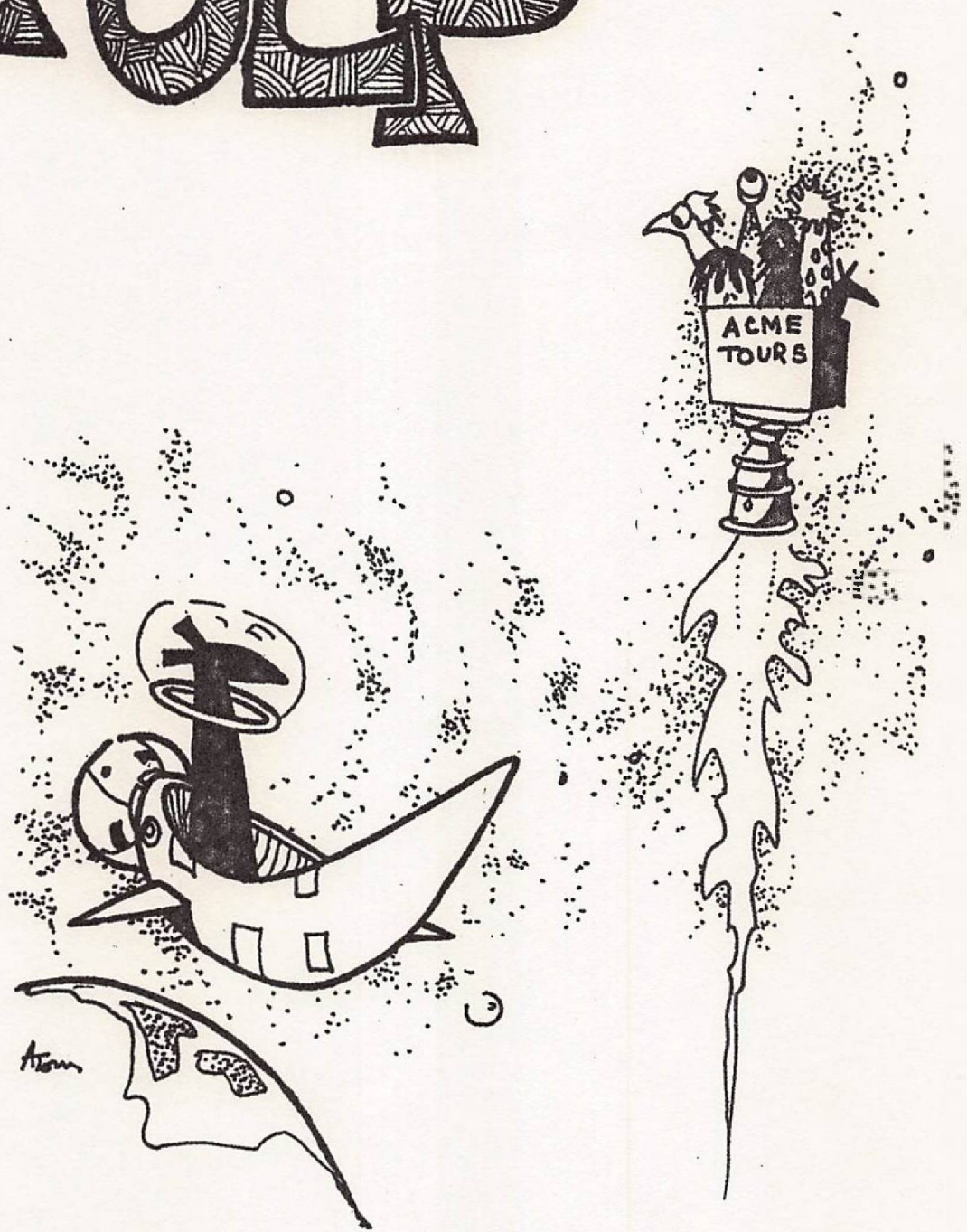
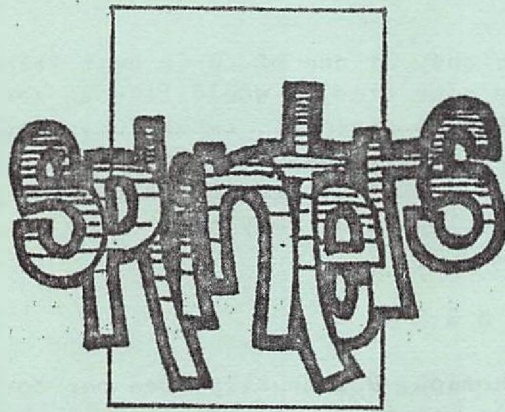


# PULP



Atom





Avedon Carol

**PULP IN WONDERLAND**      The other day I got a letter from Taral in which he mentioned a number of unpublished articles he had sitting in his files. As soon as I finish this editorial, I'm going to write back and ask him why the hell he hasn't offered us one or two of them for PULP.

One of the reasons this fanzine exists is to provide a forum for writers who would rather not publish themselves, but occasionally have something to say. While it's true there are other genzines around which could serve that purpose, PULP does come out with sufficient frequency that authors can have a better expectation of timely publication - you don't have to wait another six months to start wondering if your offering is going to see print.

We don't accept everything submitted to us - we have our standards, you know - but we do have broader tastes than some people seem to think. Yet I often have the feeling that some of our readers think we aren't interested in contributions from them other than locs (I believe we have already made it clear that we appreciate locs). But I'm certain that some of you out there must have your own opinions about the state of the art, the state of the state, or why milk cartons don't open right that could be turned into coherent and interesting articles - so why not try sending them our way?

There are a number of subjects I think fandom has a lot more room for, although some people may think PULP is too consistently fannish for them. I'd like to emphasize here that fandom is not the only topic we consider relevant for PULP - it's just the easiest one to write about and get copy on. I do think fanzines should talk about other fanzines, but I don't think that's the only subject that belongs here. I've said before how much I enjoy the approach of A FREE LUNCH, and I think some of the more interesting articles I've seen over the last couple of years have been of that sort, or the piece on Clause 28 which appeared in CRITICAL WAVE\* - I, personally, rather like the idea that fandom and SF have some relationship to the real world, and despite what some pundits may have said, it doesn't bother me at all to find such things in fanzines.

In fact, I've gotten pretty sick of the idea that what we write has to be so detached from reality and emotion that it's hard to believe anyone should care. I'd like to see a demonstration that people care, and care passionately-

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\*And while I'm mentioning CW, I'd like to take this opportunity to say I also thought all the material on SF (in the issue out at Novacon) was a Good Thing.

ly, about something other than whether they or one of their best friends have been insulted by another fan. (At the same time, I would like to see people admit when they write such things that it's personal, rather than continue the pretence that they have some Higher, Objective, Disinterested, Intellectual reason for responding to the insult. I'd like to see people willing to take sufficient responsibility for their emotions that they admit they are hurt, rather than merely "annoyed".)

R R R R R R R

As many of you already know, Arthur Thomson, who usually does our covers and headings, was hospitalized at Xmas. He was sent home after a bit, but he caught another respiratory infection and had to be rushed back. He is currently recovering at home again, but he isn't really up & around yet. Rob has cobbled the cover for this issue together out of some of Atom's fillos from our art files, and I'm not sure when Arthur will be able to get back to the drawing board himself.

Meanwhile, Harris is hobbling around... well, you know, breaking a femur isn't the most fun thing to do on your New Year's holiday, is it? So he was wowing 'em in the wards with his long-distance walker races, and finally advanced to walking with sticks. A couple of weeks ago I was talking to Sue Harris, who said he was now using only one stick, and then Chuch came bounding along and yelled in the background, "Did you tell her I'm walking on one stick now?" "Yes! A pogo stick!" said the internationally renowned Lady Captain. This was too much for Chuch, who grabbed the phone to announce, "It is not a pogo stick!"

Then Vincent was organizing the Great Quarto Buy-out - the paper people missed four opportunities to deliver the goods, which started me wondering if this thing was ever going to come out. Our supplier's supplier has discontinued making coloured quarto, so we bought up whatever they had left.

Rob picked up the issue of The Comics Journal with the Los Bros interview in it, and one Hernandez brother mentions Harlan Ellison. Gary Groth asks disingenuously if they mean Harlan Ellison the noted futurist, and they say no, Harlan Ellison the car salesman. And there in the footnotes it is revealed: Ellison is doing TV advertising for cars. That was just one little thing, of course, since the first two articles in CJ - including Groth's - are mostly about what a load of hype Harlan is. Well, they didn't like his comics article in Playboy. Naturally, Rob sent xeroxes to Chris Priest. Chris sent a copy of LAST DEADLOSS VISIONS to Groth.

Eventually, Langford sent us an ad for the car (marked "Courtesy of D.M. Sherwood" and "from Harlan Ellison Record Club newsletter"), which features TV-shaped stills of 12 frames from the TV ad itself. And yes, right across his own image are the words, "Harlan Ellison" and "Noted Futurist".

Priest was speculating on the number of fandoms in which Harlan is an expert in something else...



*Chuck  
Harris*

Welcome to the Special Gloom & Despondency Column. Was it something I said? Three pages of wit and whimsy (well, there were two fairly new jokes), and all I get is shunned. Ignored. Sent to Coventry on a no-way return ticket. As soon as they can build a pale, I'll be beyond it. Friendless, forsaken, a fannish leper with nowt to look forward to except an occasional mention in NOW & AGAIN and honorary membership - if you could call it that, and I certainly couldn't - in Puerto Rican fandom. Ghod pity us; the shame of it all - the only Wheel of IF with a bent axle.

