

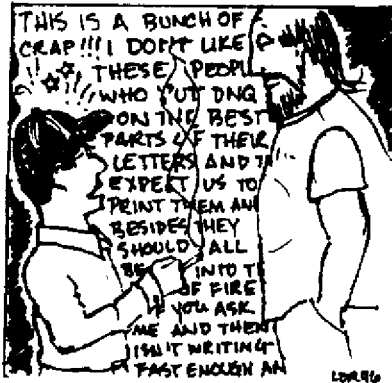
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APPARATCHIK

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This is the fifty-seventh issue of a bi-weekly fanzine, edited and published by Andy Hooper and Victor Gonzalez, member & founding member fwa, supporters afal, at The Starliter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. #103, Seattle, WA 98103, also available at fanmailAPH@aol.com. Correspondence can be addressed to Victor at 403 1/2 Garfield Street S., #11, Tacoma, WA 98444, and electronically at Gonzalez@tribnet.com. See the back page for availability and trade info, including the addresses of our British and Australian mailing agents. This is Drag Bunt Press Production #253. Apparatchiki: Steve Green, Irwin Hirsh, Carl Juarez, Lesley Reece, Martin Tudor & Pam Wells. Art by Lesley Reece.

Issue #57, April 11th, 1996



APPARATCHIK'S WEEKLY EDITORIAL CONFERENCE

Why do we do it? by Andy & Victor
 EASTER WEEKEND IS AN important stop on the annual fannish calendar. In addition to Eastercon, the British national convention, and Minicon, one of Midwest's most noteworthy regionals, it's also when Norwescon, the Northwest's largest regional convention, is traditionally held. But while fans attending Minicon and Eastercon seldom spare a thought for those

of us looking for something to do at the SeaTac Red Lion on Easter weekend, those of us who attended this year's Norwescon frequently wished we were in Britain, or even Minneapolis.

Although the Apparatchik central committee has learned from bitter experience that Norwescon is not usually our sort of convention, three of us ended up there anyway. The was because Vanguard, Seattle's longest-running fannish party, fell on Saturday of the convention, and was held in Margaret Organ Kean's room at the hotel. Despite the fact that many fans stay away from this event because a single hotel room cannot hold the fifty people who usually attend the party, and very few out-of-town fans known to them bother to come to Norwescon anymore, Vanguard continues to be linked with the convention, theoretically so that fans will not have to choose between them. The problem with this logic is that people who enjoy Norwescon have many other options open to them, and few of them show up for the party, while people who do not like Norwescon find it hard to summon the moral fibre necessary to make their way through the Red Lion labyrinth.

While Victor and Lesley didn't arrive until the party was underway, Andy paid \$30 for a one-day pass, and attended the convention on Saturday afternoon. Both programs really of interest to him, one on fanzine production and another on alternate history, were scheduled for 10 in the morning, so they were over before he got there at noon. Amy Thomson's reading, also somewhat attractive, was scheduled for 11am. Still, there were two or three good book dealers in the dealer's room, to go along with the weapon, jewelry, game and animal skull displays, and a panel on superstrings, space warps and time travel featuring Robert L. Forward and John Cramer was almost worth \$30 by itself.

The real reason he arrived early was to offer some moral support to visiting fan Michelle Lyon, who came all the way to Seattle to drum up a few memberships for Westercon 49. After several hours of preparation (\$5 for a bowl of ice from the hotel), Michelle opened her door, only to be informed by a convention security operative that, despite her specific request and the notation "party required" on her hotel confirmation form, she had been assigned a room on a "quiet floor" and that she would have to close down.

The door was closed but the party continued, providing a friendly alternative to Vanguard, which, as it turned out, was most welcome.

Vanguard was sparsely attended, which meant there was still room to move. As per the usual Norwescon party theme, huge plates of food incorporating chocolate covered most flat surfaces. Smokers found themselves perched on a tiny balcony outside the room, which probably was never meant to hold that much weight. Still, things were going rather nicely until Seattle fan Craig Steed informed the party's hostess that he had placed several bottles of home-brew beer in the bathtub full of ice. Two of the bottles were from a batch made with a small amount of low-quality marijuana mixed in; Craig mentioned this to warn anyone who might not want to ingest such substances, although few enough people are interested in tasting unlabeled bottles of home-brew to begin with. There are some who believe such an honest approach is better than the alternative: not saying anything and letting people find out for themselves.

While such things are commonly consumed at Vanguard parties, our hostess seemed to consider its very presence at her party to be a monstrous affront. A King County deputy sheriff had been seen walking the halls on the floor below; apparently, Margaret feared he had a mobile narcotics testing lab or a drug-sniffing K-9 (imagine sniffing it through sealed bottles!) tucked in his back pocket. Craig had since departed to make a brief visit to the convention dance party, so she was frustrated in her efforts

IN THIS ISSUE: Once Victor and Andy finish complaining about Vanguard and Norwescon, Steve Green will begin complaining about the state of British horror publishing — and give us a brief look inside Martin Tudor and Helena Gough's wedding. Victor offers a review of Ken Josenhans' music fanzine Bandsalat #1, followed by Andy's impressions of a bag of old prozines brought home from one of his used-bookstore crawls. Then, Lesley Reece explains the gender-differences implicit in pinball machines versus video games, and what lemmings say when they're on fire. This time out, the letter column is short but sweet; if you've ever wanted to get into FAPA, be sure to read Robert Lichtman's letter! As usual, we finish with Andy's review of his top fanzine picks of the fortnight. We hope you enjoy it!

"Microsoft's philosophy tends to be . . . global domination."

to force him to remove the offending bottles.

With no one else to accost, she came out on to the balcony and accused Lesley: "You were with Craig, weren't you?" Apparently, Lesley had made the mistake of exchanging a few words with Craig, which somehow linked the two of them in our hostess' mind. There followed a five-minute diatribe about the offense which Craig had given, which strongly suggested that those on the balcony should do something about it.

Victor spent several minutes explaining that we weren't Craig's keepers, that we certainly understood her anxiety and that we would do what we could to help out. It was much like sitting at the city desk and taking calls from loonies who think they are the Unabomber's twin brother, or that a comet is actually a message from aliens, Victor explained later.

