

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
APPARATCHIK
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The forty-seventh issue of a bi-weekly fanzine, edited and published by Andy Hooper and Victor Gonzalez, members fwa, supporters afal, at The Starliter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. # 103, Seattle, WA 98103, also available at APHooper@aol.com. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 239. *Apparatchiki*: Steve Green, Carl Juarez, Lesley Reece, Martin Tudor & Pam Wells (British Address: 845 Alum Rock Rd. Ward End, Birmingham B8 2AG UK). It's in *Revelations*, people!

Issue # 47, November 23rd, 1995

APH here: THE RED DYNAMO HUMS ON: I don't know about you, but I love the way this issue looks. Special thanks and a new apartment (shared with only one other family) to the Commissar for typography, Carl Juarez. And while I'm at it, I'd like to thank the suffering, anonymous souls in the mailing-label gulag, who have uncomplainingly helped to prepare almost every mailing since I started publishing the thing. Let them be unknown no longer: Cindy Fry, Glenn Hackney, Jane Hawkins, Anita Rowland, Jon Singer and Darrel Stalder, thank you for hours of help. And congratulations to Glenn Hackney on being able to bowl with his right hand again; ascending averages can't be far behind.

PLUS, WELCOME two new members to the apparatchiki, Steve Green and Pam Wells, who have both become occasional columnists. I hope that our readers already have them, and the other apparatchiki on their mailing lists, but if you don't, remember: it's not a club, it's a gang.

ABOUT FOUR OR FIVE YEARS AGO, Steven Vincent Johnson, Madison, Wisconsin fan and artist, published a series of fanzines for the Turbo-Apa that described the then-recently publicized "Majestic Twelve" documents, which ostensibly described a secret committee created in the late 1940's to study, and then contain, the phenomenon of Unidentified Flying Objects, and any artifacts or occupants associated with their presence in the United States. At the time, I thought that my days of interest in UFOs had peaked and fallen away after Erich Von Däniken was jailed for tax evasion, but I see now that despite my gentle dismissal of Steve's stuff, a tiny particle of curiosity began to grow at the back of my mind.

Jump forward to this year, about six weeks ago. Victor and I were in the second day of our trip to Silvercon Five in Las Vegas. The first night we stayed over in beautiful Weed, California, and spent much of the next morning crossing south of Mount Shasta, in the passes between the southern edge of the Cascade ranges and the northern edge of the Sierra Nevada. Right around noon, we passed through Susanville, California, and from there descended into the rain shadow of the mountains and the Nevada desert.

I thought I knew generally what to expect from this experience. But the eastern slopes of the Sierras are very steep, and the landscape goes from pine forest and open grassland to empty, blinding desert in about five miles. One minute we were in the trees, and the next we were rapidly approaching a dry lake bed, with endless ranks of black, saw-toothed mountains and empty, glittering desert beyond it.

Victor remained largely impassive in the face of this landscape; he was familiar with desert in general, having lived somewhere in the Mojave at an unspecified point in his youth. But I was less comfortable with our surroundings. When you see movies about the pioneers dying of thirst in the desert, going sun-mad, drinking from alkali-poisoned puddles, and having their eyes pecked out by buzzards, the Nevada desert is the landscape where all that really happened. The highway is raised about three feet above the desert floor (because when it does rain, the entire state turns into one massive spillway), and one gets the impression that falling asleep

and driving off into the desert would be a serious mistake; either the car would bog in the sand, or you'd hit one of the sections of bare, broken rock and bust your suspension into a thousand pieces. If you're familiar with the Mojave desert of California and Arizona, this is actually quite similar, except for the fact that there are no Joshua trees, and few of the interesting and exotic cacti and succulents found there (which is understandable, since the Nevada desert gets -- I believe -- only about half the amount of rainfall the Mojave does). There's just acres and acres of broken rock, dirty sand and sagebrush.

Every now and then you pass a wreck of some kind, an old car, an abandoned appliance, a heap of sun-bleached trash. Whatever gets dropped alongside Nevada highway 95 seems to just sit there, until the wind, sun and sand can reduce it into a pile of rubble a slightly-different shade of dun or beige than the rest of the desert.

And, there's damn near no one there. I pass by more people on a bus ride from my apartment to Pioneer Square in downtown Seattle than we did during the entire trip from Reno to Las Vegas. At night, the lights of even a small town can be seen from forty miles away. When you do pass a desolate cluster of trailers and shacks in the middle of the desert, it engenders more fear than comfort; who the hell is living out here, and who would blame them if they had taken to eating human flesh?

So, the Nevada desert alone is enough to inspire a kind of paranoid loathing in a person who has become accustomed to an occluded horizon of trees and hills and volcanoes. If I lived out in a landscape like that, I'd be tempted to claim I had seen strange lights in the sky, just so someone might be willing to talk to me. But this still isn't a complete picture of the scene.

The U.S. government, in its nearly-limitless hunger for cheap land in which to do unspeakable things, has a major interest in Nevada. There's a massive chunk of the state which is an officially-designated nuclear weapons-testing range, which is actually a little close to Las Vegas for my personal taste. There are numerous gunnery ranges and testing areas for other weapons-systems too, and many mysterious beige boxes on the map which simply read "Danger Area." Just north of Hawthorne, NV (Hawthorne is one of those generic town names that seem to appear in every state of the Union, like "Decatur", and "Springfield") is a massive U.S. Army ordinance dump. I'd say the whole thing covers something like 35 square miles, composed of concrete and soil bunkers for the storage of artillery shells, bombs, rockets, fuel-air explosives...you name it, if we've dropped it on brown people somewhere in the world over the past fifty years, the odds are good it was stored at Hawthorne for at least some period of time.

Anyway, driving past this facility, it crossed my mind that you could hide just about anything out there, from the Ark of the Covenant to a Vagon Constructor fleet. Not only is it desolate and largely unpopulated, but there is a kind of a psychological impression of things hidden -- a sense that anything, no matter how large or monstrous, shrinks and is swallowed up by the even larger and more monstrous landscape. And after a little while, a weird kind of

I think when John Updike was on *Chico and the Man* years ago . . .

Although most of the debris was silvery, it did not reflect the light.

euphoria came over me, the kind of giddy terror that once accompanied the act of whistling past a graveyard, or thinking too intently about H.P. Lovecraft's stories. In a way, it felt like the return of the sense of wonder, after far too long an absence from my brain.

One edge of the big beige blotch that is the Nuclear testing range is supposed to be an Air Force facility known as Area 51, or "Dreamland." According to sources like physicist Bob Lazar, a whole galaxy of weird technology and black operations gear has been tested at Area 51, including a wide variety of alien spacecraft, supposedly on loan from -- well, spacemen, of the small gray variety. According to Lazar, and a few others, there's a whole section of a mountain that's been hollowed out, and filled with testing facilities protected from prying eyes.

Driving through the Nevada desert, all of this began to seem utterly and completely plausible. And in a sudden flash, I felt very sorry for having dismissed Steve Johnson and his beliefs in such a patronizing and off-hand manner. Even if all we wanted to examine was Steve's belief, that in itself is a complicated enough phenomenon to keep us going for several years. And, fuck, having seen those tiny baked trailers stuck out in the middle of all the Nevada nothing, who is to say that visitors from another planet traveling hundreds or thousands of light-years across the galaxy, only to pancake their asses all over some stinking desert is that ridiculous a scenario? Who are we, as members of a culture that has venerated George Bush and acquitted O.J. Simpson, to say that anything is absurd or impossible?

So, after about twenty years of reasonably committed skepticism, I've embarked on a major survey of contemporary ufology texts. In general, I've tried to stay away from the abduction stories, for a number of reasons. First of all, most of these stories emerge under hypnosis, or in other altered states of consciousness which can be too easily skewed by the investigator to be taken at face value. I have some respect for the work of Budd Hopkins, who has been studying the phenomenon of "missing time," and is open to other explanations besides out-and-out abduction; but most of the people working on direct contact scenarios, like Whitley Streiber, tend to claim abduction themselves, and are making a healthy profit from the so-called ordeal.

Aside from Hopkins and Streiber and good old John Keel, the brightest new stars on the ufology horizon are Kevin Randle and Donald Schmitt, who are the co-authors of a landmark 1991 study of the Roswell, New Mexico crash, titled *UFO Crash at Roswell*. Unfortunately, Mr. Schmitt's research methods and credentials have been called into considerable question recently, and Randle has ceased to communicate with him. Fortunately, he kept a tight rein on the information gathered for the book, and did almost all the writing himself, and should be able to survive this. It's interesting to me that this is the second writing partner that Randle has been forced to jettison since I've been following his career; his former partner in a series of military adventure and space opera novels eventually admitted to have misrepresented his military background, which, along with increasingly erratic work habits, led to the termination of their partnership.

Randle is pretty big stuff now -- one could surmise this by the amount of vitriol and defamation being directed him by other ufologists. He was on the live broadcast that Larry King conducted from the desert last year, which admit I didn't watch; but even so, I have the impression that Randle brings a healthy dose of skepticism to everything he does. The methods which he and Schmitt employed in gathering evidence about Roswell seem to have been eminently sensible and restrained; but even they employed hypnosis in extracting statements from people who had been young children at the time of the crash, which calls some of their conclusions into question, and gives me the same negative vibrations that cases of recalled Satanic abuse do.

