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!!

THIS IS NOT HERE I think I'll spare you the whole boring story of how this issue was all ready to run off last October or September or something (who remembers? Not me...) and then, and then, and then... Anyway, I tore it up and I'm starting over.

In the first edition of this issue, I noticed it had been taken over by locs. It probably still will be, because I want to get them out of the way. Some of them are on #8, because I sort of, well, I was a dope about mailing it out (I was getting locs on #9 before I'd finished mailing #8 out). Some folks were smart and waited, and locced both at once. I especailly liked John Berry's remarkable post-card (a Mucha poster advert for 'Nestle's Food for Infants'). Phil James dropped a line, and Pete Lyon bitched at me about my antiquated tastes in music, or something (Hey, I like some new stuff. I like the Dave Mason Miller Beer commercial, f'rinstance). Roger Waddington wrote twice, and both times he sent back the uncanceled stamps from both of the issues of *Blatant* he'd received. He also said that 'the best thing about Rod Stewart is Alana Stewart.' (You don't want to know about the chocolate Falcon, Roger. It tasted terrible.) Mark Digre sent a recipe for learning not to fear mechanical and electrical objects, and Brian Earl Brown sent a note. Naveed Khan suggests that a conspiracy of parents works to keep us from finding our potential at such things as engineering. Bruce Townley sent a wonderful postcard with a picture of Ronald's head in a jar of jelly beans, and reminds us that the lottery number was 666 on the day of Ronnie's victory in November 1980. Gayle Kaplan also sent a barely legible loc, expressing her horror over the latest outrages from the all-new Republican fruitcake review and anti-abortionists. Tilda Palmer sealed her note with a plastic celery stalk that has yes which bounce up and down.

I see it's time to take steps to avoid giving this the appearance of the 'Personalities' column, by printing an actual quote or two. A good thing Ted's review

column drew so much printable comment, eh? (And sorry about all the typos, Ted. I really didn't mean to put all those holes in your column. Really.) How about this from Luke McGuff:

First, Ted White's Fmz reviews were definitely the highlight of *Blatant 9* to me. His experience really shows, and his opinions were strong and forthright, without being snotty or insulting. In fact, the only cavil I have is over usage--the 'unwitting dialogue' phrase really stuck in my craw--it is true that a loccol can seem to be a dialogue, but 'unwitting' is completely inaccurate.

Richard Bergeron, who also had the grace to type his letter, said: Ted White's puzzlement at not receiving many fanzines mirrors my own over the same scarcity of fanzines--and that is puzzling. I thought my problem was that I had gone into voluntary exile and then decided that fandom was doing it to me. Where were the fanzines--seems most fanzines that do arrive this far south have one or more complaints about the glut of fanzines which the reader can not keep up with. So I theorized that fans were thinking postage to PR is somehow more than to other parts of the States (I'm still in the American Empire, you know) and were hacking that tired old Bergeron off their lists. Apparently, they're hacking that tired old Ted White off, too. Which is surprising when you stop to think that he's one of the most visible fans and publisher of the most frequent and frequently most interesting fanzine around. If he can't get fanzines merely by sending out trade copies then perhaps all those reports about the glut of fanzines are only a hoax--tho come to think of it I don't recall ever having seen *Pong* reviewed anywhere so maybe all those other fanzine editors who Ted doesn't know about don't know about him. Hmm. I doubt it. More likely they're reluctant to send their fanzines before that experienced and jaundiced eye: this fanzine review column of his is perhaps the best to have appeared in a US fanzine since Greg Benford's in Quip: ten to twenty years ago...? Ted's remarks are so, how shall I say, knowing. After all, 30 years of absorbing and producing fanzines should make for a formidable critical intelligence and when you remember that Ted doesn't suffer fools gladly you have a critic that fanzine editors might think twice before sending their fanzines to for appraisal. I've been holding up Ted's copy of Wrhn 29, for instance, for 3 months now waiting for the courage to undergo his comments (and it contains an article by him, Ted White, himself). Just one of the shortcomings of being bold and trenchant as I'm sure Ted found out long ago.

