

Vol. 1, No. 1, intended for FAPA Mailing #208, August, 1989, and a few other people, by the usual Don Fitch, of 3908 Frijo, Covina, CA 91722. (Tel. (818)338-3744.) (Entire contents Copyright 1989 by Donald S. Fitch. All rights revert to original contributors.)

WONDERING AND WANDERING

EDITORIAL NOTES

WONDERING & WANDERING is intended as a general-circulation amateur journalism publication, mostly editor-written, for trade with other a.j. publications (mostly in the microcosm known as "Science Fiction Fandom") and to fulfill the activity requirements of The Fantasy Amateur Press Association, whose Mailings are quarterly. A few copies will probably also be sent to various other people, for various reasons, the most probable of which is a letter in The Stack of Unanswered Correspondence.

W&W is expected to include a few pages each of natterings by the editor/publisher, excerpts of probably-general-interest material from letters received, reviews of books & fanzines, and Comments on some FAPA publications. (An attempt will be made to make the latter reasonably self-contained, so that they won't sound too much like one end of a telephone conversation, but even more Judicious Skipping may be called for in this segment.) These pages are not likely to be enlivened by much Artwork, but some may be expected in future issues, which might be less hastily thrown-together than this one.

Those are the intentions and plans as of 5 August 1989; how much, and how soon, they may change are good questions; the best answer to both is probably "Very". If you are receiving this other than in the FAPA Bundle, either it is a FAPA PostMailing, or you are on the Mailing List and a letter of comment or fanzine(s) in trade will be appreciated, though not required just yet.

Explaining the Arcane Significance of the Title is usually the first order of business in a new fanzine, though this one really isn't all that Arcane. "I Wonder as I Wander" is the title of a song which used to be sung by John Jacob Niles, if memory serves (if it doesn't, and the singer/composer was Richard Dyer-Bennet, surely someone will let me know). The application is straightforward enough; not being especially Bright, I Wonder about a lot of things, many of which turn out to be beyond my capacity to understand, or even to pretend to understand, but are interesting to gnaw on. And I Wander, often, far from the ostensible point of a discussion -- often by obscure pathways to some other point with which there is (at least at first) no apparent connection.

Why the new title? It's true that the old From Sunday To Saturday, long used for various journal-type natterings and apa mailing comments, could serve well enough (and, indeed, W&W will be a subset of it, as the pagination indicates). But upon returning to fandom recently, after being forced away for almost a decade by family obligations, it seemed to be necessary to produce something a bit more substantial, in order to trade for the many interesting fanzines other people are producing. It seemed logical, and practical, now that I've been invited to re-join The Fantasy Amateur Press Association, to institute a modest, general-circulation, personalzine to be published co-incidentally with The FAPA's quarterly Mailings.

Also high on the faned's agenda of Topics, at least 20 to 30 years ago, was that of the typer and duplicator being used. I started out, then, with a Remington portable and a pan of hekto gelatin, in a gesture of ostentatious nostalgia, but quickly switched to an IBM electric typer, mimeography (the LASFS Gestetner 120, which I eventually bought & still use), and TwillTone paper (alas, no longer being made). Upon Returning to fandom, a year ago, I discovered that the IBM was dying, and bought this Very Smart Typewriter (a brother "word processor 500"). It was one of the very few within my price range (& that just barely) with a daisywheel printer which cuts stencils well, which was a prime consideration, and it holds about 20 pages of text on a floppydisk, displaying the matter on a 15-line screen for the correction of (some) typos & misspellings and a bit of minor editing. It's easy to use; I'm thoroughly satisfied with it and have no particular desire for a Fancy Expensive Computer.

ON RETIREMENT

The 14th of July (it seemed like an appropriate date) 1988 was my Last Working Day, after 23 years at the Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens (mostly taking care of tropical greenhouses & propagation facilities). I enjoyed the work -- especially growing & propagating rare and unusual species --(it's not the sort of thing that pays well enough to be made a career unless one does enjoy it), but arthritis/tendinitis was becoming agonizingly painful at times, I'd not recovered, psychologically, from being the sole care-giver for an aged parent for some years, the organization's Official Policies were moving in directions I did not like, and found myself unable to tolerate being in a position between the treatment I knew the plants needed and the treatment The Administration fancied they should have.

When you're Ordered to keep the Platycerium ferns soaking wet all the time, and have to watch all too many of them rot & die, and when you find yourself shoving much of the harder labor off on your assistant, rather than sharing it equitably, it's time to Do Something, and retirement was the only practical option for me. A bit earlier than was fully prudent, perhaps --with only 26 years work credit (counting Army & Glendale city time) the County Retirement Pension income amounts to only \$803 per month (after taxes, &cet). But with about that much more coming in from savings & investments, a house that's paid for, and Social Security kicking in within 6 years, I decided to Take The Plunge.

For me, Retirement hasn't been all it's touted as being. If I could find one of those people who Retire and are bored because there aren't enough things to do to fill up their time, I'd apply for lessons. With me, the addition of about 50 hours per week of "free" time has been more than balanced by the vast number of activities which were previously ignored because it was obviously impossible to find time for them. Now, they suddenly are possibilities to be considered. And I find myself developing additional (and, of course, mostly open-end time-consuming) interests, such as local history, genealogy, woodworking, and architecture. The List of Things To Do is being added to (mostly at the top) considerably faster than things are getting scratched off, and only Firm Determination (&, perhaps, a natural talent for Procrastination) prevents life from being much more hectic than it was when I was "working".

ON COPYRIGHT

Two decades ago, a Copyright Notice on a fanzine would have been generally perceived as Silly, Pretentious, and downright Ridiculous. I still think it is. Back then, Fandom was a compact and unified Group, with a strong sense of Peer

Pressure, and there was in operation something called "Fannish Copyright". Anyone who wanted to reprint something from another person's fanzine was expected to obtain permission from the original publishers &/or the writer or artist, if they could be located with reasonable effort, and such permission was usually freely given. This was, mostly, a matter of common courtesy, I think, since fanzine material was generally considered to be in the Public Domain, or at most covered by something vaguely known as "Common-Law Copyright".

On the whole, back then, the matter was almost moot; most fanzine material was targeted to a specific audience, there was rarely any call for it to be reprinted, and almost never was any monetary consideration involved. Occasionally, a Fan who was also a Professional Writer (or an aspiring one) would insist on copyright of material which had potential for future sale or which did not deserve wider circulation without revision and rewriting, and more than a few Fan Artists liked to retain control over their works to assure that they would not be mushed up by inept stencilling and poor reproduction. These attitudes generally seemed reasonable, as did the widespread feeling that most fanzine material wasn't really worth reprinting, but if anyone wanted to do it, that was ok.

Paradoxically, when being a Fan almost invariably implied poverty, Fans seemed to be more generous than they are now that the general level of wealth is much higher. A considerable change in attitude seems to have come about gradually, over the past decade or two, on several fronts. An expanding market allowed more and more fans to become Published Writers (I tend to reserve "Professional Writer" for those who earn most of their living from writing), which seems to have encouraged many of them to apply a higher (& often, imho, inflated) Value to their casual fanwriting. The growth of Convention Art Shows, and of the prices paid for works sold at them -- even tossed-off sketches used as fillos in a fanzine may sell for several dollars -- has certainly contributed to this ... commercialization. It seems to me, however, that the major force has been from the fringes, from areas outside of "our fandom" -- from "Comics fandom" and "Star Trek fandom" and similar narrowly-specialized areas where, I understand, pirated reprints/forges have been known to have been sold for large sums of money.