This brings up one of the more disturbing phenomena associated with research into UFOs, which is the tendency of researchers to discount any evidence which they have not collected themselves or which do not support the theories they have hitched their (economic) star to. Anonymous testimony from sources who allegedly fear reprisal for their admissions seem to be perfectly acceptable to Randle in the pursuit of the "truth" about Roswell (but, to his credit, only if other independent testimony can corroborate them), but they are deeply suspect when they are accumulated by other researchers. UFO researchers tend to be a paranoid lot from the beginning, but they have a special terror of other researchers whom they suspect of being disinformationists in the employ of parties unknown. This, coupled with the desire to be the first to publish a given piece of evidence, tends to retard the open sharing of information that is supposed to be one of the primary tenets of scientific investigation.

All of these concerns aside, Randle and Schmitt's work is a shining beacon of restraint in a field where leaps of faith are the norm. Their work on Roswell is well-supported, and their conclusions seem inescapable, based on the evidence they present: Something mysterious did crash in an empty field outside Corona, New Mexico, on or around the 4th of July, 1947. Its remains were found by a local ranch hand, who eventually brought it to the attention of local authorities, who in turn informed nearby Air Corps personnel. Local Air Corps officers, despite being associated with one of the most security-conscious units in the American military (the 509th Bomb group, the world's only atomic bomber squadron at the time), issued information regarding the crash to local media, apparently unaware of the perception of UFOs as a security issue in higher command echelons. These press releases were rescinded, and actually seized by security personnel, when representatives of the intelligence services arrived to take charge of the situation.

Because of this release of information, it was deemed necessary to provide an alternative explanation for the debris which was recovered from the crash site. Possibly inspired by the recovery of a Rawin radar target balloon by a farmer in Circleville, Ohio the week before, the Air Corps presented the wreckage of a similar balloon and claimed that the highly-experienced personnel of the 509th had mis-identified this as the remains of a UFO. Despite the world-wide attention focused at the event, intelligence officers were successful in convincing all eye witnesses that they had to reverse their testimony in the interest of national security. As a result the incident was largely forgotten for more than 30 years. (Although, it was sufficiently ingrained in the communal memory of the UFO culture that I heard of it somehow as a teenager, and was able to ask J. Allen Hynek himself, *eminence grise* of the field, about the possibility that it was a true story after a lecture he gave in Madison in 1976. He told me that he was pretty sure it had been a hoax.)

The story would have most likely never surfaced again if not for Jesse Marcel. Marcel was a major in the air corps at the time of the crash, and as senior Army intelligence officer on the Roswell base, was detailed to inspect and recover the mysterious wreckage. He kept silent about the true nature of the event for more than 30 years, until he saw a story in a supermarket tabloid newspaper which recounted the crash and recovery in surprisingly accurate detail. From this, Marcel deduced that there were already leaks in the system, and felt comfortable telling what he had seen and done.

In the world of the UFO enthusiast, Marcel's accounts remain suspect, but not for their innately fantastic nature. Many believers assume that Marcel was reactivated by the powers which had sworn him to secrecy in 1947, and instructed him to release the version of events which he reported, presumably to prevent the discovery of even more devastating information. For a lot of people, the presence of alien visitors to earth is actually a secondary interest when compared to their collaboration with, manipulation by or of, and

Spider woman in the front seat screaming "Go, go, go!"

concealment by the U.S. government. These people are naturally drawn to the more problematic aspects of the Roswell story, those which revolve around the alleged recovery of the bodies of the pilots or passengers of the crashed vehicle.

A much smaller selection of witnesses refer to these events. One of them is a former mortician who claims to have been contacted in regard to the preservation of damaged or partially decomposed corpses at the same time as the recovery operation. And a number of other witnesses (including a former Brigadier General) claim to have seen the recovered bodies in storage at Wright-Patterson Air Force base in Dayton, Ohio. You probably have heard of the alleged recovery of a film that purports to show events during the autopsy of one or more of the alien cadavers, which has almost universally been condemned as a hoax by UFO researchers. This is, essentially, an artifact of the good work which Randle and Schmitt and some others have done in pursuit of the mystery; without their efforts, its unlikely anyone would have been willing to create such an elaborate hoax. And it reveals how these things are often self-sustaining; the pursuit of the motivations and methods of the film-makers becomes interesting in its own right, and will likely hold our attentions for some time.

Part of the attraction which Roswell holds for the UFO researcher is that it dates from the first great "flap" or wave of UFO sightings which occurred all over the country and much of the world through the spring and summer of 1947. When these sightings were made, there was not yet anything like the UFO culture which exists today. Of course, it still isn't outside the realm of possibility that people instinctively collaborated in the creation of a communal perception of the phenomenon; the country, just coming out of the difficult years of World War II, only to be plunged into the Cold War, had an undeniable need for whimsy and wonder, and the wave of flying saucers addressed this admirably well.

It is interesting to note that at least three other locations in the U.S. reported UFO crashes the same day the Roswell story broke, July 7th, 1947, in Oelwein, Iowa, Bozeman, Montana, and Shreveport Louisiana. The Iowa and Louisiana events have been confirmed as hoaxes, but the Bozeman sighting, allegedly made by a photo service pilot, and reversed by both he and his supervisor about 36 hours later, remains somewhat tantalizing.

Also, the behavior of the craft sighted in 1947 seems much more plausible than that exhibited by UFOs seen in subsequent years. The seemingly universal ability of UFOs to shut down electrical systems and perform other amazing feats, like zipping out of sight in an instant, or sucking people out of their deck chairs with bright blue beams of light, were not generally reported in 1947. UFOs often moved at remarkable speeds, but they didn't do things which were generally regarded as physically impossible, just beyond the state of the art in aeronautics at the time.

In fact, this is in keeping with a remarkable tendency which UFOs have shown for the past 100 years or so. Strange objects have been observed in the sky for centuries, but since the industrial expansion of the 19th century, they tend to appear as if they employ technology just one step ahead of that commonly employed on earth. Around the turn of the century, mysterious airships and cigar-shaped craft were commonly reported, and many of these seemed to have some form of steam-powered locomotion. After the first world war, these disappeared almost entirely, to be replaced by mysterious fixed-wing aircraft, which often appeared in storm conditions, when contemporary aircraft would have been grounded. In the 1930's, these sightings continued, but were joined by mysterious "rockets," which streaked through the skies over northern Europe, especially Scandinavia. Rocket science, than in its infancy, was unable to create such robust and far-reaching devices.

So, after the war, UFO's began to appear as sleek metallic disks, and flying in formations much as contemporary aircraft did, albeit

much faster, and without any of the control surfaces which contemporary aircraft required. And after helicopters were introduced, the hovering behavior of UFOs, so common today, became much more frequently reported.

These changes in the observations associated with UFOs have had the effect of feeding the paranoia of researchers (who are generally unwilling to conclude that the tendency of UFOs to mimic the behavior of contemporary aircraft points to their actually being contemporary aircraft). It's easy to believe that someone is playing with us, trying to see what our response to these innovations will be. Other writers, convinced that the variation in craft and their behavior preclude a technological explanation, have retreated into claims of Satanic or supernatural motivation to the phenomenon.

For my part, I still find that initial wave of saucers, appearing in formation, buzzing around like a mysterious squadron of unknown origin, terribly compelling. They were observed by so many people; airline pilots and military men had no self-consciousness about their reports then, and even the Washington Post reported that mysterious lighted objects had been seen zipping around right over the Capitol. UFOs have been tracked on radar hundreds of time since then, but radar operators were not inhibited by secrecy in 1947, and their reports often give superb corroboration to events observed by pilots chasing UFOs.

Just the other night, TNT aired a 1956 movie called "UFO (Unidentified Flying Objects)" which followed a fictional protagonist on his odyssey from skeptic to tentative believer. The interesting thing about this movie was that it featured a number of the actual Air Force officers who issued statements in regard to the phenomenon in the late forties-early fifties, and some of the first witnesses to shoot motion pictures of UFOs in flight. Two short color films, shot over Montana and Utah, were shown as part of the movie, even though the rest of the picture was in black and white.

The little clips blew me away. Faked pictures and films often have a pronounced lack of perspective to them; individual objects fill from ten to twenty percent of the frame, yet appear badly blurred to conceal their prosaic nature. The objects in these films, one shot by a trained Navy photographer, the other by the manager of a Brooklyn Dodgers farm team in Great Falls, Montana, appear to be distant aircraft in a clear sky, with proportions and backgrounds that look quite real. The objects move, quickly, but not impossibly so, and while the cameras did jiggle a bit in the hands of the operators, no retouching is necessary to perceive the vehicles in flight. The operators were not transfixed with the wonder of their discovery; they were entertained and glad to have gotten the footage, but there was no sense of this being a life-changing experience for them, no illness or bad dreams or abduction paranoia. I was quite convinced they had seen and filmed something real, that did not jibe with any of the explanations offered. I wonder how well these films are regarded by contemporary ufologists, and indeed, if they are remembered at all.