"I always tell them I'll look into it," he said.

Andy's thoughts alternated between throwing himself from the balcony into Bow Lake, the watery glen below us, and asking Margaret if she'd mind if he shot up in the bathroom.

Lesley later said the experience reminded her why she didn't always like fandom; despite making a dozen friends or so, everyone else seemed to make unfounded presumptions about her relationships and personality. She was disgusted with the party's "host," and couldn't bear to be in the room any longer.

Well, despite finding the whole thing ludicrous, we did help: we gathered up Craig, Craig's beer and a few pieces of chocolate and went back to the Westercon 49 party, where Michelle was just starting to distribute her supplies to other party groups.

We enjoyed ourselves for a while, watching the closed-circuit replay of the convention masquerade, pondering: Why does it always take masquerade judges an hour to decide which Klingon prosthetics are the best? Then a small mob of people from a committee to hold Westercon 52 in Spokane arrived, led by some self-important con-running boffin in Ray-Bans who backed

Michelle into a corner and ranted about his problems securing a room for the El Paso convention at considerable length and volume. Michelle squirmed and struggled to answer his imprecations for about five minutes, until Andy asked to speak to her privately on the balcony. She and the Apparatchiki huddled out there in the mist until the Spokane fan and his retinue lost interest and left the party.

Actually, he had started out lecturing the Apparatchiki about his problems, until we were finally able to convince him that we had nothing to do with the El Paso hotel fiasco, and were in fact fanzine editors from Seattle. We offered him a copy of #55 and #56 of this fanzine by way of proof; he then demanded extra copies so that he could pass them on to the members of the three con committees he was part of. "No, no," Andy protested. "I'm not talking to you in your capacity as an officious con-running hack; I want to relate to you as an individual, as another human being." Next time, we'll just roll up a few copies into an empty home-brew bottle and pitch them into the sound; we'd have a better chance of receiving some response that way.

Despite all of this, we still managed to have some laughs. Lesley pointed out that this was the first sf convention she'd ever been to, and it was comforting to know that she had not missed too much over the years. And it's still sort of entertaining to wander around the halls at a big convention, observing the proliferation of young gothic leather people, leading each other around on leashes, occasionally stopping in dark corners to bite one another's necks. But what this has to do with Vanguard, and the people who usually attend it, remains a mystery. Having the party at Norwescon seems to do nothing more than create a two month gap between fannish events, and in a fannish group with as little cohesion as ours, it's hard to see how that can do anything but damage our sense of community.

☠ POISON ☠

Nobody south of Carlisle seems to realize that we have both Harlan Ellison and Terry Pratchett!

Fannish Memory Syndrome

by Steve Green

TO RURAL LEICESTERSHIRE, FOR the latest gathering of writers and artists associated with David Bell's award-winning horror magazine PEEPING TOM. Graham Joyce's just back from Rome, Mark Chad-

bourn's celebrating the forthcoming hardback release of THE ETERNAL. Derek Fox has just seen the small press imprint Tanjen debut with his novella RECLUSE; one could almost be fooled into thinking we had a healthy publishing industry.

Chatting with Joel Lane before Ann and I give him a lift back to Birmingham, however, the truth is far less attractive. Despite his excellent collection THE EARTH WIRE winning a British Fantasy Award last October, it's still to make any money either for him or for fellow author Nicholas Royle, who published it through the Egerton Press imprint he set up for the BFA-winning DARKLANDS anthologies. Around one-third of the print run still resides in Nick's flat, and it hardly helps matters that one of the few mainstream literary magazines to review THE EARTH WIRE managed to completely miss the supernatural elements and dismissed Joel's characters as nihilistic Gen-Xers. Jokingly, I wonder aloud whether the same reviewer would have similarly mis-read GHOST as a study in marital decay, with Demi Moore actually refusing to acknowledge Patrick Swayze's existence, enraging him to the extent that he leaps through solid walls.

Not that there is much else to laugh at when surveying the state of British publishing. Ironically, part of PEEPING TOM's suc-

cess — the fact that David Bell and editor Stuart Hughes are able to enlist such well-known authors as Ramsey Campbell and Graham Joyce to write for them — is a side-effect of the virtual extinction of this country's paying market for horror short stories. Aside from INTERZONE's occasional forays into the genre, only the Gollancz DARK TERRORS anthologies (picking up from Pan's famous thirty-year sequence) and Robinson's annual BEST NEW HORROR survive as potential showcases.

Now that really is chilling.

And then to post-industrial Dudley, for the fannish social event of the season: the marriage of Helena Gough to Martin Tudor, APAK agent and my CRITICAL WAVE collaborator these past eight years.

Rarely have so many fans gathered in one location without a hint of denim or the merest glimpse of t-shirt. Among the besuited are fellow MisConnors Tony Berry, Richard Standage and Helena Bowles, whilst the reception that evening drags in the likes of Peter Weston and Paul Vincent; Berry even underlines the fanzine factor by publishing his best man's speech as a one-page edition of EYEBALLS IN THE SKY.

And throughout it all, Helena's family actually looks pleased at their daughter's decision, as well they might: they've not so much lost a daughter, as gained half a photocopier.



Back from the Grave

By Victor M. Gonzalez
Staff Writer

I THOUGHT ANDY OVER-looked a gem of a fanzine in his countdown last issue, and I want to rectify his mistake.

While there were many worthy fanzines to emerge from Corflu, the one that caught my eye was Bandsalat 1, edited by Ken Josenhans. I did my first fanwriting for the Amateur Long Playing Society (Mile 247, my zine), when Ken was the OE, and I remember those days quite fondly.

So it was no surprise when I got past the title and saw the phrase "A fanzine of musical enthusiasms." That about sums it up, and it's really a good idea. Yes, Crawdaddy! is back, and music is frequently discussed in many zines, but I look forward to a long run from Ken, if he can keep it up.

A bad sign on that front is the bacover colophon, which says the zine was originally conceived in fall 1994, and wasn't released until "a thick stack of Apparatchiks arrived" providing the motivation.

