last three years, as I've been avoiding this life experience. Mind you he also convinces me not to mix a honeymoon with congoing and with a working holiday. Two out of three, maybe.

Also: *Have Bag Will Travel* ##1-4, Martin Tudor's TAFF report, leading up to and including L.A. Con III, amusingly illustrated by Dave Hicks.

*The North Wind*, now c/o 5119 Watling St., Burnaby, B.C. V5J 1W8; \$18 Cdn/yr, payable to "The North Wind".

*Opuntia* #29, Dale Speirs, Calgary. The enthinned issue, containing Dale Speirs on "Where Did the Future Go?" and an article on round robins, plus assorted letters. With the Canadian Journal of Detournement #13, the NonCon XX Progress Report, and SemperVivum 2.1 (an illustrated Worldcon 1996 report - TAFF and DUFF winners' arrival, Hugo presentations, the WSFS meeting and the dead dog, as illustrated in the Bayeux Tapestry).

*Pinkette* #15, June/July 1996, Karen Pender-Gunn, Box 567, Blackburn, Vic. 3130, Australia. Punk teddy-bear in tutu? What Gillian Anderson watches on her VCR; strange personal ads; strange locs; a GUFF diary page. I like this, but I don't really know what's happening!

*Thyme* #111, Sept. 1996, The Australian Science Fiction News Magazine. Featuring news, views and reviews of by and from Australian SF fans, some publishing news, an artists' showcase ("Artychoke"), and the absolutely \*great\* continuing SF spoof, "Space-Time Buccaneers", by Ian Gunn. This month: character Origins #6 - "Black Gladys"!



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