And perhaps most tellingly, there was really no established way that a person could make money by reporting a UFO in 1947. The only possible motive for creating a hoax in those first months was simply to draw attention to oneself; later, various parties offered a reward for confirmation of the reality of UFOs, and this produced the expected wave of hoaxes, but the people who reported the first events had nothing to gain from their reports except a certain measure of ridicule by skeptics and wags. The number of people making such sightings was enough to alarm a number of government agencies, who perceived the phenomenon could conceivably be a threat to national security, or at least aerial navigation. They moved to suppress the phenomenon long before they had any real idea of what it was.

Which brings us back around to the idea of the Majestic-12. According to the documents unearthed in 1989, and maddeningly

Once inside there is sex, violence, suspense and an increasing tension as they face the unknown.

inconclusive testimony from frustratingly anonymous sources, a committee of cabinet-level advisors and highly-placed intelligence officers was assembled to study and contain the UFO phenomenon, as a direct consequence of what the government had recovered in New Mexico. As far as can be determined, the Majestic-12 documents represent a very informed guess at the actual composition and practices of this body, and a desperate effort to create some kind of paper trail that would direct attention at the government's ongoing policy in regard to aerial phenomena.

Independent sources do confirm that the government formed a committee to study and contain UFO information at some point during the early fifties, possibly even the late forties, and that they possessed an untouchable level of clearance. The General I mentioned earlier, Brigadier Arthur Exon, referred to them as "The Unholy Thirteen," and reported that while he was in command at Wright field, he was under strict orders to supply them with whatever access or resources they should require. Exon believed that they had been assembled directly in response to the government's experience with the Roswell crash, and constituted the government's real response to the UFO problem well into the 1960s, when Project Blue Book was ostensibly the official inquiry into the subject. According to Exon, who shows a remarkable degree of knowledge about something that was supposed to be so excruciatingly classified, no elected official other than the president was ever involved in or informed of the findings made by the Unholy Thirteen, and that virtually nothing in regard to them was ever put into writing, a convenient observation.

Aside from the government secrecy which accompanied it (and which has clearly failed to conceal these events from the world at large), there are still a few other points which trouble me in regard to Roswell. The most puzzling is the nature of the debris itself. Marcel reported that the material he recovered consisted largely of four main components: long, slightly curved shafts of something that looked like metal and felt like plastic, shaped like an I-beam, which resisted all efforts to dent or damage it, even using a nine-pound sledgehammer. It would not burn, or even blacken, when exposed to flame. Some of these had strange writing or symbols in purple alongside one edge. The second major component was a metallic foil, about the thickness of lead foil, which could be wadded into a ball, and then would return to its original shape without creases or wrinkles. The third component was a light, wood-like substance, which felt like a cross between plastic and balsa, and which also resisted cutting or burning. The fourth component was a clear plastic filament, which was characterized as being like monofilament fishing line, and later, like optical fibers.

All of these remarkable materials were recovered in small pieces, over a field 300 yards wide and just a half mile long. The ground showed the evidence of an impact of some sort, but nothing especially large, or blackened by fire; it's most likely that the scar was caused by the impact of a large chunk of the object, not the object as a whole. There was no evidence on the ground of the kind of traumatic force that would be required to shatter these materials and spread them over such a wide area. My question about this is: If the foil and I-beams were so incredibly strong, what kind of force must it have taken to shatter them into so many tiny pieces? If the vehicle had been shattered by impact with the ground, there should have been more scarring, a crater, charred vegetation. If it had been destroyed by an explosion near the ground, there still should have been more evidence of the force of the blast. And if it had exploded at high enough altitude to not affect the ground, such light material should have been dispersed over dozens of square miles, not in a neat little field.

One possible explanation is the craft was under high internal pressure, was holed, and blew itself apart as the pressure escaped. This is an interesting idea, but it's unlikely that the entire ship would

have been so thoroughly shattered as a result.

I have a lot of other problems with the picture Randle and Schmitt paint of the events in question, and some of their conclusions -- such as the assumption that Roswell's base commander must have actually been touring the site when he was said to be on vacation -- cannot be adequately confirmed or denied.

But the ultimate evidence on their behalf comes from the government's behavior in regard to the event. When Project Blue Book's files were declassified, the Roswell incident was not among them. Investigators using the Freedom of Information Act have only been able to uncover a single file in regard to the event, and all that contains is a single newspaper clipping. Contrast this with the much more prosaic Circleville event of the previous week, which has a file an inch thick attached to it. Numerous civilian and military witnesses confirm the frenzy of activity in and around Roswell, and at 8th Air Force Headquarters in Fort Worth the week of the event; the seizure of the press releases and reporter's notes on the subject; the departure of a number of unscheduled flights from Roswell to Fort Worth and then to Wright-Patterson, carrying the debris which was recovered, and possibly the bodies of the passengers/pilots. None of this is plausible if the object recovered was merely a balloon, no matter how sensitive a payload it may have carried.

The possibility exists that given the desire of the "Unholy Thirteen" to protect themselves from detection through a document trail, the files in question have either been destroyed or simply never existed. The MJ-12 documents, whether they are "right" or not, contain so many deviations from accepted government document conventions that they are almost certainly forgeries. More likely, the group that the MJ-12 documents are groping toward represented a short-lived, ad-hoc effort to assemble a policy toward the phenomenon. Projects SIGN, GRUDGE and BLUE BOOK represented more or less honest efforts to gather information from more or less unreliable sources and to offer an interface for those members of the public concerned with UFOs, but they did not constitute the real policy toward any materials recovered from space. The real intelligence effort directed at UFOs has been based, since at least January 3rd, 1953, at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. This was the home of the 4602nd Air Intelligence Service Squadron, from 1953, the principal investigating body attached to an effort known as "Project Moon Dust," which was tasked with the recovery and investigation of anything technological which fell to earth from an unknown source. This included satellites of terrestrial origin, and it seems that the project recovered at least three such payloads, one from Nepal, one in Sudan, and one in Kecksburg, Pennsylvania. The objects recovered from Pennsylvania and the Sudan are widely assumed to have been soviet-made satellites.

The recoveries from foreign countries are critical to our understanding of the project, because while much of the files directly attached to Moon Dust and its successor projects are still classified, various diplomatic communications from the consulate in these countries are apparently not. They tend confirm the methods and personnel described as being used in Moon Dust operations by people who claim internal knowledge of those efforts. Without this, the existence of the project would probably still be unknown.

As if trying to throw off pursuit, the Air Force has redesignated the 4602nd several times. In 1957, it was renamed the 1006th AISS. In April, 1960, it became the 1127th Field Activities Group. It may have changed two or three more times, and is now known as Detachment 4, 696th Air Intelligence Group. It has always remained based at Ft. Belvoir, and seems to have pursued the same duties.

But in 1960, they seem to have become the center of a larger network gathering information on the phenomenon, based on memos sent out to Air Force Intelligence bodies, regarding the formation of "AFCIN Intelligence Team Personnel." This directed all Air Force intelligence stations to designate specific personnel who

I popped open a Bud and sipped it while contemplating suicide.

would be tasked with investigating any unexplained crash or object recovery, and instructed them in co-ordination with Projects Moon Dust, Blue Fly, and UFO, which then seemed to have been directed, respectively, at American, Soviet and alien object crashes.

None of these efforts had anything to do with Project Blue Book. The Air Force seems to have concluded, and who can blame them, that the signal-to-noise ratio in dealing with members of the public was so high that it was impossible to gather and meaningful intelligence by talking to them. In order to find out what was really happening, they had to send their own, highly-trained personnel to investigate events which left objective, physical evidence. Far from being the act of a paranoid, secrecy-obsessed government, this seems like the only logical course open to a body being periodically swamped with both offers of, and requests for, information, usually from some pretty suspect sources.

So, by 1960, the Air Force pretty well had its act together, and as far as can be determined, continues to operate in much the same fashion today. But in 1947, they had none of those resources or policies in place, and in the general climate of paranoia that characterized the opening stanzas of the cold war, an effort to completely stonewall any remarkable, extra-terrestrial events was probably inevitable. Investigation was probably pursued on an ad-hoc basis, with the smallest number of participants possible. It's quite plausible that the direct knowledge of the events at Roswell, and their investigation at Wright-Patterson, was restricted to 13 people or so -- and telling everyone else that they hadn't seen anything, if they knew what was good for them, was a policy that had worked surprisingly well through four years of total war. The sequence of events and official actions described by Randle and Schmitt are actually the most likely and simplest responses the government could have made, if one accepts the crash as a real event. If one does accept the reality of the crash, subsequent events provide one of the few times that the skeptics' advocacy of Occam's razor works in favor of the UFO hypothesis.