While we certainly appreciate the credit, that's still about a year and a half of gestation. If there's anything that will sap the potential energy a fanzine can generate, it's printing letters and articles so long after they were submitted that even the contributors have forgotten them. Or have become very angry.

But Ken is the right guy for the job. He loves music. He obsesses about music. And, as he describes in his opening editorial, he dreams about rambling through record stores. He also, unlike many music fans, has the ability to consider the opinions of other music fans, an essential ingredient in this sort of fanzine, I think.

Aside from the entertaining editorial, the first issue also contains a Steeleye Span review of a recent tour by the group, by David Bratman. Loren MacGregor writes about his twin careers as fan and folk singer, and the ways they have transubstantiated. Finn Pekka Taskinen (have you heard of him before?) talks about the Finnish folk-group Värttinä.

A little later, Ken comes back with a piece on travels to Glasgow. No, it's not a con report: rather a review of Gaelic bands he saw while there. And then a "fake" letter column, consisting of stuff from his letter file and a Usenet discussion. Pascal Thomas

and others appear.

But, this fanzine is a gem, there's a little gem concealed within it: Patrick Nielsen Hayden's current favorites. This is, I assume, intended to be a running feature allowing readers to talk about what's new and on the CD player. It suffers a little (being a year old), but Patrick has a certain skill with few words, and though I disagreed with him at least once, it's a funny read.

Two examples: "Barenaked Ladies, MAYBE YOU SHOULD DRIVE. Formalist popsters in an era of compulsory grunge, a nearly perfect record flawed only by the weird fact that its first two or three tracks are the weakest. Start with 'Life, In a Nutshell' instead. Count the hooks in the first two minutes. Collapse gasping."

The other, which is wrong: "Tori Amos, UNDER THE PINK. Five million depressive adolescents who wear too much black worship at Tori Amos's feet, but she's awfully good anyway. Conventional wisdom pegs her as the niece of Joni Mitchell and younger sister of Kate Bush. Don't be fooled: she's angrier than the first and less affected than the second, and one of the strongest composers to hit pop music in years."

First of all, what's too much black? But assuming that is meant to be descriptive (and somewhat humorous) as well as derogatory, Amos still falls to appeal to me. Whatever "affected" really means; in my conception Amos has more not less. I pegged her as a Kate Bush knock-off years ago; same number of letters in both names, same twitchy vocals, same diaphanous clothing. But Kate stings better (or at least she did before falling in with that Pink Floyd freak), is much more inventive musically, produced several of her later records and has arrangements and audio qualities on "The Dreaming" and "The Hounds of Love" that make Amos seem timid and flat. Just not in the same league.

But that's just my opinion, and I'm sure Patrick can defend his; and that's the potential of this fanzine. Pun talk and strong argument about music.

I hope Josenhans can keep the table turning.



I'm gonna buy me a hogleg as long as I am tall.

Digestive Biscuits

by Andy Hooper

LAST WEDNESDAY, I was sorting through the pile of correspondence that had accumulated since the first of the year when I was

suddenly seized with the certain conviction that if I didn't get out of the apartment I would go completely out of my mind. So, I put on my shoes and started walking up Phinney Avenue toward the Woodland Park Zoo. A few blocks later I heard the #5 bus chuffing up the hill, and decided to hop on for a little ride up to the south end of the Greenwood neighborhood.

Greenwood is an interesting neighborhood, centered on a long ridgeline that begins where we live in North Fremont, running north-south from about 60th Street to Holman Road. It also has the largest concentration of antique stores I've ever seen outside of Charlevoix, Michigan, leavened here and there with used book shops, some good cheap restaurants and brew pubs.

That day, I got off in the area claimed by both the Greenwood and Phinney Ridge neighborhoods. There's a small demilitarized area centered on Ken's Market, a local grocery essential to

both areas. Right next to the market is Greenwood Mandarin, a cheap Chinese place noted for good Mongolian beef and surly, distant service, where I ate my usual hurried lunch; the owner is always eager to see you pay your bill and beat it. After enjoying this repast, I walked back down the street a half block to my favorite used book store, Couth Buzzard Books.

Couth Buzzard is notable for several things. First, it often has a wide selection of quality paperbacks salted in with the literary hardcovers; and second, they buy just about anything you bring in. That day, I had a 1995 run of IASPM with me, looking to pass it on to someone else, as well as some paperbacks I figured I could do without. The owner of the CB does not offer cash for books, merely credit applied to other purchases; but since he accepts anything I bring in, this seems like a fair deal to me.

Anyway, when he saw the pile of Asimov's I had lain on the counter, he asked, "Do you ever buy any of those old Science Fiction magazines I have back there? Nobody ever seems to buy them and I was thinking of getting rid of them to make room."

I omitted to ask, "Room for what? More Mack Bolan novels?", and made my way back to the very cluttered little aisle

where the sf anthologies and magazines are kept.

Naturally, the vast majority of the magazines on the shelves were digests from the eighties, Analog, IASFM, and P&SF. I tried picking through a few of them, but the truth is, they all start to look the same after a while. And since the cover price of the modern digest is about 12 times what it was 30 years ago, they were going to cost me more as well. The trick, I figured, was to find the stuff that was old enough to have a low cover price (halved to begin with, and halved again with application of my store credit), but not so old as to be recognizable as a collector's treasure.

I gathered up about a dozen issues in good condition, mostly from the sixties and early seventies, and added them to my quality paperback purchases. Cover prices totalling over 50 dollars were quartered down to about 15 bucks, and I made my way back home to study my finds.

What had first caught my eye was a copy of *Astounding* from September, 1953. Purists howled unhappily when ASF cut itself down from full-size magazine to digest-size, but I think it was still a handsome publication. This issue featured a selection of material that strikes me as classic ASF stuff: Short stories "Little Joe," by Algis Budrys, "The Garden in the Forest" by Robert P. Young, and "Gimmick," by Katherine MacLean. The last piece is the best, an exemplary story by one of the more underrated writers in SF history. Its hard-as-nails space opera, leavened with humor; just the kind of thing I used to love to read when I was a kid. I devoured it in ten minutes.