Truly, I seem to be losing my touch (that's the fannish leprosy I was telling you about... bits drop off and you don't even notice they've gone until you need them).

Listen: one Tuesday before I retired, along with Malcolm - Ford mate and section-leader - I got wined and dined. Lunch at the John of Gaunt hotel & moshery with Perry The Rep and his Serck Radiators' expense account. Forget yer MacDonaldis - this was gourmet eats... choose between the lobster bisque and the creme d'escargots soup to start with. (The lobster bisque tasted as if they'd diluted and heated that pink goo that they spoil your prawn cocktail with, and nobody was brave enough to have the creme d'escargots so I shall never know if you get the snail shells in the soup plate like you do with moules mariniere or not.)

Anyway, back to losing my touch. When we walked in, the headwaiter bustled over, all obsequious and oleaginous (I love that word and next time I'm going to type it without looking up the spelling first) to help us park our bums. Out comes the tooled leather menu, far thicker than a Dave Bridges fanzine, and the hushed and reverent whisper to the Serck Expense Account. "May I recommend the Chateaubriand, sire, it's especially good today."

"No, no," said Perry with a big happy innocent smile. "Let's get the food ordered before we decide on the wines."

Now once, when I had this impeccable taste, I would have known immediately if Perry was tweaking the waiter or if he really thought Chateaubriand came in bottles, but now I just dunno. If I ask him it sounds either snobbish and condescending or gullible and naive. Malcolm, one grade higher than me but light-years away in his cosmopolitan, man of the world hat, thinks he has heard of this ploy before, but nothing is ever new to him.

Even the apocryphal story of James the White in the Ritz got the same un-believing condescending shrug. James, you will remember, was living it up in the Ritz or some similar caff. The water, arriving with a cobwebby bottle of 1690 (or thereabouts) Chateau Rothschild, drew the cork and poured the customary spoonful into James' glass for approval. James swilled it around the glass, savoured the bouquet, carefully drank the wine and then nodded appreciatively.

"Ah yes," he said. "Imported."

Actually, I am a little distraught at the moment. Sue has been taken to hospital and today I got a copy of NOWHERE FAST that was sent to me because I'm Elda Wheeler!!!! Right there, by the address panel for the postie and all the neighbours to see, it says YOU ARE ELDA WHEELER.

This is all very worrying - and god only knows what the dear girl will think when she discovers that she has metamorphosed into me - but I should have guessed that eventually somebody would make the connection between Chuchy the dissolute (but handsome) lycanthropogist and Elda, beauteous editor of BAYING AT THE MOON. Now that I'm getting over the initial shock, though, it doesn't seem quite as horrible as I first thought. Previously, the high protein suppers seemed the only attraction, but once you think about it there seems to be other interesting perks, too.

However, although it is a tenet - no, it's the very keystone of our belief, our trufan faith, that all knowledge is contained in fandom, there are occasions when I'd rather not share it with all and quandry like this. Thank god (again) that Towner has passed on.

"Sue," I said, as they carried her out to the ambulance, "do you think I'm bisexual?" She mumbled something but, as you can imagine, it's very difficult to lip-read people wearing oxygen masks, and the newly learnt sign language was proscribed by the drip-feeds attached to her arms. The premedic steering the trolley, full of petty authority, was quite rude when I tried to lift the mask a little to make for better understanding (but you know how it is with the National Health people nowadays), and I never did understand just what she was trying to say.

When you think of it, though, does it really matter? I already feel thirty years younger - but feel a little guilty about my alter elda. I have always had this vestigial belief in lycanthropy and if this is the change of life then I'm all for it. It's nice to be a were-been and not a has-been - and phooey to all that wolf nonsense. Believe me, it's much nicer to be a bird than a beast and I'm quite looking forward to the next con now. I know wosname, the 23 times a weekend Scottish vegetarian who whisks Elda/me off to view his oats as soon as she reaches the hotel, will be there too. I must remember to take a head of lettuce or two and perhaps a few radishes to munch on during the intervals and will no doubt be able to remember the highlights as it were for my con-report. Or would that be sexist?

I suspect that all of my generation are sexist to a certain degree. (You do realize that I am old enough to remember the war?) (Even though I can still pass for 35 in a dimly lit bedroom.) (Although, sadly, not for very long.) I

do try not to be too obviously sexist. For one thing, Avedon would break her Coke bottle over my head if I disgraced her, and for another, the Lady Captain would crown me with her 6-iron (but never her wood; it might chip the varnish) if she caught me referring to her as The Little Woman, but in the circles I move in outside of fandom, sexism is endemic.

For instance, we had one Lady Supervisor at Ford Daventry and 83 men supervisors, and golf is even worse - it must be just about the most sexist sport of all...

Staverton is a rarity amongst clubs because women are allowed to play at any time. At most clubs they have one mid-week day of their own when they can play as they wish, restricted times on other days, and a total ban on Sunday mornings (when any decent woman would be home cooking up the beef and the Yorkshire instead of cluttering up the course). And even avant-garde Staverton is ruled by a committee of 8 men and the one Lady Captain to decide who is allowed to do what.

And if you think this is bad you should see some of the long-established Scottish clubs...

A couple of years ago they held the finals of the All England Lady's Championship on the Old Course at St. Andrews. This in itself is a very great privilege. To golfers the Old Course is a sort of green cathedral and being allowed to walk in it, let alone play on it, is the equivalent of turning the Sistine Chapel into a tearoom, or allowing women to cross the floor in the Calvary Club.

Naturally, God being a man and playing off 3 handicap, it pissed down all day. As the leaders came down through the heather towards the final 18th green the storm increased - lightning, thunder, hurricane gusts - and the few faithful women spectators huddled in the lee of the clubhouse.

Being golfers themselves - albeit inferior in strength and stamina - they knew full well that the Clubhouse was the sanctum sanctorium of golf, the holy place where no woman had ever been allowed to cross the threshold. There is a picture showing Wallis Windsor fuming when she was left outside with a glass of lemonade and bannock whilst Teddy boy nipped inside for a quick gin, and even the Queen Mum, who is revered in these parts because she once caught a salmon on the River Dee, was fobbed off with a marquee, and Nancy Lopez, who is as near to the godhead as any woman ever could be, had to put on her spiked shoes in the potting shed.

In large letters above the door it says: "No dogs, no women admitted. Not ever."

Now, where were we... rain, pissing down, tempest, cloudburst, Ragnarok. Some of these ladies, no longer young, were lying on the sodden turf, moaning and trying to keep their heads above water whilst their friends supported them as best they were able.

Finally, the clubhouse door was opened. A liveried club servant stood in the doorway under a large black umbrella. The women, thinking the agony was over

and that they would be allowed to shelter in the hallway until the storm had passed, surged forward.

The servant held up his hand. "Sir Patrick McBain, Captain of The Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, asks that the lady spectators would kindly step clear of the windows as they are obscuring the members' view of the tournament. Thank you." He lowered his umbrella, stepped back inside and closed the door.

That, baby, is sexism. It is also true.

Sue? Yes, she really was in the hospital. She had a very bad asthma attack. I called the doc out twice - he didn't mind in the least and told me to call him again if I needed him - because she wasn't responding to her prescriptions and was turning a pretty shade of blue. He said she would have to go into hospital. So, we went to Northampton General at 2:00 a.m. with a letter from him and they admitted her right away. And very good they were, too - blood counts and typing, X-rays, steroid drips, oxygen and a myriad of doctors and nurses whizzing about to look after her. thank god (Gracious! am I developing religious overtones in my senility?) for the NHS.

And that's it. I have to do the washing now, then make the beds, walk the dog, vacuum the house, go to Tesco's, prepare a meal for Sean and cope with ten million other things. And first I have to find my fucking pinny.

B B

QUOTE: "I kind of liked Dave\* & Collette. Dave was pretty drunk, talking about being ready for New York, he was down the street from a riot where a policeman was killed. He didn't even hear it, mind you, someone had to come to him and tell him to switch on the telly so they could watch the riot. Hah! I mean, in any major city worth its salt in America, police shoot each other over crack deals. Oh well. I grew up down the street from riots, anyway. He said he wanted to wear a sign that said "Tourist" so that he would get the chance to mess with New Yorkers, so I suggested he just wear a sign that said "From a Really Tough Part of London."

- Luke McGuff, 28 September 1988, about people he met at the worldcon

B B

Among the many hold-ups we suffered in the production of this issue, our fast-moving fanzine reviewer. It's ironic - I wrote and asked him for an article, and he sent one back by return of post. Well, that was easy. But then he called me up and said he'd just gotten another fanzine and he thought he might want to add a couple more pages. Okay, I said, I'll wait. And then after a week had gone by he phoned and said he didn't have anything to say at the moment after all. But he did threaten that there could be a next time.

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\*Hodson





## ONE EYE ON THE PRESENT

... Skel.