What is much less likely, however, is that the debris itself and/or any bodies recovered from the crash would have been discarded. One doesn't throw away such utterly unique artifacts. If they ever existed at all, they are probably still in the hands of the Air Materials Command, or its successor agencies. It is difficult to reconcile this possibility with the ongoing wall of total denial if we regard the government in an entirely benign light; perhaps the truth is that no government official, elected or otherwise, has felt comfortable formulating an official press release or policy detailing knowledge of actual extraterrestrial presence on Earth. My growing feeling in regard to UFOs is that the original wave of sightings was demonstrably "real," but that that doesn't necessarily mean that ANY of the sightings made in subsequent decades, including the latter-day abduction phenomena, has to have been real as well. It may be that whatever was happening in 1947 stopped after a year or two at the most, and that all the research, all the sightings of Venus and the Japanese squid fishing fleet that have followed, at least in this country, are psychological echoes of the truth of that event. It may be a dead issue, and one which now holds only the potential of embarrassment for the officials who kept it secret fifty years ago.

On the other hand, even if the flap of 1947 - 48 was a discrete event, not repeated except in hysterical "phantom pains" since then, the government still had a responsibility to prepare for its eventual repetition or return. The projects located at Fort Belvoir may have represented an effort to do so. Or, the government may have chosen to simply ignore the whole thing and simply hope for the best. In which case they are quite right to conceal their policies, and would have a lot to lose if the truth really is out there.



ONE OF THE MORE intriguing differences between British and American fans currently is their respective attitudes towards the Glasgow Worldcon. Whilst the majority of those Stateside seem to view the event as largely successful (typified by a recent postcard from Frank Lunney which dubbed it "one of the best"), many Brits - and not just the ever-cynical fanzine pundits who viewed Intersection with suspicion from the start, but those also who worked behind the scenes - are trying to wipe the weekend from their memories with such determination that, years from now, they may be mis-diagnosed as victims of alien abduction.

Here's Mike Scott, in *ZORN* #1, fresh from working on the Worldcon newsletter: "I am not the only conrunner who was seen in dark corners at Intersection muttering about doing a fanzine next." And dealers' room staffer Mark Plummer, in *BANANA SKINS* #1: "The evenings in the Central Hotel were good, but did rather smack of spending several years and god knows how many hundreds of thousands of pounds creating an atmosphere that Novacon manages to come up with every year anyway." And promotions staffer Claire Brialey, in *WAXEN WINGS* #1: "Intersection made me realize several important things. The main one is that I don't want to run something like that again." And Martin Tudor, in *EMPTIES* #16: "a mitigated disaster". And Pam Wells, in *ATTITUDE* #6: "I still believe that it was irresponsible to mount the bid with these facilities; the best that could possibly be hoped for was that people would make the best of a bad job with them." And Tony Berry, in *EYEBALLS IN THE SKY* #10: "the main hall.. was a fucking aircraft hangar." And finally, Simon Ounsley, in *PLATYPUS* #5: "Intersection was a worldcon and well, let's face it, worldcons are basically crap."

To be fair, there have been contrary views voiced - Ian Sorensen actually went so far as to call the event "a great success" in *BOB* #9, albeit noting the "horribleness" of the main venue - but Rhodri James' praise in *THE INTERESTING TIMES* #1 for the cavernous Hall Four indicates he's either got his bearings confused or should cut down on heavy medication.

What's arguably more interesting about the above straw poll is that the first three opinions are expressed by conrunners whose experiences at Glasgow have prompted them to more actively explore their fan writing facets and launch wide-circulation fanzines; if Intersection has the backhanded success of injecting a little fresh blood into fanzine fandom's veins, maybe it wasn't such a complete own-goal after all.

Not that even a disaster on the scale of Bhopal and Chernobyl conjoined would deter those already planning Britain's next bid for sf's touring three-ring circus. Rumors presently center upon Cardiff, with "in 2003" presumably appended to maintain the recent eight-year schedule.

Quite why the Welsh capital has been chosen eludes me, unless it's simply to balance the English and Scots entries, since, of the four nations which comprise the UK, Wales has the least tradition for either running conventions or organizing fan groups. As if to underline the improbability of Cardiff proving a viable site, spoof posters promoting a Welsh Worldcon were plastered around the SECC concourse twenty-four hours before the official bidders arrived, discovered the bizarre coincidence and were forced to run damage limitation to assure everyone they were in fact serious.

Course, if there really was a consensus of opinion behind a British bid, but one which aimed to honor a country with a proven fannish record previously passed over by Worldcons, there's an obvious alternative: Northern Ireland.

Now that would be a true leap of faith...

FANNISH MEMORY SYNDROME

by Steve Green

Of Hogs, Whores and Cops

By Victor M. Gonzalez
Staff Writer

(The following is one day on my job, with some addendums and notes about the business. I may do it again.)

The News Tribune, 2 p.m. Nov. 20, 1995.

I arrived at the paper after driving from my apartment in Parkland. I wasn't in a very good mood, because several chunks of rock tossed from a double-long truck on Washington 512 managed to crack my windshield.

The day's paper had a number of my stories in it, including a very strange one about a sheriff's deputy involved in a pet pig-killing, so I expected a little flack from the public, if not a foolish lawsuit threat.

The first thing I did is grab a paper and read all the lovely bylines: two on A1, one on B1, one on B2. Pretty good showing. Then I got on the horn and complain to the truck company, telling the dispatch supervisor what happened and the truck number and its license plate number.

Then I get to work on cop calls. I call about 15 local and regional police and fire departments, asking, "Anything major today?" With the medical examiner I sometimes get a little creative: "Any new tenants?" The ME actually provides more timely information than the other departments, probably because there's nothing very vague about dead bodies.

In fact, if I suspect someone has been killed, the ME is often my first call to confirm it.

Hits are seldom during copcalls, but I don't want to miss anything. A portable scanner is always sitting on my desk, buzzing with static in between silken-toned calls of the mostly female dispatchers and the usually authoritative, mostly male voices of the police officers.

Listening to the cops talk to each other while chasing a suspect down on foot - huff, huff - provides entertainment sometimes. Besides doing all the late-breaking crime and car accident stuff, I also tend to do last minute checks for reporters who've left holes in their stories.

At some point an editor mentioned that the Sheriff's spokesman told her that the deputy involved in the pig killing had said something about suing the paper, and added that the spokesman said he had recommended against it. I laughed it off, because I knew the story was airtight - partly because it came from a court record, making it legally bulletproof.

The pet potbellied pig, named Diamond, was owned by a woman married to a sheriff's deputy. They were getting divorced, and she was in alcohol treatment when he decided to get rid of the pig.

Here the versions diverge. But, neighbors say that they heard a gunshot (within the city limits), and then the squealing of a hurt pig.

When they came to look, they discovered the pig was flopping around, being chased by two men whacking it with a hammer.

By the time police arrived, the two men had driven off with the pig in the back of the pickup truck. The entire incident took about 30 minutes, and the strangest thing was: neither the deputy, nor the man who came to pick up the pig, knew the name of the third man, who they claim shot the pig with ineffectual results. Thus, the investigation was closed.

In the police report, the man who came to get the pig said he met the third guy in a bar. This guy said he was a licensed slaughterer and would shoot the pig for \$10.

But nobody ever asked to see his license.

And that's the short, short version.

The biggest item by late afternoon Monday was a school bus that hit something, not injuring the five passengers. I had a cigarette, planning to go back to my desk and start hunting down the district spokesperson when my editor gave me an assignment with "A1 potential."

Two notes about the business here:

First, all stories are not created equal. Editors and people over them make instant decisions regarding the relative newsworthiness of any particular story, and you can be sure that A1 stories get more attention than others, because they are among the best read by the public. So, an A1 story not only implies that you'll get good play as a reporter, it also means that you have to work harder.

Second, in the best of all possible worlds, reporters familiar with certain topics would cover those topics. While this is frequently true (and definitely improves the quality of the writing) it's also frequently not true. As the paper's "night guy," I often get thrown at stories I've had only passing knowledge of before.

This is called "parachuting in," because you have to get a read of the territory very quickly.

In this case, I wrote a story about a state trooper who in 1994 pulled a couple over for speeding. Told by the couple that they were late for an appointment at an abortion clinic, the trooper advised them to seek counsel at a Christian center. They did that, but accounts vary as to why. The couple said they were coerced, and that the trooper said he'd forget about the speeding ticket if they did what he said.

The trooper said they did it voluntarily.

The story had been dragging on through the last year, as the trooper was put on trial, which ended in a hung jury. But what I was working on was an internal decision by the Washington State Patrol to fire the trooper after conducting its own investigation.

So, I called the trooper's lawyer, the couple's lawyer and the State Patrol spokesman, got all the sides, and then searched the electronic library to get some background.

I might point out here that this is not normally the way I'd like to do it. The success of any particular interview tends to be defined by what the reporter knows going in. The quality of a question is always based on knowledge.

But people have this insane tendency to go home after work, and if you don't have their home phone numbers and you have to talk to them, you're fucked. So the first priority was to do the interviews. Then do the background, so that the details are right. Then write the story.

In this case I was assigned the story at 4:15 p.m., and filed 18 inches at around 8 p.m., which is actually luxurious.

After that the night evened out. I did a long brief on a man sentenced to six years for running a prostitution ring with 250 employees and 8,000 customers. I fielded a couple of complimentary calls on my stories in the day's paper.

My last task was to be to type while a reporter in the field fed me her story, but my editor (who types faster than me, and would have had to look at the final product anyway) did it for me, allowing me to write the first half of this essay.