On the whole, this sort of thing does not seem to be likely to happen in our fandom ... but "fandom" is now so large that Peer Pressure is diffuse and often not effective. It certainly does not seem unreasonable that fan writers and artists would wish to retain control over their works, and it is highly reasonable that they would be Extremely Displeased at seeing things they had created and given freely being used by someone else to make a monetary profit. The idea of copyrighting fanzine material still seems kinda silly to me, but I'm willing to go along with it just in case some potential contributors (of artwork & letters, in the case of W&W) might feel strongly about it... hence the "copyright" notice on the masthead.

MORE MICROCOSMIC SCOPE

Upon returning from almost a decade of (virtual) absence from the little world of amateur journalism science-fiction fandom, I was startled to discover that there had been considerably more Change in it than I expected. The major directions of that change had been apparent since I entered the microcosm 30 years ago (has it really been half my lifetime so far? Obviously, yes.), but I'd not realized that the rate of that change was one of geometric progression.

I looked around, observing this once-familiar society as carefully as I could, and ... began to rediscover the wheel, as it were. After obtaining, recently,

several stacks of fanzines published during the past few years, it's become obvious that most or all of my Perceptive Observations have already been made by others, and are in wide circulation ... which will not prevent me from repeating them at least a few more times.

Back in the late 1950s, Science Fiction Fandom was a small Group with a strong sense of Identity. (The number depends upon one's definition, but one thousand people wouldn't be far from the mark, as an upper limit.) We felt (and were) alienated from mainstream society, not only because we read That Crazy Buck Rogers Stuff which was scorned by the literary establishment of the day, but because we regularly were willing to consider fantastic concepts, and to extrapolate the fantastic (though logical) implications of the eventual development of commonly-accepted concepts. Mainstream (mundane) culture in the '50s was not very imaginative -- it hadn't yet really caught up with the Industrial Revolution, much less the Technological and Intellectual Revolutions which were already strongly affecting it.

People who shared significant interests, literary background, and basic attitudes coagulated together, then, and their sense of Identity and Unification was re-enforced by their means of communication. Being widely-scattered, geographically, their primary means of association was through fanzines -- these amateur journalism publications they produced and mailed out to a hundred or so fellow-spirits. (It was not extremely difficult, even in those days of little disposable wealth, to obtain some sort of typewriter, an old Mimeograph or Ditto machine, a few reams of paper, and a hundred 1st-class postage stamps. Moderately difficult, perhaps, since most fans, then, were adolescents with minimal income, but generally within the bounds of Fannish Ingenuity.) It would not be accurate to say or imply that even almost all fans were "fanzine fans", but it seems that almost everyone received (and sometimes contributed to) at least a few fanzines. Ideas, news, book reviews, and opinions & attitudes (and arguments) would be spread to almost everyone in fandom within a few months. Because of the overlapping nature of fanzines and their readerships, almost everyone was at least acquainted with almost everyone else, and many became close friends, even though they may never have met in person. Fans were, to a large extent, a Group, a unified entity, sharing so much in common that they often thought of themselves as being members of an extended Family.

The Change to what Rick Sneary has called "Second Stage Fandom" (cf. E.E. Smith's "Lensmen" series) -- different by an order of magnitude, at least, from the numerical fandoms sometimes used to categorize previous trends in the group -- seems to have begun most noticeably with the increasing (mundane) popularity of Science Fiction (or something like it, reduced to the lowest common denominator) in motion pictures and television. The trickle became a flood, especially after the introduction of Star Trek. A Group of a certain size and activity level can integrate a percentage or number of newcomers at a time, inculcating the values and traditions of the organization, but when this is exceeded (as it was, vastly), something entirely new develops.

I do not wish to Put-Down "Media Fans," as such, but it does seem clear that the vast majority of them do not share the traditional fannish orientation towards the Written Word; they neither have our shared literary background, nor are interested in obtaining it, nor are most of them interested in communicating with others by writing for or publishing fanzines. And most of those who do publish seem to restrict themselves to some narrowly-specialized field, in direct contrast to the traditional fannish admiration for "Broad Mental Horizons."

(It should be noted that the "Media" (don't ask me why the medium of the printed word is not included with movies, TV, & comix) are now at about the stage (magazine) Science Fiction was in the 1930s. Harlan Ellison has pointed out that one can't expect good sf in TV, or much of it in movies -- the expense of adequate Special Effects is simply too high. He is, I think, unwisely ignoring that category of sf in which physically spectacular elements play little or no part, but his point is as significant as that of the concept that Producers hold too much with the Lowest Common Denominator approach, and underestimate the sophistication of potential audiences. It seems highly probable that nothing can surpass the combination of a skillful writer and a reader with imagination, but still ... it will be interesting to watch the progress of sf in "The Media" during the next few decades.)

So, what is "fandom," today? Insofar as I can perceive, it's a large number of people (on the order of ten thousand, probably) who really have very little sense of Community (or of the responsibilities that implies), most of whom attend conventions (and perhaps club meetings) and there interact either with a comparatively small number of people who share their particular special interest, or at large with more people, on the basis of "this is just another social outlet, of many". A small fraction of them publish "fanzines", but few (if any) of these reach more than 2 or 3 % of the total number of people in "fandom."

Is this bad? It seems so, to me, in some ways, both personally and in an Absolute sense. Like so many young people who Read A Lot, I didn't early develop a high degree of Social Skill; acquiring this is much easier, for a shy person, from behind a typewriter. Unlike many (most?) fans, I do not think rapidly (reasonably well, I like to think, but not fast), and use of the written word permits a depth and intensity of communication rarely possible in conversation. And I derive a particular pleasure from (as Jodie Offutt once put it) getting to know what people are like in their heads and their hearts before being influenced by their physical appearance. (Such factors as age, race, gender, & physical beauty/ugliness are more easily relegated to their proper place of being immaterial when people communicate other than face-to-face.) In a more general application, communication is enhanced when people share a reasonable amount of background and tradition in common, and when they're interacting in a group which is small enough that almost everyone can be pretty well acquainted with almost everyone else.

Those days, in fandom, are dead beyond recall, but I really don't think dusk has begun to fall, despite my Gloom of a few months ago. All we need to do, really, is change the name of "fandom" to "quasi-mundania", and the name of "fanzine fandom" to "fandom", and we're just about back where we were in The Good Old Days. (Well, maybe not quite, and there are a few drawbacks to this idea at best, but that leaves something to write about nexttime, maybe.) Certainly Fanzine Fandom is far from dead; it's no longer The Central Core, nor does it have much influence on "fandom" in the wider sense, but there are probably more (more-or-less fannish) fanzines being published now than ever before. No-one, even by adopting a Fandom Is A Way Of Life approach and concentrating on them to the exclusion of everything else, can keep up with all the fanzines and APAs in the participatory way that makes them most valuable.

I wonder what's going to happen. Old-style- (mostly fanzine-) fans, by no means all of whom are old themselves (though there don't seem to be as many Enthusiastic Neos filled with Sense of Wonder around as there used to be), will continue to publish & to write, and to serve as Examples. Most will continue to attend at least a few Conventions (perhaps, like me, avoiding WorldCon and the biggest of the Regionals, unless they're nearby), and will devise methods of getting together with others of their Group.

