



This is the 28th Issue of a quarterly fanzine that doesn't know who the Gepids were, let alone what color to paint them. Edited and published by Andrew Hooper and Carrie Root, of 4228 Francis Ave. N. #103, Seattle, WA 98103, members fwa, supporters afal. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 216, 4/7/95 Available for the usual, i.e., letters of comment, submissions of art or prose, or your own fanzine in trade. Material in this issue comes from Andy, John Bartelt, Carrie, Elizabeth Hooper-Lane, Candi Strecker and our correspondents. Art by Bill Kunkel (title), Bill Rotsler (page 5) Stu Shiffman (pages 2 & 3), Dan Steffan (pages 1 & 8) and Pat Virzi ("Blowback" logo). We'd like to take the opportunity to announce the first AFAL award sponsored by *Spent Brass*, the Walter Dunkelberger trophy for miniaturization in fanac. This year's recipients are the editors of *Nine Lines Each*, Ken Forman, John Hardin, Tom Springer and Ben Wilson. Guys, the award will be delivered to you as soon as we can find it. Sadly, someone at the AFAL dropped it into a heavy shag carpet....

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Apparently no one had ever turned down 15,000 comic book fans before.

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### KISS OF THE RAINY-TOWN TATTLER by Andy

DESPITE the many issues which remain to be solved, we here at *Spent Brass* would like to express our heartfelt joy at the temporary resolution of the major league baseball strike. It feels great to be able to look at the calendar and anticipate heading to the great concrete mausoleum beside the harbor, to see major league baseball, of a sort, played once more. Now all they really need to do is find a way to convince the umpires to participate as well...My interest in the game is no longer a purely abstract or competitive one, since I have just completed the manuscript of the third book I have worked on for Prima Publishing, *The Interactive Baseball Handbook, 1995 edition*. I have done my best to try and make the work appeal to game-players looking for an alternative to the frustrations of the strike, and to sell the whole thing as an exercise in alternate history, but the act was beginning to wear a bit thin. Hopefully, sales will be solid. And my first solo work, *Front Page Sports Football Pro '95: The Official Playbook*, is finally on the stands, just two and a half months after the end of the football season. Perhaps I can work out some way to appeal to the nostalgia market.... READERS of this fanzine will find the results of the third annual *Spent Brass* Poll tastefully displayed within. Our correspondents did an excellent job of sending in ballots, even though the deadline was less than a month away when many readers received them. It was a lot of fun tallying the votes as they came in, especially the tooth and nail battles for favorite fan humorist and illustrator. And I was extremely flattered to receive so many votes, both as an essayist and for publishing APPARATCHIK, which nosed out a number of fanzines which are certainly much more impressive



artifacts. Thanks for all the egoboo to each of you who swallowed your doubts about not knowing the field well enough and voted anyway. THE LATEST ADDITION to the ranks of fandom that we have heard of came in Baltimore, where former Madison fans John Peacock and Paula Lewis have announced the birth of a daughter, Leah Malkah Peacock, born March 25th. Congratulations to both proud parents, especially poor Paula, who is reported to have endured 17 hours of labor. READERS hoping to find that British reprint I mentioned at the end of last issue will be disappointed; the piece turned out to be 27 pages long, just a little meaty for a typical issue of *Spent Brass*. The cupboard is bare once more here at the SB editorial center; we need lots of material for our next issue, to be finished sometime in late June. As always, we hope fans will send questions to ASK DR. FANDOM, (c/o Ted White, 1014 N. Tuckahoe, Falls Church, VA 22044) and fanzines to our reviewer, Mark Manning (1709 S. Holgate, Seattle, WA 98144). No details are close to hand, but Janice Murray and Alan Rosenthal are still planning to hold Ditto here in November of this year; address your inquiries to Janice at P.O. Box 75864, Seattle, WA 98125-0684. WHAT are we waiting for? Let's go get a shrimp sundae! -aph☐

CORFLU 11  
(CORFLU NOVA)  
Guest of Honor Speech  
John Bartelt – May, 1994

People have asked me what my reaction was to being named Guest of Honor. My reaction was: "It's about time!" It's about time I was a guest of honor at a convention. Like many, or perhaps most, fanzine fans, I think I've made sufficient contributions to warrant being guest of honor somewhere. But where?