Later, my editor and I met up with a copyeditor at a north Tacoma bar and had a few while we discussed various things. I made my editor pay for the drinks because he had forced me into the pig story. In reality, I was happy it made print.

A television station had wanted to do the pig story as well, but gave up when they discovered how complicated it was. Thirty inches for a dead pig. Christ. And not one of which could be cut. After four days of work, the thing was a house of cards: remove one, and . . .



AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH: Not quite so much mail this time, owing in part to a minor delay in sending originals over to the U.K. No matter: let's lead-off with a riposte or two from GREG BENFORD (e-mail at molsen@uci.edu) :]

"George Flynn is right. After writing that note about *The High Crusade* I heard from Poul Anderson that indeed a German version was made, and it was 'quite awful'. Too bad, but of course that doesn't prevent Hollywood.

"A shock, the death of Kingsley Amis. He was the most brilliant mainstream figure to visibly align himself with sf in the mid-1950s, when it was compared to jazz as an underground pleasure with the future in its bones. I found him to be a fabulous talker, with insights into the genre unlike any other's, and the greatest drinker I had ever met, surpassing even Brian Aldiss. We need allies of his depth and range, a figure unequalled in British letters of his time.

"You may think I'm guilty of "outright misrepresentation" of Joseph Nicholas's views, but I'm not trying to parrot the super-structure of argument, rather describing the emotional slant. It's idiosyncratic to the Euro left, growing, and weirdly reactionary.

"I'm quite sure he's a virtuous man, and certainly pleasant company, but read your own description: 'willing to pedal the bike to run the generator to run the 40-Watt bulbs and the tiny crystal set that would bring in the BBC Home Service, quite late into the night.' Sounds like satire, or did you intend the reference to Soylent Green's opening scene, with Edward G. Robinson at the bike?

"For many, we seem to have made only technological progress; so says Bob Lichtman. I doubt any social historians hold such views. Read Barbara Tuchman's rendition of just one century, 600 years back.

"Sure, big problems loom now. But the root causes--population rise, particularly--are not the fault of a technological worldview, but of deeper, older forces. And they won't be solved by piety, even on a bicycle."

[APH: These are good points, Greg, but I think it's appropriate that you admit to addressing the tone of Joseph's argument, rather than its substance. His original point, that technology has failed to deliver solutions to these problems, has gone unanswered. And here to offer another stab at it is JACK HENEGHAN (4190 Hay Creek Rd., Colorado Springs, CO 80921, e-mail at jack@stardel.com or jheneghan@mcimail.com) :]

"Thank you for the recent copies of *Apparatchik*. I thought Dan did a good job catching the spirit of our little cultural sports exchange (although Martin never did arrange that cricket match). I suppose the Brits now understand why we pay our best nominally professional ballplayers (who couldn't pitch their way out of a wet paper bag) millions of dollars to have the same fun we did. I shall

strive to remember to bring a couple of left-handed gloves to the next Corflu.

"I don't think I caught the beginning of the technology discussion with Joseph Nicholas but I will comment anyway. Technological advancement is not 'progress', it is change. Technologists and technocrats are the masters of change, guiding its direction and acceptance at the upper levels of technocracy. The acceptance by the rest of us is handled by others. There is a certain arrogance in technology that implies that all change is progress and that all progress is 'good'. From what I have observed in history, and our own recent past, change is cyclical, rather, the acceptance of change is cyclical. People rush to embrace a new, improved technology (like oil, radiation, telephony) then gradually come to dislike it a bit (like smog, atomic bombs, telemarketing) but still accept it because they have integrated the technology into their lifestyle.

"And then there are all the attendant offshoots of a new technology, creating a symbiotic relationship with society where each needs the other to survive. But, at what point does the symbiote become a parasite?

"And what price do we pay for the new technology? Small change. Or large change in some cases. I think that most of the ecological problems facing humanity are the direct result of a growing population concentrated in small areas, not technology. Of course, the growing population is one of the side effects of the technological changes over the past several centuries. Those changes are also the cause and effect of the concentration of populations into metropolitan areas.

"Our ability to manipulate the physical world around us, for 'good' or 'bad' is a direct result of technological development. Our ability to integrate it into our social world lags a bit. From what I can see in history, societies develop over the course of generations. New social orders do not spring up overnight, but rather, are laid upon a framework that has been developed by previous thinkers that broke the ground and allowed people to start thinking about different ways to live in a society. The American revolution did not spring forth, full blown, from the brows of the Founding Fathers. They rationalized their actions based on the thoughts of English common law and the philosophers that came before them. The FF just integrated a lot of previous thought into a whole.

"Societal philosophers are still working on Industrial Revolution concepts and society is trying to deal with the Information Revolution. It takes time to distill ideas and thoughts into a working philosophy, much of what we have to work with must be built on the existing, or previous structures. Those that propose to just return to the older structures of societal order, figuring it is safer and more stable, are denying the new technologies and their affect on society. I don't know of too many social structures that are designed to work with 200 Million + people societies. Of the several that exist, like India or China, I don't know that I would want to live in those societies. The technology does not seem to support a comfortable level of existence for that many people. The US is having some problems supporting 250 M+. The framework is continuing to grow even though a lot of vocal folks want to retreat into a never-existent "Golden Age" of society and, of course, as everyone knows, the most volume wins.

"The technocrats can keep trying to shove more technology down people's throats, but if the people aren't ready for it, they won't accept it. Personally, I would love to see High-Definition TV hanging on the wall of my TV room. The technology has been here for several years, but not the will of the people. I may get my HDTV by the next century, or maybe not.

"Technology reminds of the time my Dad bought a Carvel Ice Cream franchise, after retiring from Feds. He recruited the multitude of Heneghans to be cheap labor and we were happy. Just think, all

Fifteen hundred bass-drum-lugging bug-eyed monkeys

that ice cream and we get to eat the mistakes. After a month of working in the ice cream store, we realized: all that ice cream and we HAVE to eat the mistakes. This analogy can go on for a long time, but I think I'll end it here.

"Do the technocrats run things for humanity? I think not, especially in the industrialized world. Marketeers run things. They're all illuminati, you know. Trying to create the 'One World Order': BUY, BUY, BUY!

"I don't think I shall ever be able to go back to Vegas without keeping all eyes open for the Gang of 23 laying traps for the unsuspecting fan stumbling his way through the casinos. And to think, I was thinking of stopping by on my way to LA next year. Speaking of which, how do I know that Victor Gonzalez isn't a hoax being sprung upon fandom via subliminal linos by a certain member of

"No, No that way lies madness."

[APH: Thanks Jack; interesting stuff. Now, HARRY WARNER (423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740) observes:]

"Please consider the usual apologies written several times in recent weeks about my failure to respond to every issue of *Apparatchik*. It's the same old story: galloping old age, indecision on when to pull the trigger on my gaffiation, eyes that tire before they finish reading the fanzine, and most recently a spot of trouble involving my fanzine collection. The institution that I intended to have it seems to have lost interest and I've had a terrible time finding a final resting place for it. Finally today I think the problem has been solved on this matter. I wish the other troubles lent themselves to final solutions.

"I can't find your 45th issue at the moment but the 44th amused me to some extent for its long pastiche which I'm fairly certain springs from that *X-Files* television sitcom. I know about it only from items in *TV Guide* and occasional three-minute glimpses of it during commercial breaks while I am watching another channel. But I gather that it is 1995's answer to the Shaver Mystery and you seem to have caught the previously inimitable flavor of Ray Palmer's star writer for the Ziff-Davis *Amazing Stories*. Incidentally, I have a personal problem with the titles of the television series. I keep hearing it and seeing it as the *Ex-Files* and imagining it's the continuing account of a man's obsession with the implements his former wife used on her nails and left behind when she started to sleep around.

"I think I've been insulted about my rotary telephone in the loc section of this issue. About a year ago, the telephone went dead and the telephone company first diagnosed a problem with my telephone. The repairman told me not to buy a pushbutton replacement because my old one if repairable would be still be more durable and reliable than the fragile ones that get dial tone without dials. As it turned out the problem was not the telephone but the wiring outside the house. I took his advice and haven't regretted it, keeping the telephone that I've used for 35 years, ever since moving onto Summit Avenue. Last year, I needed to make a telephone call that couldn't be completed without buttons so I journeyed a block and a half to the nearest public telephone and made the call on it. So far this year I've not encountered any telephoning situation in which something more than the dial is necessary. I calculate that it will be the middle of the 21st century before the money I spent on pay telephones for this purpose will equal the cost of a non-dial instrument. Meanwhile, I have the satisfaction of knowing that my dial tone is really a dial tone.

"Obviously, awarding Hugos to creativity that happened 50 years ago will be a hit or miss affair. Most votes will be based on faulty memories (in the case of people who were in fandom a half-century ago) or reputations of stuff that may not have been as good as reputed. However, the Hugo voting for the past year's accomp-

ishments also has inspired outlandish outcomes so I don't suppose the retro Hugos will be any worse than the current ones.