Well, yeah, I guess fear slows me down once in a while when it comes to adding some of those Great Names to my mailing list. After all, who do I think I am? It could be that all you folks are just pitching my zine in the old round file, you know? Swatting it away like a fly ("How did all of these *crudzines* get in here?"). On the other hand, I'm not sure the *Pong* mailing list is all that long and inclusive...

A few thousand years ago I sent a note and a couple of issues of *Blatant* to a guy named Walt Willis (speaking of fear...), and eventually he wrote back: Your letter (of 22nd January, in case you've forgotten it) gave me so much pleasure that I resolved to write to you at once, and this is a resolution I have maintained for the past six months with the steely determination of one who entered for a N3F competition and won a scroll mimeoed on a postcard.

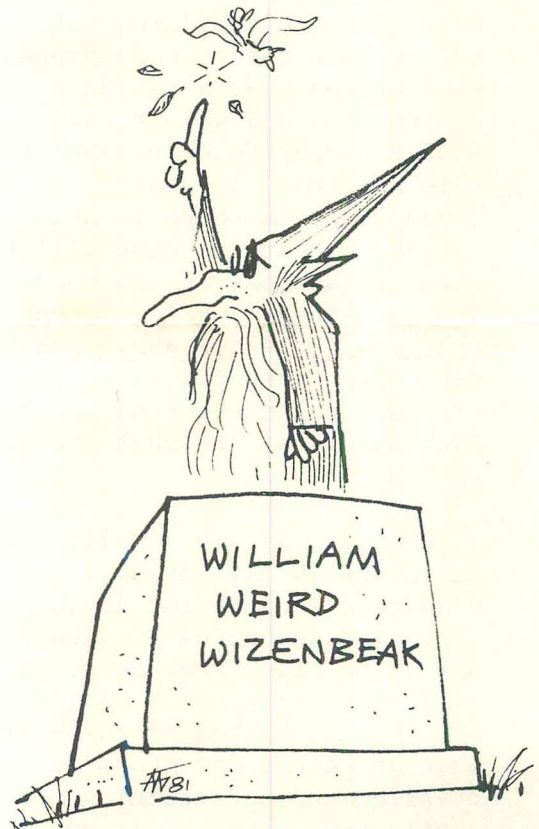
It's just that there have been these two slight problems. The first is that since I retired from work about a year ago I have been looking forward to the long leisurely days when I will have nothing to do but listen to Bach and Vivaldi and write long letters full of sage counsel to interesting people all over the world; a sort of baroque Baruch. Having waited through autumn, winter and spring for these days to arrive I feel that I am shortly going to run out of seasons. The

other problem is that I'm not quite sure whom I'm writing to these days, in the sense that I am no longer sure of the extent to which our terms of reference overlap. I don't mind other people knowing things I don't as long as I know things they don't: that's as interesting as sex. What does worry me is the feeling that there has been a sort of information flood in the world which has left me marooned on the roof of an outhouse.

Obviously this has happened in pop music, where I keep finding that people I never heard of are the idols of millions. I'm thinking of Bruce Springsteen and Barry Manilow. And in *Blatant 8*, who is Sam Cooke? Other questions arising from *Blatant* are whether you or Anne-Laurie Logan would recognize a reference to Bonnie Annie Laurie. I remember reading some while ago a book in which the text of old Scots songs appeared to be a cult in the US but is that the case more generally? Not that I have any intention of making references to Scots songs, but I find it inhibiting not to know the field of play. It's a bit like making puns in front of foreigners. (I still remember at the London Worldcon, when Bob Shaw having put aspirin in his Alka Seltzer, explained it was an example of two-tonic efficiency and I had to try to explain it all to three German fans who were present.)