I am not generally known to be a person fascinated by statistics. This is because I'm not. Normally, just the very mention of the word will cause me to nod off in three seconds flat. Two seconds, if you say it loud. This week, though, I'm not running true to form. First, just a couple of days ago, there was the Offerton High School Drama Presentation. In olden days this used to be known as 'The School Play', but teachers are getting both more cunning and more fiscally aware. 'The School Play' was invariably a drama that involved a cast of 14,000, thus ensuring that all seats would be sold to dotting parents and that the entire season would be played to packed houses. The teachers in charge of Offerton High's drama group decided instead to put on a trio of short plays, each still requiring an enormous cast, and are doubtless already discussing various options for retiring on the proceeds.

The main problem for me was that Cas does not believe in leaving anything close to the deadline, and so we arrived a good half-hour before the start of the performance. Needless to say, there was no bar. Schools tend not to have such facilities - a glaring omission which oddly never seems to be raised in the House of Commons Education debates. This meant I was left with but one resource, the programme, to alleviate my boredom. Having read it cover-to-cover three times I was still left with 29 minutes to kill, and so I decided, the way you do, to go through the cast lists to see which first names were most common. There were actually 52 cast members (so OK, 14,000 was a slight exaggeration), but only five forenames were common to more than one child. 41 of the 46 names appeared only once. For what it's worth, David, Karen, Lindsay, and Melanie were the only duplications and Lo, Emma (3 cast members) led all the rest. This has been a Public Service Announcement on behalf of the PULP Census Bureau.

The reason that we were there, of course, was that our own dear Bethany was in one of the plays (Alan Ayckbourn's "Ernie's Incredible Illucinations"), playing the dual role of 'Patient with cold' and 'Lady in library.' As she made her entrance hiding her face behind an enormous hankie, and went, "Atishoo, Atishoo," Cas beamed with pride and said, "At least she remembered her lines." This caused me, Cas, and our good friend Joan Sharpe, to collapse in giggles, closely followed by the rest of the audience, as they desperately tried to conceal the fact that they'd missed one of the jokes in a play that was billed as 'hilarious'.

"What," you are doubtless asking, "has any of this to do with fanzines?" Well hang about a bit, because I'm coming to it. Slowly, true...but inexorably. Would I lie to you?

So, yesterday comes Avedon's request for this column, which says I'd be "a good person to ask" - why do I persist in translating that as "I've already tried everyone else, but they said, 'NO'?"\* Be that as it may, I am left with Avedon's request and myself in ~~statagely~~ strangely statistical mode. So I went into my den and grabbed some fanzines. I have a den now, ever since Nicholas ~~was/through/it~~ flew the skelnest as part of the process of growing-up. The zines on top of the pile were Jan Dawes' VSOP 3 and Elaine Stiles' BSFAN 17. This was sheer chance, on account of I'd just tidied up. One of them I'd read (VSOP 3) and just happened to be atop the pile; the other had arrived the previous day, and had gone on top of that. Two zines - one read, one unread - juxtaposed by sheer chance. What more could one ask for?

The first thing I did was make a note of the people who appeared with contributions (articles, artwork or locs) in VSOP. Here are all 20 of them:

Clive Ashworth, William Baines, Harry Bond, Chuck Connor, Buck Coulson, Jan Dawes, Steven Glover, Mike Glicksohn, Mike Gould, Steve Green, Ken Lake, Dave Mooring, Ludvig Prinn, Skel, Milt Stevens, Arthur Thomson, Martin Tudor, Lesley Ward, D. West, and Dave Wood.

Then I made a similar list of the 17 contributors to BSFAN 17:

Brian Earl Brown, rich brown, Marty Cantor, Gary Deindorfer, Alexis Gililand, Mike Glicksohn, Jay Kinney, Jeanne M. Mealy, Bill Rotsler, Elaine Stiles, Steve Stiles, Tara!, Harry Warner, Jr., Kip Williams, Walt Willis, and Cat Yronwode.

37 names, and the only one present on both lists was Mike Glicksohn's, which should simultaneously surprise and fail-to-surprise everyone. The surprise is that only one name is common to both lists. The fail-to-surprise is that it should be Mike glicksohn's name. OK so far, but I thought I should widen my net to include the WAHFs and such, and thus include all the active fans from both zines. A bigger sample and all that. The additional nine names for VSOP 3 were:

Mal Ashworth, Michael Bernard, Terry Broome, Bernard Earp, Jenny Glover, Judith Hanna, Eric Mayer, Sue Thomason, and Pam Wells.

The additional 14 names for BSFAN 17 were:

Greg Benford, Richard Brandt, Cecilia Cosentini, Cathy Doyle, Matt Groening, Gary Hoffman, Joy Hibbert, Ray Nelson, Norman Schwartz, Noreen Shaw, Bbob Stewart, Pam Wells, Jon White, and Ted White.

Only Pam Wells, with the dubious distinction of being WAHFed by both zines, adds to the list of duplications. So, with a total of 63 names active in both issues we find only two fans common to both lists. OK, end of facts and figures. Time now to View With Concern, to Point In Alarm...and all that shit.

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\*The editor denies this. - ed.

Well, yes, I do find it slightly alarming. I stress that this is not a stacked deck but two zines effectively taken at random. yes, there is strength in diversity, but that strength comes from the potential for cross-fertilization of ideas, and precious little of that can take place when zines are basically in separate universes, as seems increasingly to be the case these days. And that potential for sharing ideas, concepts, worldviews, and knowledge is highlighted very well by these two fanzines.

They are both interesting and full of good material, but they are different in so many ways you'd almost think each was produced for the prime purpose of that difference. Both zines are fannish but are totally different in orientation.

BSFAN 17 concentrates on fans as fans, doing fan-type things. Steve Stiles' "Better Late" is his 1987 Conspiracy report. rich brown's "Whatever happened to Faasanfiction?" is a personal essay, couched as faanfiction, on the difference between faanfiction and personal essays (say again?), and Taral's "nothing like the sense of wonder" is a recounting of the life of an archetypal SF pro of the old school, not totally dissimilar to Isaac Asimov, couched in blank verse (no, dummy, it isn't Isaac who's couched in blank verse). These last two set the tone because they are...mannered? No, carefully wrought is better. The way in which they are told is as important as that which is told. Alexis Gilliland's "The Rise and Fall of Sky Father and Earth Mother" is also a quality piece and isn't just here as the token exception to prove the rule. The artwork, best described by the term "Fannish Traditional", is light-hearted and never dull. Just what one would expect, in fact, from the likes of Bill Rotsler, Steve Stiles, Alexis Gilliland, Taral, and Kip Williams, and the layout is crisp, clean, and restrained. BSFAN is produced with hi-tech aids, has justified margins, the masters are produced by laser printer before being sent out to the Copyshop to be professionally produced and saddle-stapled. One is left with the impression of a class act.

Elaine Stiles is the editor (of what claims, somewhat ungrammatically, to be "A organ of the Baltimore Science Fiction Society", though apart from the Paul-Getty-Jr.-no-expense-spared approach to fanpublishing, no "clubzine" elements are apparent), and in her editorial she bemoans the fact that "Life" is interfering with her fanac. Ain't it da truth.

In Jan Dawes' editorial for VSOP 3 she mentions something similar, except that she doesn't complain of the fact, but accepts it gleefully. "Life" is a major element of her fanac. Bathing her kids becomes both an editorial and an article, and this approach runs all the way through VSOP, where the emphasis is on fans as people, fans in their everyday life. This emphasis is mirrored by the "cluttered" feel where the artwork (by herself and Dave Mooring, along with cartoons clipped out of newspapers by Mal Ashworth) is given no more space than is absolutely necessary. The text of VSOP is also justified and well mastered, but the show-through and crammed layout give a "down home" effect.

Jan provides a theme for the issue (Children/Childhood) and then lets her contributors use, abuse, or ignore it as they will. Ludvig Prinn produces a piece of almost straight fiction, whilst Harry Bond and Steven Glover provide the sort of concern with fandom so strong in BSFAN (though nothing like as



# JETBUFF LTD

Prop. Dave Langford

## ENDLESS LOOPS

"Software," said Charles Platt in menacing tones, "is a disease. Never get into software, Dave."

I laughed. They laughed when I sat at the keyboard, but then I started to hack the operating system. There comes a turning point in life when with horror you find yourself thinking, If (DayOfWeek=Thursday) and (DayOfMonth in '15..21, ) then DoBSFAMeeting; ...with a semicolon. It is a bad sign when you end sentences with semicolons.

The program counter clicked to the next instruction. If BSFAMeeting and (Month=January) and FoolishPromiseToPaulKincaid'November, then OhShit;

I was a featured speaker. I had been writing nothing but software for a solid month, and my brain was firmly embedded in one of those spaces that Bill Gibson writes about but never, never visits. I ported myself along a British Rail communications interface to the Paddington data terminal and... stop that... got to the celebrated BSFA pub. Buzzing fragments of indexing routines were milling behind my eyes before I'd so much as touched a drop, while before my eyes was Gamma, who had touched a drop.

"Accept data," this SF landmark seemed to say. "I am now Barrington J. Bayley's literary agent. Data entry terminates." He fell over.

Unreality error in central processor, I thought. Some ideas are too perfect and appropriate to be spoiled like this by coming true.

"What's happening tonight?" "I think it's a slide show." "What?" "The barman said." "No, Langford's talking." "Oh, him." "What about?"

"Himself. As usual," interposed Greg Pickersgill.

Thinks: If I open my mouth, all that will come out is 64 kilobytes of hex core dump and error messages.

"Slide show...?" "Gosh, they've arranged the chairs in rows for us. They never did that for the BoSFA before." "Langford's going to...."