Of the two novelettes in the issue, the best is Lewis Padgett's "Humpty Dumpty," one of those telepathic-minority stories which sprouted like mushrooms after the success of Van Vogt's *Slan*. It doesn't exactly break a lot of new ground, even by 1953's standards, but the style is vintage Padgett, full of slightly-hidden humor and memorable characters.

The other thing which really grabbed me was a full-page ad right next to the contents page, proclaiming: "*The Shadow: Unusual adventures of a man whose dual existence is the nemesis of the criminal mind. A weekly mystery feature of the Mutual Broadcasting System.*"

Next to that issue were the January and February 1962 issues of *Analog*, which were only slightly changed from their former existence of a decade before. Campbell was still leading off with his authoritarian editorials, P. Schuyler Miller was still reviewing books, the cover art was still deco-influenced stuff about twenty years behind the times (the Feb. issue has a portrait of "Spaceport . . . Backwater Planet," which has the unmistakable joined arches of the terminal at LAX in its center), and the center of the magazine was still dominated by science fact articles, this time a two-part series on explosive metallurgical forming, which seemed to reach out from within the magazine to turn my eyelids to lead.

By far the best thing in either issue was Raymond F. Jones' "The Great Gray Plague," a remarkable short novel that seems to stand firmly between the classic scientific advance story and the kind of social meditation that supposedly first appeared during the "new wave." Reading it, I thought several times of Joseph Nicholas; at the heart of the story are questions about the power of technocracy, and the limitations of human authority. The characters are still pretty cardboard, and the climax is one of those neat courtroom dramas that only happen in fiction, but I still think it's a pretty strong tale.

That was in the February issue; in the January issue the most striking things were Miller's reviews of both Phil Farmer's *The Lovers* and Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*. It's very easy to forget that the latter came out in 1961; it seems to capture the zeitgeist of the mid-sixties so thoroughly that I find it hard to believe that it was written before I was born. Miller regarded both as

remarkable books, and recommended both highly; one wonders if the field is capable of giving any contemporary magazine two such powerful novels to consider in a single month.

I also grabbed a copy of *Analog* from May, 1976, for two reasons; the first is that it has one of the florid, sensual covers that Kelly Freas did so often the seventies, which really caught my eye. The second was that our correspondent Gordon Eklund's name appeared on the cover, referring me to his short story "The Prince in Metropolis" within.

That piece seems to be informed by equal measures of O'Connor's *The Last Hurrah* and oh, perhaps Brunner's *The Jagged Orbit*. It's got a cute gimmick in that the protagonist is dying at the beginning of the story. He is a powerful politician confined to a powered chair by the loss of his legs in a childhood accident; with the help of one of those electronics geniuses who are as thick as fleas in sf, he uses a suite of electronic monitors to gauge the tenor of the times, and as a result he's been in power for more than thirty years. At the hour of his death, the genius comes to visit him, and beards him gently over the misuse of power which drove a wedge between them long before.

It's a sentimental story in many ways, set in the kind of social abstraction which seldom exists outside of SF, yet it works; there are enough basic truths about power contained in it that most readers will be propelled to the end. I liked it.

Even though the late sixties were far from its best period, I picked up a few copies of *Galaxy*, too. The November 1968 issue caught my eye for Robert Silverberg's "Perris Way," which I'd not seen before. It's a highly-atmospheric piece, which reminded me of *Shadrach in the Furnace* more than anything else, but it had a degree of detachment that made it hard for me to really embrace. I think a lot of authors fall into this when they try to create a sense of distant relationship to the times and places most familiar to the reader; I think Bob did that job all too well here. There's a sense of something familiar, as if there is some allegorical impact I am expected to infer from names and characterizations, but I end up feeling rather thick for not being able to work it out. I did like the Jack Gaughan art, however.

I got the same feeling of confusion from Brian Aldiss' short story "The Tell-tale Heart Machine," one of these pieces of science-related ethical dilemma that left me asking "Why should I care?" at its end. This is the other end of the "new wave" spectrum, characters and situations so oblique that they are barely recognizable as fiction, let alone science fiction.

I was drawn to the May, 1969 issue by Vaughn Bode's cover, referent to "Star Dream" by Terry Carr and Alexei Panshin. This is a character study framed by a stellar exploration effort, concerning the relationship of two men struggling to accommodate each other's vision of the project. A small tragedy, in that they both step away so the other will have a free hand, so that neither makes the trip. Whether or not this was principally his story, Terry had a real gift for accessing fundamental human emotions and issue, and had an even greater skill at encouraging other authors to bring them into the foreground of their own.

By 1973, *Galaxy* was an even uglier magazine, inside yellow covers with the table of contents listed to save money on art. For all that, I think it was actually a slightly better read: Ted Sturgeon had taken over as reviewer from Algis Budrys, who I assume was with Playboy Press by then, and the list of contributors in the November issue was impressive: James White, serializing his *The Dream Millennium*, plus short works by Pohl, Sheekley, Michael Kurland and R.A. Lafferty.

Kurland has long been a guilty pleasure; I especially enjoyed his alternate history novel "The Infernal Machine," set in turn-of-the-century Istanbul with Professor Moriarty as its hero! This story, "Think Only This of Me," is a nice piece of time-traveling

romance, nothing really unusual but a good read.

The real gem is Lafferty's "By the Seashore," which has a sfnal theme at its heart, despite his decision to cloak it in his usual fantastic, almost fairy-tale, narrative. The smallest, slowest and dimmest member of a wealthy family vacationing at the shore finds an alien which happens to look like a rare species of mollusc; the two enter into a symbiotic relationship which proves to be of inestimable value to the family when another alien power shows up and enters into negotiation with them over non-specific matters of great portent — Lafferty doesn't say so, but the overwhelming impression is that the fate of the earth may hang in the balance. In exchange for the alien shell, the visiting bigwig chooses to take the small, backward son back to his homeworld — where he too is discovered on an alien strand, and enters into symbiosis with the smallest, slowest and dimmest member of a powerful alien family. It's a great lesson in leaving behind concern with detail, and writing toward the heart of a story.