And I never heard of Jacqueline Lichtenberg. Should I? But the most worrying example of all so far is Helen Berrotini's Movie Review. All sorts of questions arise. Is the Yeats quote really so well-known in the States that it doesn't have to be completed? What's the movie? About all I understand in this article is the Q & A sequence, which is worrying because if there are two fields in America I thought I knew something about, they were the cinema and politics. Incidentally I see that Dr. Cullingford's new book suggests that Yeats' rough beast was fascism. I wonder is that what Helen meant.

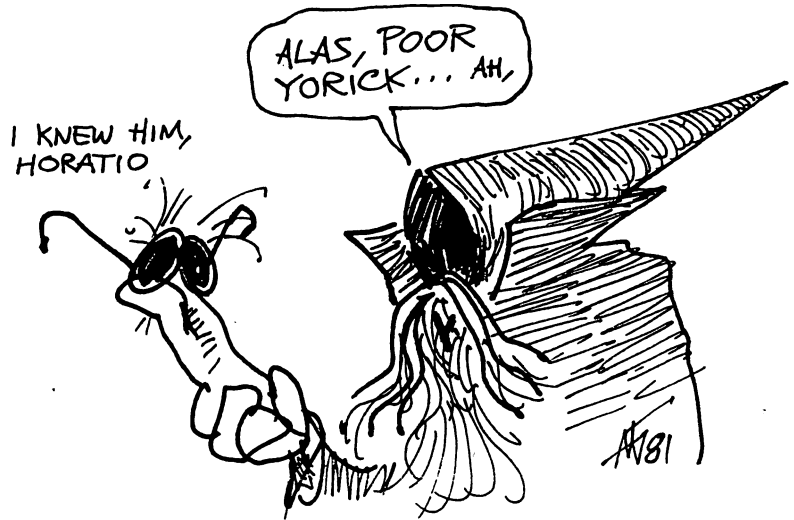
Well. First things first--Barry Manilow is the person who writes all of those MacDonald's commercials, isn't he? (I don't know. I don't eat there.) And Sam Cooke was a pretty good singer who wrote and recorded some pretty decent songs--although he was probably asking for it when a woman shot him about fifteen years ago and put an end to all of that. (Don't worry about it. Abba is, I'm told, the most popular group making records in the world today, but I used to be a professional musician and I've never heard them.) Anne-Laurie, on the other hand, says she has never quite forgiven her father for naming her after 'that song.' She even has an Annie Laurie tee-shirt which I believe he gave her a few years back. None of us should ever have heard of Jacqueline Lichtenberg, but the quote is *just* well-known enough that Helen could take liberties with it when commenting on that silly show that has been playing down at the White House lately (which no one else understands, either), and Kate Schaefer could write: Helen Berrotini seems to be alluding to a different version of Keat's 'The Second Coming' than that with which I am familiar. 'The falcon cannot