Madison Fandom could invite me back to a Wiscon, but they don't seem to work that way. Besides, we (we being Tracy, Spike and I) have decided that Madison fandom can be divided into three eras: pre-Spike, Spike, and post-Spike. I'm from that long-ago pre-Spike era when we published Janus and put on the first Wiscon. Many of the current post-Spike Madison fans may not even know who I am.

Then there's Minneapolis fandom, where I made the biggest splash -- as one of the "Rune Boys", along with Joe Wesson, Garth Danielson, David Stever and Karen Trego. We put out ten issues or so of Rune, including the "Sci-Fi People Weekly" issue. But I think I burned enough bridges there that I'm not likely to be named guest of honor at a Minicon.

After that, I slowly started gafiating. I only did one fanzine in my six years in California: *The Lizard of Menlo Park*. So it seemed Corflu was my only chance to be made a guest of honor. This seems most fitting since I married one of the founding mothers of Corflu, a past-president of FWA, Lucy Huntzinger. And we met at the first Corflu. And though I haven't been very active in fanzines lately, I have enjoyed meeting some more fanzine fans who I used to trade fanzines with.

So I am happy to be a guest of honor, even if I do have to make this speech. I feel that I should say something profound about the state of fanzine fandom. Like: "Computer bulletin boards - Threat or Menace?" But I'm so gafiated I can't. Heck, I spend more time following women's volleyball than I do reading fanzines. So instead, I'm going to say something about my "real life", which is particle physics.

I work on an experiment where we whack some particles together at high energies to make more particles. Last year, sifting through the data, I discovered a new particle. No, not the top quark. It didn't make the *New York Times*. But it was a new particle. Is it called the "Bartelt Particle"? No,



nothing that catchy. It fits into a naming scheme that had already been established. So it is called the  $D_{s2}^{*}(2573)^{+}$ . The name tells you that this particle has both charm and strangeness. The "D" indicates the charm; the "s" indicates the strangeness. The subscript "2" means that it has two units of angular momentum or "spin." Its mass, in MeV, is given by the "2573". The "star" superscript indicates it is "natural" (that's a bit esoteric), and the plus sign just indicates it has one unit of charge.

I don't have my usual visual aids with me, so I have enlisted the help of some of my friends to re-enact the life of a typical  $D_{s2}^{*}(2573)^{+}$ . We have simplified some of the details for this presentation. The particles will be played by the people wearing white shirts, and the anti-particles will be played by the people wearing black or dark-colored shirts. We begin by hurtling an electron [Lucy Huntzinger] and a positron [Joe Wesson] at each other at very nearly the speed of light. [Lucy and Joe slowly walk toward each other while each spins clockwise.] This is obviously a slow-motion replay. They collide and annihilate into a virtual photon [Joe and Lucy embrace and spin together], which then rematerializes as a charm quark [Lucy] and an anti-charm anti-quark [Joe; Joe has pulled off Lucy's wig and put it over his face]. As they separate, the excess energy can create more quarks. [Lucy and Joe continue to spin clockwise and slowly separate.] In this case, a



strange anti-quark is produced which binds with the charmed quark. [*Spike appears, and while spinning clockwise, orbits Lucy in a clockwise direction.*] The strange anti-quark orbits the charmed quark while they both spin. They are held together by the exchange of gluons [*Lucy and Spike toss colorful sock-balls back and forth.*] This goes on for about 20 trillionths of trillionth of a second, and they split apart, and some more quarks are formed from the energy. [*Lucy and Spike separate.*] An up quark [*Bob Weber, spinning counterclockwise*] joins the strange anti-quark [*Spike*] to form a K meson, while an anti-up anti-quark [*me, also spinning counterclockwise*] joins the charmed quark to make a  $D^0$  meson. And that's about it. Thank you for letting me inject a little science into science fiction fandom.

[Author's note: The terminology "anti-charm antiquark" and "anti-up antiquark" is not quite standard, but not incorrect. I thought it was more colorful than saying just "charm antiquark" or "charm = -1 antiquark". I would also like to point out that referring to the "strange antiquark" was not a mistake. For historical reasons, the antiquark has positive strangeness, and it is the corresponding quark which has negative or "anti-strangeness". Finally, in standard typography, the superscript <sup>\*\*\*</sup> should be right over the subscripts in the name  $D_{s2}(2573)^+$ ; this is how I wrote it on the sign I used at Corflu. I don't know how to do that in word on the Macintosh. If I were writing

this on my VAXstation using T<sub>E</sub>X, it would be no problem.]