"Who are you lot?" said the new arrival with the slide projector, before anyone could ask him to renew his membership.

"You didn't confirm your booking," added an implacable barman shortly afterwards, logic centres firmly locked against unauthorized tampering. Had he taken massive bribes from slide-show organizers? No, once again it seemed that a committee person had faithfully followed the traditional BSFA algorithm of If AllSeemsWell then Repeat DoNothing until CockUp;

Over the ensuing squabble came doomy Pickersgillian rumbles of "THIS IS SHABBY! THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION!"

I huddled in a corner, trying to scrape semicolons from the ends of my thoughts and wondering if I was going to be let off. But Gamma was slurring into a telephone with the resource and acumen which has made him what he is today (i.e. a man whose income is 10% of poverty-stricken Barry Bayley's). In mere minutes, powerful data compression routines had squeezed the entire meeting into the legendary Troy Club.

This, as will emerge, was all too appropriate. A venue resembling the Black Hole of Calcutta though less airy and wholesome, the Troy Club is best known as the site of innumerable launch parties for Broanan/Kettle collaborations called things like Spew and Secretions. "You should join," secreted Gamma, fondling a representative of the management. "All sorts of SF people are members. Terry Pratchett, and, er, me... and there's Terry Pratchett, and whataname who writes those Discworld books, and, and...."

System in naked terror mode, I conveyed. Unable to accept input. Mr Kincaid had decided I was giving a talk after all. The eager BSFA crowd was pressed hard against my chest, making it something of a challenge to draw breath and hold them spellbound. I duly failed to hold them spellbound with the story of the unpublished Guts! -- called by Ramsey Campbell "The first horror novel I don't even dare to read!" -- which had become the first horror novel that even Grafton Books don't dare to publish.

(They accepted and paid for it in 1987; by the week of that BSFA meeting they'd just ticked their way into breach of contract for non-publication. Over the last year the authors have fielded upwards of eight hundred enquiries about publication date -- six of them not from Neil Gaiman -- by advising that seekers after truth write to Grafton editor Nick Austin and bother him. Nick himself dives under tables and out of windows when he sees me coming.)

Better to draw a veil over my reading from the Guts! chapters tastefully called "The Chyme of Midnight" and "The Lights Are Going Out", which probably went Repeat ReadWordNotLoudEnough; If EndOfSentence then PauseNotLongEnough; until EndOfMS; ...Like that but less terse and exciting. My audience seemed to be many echoing miles distant, a neat trick in a bar scarcely larger than a British Rail toilet.

Eventually firm hands were pressing beer on me, too late to lubricate thoughts still all tangled in algorithms and program loops. Abi Frost and Avedon Carol

united to claim the existence of deep structural flaws in the programming of my outmoded hairstyle. I tried to explain to Owen Whiteoak that he'd taken and quoted with ghastly seriousness a remark ("Do we all have to gaffiate now?") which I'd made with cheerful irony. He looked blank, as so frequently he does. I failed to convince Paul Kincaid that important parts of me seemed to have been left behind in random-access memory. Gamma gave an impressive demonstration of how much spittle he could balance in his beard before falling over again. Greg Pickersgill probably said something. I probably misheard it.

Next morning, eyes still not quite in focus (which had been routine for two weeks), I toyed with the idea, glimpsed dimly at the BSFA thrash, of writing some science fiction. But the programming work was calling and there was no time. Charles Platt was right, you know.

If (Software=Disease)....  
IF (Blood=PriceOfAdmiralty)....  
Question: (ToBe) or (Not ToBe)....

Is anyone out there well-informed on the cold turkey cure?

\* \* \* \* \*

Something glittered on the alien blue-green sward not fifty yards from the ship. Intensely intrigued, all rushed to it.

"Why, it's only a cogwheel," cried Madeline. Steve gave her a glance from which love and respect were conspicuously absent.

"A left hand helical mitre gear," he said, with emphasis on the last word. "Involute tooth form, helix angle about twelve, ground after hardening," he went on didactically.

"What does it all mean?" cried Madeleine hysterical y. Steve regarded her irritably.

"It means I know more about gears than you do."

From NOVAE TERRAE, August 1938, Second Anniversary Issue  
(Excerpt from D.R. Smith's story, "In The Grand Manner")\*

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"Oh Lord, will you please tell me what purpose macho serves in this universe other than bad dialogue?"  
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\*As quoted from SF Digest, Burrell, 1952.

# LETTERS

Edited by Avedon Carol

§§Before we begin, we would like to take this opportunity to echo the thoughts of many others and suggest to Harry Bond that he type his name on his locs, since no one can read his signature. Thank you. We now resume our regularly scheduled programming.

Due to technical difficulties, the following letter got hidden under a pile of comics for several months. See, I knew I'd missed something. §§

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Censorship is always political, and if Andrea Dworkin wants to enlist the Moral Majority, she'd better have a very long spoon, because when you get right down to basics those people regard a woman who belongs to no

one but herself as infinitely more dangerous than Larry Flint. Which is one of the few things they've got right!

Sexism and fascism are indeed aspects of the same phenomenon - the reduction of other human beings to commodities to be bought and sold (there is a simple name for such a social system - slavery) - which is why we in the UK cannot expect any meaningful attempt by this government to combat sexism. The root of their philosophy is that everything can be, and must be, reduced to a commodity. If it can't be so reduced, it isn't important, if it exists at all. Which is why they know the price of everything and the value of nothing. Taken a little further, this philosophy (if it can be dignified by such a title, as that implies something fully thought out, which Thatcherism/Reaganism/Libertarianism - call it what you will - isn't) would lead one to think that if a woman wishes to sell her body/image in a market place, she not only has the right to do so but the duty as well. You want obscenity? You got it.

§§I call it Calvinism. And now back to business with locs on PULP #11. §§

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Although aimed in the main at one specific fanwriter, Avedon's "Going Nova" made for an incisive assault on an entire fannish form more and more in vogue these days - character assassination, (barely) disguised as humour. Which is not new, but what makes the newer

brand more offensive is that the personality profiles being used as Aunt Sallys are to a significant degree constructs, designed specifically for this purpose by the clique of "juvenile sadists" which Avedon identifies. First, they evolve an image of, say, Harry Bond; then they use this stereotype as the butt of their humour. There's little or no opportunity for the scapegoat to fight back, to restore a truer image, without appearing to whinge or (worse) to give the "humour" an even wider currency.



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Whilst I think Avedon over-reacts to Ashley's article in LIP 4 and takes the Nova Awards too seriously, I agree with her perceptive comments on it. It was not only very similar to an earlier one of his (I can't recall the title or where it appeared, but it has a graphic scene wherein his girlfriend is giving him a blow job), but it showed such obvious delight in his own misery that it is hard to understand what exactly he is trying to tell us - if anything. The impression he gives is one of duplicity of feeling, insincerity, sadism and a perverse form of exhibitionism which weaken what would otherwise have been a very strong article. To what extent are fans swayed by the subject matter rather than the quality of the writing, when it comes time to vote?

There are a number of fans and fanzines equally worthy of the Nova Award this year, but what does winning it actually prove that being nominated doesn't? That you can market your zine better? That you have a larger print-run? That you know what fans like to read best (articles about other fans, articles about cruelty and sex?)? Perhaps the award results would change if every faned had equal opportunities in the distribution of their zine, or if more Novacon members voted (which presupposes they get the zines and have time to read them)? But since this seems unlikely to happen for some time yet, it's silly to take the awards as seriously as Avedon does. If we really want to treat fan awards seriously, then perhaps the best method would be to create a rotating panel of judges who can announce a shortlist several months before the convention, allowing members to request the zine and cast informed votes.

§§Panel of judges? Advance shortlist? Who is taking the Novas too seriously? More to the point, the article wasn't really about the Novas, you understand - much of what I wrote about Ashley was written before the convention, at a time when I hadn't yet given any thought to the awards. The Novas are interesting to me only as a reflection of values, and this is what concerns me - just how creepy does someone have to be before people look at them and say, "Stop"? At what point is talent overshadowed by the ugliness of what that talent is used for? What does it mean when we use our art to exemplify our lowest values, and when people laud such art over works which express higher values?§§

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Once, long ago, I thought it was possible that I too might win a Nova Award. I struggled with typewriters and computer printers and stencils and a second-hand Gestetner and produced a fanzine. Nobody noticed.

It wasn't even the first zine I had edited. For two years I had tried to keep running a zine for the local group of the Tolkien Society, except that eventually I seemed to be the only one writing it (which explained the strange names some pieces were blamed on). I lost count years ago, but in terms of number of issues edited I reckon even Ian Sorensen is only just catching up.

But I'd given up hoping for any notice. Even a postcard-of-comment was a thing to be treasured amongst the heirlooms of my house.

And now come your revelations about how to get a Nova Award for fanwriting. It isn't wit or stylistic elegance. It isn't having something important to say. All you have to do is be obnoxious in some London pub, tear into poor

defenceless neos, and lead people to think that if they don't vote for you they will find their typer being dropped onto their kneecaps from a great height.

This isn't as easy as it appears when I have a look at the railway timetables. I don't see much chance of contributing to the rumours of fannish seduction as a way of getting cheap B&B in reach of the Wellington, since I am heavier than Harry Bond and can't even do the basic Madison. (Let's do the Time Warp again.)

