

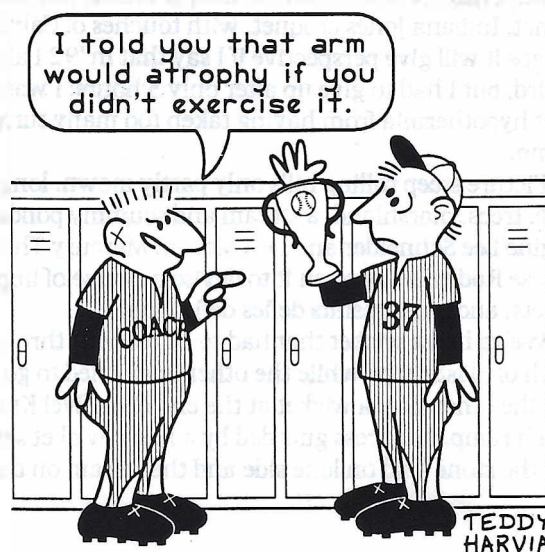
REFUSE TO LOSE by Andy

Yes, here we are again, with another issue of Spent Brass, the fanzine that once called itself frequent and now merely intends to go kicking and screaming when the corpse-wagon rolls up to the door. Carrie and I have been busy with one thing and another — first there was the trip I took by Car to Silvercon IV with Victor Gonzalez, and a few weeks after that Carrie and I attended ReinCONation V, where I was the Guest of Honor, and then there were the holidays, and a trip to California to visit with my family, and now Corflu Du Nashville rears its sleek and roynish head (I don't know what it means either, go ask Stephen R. Donaldson) — well, it's pretty remarkable that we've been able to get one word down on paper. Plus, Mr. Gonzalez and I continue to publish the bi-weekly homunculus of fanzines, Apparatchik, which now reaches nearly two hundred fans on four continents — close your eyes and sit still for a moment, and you can probably feel the beat of its leathery little wings on the back of your neck.

And we're not the only ones who have been busy! Elizabeth Hooper-Lane, my sister and sometime columnist, had barely put the period on the end of hurricane season when she started production on a whole new person, whose birth is anticipated sometimes in late May. By that time, tropical storms will be threatening the gulf coast again — see her article on page 3 for some insight into how nerve-racking that is to her — presenting her with a golden opportunity to give her baby a name truly evocative of the times surrounding his or her birth. Provided, of course, that she and the National Weather Service end up on the same page in regard to gender. But maybe that wouldn't be all that necessary, either — so far, the name our Mother favors most for her first biological grandchild (Carrie and I presented her with some clock-work automata named Harlan and Gwen when we got married) is Rupprecht, closely followed by my personal favorite, Hepzibah. Given those two alternatives, most kids would probably love to be named after a hurricane.

Since we wrote our last issue, we've said goodbye to a number of SF luminaries, like Bob Shaw and John Brunner, and some fan-friends like Jeff Ford of Milwaukee and Wesley Noel of Madison. It's made me ponder why we seem to be limited to marking the departure of notable figures, without a commensurate opportunity to note the arrival of new stars on the scene. The fact that newborn babies have very few

This is the 30th Issue of a fanzine which burned up on re-entry, or maybe plunged into the south Atlantic off the coast of Brasil or might even have splashed down in the northeast Pacific — but wherever it really landed, we can assure you it looked just like Vancouver. 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 # 252, 3/14/96. 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, Elizabeth Hooper-Lane, Georgie Schnobrich, and our correspondents. Art by Ian Gunn (pages 5, 7, 9 & 10), Teddy Harvia (page 1), Bill Kunkel (title & pages 4 & 6), Greg Rihn (page 2), Bill Rotsler (page 11). "Blowback" logo by Pat Virzi. We support Martin Tudor for TAFF and Perry Middlemiss for DUFF. Seattle Corflu in 99?



publications or Nebula nominations to their credit may have something to do with it, but I think it still speaks of a huge lack of imagination on the part of the fan press. When Rupprecht von Hooper-Lane makes the scene in May, I plan to tout him as a future afal award-winner for best placement of staples, circa 2025. This may place an incredible amount of strain on the wee tike, but Hoopers have never been afraid to have greatness brandished in their direction. Start sending in your sticky quarters now, Rupprecht's mailing list will probably fill up fast.

The baseball doldrums I was moaning quietly about last issue were completely dispelled by something we almost didn't recognize here in Seattle — a pennant race! I'm afraid I may have seemed terribly distracted during my turn as GoH at ReinCONation: Despite remarkable heights of hospitality shown to us by the fandom formerly known as Crazy Minneapolis, I was riveted by the fortunes of the Seattle Mariners in their American League Championship Series with the Cleveland Indians. Despite their eventual loss to the Tribe, the Mariners seized the local imagination so thoroughly that a bond issue supporting a new stadium here very nearly passed (well, Northwesterners can be somewhat circumspect in their affections), and when the county government managed to slip funding through in the dead of night anyway, few people were willing to complain. As I write these words, a new season is just 15 days away. Junior! Edgar! The Big Unit! The magic number now stands at 162, my friends, and remember — it can only go down. Get me a Polish with red sauce while you're up, will you?

For Whom the Ball Rolls: The Saga of Cross-Country Fannish Croquet

By Georgie Schnobrich

Milwaukee fandom has a long-standing tradition of playing croquet on Memorial Day. I believe it all started out pleasantly enough in Washington Park, but when the venue changed to Lon Levy's acres across from the Kettle Moraine State Park the game went mutant, till it grew into the wild and woolly enterprise that now has the power to drive strong fen mad.

"What?" you say. "Croquet? That genteel afternoon lawn game designed to while away an hour before tea? Or indulged in by picnic loungers too lazy or refined for volleyball? How wild can that get?"

Forgive the slightly hysterical edge to my voice while I laugh. I've been there, you see.

Ours has become a sort of steeple-chase, full-body-contact, Indiana Jones croquet, with touches of Calvin Ball. Perhaps it will give perspective if I say that in '92 I almost came in third, but I had to give up after only 5 hours: I was beginning to get hypothermia from having taken too many turns in the swamp.

Picture steep rolling hills only partly mown, long grass, scrub, trees, marshland, a stream and scummy ponds. Then imagine Lee Schneider and Lisa Mason, Mercury Thompson, or Therese Roden let loose on it to devise a course of improvised wickets, and what results defies definition.

We've had a wicket that had to be reached through a length of plastic pipe while the other team tried to go through from the other side; a wicket at the end of an Evel Kneivel-style launch ramp, its access guarded by a net; a wicket set on a ridge with the stone field on one side and the stream on the other.

and straddling three saplings the only way to get a clear shot.

My favorite from last year was the piece of angled plumbing pipe buried in gravel that spat one's ball out into a narrow crease of scree, but the long wooden box was fun, too. If your ball stopped halfway through and your mallet handle was too short to use in the manner of a cue stick, the rules allowed you to hunt for a suitable length of dead branch to poke the ball through. Then there was the cloverleaf arrangement of 4 wickets in close proximity, which was quickly named the "Marquette Interchange" and at rush hour certainly lived up to the name.

"Ordinary" wickets just stuck into the grass are usually three-quarters of the way up a steep hill, and -after the game has gone no awhile and a degree of desperation has built up - it is entertaining to watch a player shriek and throw himself on his ball as it starts to roll back down into oblivion.

On the course itself, the ponds are always a daunting water hazard, but we have also played through the fire hazard (the barbecue pit) and its attendant smoke hazard. Sometimes the water hazard is delivered to us vertically, accompanied by the lightning hazard.

