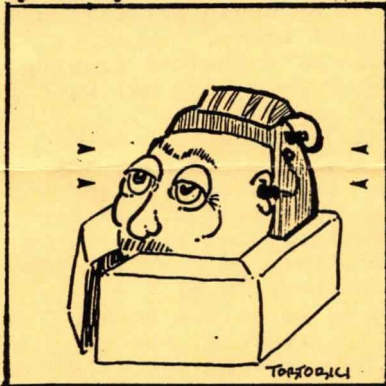


SPENT BRASS

The frequent fanzine of bitterness and address changes, published by Andy Hooper and Carrie Root, of 315 N. Ingersoll, Madison, WI 53703, members fwa, and available for the usual, or \$1.00/2 issues. This is Drag Bunt Press Production #120, 6/17/91. Material this time comes from Bob Webber, Bill Humphries, Ted White, and REM. Art credits: Spent Brass title by Jeanne Gomoll, Page 1 by Phil Tortorici, Page 3 & 4 by B. Ware.

Children look up, all they hear is sky blue bells ringing....

BRUTUS SAYS HE WAS AMBITIOUS On Memorial day, we were at Dick Russell's house for the annual SF3 picnic, trying to avoid what our o'eremployed country vomits forth to desperate ventures and assured destruction, when by Andy



house for the annual SF3 picnic, trying to avoid what our o'eremployed country vomits forth to desperate ventures and assured destruction, when it was pointed out to me that Jeanne Gomoll had a list of the Hugo-nominees for 1991. This she had neglected to show me, though we had been at the picnic for some time. A cold certainty came over me; if I had made the list for best fan-writer, Jeanne would've crawled unclothed through hot tar and IBM cards in order to be the first to tell me.

Oh, the bitterness of it! I have to admit I had been allowing myself to hope I might get nominated, since a number of people went out of their way to tell me that they had voted for me. And I did my best to hide the sick disappointment that came over me, saying "Goshwow, it's good to see Avedon Carol back on the list! I'm going to vote for her."

I didn't say anything about other people nominated, those whom I am less than enthused about. For a lovely, self-indulgent minute, I sat pondering the nature of the Hugo awards, and all of the arguments I have heard against the fan-writer category over the years; that it represents neither fanzine fandom, nor specialized Stf interest groups with any accuracy, how crudzines with high circulation ace out quality every time, and what a small percentage of ballots submitted feature any vote in the fan categories. And then it struck me; how much sweeter to be embittered, out of touch with the cadence of fandom at large, than to receive the adulation of those who read and appreciate Orson Scott Card.

Yet, despite my sour smugness, I feel that as a new generation of faneds steps forward (haltingly, I'll admit), some sort of award or poll to acknowledge the best of their efforts is warranted. Will the task fall to this little zine? Well, if Trap Door doesn't win a Hugo, some sublimation of my angst will be required....

Oh, and one other bit of old business -- a few years back I called a Hugo-winning faned "something of a goof." He wanted to know why, and I had trouble putting it into words. Well, here's a little quote from Ted White, that sums it up better than I ever could have, Mr. Laskowski.

"LAN'S LANTERN won a Hugo -- and may well win more -- on the strength of its lack of fannishness. Its editor preens himself; he is publishing his hundreds of meaningless book reviews, (and movie reviews and TV reviews) for his kind of fan, the perpetual neofan to whom fanzine fandom is forbidding and elitist and ghod knows what else. He takes a paranoic, "Didn't-I-tell-you?" delight in the criticism he receives; it brings him closer to his audience, each one of whom knows in his or her heart that fanzine fans are Degenerate Ogres and fanzine fandom is a closed club which would never admit any of them."

-- Ted White, from "The Fanzine Fanfaronade" in Lenny Bailes' Whistlestar #5, 1988

The walls are built up stone by stone, fields divided one by one....