The last pile of mags turned out to be the best, at least from my point of view: three issues of *Amazing* from the early seventies, when Ted White was editor, Arnie Katz was, for a time, an associate editor, John D. Berry was running the Clubhouse column, and so on. Oddly, I don't think I've ever looked at one of these since making Ted's acquaintance; my impression is that, had I read them at the time, I would have found fandom about

five years sooner.

In the July 1971 issue, I am impressed as always with James Tiptree Jr., who offers a short story, "The Peacefulness of Vitvyan": how interesting to see her juxtaposed with Bill Rotsler's story "Bohassian Learns." The July 1972 issue features the conclusion of Bob Shaw's *Other Days, Other Eyes*, and another cool Bode/Todd cover. Berry's fanzine reviews are damn near perfect, and I envy him the opportunity to read *Energumen*, *Focal Point*, *Cipher*, *Rats*, and so forth, when they were brand new.

But perhaps most impressive of the whole pile to me was the January 1973 issue, which features part of a serialization of White and Shaw's *The Enchanted Duplicate*. This copy may well have been owned by a true fan at one time; the listing for TED in the table of contents has a big red check-mark next to it. I wonder what note this referred to?

The issue also contains short stories by Barry Malzberg and George R.R. Martin, a fascinating column on the then-raging debate over tachyons by Greg Benford and David Book, and complete short novel by Gordon Eklund, *The Ascending Aye*. I'm not all the way through that yet, but I'm enjoying it.

These are entertaining, rather attractive magazines, and the combination of fannish and sercon attitudes exhibited in them is something I've never seen so adroitly managed before.

If there was anything like it around today, I'd subscribe.

When did it become necessary for everyone in this country to carry around their own bottle of water?

Boygames

By Lesley Reece

I USED TO LOVE PINBALL.

Until a couple of years ago, I couldn't resist playing a game on any machine I saw in a bar, restaurant, or laundromat.

Now, I shudder to think how much money I wasted on that habit. It was expensive, too, because even after playing regularly for an embarrassing number of years, I still stunk, and of course the worse you are the more quarters you lose. But I kept at it. I loved all the different tables, for one thing. My favorites were probably "Cyclone," which had R. Crumb-type art all over it, and "F-14 Tomcat." That one I liked because whenever you got a free game, the revolving red and blue lights on top of it went off, creating a sort of police-car atmosphere.

That always added to the fun, since it usually sent any nearby dubious types diving under the first table they could find.

Besides, I got the point of pinball. Flipping the ball into all the various machinery on each table seemed a feat of real coordination, timing, and skill, all of which were things I utterly lacked but desperately wished to develop.

The arcade games that began appearing alongside the pinball machines in the early eighties were boring to me in comparison. Instead of shiny, flashing tables, they were ungainly boxes painted ugly neon colors. Most of them seemed to involve shooting things, or some other kind of mayhem. It wasn't that I, at the age of about thirteen, was opposed to video violence. I thought it a sensible alternative to the real thing, and in fact one of the few games I liked. "Death Race 2000," was so horrifying that it was actually taken out of all the arcades I frequented.

Apparently, some parents objected to their children chasing down hapless video pedestrians with a little video car, then running them over, all while trying to avoid the tiny tombstones that popped up in place of the fallen.

No, what made the games dull for me was that instead of relying on a player's skill in controlling the physical world, the way pinball did, they hinged on some kind of gaining of territory. It was obvious to me even then that video game manufacturers were trying to steal the allowances of adolescent males, and ado-

lescent males alone. "Big deal" I remember thinking after one battle game that seemed particularly pointless, "I shot the most tanks. This game is for boys." After that I pretty much avoided video games altogether, thinking of them as "boygames" and preferring to stick to the more genderless game of pinball, even though the pinball machines got harder and harder to find as time went on.

Recently, I acquired a Mac, which came with a lot of pre-installed demo versions of games on it. Some of them were fun right away, like the solitaire games and the Hello Kitty Big Fun Piano. And there was *Lemmings*, where the object was to save the ceaselessly marching rodents from various pitfalls. If you weren't vigilant enough to detain them, they'd fall right off a cliff, making a neat squish noise when they hit the bottom, or walk into a fire and die, screaming "Yipe!" at the top of their little lungs.

Not surprisingly, the one game I didn't like was a sort of cyber-tank adventure called, for some unfathomable reason, *Spectre Challenger*. The object there was to blow up the enemy tanks and capture all the flags. I instantly dismissed it as a "boygame" without even bothering to learn to play.

Victor liked it, though, and one slow evening he offered to show me how it worked. I had to admit, the game took more strategy than I'd originally thought. You had to pay attention to where your little tank was in relation to the others, as well as try to figure out how to get all the flags in the most efficient manner. Worse for me, though, was that I found, to my horror, that I actually enjoyed blowing up the other tanks. Even though I tried not to identify them with anything or anyone I particularly disliked, there was still something cathartic about watching them explode.

And so I was converted. I am now able to think of video games as gender-neutral, which may not be what the manufacturers intended, but I don't care. I play rounds of *Spectre Challenger* in between paper-writing sessions. I've even moved on to *Wolfenstein 3-D*, a game where you get to shoot not only Nazis but also zombies with machine guns sticking out of their stomachs. Cool. And no more wasted quarters.

AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH: Only a few letters this time, but comment on things raised months ago continue to trickle in, as with this note from DAVE RIKE (Box 11, Crockett, CA 94525), who is still concerned with events at Intersection:]

'I must confess when I first read your succinct account of what you did while at the *Scottish Convention*, of sitting around getting high and then tripping out while staring out the window I thot: Oh wow, wasn't that something we did when we were 10 or 12 years old. Why go all the way over to Glasgow to do that again? Especially since you did it with the Same Old Crowd. And then, after four months, I read Mike Glycer's account in File 770 where the most excitement he had was being taken for a taxi ride around half the city to arrive at a copy shop that was just across the square from the con centre. And he really grooved with the scene because it was just like a con in the US. That's enough to drive a strong fan to drink, so the bars must have done great business. Well, I guess at least Harry Andruschack had a good time.