LETTERCOLUMN

[A Letter Column in the first issue? Why not? A few months ago I mailed about a hundred copies of a Corflu Report issue of FSTS to a hastily- (and somewhat randomly-) constructed Mailing List, and portions of most of the responses deserve to be published somewhere. (And when I say "portions" I do mean brief excerpts *sigh* -- postage rates, you know, on Monstrous Big Fanzines --though, indeed, the entire letter/article from Skel so strongly struck my fancy that it may be considered the Reason for publishing a (demi-) general-circulation zine rather than a mere mailing comments one.) ## The names and addresses of letter-writers will be enclosed in double brackets, my responses in single ones, like this. ...df]

[[Rick Sneary, 2962 Santa Ana St., South Gate, CA 90280.]] 5 June 1989

I couldn't agree more with your remarks about current Cons -- too large, and too much going on that I'm not interested in. I was arguing with Len Moffatt last week (well, not arguing; he just doesn't agree) that Current Cons do too much. He says that these people come, and you have to do something for them. I say "Why?"... if they are disappointed, maybe they won't come again next year, and that will be an improvement. But still, it will never happen. That is why I have officially ended plans for a **SOUTH GATE AGAIN IN 2010!** con. It wouldn't be the Fannish Con I would want; even if I was still alive to run it, I couldn't change a WorldCon, single-handed, against the will of the people, and I wouldn't want one of the current monsters to pretend to be in the same spirit. So -- I am very glad to read the reports of Corflu cons, and how they do sound like the old kind ... not over-programmed, and people who know each other; when I went to cons, it was to see the people, not the programs.

I had not thought about it, but do agree that the more a fanzine editor is involved in publishing (hand mimeo vs. photocopier) the more of their personality comes through, and the more friendly it seems...The really professional ones look just that -- Professional. I feel more relaxed reading a plain mimeoed zine than one of these copier things. I never liked the work or the expense in publishing my own; that is why I always wrote for others.

...Minneapolis ... is a strangely fannish city -- it seems to me that it has had a higher level of constant fanac, and produced more BNFs, than one would expect from a ... city of that size. I think it has produced more fanac than Chicago, and certainly more than New Orleans, which one would expect to be fannish.

Yes, Paul Skelton is a very good writer -- a rambler, most often, seeming to write in a very conversational tone, as though you were just sitting around and he was spinning a tale for you. One would say that the British fans seem better at this casual writing, but of course it is that they copy each other's style. Like all writers, we read the market, and then try to write what "sells." [That's] one reason a few fans have had such an influence on fandom. Fans like Tucker and Ackerman, in the early days, were good, and others tried to write like them, or put out fanzines like theirs. Then Burbee came along with the more relaxed style and format... Then Boggs, with the polished and professional looking and reading, proving that "serious" could be just as interesting as humor. Then came Hoffman, with the Q-Crew, bringing humor to a higher level of sophistication (not much, but higher than it had been). I suppose there are some in the Second Stage Fandom, too, but I don't see enough of them. [Most] seem either too large and lacking in focus, or too small and private ... or maybe it's just that I don't feel part of the crew anymore. With the old Focal Point fanzines, you knew everyone, and they appeared often enough that it wasn't a strain to recall what had been said in the last issue.

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[[Arthur D. Hlavaty, P.O.Box 52028, Durham, NC 27717]] 27 May 1989

I think I belong to the group whose writing is improved by word processors, rather than the contrary. In the bad old days, what I typed first had to be good enough; nothing was going to make me retype it. Now if I do spew out words without stopping to think or organize, I can and do organize them later, without the ugly necessity of retyping the parts that were OK. The greater the physical effort involved in improving my words, the more likely I am to forego such improvement.

[Perhaps it's like alcohol; some people can handle it (after a sometimes-embarrassing learning period, maybe), and others should never touch it. I don't believe this modest-capability WP has changed the ratio of words to ideas in my writing, but it has increased the total output, which renders the flaws more distressing. ...df]

I do not understand your statement that the writer's personality is most apparent when there's a maximum of hands-on participation in the physical production of the zine. I perceive personality through words and, less frequently, pictures, and whatever physical production method is used at best refrains from interfering with that communication. The idea that some other message is somehow given in the physical production, perhaps transmitted through the mimeo-cranking arm and subtly perceivable in the light and shadow of the letters, seems occult to me. Can you explain further?

[Perhaps it's a Special Transmission, outside the Scriptures. I suspect that you might prefer a copy of a Sonnet written by Shakespere's own hand, over the same words on a computer screen -- but that your preference would not be nearly as great as mine. I often find antique/hand-crafted objects more (aesthetically) appealing than (more Perfect) machine-made ones. Also, I value the aspect of casual informality in (fan) writing, and this often seems (to me) to be enhanced in a self-produced zine; in a "professional" looking publication, a more formal style seems more appropriate, and that's easily found in hundreds of really professional publications. That doesn't "explain" anything, of c., but may indicate that the difference is merely one of taste/approach/attitude, rather than of anything like Absolute or Objective Virtue. ...df]

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[[Cathy Doyle, 26 D Copeland Ln., Newport News, VA 23601]] 6.6.89

I don't know about word processing being a bad thing -- it does allow you to get your thoughts down quickly and revise them without the pain of retyping. I'm almost finished with my second graduate degree, and the difference re. term papers is considerable. ... I think that good writing will show itself, no matter what the medium used to publish it is. Xerox machines just make it so much easier for the rest of us to use print too.

[I agreed strongly with Harlan Ellison's condemnation of the phrase "Word Processor" (the concept sounds even worse than that of Processing cheese) -- and still do in the matter of the Computer Writing Programs Jerry Pournelle has been touting with such enthusiasm recently (likely to lead to a proliferation of homogenized-style hackwriting, I think), but in fact everything done with words after they come out of the writer's head (typing the mss., typesetting, printing) is "processing", and might well be done as expeditiously as possible. Photoduplication processes are especially valuable for artwork, & it's gradually soaking into my consciousness that they're probably no more expensive than home-done mimeo & are often more accessible, though I'll continue to draw the line at shiny paper, & to use the old Gestetner while it lasts. ...df]

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[[Mike Glicksohn, 508 Windermere Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6S 3L6, CANADA]] 15 June

It saddens me that fanzine fans, who started it all, are now among the smaller of the "fringe" groups at all large cons. If I had huge gobs of disposable income I'd still attend Worldcons and big regionals like MINICON but when one has to be selective, I'll stick to the smaller (and nearby) regionals where I can expect to see a sizable number of my friends even if they aren't all fanzine fans.

I wouldn't want to generalize about current fans [why not?] but I have observed that on the rare occasion when I'm still partying at 5:30 a.m. and hence qualify for what is known as All Night Fandom here in the midwest, the majority of those staying with me are the same fen I partied all night with ten or more years ago. Undoubtedly the real explanation for this is that younger fen find us old farts too boring to hang around with and are off somewhere celebrating their own versions of ANF, but I'm damned if I know where they go to do it...

I'm intrigued to observe that I recognize only about two thirds of the names you mention and most of those go back a goodly number of years. I suppose the names I'm unfamiliar with are those of the new young fanzine fans with whom I've just not had any contact yet, but by and large it doesn't bode all that well for the viability of fanzine fandom when its average age seems to increase in an almost one to one ratio with the passing years.