BOB WEBBER, whose name we butchered twice last ish, recently moved to the Boston area from Toronto, the Athens of the North. Since we like to give you the story behind the COA, we hereby offer:

HIGHWAY ROTARY: DEMOCRACY IN TRIUMPH

by Bob Webber

Many, even most, people get the wrong impression of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from driving here for a short time. A brief taste can't show you what driving here is really all about (As this publication is distributed internationally, I will include parenthetical notes to aid the comprehension of British and Australian readers.).

For example, one may be quick to learn of the average Mass. driver's dislike for vertical concrete surfaces, which leads them to shy away from the edge of the road on narrow-bridges, or curbs (kerbs) (though only at the last minute when turning a corner: a moment of peak stress, since one is faced with a choice of lanes, if only one's own versus the lane for oncoming traffic). Similarly, one may quickly note that Mass. drivers dread passing (overtaking) on the left (right) and therefore always pass on the right (left).

Further study reveals that the usual justification for this behavior is that passing on the "wrong" side is legal (it isn't) and that it's safer because one doesn't have to move out into the high-speed passing lane. Given the strong predilection of Mass. drivers to pass at high speed on the right (left), this last isn't true either. More investigations indicate that Mass. drivers prefer to change lanes to the right (left) because that side has a larger blind spot, so that they are less aware of traffic on that side, and therefore less frightened of it.

Even this simple example of how drivers pass (overtake) reveals that Mass. driving behavior is a complex subject. How infinitely more subtle and complex is the matter of rotaries (roundabouts or traffic circles). First, there is the matter of yielding right-of-way. Some drivers think that traffic entering the rotary (roundabout) should yield (give way); others think that circulating traffic yields to those entering. The majority think that everybody else should just get the hell out of their way; a small minority wish they'd taken the bus. Drivers commuting from New Hampshire just mutter, "Live free or die!" and plunge right in, especially if they're uninsured.

In fact, the path (trajectory) of a vehicle in rotary traffic is governed by a complex set of rules which have never been written down, but which everyone agrees on. Driving around a rotary is an intensely moving democratic experience (major hassle), like a town meeting. Since Massachusetts is a cradle of U.S. democracy this should not be a surprise; it is unfortunate that the anti-democratic interstate highway (motorway)

movement got ahead of the plan to extend the benefits (nightmare) of Mass. highway design (haphazard road building) to the rest of the country. Few now remember that movement, though many know of the organization set up to prepare the rest of the U.S. for negotiating traffic circles, namely the Rotary Club (Centrifugal Bludgeon).

There are only two flaws in the Massachusetts traffic circle and highway system. The first is an old one: the civil engineering departments (sheltered workshops for the bewildered) of the Commonwealth and its constituent towns have always been kept on a tight budget, so that they could not afford such niceties as straight edges, compasses, or multiple thicknesses of technical drawing pens. As a result, roads were laid out with the edges of envelopes and rotaries (roundabouts) with jam jar lids, and where one joined the other the same pen was used, and therefore the same thickness of line. This was fine when only one lane of traffic travelled in each direction, but it's led to some confusion when a stream of traffic from a three lane divided highway (dual carriageway) is expected to join a rotary (roundabout) already in progress, the leftmost (rightmost) lane moving across three rotary (roundabout) lanes and proceeding anti-clockwise (clockwise) around the rotary (roundabout) without actually touching another vehicle.

The second blot on the rotary's escutcheon is due to the attempt to counter the tyranny of the interstate with the democracy of the traffic circle: the combined cloverleaf-rotary (flyover-roundabout). The change of style at the foot of an off-ramp is too great, especially since ramps may join the same rotary at both the inner and outer perimeter. Added to the change from regimentation to freedom, and the invariable lack of signs pointing out your preferred route, the confusion can have cataclysmic results. The tortured out-of-state driver exits (hurtles from) the familiar order of the interstate (motorway), and even the Mass. Pike (not to be confused with the Sacred Cod) is relatively familiar to foreigners, into a fine example of roadway democracy (whirling, seething, grinding mass of traffic filled with voices howling epithets in strange accents), not knowing the rules, helpless, lost, and still miles from the NESFA clubhouse with no road signs for guidance. As Laurie Anderson once put it, it's "Every man for himself: all in favor say 'aye.'"