## Walking Through Life, or, It's Cheaper than a Trip to Maui and More Fun Than Therapy by Carrie

Since the first of the year, my pal Karrie-with-a-K and I have walked a lot. My *International Record of Popular Sports DISTANCE Record Book* (issued by the American Volkssport Association) says 80 kilometers since Jan 1 1995, which doesn't count the walking we do unofficially - which since I transferred into a different division at work, but haven't been assigned an office in even the same time zone as my new division, has been an additional 10K a week, with 25 flights of stairs thrown in for interest. (Yeah, I kept track for a week. I'm trying to convince the Office God that they'd get a lot more work out of me if I didn't have to commute.) Karrie and I have a goal of getting into good enough shape that when we sign up for a backpacking trip with the Seattle Mountaineers Club (first open enrollment meeting of the

year this Wednesday in Queen Anne somewhere) we won't generate outright hilarity. Our knees may be weak, but our will is strong. Actually, to walk much in Washington requires more than just strong knees. I guess it sounds a bit like boasting to those of you braving a subzero winter in the upper midwest, but at least four of the eight 10K walks we have done so far this year have had head-to-toe raingear as an absolute requirement, and two of those days were so wet that I ended up soaked to the skin anyway. And it wasn't THAT warm. The walks we do for Volkssport credit are measured and laid out by one of the 55 member clubs (with names like "Skagit Tulip Trekkers", "Mercer Island Insteps", and the "Seattle Strasse Striders") of the Evergreen State

Volkssport Association. Most of them are urban or suburban walks, and we've been amazed by the variety and charm that can be found in the most unlikely locations.

For instance, in January we did a "year-round" walk in Issaquah, which is a bedroom suburb of Seattle, and has long been the home of Boeing engineers. I was reluctant, imagining 10K of ramblers and pretentious split-levels. And when the starting point for the walk turned out to be an espresso shop in a video store in a strip mall, I was even more apprehensive. But the trail quickly entered the "old town", with vine covered bungalows and neat kitchen gardens. Up the hill, over the bridge, and we were picking our way along Issaquah Creek, following the old narrow-gauge railroad bed that used to (and may again someday, if the hydroelectric dams that produce such cheap power for the area succumb to the fishing industry's demand for restored salmon runs) haul coal out of these foothills to the Cascades, to fuel the industry of turn-of-the-century Puget Sound. Up through old coal tailings, then down past coal miner's cottages (which now cost more than the miners made in their lives) overlooking the valley. Around, but not through, the old cemetery ... and then

down to the Issaquah Fish Hatcheries, and a very nice educational kiosk about the salmon runs up this creek, and how the work of the Army Core of Engineers in the 50s and 60s is gradually being undone, un-straightening waterways, replanting stream sides, cultivating marshland. Now, this walk did end up in "Issaquah Village" a pretentious open mall of cute little Shoppes in Olde Towne renovated brick buildings, but the Chocolate Factory almost made that tolerable, too.

But we keep at it. Aside from the moral superiority you can claim from engaging in healthy behavior that is demonstrably painful (ask any jogger) we've become addicted to the enforced intimacy of almost-weekly two or three hour excursions. Over the three years we've been walking, we have occasionally convinced someone else to walk with us (in decent weather only), but we'll always keep some walks private. How often do most people, even married folks, get to spend an extended time really talking, with no distractions except an occasional spectacular overlook? It's cheaper than therapy.

For information about Volkssport activities in your area, call the AVA Event Information Line, (800) 830-9255.

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### Results of the Third Annual Spent Brass Poll

We're happy to say that we received 35 ballots in various degrees of completion, listing our readers' favorite writers, artists and fanzine of 1994. Congratulations to the winners, and sincere thanks to all the people who took the time to send in a ballot. We've listed the winners below, along with the top finishers in all five categories. Persons and fanzines which received less than five points total are listed below the top finishers in alphabetical order. A first place vote was worth five points, and a fifth-place vote was worth one, which is why the top choices have totals in excess of the number of voters. Kudos to all the winners, and a special nod is in order to Mr. Dan Steffan, current TAFF candidate, and fan-about town, for receiving 213 total votes spread between all five categories, including the 85 he shared with Ted White for editing the fanzine BLATI A performance worthy of the sobriquet of Fan Face #1, assuming we admitted that such a category existed. Award certificates will be sent to the winners once things die down after Corflu.