I did hope to get off for Congregate soon enough in the morning to park the car up at Wansford and travel the last few miles on the Nene Valley Railway, just to satisfy Dave Langford's strictures on conrep writing. It must be at least twenty years since anyone arrived at a con by steam train. If you saw that sequel to "The Dirty Dozen" on TV over the Xmas advertising season you will have seen one of the coaches I rode in the other time I visited Peterborough. And did you know that one of the nicknames of a BR Class 9F was "Spaceship"? Now, it would be worth travelling to a con on an enthusiasts special just to say that you'd come by spaceship...

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First off, I should say that PULP has definitely improved in the last few issues. A more positive presence in the loccol, less waffly letters printed, and some more irritated articles, all contribute. It's still not my favourite fanzine, but I look forward to getting it now, which hasn't always been true.

Several things I want to comment on this time around. Vince's editorial is possibly just another example of good ol' Vince chortling up his sleeve while he plays innocent and pretends ignorance, but I have to correct his idea that fans these days don't want to be filthy pros. There are at least two workshop apas going, both started by Sherry Coldsmith and me, called Apple and Apricot. The members who have sold at least one story are Sherry, Christina Lake, Simon Ounsley, Susan Beetlestone and Nicola Griffiths. Of the five, only Nicola is not really a fan as far as I know, and Susan is a recent acquisition. Other fans whom I know are submitting work (and in one or two cases getting published) include Michael Cobby, Charles Stross, Mike Abbott, Caroline Mullan, Brian Ameringen, and myself. Other names of hopefuls spring to mind easily - how about Jackie Gresham? Anne Page? Simon Polley? I could go on. But you get the idea.

Best thing in the issue this time was Avedon's "Going Nova". I sometimes feel that Avedon's style is too distinctive, too individual, but I'll let it pass on the grounds that it's still pretty good. "Going Nova" is a good piece regardless of what I think about the contents, because it's a well-structured piece. A fan who knew about the Nova awards and the discussion about them (many of us, surely) would guess pretty quickly what the article was going to be about, but Avedon builds tension, uses a narrative drive without collapsing into rant, and gets a conrep slipped in as part of the atmosphere, part of the article. Under the noses of the people like me who expected it to be all about the Nova awards.

So why am I saying this instead of saving it for a review column in an overdue AFL 4? Because I didn't agree with what Avedon said, but that doesn't mean I don't admire her craft. And I don't agree with much of what Ashley said in his piece in LIP 4, but I am forced to acknowledge that it's the most skilful piece of writing I've seen him do, and one of the best things anyone's done this year.

I didn't vote him top; I voted him third, after Sherry and Simon Polley. And that's an honest opinion - I cannot truthfully name a fourth fanwriter who has demonstrated that level of skill\*.

So should I vote for the nice guys instead? Should I vote for Dave Langford because his stuff always makes me smile? Or for Christina Lake because she's probably more or less the next on the list after Ashley? No way. Bland Novas are no Novas. Calling Ashley a shit wouldn't change my vote: you should convince me he's a bad writer.

In fact, as I said to you at Novacon, I think you're over-reacting a little. Sure, it's cruel to say those things about Harry, and I feel sorry for him. I wouldn't use those tactics myself. But I don't think that this time he was being wanton in his abuse, as he was in "Playtime" (STOMACH PUMP 10). Ashley is cruel, yes. But I think it's wrong to deny him the Nova award on those grounds, and it's wrong to pretend Harry is a perfectly socially competent person.

Bridget's fnz reviews - I agree about Martin Tudor's piece in EYEBALLS IN THE SKY 5 being brilliant, and I hope a few people remember it when the next year's Novas roll around. What I'd really like, though, is the chance to make a couple of comments about her mention of my piece in NUTZ 7. This was the one about fannish conversation being mostly pretty poor. First, yes of course I agree that mundanes share all these faults. In fact, I happen to think fans score marginally higher than mundanes on the conversation ability meter. But secondly, I'm a little worried by her remarks about "snide fun". I asked people to send in names of people they reckoned sinned in various ways. There were two riders on this, one which I feel Bridget might have mentioned, and one which she knows nothing about. The first is that I stipulated, after discussing it with Pam, that you had to nominate yourself in at least one category. The second was that Pam and I both felt it would be counter-productive to print the results (if in fact anyone bothers to write in) as it would indeed be snide. But the process of nominating and thinking about faults would be a brain-loosening and loc-promoting thing, and might well lead to quotable excerpts. I trust Pam to select from what comes in to create a loccol without cruelty, but with some bite. I hope that's what happens.

Somebody should tell Jerry Kaufman that Dave Langford's White Dwarf reviews are indeed available in collected edition. Card bound, but I forget the price. Well worth having. You can order them from Dave direct.

Rob's comment somewhere else about Puerto Rico has given me a wonderful idea, which I must share with you. I am never going to read anything Ken Lake

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\*!!!!!!? - ac

writes again. Calling Harry Bond names may be cruel, because he is striving to improve his standards, but Jimmy Robertson is my flavour of the month since he suggested THE CAPRICIAN should just ignore Lake, rather than print the trash he writes. This seems perfectly fair to me, as Lake is unrepentantly snuffling and snorting in his ideological garbage for more bullshit to hit the fans with. His recent letters to Vector have put the case for a violent socialist revolution better than I ever could, simply by so eloquently demonstrating the alternative. And before someone starts oinking about censorship, let's remember how effectively censorship of the left is operated in this country, and let's retaliate.

§Gee, I could spend pages responding to that series of faint damns, Mike. (I mean, yeah, I guess I do have too distinctive a style - for a girl.) (What does "too individual" mean, anyway? Is that like being "very unique"?) I particularly like the part about Harry Bond. I mean, hell, if we want to spend a little time examining the socially imperfect, what makes Harry Bond so special? There are plenty of people in fandom who are rank nerds (and considerably older than Harry, too - that much less likely to change), and I can think of plenty who commit far more social sins than Harry without being singled out for this sort of treatment. Even some people who have reaped high honours in fandom look like real losers when held up to the light. Harry is just a kid with a home life which he understandably escapes from into fandom. Some day, when he has been able to put some distance between himself and those experiences, he will probably realize that he does indeed have something besides fandom to write about, and maybe he'll share it with us. In the meantime, how will this ridicule improve him - or anything else? Most of us survived our less sophisticated years of existence by being able to screw up without having such a spotlight focussed on us. I can't think of anything more terrifying than having to undergo that phase of life knowing that every mistake you make is going to be highlighted in print for posterity.

Meanwhile, Mike, remember that we aren't pretending you are a perfectly socially competent person, either; still, we don't treat you like M. Ashley treated Harry Bond.

But you still haven't told me what's so good about Michael Ashley's writing. All I see is the occasional glimpse of some potential, if undisciplined, writing ability. The capability to compose a coherent sentence is nothing to write home about, and the fact that you can read his stuff without falling asleep is no more impressive than the fact that Maggie Thatcher, too, keeps me awake.

Using the same criteria mentioned or hinted at in your letter above, Ashley doesn't cut the mustard. Structurally, he stinks - which is why he always has so much inappropriate material tucked away in pieces which would have stood better without it. Certainly, if you examine an artist's work in more macrocosmic terms, Ashley's output makes him reprehensible. "But he's so good at being anti-social." Oh, please. Ken Lake, in technical terms, is far superior to Ashley, after all. Most of the fanwriters I mentioned in "Going Nova" - although you apparently dismiss them - would undoubtedly have written far more explosive pieces than Ashley wrote, given the same material. This is one thing I strongly fault him for as a writer - he lets his material down most of the time.

And really, Mike, if Dave Langford always makes you smile, what better reason do you need to vote for him? He is intelligent and thoughtful while remaining accessible, erudite without being snooty, and very witty indeed - without doing hurt to others. Given the number of people in the world - and fandom - who never make me smile, I consider that quality in Langford which "always makes me smile" a pearl beyond price, and I'd rather encourage him than someone who can't make points without putting someone else down.§§

C. Randy Harris                    There seems to be such a dearth of talent nowadays  
32 Lake Crescent                that I feel we should be patient with Ashley and hope  
Daventry                            that eventually he will grow up, rather than drive  
NORTHANTS NN11 53E              him away. Mind you, I wouldn't have voted for him at  
   Novacon - I don't know if I would have voted for  
anyone - but if I had voted, it would probably have been for Rob (because the history is important and a permanent and valuable reference that we need) and for Owen because he makes me laugh.

The only witty limerick about Devizes is (my opinion):

A schoolmistress late of Devizes  
Was had up at the local Assizes  
For teaching young boys  
Matrimonial joys  
And handing out condoms as prizes.

But Ray Thompson (note the sinister "p" which shows he's not royalty) was good and original. Send him the money.

Ken Lake puzzled me. Is he saying that PODNC has the right to veto increases in postal rates? Is it an elected body (and why isn't Vincent on it)? And, have they ever successfully vetoed a postage increase?