[Victor Raymond has pointed out, in RUNE, that when he joined MnSTf, ten years ago, he was the youngest member-- & that he still is, practically. And people here have been remarking upon "The Graying of the LASFS" -- there are lots of young people at the meetings, but few of them show much interest in becoming part of the Group, much less of Fandom. ...df]

Colin Hinz was quiet and withdrawn?!? I hope someone took his temperature and pumped him full of antibiotics!

[He may have received some inhalation therapy, but I assumed that he was merely Awed by the presence of all the BNFs ... you mean he doesn't act that way around you? ...df]

If anything I'd say that there was even more internecine warfare within British fandom than there is over here, at least in part because of the geographical factors and the relative sizes of our fandoms. British fandom is still quite small numerically compared to ours and when two really top active fans dislike each other the chances are they're going to see each other or intact with each other far more frequently than feuding fans in North America. [Ah!. Chalk up one Good Point for the otherwise-pernicious Bigness of contemporary U.S. fandom. ...df] [_____ and _____], for example, can't stand each other yet they live in the same city and attend the same fan gatherings several times a month so there's a fair amount of back-biting going on almost continuously. Perhaps that explains the overall different tone of British fanzines...?

[Sounds reasonable; I remember L.A. fandom at that stage... & was remembering a time when BritFans were generally far enough apart that little friction was generated. So much for my Theory that the "I can write more vitriolic insults than you" tone in some British fanzines is the outgrowth of excessive "I can eat Hotter than you" competitions in Sezchwan, Indian, and Mexican restaurants. ...df]

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[[Ruth Berman, 2809 Drew Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55416] May 25, 1989

I've been thinking about the possibility of reverting to some mimeograph publishing, since talking to some of the people at the Haskells' party. My old mimeo mostly works, but the pad on the arm that pushes the paper into the machine has worn smooth, and it doesn't push. ... But I'm told that if I wrap rubber bands (or rubber binders, as we often say in this neck of the woods) around it, they'll act as rougheners well enough to work.

[They've done so with my Gestetner 120 for about 20 years -- one band (we don't raise much hay/straw in So. Calif., and "bind" isn't here often used as "wrap") towards each end of the pusher-pad (if it's a wide one) seems to work best. ...df]

I was sorry to learn of your father's death. In some ways it must be a relief to you not to have the responsibility of being the sole care-giver, but even so the change is a difficult one.

[Not as difficult as the "conditions are going to get worse and worse" situation. Actually (I should've phrased that original passage more clearly) it was my mother for whom I had been sole care-giver, as she went steadily downhill over a period of 10 years, until she died (about 2 years ago) at 98. Dad was living in a retirement home (furiously independent, as always), but his death was even more of a Blessing (to him, anyhow) since he was still mentally alert, and aware that his sight and health were deteriorating rapidly. I'd expected him to last through his 94th birthday party, then go to his room and open a vein, in the Roman fashion, but the heart attack came a week before that, and (fortunately) CPR was not successful. ...df]

[At the Haskell pre-Corflu party, Chuch Harris had asked about Coventry -- an Imaginary Worlds/Role-Playing episode from early-1960s L.A. Fandom -- in which he saw parallels with the excesses of Dungeons & Dragons of more recent date. Hordes of people, it seemed, were typing information into the computer for him, though (as far as I know) I was the only person present who had been on the scene at the time, and only Ruth had participated in it. ...df]

It seemed surprising, didn't it, that so many people there were interested in the history of Coventry? I think I was the only one there who had been actively involved in Coventry (although, of course, I wasn't actually There at the time). The Coventry story that I re-wrote, taking out the Coventranian material, was "To Ceremark," which appeared in NEW VOICES 1, ed. by George R.R. Martin (a collection of stories by the people nominated for the first Campbell award for new sf writers).

* * *

[[Luke McGuff, P.O.Box 3987, Minneapolis, MN 55403]] 5-25-89

...your commentaries on Minneapolis and environs: the new perspective on a city is always helpful. If you read any fantasy, perhaps you could check out "War for the Oaks," a very enjoyable first novel from Emma Bull. It takes place in Minneapolis, and you might get to see in it some of the places you visited.

One thing I liked was the way you encountered things I took for granted, like Gringolet Books. Yes, it is a very good bookstore. I also agree that Nicollet Island is over-developed. Another case of Mpls. trying to grow up and be a city it isn't.

There used to be a woman on the island who kept donkeys; she was one of those urban characters that just about everyone in the city knows about and likes or loves to some degree. She had to get a zoo license in order to have them. You'd go biking around, and there'd be a gol-dang donkey in the middle of an island in the biggest city in the five-state region (Iowa, N. & S. Dakota, Minn, Wis). There were also a few run-down houses.

This all happened on the part of the island that was the other side of of the Henn. Ave. bridge (1st Ave.). Developers came along, and converted some of the native limestone or whatever buildings into \$100,000+ condos, and then decided that the people living dirt cheap in the rundown houses, keeping donkeys and such like, were not beneficial to their image. So they got rid of the lady who kept the donkeys. One day there was a picture in the paper of some policemen dragging her off her property. And that was that.

[*Sigh* And I'd have thought Mpls. to be one of the few Big Cities in the U.S. where something like that would not be done. ..df]

You know, I think the phrase "fringe fan" has gone through a shift of meaning a while back. When I very first entered fandom (get this) all of about ten years ago, I thought a "fringe fan" was someone who hung out with fans, went to conventions, but didn't write for or do fanzines. Now, a fringe fan can do tons of zines and still be a fringe fan. I think the reason fanzine fandom claims to be the fandom (like a religion that claims to be the religion, or a tribe that claims to be the people) is because of our interest in print sf. Also, because we wuz here first and don't you forget it buddy.

[2 decades previously, we'd probably have used "fake fan" for that type; though we did have the term "fringe fandoms" for specialized, vaguely-sf-related interest groups, there weren't enough people belonging (exclusively) to them for "fringe fan" to be in common use. Now, they're the majority. ...df]

...reading your description of the MIA, I was wondering if we had gone to the same museum. ...they do have good touring shows, like "German Art of the Late 80s", "Courbet Reconsidered", & one or two others. I was surprised you missed them, but you did see works that you liked, and you knew what to look for.

[Not missed; they just left me cold. I'm not the Renaissance Man type, alas, and much highly-acclaimed art of this century isn't my cup of tea. One does develop a knack, though, for glancing over a museum room & letting one's eye be caught by the 3 or so things which are most likely to be Interesting. Not as good as checking out everything -- much is missed -- but necessary if one has but a day to spend at such a great place as the Mpls. Inst. of Art, or the Denver Art Museum. ...df]

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[[Patty Peters, 7501 Honey Ct., Dublin, CA 94568]] May 28, 1989

I've often wondered how people who first hear of Corflu [or Ditto] with the, now standard, disclaimer ("If you're not a fanzine fan..") react to it. My fear is that it will be interpreted as elitism instead of fair warning. ... my perception is that they're extremely egalitarian. [As is mine. ...df] ...drawing the GoH from a hat was intended, in part, to recognize that anyone there had the credentials to play the part. Besides, who could afford to pay the bill for a real guest?

Your experience of being "acquainted with at least 50 of the 100+ people present" seems, to me, the best of all reasons to go a Corflu. ... Each year, I get the chance to see old friends. (For me, it's people I've known for up to [half] of the years I've been living.) I also get to meet new people whose fanzines I've enjoyed. There are always some people I don't get to meet at this year's con so I've got to go next year.