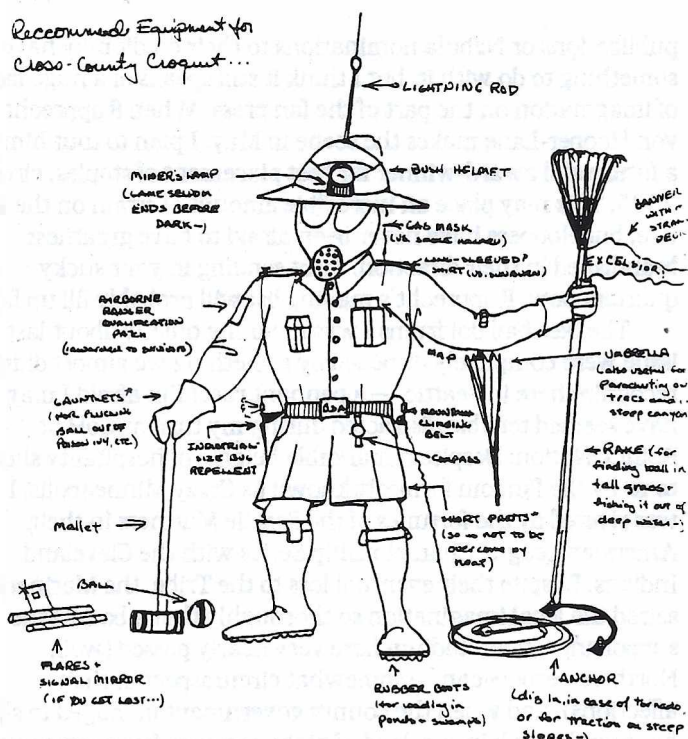
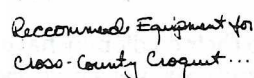
Some years we totaled 20 players. Other years we have merely dented 10 or so. One year ethnic cleansing broke out at wicket #9. Another time an exuberant player tossed his mallet up into the branches of a 30 foot tree, and had to climb to shake it down. Playing time has varied from 5 to 7;5 hours, which includes trips to the house for picnic rations, bathroom breaks, chances to cool off or thaw out, or to hid from hail or suspiciously turbulent dark clouds. Some of the time is taken up by players who make very carefully planned shots. As one player agonized about another who moved from shot to shot with his magazine and lawn chair, "He takes as much time as it takes to get through Grad school!"

I could tell of the hunter/gatherer band that one year primally stalked the tall grass of the highlands of #3, with mallet in one hand and sharpened stake in the other, (for marking one's ball in deep grass and in case of vampires) but that's a tale for another time.

You can see that translating Cross-country Fannish Croquet into an indoor sport suitable for a con hotel might not be easy. Nevertheless, we gave it a try at WisCon 19, because WisCon fell on Memorial Day weekend this year, and part of the usual bunch of croquet masochists was attending. And besides, a tradition is a tradition.

We had to be reasonably civilized so we used nerf balls and constructed wickets out of Styrofoam sheeting; and just to give it that Alice-in-Wonderland feeling, Lisa came up with super-cheap tacky lawn flamingos for mallets, their wire legs taped together to form a handle. Some of us dressed for the event: Greg Rihn as the Mad Hatter, me as an Edwardian lady adventurer, and one recruit from the con elegant in a Russian airman's uniform. We were delighted to find unsuspecting congoers who were in the mood to indulge in a spot of impromptu lunacy, and 10 of us launched into the game.

Nerf balls don't go anywhere much and flamingos make lousy mallets, but we had a good time obstructing traffic flow creatively in the Concourse's back halls, particularly when panels let out. Naturally we made up rules as we went along.



* Note: fabric should be flame-resistant.

Our flamingos were endangered species, so if we "killed" one, (the plastic was flimsy) we were out of the game. Non-players had a chance to be a Course Hazard, and if suitably importuned, they could move a player's ball to a better vantage. One young woman had a player down on his knees swearing to worship her as a goddess for the rest of his life, before she gave in. This gave other players ideas, and until we determined that a Course Hazard was a one-time thing, we seemed in danger of inventing Croquet Groupies. Toddlers proved to be easier marks to pick up your ball, but harder to influence as to where they put it down. One of the more amusing developments was the practice of running up to stomp your ball flat as soon as it showed signs of rolling back down the wheelchair ramp; a novel technique in croquet.

Overheard: "I'm a Course Hazard: I can do whatever I like!" "I have always depended upon the kindness of strangers." And, from a bemused pizza deliverer passing through, "What are you doing with those penguins?"

We had planned to have wickets on the second floor of the

public space (access only by elevator, and players could not operate the elevator themselves) and a final wicket by the ConSuite, but nerf croquet went more slowly than expected, and people had panels to attend, so the whole course was not played. But it was pretty good for a demonstration game. Next time we plan to cut the course to 9 or 10 wickets and arrange things a bit more expeditiously. Eventually we mean to decorate the wickets with Alice-style playing cards. Yet even now we find we look at con hotels in a new way. We think of the downtown Chicago Hyatt, for example, with its log escalators and decorative pools, and a not-quite-wholesome visionary light comes into our eyes.

So if you ever come to a con and see people holding flamingos by the feet and flailing away with a great deal of begging and yelping, you know what is going on and why.

And if you are a persistent person of basic good temper who enjoys losing all sense of time and proportion, and can make witty or snide observations while lying on the floor to fish your ball from under the Coke machine, WE WANT YOU.

Another Letter From Houma, early November 1995 *by Elizabeth Hooper-Lane*

Well, I come to you once again from that strange land where time seems to have stopped around the mid 1970s, that's right, bayou-land of southern Louisiana. Now I know all I seem to do is complain about this place and our experience living in it, (pitiful, isn't it?), but my God it's desolate here! We clearly had no idea the magnitude of rural isolation and educational poverty we were headed for when our career paths led us to the teeming swamps.

As you might have figured out by now, I've never been really good with change. New school terms, new friends, new teachers, new jobs, they've always been a challenge. I tend to like things stable, predictable, the unknowns of the future are really hard to take. I've gotten better thought as I've racked up my on particular combination of life experiences. I even welcomed, albeit somewhat hesitantly, this latest move away from the security of Madison. Maybe it could be a positive broadening experience, and exercise in self-development and mind expansion. In many, many ways it has been just that. For a you, liberal (and somewhat cynical) Idealist from that island of unreality called Madison, WI, this foray into what many call the "Real America" has been an eye-opening experience. On a purely personal level as well, relocating into the jungle has forced me to come face to face with the truly paralyzing fear of storms I developed at some point during my childhood.

Tornado season in Wisconsin was often a fearful time for me. Regardless of the fact that tornadoes rarely, if ever, touched down in the middle of the city, the dark skies and air raid sirens were accompanied for me by cold sweats, heart palpitations and feelings of extreme panic. Hiding in the basement, feeling so unsure of what was to come, my mind raced through all the possibilities of devastation most likely occurring to my devil-may-care younger sister, blithely finishing her paper route by bicycle as the world was coming to an end. (It's interesting, as I look back on that time of my life I remember it was at that point that I started having nuclear holocaust dreams/nightmares, heavily populated with air raid sirens, time spent hiding in the basement, and that sickly greenish-pink color and stillness you

see in the air before a tornado.)