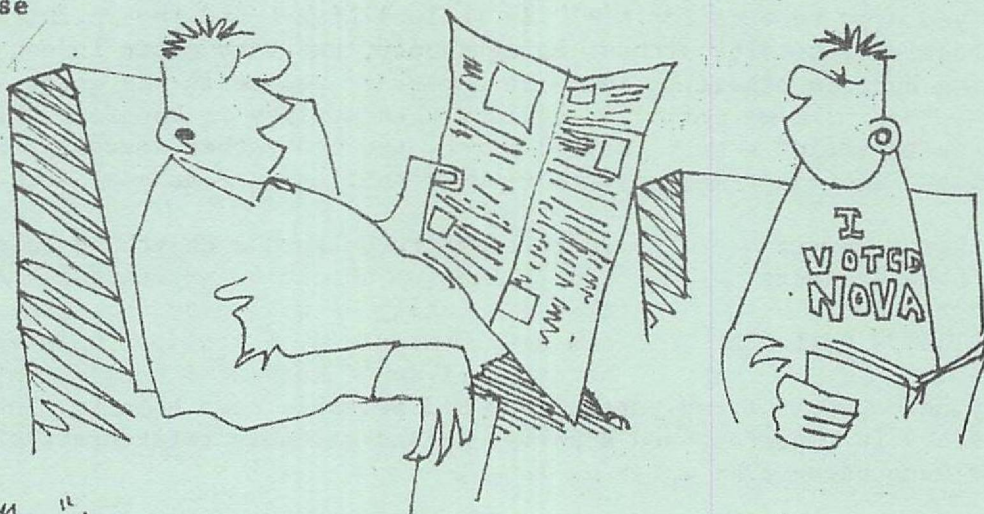
And surely Vincent answers his own question when querying Rob Jackson's wry "rare though it is for a member of the committee to stick his/her head above the parapet these days". Surely they don't stick their heads up because as sure as hell we'll shoot 'em down as soon as we spot them. It's a lot easier for them to try to get on with the job without fighting a war at the same time.

And having said that, I think it's wishful thinking to hope to sell 500 surplus Souvenir books at £10 a throw. Realistically, they might be fortunate to get £1 a copy when they are eventually remaindered. So there... and I'll save the silver bullet in the other barrel for next time.

Langford is always a delight to read. Fleet-footed Bridget has a nice thoughtful column again, too. The Atom/Alexis cooperative cover was a success. I wonder if it would be feasible to get half a dozen fanartists to work on a cover - say, Atom, Alexis, Taral, Bell, West - er, no, perhaps not. All those editorial dead bodies to step over first, hummm?

§§How do you know Ashley hasn't scared off potential writers, eh? I mean, if all you can expect to accomplish by publishing is calling the attention of Ashley to yourself... And I already know what "verge" means in French, Dad.§§

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Atom "I SEE DWEST HAS WON 'NEWFACES' AS WELL  
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Thanks muchly for PULP 11, another good issue. Personally, I've never understood the prevailing view in British fanzine reviews that PULP is "bland" and "predictable". To me, it's one of the best fanzines of the late Eighties (my answer to Paul Kincaid's query in the last CRITICAL WAVE, namely, "Is that really what we would want?" is, "Well, yes, it is, actually."). I think that for a few issues after the Razorbill furore in issue 1, there may have been a deliberate (and understandable) attempt to upset the salad dressing over stropgy garcons (or "pour oil on troubled waters"), but the quality has never been missing, and PULP has remained a very enjoyable read.

The only thing that really prompted me to write this time was Mike Glicksohn's "no holds barred" comment, which Avedon quite rightly stomped on. To hammer the point home: if an "old-timer" who has previously produced good fanwriting/editing suddenly puts out a duff fanzine/article, I would immediately assume that she is under stress but still doesn't want to leave fandom altogether. Perhaps the pressure of work is grinding them under; perhaps a family relationship is suffering; perhaps their health is bad (or any combination of the above) - yet despite adversities they still want to keep in touch with fandom. At a time like this, is it fair to launch a "no holds barred" attack on them? Won't that just ensure that they vanish from the fan scene altogether? (And just what does "no holds barred" imply? That it's okay to send letter-bombs through the mail?)

I find it extremely unlikely that the "old-timer" concerned is unaware of the inferior nature of their current effort. Show a little understanding. A little sympathy. A little tolerance.

This doesn't mean that we shouldn't point out the weaknesses in any fanzine.

But this can be done without the "no holds barred" approach. Polite advice is always more likely to be heeded anyway. It is possible to criticize someone's work or disagree with their ideas without throwing gratuitous insults at them. It is even a good idea.

It's not good enough to say that KTF reviewing can make entertaining reading. After all, everyone enjoys watching a good bonfire, but if it's your house that's burning down, the excitement is somewhat less pleasurable.

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I'm surprised Vince has trouble running into "young hopefuls"; seven names leapt into my mind with no conscious effort, and thirty seconds pondering doubled that figure. I would suppose it's merely a question of who you hang out with. I'll just mention

that in addition to How to... there is also, now, Writing Science Fiction by Chris Evans (a review will appear in the next CONCATENATION). I (with no professional sales to my credit, and four chapters into a 10 chapter novel) am on a panel at Elydore to encourage fans who wish to write. This panel came about following several suggestions from the previous year's Elydore.

Easily the best piece in PULP was "Going Nova". Obviously, to some extent, everybody cares what people think about them, but it depends on who the "people" are. General "people", as far as I'm concerned, can go and fuck themselves; if I care what a person thinks about me, then it is probably because I care for/about that person. And occasionally, even they need straightening out due to some misconception. As for sheer spiteful nastiness to fans; I confess I have never understood the need for it. If I do not like a fan, or what they do/write, I generally ignore them. If I like them but think they're a little fucked-up, I try to help them. If I love them and their output, I praise them. Nastiness, especially to new/young fans, can only mess things up - I would put a lot of fandom's current problems down to the way neos were treated in the early eighties (for instance, Yorcon II, in my estimation, scared off a great many talented fans who went on to swell the ranks of media/comics fandom.

"Jetbuff" - I think conventions are having a lot of problems currently (again, see the upcoming Concatenation - then attend my panel at Mexico) and I think one of the reasons for them is that conreps, generally, have been disappearing from fanzines, and, when they do appear, little is written about the convention itself. This is a trend I wouldn't mind seeing reversed.

Briefly, on letters: Popcorn & Dope - throw in a steak per day and I'll go for it. Crusading vs. Passive Sympathy - I can't think of anyone who crusades about everything all the time. Things I don't crusade about (usually because I am crusading about something else or less well informed than others who can crusade better in a given area) I usually still try to handle, in my passively sympathetic way, on an individual level either by (a) example, (b) via individual communication or, (c) by lending support (emotional or whatever) where it is needed. No one wins a fight alone, Ken, so support.

\$\$Hmmm... I'm trying to apply that bit about conventions to my experience, but I really don't remember a time when programming was discussed unless people wanted to single it out for specific condemnation or praise. I got into a pretty lively fandom, and people did bitch a lot about a lack of feminist

programming, or when we finally got that, of sexist programming designs (program items not specifically feminist had few women, feminist program items were virtually all-female, etc.); and people had praise for outstanding programming - but your average middle-range item got very little coverage, unless the writer was actually on a panel or directly involved with an event.

On the other hand, you are quite right that everyone does care what people think of them, to some extent - although obviously some opinions may count more than others. You can't be constantly limiting yourself because someone might get the wrong idea. But whether or not you actually care about an individual may not be the only factor - if someone is known to be particularly vindictive and able to effect some sort of revenge, you may be forced to worry a great deal about their opinion (for example, I hold the CIA in contempt, but I'd hate to be in a position where they had it in for me). Making the wrong enemies is always a dangerous business. And contrary to the popular reassurances, it is possible for good people to get the wrong idea about you just because they've been given false information - you don't want to write those people off, but it can be very difficult to straighten things out.

And just when you thought it was safe to forget about the fanzine review discussion, no less than three untimely locs on PULP #10 arrive in the mail on the same day. I know Jimmy Robertson has gotten tired of this subject, but I've got to print this, since so many of us had begun to think the individual who wrote the following loc had gone gafia (or at least fafia).\$\$

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The USRE of PULP #10 arrived in yesterday's mail, and I perused much of it in my dentist's chair before the nitrous oxide hit. I've intended to comment on each of the previous PULPs, but never quite did. (I did review #9 for Lenny Bailes' WHISTLESTAR, which he was going to publish last September; g'od knows when you'll see that.) In any case, I've been following the LoCs vs. Reviews controversy with fascination, and I'd like to offer the following thoughts:

Reviews/critiques do not exist for the primary purpose of rewarding/chastising the object of the review, and certainly not with the intention on the part of the reviewer of "improving" the reviewee. If that was the aim, a private letter would be far better. It's boring to waste space in a review explaining for the Nth time the difference between "its" and "it's", but helpful to do so in a letter. Similarly, most worthwhile suggestions for "improvement" are better received in a private communication - the presence of an audience may encourage at least the perception on the part of the reviewee that the reviewer is grand-standing, and thus leave the reviewee defensive and hostile to suggestions. This is counter-productive.

No, reviews exist primarily to instruct the rest of us, at best, and at least to entertain us. A review is a statement of opinion, and a good reviewer is someone who can justify her opinions well.

Vinç seems to me to ignore this in his own criticisms (!) of fanzine reviews. Like Eric Mayer did only a few years ago, he seems to be saying that All Fanzines Are Good - and to wish to see all egoboo apportioned equally. Frankly, this worries me: it's a sign, I fear, of incipient dotage on Vinç's



part. Thirty or forty years ago Vinđ would have attacked his present stand with glee, and demolished it.