* * *

[[Cy Chauvin, 14248 Wilfred, Detroit, MI 48213]] June 21, 1989

I didn't go to my first convention until after 4 or 5 years of fannish participation exclusively through fanzines (and a few months of local club activity). I remember being introduced at that first con to someone who was described as -"Oh, he's a con fan -- he just goes to conventions, and never writes anything for fanzines."- This surprised and puzzled me enormously at the time. Why would anyone do that? This was only back in 1973.

I don't remember saying to you that fanzine fans don't need to say goodbye because next week we'll see on another in a fanzine, but I forgot a lot about Corflu, and that's a typical comment. [If memory serves, it was more like -"It's not as difficult to say goodbye to a fanzine fan, since we'll be seeing one another soon in our zines."- ...df] I remember we talked about how we both preferred to meet someone via a fanzine first ... I'm still shy around people who are fanzine fans I've not met that way.

It's perhaps even better to meet fans via apas -- the contact is a little more frequent and direct. Fans used to write letters in reply to locs -- remember that? That was one of the most enjoyable aspects of fandom, but I don't think anyone except a rare British fan does that now.

It also seems like there has been a Resurgence of old-time fans (like yourself and Art [Widner]) who have now retired and for whom the "time-money" equation is reversed; you are in the situation that many were in when they were college or high school students.

[Would that I did have more time than money (though lots of both would be better), but in fact the Interests acquired over the past 40 years, since I was a college student, are both numerous and unsatisfied; the addition of 40 "disposable" hours per week still isn't enough. ...df]

* * *

[[Chuck Harris, 32 Lake Crescent, Daventry, Northhants, NN11 5EB, United Kingdom.]

...I've done 16 pages of my Corflu trip report so far ... but Sue said she found your report a damn sight more interesting than the first few pages she had seen of mine, and how come I hadn't written to you and said so yet. I think I preferred it myself too. You saw a lot more -- or perhaps a different lot -- of the place than I did, and it was fascinating to read all about it as seen thru your eyes instead of ours. [Yes, the seeing of something in a different light, from a different point of view, gives (additional) merit to much fanwriting. ...df]

The trouble was that there were so many things to see, so many people that I wanted to talk with, that we just didn't fit them all in. It really was one hell of a marvelous experience, though, and we still seem to talk about nothing else.

Sue also bought a fish-shaped multicoloured windsock ... and would dearly love me to climb up on the roof and fix it on the chimney or the TV aerial, so that everyone would appreciate what trendy world travelers we are, and eat their hearts out with envy because we are the ONLY people in Daventry, and, for all I know, in N'hamptonshire or even Great Britain itself, who have such a souvenir.

I told her I'd think about it, but what would she do about all those bloody Boeing 747s larding in my garden, and leaving wheelmarks all over my turf now that I've just irrevocably strained my back mowing the damn thing again, just answer me that, woman. So now SHE'S thinking about it.

[And I've been thinking about your artfully-inserted comments about Sue's skill at exotic ethnic cookery (what are "kippers"?) and the prediction that the exchange rate will be favorable to travelers from the U.S. next summer. ...df]

* * *

[[Mark Manning, 1400 East Mercer #19, Seattle, WA 98112]] June 15, 1989

...In the middle of typing up the layout for my next genzine (which looks like it'll run about 75 pages, when it's finally electrostencilled and mimeographed next month), I've let this LoC go for a while.

I might someday copy the way you've interspersed fanzine reviews with the conreport. On the other hand, I've done almost all my fmz reviewing for the local clubzine (Westwind), and left my genzine (Tand) freed up to run book reviews..

Another moment I liked in this FSTS I liked came when you summed up all the [people and events] at Corflu by likening the weekend to a miser's accumulation of his hoard. I first entered fandom (in the mid-60s) thanks to Tolkien, where misers' hoards seem to be stashed under every mountain.

[Here, too, I think, though it's not the World's gold, & the pearls are beyond price, but sometimes the mountain to be dug through is awfully massive. ...df]

* * *

[[Paul Skelton, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 5NW, U.K.]]

0-0-0-0-0

"What do you mean, Holmes?"

"Observe, Watson! Your eyes see, but your mind does not interpret. You have but to note the condition. Not even the combined malpractices of the UK and the US Postal disServices could normally be expected to leave a fanzine in this state. See how wrinkled and degenerated is the paper, how pulpy it is becoming. It has been severely misused. Mark my words, Watson, this is a dark case. Obviously it has suffered the depredations of a severe flooding. Now where, Watson, have there been sudden floods of late?"

Why, all over the country, Holmes, after the torrential thunderstorms of three days ago, which signalled the end of the previous fortnight's glorious weather. In fact, it put me in mind of the monsoons when I was serving in the Raj. I'm afraid there's no clew there, Holmes."

"But there is, Watson. Don't you see? in order for it to have been caught in that flooding, this fanzine must have been in this country within 24 hours of being franked by the Postal Authorities in Covina, CA. I need hardly tell you, Watson, this is not normal practice for the minions of the USPO. Someone obviously gave this fanzine very singular attention indeed. Now, Watson, observe the strange marks that overlay and almost obscure the print on the outer cover. What do you make of them?"

"Well, it appears that this fanzine has been left in some pasture for many months, constantly being trampled by a herd of cows, but this could not be the case, from the evidence of the franking date. I confess I am at a loss."

"You should have more faith in what you see, Watson. Pray, pass me my copy of DeWitt's 'Tracks & Prints of the World's Fauna'. Thank you, Watson. Ah, yes, as I though, Hartzbein's Wildebeest, found only on the Serengetti plains. This fanzine, after arriving in this country, was rushed to Africa 'post haste' as it were, for some nefarious purpose. After which it was discarded, and subsequently trampled over by an enormous herd of wildebeest. This explains the large number of hoofprints in a small space of time. The evidence, Watson, is before your eyes, and the logic inescapable. The question now is to motive, and I think the answer to that is revealed by the other half of the back cover.

But Holmes, I see nothing of note on the back cover."

"You disappoint me, Watson. Why, did I not, on a previous case, point out to you the mysterious behaviour of the dog in the night?"

"Of course I recall that, Holmes, but the mysterious behaviour in question was the fact that the dog did nothing. Are you saying that there is something missing from the back cover? Let me have another look. Good Lord, Holmes! There's no postage stamp. Have the US authorities taken to delivering the mail for free? Damned decent of them, Holmes."

"No, Watson. You will note from the franking that there is a rectangular gap where the stamp used to be. The evil genius behind this course of events is obviously a philatelist, and therein lies his Achilles' heel. He has given himself away, Watson. Feel the weight of this fanzine."

"Humm, let me check it on the scales. Why, that's 35 of these new-fangled gramme things. Good Heavens, Holmes! Do you think this 'Don Fitch' person, mentioned as the sender on the cover, inadvertently used the exceedingly rare California 45-cent blue variant?"

"Precisely, Watson, and this tempted the criminal mastermind who'd been monitoring the addressee's mail to risk revealing his hand. See, Watson, to whom this fanzine is addressed."

"Skel? Good Lord, Holmes, isn't that the fannish nom-de-plume of that Paul Skelton fellow? You know, the one who was once described as one of Britain's 'extraordinarily good fan writers', along with Willis, Berry, White, and Harris? The same 'Paul Skelton' who is your only equal in deductive logic?"

"Almost my equal, Watson, almost. But yes, other than that, you are correct."

"But who can have done this deed, Holmes? Who is monitoring his mail?"