hear the falconer' is how the line goes. (Check your handwriting or check your source, folks. I'm into stuff like Morgan and Corso and Ferlingetti, so I wouldn't know.) Sigh. This still doesn't look like a lettercol, does it? Next issue I've just *got* to get organized. Anyway, meanwhile, we can get back to the popular subject of Ted's reviews with a letter from Mr. Joseph Nicholas: I read Ted White's review of Bruce Gillespie's *SF Commentary* with some interest, but also some amusement; in quoting Chris Priest's remark about still being to some degree active in fandom and finding the SFWA's attitude towards it rather repellent and then following it with an observation to the effect that modern fans are to all intents and purposes akin to the groupies that follow rock and movie stars around the streets begging for autographs, he seems not to have appreciated that whereas Chris is basing his remark on the attitudes prevalent in British fandom, he is basing his on the attitudes prevalent in American fandom. The two are, I'd point out, entirely different in their attitudes and concerns, and not just because of their cultural backgrounds, either. Over here, we are simply not inundated with media fans to the same degree as you are over there: over here, the printed word counts for much more than the phosphor dot screen, and always has; and although there is a slowly rising tide of media fans now beginning to put in an appearance, they by and large tend to keep themselves rather more to themselves, holding their own conventions and publishing their own fanzines and such and barely interacting with us at all. (Although the "us" in this respect means not merely fanzine fans like myself but also all those who prefer to read books rather than watch TV.) Then, too, British fandom is orders of magnitude smaller than American fandom, and there is in consequence greater opportunity for the authors to meet their readers on more or less equal terms, treating each other as human beings rather than as idols to be worshipped or a bunch of dumb-eyed cattle to be pandered to; authors who not only have their roots in fandom but to some degree acknowledge its influence upon them and the friendships they've formed because of it. In America, as I understand it, authors go to conventions not to have a good time with their buddies but to be feted as Major Attractions and Minor Gods, and to have their every pronunciamento listened to and acted upon as though it were graven upon a tablet of imperishable crystal handed down from the summit of a mountain; and who in this respect do treat their audiences as a bunch of open-mouthed sheep to be manipulated according to their every passing whim....and this attitude, I suspect, is fostered in them by the very quantity of American conventions, so huge in number that in the fullness of time almost every damn author you care to name will end up as a Guest-of-Honour at one or other of them, regardless of how much and the quality of what they've published, with the result that, being so honoured, they almost automatically tend to think that they're a cut above everyone else and can behave in an appropriately condescending manner without fear of opposition. Never mind the sheer size of modern American conventions, which deny the authors just about any opportunity of ever being able to meet and talk with readers as equals and form friendships thereby....

Heavy stuff, eh? Well, you can tell that a review by Ted White certainly Makes You Think, anyway....even if it is only a thought along the lines of "I'm glad that I don't get copies of Chris Estey's fanzine." And in his review of this awful-sounding publication, White is betraying what amounts to a very conservative bias: that there is but one way to do a fanzine, and that way shall be followed come what may, and everything else is right out. Nonsense; fanzines are a method of communication, and as such there's absolutely no limit to what an editor may choose to write about (always provided it is done in an interesting and entertaining and insightful and like that manner). "Estey knows little about the traditions and history of fandom"? Well, for Christ's sake, how can any new editor be expected to be totally au fait with these much-vaunted

"traditions" and their "history"? White may well feel that he's watching someone reinvent the wheel, but that's simply because he happens to have been around for longer than many of the rest of us, and will thus have automatically and of necessity encountered much repetition throughout his career. Does he seriously believe, as his throwaway final line seems to imply, that each and every fanzine must represent some sort of advance or upward progression over each and every preceding fanzine? Because if so (quite apart from contradicting his implied claim that each editor should hold true to the "traditions and history" of fandom, and thus merely rehash the past without hope of advance or progression at all), the belief is ludicrous in the extreme.



I wish, Joseph, that you had said more about just what Chris *was* referring to (in the British fan scene and SFWA) for contrast. At any rate, it is my feeling that a great deal of the blame for the current mess in US fandom can be laid to committee members who advertise Bigger Better Cons, put signs at the door listing movies, and even send out fliers touting the free beer and Big Name Pros attendees may find there. As to "reinventing the wheel"--frankly, I wish more fans *were* trying to reinvent the poor thing. Lately the old wheel is so covered with video and costumes and weapons and movies and Logan's Runs and such that we can't get it moving. Not much use in that condition. Someone really ought to make a new one, since we can't seem to get those other people to take that junk off of it and make it usable to us again. (And I really hate getting fanzines which contain nothing but photographs of costumes and descriptions of SCA feasts and movie reviews.)