As you might expect, facing hurricane season in Louisiana has been a challenge for an anxious person such as myself. The official season lasts from June 1st to November 30th, so I began the whole experience in a fury at the fact that six months out of my year must be spent in a state of perpetual preparedness, my family and I ready at a moment's notice to pack up the house and evacuate to higher ground (as far as I can tell, this means going as far north as Arkansas). Along with the unheard of heat wave, the 1995 hurricane season has been a record one, with the most tropical storms and hurricanes in one season this century (a real whopper for hurricane and jungle heat virgins such as Chris and myself). This here was the first season since meteorologists started naming tropical storms in 1950 that the summer-long procession of storms, named consecutively through the alphabet as they occur, made it past the "O"s; so far this season Tanya (the 19th tropical storm and 11th hurricane this year) is the last named storm we have had the pleasure of tracking. And, yes, we do track the, everyone does, endlessly. You may have wondered why the weather channel spends such an inordinate amount of time discussing the hurricanes; well all along the Gulf Coast of the U.S. people are watching those broadcasts religiously. You watch in the morning at breakfast, at work on break and at lunch, and then all night long at home. We generally start watching a storm closely when it nears Bermuda, which gives us about a week to ten days to wait and prepare for imminent evacuation. I've found that this period of waiting takes quite a toll on one's psyche after a few days.

We have been unbelievably lucky here in Louisiana this year, unlike Pensacola, FL which has squarely taken the brunt of two major storms already (depressingly enough, we aren't through with this season yet). Hurricanes Erin and Opal were our closest calls, close enough for great discomfort and near-evacuation. Preparing for a hurricane involves a lot of self-evaluation. You have to assume that everything you leave behind will be destroyed, so the task requires developing a hierarchy of values regarding your personal belongings. Now,



being a materiel culturist, I have a well-developed sense of attachment to all the objects I surround myself with, so although it pains me greatly, the majority of our books and CDs are relegated to the lowest, most readily replaceable rung on the hierarchy: they aren't packed, moved or touched. Major items that are easily moved and protected are taken into the house's one interior space, my closet. The computer and printer are taken apart, wrapped in tarps, and carried into the closed. Rugs are taken off the floor, rolled and put under plastic on top of the bed. Secondary artworks and heirloom plants are moved away from windows into interior corners. Then the things that are coming along for the drive along the evacuation route (prominently marked with large blue highway signs) to Baton Rouge must be packed. In our final determination this highest rung of the object hierarchy included irreplaceable items such as photo albums and negatives, all personal and business documents, jewelry, framed family photographs, several original framed lithographs, several pieces of original pottery and blown glass, all Master's Thesis and teaching notes, the Thesis itself, all computer disks, clothes, toiletries and medicines for a week, cat supplies for a week, and finally, most importantly (and most stressfully) the cat herself. Of course, remember this is our first hurricane, it's 11:30 at night, and we are rushing around making these executive decisions in somewhat of a panic, trying not to take out on each other the frustration and fear we are both experiencing.

We have both spent the day at the lab in the midst of more hurricane preparations that, to the inexperienced eye, appeared to contain elements of panic and confusion. Chris's preparations in the Library entailed draping all the stacks with duct taped plastic, and moving computers away from windows to be encased in their own plastic and duct tape body bags. Preparations for the researcher I work for involved locating and boxing all computer disks for four labs/offices, unhooking and packing for transport five computers and their accessory parts, draping all lab equipment with plastic and duct tape, locating and boxing any irreplaceable printed material (data, dissertations, etc.), and loading all these items into her truck to be taken to her house farther up the bayou. All the remaining items in the labs were moved away from the large glass wall in each office that overlooks the wetlands.

In addition, all the lumber stored outside the lab (used for creating boardwalks in her wetlands management research) had to be dragged inside the steel storm vestibules. By 11:30 that night, Chris and I were exhausted and filthy, yet still tense and anxiously watching the weather channel during our frantic preparations at home. To improve my mood even further, I had spent the previous day in a journey to the

wondrous world of Wal-Mart, a half-hour drive from our house, attempting to stock up on items necessary in case of a large storm with power outages but no evacuation. Of course everyone else within an hour of the place was doing exactly the same thing. Traffic jams of shopping carts, or buggies as they're called here, are extremely unpleasant, even more so when they're filled with tired, whining children and you're in a hurry.

Anyway, the search for bottled water, flashlight batteries, lamp oil and canned food was on. By the time I got to that aisle, not only were the batteries sold out, there were no flashlights left, not one in the entire Wal-Mart Superstore. I stocked up on bottled water (1 gallon per person per day), lamp oil, easily prepared canned foods, charcoal for the grill, plastic sheeting, and headed home. Our final preparations at home that evening concluded with filling all the large stock pots of water and locating all the candles. Colleagues at the lab had warned us that in the case of power and gas outages we could expect to be without electricity, running water or gas for anywhere from one to three weeks (assuming, of course, we still had a house).

This season, what we've found to be the definitive preparatory act for an impending hurricane is boarding up all the windows of the house. Earlier this summer, in heat and humidity the likes of which I have never experienced before, Chris and I had fashioned crude hurricane "shutters" to be screwed over each window in the hopes of avoiding broken glass and subsequent water and wind damage. Over saw horses fashioned out of cardboard boxes, we used a hand saw to cut 3/4" plywood sheets into rectangles to fit each window. In one of his characteristic moments of brilliance, Chris suggested we label each "shutter" with the room's name in black marker, to avoid confusion in the inevitable rush to get them installed before a storm. (I've never sweat the way I did that day, sawing plywood in a heat index of 110 degrees).

At this point, screwing the large hunks of plywood into place with 3" screws has been the one hurricane preparation we have been able to avoid. This is fortunate, because our house sits on 6' high pilings, and I do not look forward to hauling them up on the ladder and attempting to manipulate them into place. Despite the daunting prospect of dealing with the shutters every time a storm threatens, it still amazes me as we drive by houses on the way to work each day, that installed similar primitive protective measures earlier in the summer and have not taken them down. It seems to me that living in the dark for six months might be even worse than dealing with the prospect of hurricanes for that long.

Despite all these involved and exhausting preparations (or perhaps because of them) we have yet to experience a direct hit from one of these tropical storms (believe me, I'm keeping my fingers crossed and I'd appreciate it if you did too). We did enjoy what Chris and I happily regarded as a "snow day" following the Hurricane Erin preparations, although we didn't even have any rain or clouds that day, let alone snow. The lack of earth-shattering results may make this entire harangue appear overblown and paranoid on my part, but we've seen the devastation which Hurricane Andrew inflicted on this area. Andrew cut a swath directly over the lab on August 24th, 1992. A category 4 hurricane, out of a 5 point scale (Erin was category 4 when it hit Pensacola this summer), Andrew caused more than 60 deaths and has been called the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history, causing \$27.4 billion in damages in Louisiana and Florida. The storm surge it caused reached 9.5'

and flooded the ground floor of the lab destroying much equipment and all the public displays and several aquaria. Winds reached upwards of 90 MPH, ripping the roof off the lab and shattering all the "storm-resistant" glass walls in each office and lab.

The town we live near was flooded for several days, and we heard tales of people sitting on their roofs with shotguns threatening those who would drive by in boats creating wakes in the street that would wash up and flood the houses further. Our house, which was on the ground at that point (the previous owner was moved to put it on pilings by Andrew's devastation) was flooded with two feet of water and had its roof torn off. The way we look at it, this hurricane thing is a very real threat, and as with every other aspect of life that I

find anxiety-provoking, being as educated about and as prepared for it as we can possibly be is the best way to deal with the fear of the unknown. Now, if I could only get those Elvis Costello Lyrics out of my head:

This is hell,
this is hell,
I am sorry to tell you,
it never gets better or worse

But you'll get used to it
after a spell,
for heaven is hell in reverse.