"Not 'who', Watson, but rather, 'what'. Skel's mail is obviously being monitored by that tribe of mutated apes known to have philatelic tendencies."

"Not those apes first discovered by that explorer chap who was looking for my colleague Doctor Livingstone?"

"Yes, Watson, the very same Stanley Gibbons. Mark my words, Watson, there will be ill-tidings out of Africa before this year is out."

"But Holmes, shouldn't we warn him? If these creatures are monitoring his mail he may be in grave danger. The world can ill afford to lose an 'extraordinarily good fanwriter' of his ilk."

"Fear not, Watson, you may rest easy. We need not tip our hand in this matter. We shall simply mail on to him this fanzine. Whilst he might not be quite my equal in matters of criminal deduction, it is, after all, a relatively simple case, and one I am sure is not beyond his powers in this regard. Then, Watson, after we have partaken of Mrs. Hudson's excellent dinner, I shall recount to you the details of one of my most baffling and portentous cases. It was before your time, Watson, but when Mr. Courtney first came to me with the tale of what had befallen his boat, little did I realize...."

0-0-0-0-0

Don:

You mailed out my copy of FSTS on the 22nd of May. I received it not long after dawn had finished cracking on the 27th, and thought you might be interested in what it has been through in the intervening 4-5 days.

SKEL

* * * * *

There remain (transfixed by a jack-knife to the mantle-piece) letters and postcards from Victor Raymond and Mike Gunderloy (both containing helpful, albeit differing, attempts to define "fan"), Rob Williams, Pat Mueller, Ken Gammage, Jeanne Mealy, Brian Earl Brown, Amy Thompson, Moshe Feder, and a few other people. With luck, these missives will be butchered, RSN, in the next issue.

MAILING COMMENTS

It might be unwise to say, "Mailing Comments are the Heart of an APA", since so many superb apazines contain none, but I'm fond of both reading and writing them -- the opportunity to have something approaching a Conversation with interesting people who are encountered all too rarely in person is not to be lightly dismissed. As a waiting-lister, I was able to purchase several back Mailings some months ago, have read them with extreme pleasure, and have responded with thousands of words of mental comments. But that was months ago, and those words are not likely to be written and published.

Recently, through devious means some Strict Constructionist FAPAns may not have been Meant to Know, I obtained a copy of the most recent Mailing (#206), and decided to include a few Mcs here, if only to see how much of the knack remains, though the Deadline is pressing and there won't be many of them. Unfortunately (perhaps), I began with comments on SYNAPSE. "When I begin to write Comments to Jack Speer," I mentioned to another FAPAn last night, "a little Flag goes up in mind, saying, 'You are now beginning to write Comments to Jack Speer. Do NOT, in this passage at least, provide him with any nits', and that sort of writing is extremely time-consuming." "He doesn't like adverbs." the other FAPAn helpfully interjected. "What adverbs?", I archly asked, with almost-Mehitabellian innocence.

Though it would be Interesting to write comments on every zine in the Mailing, imitating in each case the writing style of the individual contributor, this would require both more talent and more energy than I have, and even comments to Speer are highly likely to revert to my customary casual and prolix (not to mention careless) style. *Sigh*

Jack [Speer, SYNAPSE, for #206]: If you do Speerishly-meticulous comments on W&W, please disregard my inconsistent handling of quotation mark and punctuation combinations. I am familiar with the Rules of Pointing involved, but have not yet decided whether to follow them, or to develop and adopt a more logical system. There seems to be no reason, save irrational convention, to adhere to Rules devised by printers to prevent mechanical damage to isolated small points (such as the full stop or period, and the comma) in the press, when the duplication process does not utilize lead type.

"Calligraphy is elegant script." -- I believe that the Greek root here (kallis- (?)) is usually translated as "beautiful". Is this rightly equated with "elegant", or is my belief incorrect?

"...i've seen license plates with the [Masonic] symbol and '2B1ASK1'." -- While two plates (for one vehicle) with that letter & number combination might be issued in any one state, I was not aware that "vanity" plates bearing such a symbol were available anywhere. Did you mean "license plate frames"?

Milton Stevens' usage of hyphenation sometimes seems strange, as you point out, but never seems to me to be unreasonable or illogical, unlike the strange hyphenation which sometimes appears in computer-produced material and which I ascribe to computer programs which improperly retain line-breaks when margins are changed, and to lack of proofreading. (You will note that one hyphenated word in the previous sentence has already progressed into a single word -- "linebreak" -- in some technical vocabularies. "Computerproduced" is too long a word for the comfort of most English-speakers, with too many consonants, and probably will continue to be hyphenated.)

"Is '12:05 on Saturday Nights' Sunday Mornings?" -- A good question, and the results of tabulating a large number of answers would be interesting. In some of our culture's oldest traditions, the observation of a "day" begins at sunset --e.g.: All Hallows' Day and Christmas -- as does the Jewish Sabbath. (Easter may be a special case, combining two aspects of reawakening, rebirth, and renewal.) Somewhat like you, I prefer to hold that the transition takes place while I am asleep, but the use of midnight as a reference point seems to date no farther back than the development of (semi-) reliable clocks, which may be too recent to permit the alteration of basic attitudes. (As you probably have noticed, many English-speaking people have not yet accepted the long-ago-engrafted (from Latin and Greek) Rules forbidding splitting the infinitive or ending a sentence with a "preposition".) And the very word "midnight" indicates the mid-point of an entity, rather than the ending of it and the beginning of another. I, for one, have the feeling "A new day is beginning!" most strongly at sunrise (generally when camping, or after partying all night at a convention), which is when I'm likely to look in the six directions, obscurely give thanks for the Creation, and think about what to do in the day which has been put before me.

"That people are touchy about their beliefs is the wrong way to approach writing for apas. Here you say what you think, regardless." -- Is that really good advice, Jack? (In contrast to that which you thought to be good, at the moment of writing, or, perhaps, to that which I consider to be good.) Am I unusual in thinking it unwise to discourage a newcomer to an apa from exercising caution in the choice of topics, and tact in the development of them, at least until it has been possible to ascertain the crotchets and tempers of the members? Even after all these years, I find it wise to approach certain topics, in the cases of certain people, with extraordinary caution.

Norm (Metcalf, THE DEVIL'S WORK, Vol.2, No.11): George Scithers has recently stated, in The Cult, that numerous ConComs have had to cope with the problem of attempts to stuff the Hugo voting, and that this was usually done by suppressing the obviously-illegal ballots, quietly, so that people might not figure out how to do it successfully. I'm not sure I like that idea... though, of course, it has nothing to do with the current brouhaha, since "block-voting", per se., is not "illegal". I have heard talk from several SMOFs about eliminating the category of "Supporting Memberships" for WorldCons; the small profit they produce seems not to be needed, and doing this would, at least, greatly increase the expense of attempting to "buy" a Hugo. It would, of course, also greatly decrease the nominating base, and (probably) substantially increase the influence of Media-and Convention-fans.

You have sent me several batches of your old-to-recent apazines since I reappeared on the FAPA & SAPS waiting lists, and I have (somewhat surprisingly) found them extremely interesting and enjoyable. This might not be expected, since your orientation is strongly SerCon, and mine is Fa(a?)nnish; perhaps the wry humor you display in listing D.W. as available for (among other things) "published letter of comment", when you seem to publish no letters whatsoever, is a clue.