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#### Favorite Fan Writer for Humor

Dave Langford - 53  
Arnie Katz - 43  
Chuck Harris - 38  
Andrew Hooper - 26  
Sharon Farber - 21  
Rob Hansen - 16  
Kate Yule - 14  
Dan Steffan - 12  
Ted White - 12  
Ross Chamberlain - 11  
Bob Tucker - 11  
Charles Burbee - 10  
Bill Kunkel - 9  
Arthur Hlavaty - 9  
Greg Pickersgill - 9  
Tracy Benton - 7  
Joyce Katz - 7

Dave Locke - 7

Bob Bloch, Jim Brooks, Helen E. Davis, Bill Donaho, Janice Eisen, Marc Ortlieb, Paul Skelton, and Elliot Weinstein all received 5 votes

#### Others receiving votes:

John Berry, Bill Bowers, The Chaotic Commentator of the Reluctant Famulus, Ken Cheslin, Chuck Connor, Marc Cram, Lillian Edwards, George A. Effinger, Holger Eliasson, Mike Glicksohn, Mike Glycer, Judith Hanna, Dave Hicks, Lucy Huntzinger, Terry Jeeves, Dave Kyle, Mark Manning, Diane Martin, Greg Pickersgill, Roger Sims, Tom Springer, Simon Ounsley, Candy Strecker, Roy Tackett, Larry Tucker, and Laurie Yates

### Favorite Fan Writer for Essay

Ted White - 78  
Andy Hooper - 76  
Redd Boggs - 16  
Lucy Huntzinger - 15  
Avedon Carol - 14  
Barnaby Rapoport - 13  
rich brown - 12  
Bill Donaho - 11  
Jeanne Gomoll - 11  
Dan Steffan - 11  
Rob Hansen - 10  
Joyce Katz - 9  
Robert Lichtman - 9  
Luke McGuff - 9  
Daie Speirs - 7  
Greg Pickersgill - 6  
Vicki Rosenzweig - 6  
Walt Willis - 6

Vijay Bowen, Grant Canfield, Frank Denton, Mike Glycer, Judith Hanna, Arthur Hlavaty, Ben Indick and Simon Ounsley all received 5 votes

### Other s receiving votes:

Buck Coulson, John Foyster, Victor Gonzalez, Rob Hansen, Arnie Katz, Christina Lake, Tom Sadler, Jeff Schalles, D. West, Eric Mayer, Luke McGuff, Dave Kyle, Art Saha, Ben Zuhl, Howard Devore, Sharon Farber, Don Fitch, Fred Lerner, Joseph Major, Sam Moskowitz, Tom Sadler, Jeff Schalles, Gerri Sullivan, Harry Warner.

### Favorite Fan artist for cartooning

Bill Rotsler - 83  
Dan Steffan - 62  
Steve Stiles - 44  
Bill Kunkel - 34  
Teddy Harvia - 29  
Ray Nelson - 20  
Don West - 19  
Craig Smith - 17  
Stu Shiffman - 16  
Ross Chamberlain - 11  
Brad Foster - 9  
Alexis Gilliland - 8  
Taral - 7  
Scott Patri - 5

### Other s receiving votes:

Sheryl Birkhead, Ian Gunn, Joy Mayhew, Tracy Benton, Ken Fletcher, Harry Bell, Tom Foster, David Haugh, Taral, Vaughn Bode, Ken Cheslin, Tom Duabrey, Craig Hilton.

### Favorite Fan artist for illustration:

Ross Chamberlain - 44  
Dan Steffan - 43  
Steve Stiles - 35  
Ray Nelson - 30  
Peggy Ranson - 29  
Linda Michaels - 26  
Brad Foster - 15  
Jeanne Gomoll - 14  
Bill Rotsler - 12

Taral - 12  
Grant Canfield - 10  
Steven Fox - 10  
Margaret Organ-Kean - 9  
Stu Shiffman - 9  
Delphyne Woods - 8  
Sheryl Birkhead - 7  
Raven - 7

### Other s receiving votes:

Craig Hilton, Kurt Erichsen, Alan Hunter, Allen Koslowski, Harry Bell, Craig Smith, Sheryl Birkhead, Rob Hansen, Teddy Harvia, Diana Stein, Glenn Tenhoff, ATom, Ruth Thompson and Harry Turner.