The Salisbury Stakes by Andy Hooper

At about 6:30 am on the morning of August 22nd, 1995, my eyelids struggled open and I found myself completely disoriented. Carrie was lying beside me, groping for the off switch on her travel alarm. A very gentle breeze riffled the curtains in the windows over our heads. It seemed like mere seconds since I had laid my head on the pillow. Then I remembered we were lying in the front room of Rob Hansen and Avedon Carol's house in the East Ham district of London. Distant memories of last night's Sri Lankan curries muttered dimly in my digestive tract. As much as I wanted to sink back into dream, I knew we had to get up and going. This was the big day; this was the day Carrie and I were picking up a rental car, and had to confront the terrifying realities of London traffic.

As I struggled to brush my teeth as quietly as possible, I tried to remember what I had been dreaming. The dream was mixed up with the hours directly before I had gone to bed, when Avedon had let me use her computer to bang out three pages of text for *Apparatchik* #41, to be handed out at Intersection later in the week. I think the dream itself had me back in the billiard room of the hotel bar in Stevenage, where we had spent much of the previous weekend. Only the table was even smaller than I remembered, the balls about the size of a healthy marble, and the cue was something akin to the trunk of a Douglas fir. Every time I took a shot, I did my best to be as gentle as possible, yet the impact when the balls were struck rang in the room like a gunshot, and they leapt off the table like shrapnel. People were hit, the balls digging deep into their bodies and emerging with a wet "thwock" from the other side, yet they simply stood and laughed, offering derisive comments on my lack of skill. I felt slightly sick.

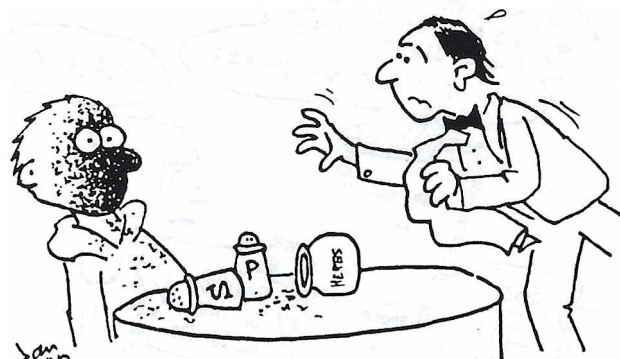
Downstairs, Dan and Lynn Steffan slept soundly in the other parlor, while Nell Rest sawed logs softly on the floor of Rob's office. Rob and Avedon were also asleep, insulated from the rest of the world in their bedroom. We wrote a quick note to thank them, and gathered up our bags.

Despite the fact that we were each carrying about 60 pounds of clothing, fanzines and softball gloves (don't ask), we managed to make our way out the door without waking anyone up. Outside, Plashet Grove was just beginning to stir itself for the morning. We were delighted to see that the sky was occluded with a low scud of cloud, and that the temperature was still in the low sixties. All of southern England had been in the grip of a

heat wave and drought for most of the summer, and we had dreaded making the yomp to the underground station, with all our gear, in the punishing heat. Even so, I had broken a healthy sweat by the time we reached the neighborhood high street where the tube station awaited. People were already out shopping at 7 am, picking over the fruit in the vendor's stalls, bustling in and out of corner chemist's and newsagent's shops. Perhaps they too wanted to avoid the heat of the day.

Naturally, there was word of station closures and warnings of delays as we purchased our tickets to Bond street. Studying the diagram on the wall of the car as we bumped away toward West Ham, we determined that we would be leaving the train one stop before the blockage. "That's a good sign," I opined, "perhaps our good luck with transport will continue today." Carrie rolled her eyes slightly; she was the one who would have to drive us out of London. But we were on a remarkable streak of good fortune; our flight was as pleasant as such a thing can be, we had no trouble at all passing customs, and after our underground ride to King's Cross, the train we wanted to Stevenage had departed just five minutes later. It made me a little nervous, wondering when the inevitable problems would begin.

We climbed up out of the Bond street station subway just a



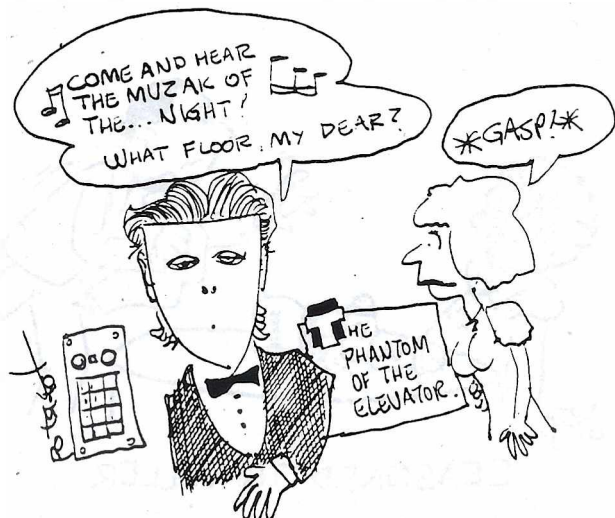
SEASONED TRAVELLER

few minutes before eight, and found a lovely little spot next to a rubbish skip for me to wait with the bags until her return. The skip was blissfully empty and didn't smell too bad, and the area around it was shady and pleasant. Carrie bore off into the commuting throng, and I alternated between observing the patterns of traffic and the legs of attractive English women as they hurried by. The legs seemed remarkably long, and streets remarkably narrow. Before I had very long to ponder this, Carrie reappeared, behind the wheel of a Vauxhall Astra, her knuckles on the steering wheel glowing like magnesium flares as she approached.

Now, first of all, Carrie is a superb driver. She has just the right mixture of caution and aggressiveness that makes for maximum safe efficiency on the road. I had full confidence in her abilities. But it wasn't clear if she shared any of that confidence. Little shrill voices in her head kept shrieking, "We're on the wrong side of the road! We'll all be killed! You'll have to turn the car on it's side to fit through there!" To drown this out, I tried to keep up an ongoing narrative of the streets and sights as we passed, reassuring her that we were on the right route, and only occasionally yelping uncontrollably myself as she came dangerously close to mounting the curb.

We blew by the Albert Hall ("10,000 holes," my useless brain murmured), Hyde Park, the Natural History Museum, and various other sights of West London. After a while, the road opened up slightly, and we both relaxed. It began to seem slightly less likely that we would be torn apart in a rolling ball of steel, glass and burning plastic, and Carrie began to press me for details of the route ahead. "We go this way for a while," I said, "then we'll stop and look at something." I'm an excellent navigator.

One thing that bothered us slightly was the fact that we had left London without having any breakfast. The after affects of the Roghan Josh I had eaten the night before had finally subsided, and I began to wonder where we would be able to find anything to eat. On our previous trip, in 1987, finding a place to eat lunch for less than \$50.00 had been a major source of friction, and I wanted to avoid that sort of thing at all costs. I was therefore stunned -- pleasantly so -- when something that looked exactly like the Belvedere Oasis on I-94 hove into view ahead of us.



Apparently, in the past decade, traffic engineers trying to improve England's motorway system had been studying the configuration of highway rest stops in the United States, and had openly emulated them in building a new generation of service centers. The signs referred to these as "Welcome Rest Centres," and we happily pulled into the first one we saw. Under other circumstances, we might have turned up our nose at this colonial inroad into British culture, but at the time, all we felt was gratitude. Hustling around London on an empty stomach can take a lot out of you, and I wanted the chance to study the map and figure out where the hell we were going.

I purchased your average English breakfast (sans Black Pudding) at a restaurant called "The Granary," and sat down next to Carrie with the road atlas. Our destination for the first part of the day was the city of Salisbury, and its remarkable cathedral. When we had begun to make our plans for the trip, the only place which Carrie was adamant about our visiting was Salisbury and the plain which surrounds it. A few years ago, both of us read a remarkable historical novel, *Sarum*, by Edward Rutherford. The novel followed a series of families living in the area of Salisbury, and the town of Sarum which preceded it, from neolithic times to the present. I had enjoyed it very much, but the book had really captured Carrie's imagination, and she insisted that it was the place she most wanted to visit in all the British Isles.