You also sent me a copy of your genzine (NEW DIRECTIONS, wasn't it? -- I have little memory for details, and no readily-accessible files at the moment) some time ago; it was the very first fanzine I ever received, and utterly delighted my spirit (as well as providing reviews of many other fanzines, and access to them). You have much to answer for.

Bob (Rodgers, ADVOCATUS DIABOLI #11): Thanks (I guess) for reminding me to add the learning of American Sign Language to the List of Things To Do. The hearing aids worn since my mid-20s have been close enough to adequate, but it would be good to have an additional communication system in reserve. I've picked up some Plains Indian sign language (on which AmSLan seems to

be largely based) but I don't expect to learn the new language well. I am, though, fascinated by a remark Phil Paine made some years ago, to the effect that people who were totally deaf from birth, and learned to think without using words, have mental processes which are entirely incomprehensible to the rest of us.

There are sometimes disadvantages to having a poor memory: you might be interested in this, but I can't be more specific than to say that there are, somewhere, references to two different members of one of the Lakota Tribes whose names could be translated as "He Talks Dirty", which might very well indicate Tourette's Syndrome.

Is there any indication that the decline in the number of Free Masons differs from the decline in the number & popularity of various other Fraternal social organizations? The popularity of such groups was enormous in the 1920s & '30s, but seems to have declined steadily since then. (Sometime around the peak, for example, every Indian Veteran in & around Ponca City, Oklahoma, (which is not as small a town as one might think) belonged to the American Legion Post there. (I've been picking up some information about their revival of the Ponca Heluska (Warrior Society Dance.)) The Masons may be a special case, however -- perhaps the earliest (many others seem to have been patterned after them), and certainly influential in part because so many of the Founding Fathers and early Presidents were members. The Lodges may also have provided a useful substitute for churches in a society with an increasing number of Deists, Theists, agnostics, and people who rejected the dogmatism of most organized religions of the time. I assume that the Masons excluded Atheists, but they seem to have been compatible with most religions, including Judaism. I don't know if they practiced segregation, but the Aug. SMITHSONIAN contains a photograph of about 40 Black cavalry troopers wearing Masonic collars and aprons, ca. 1915. (Since they enjoin secrecy, and their meeting-halls are required to be on the 2nd floor (or, if at ground level, windowless), to avoid eavesdropping, the situation would seem to be useful for men plotting a revolution, and there is little doubt that it has been so used.)

Ben (Indick, BEN'S BEAT #13): It seems strange that I barely remember your name from my previous incarnation here (apparently our periods of greatest activity did not overlap), but number almost all the people you mention on p.1 among my fan friends (or perhaps, in one case, fan enemies). It seems strange to see you use "Augie", though; in my early- and mid- teens at the times we met, I always addressed him as "Mr. Derleth."

I do not like to Rank things, but of the zines in the 4 or 5 recent Mailings I've purchased, yours have been high among those which have given me the greatest pleasure. Thanks. I guess... BEN'S BEAT is a stiff standard of perfection, but if I can listen to Mozart or Bach in the morning and still get through the day, I guess I can read your zine and still work on my own.

It's new enough to me that I'm still startled when someone asks if I'm eligible for a Senior Citizen Discount, and not particularly delighted. When being 60 qualifies, however, I accept with the enthusiasm one might expect from someone of half-Swiss ancestry. (The Scots cannot hold a candle to the Swiss in the thriftiness department.)

That may have some bearing on the fact that I'm not a Theatre Person -- ticket prices in the LArea seem to be prohibitively high, especially for good productions. I look at the cost, including parking fees after the 35-mile drive, and figure how many books that could buy. And storefront little theatres too often have acoustics unsuited to a hearing impairment.

Harry (Warner, Jr., HORIZONS pp 4206-4217): The Lynch mimeo seems better able to cope with your stencils than the Coulson one was. I still look forward to a carefully-selected anthology of your apazine writing, produced by way of one of the super-good modern processes (and on acid-free paper), but this issue of H is more easily read than many have been.

Despite attending perhaps a hundred Jam Sessions at Burbee's, I never heard Elmer Perdue play the piano, and am not aware of tapes of him doing so. There are some which probably include his sister (though I did not note this on the boxes at the time), and perhaps Lee Jacobs, who did a good barrelhouse boogie beat.

I'm surprised and gratified by your vitriolic attack on Jack Speer's nitpicking re. grammar. Well... "vitriol" in comparison with your usual mildness -- by general standards more like vinegar, a touch of which greatly improves many dishes. I've been amused and bemused, as well as often irritated, by that practice of Speer's, and (primarily) regret that he wastes so much time & space on it when I find his more cogent Comments vastly more rewarding. Since other members may well consider (some of ?) the things I write to be a similar waste, I'll try to limit my complaining to an annual comment, though that's difficult when one of his "corrections" treats as an Error something I consider a matter of valid stylistic taste.

The suggestion that all (or any) of the money now devoted to cancer research be diverted to work on AIDS is clearly that of a monomaniac, and has not been supported by any of the anti-AIDS organizations whose literature I've read. These groups tend to look more toward the funds expended on the Stealth Bomber, &cet.. Perhaps it should be pointed out that Basic Research on the human immune system might well be applicable to cancer studies, and that when 1.5 million people (actio Govt. estimates) are infected with the probably-fatal AIDS virus, it is not unreasonable to call for some Serious Funding, perhaps along the lines of the Manhattan Project.

I know little about other local apas, but have noticed that the majority of the current participants in APA L rarely or never attend LASFS meetings, or (like myself) seem unable to crowd the social and intellectual contacts we'd like into a ca. 4-hour gathering of 100 to 150 people. Most members of the Club (including the movers and the shakers) seem to pay no attention to the apa, and many (most?) of the Lers seem to have little or no interest in, or even awareness of, external fanzine fandom.

Since the majority of my non-pension income is from savings, I'm acutely affected by a "moderate" (.4% per month) inflation rate; the difference between Survival and Comfort depends on the spread between inflation and interest rates. Perhaps switching from savings to Stock investments would help, since stocks tend to appreciate at about the inflation rate, but the Pennsylvania Railroad stock didn't work out too well, and the currently-popular Corporate Take-Overs are usually inimical to the small stockholder.

Probably many FAPAns have or will have earned a million dollars (read "earned" = "been paid"). That averages to about \$25,000. per year over a typical 40-year working life, though one might have to hedge with something like "in 1989 dollars".

Having settled the estates of both parents during the past 3 years, I can attest to the usefulness of at least 10 certified copies of a death certificate. Insurance companies might not require one, but it certainly facilitates matters, and jointly-owned stocks & real estate would be dreadfully snarled-up without them.

Perhaps incidents of fan violence are rarely mentioned in print until long after they occur because they didn't occur. I recently heard, for the first time, of something of the sort in connection with Coventry, and am reasonably certain (considering the Tempers of the time) that I'd have heard about it before 20 days had elapsed, much less 20 years, if it actually had happened... and even then, one sometimes may have doubts about things not personally observed.