"In all probability, I'll never be forced to experience the ordeal of watching my fanzine collection vanish in the distance as Walt Willis did. If I still have it when I'm dead, I doubt if I'll retain any interest in earthly things long enough to want to oversee from the hereafter its packing and shipment. If I should be forced while living to move into a rest home or sheltered care facility where there's no room for 100 cubic feet or so of fanzines, I'd be too feeble to see the contents of my house being evacuated. But one nice thing about moving a fanzine collection is that it won't be hurt if clumsy moving men drop some of the boxes or pile up too many boxes atop one another in the van.

" 'Revisionist' history seems to mean different things to different people. To me, it is history which deliberately changes aspects of history on which most writers and researchers have had fairly similar viewpoints. It isn't just a new history that emphasizes minor points that were given little mention by previous historians.

"The reference in the 46th issue to famous fanzines that had two editors brings up a remarkable fact. Co-edited fanzines are just about the only aspect of fanac which can produce non-acerbic good results. Look at the fussing that gets started among committee members for any largish convention, the collapse of fan-history projects that were meant to be joint ventures, the splits that most local fan clubs eventually suffer from factionalism. But there haven't been many co-edited fanzines that have exploded in a major fuss between the editors. A few husband-wife teams have split up but the problem in most cases seem to have mundane factors rather than the editing that caused the separation or divorce.

"My dreams are almost never about science fiction or fandom. Most of them involve personal friends including the dead ones or my old job. When I was a boy, I did have a doozy of a nightmare after reading *When Worlds Collide* but such things haven't happened often since then. Curiously, one common factor in my dreams is my incapacity to cope with things. I may be in a hotel and unable to find the door leading to the sidewalk or I'm covering as a reporter an important story and I forget to ask key questions or I'm driving somewhere and suddenly realize I hadn't brought along the person I was supposed to haul to my destination or I know someone is ill and can't persuade him to see a doctor or something of that sort. I can remember a few dreams when I waken in the morning and I have just a vague impression that I did something wrong in otherwise forgotten dreams but always I feel depressed over my incompetence for a couple of waking hours."

[VMG: It seems impossible to believe that you would have a difficult time finding a place for your collection. I would be interested in more details about that. Regarding Issue 44, you are correct, and I glad you think we caught the flavor. We conceived of the piece some days before taking off for the con, and I can assure you that every scene has at least some correspondence with reality, contrary to those who say, "What was the con really like?" Thanks again.]

[APH: I certainly hope that your observation in regard to the relative harmony of fannish editorial teams will apply to us as well. So far, things are going very well, but I would never have opened the door if I hadn't been relatively assured of success. But as I was saying to Victor a few weeks ago, I think we work well together because we're not afraid of arguing, and wrangling things through. All partnerships have their rough spots, but successful ones don't let that stop them from getting their job done, whatever that may be.

I think your point in regard to the retro-Hugos is very well taken. These days, I try to keep a mental image of the Hugo awards as generally harmless, and occasionally a lot of fun for the

Sometimes I just want to take a big wooden spoon and dig it all out

people who get them. Teddy Harvia's evident, nay, incandescent, pleasure at winning in Glasgow is a good example of the latter; it seemed like he spent the better part of Monday carrying his around with him, with a big grin on his goofy face. How can you begrudge something like that? Speaking of which:

TEDDY HARVIA (701 Regency Drive, Hurst TX 76054) writes:]

"The insulting humor in your fanzine reviews is great! It's enough to make dangerous dingbats everywhere chew on their purple crayons. You are a sophisticated comedian trapped in a serious dramatist's body. You are the Dave Langford of American fan writing. With a little lighter touch, you continue your verbal barbs and have your targets loving it. I don't know how many fans from whom I've elicited chuckles telling them about your put down of me wearing my silly cowboy hat in Glasgow.

"Diann and I are going to SoonerCon in OK City this weekend, a relaxicon for us both. I can hardly wait to hear who is sleeping with whom this year. I hope they don't repeat the adolescent search for vampires."

[APH: I'm very glad that you see the humorous intent behind a lot of my more bombastic pronouncements. A lot of people don't, especially when it applies to them. Sometimes I just get this rush when trying to figure out what to say about a given fanzine, and out comes this "AAARRRRROOOAAHHH!" kind of thing, which may or not be intelligible to the public at large. But these things aren't always meant as put-downs, and I actually thought your hat was pretty sharp-looking, even if it was an unutterably Fort Worth-type of thing to wear.

Speaking of standing the gaff in regard to review, here's a note from BEN WILSON (who moved and gave me his new address which I then lost. I'll run it on the front page next issue :)

"I'd like to take a little of your time to address a few remarks that were found in APAK #46. In fact these comments are in fact directed towards Victor's piece.

"Also, the writing jam that takes the place of an editorial pinpoints the ridiculous idea of having 23 editors. There's nothing wrong with 23 (or more) contributors, but I think two editors is just about right.' Let's face it, how many of us actually participate in an editorial? Maybe nine or so each issue? How many actually have contributions on a regular bases? Maybe five or six? Now I could go back and look through my copies and give exact figures, but that's not the point I'm trying to make. The point is, I'm lazy and fairly close to a true procrastinator. From where I'm sitting, so are a few others here in Vegas.

"Now being listed as an editor gives me a kind of obligation to write, in the editorial and letter column, which is about all I do, as far as writing goes. I enjoy writing, always have, I'm still learning how to write so that others know what the hell I'm trying to say.

If it wasn't for the generosity of Arnie, Joyce and the others that produce the actual meat of the 'zine, I'd probably drop out of the writing end of fanzine fandom. Now where would that leave me? Out of the loop for sure. Nobody likes to send their 'zine to someone that has no potential to give the faned their just ego-boo. So even though, 'The editorial lacks the kind of focus that might make it really interesting,' I'm grateful that it's there.

"As for 'I don't get a really coherent picture of anything,' well join the club, not many of us here do either.

"... how long will the Vegrants need to compliment themselves, and what purpose it really serves.' I could go into a lengthy tirade dealing with that line alone, but that kind of talk would only serve to make a few local enemies, who needs that? Let me just say this, there's a few delicate, really delicate egos here and the self patting and stroking will probably continue until '... a certain independence will arise among these individuals,'. And

again, the self patting and stroking is to keep those of us that haven't developed into satisfactory writers, and faneds, in the loop. I mean who wants to put out a shitty 'zine?

"We're all hoping that the energy and friendships here in Vegas and fanzine fandom in whole, don't fade. In fact, I hope it increases, starting here in my own home. Hence this LoC and I'll be, I hope, in a few publications in the next few months. And on top of that 'Fanstorm' will have a piece by Cathi, my lovely wife.

"Pam Wells' *Snapshots* was enough to make me want to go to a Novacon in the next couple of years. I'd also like see a con report on Ditto, guys?"

[VMG: The last thing I'd like to see would be you – or anyone in Vegas – stop writing. I wish Nine Lines Each was still coming out, I'm waiting without patience for the next Brodie, and I wish you would produce more as well.

No doubt your Inclusion in the list of 23 editors does cause you to write more, and if a structure change meant that you wouldn't write, I would be unhappy.

And – let me be clear about this – the longer your tight social group survives, the better. But you and your compatriots should know that you are interesting writers. Otherwise *Wild Heirs* would end up in the slushpile with the rest of the garbage. It would not then be considered a preeminent frequent fanzine, which it now is.

Write if it interests you. I certainly have my own problems with procrastination, and no matter how busy a person is there's always something else to do.

If but one new fan emerged from the star system that is forming in Las Vegas, I would be happy. But if all of you, independent of your social bonds, were writing in two years, it would make me ecstatic.

The best egoboo comes from other fanzines, not your own. You say some in Vegas need to be stroked so they will continue to write. Let me tell you, the best thing you can do is take a 'fuck 'em' attitude and do it.

Who the hell in Vegas is telling you you're not a satisfactory writer?

You might ask yourself why you're listening to them and not producing, with or without the help of others, your own fanzine.]

[APH: I'll reserve my comments on this, as we have another letter discussing the same stuff from ROBERT LICHTMAN (P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442):]

"A quick response to *Apak* #46 before it slips down in the pile. First, I suppose congratulations might be in order to Victor for assuming the hitherto-undetected position of co-editor of *Apak*. Remembering the several successful collaborations a decade or so ago of Victor and Jerry Kaufman, this bodes well for your fanzine's future, as Hooper & Gonzalez (or will it be Gonzalez & Hooper?) join the ranks of Carr and Ellik, brown and McInerny, Demmon & Main, Demmon & Berry, Glicksohn & Wood, Benford and White (& Carr & Graham &), to name some you didn't. But ignore Victor when he writes that *Apak* 'suffers from a lack of art.' To me your format is fine as is, but if you compelled to add some art please restrict it to a hand-lettered logo and accompanying cartoon, like *Ansible* nowadays and *Fanac* in the days of my newfanhood. Considering the postal economics of your small, frequent fanzine and my general enjoyment of the wordage therein, if more artwork sprouted up I would miss the words thus displaced.