'And then, following up on this adventure across the sea, there was your account of going down to Las Vegas and hanging around town while SilverCon was going on. I take it your report was an homage to Dr. Hunter S. Thompson and his *Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas*. However, I detected a difference: instead of ingesting a variety of interesting drugs and good scotch, there was a definite flavor of self-service unleaded petrol fumes (that benzene'll get ya every time) and too much I-5 truck stop coffee. It's too bad you didn't have someone like Ralph Steadman along with you to do illos.

'Do tell us when you're going to have your Trekker Appreciation Day and what we all can do to make them feel good. Myself, no matter what you do, I don't think it's going to make that much difference. I hope you don't get hurt when I tell you this, but we fanzine fans are lowlife scum to them, beneath their notice and unworthy to even bucket out the bilgewater from their starships when they're a-dock in port. I know sincere Trek fans who were turned down by them because they didn't come up to their standards. So they joined the K/S apa for a while and occasionally come to the third Saturday party. And all of the young fans are into post-literate electronic media of one sort or another, they're into *Doing It*, by whatever means available. Yes, there are folks out there on the floor of any con that can write, but they're hung up on being wannabe pros and if they can't be that right now then they'll settle for being groupies of one sort or another, hoping that it'll somehow rub off on them. This is nothing new, it's a game that's been playing in one fashion or another for 50 years in fandom.

'So what to do? Well, first off I think that we can assume that anyone who can read & write in English in the US has sf-fy as part of their cultural background, so you don't have to focus exclusively on cons. Someone who likes to try their hand at writing and who finds that the interaction on paper that's found in fanzines is fun. I don't know where they're at, but they're around: you just gotta dig 'em out. Or nudge some of your old fart fan friends to do something again. During the past few months I've been trying to kick-start Bill Donaho into starting to work on another issue of *Habakkuk*. It's the usual story of low energy and he's not getting any younger, but the issues he did come out with were too well-received to just let it drop again.

'What's happening with TAPP? Are US fms boycotting it or something? The only ballots I've seen were the ones enclosed with *Ansible*. Did Dan and Lynn have too much haggis over there in Glasgow or something? You were at Corflu, surely you can tell

me what's going on.'

[VMG: It would be a lie to deny some influence from Mr. Thompson, but the imagistic and plot goal was to be based on the television show *The X-Files*.]

[APH: I'm not sure why other fanzines haven't been running TAFF ballots, but if we did it under normal circumstances, it would cost us an extra \$23.00 in postage plus the cost of copying it. We'll probably get around to it in the next month. But I think Dan's doing plenty of work for TAFF so far, and we hope to see another chapter of his report soon.

I'm not really sure why I have been cast as the defender of Trekkies here, Dave; all I ever said was that I didn't think they should be rounded up and killed. The fact that they are more interested in "doing it" than fanzine publishing strikes me as something of a good sign, really.

Now, sundry comments from ROBERT LICHTMAN (PO Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442):]

It didn't seem right to me that the editor of the number No. 1 fanzine should have "never even seen a copy of *Perspex Parrot*", so one is enclosed. This was made on My New Copier. Yes, I succumbed, and am now the proud owner of a Canon PC6RE, which was on a very good sale at Office Max. [They were] offering to carry the entire purchase price, including toner cartridge and whatever else I wanted to buy that day, interest free through October. How, I ask you, could I resist, having just "saved" approx. \$750 by not going to Corflu? I'll be using this for everything I do except for *Trap Door*, which just too large a job for it.

'Sad to read all the tributes to Bob Shaw in No. 55. I can only remember meeting him once, at the 1968 Worldcon I think, and then only in passing. He was on my mailing lists from my rankest neo days and I always felt honored to be favored with one of his infrequent letters of comments. In most recent years, he surprised me on a number of occasions with articles for *Trap Door*, articles that were always well-received, I might add. Despite the absence of more in-person contact, I always considered him a kindred spirit and I'll miss him a lot.

'Ted White's mention of 1958 Hollywood Boulevard and BoSh's first pizza was particularly interesting to me for its description of the restaurant being "across the street from an establishment that had a live waterfall down its front." I don't remember what would have been in the particular building in 1958, but it still exists — and the last time I saw it, several years ago, it was one of a number of buildings along the Boulevard owned and occupied by the Church of Scientology.

I haven't read much of the first FHAPA mailing myself, but I found myself wondering what Ahrvid Engholm's contribution had to do with fan history when I ran across it. I agree with Victor's comments about the Westwind interview guidelines, and would suggest that they're in the apa as a guide to interviewing old fans. I think that behind this there's a romantic image of how to go about it that corresponds to what happened in decades past when grad students in music history would go out and interview old dried-up but still strummin' and singin' blues singers on their farms in the Delta, or whatever.

'Your accomplishments in winning by a wide margin both best fanzine and fan writer FAA Awards cannot slip by without congratulations. And its good seeing D. West get well-deserved recognition beyond the confines of those who vote for the Nova Awards. Regarding the FAA Awards in general, it would be good if a list of voters could be published, since this often provides additional depth of meaning/interpretation to the results.

'My perception that Lesley Reece had read *A Wealth of Fable*

Can you picture them taking a communion of Leary's brain?

came from her sentence opening the fourth paragraph from the end of her article: "Wanting to know more about this person who'd cowritten *The Enchanted Duplicator*, I turned to Harry Warner's biography of Willis, *A Wealth of Pable*." At the time I wrote those words, I must have been under the impression that she was somehow misconstruing Harry's fanhistory; but on later thought (and checking it out) I see that Harry's Introduction in *Warhoon* No. 28 also has that title.

"Thank you for grasping the essence of my approach to fanthologizing. Or at least I think you grasp it when you say "he doesn't appear to have much interest in expressing that aesthetic, preferring to let us infer what he likes from his selections." Exactly. I think the core readership of fanthologies is established fans, and that group of fans already knows or at least must suspect my preferences in fanwriting via the example set in my own fanzine. I don't choose to offer interpretation to those individuals, assuming they will have already made their own interpretation of the events of fandom in 1992 or whatever year is under consideration. The presentation of the selections in alphabetical order was so as not to assign any relative importance to any of them. This is my approach, but I readily admit that I endorse your approach to fanthologizing: the long essay that introduces *Fanthology '89* is a marvel.