He speaks of "the sin of comparison", and says, "It's no use comparing fanzines any more than it's of use comparing fans." This is nonsense. Fanzines are not the fans who create them. Separate the art from the artist, Vinđ! (Not that people don't "compare" fans, in the sense of gossiping about them, arguing over who's better at what, and expressing preferences for socializing.) A fanzine is not the total reflection of the fan, and a fanzine, as an artifact, can - and will be - judged. The basic judgment is visceral: I liked it/I didn't like it. Some settle for that. Others introspect: examine their own reactions for causes and express verbally the justifications they've found for those reactions. This is very useful in itself for anyone who takes seriously the art of fanzines. What works in a fanzine? How does it work? Each and every faned brings something unique to his or her fanzine, and the rest of us can learn from them. Periodically a fan of striking originality does something no one else has ever done - something that, within the specific context, "works". Take Dave Bridges as a good example. While I would have said that Dave is so uniquely Dave that no one else could do a "Dave Bridges fanzine," this issue of PULP proves me wrong with Harry Bond's piece. Whether Owen or Terry (whose fanzine I haven't seen) would concede a debt to Bridges, I don't know. Neither do I know whether either is influenced by Bridges, nor, if so, to what extent.

But certainly Bridges, who was far from the first to devote a fanzine to his personal life and thoughts, showed us something: he showed us what could be done within the "personal" or "confessional" format, and at length. He opened a door through which others may now venture.

All this stuff goes on in fandom, willy-nilly; we're an anarchy. But the human impulse is to find patterns, to make sense of it all, to impose order on chaos. Thus, fanzine reviews: an attempt to understand fanzines better.

They also provide recognition and egoboo to the faned in a venue outside his own control (unlike LoCs), which I think enhances the egoboo. Personally, I'm discouraged by the lack of good fanzine reviews. Sometimes they are the only way the contributor to a fanzine gets any egoboo. Just to offer a couple of examples, I had pieces of which I was fairly proud in both the most recent SCIENCE-FICTION FIVE-YEARLY and IZZARD 9. S-FF-Y doesn't print LoC's (after five years they'd be pretty stale if they commented on the specific material in the last issue), and it looks like there will never be an IZZARD 10, so all I have left are the reviews. Those - despite the heavy-weight nature of both fanzines - have been scant to nonexistent. So much for feedback on those pieces.

And, beyond that, I enjoy good fanzine reviews because I learn from them.

Still on Vinđ, but no longer on reviews: The question of sexism in fandom, it seems to me, is being argued in non-overlapping terms. Vinđ's argument - that fandom as he knew it was always "equal opportunity" for women - is one I've used myself and recognize to be true in my own experience (but then, I'm another "Fifties Fan"). But the context in which this was true was that of Paper Fandom: fandom in fanzines and letters. In the earlier years of fandom,

Paper Fandom was the core; except in a few areas (LA, NYC, London), fans had little opportunity to socialize. There were very few conventions, and these existed as extensions of Paper Fandom: a place for long-time correspondents to finally meet. Thus: Sandy Sanderson could create the hoax-fan, Joan Carr, and "she" could successfully dominate British fandom for several years before the hoax was revealed. And, likewise, Lee Hoffman could let even her closest correspondents think she was male and in the process become a BNF. These things, like the Carl Brandon hoax, were possible only in Paper Fandom. But what Avedon is talking about has little to do with Paper Fandom and everything to do with social fandom: the fandom which came into existence on both sides of the Atlantic in the seventies, when travel was cheaper and easier, fans were much more mobile and also more densely populating major cities, and conventions could be attended every weekend. The sexism she describes is not that of Opportunity Denied - her own career in fandom belies that - but the more subtle and pervasive sexism of personal relations: the way she is treated at a party, or the assumptions revealed in casual conversations.

To this observation must be added another: I think the fans of the fifties and earlier tended to be cultural outsiders, utopians, one-worlders, humanists, Alien Observers. We did not identify too strongly with the prejudices of the mundane society which eddied around us. We were not only not as sexist, we weren't racist or ageist either. (We had Broad Mental Horizons, of course.)

I think fandom (in the US, anyway) has been "mundanized" in recent years. I think many modern fans are much less alienated from contemporary society, and much more reflective of that society's prejudices. I don't see much - if any - racism, but there's more ageism (on both sides of the Gap) and undoubtedly a fair amount of sexism.

So maybe, Vinç, we're defending a fandom that no longer exists.

On to the letters: Brian Earl Brown says, "Someone had to have told Eric Mayer, his opinions don't count because he doesn't go to conventions, because that's not something he'd have thought up on his own." Why not? Eric thought up quite a lot of things on his own, some of them amazingly malicious (his attacks on me, for instance, based in most cases on a unique mis-reading of something I'd said), and most of them paranoiac. But in this instance, by remarkable coincidence, another fan was loudly claiming that he had been told his opinions didn't count, because he too did not go to conventions. As I recall, he and Eric made common cause, and I would be surprised if each did not feel some kinship in their common refusal to meet other fans face to face.

No one in fact told either Eric or the other fan that his opinions didn't count because he didn't go to conventions. I told that other fan that his opinion on a TAFF race didn't matter to me because he wouldn't be meeting the winner, and I would be. And of course that got blown up by him into a monstrous attack in which, he claimed, I denied him his right to vote in a TAFF race, which was nonsense.

As Rick Sneary correctly points out, you can't really drum anyone out of fandom. The best you can do is to ostracize someone. I can think of very few cases in which this was done: maybe three. The first would have been Claude

Degler - who, I think, mostly just wore out his welcome, although he had few defenders left by the late forties. The second was George Wetzel. Wetzel was probably mentally disturbed; he was given to writing poison-pen letters, often in other people's names, in order to stir up trouble between his victims. (He went to great lengths to have his letters mailed in other cities, but his ranting style and bigoted puns - "Harlem Ellison", etc. - gave him away.) He also wrote letters to the FBI to complain about fans whom he disliked. Once these things became generally known, he was shunned by fandom. And the only other of whom I can think was Gertrude M. Carr, a feisty old woman who, after ten colourful years in fandom, mounted an attack on Walt Willis for being - get this - "UnAmerican." Mrs. Carr was an ardent supporter of Joe McCarthy, a member of the John Birch Society, and heavily into Roman Catholic dogma. (She also once told me that Coleman Hawkins didn't play jazz, because jazz was played only by white musicians and only in the twenties - she know, because she'd been there!) After her attack on Willis, Terry Carr (no relation) started a quiet campaign in FANAC to ostracize her, and within two years fandom had largely separated itself from her. But I always wondered if maybe most fans had just had enough of her anyway. Whatever, she never really totally left fandom, and she's reactivated in recent times as a current member of SAPS. 1958 was a long time ago.

So, nobody pushed Eric. Hell, plenty of people enjoyed his presence in fandom and tried to be his friends. I regarded myself as his friend until his attack on me (later I discovered he'd been rabidly bad-mouthing me in private letters for several years, while pretending friendship in his letters to me), and more recently one of his closest friends has complained bitterly of how Eric had abused that friendship.

I think Eric just used fandom up.

By this point I think Brian is Eric's last defender, the last of his friends to still stand by him. The rest have had enough of him. Eric must have realized that.

By the way, I blame Arnie Katz for the whole thing. Ask me some time why.

§§Actually, I think you overstate the degree to which other fans were responsible for Eric's ultimate position in fandom. When he unilaterally cut off all communication with so many of fandom's most prolific letterhacks, writers, and editors, he had pretty severely limited the number of places where his work would appear and the quality and quantity of feed-back he was likely to get. We can't be loccing fanzines we don't receive, praising work we don't see, and publishing articles never submitted to us. Eric wasn't really even ostracized so much as missed. When he said, "This will be my last communication with you, don't bother to respond," and kept his word on it, he was in no position to complain when he didn't hear from as many people anymore.

From all reports, Eric has found himself a different sort of fandom somewhere and seems to be perfectly happy - perhaps these are people who don't meet each other, and thus it may be easier for him to treat it impersonally.

As to sexism in fandom - "Lee Hoffman could let even her closest correspondents think she was male and in the process become a BNF," you say. This

sentence contains the possible interpretations that either (a) Lee Hoffman was only able to become a BNF because she concealed her sex from others (who would otherwise have devalued her work) or (b) it was the fact that she turned out to be female, rather than her actual performance, which made her interesting in her fandom. Interpretation (a) has, in other situations, been exactly the case (as shown by numerous studies of how people read and interpret work according to whether it appears to have been written by a man or a woman - as well as history, in which numerous women who used male pseudonyms were hailed as brilliant writers until they were discovered to be female - Tiptree/Sheldon being an obvious recent example), so it is not hard to wonder if this was not also what happened in Lee's case. I have no doubt that it is true within fandom, and has been as long as I have been involved in it.

I have run into all too many examples of a woman, no matter how talented, being treated as a second-rank player to far lesser talents because when people are talking about good fanwriters they list men, and only after being reminded of women do they make a second - and secondary - list of the women. When Rob was putting together the anthology of British fanwriting for Conspiracy, I was constantly bringing up the names of various female fans who'd done some outstanding writing over the last 10 years, in an effort to prevent an over-abundance of males squeezing the women out. Nevertheless, Linda Pickersgill had to make noise about it to the relevant Welshmen involved before those women were included. That simply shouldn't have been necessary. And, time being short, those pieces were chosen in terms of what would fit - Christina's piece, for example, is hardly her best work of the last decade. But that was not the first instance I'd seen of the phenomenon, either. Half the time you guys are writing us out of history before the ink is dry on our work.!!