"I enjoyed Victor reviewing *Wild Heirs* in lieu of his writing about his reporter experiences. In response to his wondering 'how long the Vegrants will need to compliment themselves and what purpose it really serves,' I might offer the insight that this is a group

September 9th, 1952: Spitsbergen Island, Norway -- HOAX

primarily made up of newfans -- their experience in fanzine fandom only goes back to 1991, and while many of them have been in (& out of) FAPA back when that organization had no waiting list (many of them did their first fanzines in FAPA, including one that has to be the *Thurban* /No. 1 of the '90's) most of them haven't appeared before the usual international fanzine fan audience before *Wild Heirs*.

"While they are generally a talented lot, some of the Vegrants are more comfortable with their writing than others. As for stuff like 'what marvels lie ahead for this remarkable gang of trufans', one can only marvel at their pure enthusiasm. My only fear for *Wild Heirs* is that if it continues for a long time, it may put off the blossoming forth as faneds in their own right of some of the participants. For instance, if Tom Springer weren't so involved with *WH* would *Brodie* have already continued its rapid improvement? At Manure-Con I mentioned to several people that *Wild Heirs* reminded me a lot of the late '50's *Cry of the Nameless*, in that year or so after it stopped being a small club newsletter and began reaching out to general fandom and before it turned most of its pages over to outside contributors. I stepped aboard the *Cry* express with No. 120 in late 1958 and arrived to see the nucleus of the *Cry* letterhack gang emerging. Hell, I was one of them myself, even if I can no longer produce my *Cry* letterhack card to prove it. In this early period, there was a lot of writing about local fans and local fandom -- while it wasn't exactly the same as what's occurring in *WH*, I feel it's similar enough to make the comparison. No one I mentioned it to at the con disagreed. The bottom line for both Victor and me regarding *WH* is 'it's just such energy as *Wild Heirs* that is making fanzines interesting again.' Amen to that!

"It was frustrating in your fanzine countdown to have your top item be something I probably won't see for weeks or perhaps even months. Like you, I find his writing endlessly fascinating and I'm looking forward to this latest helping. And I hate to wait, knowing that it's out there. Perhaps there ought to be a rule about reviewing electronic fanzines before the print edition is distributed. Not quite as frustrating, but I haven't yet seen Widner's new zine either, since he no longer sends it to me directly and the November FAPA mailing hasn't come yet. Despite its being continued, I look forward to Lucy's Kenya report.

"Much enjoyed reading Pam's Novacon report just scant weeks after the convention itself. This is a really good account with a nice level of details, and bodes well for the likely quality of Pam's eventual (we hope) TAFF report. Particularly liked her mention of how many fanzines were handed out at the con, and that the energy reminds her of the early 80's over there. If true, I look forward to it. And then there's her admission of having 70 pairs of shoes. While nowhere in the league of Imelda Marcos, one wonders if this is a record for fanzine fandom?

"Leah Smith seems to have tunnel vision in her comments about 'people sending messages by e-mail to people who aren't on-line via their friends who live nearby, just as people once not on the phone once got telephone messages via their neighbors or at the corner store.' This totally ignores such message senders picking up the telephone -- lots more people have telephones than are on line, after all -- or even writing a letter (everyone has a mailbox). From my vantage point of not being on-line but being surrounded by friends who are, I can see its potential charm in at least theoretically instantaneous communication -- but it's not yet the goddamn 'be-all and end-all of human communication.

"I've been able to spell 'anorak' for years, but then I've been on the L.L. Bean catalog mailing list since the early '70's. I first heard of anoraks in their pages, buried deep among the duck decoys and fishing equipment. I was amazed to learn its current U.K. definition when I was over there in '89."

[APH: I generally share the skepticism you express in regard to the primacy of e-mail among all communication methods, but it is a major innovation, probably the first real step forward in communication technology since the invention of the telecopier (or fax, or mojo wire, whatever you want to call it). I have to admit, I just kind of glaze over when people start to talk about e-mail improving the quality of communication between people; I've seen no evidence to support that supposition so far, and more than a little to make me think the opposite.

Yet, I have to admit that the use of electronic communication has made publishing this fanzine far easier. I can send letters and other material for Victor to see at his desk in Tacoma, with only a few minutes of delay. Berni Evans acts as the electronic go-between for me and Martin Tudor, among others . . . and not having to make transatlantic phone calls, or wait for paper mail to make the trip around the world is a genuine advantage. And this is very similar to the scenario which Leah envisioned.]

[VMG: I think I mentioned the lack of *APAK* art to avoid the obvious rebuttal (You guys should talk about art!) as much as to qualify a criticism of *WH*. We are discussing some minor changes to the look of the fanzine (some of which you might see in this issue), and I could see some special projects in the future, but full-page illos aren't likely real soon. I think your comments on *WH* are probably right on the mark. While I don't remember *Cry* (though, of course, I have heard of it before), I suspect you are correct: it's a really successful clubzine kind of thing. And I couldn't agree more: I hope that *WH* doesn't keep these brilliant faneds from producing their own stuff.

I get the impression perhaps *Brodie* has been so delayed, which dismays me.]

[APH: I also think the comparison with *Cry* is a remarkably apt one, and probably the best parallel you could draw. It also matches in the sense that *Wild Heirs* is gradually drawing in notable columnists from outside the fan group, and could, given another six to eight months of development, survive a major schism in the local group. But I join Victor in knocking wood and hoping that won't happen; it's much more interesting to get a picture of local doings and myths, which people from outside the group aren't in the best position to create.

Then there's this issue of self-congratulation. It's important to note that while for those of us outside the club, this seems like self-congratulation, the people actually writing these things are mostly offering praise to other people, not themselves; the psychological line between the self and the community gets very blurry at times, but I doubt that many of the people in Vegas think that this praise reflects directly on themselves. They are trying to do something nice for their friends, which, while tedious to an outsider, is a very useful and important thing to do within a given club or organization. This is at once a strength and a serious weakness for clubzines as a subgenre of fanac.

Hell, Pam's report came out scant DAYS after the convention was over. I'm not sure, but I think I may have scooped all the fanzines IN BRITAIN, or at least the ones that appear in print, rather than magnetic ink. Speaking of which, I just got a paper copy of Richardson's latest zine, *Anorak Redemption*, so I bet you'll get one sooner than you think, Robert. I'm reluctant to establish some kind of artificial policy against reviewing electronic zines on the grounds that you, or anyone else, has not gotten them; if I do something like that, they'll most likely respond by not sending them to me anymore. Plus, you have to remember that one of my ongoing imperatives

You seemed pretty cool for a naked chick in a booth . . .

is to give this fanzine some reason for coming out every two weeks. There are a lot of reasons why we might be better off if we cut back to monthly publication, but I resist this as best I can. Your discomfort and frustration at seeing reviews of zines that you won't get until weeks from now is actually a sign that I am succeeding at least a little

Now, TRACY BENTON (e-mail at TLBenton@aol.com) also observed the change of editorial structure:]

"Hello, apparatchiki (Hooked on Phonics doesn't work too well on that one). So what is the proper phrase? 'Congratulations! It's a healthy baby coup!' Or some such? I'm not sure whether to accuse you of luring the fly into your web or to tax Victor with smoke-filled room antics. I'll settle for both.

"Certainly his input up to now has helped strengthen the zine, so he gets at least two issues before I say 'Isn't it sad about Andy's brainchild....' But let me know if he stops allowing you to leave the house or wrests a power of attorney from you. I'll send the cops right over.

"*Snapshots from Novacon* was a really fine example of a good con report. I'm always amazed when somebody can tell stories about flocks of people I don't know and still make it interesting. (Especially considering that many con reports featuring people I know trigger jaw-splitting yawns.) But Pam is a wonderful storyteller. Her anecdote about Nic Farey's 'Gift of the Magi' hair-selling is already spawning talk of a similar event at Wiscon 20, with the main topic of conversation just who they could get drunk enough to do this (and if we got him or her even drunker, would a tattoo be in the offing?); I mention this only to warn you should you attend.

"Before I forget, I want to get down in writing how tremendously I enjoyed the Las Vegas X-files piece. I felt a bit like you had impregnated the paper with something slightly hallucinogenic; I had to keep going back to reread paragraphs to make sure I had understood them correctly. Of course, the fact that I've always thought Nevenah was a deep-cover agent for SOMEBODY heightened my experience. I hope this suitably hints that more stuff in that general vein would be great to read . . ."

[APH: Thanks for the kind words, Tracy. And here's a quick note from a JANICE EISEN (e-mail at eisen@third-wave.com) who offers a paper-mail CoA:]

"I will have a new address as of the end of November, and would appreciate its being published:

Janice Eisen
1424 Emmett Drive
Johnstown, PA 15905
Phone: (814) 255-3928

"E-mail address should remain the same."

[APH: Duly noted! And to finish out this issue, here's a report from PAM WELLS (e-mail at Vacuous_tart@bitch.demon.co.uk), giving us the full scoop on The Nova Awards, award in Birmingham a couple of weeks ago. See you in two weeks!]

"Dear Andy,

"Here are those Nova Award results in full (courtesy of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group Newsletter, 'Brum Group News', edited by Martin Tudor).

"NB: The number in brackets indicates the number of points received after totaling first place (5), second place (3) and third place (1) votes on each ballot."