Joseph also pointed out to me that I had misspelled "Maule" in the same way that I misspelled "Hughes" in *Harlot*, leaving out the "e". Yes, I do have this problem of not quite seeing letters in words. I hastily sent out an apology to Janice and Ian, noting that I had really made up for it by adding an extra "e" to Anne Frank's name, and that as it seemed to draw comment whenever I did these things, perhaps it might be a good idea to continue in this mode, writing articles which refer to such fans as "Joe Nichols", "Ted Whit", "Terry Carre", and perhaps "Avedon Carole." Ian sent me back a charming note which said: Dear Avedone, Pleez do knot bee upsett bekause you spelt hour namez rong. Four meny a yeah I hav bean nown as an orful speler and bean geting other peeplez namez al rong --enwyway, Maul iz such an eezy name to mispel that I often get it rong miself. PS. I beleev Kevin Smith haz writen also to poynt out that you spelt our name rong--just like sumwon with a univercity edukashun, always poynting out other peeplez errors... Ian Maul.

SEX Have I got your attention now? OK, this is really just more locs, but after writing about things like menstruation and not being an engineer, it was bound to happen--you know, the old "Woman Question" and all that. Commenting

on *Blatant 8*, Paul Kincaid wrote: Your comments in the same piece about male-oriented literature gave me pause for thought. Could it possibly be that male writers are better than female? Hastily I scanned my shelves--favourite authors include Angela Carter, Ursula LeGuin, Doris Lessing, Muriel Spark, Kate Wilhelm, Joan Didion, Maxine Hong Kingston, Harper Lee, Olivia Manning, Anais Nin, and so on. I think we can conclude that there are women writers to match, at least, the men in just about every area of literature. In some areas they even outshine us --what man, for instance, has written erotica to match Anais Nin or Pauline Reage?

So is it then that there are just so many more male writers? A wander round any decent bookshop should be enough to disprove that.

All in all I can see no reason for supposing there is a male preponderance, unless...

Have you noticed how male writers are praised for creating that most difficult of things, a good, strong, well-rounded, believable female character? Just remember all the bruhaha about Tiptree's understanding of the female psyche back when we didn't know who Tiptree is. Does anyone make a fuss about Ms Sheldon's male characters? We men are obviously so crystal clear that even mere women must be able to figure out how we tick. But you women are such complicated creatures that it takes real talent to get you down on paper.

Hmmmm....I could quote you Goldberg on how people automatically judge a piece to be better if they believe it to be written by a man--but that's getting to be pretty tired. Meanwhile, here's Jack Heneghan, an engineer, on a related matter: My Parents called me destructive during my quizzical childhood endeavors (How the hell does this thing work?) when I took apart radios, bikes, motors, dolls, books, watches, toasters, safes, etc. This mainly applied when I dismantled working models, since the only things I ever put back together were the bikes. But, I was never actively discouraged from fiddling as long as I kept the remains in my room. My three oldest sisters, on the other hand, were told "Such things Are Not Ladylike."

Today, two of them can barely open a car door. The other one, Tia, is out in Seattle working as a carpenter, or in a shipyard or somesuch. She learned her skills after she left home.

Attitudes change, and parents learn (given the chance). My next three sisters can take a car apart and put it back together (which is more than I can say for myself. I still can't put it together). The jury is still out on my youngest sister. (That's seven so far, plus me, the eldest, makes eight. I won't mention my four brothers. My parents gave themselves a chance).

What your article got me to pondering on was the so-called manipulateness (is that a word?) of women. The female is discouraged from understanding How Things Work. She doesn't need to depend on Things. She has to depend upon People, more specifically Men, for survival. So, she learns how people work, and tinkers and fiddles with these interesting machines. Is the man who tinkers and fiddles with beat up worn out clunkers or gleaming new computers any less manipulative?

When a person's individual survival is on the line, is dependent on outside factors, you can bet your ass that they are going to learn everything they can

about those factors. The astronaut program is a perfect example. When those guys went up there, they knew every line, every circuit, every piece that could go wrong and the ones that couldn't. And, they knew the men with them, knew what they were capable of and what they weren't, knew what they would do in any situation imaginable, and some that weren't. When those guys came down, and went to the local pub to play Asteroids, they don't give a damn how the stupid thing works. All they have to do is push some buttons to be entertained. It's just a creature comfort.