Having decided on a pleasant set of roads that would take us into Salisbury, I was preparing to bus my dishes and go look for bottled drinks to keep us cool, when I became aware of a small commotion at a table nearby us. A couple in their sixties, tastefully dressed, she giving orders and he being pushed in a wheelchair by a much younger man, set up shop next to us. She ordered the young man behind the chair and an employee of the restaurant to take away small pieces of trash in the vicinity, after they had wiped the table clean. He looked as if he might have had a stroke; but there was still an air of ramrod dignity about him, the leonine look of an aging Etonian, and as it turned out, he had served in India years before.

I went off to do my errands, but Carrie stayed and talked with them for a while. The woman was very curious as to where we were from, and where we were going. When Carrie mentioned that we were from Seattle, both of them brightened perceptibly; it turned out they had a son in Vancouver. The conversation turned to the roadway oasis itself, and the woman insisted that as we approached Glasgow we simply had to visit another such facility owned by a friend of theirs. She wrote the name down on the back of a receipt, "TEBAY Motorway Service Station SOUTHBOUND," and that we should mention their names, "Lord and Lady SANFORD," to the owner, "John DUNNING." (We later determined that John Dunning was a major industrial figure and owner of a very large haulage concern in the northwest of England) So, it turned out that we had the opportunity to breakfast with members of the peerage, in the British equivalent of a Stuckey's.

Only another half hour of driving brought us to the first site we wanted to look over, the Figsbury Rings. These are the remains of a fifth-century hill-fort, constructed in a classic circular trench-and-henge style. At one time, a stockade probably stood on top of the ring around the fort, but all that remains now is the henge and the trench from which it was raised. As Carrie rushed back to the car to get the camera (what were we thinking?), I surveyed the countryside from the top of

the ring. Turning 360 degrees, I imagined that I could almost see the English channel to the south. It was clear why these hill-forts were favored by the people who built them; the field of view was remarkable. To the north and east, the plain was covered with installations belonging to the Royal Army, and helicopters buzzed close to the earth around them. And in the west, some miles away, was the city of Salisbury, with its huge cathedral spire standing high above the other buildings. When she saw this, Carrie was eager to move on, and we drove down into the valley below.

Salisbury is a major tourist destination for a number of reasons, but none more so than its cathedral. Work began on the present site in 1220 A.D., when the Bishop of the Diocese of Old Sarum decided that a new church needed to be built closer to the water of the river Avon than the old Norman cathedral that had been consecrated in 1075. Whether it was his intention to lessen the power of the secular nobles who held the old castle at Sarum is unclear, but the people followed into the valley to be near the work which the cathedral provided, and soon the local market was held there as well. The cathedral was consecrated 38 years after construction was begun, but work on the Cloisters, Chapter House, Tower and Spire went on for more than fifty years thereafter. In the case of the latter structure, it is amazing that the work was ever completed at all; the spire stands 402 feet high, the tallest in Britain, an achievement beyond most estimations of the engineering and construction technology of the time. Some of the secrets of the builders of the spire may never be known.

Today, the Cathedral sits in the center of a walled close, regarded by many as the finest in Europe. The operation and protection of such an amazing edifice requires many hands, and by the end of the 14th century, the cathedral close had many of the characteristics of a walled fortress, with its own constables and a small army of workers and clerics. Even today, the constable of the close has a little office in the way that leads to the cathedral proper; they were painting it as we went by.

We parked next to a leaning old hotel and made our way along the banks of the Avon toward the close. The river splits into three or four different channels in and around Salisbury, and this one lies below an old mill race that ran through the center of the town. The morning cloud had long since burned away, and the water looked unusually inviting as we walked along its banks. The heat was already getting to me, and I was very happy to make a donation and walk into the Cathedral. Inside, the deep shadows were cool and quiet, and although there were probably over 100 people in there, it seemed remarkably quiet.

We walked up one side of the nave and down the other, struck by the age of the burial effigies and the ancient banners hanging from the walls. One particular striking sight was a wrought-iron mechanical clock which had been installed in the cathedral at the time of its consecration in 1258. This ran without prolonged interruption for over 400 years, until it was replaced in the 18th century. The clock was left in place, generally ignored, because it was assumed that there were several clocks of greater age at other sites in Europe. But it was eventually discovered that it is in fact the oldest working mechanical clock in Europe, and possibly the world. It was fully restored to working order in 1956, and is estimated to have ticked more than 50 million times!

I could go on for pages and pages about the amazing art



and memorials we saw inside the cathedral, but one of the most striking things to my mind is the fact that it is still in use, and services are performed there daily. It's difficult for an American, from a country where a structure 200 years old seems impossibly ancient, to imagine going to church in a structure that was begun more than 700 years ago. We could easily have spent the whole day there, but we had other sights to see. After a brief ploughman's lunch and a lemonade in a huge pub that offered satellite TV and hundreds of wasps flying around in the rafters, we were back on the road in search of the ruins of Old Sarum itself.

After struggling into the car park, and then up the side of the hill to the ruins, we could see why that long-ago bishop had decided to move into the marshes below. The site seemed bone-dry, except for the sweat that was running off us onto the ground. There had been a very deep well sunk there when the main citadel was constructed, but it was barely able to meet the needs of the keep itself. The site was superb from the standpoint of immediate defensibility, but over time, the castle could easily have been starved out. The ruins of the walls seemed incredibly massive; it was hard to imagine any siege-craft being able to breach them. Of course, we could only see the bases of the walls, which had been built thick to hold the huge stacks of masonry and stone in the upper stories of the keep. Once or twice I noticed Carrie staring blankly into space above the walls; I knew she was playing descriptions from the novel in her mind, and I was very glad we had decided to come, heat or no heat.

After touring old Sarum, we decided to head north into the plain itself, and into one of the greatest concentration of Neolithic monuments on the planet. Exactly why Wiltshire was such a popular place for religious or astronomical monuments is unclear, but if you accept the idea the Stonehenge and the Avebury are religious sites, that makes the Salisbury plain the Neolithic equivalent of the Vatican City.

We did not stop at Stonehenge; as much as Carrie might have liked to have lingered over it, everyone we had spoken to recommended we keep going. Barbed wire keeps the public well back from the stones now, the place is constantly packed with other tourists, and the admission price is quite steep. We got a good view as we sped by on the highway, and pressed on toward Avebury and Silbury hill.

Avebury is one of the largest stone circles in the world, so large that it has a whole village situated within it. Many of the stones have been removed, broken up by heating them and then dousing them with cold water; but enough remains to give you a solid idea of what the original configuration must have

looked like. In addition to the ring stones, there are a number of stones arranged in close proximity which are referred to as "the temple"; and the whole site is also surrounded by a bank and ditch henge, which may have had some application as a defensive installation, although the four causeways which enter the inner ring make this seem somewhat impractical.

When we got there, the temperature was still hovering right around ninety; the first place I went was a small van selling snacks and ice creams, where I picked up several bottles of overpriced mineral water. I think I was suffering from the effect of too many late nights in a row, as well as dehydration. Carrie was reluctant to push me, but she did want to see the inside of the place. We walked into the center and looked around at the inevitable gift shop. I went in and re-filled the water bottles from the bathroom taps, and ended up saving half a bottle for Jerry Kaufman . . . Jerry's well known for his affection for things pagan and shamanistic, and a bottle of water drawn from within the great ring (even from the bathroom sink) at Avebury seemed like a perfect keepsake for him.