If you should ever find yourself in this situation, just remember to honk your horn (pip your tooter) every few seconds to indicate that you understand how things work, and join in: it's really great fun (terrifying) once you're used to it.

-- Bob Webber

HOT OFF THE WIRES

BILL HUMPHRIES writes: Among the stranger events during the recent unpleasantness in the Middle East was one of the numerous

ballistic missile attacks on Israel. Bruce Sterling describes an event much like it at the end of Islands in the Net.

"Cullen laughed aloud. "They bombed Hiroshima," he said. Laura went white and grabbed for the couch. "Easy," he said. "They fucked up! It didn't work!" He rolled the armchair behind her. "Here, Laura, sit down, sorry...It didn't explode! It's sitting in a tea-garden in downtown Hiroshima right now. Dead, useless. It came flying out of the sky - tumbling, the eyewitnesses said - and it hit the bottom of the garden and it's lying there in the dirt. In big pieces."

In reality, a SCUD plowed into the backyard of a suburban Tel Aviv pensioner. The military learned of it from the sanitation department, whom the retiree called to demand that they do something about the junk in his yard.

ROBERT LICHTMAN writes that the 1991 TAFF race has come to its conclusion at last, with a clear-cut victory for Pam Wells. Pam received 132 first place votes, to 58 for Abi Frost, and 33 for Bruno Ogorelec. Three people voted Hold Over Funds first; one wonders who they would vote for.

Pam will be travelling to the Worldcon in Chicago (That's Chicon V, by the way - thanks to everyone who pointed that out to me over the past month) over Labor Day weekend. According to Robert, Pam has expressed a desire to visit Seattle, California, Texas, the east coast, Madison, Minneapolis, Biloxi, Moose Jaw, Medicine Hat, Twin Peaks, South Gate, Hagerstown, and the Pirates of the Caribbean ride at Disneyland. No wonder those fanzines at TAFF auctions are so expensive!

He also wanted all of us frequent fanzine publishers (both of us) to list the schedule for the 1992 race, to find an American delegate for Eastercon 43, which will be held in Blackpool (Oh, look it up!) in April, 1992. So, be advised:

Nominations open:	June 15th, 1991
Nominations close:	August 15th, 1991
Ballots available:	September 6th, 1991
Voting deadline:	December 31st, 1991
Eastercon:	April 17 - 20, 1992

People sometimes ask me if I would like to run for TAFF, and have been doing so more lately, in hopes of offering some new ambition to divert my attention from my growing sense of inferiority to Evelyn C. Leeper. It's an entertaining fantasy - sure it would be fun - but I think it might be best left as such. Having read some British fanzines lately, I can't imagine there are any Americans they would actually be happy to see. And anyway, I regard such compliments with suspicion, since I know the real substance of TAFF is running the elections and pumping the fund, which would be sure to burn me out completely and drive me into total gafia. Some friends, eh?

COAs:

David Bratman and Berni Phillips, 1161 Huntingdon Dr., San Jose, CA 95129
Jan Howard finder, 164 Williamsburg Ct. Albany, NY 12203

Linda Krawecka (formerly Linda Pickersgill), 28 Duckett Rd., Haringay, London NW4 1BN U.K.
Mark Manning, 1709 Holgate, Seattle, WA 98144
Eric Mayer, 98 High St., Fairport, NY 14450
Spike Parsons, 676 Cherry Way, Hayward, CA 94541

Jerry Kaufman & Andi Shechter & Stu Shiffman & Suzanne Tompkins, 8618 Linden Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98103

Martin Tudor, 845 Alum Rock Rd., Ward End, Birmingham B8 2AG U.K.