### Favorite Fanzine

BLATI- 85  
Habakkuk - 63  
Idea - 49  
Apparatchik - 42  
Mimosa - 32  
Trap Door - 30  
Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk - 20  
Wild Heirs - 18  
Ansible - 15  
Mainstream - 11  
The Reluctant Famulus - 10  
Attitude - 9  
FTT - 9  
The Frozen Frog - 9  
Bento - 5  
Cazbah - 5  
Fosfax - 5

### Other s receiving votes:

BCSFazine, Fantasy-Scope, File 770, The Knarley Knews, Lagoon, Lan's Lantern, Licks, Moriarty's Revenge, Nasfa Shuttle, Opuntia, Quipu, Project Z, Southern Gothic, Spent Brass, Spirochete, Stet, Thingumybob, Weberwoman's Wrevenge, and World Domination Review.





## APPLES AND ORANGES

By Candi Strecker

Zany, warm, romantic -- critics have said all this and more about Samuel R. Delany's 1975 avant-garde science fiction masterpiece, *DHALGREN*. Oops, I've got my clippings mixed up -- those are the things the critics are saying about the popular current TV show, *NORTHERN EXPOSURE*. I can't imagine how I got the two confused, since they're nothing alike, except for a few minor points like...

### NORTHERN EXPOSURE

An outsider arrives in a town full of outsiders, most drawn here by the chance to forge new lives and relationships. Cicely, a town with a woman's name, is isolated from the rest of America by distance and harsh, uncompromising climate.

Despite its small population, Cicely is a strangely cosmopolitan place, where classes and races freely mingle, and a disproportionate number of its people are educated, well-traveled, intellectual. Among its residents there's even an astronaut, Maurice Minnifield

For such an isolated spot, Cicely gets more than its share of colorful visitors.

A key locale is The Brick, a bar/hangout where everyone gathers to socialize and exchange news and rumors.

Cicely's main source of information is its unconventional radio station. It's owned by Maurice Minnifield, a larger-than-life figure who views Cicely as not just a place to live but as raw material he can control and shape. Another of Minnifield's machinations is to arrange for the arrival of Dr. Joel Fleischman, the main character.

Supplies are hard to get in this isolated place and are most often obtained by airlift.

Even the days and nights are different here, where the long winter nights or the midnight sun can trigger strange behavior.

The biggest arts event in the town's history is the premiere of the first film by Native American Ed Chigliak.

The main female character is Maggie, an independent young woman trying to distance herself from her wealthy sheltered background. She's also main character Joel's landlord.

Cicely has its own animal mascot, the moose that wanders through the streets

### DHALGREN

An outsider arrives in a town full of outsiders, most drawn here by the chance to forge new lives and relationships. Bellona, a town with a woman's name, is isolated from the rest of America by a mysterious unspecified catastrophe.

Despite its small population, Bellona is a strangely cosmopolitan place, where classes and races freely mingle, and a disproportionate number of its people are educated, well-traveled, intellectual. Among its residents there's even an astronaut, Capt. Michael Kamp.

For such an isolated spot, Bellona gets more than its share of colorful visitors.

A key locale is Teddy's, a bar/hangout where everyone gathers to socialize and exchange news and rumors.

Bellona's main source of information is its unconventional newspaper. It's owned by Roger Calkins, a larger-than-life figure who views Bellona as not just a place to live but as raw material he can control and shape. Another of Calkin's machinations is to arrange the publication of the poems of Kidd, the main character.

Supplies are hard to get in this isolated place and are most often obtained by looting.

Even the days and nights are different here, where perpetual night and two moons or an enormous sun can trigger strange behavior.

The biggest arts event in the town's history is the publication of the first film by the Native American, Kidd.

The main female character is Lanya, an independent young woman trying to distance herself from her wealthy sheltered background. She also sometimes provides a place in the park where main character Kidd can sleep.

Bellona has its own animal mascots, the holographic projections of scorpions and other fabulous beasts that conceal some residents as they wander through its streets.

## A LETTER FROM HOUMA

By Elizabeth Hooper-Lane

(Note: My sister, Elizabeth Hooper-Lane and her husband Chris have recently moved to Houma, Louisiana, where Chris has taken a job running the research library at the Louisiana University Marine Consortium laboratory (aka "LUMCON"). Since this has been a big change for Liz, after growing up in and spending over 20 years in Wisconsin, her letters have been interesting enough that we thought Spent Brass readers might enjoy reading them. -APH)

Well, it has been one week since we moved down here on the bayou, so I thought I'd write you some of my impressions.