Just outside Avebury is the largest ancient monument in all Europe, Silbury hill. This is a conical, man-made hill, well over 100 feet high, whose function is entirely unknown. Standing a good mile away, I was stunned by the size of the thing. Imagine how many buckets full of earth went into it! It's quite a structure. But even so, I superimposed the great mound of Cahokia over it in my mind, and realized that it probably had only about one-third of the volume. When it came to raising stones, the Neolithic people's of Britain and northern France had few equals, but they clearly had smaller populations to work with than the great civilizations of Meso-America and the Fertile Crescent.

By this time, Carrie had largely gotten past her earlier difficulties with driving on the wrong side of the road, but the vagaries of the roundabout (a Spent Brass staple) were still beyond her. If you have never seen one of these, it's hard to imagine how difficult they are to figure out at first. Basically, traffic approaches the circular intersection from several apertures, makes the circuit in clockwise direction, leaving via another aperture marked with their destination. The order in which traffic either yields or bullies through to the other side seems to be determined solely by order of assertiveness. So it's

imperative that you keep your eyes on the traffic at all times, which leaves the inexperienced driver unable to take note of the signs and figure out where they want to go. Throughout the trip, I had to pay as close attention as Carrie did, to spot the escape route we wanted.

After Avebury, we headed north and somewhat east, generally angling toward Oxford, where I assumed we would be able to find some lodging for the night. This route also took us through the chalk hills of the "Vale of the White Horses," an area where turf has been cut from the hillsides to form huge effigies visible for twenty miles or more. We saw two, one of which was dated to the 5th century BC, and the other to 1812, from far across the valley.

But the last amazing thing was just north of the city of Swindon, home to the Great Western Railway museum and ten thousand slow delivery lorries. Just as we were on the point of extricating ourselves from this mess, we were confronted with a sign that proclaimed "THE MAGIC ROUND-ABOUT." This is a hexagonal cluster of six individual roundabouts that vector traffic towards every corner of the nation. Carrie nearly swallowed her tongue. It turned out that we were going in one of the easiest possible directions, and merely stayed in our lane as best we could, and were spat out onto the road that led toward Oxford. If we'd wanted to go back to London, we'd still be circling now.

Unfortunately, finding a hotel or bed and breakfast that was somewhere within our budget in Oxford was a harder than I had thought. We saw a wide variety of beautiful and historic buildings in the city, and thrilled a little as we drove by signs directing us to famous colleges of the University, but eventually ended up in exactly the same place we started a half-hour and twenty miles later. As it turned out, this was near another "Welcome Rest" stop just off the motor-way, and this one had a suitably cheesy little motel attached to it, with a room that suited us fine. And the shower actually worked!

After eating, we returned to the room and happily collapsed. I somehow fell asleep with my head at the foot of the bed, and dreamed of driving round and round the Cathedral spire, occasionally striking road signs with a loud "thwack." In the morning, I decided this constituted an improvement, and cheerfully went in search of a big plate of black pudding and fried bread.

"We all need praise, but enemies are necessary companions and the very proof of a robust life."



The Spent Brass Letter Column

Rich McAllister
149 Webster Street
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Lin's off on a business trip to England this week, so I'm stuck home by myself and so will actually get around to writing a LoC. But, I'm sure I've seen at least Andy on the Net recently... can't I email this?

[Sure, Rich. Just send to FanmailAPH@aol.com. We're glad to get feedback any way you want to send it, but we have to admit that a long, involved treatise is even more likely to get printed without extensive cuts if we don't have to type it in. . . C.R.]

Andy's editorial appears to have been written about mid season. I trust that the Mariners making the playoffs helped recharge his baseball batteries. As an A's fan, I have to disagree that Dave Stewart left too early. Great as he used to be, he just didn't have it any more.

Tracy's article on the trip to the Valley of Fire was fun, since Lin and I had made the trip the day before. Since Lin had been to Las Vegas before, we knew ahead of time we were going to have to make an escape to the desert at some time during the con -- we generally need to get away even from conventions that aren't held "inside a pinball machine" (wish I could remember who came up with that description.) I distinctly

remember us reminding Carrie to take water; guess we should have added "and make sure everybody *drinks* some!" A cool, breezy day in the desert is so insidious -- one feels comfortable, not overheated or thirsty, right up until dehydration kicks in. It even happens in the Bay Area. If Tracy had trouble with the sand on the walk out to Mouse's Tank, she should never go hiking in the northeast corner of Lassen National Park. That area is full of volcanic cinder cones and dunes -- it's like walking on soft sand that goes *uphill*. Lin and I remarked to each other how much easier the Mouse's Tank walk was. Plus, there wasn't a thunderstorm brewing as there was on our last hike in Lassen.

The letter from Houma certainly made me want to head back to Louisiana and eat. Suck the heads and bite the tails, mm good. On my last trip to New Orleans (World Fantasy Con 1994) I even found drinkable beer -- there's a competent microbrewery in Abita. It's true, though, even in New Orleans there's Louisiana cuisine, and there's fast food; but there's not much else -- no Chinese, no Thai, no Mexican, no Indian. I had thought this was just because the Louisiana places concentrate in the touristy parts of NO, but apparently it holds out in the country too. Of course, outside built-up areas in most of the USA there's not much exotic food either.

[If that brewery is still there, we may try to find it next week. We're heading south after Corflu in Nashville, touring Civil War battlefields in Mississippi on the way to see if Houma is everything Elizabeth has led us to believe. We're taking a small "Care Package" of Patak's Masala Curry Paste, Thai spices, and other sanity-preserving ingredients. And you're right, in the small part of the southwest I grew up, Mexican was everyday, and spaghetti and Chow Mein were the exotics. Small-town America generally eats what their ancestors ate, period. C.R.]

Buck Coulson
2677W-500N
Hartford City, IN 47348

I gave up on baseball years ago, but then I was a Chicago Cubs fan, which might explain it.

Gee, Tracy, you mean they had a *railing* on the stairs? No problem at all, with railings. But I warn you; stay away from the Grand Canyon. And especially don't do what Juanita and I did once; drive into the sunset along the Canyon rim, on the side of the road nearest the edge. Railings? Ha. I was trying not to consider how many tourists they lose each year...

I'm too old for Cajun cooking. I used to enjoy Mexican food at a restaurant where a chemist friend pronounced the chili chemically pre because it was too hot for germs to live in it. But now that I'm an old fart, I'm restricted to a bland diet, and since I never sampled Cajun while young, I never will.

I suppose if one tries, one can become aware of local politics in an area, but Juanita and I have lived near Hartford City for around 30 years and we still are largely ignorant of the political situation. Partly because our friends are in fandom, partly because the local paper provides a minimum of news, so we take the paper from the larger town in the next county. Oh, we know the general attitude; the county majority is composed of what used to be called Southern Democrats before most of the real Democratic politicians in the south turned Republican. Voting against insiders is useless, because their opponents believe pretty much the same things. Only occasionally is there a marked difference, where votes are really important. (But there's very little crime in the county. There was a big



newspaper article some months back about a crime wave; several unlocked cars in the supermarket parking lot had articles stolen from them. Of course, we never locked our car and never had anything stolen, but there was usually a large dog in the back who threatened to rip arms and legs off anyone who got too close to it.)

Terry A. Garey
3149 Park Ave. S.
Mpls, MN 55407

Andy's "This Summer of Goodbye" got me thinking.

My interest in baseball started many years ago when I moved to California to live with my Grandmother and go to college, back in 19 ought 66. Not only did I sit next to a famous pitcher's mother on the flight out (and found myself deserted by my grandmother, aunt and cousins, whom I hadn't seen in three years, as they rushed to worship her and then shake the hand of her famous son whose name I can't remember, but he was with the Giants at the time an maybe someone can jog my memory one day) but I found that my Grandmother was nuts about baseball, particularly the San Francisco Giants, and particularly Willie Mays.