Tami Vining, 1435 22nd Ave., Apt. E, Seattle, WA 98122

Joe Wesson, 951 River Rd., Valley, AL 36854

I'd like to mention a fanzine that our reviewer hasn't have had time to cover yet: Spangler #1, from Garth Danielson, 3817 29th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406.

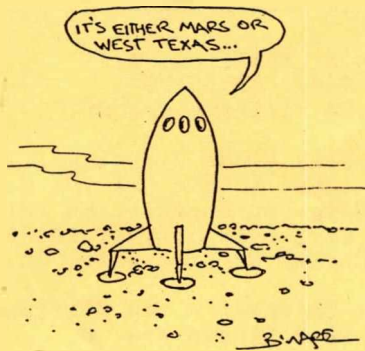
Garth has had a checkered career in fanac, ranging from "organized" projects like his work with Rune, to the complete rave-up lunacy of Boowatt. I have always secretly admired his stuff, which may be reflected by my own adversary relationship with the elements of good lay-out. They may have looked like J.C. Palmer's crudsheets at times, but Garth's zines usually considered stuff you wouldn't find elsewhere.

Now, with Spangler, Garth rises from the ashes of loss and MnStf burn-out, to lay a pretty good, punchy little perzine at our feet. He covers some of his past activity, including his entry into fandom, and a sketch of how things are now in his current fan/peer group, the "League of Psychotronic Gentlemen." I liked it. And Garth reaches out to all and sundry, viz, "I really don't know much about the zine scene nowadays. I'm interested in learning." I think it would be nice if people sent trades and addresses to help Garth climb back into the saddle; Spangler #1 makes me think it would be well worth your time. -- aph



Did you never call? I waited for your call....

WHOSE FANZINE IS THIS, ANYWAY?
(still Andy)



Of course, one of the things which makes my failure to be recognized by the Hugo voters easy to swallow is the fact that I don't actually believe I deserve the honor, a sentiment many of our readers will echo. But I guess that's the nature of awards; by the time you've earned them, you probably have no interest in winning them anymore, it becomes trivia.

Which makes some people's on-going desire for -- and acceptance of -- yearly recognition by the Hugo voters very problematic indeed.

While I am rattling on and on about my own miseries, you might well be asking, "Where's Carrie, anyway? What did you do with the interesting half of the zine?" The answer is, and I quote, "If you'll let me work in the garden and write this one yourself, I promise to write something good for next time and all you have to do is edit the lettercol." What a deal, huh?

Besides, I have to fill up half the zine with CoAs and other dispatches from the fannish schwerpunkt, Glen Ellen, California. Mr. Lichtman, besides sending out urgent TAFF dispatches, complained "Your CoAs in #6 were not especially new, and Joe's has changed since you published." Well, Robert, who told you this was a newszine? Who said anything in it was worth depending on in the first place? People should note that we don't run CoA's for everybody; rather, we try to stay with people who we think are good correspondents, and worth sending your fanzines. I mean, we don't want to encourage people to move.

Leland Sapiro also seems to be confused about the putative veracity of this zine. His most recent letter complained that nothing in the latest "Split Brass" could be taken seriously, and that there was no B-21 flown in WW II, no use of chemical weapons by the state of Texas, and that Terry Carr could not have attended Corflu Ocho, for obvious reasons. He failed, however, to point out that the south didn't win the civil war; perhaps he actually knew my article last time was a put-on, an alternative historical canard. Perhaps his mis-identification of our title was a clue to a clever alternative LoC. I like to think so... hopefully from a world where Leland would not have sent us three copies of the same issue of Riverside Quarterly in trade for three different fanzines. One thing I can assure him; despite being gone for a few years now, Terry's presence at Corflu was as palpable as anyone's. -- aph.

Buy the sky and sell the sky and lift your arms up to the sky....

SPENT BRASS #7
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