Best Fanzine

1 ATTITUDE ed. Michael Abbott, John Dallman and Pam Wells (91)

2 LAGOON ed. Simon Ounsley (84)

- 3 EMPTIES ed. Martin Tudor (63)
- 4 RASTUS JOHNSON'S CAKEWALK ed. Greg Pickersgill (46)
- 5 FROM THE KELPIE'S POOL ed. Alison Freebairn (39)
- 6 BOBI ed. Ian Sorensen (38)
- 7 ZORN ed. Michael Scott (33)
- 8 FIT ed. Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas (26)
- 9 EYEBALLS IN THE SKY ed. Tony Berry (24)
- 10 THE WRONG LEGGINGS ed. Lilian Edwards (18)
- 11 = ANSIBLE and FERMAT (15 each)
- 13 OBSESSIONS (13)
- 14 PLATYPUS (11)
- 15 = OUR DOG'S BASKET and DR BEECHING'S COLD FUSION TRAMWAY (10 each) Then BALLOONS OVER BRISTOL (9), CYBRER BUNNY, OLAF, GAJJIN, READING MATTERS (6 each), BEER CAT SCRATCHINGS, CYBERSPACE, THE DISILLUSIONIST (5 each), BLEARY EYES, DREAMBERRY WINE, GERALD, SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND (3 each), ETRANGER, GOTTERDAMERUNG, MOSTLY HARMLESS, TASH, THINGUMYBOB (1 each).

Best Fan Writer

- 1 Simon Ounsley (60)
 - 2 Dave Langford (59)
 - 3 Alison Freebairn (56)
 - 4 Helena Bowles (52)
 - 5 Ian Sorensen (48)
 - 6 Mike D Siddall (35)
 - 7 Greg Pickersgill (32)
 - 8 Michael Abbott (27)
 - 9 Bridget Hardcastle (23)
 - 10 Christina Lake (19)
 - 11 Lilian Edwards (18)
 - 12 Joseph Nicholas (16)
 - 13 Martin Tudor (12)
 - 14 Mark Plummer (11)
 - 15 = Steve Green and Michael Scott (10 each)
- Then D West (9), Judith Hanna (8), Steve Brewster (7), Paul Kincaid (6), John Berry, Ken Lake, Antony J 'Doppelganger' Shepherd (5), Tony Berry, Ann Green, Dave Hicks, Alison Scott (4 each), Alisdair Hepburn, Robert Cogger, John Richards (3 each), Jim Barker, Jane Carnall, Vince Clarke, Steve Glover, Catherine McAulay, Jackie McRobert, Jilly Reed, Ivan Sinha, Pam Wells (1 each).

Best Fan Artist

- 1 D West (151)
 - 2 = Shep Kirkbride and Dave Mooring (58)
 - 4 Dave Hicks (52)
 - 5 Sue Mason (47)
 - 6 Ann Stokes (25)
 - 7 Jim Barker (23)
 - 8 Ken Cheslin (9)
 - 9 Bridget Hardcastle (6)
 - 10 = Tim Groome and Tom Abba (5 each)
 - 12 = Harry Bell, Alan Hunter and Terry Pratchett (3 each)
- Dave Carson, Neil Gaiman, Chuck Harris and Teddy (1 each).



FANZINE COUNTDOWN, November 9th to 21st

1) Cybrer Bunny #47, edited by Antara & Robert Glover, 24 Laverockbank Rd., Edinburgh, EH5 3DE U.K., available through e-mail at tara.glover@ukonline.co.uk or robert.glover@ukonline.co.uk; The question mark is up there because there is neither a date nor a number on this issue, but I think we've seen three issues before. The first thing one has to note about Cybrer Bunny is that it's being published by a pair of very young editors, and it's sort of sad that this is so much more notable than it once was. But it's also worth observing that there are quite a number of adults who have never published anything this good, even after dozens of issues and years of effort. Another thing that strikes me about this issue, which is entirely composed of outside submissions, is that the writers have all undertaken to write what could be characterized (without pejorative intent) as "childish" material; Material about their own childhood experiences or about things which would be of at least passing interest to children. Terry Jeeves appears with some more consideration of his life-long obsession with interesting aircraft and building models thereof. Kryss Ungar offers a thumbnail version of the origin of Esperanto and his ongoing interest in the language. And Tom Feller recounts his early experiences with Star Trek and fandom, to generally good effect. The letter column is quite short, but is all interesting stuff, with none of the "Gosh, what a good fanzine, thank you for sending it," which I, after 12 years as a fan-writer, still have yet to master. And I quite liked Ian Gunn's cover illustration as well, one of the few times I have seen his art appear in this size or proportion. Getting to see it like this makes me think I might like to see him show up on the Hugo ballot . . . Anyway, this is a solid effort, if somewhat (read "utterly") lacking in editorial presence. The kids are all right (hopelessly naff reference #422).

#2) Pinkette # 15a, written and edited by Karen Pender-Gunn, P.O. Box 567, Blackburn, Victoria 3130 Australia; This is a stop-gap issue meant to tide Karen's correspondents over between issues of her fanzine *Pink*. I'd really like to see an example of the latter now, because this little treat has really whet my appetite for more of Karen's writing. This issue was put together so she would have something to bring to Basiccon over the 15th of October, and is largely concerned with the aftermath of her and Ian Gunn's recovery from their GUFF trip to Britain. It's nice to know that there are other people who brought back far too much stuff back from Worldcon with them, including plenty of things that there can be no real justification for carrying around for thousands of miles. And then she sits down and starts to ponder things like where has all the dust in her house come from, earth or space. I wonder about these things myself.

#3) Ansible #100, edited by Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU U.K.: Issue #100 is always a special event in a fanzine's history, even if, as in Dave's case, fractional and special numbers mean that #100 is actually the 103rd issue. Dave continues to scoop the world; why, for example, do I have read a British newszine to find out the our own correspondent Greg Benford has received the Lord Award (a statue and \$2,500) for a combination of his astrophysical research and his work in popularizing science?

Sadly, the issue is also notable for the second excellent obituary in two months, this being Chris Priest's memorial to the late Sir Kingsley Amis. One hopes the latter has no need of a new map of hell.

#4) Science Fiction Chronicle Oct./Nov. 1995, edited by Andrew Ian Porter at P.O. Box 022730, Brooklyn, NY 11202-0056; This issue was delayed by several weeks, at least partly by a nasty cold which Andy suffered. It may appear on the newsstand, but in many ways, SFC is still a fanzine. Lots of interesting news and notes, as usual, including the first notice I had seen of the death of Dr. Claude Avice, a French novelist better known by the pseudonym Pierre Barbet. Barbet had three pretty good alternate history novels translated into English, *Baphomet's Meteor*, *The Joan-of-Arc Replay*, and *The Napoleons of Eridanus*. He wrote thirty other titles which have never been translated; I for, one, would buy them if they were.

#5) MSFire #5, edited by Sue Burke for Milwaukee Science Fiction Services, P.O. Box 1637, Milwaukee, WI 53201; Well, this is what happens in a slow fortnight. *MSFire* is actually not a very good zine, in my admittedly jaundiced opinion; fanzines with amateur fiction and lengthy accounts of the activities of gaming groups are not real high on my list, my own foolish forays into air combat narrative notwithstanding. But the zine looks pretty good, and it has two very talented people making contributions, Greg Rihn and Georgie Schnobrich. This issue has several examples of Georgie's excellent art, and a parodic coda to all the gaming material, a tongue-in-cheek guide to playing "Where in Hell is Carmen Sandiego?" As long as Greg and Georgie are contributors, I'll be happy to receive *MSFire*.

ALSO RECEIVED: De Profundis #283, edited by Tim Merrigan for the LASFS; DUFFacto, Autumn 1995, edited by Dick & Leah Smith for DUFF; Mobius Strip October, 1995, edited by Alexandra Ceely for the EPSFFA. *Don't forget to send trades to both Victor and myself!*

APPARATCHIK is the Lothaire Bluteau of fandom, looking wounded, bearded, vulnerable and catholic all at once. How can the Party Quebecoise have failed to take advantage of his remarkable Habitant charisma in their drive to separate from Canada and join the third world? It's still available for the usual, but note that trades must now be sent to both Andy and Victor (Victor can be reached at 403½ Garfield Street S., #11, Tacoma, WA 98444, electronically at Gonzalez@tribnet.com), 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 bottle or two of 21-year-old Glenmorangie. For readers in the United Kingdom, Martin Tudor will accept £10.00 for an annual subscription, £19.37 for a lifetime sub, see his address in the colophon on the front cover. Lifetime subscribers include Tom Becker, Judy Bemis, Richard Brandt, Scott Custis, Don Fitch, Ken Forman, Lucy Huntzinger, Nancy Lebovitz, Robert Lichtman, Michelle Lyons, Luke McGuff, Janice Murray, Tony Parker, Greg Pickersgill, Barnaby Rapoport, Alan Rosenthal, Anita Rowland, Karen Schaffer, Leslie Smith, Nevenah Smith, Geri Sullivan, Steve Swartz, Michael Waite, and Art Widner. It has been replaced by another name that is not releasable.