

FAPABIT

A supplement to Philosophical Gas 34, published for FAPA members and waitlisters by John Bangsund, PO Box 434, Norwood, SA 5067, Australia

27 May 1976 This first instalment of FAPABIT is dedicated to Chuck Hansen, who reminded me in the May mailing of what apas (and in some ways, fandom) are all about, and who is older than all the rest of us put together. So far (I've read only half of this mailing, but) Chuck has given me the most pleasure in this lot, in his *Damballa* 31. I'm not sure what to make of a bloke who buys his first Gestetner when he's past 60, and gets as much pleasure from playing with it as any teenager might (I was a teenager myself, barely turned 28, when I got my first Roneo, so I know what fun it is), but I know he's my kind of people.

Your feelings about apazines and genzines are pretty close to mine, Chuck. The only genzine I've read from cover to cover in recent months is, um, forgotten the title, the latest from Victoria Wayne, and it's all letters. The one before that was either John Brosnan's scabyzine or Ed Cagle's thing (the old memory is not in top gear tonight, folks), and they are both very very witty and amusing, John's in a typically Australian way, Ed's typically American. But these three genzines are really apazines for non-apas. (And a lot of sense that makes! Try explaining, JB.) What I mean is that the best qualities perhaps of the apazine are humour, informality and directness, and Victoria, Ed and John publish fanzines with these qualities, among others. So do a lot of other people: I chose these three as recent examples that have stuck in my memory.

When I publish a fanzine, with few exceptions, it is aimed immediately at ANZAPA (because I know most of the members personally), FAPA (because I'm getting to know you gradually, after only four and a half years) and a score or so friends who like what I do. The latter I call GRAPPA, if you were wondering what that outfit might be. The word is Old Slovenian for 'karass', I think.

I know that PG is available on subscription, but have you ever met any of my subscribers? A churlish lot, both of them, forever complaining about the two bucks they sent me in 1969 and nothing to show for it to date. No, I publish fanzines for the hundred-odd folk in ANZAPA, FAPA and GRAPPA, and the rest get copies if I get round to collating and posting them. Sam Moskowitz has never ever spoken to me in FAPA, but I reckon he publishes his stuff as much for me as anyone else, and even if that's a delusion, even if he throws up when he sees my name on the membership list, I appreciate what he's doing for me. It's mostly rubbish, sure, and it doesn't seem quite to meet the requirements of our Constitution, but I appreciate it. I appreciate it more than, say, Bruce Pelz's remarks in this mailing about the difficulty of preserving his minac when the mailings are running late. Minac is one thing, but bitching about keeping it up is something else. Mind you, Bruce is a

nice bloke. I enjoyed meeting him last August in Melbourne. He struck me as a kind of American Robin Johnson gone wrong - and even that is a compliment, dammit! I don't think I could live comfortably within 500 miles of Bruce, but he's okay. My point here is not about Bruce, but about what he said in this mailing. The Constitution graciously allows a minimum activity, and that's only fair, but a whole lot of members of FAPA seem to regard eight pages per year as maximum activity, and I confess that I find this a pretty mean attitude. In Australia we have a polite term for this kind of person: he is a bludger. Being a bludger of long standing myself, in various ways, I can understand this attitude, and I can live with it. But (pardon me, Bruce) I don't like it. Each year at Egoboo Poll time I look at those figures, and I see that Harry has his usual 96 pages, and a whole lot of members their 20 or 100-odd pages, and I'm usually up near the top on page-count, and I seem to finish up in the top three or four in the Poll, and that's very gratifying, truly - but there really are times when I wonder why I bother.

Then along comes something like Chuck Hansen's *Damballa 31*, or Don Markstein's stuff in this mailing, and I know why I bother. You really are people out there, real, fascinating, flesh&blood people, and every now and then you come leaping off the page and into my life. This is a wonderful thing, and the odd part of it is that you don't know what you have done. Harry and Redd and Gregg and Jack, to name only a few, are friends I live with, not just from mailing to mailing, but virtually from day to day, because I think of them almost that often. Consequently, I tend to write with them in mind. Susan and Mike and John and Don are possibly even closer, because I have met them, and I love them.