When I had last seen or listened to baseball games, Dizzy Dean was in vogue as an announcer and I was sorry to hear he was no more. That man could really stretch the boundaries of English.

Willy Mays was really something, though. He could do anything on the field, and I came to admire him. "Hit the ball, Willie," we'd cry on a Sunday afternoon, eating off TV trays, or freezing to death in the stands of Candlestick Park.

Well, one day, I got the surprise of my life. Willie was at bat, and the camera got a picture of him from the back. My grandmother was thrilled.

"I love it when they do that," she said, twinkling.

"Do what?" I asked, chasing a carrot on my plate.

"Show his, ummm, backside," she said with a blush.

I dropped my fork. She then cheerfully pointed out that baseball uniforms really show off a guy's tush to good advantage.

It was a revelation. A whole aspect of baseball I had never even thought of. I'm a leg woman myself, but after watching Willie for years, began to notice that guys with behinds similar to Willie's tended to be good hitters. When I moved to Minnesota and spotted the backside of Kirby Puckett, and what do you know, he turned out to be a pretty good Willie Mays



substitute in both ability and dignity.

The things one learns from one's grandmother.

[I don't think ballplayers mind why you come out to ballpark, and few of them are very shy about returning the same kind of scrutiny undertaken by your Grandmother. But sitting through games at Candlestick . . . that's dedication! If anyone reading this has ever seen one of those little medals they used to give to people who stayed to the end of extra-inning games, I'd love to hear what they look like.

And as for Kirby Puckett, posterior shapeliness is perhaps the only category in which comparison with Willie Mays is any-thing but a disservice. But then again, try to convince any Twins fan of that . . . APH]

Vicki Rosenzweig
33 Indian Road, # 6-R
New York, NY 10034

My life is a blur of Republicans and meat. I haven't identified the meat, but the Republican is Arlen Specter.

[Vicki, if the meat is blurry, I wouldn't eat it. C.R.]

Sheryl Birkhead
23629 Woodfield Rd.
Gaithersburg, MD 20882

Las Vegas is one of the many cities on my list to visit someday. There will be a professional meeting there in February which tempts me. I need continuing education credits to maintain my license and this meeting registration is only \$125 - but the hotel is \$100 a night and then there's the airfare. It would seem that my 4 days would end up costing at least \$800... money I can't spend. So, Las Vegas stays on the list.

I'm glad to see Mark's zine column in that it helps support the idea of global fandom (now - if we all spoke Esperanto and could actually communicate.)

I always hunt for regional cuisine which is also vegetarian. Somehow everyone automatically presumes this means you want a salad. No thank you. At Nolacon I asked the main desk for ideas (none) and got some really good ideas of spots from the Shuttle driver (unfortunately on the way back out to the airport). Sadly, I'm also an un-fan of hot sauce - yeah, I know I miss out on a lot. And - I see the list from the co-worker - but it's all fried (well, can't have everything).

Gee - it's D. R. Haugh. (I looked at the signature quickly and got Dr. Haugh - and figured *that's* why he's been in fafia -- getting medically inclined...)

Many Americans, myself included, are notoriously poor at geography and knowledge of the physical political areas of our world. The only thing I can say in my own defense is that when I know I'll be visiting, I get a map and try my best to learn about the area. But as Pamela Boal says - I'm not sure this excuses it.

[As a native New Mexican, I'm particularly sensitive to geo-

graphical illiteracy. I saw in the paper the other day that a gentleman from Albuquerque N. M. was trying to get tickets for some Olympic event in Atlanta this year, and not only did the telephone receptionist instruct him to see the Olympic consul for his country, but the shift supervisor agreed, and only allowed him to reserve his tickets after he produced an address for his vacation cabin in Arizona! Gives you a warm fuzzy about the Games actually happening without a major international incident, doesn't it? CR]

Shelby Vick
627 Barton Avenue
Panama City, FL 32404

I was recently ruminating over the decline of baseball as America's favorite sport (a decline that began way before the strike). To me, it reflects badly on our society; what has replaced baseball is football -- violence being the main attraction. It's unfortunate our culture is so taken by violence. (Yeah, yeah; all this is being said by an avid fan of pro wrestling. But that's planned violence, where injuries are nowhere near as bad as they are made to appear.)

Admittedly football has more than violence going for it, but I maintain that is its main draw.

I'll take baseball.

I'm not exactly a baseball fan; I'm a Braves baseball fan. (Altho I have watched baseball since grammar school. We used to have a ballpark in Panama City. Appropriately -- as we have lots of the birds around here-- it was named "Pelican Park". Then we moved to St. Pete where Spring Training was held and watched games there. Way back then, there was no charge for the audience. The only problem was that the water fountains spouted sulphur water and we could only afford to buy one Nu-Grape, so I had to learn to love sulphur water....)

I need to point out how difficult it is for me to get *anything* done, with the hectic schedule I keep. First, I get up early and get to work by or before 7AM. With luck, I get back in time to keep an important date: *Jeopardy!* After that it's 5PM, giving me a few moments to skim over the mail before supper... which is generally thru in time for a Braves' ball game. On Monday nights, it's really a scheduling nightmare; not only a ballgame, but both WWF and WCW have wrestling at 8PM. Have to record one to watch later. At nine each night there's a rerun of STNG. By 10, on a work night I have to get to bed. (Of course, time has to be worked in for shower, shaving, shampoo, and all that. But I sacrifice.)

Tuesday night isn't quite that bad; the ballgame is usually over by nine or nine-thirty, giving me a little time to write or fan. If the grandkids aren't spending the night. Of course, that means I have to *skip* a rerun of STNG, you understand.

Wednesday night I have to split between baseball and *Sequest 2032*. Naturally, I then catch STNG.

Thursday night -- if I skip STNG -- there's another half hour or so. (Oh, yes; not all ballgames are televised; when they aren't, I catch them on Braves Radio.)

And I have to squeeze in, during the week, trips to the grocery store, paying of bills, gassing up the car, a glance at the newspaper, a trip or two to the post office, the drycleaners -- things like that.

You say there's still Friday night and the weekend? You just don't understand. There are clothes to be washed and dried (I still use the laundromat for drying). Saturday morning I go visit a 93-year-old aunt in Lynn Haven. During the day on Saturday there is wrestling, then Saturday night there is wrestling.

Saturday night there is Braves baseball. Sunday morning there is wrestling. Sunday night there is wrestling. And Braves baseball. And Pay-Per-View has wrestling at least twice a month. And there is *Voyager* and *Deep Space Nine* and Braves Baseball.... And at least once a month there is *Wild Heirs*. Every three months there is a bushel of FAPA.

Plus the time taken to dream up itemize all these details for posterity.

Is ask you: How in the world can I find any time for fan stuff and locs and FAPA and all that??

[I am sensitive to this dilemma, Shelby. You cannot imagine all the pressure that the approach of Corflu places on my already demented schedule. I have responded by cutting out sleep. So far, it has had no effect on me, except for ypirgl umf gogrobble jekse gabryon, of course. APH]

Brian Earl Brown
11675 Beaconsfield
Detroit, Michigan 48224

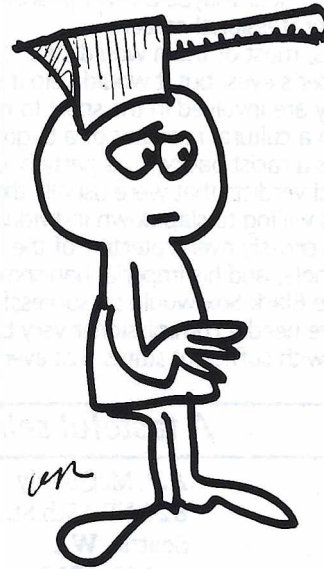
Your admision that baseball this year hasn't been as gripping as it has been in the past strikes a familiar chord with me. I've never been a really big fan of professional baseball but over the last few years -- since the Tigers '84 season -- I have followed them on a casual basis and Denise, who's the bigger fan, and I have tried to go to three or four games a year. But this year -- nada. I didn't feel like reading the columnists in the paper, watching games on TV didn't have the arresting quality it did in other seasons and we never went to a game. Of course 10 years of the Tigers sucking may have had something to do with that, too. But it does seem that since the strike, baseball has lost its magic.