So we got everything out of the truck, again, and into a storage locker, again. Chris had to go to a K-Mart and buy a new lock for it, while I sat on a cedar chest in the locker, waiting. As I was re-hooking the tow dolly to the back of the truck I rounded a corner to find a handsome Louisiana gentleman urinating against the locker wall; ah, welcome to the deep south. We finally returned the truck, with Chris driving the Subaru into New Orleans with me following in the empty truck and tow dolly. I'll tell you, I never quite realized I had such a powerful fear of driving over bridges until transiting the Huey P. Long Memorial bridge over the Mississippi. Holy high bridge! That was one difficult day to say the least.

Chris has started his job running the library and appears to really like it. He doesn't seem in the least nervous or afraid that he won't be able to figure things out that he hasn't done before. Even administrative chores like the budget have already engaged his interest. It really wasn't the best week to begin, though, with much of the faculty and staff gone for the Mardi Gras holidays. The schools are closed throughout the week, and everyone seems to treat the period that began last weekend and runs through this one as a sort of spring break holiday. So schedules have been suspended and Chris hasn't had much of a chance to work with many folks. He hasn't gotten his keys or figured out his E-mail, so it's a little bit frustrating.

I'm ashamed to admit that something clicked in my brain as I was pushing my "buggy" around the absolutely teeming aisles of Sam Wall's stupendous achievement in Americana yesterday. ("Is tha' you buggy dahlin? I was jus' abou' to take it right ow' frum unda' y'all!"), entailing the loss of all my resolutions to hold my tendency to stereotype, preconceive and carry snobbish intellectual assumptions in check. I just lost it. I walked up and

down the aisles incredulously, trying not to gawk at the heavily made-up women in sweat suit outfits pushing one cart filled with processed food and a second cart filled with six children, all under the age of seven. To make things even more bizarre, these women and children sported strange smudges of dirt on their foreheads. Aha, Ash Wednesday, the heart of Catholic America. Wow, I'm living in the middle of a very large and powerful cult of some sort.

The whole drive home I felt strangely empowered as I puffed myself and my intellectual achievements up to greater and greater heights. I'll have to subscribe to some journals. I'll have to get on some list servers to have someone on the same wavelength to talk to. Anyway, as you can imagine, Chris was merely amused by this attack asking simply: "Liz, what did you expect?" I continue to attempt to control my disgusting elitist tendencies, reminding myself that it's probably no different here from Two Rivers, WI or Duluth, MN. When we are living in a place like Boston, Berkeley or Syracuse, attempting to engage in "American Studies," I'll be justified in acting like a snob, having put in my time in a small corner of The Real America.

The weather has shifted from warm, sunny days to become rather gray and dreary. We had our first thunderstorm and boy did it rain. We were on our way to Houma for a Mardi Gras parade and decided to turn back, due to a complete lack of visibility and our fear that the road would become impassable. That was three days ago and there are still large puddles everywhere. The temperature stays around the upper 50s and gets rather cool at night. The winter cycle seems to work this way fairly regularly and temperatures should continue to rise into the 80s over the next few days, ending in a muggy day that will break into thunderstorms bringing the temperatures back down again.

Mardi Gras was extremely strange and interesting, just an excuse to party and have parades. We went to some parades, each hosted by a different "Krewe" (The Krewe of Terranians, Krewe of Cleopatra. Krewe of Bonne Terre. Montegut Children's Krewe, etc.) Hundreds of people line the streets with plastic grocery bags (which, by the way, are the only type of bag around here at all, no "paper or plastic?" inquiries) and scream and yell at the costumed people driving by in the floats to throw them things, cheap



plastic beads, fancy metallic beads, trinkets, stuffed animals, commemorative plastic cups, doubloons, candy, popcorn balls. The amazing thing is, you really get swept up in all the frenzy and are soon joining in, ripping strands of "the good beads" out of the hands of old ladies and children along the parade route. Police officers are completely weighed down by pounds and pounds of bead strands over their uniforms, young and old, everybody wants beads! So, enclosed with this letter are some strands from our haul. Everyone here displays them proudly on their rearview mirror, so we thought you might like to exhibit your exotic Mardi Gras connections to the greater Seattle area.