"Would you mind mentioning that it appears FAPA will shortly have some vacant positions? It seems unlikely at this late date that some members [seven] will be continuing: It's one of the bigger states of flux in recent FAPA history, Meyer, with this many people in limbo and no waiting list. Anyone interested in stepping into this particular void, please contact me."

[VMG: I thought of one connection between Engholm's thing and fanhistory: Without fanhistory, there would be no coherent context at all in a piece that can scarcely afford to lose another screw. I still like it. And thanks for noting my part in our accomplishment.]

[APH: Yeah, I made the same mistake about Lesley's comments that you did. But my copy of Harry's book is still at her disposal.

I don't think that it's necessarily a good idea to publish the names of the award voters; it would be impossible then to conceal the fact that you had spaced the deadline and failed to vote for your friends . . . hrm, maybe that isn't such a bad idea after all. . . .

We finish with a letter from GORDON EKLUND (15815 - 40th Place South #103, Seattle, WA 98188) concerning issue 56:]

"Lots of interesting stuff here, including Andy's report on the Corflu just past and his subsequent trek through the deepest regions of the American south, a trip that sounds at least really similar to the one I had at one time mapped out for myself till too many other real world circumstances protruded and I decided to stay home and chew bark instead, except that Andy does not seem to have partaken of the sacramental opportunities to visit among the various Elvis shrines-out-of-his-life-as-he-actually-lived-it which dot the region like warts on a toad's spine. Back in the fall of 1963 I spent a weekend in Memphis of my own accord and being just a kid wet as noodle soup and thus knowing no better didn't even fall by Graceland itself for a look/see. A paucity of act I have regretted for years, let me tell you. As sad as wine turned to vinegar. Now Elvis was no doubt gone to Hollywood to make one of those dreadful Hal Wallis movies the Colonel forced him to do. But, still, it could have been history. (Mine, if not his. Speaking of which — history at least — I read with relish Victor's review of the first *Fan History* apa mailing but could only mumble to myself something to the effect that the people who

know the most about fan history are probably the same ones either too busy or forgetful (or both simultaneously) to want to write all that much about it. More's the goddamn pity, too. Since history, it seems to me, should be more about people and less about statistics, unless it's baseball history, in which case the latter illuminates the former like a light that shines. But life isn't baseball. (Nor is fandom.) Despite hardly being any kind of fan historical figure myself, every once in a while like a barn in a cornfield I find myself rummaging through the back corners of my brain and thumbing fond old memories of Seattle/Berkeley/national fandom as I knew in the time of the nineteen-sixties. But I don't think I've ever written anything about that epoch. Except some fiction. I don't know what it is with me but find myself tending to freeze up like a clam in an icebox whenever I have to write about actual real people in actual real places living out actual real events. I don't like it. It's not fun. I cannot go on. I guess it's the reality that throws me off and my own consequent inability to shape events to pattern a narrative. I'd rather lie than have to tell the whole truth. And since the truth is that many of the Nameless gatherings of the early sixties were awfully boring affairs and the fabulous Berkeley parties of later in the decade populated by sodden depressing drunks and a lot of the people involved in fandom everywhere were bad tempered and bad mannered and badly behaved just like real people everywhere. It was history, sure. But it wasn't legend. (And certainly not myth.) I guess I'd just rather go with the legend myself even if I have to make it up as I go along.

"Nor can I help but feel some degree of sympathy with this B.B. Frohvet correspondent of yours and his/her desire to operate behind an acknowledged pseudonym. It's not just a matter of wanting to call people names and them not knowing who you are. I can also see the real possibilities of freedom involved. Not just in terms of what other people think but in terms of what you yourself (the guy with the phony name) believe is real. I've played with the possibility from time to time of using a pseudonym in my work in order to help break free from a debilitating writer's block. A couple times I've started stories, put a pseudonym on the title page, finished the story, and then changed the name back to my own. I don't know if this has helped or not. But the stories have at least got written. I'm not sure how this ties with fandom either, especially with fanzine fandom, where "true" identity is often only a matter of how much each person chooses to reveal. It sometimes strikes me as odd that there aren't more fictitious fans than there are. It reminds me of something else I've never fully understood. As a writer, I get asked question and the one I hear the most after the one about ideas is: what name do you write under? My own of course, I reply. All that work and you think I'm going to let some unreal person swipe the credit? It puzzles me.

"I must admit to experiencing a swift solid shot of egoboo on finding myself the recipient of two full votes in your recent fan award results. How unexpected. (And tied with Buck Coulson — amongst others — too.)"

[VMG: I think you're right about fanhistory. We rarely write about the boring, the terrible or the traumatic things that happen to us in fandom; everything is encapsulated in a gel of wit and banter. When was the last time you read about someone crying from grief at a convention?]

[APH: Actually, we did stop at the house where Elvis was born in Tupelo, Mississippi; I paid a dollar to walk inside. I think the lawn must look better now than when Elvis was a boy. And I too thought your comments on fan history are well worth noting.

WAHF: Teddy Harvia.]

I don't know, these aliens look like they're from Dr. Who or something with a really low budget.