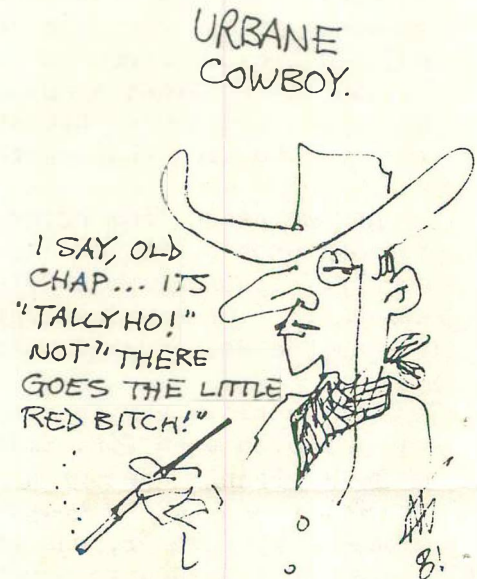
As are women. Women provide the warm house, the warm meal, the warm bed. Nice, but you can survive without it. People have. As long as you can push the buttons, it isn't necessary to know what is happening inside. So men have never studied women; their constricted social status, their psychological and physiological differences, except in a cursory, demeaning way.

Now that Donna Reed is no longer the woman that all females aspire to in our quaint middle class society (although she may remain the woman that men aspire to), things will change, with awareness of change, possibly for the better. Once women reach the point that they are people upon whom you depend for survival they will be equal as can be (some being more equal than others). In these past three years, the number of women entering EE (electrical engineering) has grown visibly. True, they are faced with subtle harrassment, and not so subtle when the guys are drunk. They are hanging in. Not to worry, Avedon, your sisters will realize your dream.

Whew. I think this means it's time to lighten up around here. Let's see... here is a note from Sheryl Birkhead which is sealed in Miss Piggy stamps...and Jerry Kaufman says: Special note to Harry Warner on cursing Nixon: it's never too late to start. We have also heard from Dana Seigal and from dear old Malcolm Edwards (fabled in story and song), in addition to Eric Lindsay who said: Ha, Joseph Nicholas travelled to Australia after winning GUFF and instead of terrorising all manner of author and fanzine editors, he renounced attacks in print, and in person was a splendid fellow. Spoiled his image properly. You were right about him.

I'm glad to see Ted White making reasonable comment upon the Chris Priest letter that surfaced in SFR & SFC. Certainly I can't recall seeing all that many fans abasing themselves on the altar of worship of sf writers. Nasty reviews in fanzines, and the odd beer shared at conventions are about as far as it goes, except perhaps for Ellison groupies, and how many of them offer material to fanzines? Well, maybe there are a bunch of media fans, at least at worldcons...but are worldcons representative of fans? I certainly don't believe that they are.

Yeah, it's Harlan's fault. Or so Terry Carr implied in a letter--and he ought to know. Meanwhile, Pauline Palmer wants to know: What do you mean dolls aren't people. Next thing I know, you're going to be telling me there's no Easter Bunny.



I envy you your Disclave experiences, especially the meeting of all those marvelous BritFans that I'd so dearly love to have a chance to meet *whimper*...also enjoyed Alexis' cartoons (him I have met *ta da* at the last NorWescon! nice man) ...and was somewhat bemused by Ted White's reviews, esp. the one of SFC in which he didn't talk about SFC as much as he did other things, which made it a somewhat more interesting than average review.

And we heard from Peter Singleton, and Jan Howard Finder, and Greg Benford (Jim Benford phoned his loc in...), and of course from Harry Warner Jr.: This 'great work of illusion' that Helen Berrotini writes about seems to be getting results already. 'The Americanization of Emily' takes place in England and France, not the United States, and most of the characters are United Kingdom residents.