We haven't been doing too much yet, just sort of taking it slowly, getting to know the immediate area. Houma is a pretty complicated city to get around in (with tunnels, bridges, one-way streets, etc.) but I think I am finally getting it down. We read, watch old movies on the American Movie Classics network, watch our TV shows (Chicago Hope, NYPD Blue, Northern Exposure, ER, The X-Files, and various flavors of Star Trek), play Eurorails, take pictures with our new camera, bake bread in the bread machine (very successfully, I might add) and drive to and from the distant grocery store. We have tried to stop eating out to preserve our budget, although it is hard to resist crawfish season and shrimp po-boys.

We're lucky that David and Mary, our friends from Tennessee, now live in Baton Rouge, just ninety minutes away. They came to visit us, with their new baby, Ernie, last Saturday. It was great to see some familiar faces. It was the first time they had left the house with the baby, except for short walks in the neighborhood. They have the whole routine down, and it effectively dominates their existence. Mary never puts him down and says she can't possibly remember what life was like before he was around. David is a little less well-adjusted, and still felt slightly squeamish about having a baby spit up all over his new Chambray shirt. He works as a Science Fiction Reference Librarian at LSU, so he and Chris are happy to be working in the same system. They plan to meet at a Louisiana Library Association in Lafayette next week, if Chris can figure out how to do the paperwork to get the funding.

We think that part of the way to make this move a more positive experience is to think of it as an extended tourist stay, and we have several small jaunts we'd like to try over the next few weekends.

Of course, we have to try a swamp cruise, something I figure anyone who visits us will want to do as well. There was a long feature in an issue of Historic Preservation on the old Louisiana State Capitol in Baton Rouge that has been restored and reopened as the State Archives. Chris received a big promotional packet regarding the opening of a special exhibit on the Louisiana Purchase, so I think we'll make that trip some weekend and stay with David, Mary and Ernie. I also want to take a drive along Plantation Road and tour and photograph the old Plantation mansions. This weekend we're thinking of going to Thibadoux to see the historical district and the Jean Lafitte historical site. Plus, Chris found a listing for a huge two-story bookstore something you don't find on every street corner around here....

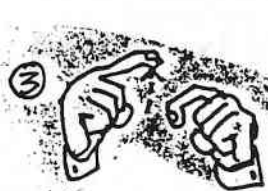
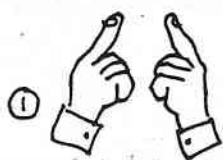
This is truly a foreign place to me. The mix of live oaks, hanging moss, pine and palm trees, magnolias, azaleas, house plants growing in the ground in people's front yards, houses on stilts, flooded ditches, pickup trucks, minivans, BVM (Blessed Virgin Mary) statues galore, piles of trash, twisted wrecked motor homes, white egrets and great blue herons, shrimp boats and oil refineries, are mind boggling. The people are friendly, yet they don't seem to be playing with a full deck. There are no gyros or Thai food here (I am already planning a menu for our first visit back to Madison), only shrimp, gumbo, Etouffe, crawfish, po-boys, oysters, beans and rice. The grocery stores carry the weirdest foods and brands. The deli counter woman had no idea what I was talking about when I asked for a half pound of Braunschweiger.

Mostly it is the visual differences that strike me as so strange: the endless flatness, the flora, the ever-present shrimp boats and their nets and cages, the trash and refuse left where it landed after Hurricane Andrew. Ya'll jus' won' believe it till you see it.

Well, I think I will close for now. I miss you guys and wish you could come soon for a visit (or we could come see you). Life really is strange sometimes, everything continues to feel unreal in some way. I don't really know how to explain it, you just keep waking up each morning and going to bed each night as usual, except you are in this strange place. I still find myself thinking about "when we go home." But I guess we'll have to figure out where that is before we go there.

Love always, Liz.

the SECRET SIGN





# BLOWBACK

(We've gotten just a few letters since Issue #27, since this follows so closely on its heels. Most people just sent their poll ballots. But we do have some, including a couple people still catching up on #26:)

Murray Moore

377 Marly St., Midland, Ont. L4R 3E2 Canada

"I am a very good speller, with a good memory, but damned if I can remember, even a minute after typing it, HABAKKUK. You are not alone. A very fine fanzine, but a terrible title.

"Dr. Fandom, commenting about the lack of literacy in comics fandom, states that the average comics fan 'distantly sense when he tries to read [The Comics Journal] that it is somehow subtly sneering at him.' Neither the sneering, nor anything else about TCJ, is subtle. I offer this observation as a faithful reader of the Journal since it's third of fourth issue.