What I set out to say to you, Chuck, I think, is that although PG may not always seem to be addressed to you, it is. I am looking to your approval, and aiming at your enjoyment, as much as the member that addresses you by name, and as much as Andy Porter (who might never mention you in *Algol*), and as much as SaM (who never seems to mention anyone) and Bruce (who is just one of many that appear content to abide by the letter of the Constitution, rather than the spirit of the apa). Genzine, apazine, minac - what the hell? We're all in it for much the same thing, and if you don't know what that thing is, dear FAPA reader, maybe you haven't examined your motives lately.

I am delighted to have topped the Egoboo Poll again, and my delight is not diminished by the thought that 53 members did not vote. Any Egoboo Poll that doesn't put Harry in top place is wrong somehow, in my view, but I am happy to be no.1 in the judgement of the twelve that cared enough about FAPA's traditions to vote. Next year I reckon I'll be lucky if I run fourteenth behind Burbee (let alone Warner), so if you don't mind I'll just enjoy this moment of glory.

Did you notice that Roy Tackett didn't score a solitary point in the poll? How many of you gave him points, eh? The points I gave him should have got him into the top twenty or so. Awfully modest, the old HORT. I like him.

Harry (bless him) says all that needs saying about Hugos, and by implication, Egoboo Polls. To be thought of at all is honour enough. I'll drink to that.

30 May Re-reading the last two pages, I reckon I was a little hard on Bruce Pelz, but it's probably his fault. He's the kind of bloke you shouldn't really take literally, however seriously you take him - in short, someone rather like myself.

Having now read all of the mailing, except Irvin Koch's outlines of *Star Trek* plots, Don Markstein's list of his first five thousand fanzines, and possibly a few other things, I am reinforced in my two main beliefs about FAPA: (i) that it is an eminently worthwhile folly; (ii) if only because Harry Warner is in it. This is also my View Of Life.

I remain fair croggled at the difference between American and Australian prices. (Aussiecon visitors from Over There probably remain in the same condition.) Gregg Calkins's comments on buying houses provide an example - as well as making me wish we lived in a welfare-state where we could buy a \$45 000 house on \$3750 deposit and not pay more than 11% interest. (This place at Mile End is probably worth about \$35 000, and if it came on the market we could get it on, say, a deposit of \$2000, with a first mortgage of \$12 000 at 12.5 per cent and a second mortgage at 18%, plus the \$1500 or so needed for stamp duty and brokerage fees. I haven't done the arithmetic, but offhand I'd say our \$40 rent is a bit less than the interest we'd be paying on that lot, considering we haven't a cent to put towards any of it and would have to borrow the lot.)

Don and Chuck, I think, mention buying such things as duplicators and IBM Executives for \$20. Or am I confusing Don's duplicator with Gregg's \$100 IBM? No matter. This sort of thing just doesn't happen here. At present I am paying off three typewriters and a duplicator. The Optima portable was \$125 new, something of a bargain. The IBM Executive was over \$500, reconditioned. This Selectric II, nine months old, was \$650. The Roneo 870 was \$600. And they're heavy dollars, folks, not your American rubbish. Of course I arrange things so that all my payments are tax-deductible, but I still think now and then that I'd rather spend the money on something more immediately rewarding, such as records. Fanzine publishing need not be as expensive a hobby in Australia as I manage to make it, but I suspect that it's a fair bit more expensive, how ever you go about it, than it is in the goodol' US&A.

I'm not sure whether FAPA #155 is a vintage mailing, or whether it's just that this is the first I've read from Fantasy Amateur to Harry Warner in some time, but I certainly enjoyed it. Thank you, all. I'll finish this page with a few random comments. Gregg: John, not Jack, ta. Paul: I still don't quite believe in you. Biblical characters lived so long because people had shorter memories and more imagination in those days, that's all. Chuck: Okay, if you'll talk to me. Don: Mardi Gras piece is beautiful, fascinating. That happens on the same planet I live on, right? Jeez, who needs sf? Dian: Your Bill reminds me of ours, somehow. Terry: If you don't like perchildatory, how about ongoing? Must tell you the difference between which and that some day, too - you and most FAPAns. Helen: When do we get something about Michael Innes? Burbee et al: Great stuff. In the gents at Nation Review someone had written 'There's a Lull in Production.' I wrote underneath this 'A Spaniard in the works?' No one ever remarked this, to my knowledge, so I've given up graffiti.

Cheers, JB