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Chuch Harris muses on art, specifically Goya's Naked Maja, which was, of course, one of a pair; the Duchess of Alba painted with and without clothes.

Legend has it that Goya painted her in the buff over several leisurely sittings, and on hearing that the Duke of Alba was arriving in the morning, did her fully clothed and suitable for presentation at court by candlelight. Alas for legend. It is obvious on inspection that the lady, clothed, was wearing a waist cincher of some sort, and that the lady, naked, is configured in exactly the same way. The latter was probably a sentimental tribute (or a centerfold for some courtly gazette) copied from the former.

The Duchess of Alba was quite a gal, however. Besides consorting with (shock, horror!) artists, she upheld the honour of Alba (as was permitted by special decree) by refusing to curtsy to the Queen of Spain. She came to an untimely end, reputedly poisoned by that selfsame Queen.

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I was a little surprised last summer when Art Widner sent me a copy of YEOS #44, since I had already received one as part of a FAPA mailing. I dropped the redundant copy into the FAPA envelope with the idea of twitting Art in a mailing comment. Thus it wasn't until the last moment before the November

FAPA mailing that I dug it out and peeked inside to see if there were any

differences between my two copies of YHOS #44 that I could comment on - and discovered for the first time that that second copy was actually a copy of PULP #9, mailed with YHOS cover presumably to take advantage of Art's bulk-rate mailing permit. Of course, it was far too late to send a loc, and I despaired of ever seeing another issue of PULP.

And yet here comes another "American Edition" of PULP. Prudence says I'd better not chance failing to respond again (insert here appropriate joke about what a clever gal Prudence is). PULP may not have a Willis column anymore but it has Langford and Harris; combined in the right proportions they make a sort of ersatz Willis sufficient to alleviate withdrawal symptoms. And what other fanzine would throw out so casually the information that Helen Keller knew how to ride a bicycle? (No hands, I assume.) Prude is right - a household that receives only four or five fanzines a year can't afford to let this one go.

Hasn't Langford ever heard of Simultaneous Submission? (Three nanosecond pause while Dave bats out a John Norman pastiche entitled SIMULTANEOUS SUBMITTERS OF DAW.) Always seemed to me that would take care of the multiple commitments any fanwriter of quality finds herself faced with (I've just heard of this problem, mind you). A quick statistical survey would show that at least half the fuz that solicit pieces won't appear in the same decade as the submission - the same logic used by hotels and airlines in over-booking. As for the odd cases when two fanzines do appear with the same piece, odds are that one of the editors will have "edited" it out of all recognition - or that the overlap of the two fanzines' readerships will constitute a disjoint/null set - or that even if the two both bear the date Fall 1989 only one will appear on-time (i.e., the following January) while the other will sit uncolated in a closet for three years while the faned attempts to raise enough money for postage by buying lottery tickets. By the time it does appear, most of fandom will have been renewed through nature's miracle of neofans replacing gafiates, and the rest of us will nod sagely at the wisdom of singling out the piece in question for reprinting.

I gather that this is the approach that Chuch Harris uses, going by the comment on page 11 of #9 ("Hazel Ashworth... used material from the same letter we were going to use...in LIP"), only this fannish master applies the principle to letters instead of just articles. Hey, I think I see how to clean up this backlog of uncommented-upon fanzines! I hope you won't object if you read this letter in the loc column of BSFAN #18? Let me just flick on the copier...

§§Actually, Chuck was circulating his correspondence to a chosen few, and Rob had been grabbing bits of his letters all along for PULP. Hazel happened to grab that one in particular and edit it her own way - not as Rob had done, I hasten to add for the benefit of those who noticed the missing first and final paragraphs. §§

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Great collaborative cover! Wouldn't it have been just a little bit more fannish, though, if one of the little black characters was looking in the other direction?

I wonder if there are really fewer would-be pros in today's fandom? Oh, obviously there's a much smaller percentage of fans interested in a pro career, but could it not be that at one time during the early days of the sf field fandom attracted primarily those dedicated types who wanted to be apart of the professional side of sf whereas nowadays fandom attracts just as many of those die-hards but also vast numbers of readers, fringe fans and people with reasonably full and successful lives who find reading and writing for fanzines an enjoyable hobby activity? The would-be pros tend to get buried in the masses of non-aspiring-to-prodom amateurs who are just here because it's fun (or at least it's supposed to be).

A very powerful and passionate article by Avedon, proving that some good can come from even the most unpleasant or stupid events. When I read Owen's fanzine about the same situation (the first I'd heard about it, as well) I sympathized, but also thought his publishing a whole fanzine just about that one piece of fannish stupidity was a bit of an over-reaction. Fans frequently do dumb things and occasionally make bad choices. You grit your teeth, vent a little spleen and go on trying to set them on the right path by setting a good example. Reading this very fine piece by Avedon didn't make me think my reaction to Owen was wrong but it did make it even clearer to me how much distance can ameliorate the way we see and feel about things. (I also think that Avedon's article, taken in context of part of a fanzine, while no less intense than Owen's, somehow seems a more appropriate response. This probably reflects my deep-seated belief that Ashley just isn't worth a whole issue of anybody's fanzine.)

Both Owen and Avedon have tackled this topic with eloquence and fire and I doubt theirs will be the only views I read on the matter. But I can't help hoping this won't become the dominant theme in the British fanzines I so enjoy reading and participating in. Ashley is a petulant creep and doesn't deserve to occupy the thoughts and fanzines of writers who can and do out-write him and who will undoubtedly outlast him in fandom.

Great stuff by Langford and Harris, but aside from enjoying it all, there's not much I can add.

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Thanks for the copy of PULP 11. The article "Going Nova" was recently read with interest by various other members of the Leeds Group and contributed greatly to the evening's entertainment, several people being both surprised and cheered to discover they were part of such a Killer Elite,

But all this can be gone into some other time, if it seems necessary. Right now, just a small point left over from an earlier issue: "berk" is the short form of "Berkeley Hunt", not "Berkshire Hunt" as is stated in PULP 10. The Vale of Berkeley is in Gloucestershire (or Glos.), not Berkshire (or Berks.), so all that wonderfully confused rigmarole about postal districts and pronunciations is a little of the mark.

[[Gee, Don, I'm sorry if all of those compound sentences were over your head. I've had it from three separate sources that "berk" evolved from "Berkshire Hunt", and you are the first I've heard to suggest otherwise. So I checked

with Langford, who checked with Eric Partridge's Dictionary of Historical Slang. Partridge gives both, but believes Berkshire to be the original form, tracing to mid-19th century, while Berkeley seems to be 20th century.

Uh, "several people"? "Killer Elite"? Hmmm. I look forward to your brilliant refutation of things I did not say about people I did not mention. §§

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I am rather at a loss for the reasons British Fandom seems so violently to dislike Prime Minister Thatcher. Even more so than liberal fans in this country dislike President Reagan. But while our press frequently finds fault with the President, it never seems to find anything wrong with Mrs. T. Of course, they refer to her mainly in the realms of foreign policy, which usually supports ours. I like her myself, but then I don't understand your domestic problems - though most commentators say you are better off than before.

§§Come now, isn't your hatred for Reagan tempered by the fact that you've never been certain he's intentionally malign - I mean, that he just seems to be an amiable dunce? Or by the fact that, however strange it may seem, at least a little more than half of the active voters actually voted him into office? Or by the fact that there are three other bodies (The Senate, The House, & The Supremes) that can - and often do - stop him if he gets too far out of line? Or by the fact that there are state and local governments between you and him? None of that is true of Margaret Thatcher, you see. Barely over one third of the voters voted for The Blessed Margaret, but no one can stop her. There's no first amendment, no reliable charter, and no other body that can really get in her way. Moreover, the legislation she involves herself in has direct and immediate effects on individuals in a way that Ron's meddling never can - and it is enacted and implemented with astonishing speed. Maggie didn't like the government of London, so she abolished it. Maggie thought it was a shame that rich people who live in mansions have to pay more real estate taxes than poor people who live in tiny little flats, so she's replacing the rates with the poll tax, creating equality between them (isn't that nice?). And so on. And no matter what else you can say about Maggs, she is neither amiable nor a dunce. §§

WAHF: Ethel Lindsay; Krsto Mazuranic; rich brown; Harry Bond (I think); Janice M. Eisen ("I enjoy what one might call the 'collage' fanzine style, when done well, which PULP is."); Andy Sawyer (who reckons Langford is triffic); Pamela Boal; Ethel Lindsay; Duck Coulson ("Fandom certainly isn't full of liberal free thinkers; it's full of liberals who seldom think at all, but often expostulate."); Ken Lake (who quoted Vince's, "I looked around and realized that all the hot young writers were at least 35 years old," and remarked, "With newspapers and educational publications full of denunciations of the illiteracy of the rising generation...I would expect this to be the case."); Arthur Thomson ("...it's time they took some strong medicine."); Ian Bambro; Robert Lichtman ("It seems that since PULP started having an American edition, it's slower in arriving at my door than it used to be coming directly from over there."); and Pascal Thomas.

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Next issue edited by John Harvey (and no, Eve has not suddenly become a co-editor of PULP) - submissions to him at: 8 The Orchard, Tonwell, HERTS SG12 OHR, by 1 April 1989.

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