I'm not sure it was entirely the fault of the strike, I think, too, that the rampant greed of the owners in their incessant demands for newer stadiums and better stadium contracts -- all of it to be footed by the taxpayers -- has generated a lot of resentment that only needed the strike to crystallize. The Tigers have at long last won on their new stadium bid but the owner, Mike Ilitch, has to provide the bulk of the financing and even the small amount the city will expend for site acquisition and preparation is bitterly opposed. The Detroit Lions football team think they can play whipsaw with the City of Pontiac, where they currently play under the Silverdome, by threatening to return to Detroit but who are they kidding, nobody's going to build a stadium for them.

And I don't think the owners realize how corrosive it is that Darryl Strawberry keeps getting rehired every time he's let go by his current team for drug violations. How can you root for a team that's composed of millionaire drug addicts? What baseball needs is another Commissioner Landis, willing to suspend even innocent people for life who bring a whiff of scandal to the game.

I was surprised as anyone when Kirk Gibson and John Kruk retired, especially Kruk who retired right in the middle of a game. I can understand some of their thinking. Gibson is intensely competitive and can't stand not playing while the Tigers after sighing him decided on a major youth movement and Gibson's playing time shrank. I'm surprised that he waited till on the road to Milwaukee (was it?) to decide to quit but I'm sure his decision was based on the fact that he wasn't playing anyway. And Kruk lost that testicle to cancer last year which has got to be unsettling and it's likely that he never came back to the strength and speed he was accustomed to. It's surprising

YOU DON'T LIKE
MY LOC?



that he even came back for the part of the season that he did play.

Elizabeth Hooper-Lane mentions Cajun cooking as one of the reasons she and her husband moved to Louisiana. My stomach goes into spasms just at the thought. I've never understood the fascination people have with eating food that makes you sweat. That and the thought of any food made with live clams or crawdads cooked in their shells. This isn't cooking food, this is cooking vermin, IMHO. But as long as they are happy... I can imagine that it must be a little frustrating to be living in a region noted for its regional cooking and not be able to find non-regional cooking. And what about all those poor people allergic to shrimp?

[Your gastric conservatism seems to complement your somewhat reactionary attitudes toward baseball, but while the former can be immediately excused by the physical limitations of your stomach, there's less justification for the latter. Of course, you're far from alone in expressing these emotions, and the media have done their best to reinforce such discontents.

The Tigers have not sucked for the past ten years, although it certainly seems like their pitching has. They were in the play-offs in 1987, and throughout the period which followed, they have had fine players like Mickey Tettleton, Cecil Fielder, Tram, Sweet Lou, and Tony Phillips, and have remained entertaining even when they were mired in the lower depths of the standings. Face it, Brian, you're spoiled. The Tigers have won the World Series *twice* in your lifetime... ask Buck Coulson, or any other Cubs, White Sox, Red Sox, Brewers, Astros, Rangers, Angels, Padres, Mariners, etc., fan if they have any sympathy for us.

Darryl Strawberry, Doc Gooden, Steve Howe, et al, do represent a major dilemma for baseball; what can you do with people whose talent warrants massive compensation, but who lack the self-control to avoid self-destruction? I don't like to hear about ball players getting into fights with their spouses, having drug problems, throwing fire-crackers at kids, etc., but let's have no illusions that this is some sort of modern innovation. Baseball players have been gambling, abusing drugs and alcohol, fixing games, beating up handicapped fans, running with prostitutes, and wearing ugly suits for over 125 years now, and the game has

somehow survived. And teams are not composed of millionaire drug addicts, at least not since the 1983 Cardinals. For every player who has had a brush with the law, I can name dozens who have not, and who have tried to put something back into the communities which support their grandiose lifestyles. The average major league career is about two and half years long these days, and most of these guys clear maybe a few hundred thousand dollars in their entire professional careers.

As for the owners, most of them would steal the pennies off their dead grandmother's eyes, but it would help if we remembered that they are involved in the sport to make money, not to provide us with a cultural remnant of a bygone age.

Judge Landis was a racist backwoods party hack who made a name with sensational verdicts that were usually thrown out by higher courts. He was willing to slap down individual owners from time to time, but was grossly overprotective of the baseball establishment as a whole, and his imperial banishment of various interlopers such as the Black Sox would be successfully challenged in civil court today. We need a commissioner very badly, if only to provide a moderator with sufficient status that everyone would

have to listen to him, but you'll get very old waiting for someone to come in and "clean up" baseball.

John Kruk's testicular cancer was not a factor in his retirement; his terrible knees and the fact that he had blown up into something resembling the Graf Zeppelin were.

Through all of these discontents, baseball itself remains largely inviolate. A ground ball in the hole still gets most runners by a step. Playing in an over-sized roller-rink a mile above sea level may have aided the Colorado Rockies' bats, but it can't keep their pitchers from being slapped around like Elisha Cook Jr. in a Bogart movie. Speed still kills. Pitching and defense win pennants.

The game is still fun to watch, even without the giddy, breathless attractions of pennant races and championships. If it is unable to retain your interest without them, that's too bad, but it doesn't necessarily mean that the game needs a major overhaul, or that the rest of us feel compelled to stay away as well. APH]

WAHF: Martha Beck, Ben Bost, Cathy Doyle, Sharon Farber, Ben Indick, Luke McGuff, Robert M. Sabella and Raoul Mitgong. Thanks for thinking of us!

A tasteful selection of recent changes of address

Barnaby Rapoport 407 Noxon Rd. LaGrangeville, NY 12540	A.P. McQuiddy 824 NE 45th St. # 26 Seattle, WA 98105-4713	Laurel Krahn P.O. Box 788 N. Sioux City SD 57049-0788	Peter Roberts 36 Western Road Torquay, Devon TQ1 4RL UK
Steve Swartz 121 Oak St. #3 Madison, WI 53704	John Hardin & Family 5004 Celebrity Circle Las Vegas, NV 89119	Nigel E. Richardson 35 Cricketers Way Headingley, Leeds LS5 3RJ UK	Sandra Bond 10 Hawkesworth Close Grove, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 ONU UK
Tracy Benton 315 Island Dr. #4 Madison, WI 53705	Ron Drummond 7746 15th Ave NE Seattle, WA 98116-4336	Michael Ashley 15 Howgill Green Woodside, Bradford BD6 2SE UK	Jenny & Steve Glover 24 Laverockbank Rd. Trinity, Edinburgh EH5 3DE UK
Vijay Bowen & Mark Richards P.O. Box 105 Madison Square Station New York, NY 10159-0105	Janice Eisen 1424 Emmett Dr. Johnstown, PA 15905	Martin Tudor 24 Ravensbourne Grove off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall West Midlands WV13 1HX UK	Tom Perry 28 Sandpiper Lane Crawfordville, FL 32327

SPENT BRASS # 30
C/O Hooper and Root
4228 Francis Ave. N. # 103
Seattle, WA 98103

Address Correction Requested