FANZINE COUNTDOWN, March 29th to April 10th

1.) Attitude #7, edited by Michael Abbott, John Dallman, and Pam Wells, 102 William Smith Close, Cambridge, CB1 3QF UK: What is a genzine? Well, Attitude is a prime example. The term genzine is typically used by fans to indicate any fanzine which publishes a variety of material "of general interest," a definition so imprecise that it could refer to almost anything. Mimosa, with its relentless presentation of fan history, is called a genzine, and so is Lan's Lantern, with its focus on written and media SP, and so is BLATN, which will talk about anything that Dan Steffan or Steve Stiles can draw a picture of. But how many of these fanzines really strive to present material of general interest? No one can fault editors for focusing their efforts on the things which move them most, but it should come as no surprise to them if the greater arc of fandom do not share their specific interests or obsessions. But Attitude appears to have established such a high standard of contribution, coupled with a truly wide variety of material, that they can honestly say that they publish a fanzine of interest to most people in fandom. One need only look at the 18-page letter column to see the large and faithful readership which they have developed. And the really remarkable thing about Attitude is that while they publish material from many strong fan-nish authors, one never has any doubt who is editing and publishing the fanzine. The personalities of Michael, John and Pam come trumpeting through, in the rotating solo lead editorials, their comments in the letter column, and in the group editorials which end each issue. #7 contains con reports, fanzine reviews, meditations on modern pagan traditions, some preliminary notes on a TAFF report by Pam, and Mary Gentle's rather twisty essay on why her work really is SP, thank-you-very-much. Plus, some cool non-fannish, non-stefnal stuff, like Alison Scott's account of her life-long quest for a bra that fits properly, paired with Sue Mason's account of her discovery of the delights of foundation garments, and a transcript of Michael Abbot's maternal grandfather's memories of his life, from the coal mines of Glamorgan to the trenches of France and back again, a unique, wonderful piece of writing. The issue is accented by excellent covers by Steffan and Gunn, and looks every bit as impressive as it is. An example we might all aspire toward.

2.) Thyme #108, edited by Alan Stewart, P.O. Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria, 3055 Australia: Hmmm . . . things are getting a little circular here. A number of irresponsible stories which first appeared in Apak are now being repeated as fact in this fine and essential Australian genzine. This can only degrade its standing as the fanzine of record in the antipodes, but I can certainly understand Alan's impulse: I mean, look at some of the things we've published in Apak . . . This does nothing to reduce the value of the rest of the news and information about Australian fandom offered within (another effort to re-write the Ditmar rules is underway, and the debate rages on whether or not the Australia in '99 bid actually has any Australians working on it), and the reviews, editorials, art and letters are fine as always.

3.) Muse 134, dated Winter, 1996, written and edited by Steve desJardins, 1711 Massachusetts Ave. NW # 134, Washington, DC 20036: This unassuming personal zine is starting to really grow on me. Steve is a fan with interests still firmly planted in stefnal concerns, but his stuff is never pedantic or tiresome. He includes an account of his trip to Lunacon, lists some of his Hugo choices, offers an appreciation of Captain Marvel (The "Shazzam" guy, the big red cheese, not the star spanning, alien-avenger Skrull-Kree wars Marvel comics version), and a comparison of the edited (as originally published) and restored versions of Stan-

ley Weinbaum's "The Black Flame." But what stays with me is his reaction to the terrible winter they had on the east coast: he is reminded of the worst storm ever in Washington DC. In 1922, which collapsed the roof of the Knickerbocker Theater, killing nearly a hundred people. In an odd piece of synchronicity with the coal-mining memoirs in Attitude, Steve recounts the story of a coal-miner named Morris, who recognized the sound of the roof giving way as being just like the noise a slate fall makes prior to crushing the miners below, and who actually managed to out-run the roof before it landed on him. Only in fanzines.

4.) Opuntia #28, edited by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2E7: Fine Terry Jeeves cover on this one. Dale takes my remarks about the internet as being like cheap, instant telegraphy and runs with them, wondering what fandom would have been like if zines had been sent by telegram. Ken Faig Jr. follows this with an investigation of the origins of fanzine in Amateur Journalism of the 19th century. Dale has a gift for printing fan history at just the length which I can assimilate without having my eyes glaze over; I wish more in the field would emulate him. But Dale: How about sending Victor a copy?

5.) Brum Group News #294, edited by Martin Tudor for the BSPG, c/o 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarke's Lane, Willenhall, WV13 1HX UK: All clubzine editors should take a look at this little gem: Martin uses all of his experience as an editor to cram in a boatload of useful information, and presents the Birmingham club's business with sufficient facility that I, an ocean away, found it all quite interesting. Some Bob Shaw memories, some book reviews (and how on earth can the co-editor of Critical Wave stand to read yet more book reviews for this zine as well?), calendar of events and a handy map of Birmingham's city centre to aid in finding the next general meeting. The BSPG should appreciate the fine effort which Martin undertakes on their behalf.

Also Received: Canadian Journal of Detournement #11, Dale Speirs; The Wollongong Pig-Breeder's Gazette #5, Perry Middlemiss; Situation Normal??, Vol. 7, #4, Aileen Forman for SNAPFU; Mobtus Strip, March, 1996, Alexandra Ceely for the EPSFFA.



APPARATCHIK is the Nico Jerkic of fandom, still struggling to throw off the effects of another Dubrovnik winter, when a load of US politicians tumble out of the sky next to his airport. Suicide involves less paperwork. It's still available for the usual, but note that trades must now be sent to both Andy and Victor (see the front colophon for our addresses), and/or you can get Apparatchik for \$3.00 for a three month supply, or a year's worth for \$12.00 or a life-time subscription for \$19.73, or in exchange for a solid week without a game called on account of snow. For readers in the United Kingdom, Martin Tudor will accept £10.00 for an annual subscription, £19.37 for a lifetime sub, from 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Off Clarke's Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX, UK. Australian Readers can subscribe through Irwin Hirsh, 26 Jessamine Ave. East Prahran, Victoria 3181 Australia, for \$4.00, \$16.00 and \$26.31 Australian. Lifetime subscribers: Tom Becker, Judy Bemis, Tracy Benton, Richard Brandt, Steve Brewster, Vince Clarke, Scott Custis, John Dallman, Bruce Durocher, Don Fitch, Jill Flores, Ken Forman, Margaret Organ Kean, Lucy Huntzinger, Nancy Lebovitz, Robert Lichtman, Michelle Lyons, Luke McGuff, Janice Murray, Tony Parker, Greg Pickersgill, Mark Plummer, Barnaby Rapoport, Alan Rosenthal, Anita Rowland, Karen Schaffer, Leslie Smith, Nevenah Smith, Dale Speirs, Geri Sullivan, Steve Swartz, Michael Waite, Tom Whitmore and Art Widner. Did anyone hear who won the Dick award?