"Admiration" does not accurately describe my attitude towards Christopher Morley's novels. The first book I checked out of the Jr. Highschool library was his The Haunted Bookshop. That it didn't turn out to be a ghost story is immaterial; the bookish conversations and literary references did more, I think, to shape my entire life than any other book has done. Later re-readings have

convinced me that it is a wretched novel, and I cannot admire it; the residual feeling is somewhere between fondness and love, and I may yet take the unprecedented step of cutting up two copies and pasting together a volume composed of the 1/3 of it which is worthwhile. (Silverlock produced much the same effect, many years later. The protagonist is too much the stereotypical country (city) bumpkin (to whom the reader is expected to feel Superior) to be bearable, but the literary references are Great, & I'm fortunate to have discovered it before it became a Cult Object & hence something I'd probably ignore.) ## Do you have a date for Hagerstown library's first book wagon? I'm wondering if it might have been inspired by Morley, or by David Grayson, the original of the character in the Parnassus novels.

Your suspicion that the trend to hold large cons in Fancy Expensive hotels may have been influenced by the idea of attracting pros may have merit, but I've not heard it mentioned by the (all too) numerous ConRunners around here. They usually seemed to be attempting to find the cheapest hotel capable of holding the size of con they were planning on, with a staff they could work with and which could cope with a fannish convention. There may well be an unspoken background level of Upscale Yuppyness, but the worst I've heard expressed was, "the rooms are too small for roomparties", which doesn't seem unfannish. The sad fact may be that all too many current fans would not readily put up with the sort of modest hostelry in which I would be most comfortable. I tell you, Harry, Fandom has Gone All To Hell in the past 10 years. Actually, "Big Con" = "Big Hotel with much Function Space" = "Expensive Hotel", almost every time. We can expect to hear, in about 2 years, lots of Complaints about the Vancouver Westercon, which will have been held in a University Residence Hotel we would have considered Superbly Fannish.

Janice (Eisen, ELECTRIC CITY EXPRESS #4): Though I don't often take part in Clever Fannish Activities, it's impossible to resist the temptation to suggest to Elst Weinstein that he add The Teitelbaum Award as a category on the Hogu/Black Hole Award Ballots.

The idea of trees causing (air) pollution sounds like pseudoknowledge derived from studies indicating that some trees/shrubs/plants (mostly in semi-arid regions) do release particulate matter (mostly resins) into the air. That they use or tie up other pollutants, and produce oxygen, in much more significant amounts, seems to have been ignored.

"...we don't call it ABO any more since finding out that that's a racial slur." -- I asked two Aboriginal Australians about this some years ago (AussieCon I); both seemed even more startled by the idea that it might be a slur than by the fact that I cared whether or not it was one. It seems to be a situation, much like that among U.S. Blacks, and American Indians, where you can find some small (but vocal) group which will object to almost anything you use, and where most people will pay more attention to your tone of voice and to the content of your words. Most (White) Aussies seemed to consider "Abo" to be a civil & polite term.

(Alice Springs had two old bars -- one a beautiful Art Deco building, where Abos were served in a tin shed out in back, and one a cavernous room downtown, where the co-owner was reported to be an Abo and where the patrons were of various racial & cultural backgrounds. Of the 3 fights I observed in the course of 2 evenings spent in the latter (there isn't much to do at night in Alice Springs) one was between two White males over the Abo ladyfriend of one (or both) of them, the other 2 were between pairs of White males, one of whom felt that the other had insulted an Abo friend. (Different individuals in each case.) There was no significant difference in the racial make-up of the spectators cheering on the various participants. During those 2 evenings, I heard "Abo" used perhaps 5 times, never as a slur. I did hear the word "Black" used insultingly, by a White "gentleman" who said that the local Country Club had no Rule against "Black" members ... but that, of course, none had ever applied. ## Wandering down along the dry riverbed one morning, I

was invited to join some people (who referred to themselves as Abos) to share their meal (beef cooked on a piece of tin propped on three rocks over a small fire) and exchange ciggos. (Either I was obviously an American Tourist, or they'd correctly read the U.S. flag on my jacket.) Actually, they may have wanted to be given cigarettes, but when I presented mine correctly (in a shamanistic culture you do not point a cylindrical object at a person, and the atmosphere here was such that I automatically reverted to AmerInd mode), theirs made an immediate appearance & we exchanged. (Among the Abos, too, Tobacco has ritual/religious connotations.) ## One of them pointed out the smallness of the cooking fire (indicating that Whites build a bloody big bonfire -- as, indeed, Whites (Aussie & American, anyhow) generally do) -- three sticks, to be pushed in as the tips burn at the center. I mentioned that the Native Americans -- the Abos in my country -- did about the same, but usually used 4 or 6 sticks. One said, -"We don't do that, for ordinary fires"-, and another said "Six? You count Up, and Down, too?" ## But I Wander; the point was supposed to be that a significant number of people of pre-European Australian Ancestry seem to be perfectly comfortable with the word "Abo", and I guess I'll continue to use it for a while. (There is, of course, no adequate "native" word, since there are several languages and many very different dialects in that country.) Maybe one of our Australian members can help with this.

Bruce (Pelz, ANKUS 37): Your description of Elmer Perdue's place sounds precisely like it was 20 years ago -- and all too much like mine is today. As a PackRat by nature... well.... maybe I'll Get Things Organized, RSN.

There are no rodents in my house (I'm less sure about termites), and considering the number of stray cats in the neighborhood, probably no mice in the garage, though the peaches are ripe, and that usually results in a nest of rats there.

Meanwhile, I've left a Will (with Erickson & Burns, 1500 West Covina Parkway, West Covina, though Erickson will probably die long before I do), naming a fanzine fan and a non-fan friend as co-executors and giving both general & specific instructions. But are we really possessed by our possessions? Maybe, by having so many of them, we free ourselves from strong ties to any of them.

* * *

It's a Shame to waste a whole page, and maybe there's something on disk to fill up the next one -- this is being done perilously close to Deadline, and I'm not about to drive up to the BArea to hand-deliver it, during the hottest part of the summer.

FAPA BUSINESS: I'm too new to be really qualified to vote, but expressing Opinions should be OK. Though retired, and living on a less-than-spectacular income, I'm all in favor of sending overseas members Bundles by air, and increasing the FAPA Dues accordingly. The increase would be but a small fraction of the other expenses of membership, about the cost of a mundane magazine subscription, and the total expenses of a year's Membership would still be less than the cost of spending one day at most major conventions. ## Though totally impractical, the idea of allowing the Treasury to build up to the point that the interest income from it would pay all the Mailing expenses does sound attractive. ## I'm less enthusiastic about (though by no means opposed to) the idea of establishing a category of Emeritus members who would have no activity requirements. Surely most members, if asked, continue to send their zines, individually, to long-time FAPA comrades who are unable to maintain active participation.

FAMOUS FANNISH QUOTATIONS

"Next time, I'll start working on this zine much more than 5 days before the Deadline."

Addenda:

In the midst of all the Excitement of Actually Publishing A Fanzine, I settled on a copy count of 150 -- 70 for FAPA and 80 for "general circulation" --before checking over the Mailing List. As things turned out, there are several more than 80 people who really ought to be sent copies, not to mention a score more for whom a speculative copy would be in order. *Sigh* The new "improved" mimeo ink has rendered many of the stencils un-re-usable; I'm not about to re-cut them, and may decide that commercial reproduction is prohibitively expensive, so circulation of Wondering & Wandering is not going to work up a full head of steam until next issue, which is planned for....umm...let's say 20 Oct. 1989 as the Letter Deadline, to permit inclusion in the November FAPA Mailing.

Letters (or postcards) of Comment are invited, with the caveat that The Budget is going to make extensive Editing necessary.

Small pieces of ArtWork (suitable for electrostencilling) will also be welcome, though they may not be used until Issue #3.

12 Sept. 1989

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