"I particularly enjoyed Redd Bogg's perspective on mimeo vs. photocopy reproduction. I tweaked the Lynches in my latest loc on Mimosa: 'I must say, the blotting paper on which you print takes the ink remarkably well!'

"SB 27. The obvious question -- to me -- to Victor Gonzalez, is, did you record your interview with Ted White, or did you interpret his answers and bracket them with quotation marks?"

[My understanding is that Victor wrote the piece from memory, despite his use of the cassette recorder. I'm sure he'll correct me if I am wrong, since he's never been shy about that before. -aph]

Catherine Mintz

1810 South Rittenhouse Square #1708  
Philadelphia, PA 19103-5837

"Victor Gonzalez' 'Just Like it Was' moves me to point out the opposite phenomena from the one reported by Ted White, where he wrote 'in the voice of his narrator, rather than transcribing quotes from a tape recording, yet impressed his subject with his accuracy: that is, those people who, confronted with a tape recording that they were aware was being made, nonetheless insist that they didn't say what they did say, or that it's out of context, or that there must be some way to

wriggle out of responsibility for what came out of their own mouths.

"Thanks, too, for Mark Manning's 'Little Paper Faces,' especially for the reviews of non-North American fanzines, which seem to be less frequently discussed than they often deserve."

Nigel Richardson

Nigel@impolex.demon.co.uk

"Thanks for the collection of Spent Brasses that arrived today. I just can't keep up with you, I'm, afraid. Blame my computer: by the time Windoze has booted up and loaded my WP software it's time to go to bed. I've probably written an equivalent of one word of the 'latest' Slubberdegullion for every issue of Apparatchik or SB you've sent me. As the sort of person who is tempted to drop people from my mailing list for reasons too petty to mention here, I feel a little shamefaced at still getting them. Not as bad as I do about getting BLATI, which costs Dan and Ted over \$5.00 to send me (and I forgot to send Dan a copy of the last Slubb), but guilty enough to actually write a letter, despite not having anything really relevant to say.

"But it was neat to be included in your list of 'Indispensable Fanzines', although I do understand your reservations - re-reading issues makes me wonder where all the whinging comes from. I'm not like that in real life...well, actually, I am - but I ought to be able to edit it out when I write about it. The next Slubberdegullion might be a little less whiny. But that's not a promise (Or a threat.)

"So - the 3rd Annual SB Poll form arrives the day after closing date. Probably just as well as I can't think of 25 fans whose work I've seen over this last year.... And where's the favorite fan writer for misery and whinging category, huh? Trying to keep us Brits out of it, eh?"

[You know, I had every intention to find a way to alert Dave Langford or Rob Hansen or some one else on-line to please let people know about the poll and accept ballots electronically, but the press of work has been so monstrous over the past month that I never seemed to think of it until I was already in bed, around 3 in the morning (which would actually have been the ideal time to call...) Next year, we'll get a proper number of ballots to Britain in time to allow fen there to vote, even if we have to send the ballots before the accompanying zine is ready -aph]

Mike Glicksohn  
508 Windermere Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6S 3L6  
Canada

"Good piece by Victor Gonzalez, if somewhat ironic. I add the disclaimer simply because Ted, whom I admire greatly as a fanwriter, is frequently caught out in factual errors in his fanhistorical pieces. Small, probably inconsequential errors mostly, but errors nonetheless. An interesting sidebar to an interesting article, I guess.

"I commend your restraint in not pointing out that 'talent' should have headed the list of things that Harry Andruschak lacks that prevent him from publishing a focal point fanzine."

Buck Coulson  
2677W-500N, Hartford City, IN 47348  
"Harry Andruschak misses the focal point. Fandom needs the idea of a focal point fanzine to give

fanzine editors something to write about. An actual focal point fanzine is much less necessary, of course.

"No tombstones around here marked simply "baby" that I know of. Possibly the area was settled later; it was originally a swamp. Or as the county history says, 'a forest with a drainage problem.' Anyway, it wasn't settled until better land had been taken and methods of drainage improved. Lots of little cemeteries around, though; some alongside roads and some in the middle of cornfields. And one I ran across while I was walking the dog through a woods across the road from our house. (There was a lane leading to it, but I hadn't come that way.) And there are at least a couple of Indian cemeteries in the general area."

[With that token entry in our cemetery department, we close for now. See you in June! - aph]

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"When I began playing baseball it was as gentlemanly as a kick in the crotch" - Ty Cobb

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