Ted White is very perceptive about the change in fandom's relation to pros. I was a neofan when E.E. Smith was still writing new Skylark and Lensman novels, when Heinlein's idea of a future history to make his stories consistent with one another was a wildly original concept, when one of the most loved of all talented pros, Henry Kuttner, was productive. It never occurred to fans to create special clubs and fanzines to specialize in these writers and their stories, to make up stories of their own after the pro patterns (except for parodies, which were numerous). There's nothing particularly wrong with the current adulation of specific writers, except for the fact that most of the writers lionized have very limited abilities and some are obviously the focal points of subfandoms mainly because of their personalities rather than their fiction. Then some people confuse these subfandoms with the general bulk of fandom and forget that some of us prefer to praise a particular story for its own merit, not because it fills in another gap in the large picture painted by the writer's total output or because it's an inferior retelling of a former story that won praise.

QUOTE OF THE DAY "The Cincon [1949 Worldcon] was a blooming success, too. There's a rumor about that the auction took in about a thousand bucks, with Cartiers selling for \$20 and bids going up over \$50 for some items. The WSFC is getting to be big business."

--*Fantasy Advertiser*,
November 1949 (What would life be like if Terry Carr didn't send me nifty quotes and things like this, I wonder?)

* * *

WATCH THIS SPACE I actually did read some SF lately--no, really. Well, not lately so much as



um, well, it was last fall. Well, I mean, it was around the time this issue was supposed to come out, ok? Anyway, I read--oh, are you ready for this?--the Skylark series. And a Heinlein juvenile. You don't want me to say anything about it, right? That's ok, I really don't have that much to say about it--except that I discovered a previous use of the word "spung".

I also read Jonathan Carroll's *Land of Laughs*--hated the leading character, but liked the book. Also didn't like Paul Mason in Chris Priest's *Dream of Wessex* (which I read in the American edition, unfortunately re-titled *The Perfect Lover*), but it's worth reading, even if it did keep making me think of *What Entropy Means To Me*. Books about writers writing, right?

The new semester, of course, has reduced my reading list down to required texts (yawn) and of course making a bookmark out of the *Pong* poll. The reason the poll gets to become functional is because I kept changing my mind and crossing things out and leaving large ink blots and worn spots on it. ("~~DAVE/KAT/TERE/CHRIS/AL/RJ~~
~~KEYMATE/PA~~") Maybe I could eliminate the problem and just write in my own name--at least I wouldn't have to worry about insulting someone by misspelling *their* name.

"Those who do not know history are condemned never to repeat it." —Terry Carr

IN THE CHOCOLATE CITY I guess everyone knows it's snowing in Washington lately. National Airport has been a big controversy for years, as has our local inability to cope with weather, but we don't usually get air traffic on the 14th Street Bridge. And we used to have two big newspapers to report stuff like this.

The demise of the *Star* last August didn't make anyone very happy, least of all me. Used to be that the having a right-wing paper around forced the *Washington Post* to lean a bit to the left--but now I open up the *Post* and find odious things like William F. Buckley. Hmmm. Not only that, but the employment situation has not been helped much. Gee, and I was hoping to get a gig with the *Past*... (And I hear the two major Seattle papers are merging, too...)

Well, now that we're all out of jobs and getting only one paper and there's all this snow on everything and nowhere to go, we've been spending a lot more time around the TV set around here. Videotape machines are a wonderful thing, of course, and things like *Saturday Nite Live* and Kenny Everett keep people from having to stoop to conversation. It all seems very strange to me--when I first got into fandom, I was the only person I knew who admitted to watching TV; now it seems that the same people who bragged about not owning a television set are stopping in the middle of parties and conventions to watch the tube. I'm a real child of television, but I never considered watching the box to be a group activity...

APOLOGY While I'm here, I'd like to express my apologies to the following:
 To Ted White for putting millions of typos in his reviews last issue.
 To Sarah Prince, for losing the logo she donated to me.
 To Brian Earl Brown for once again not proving that I am one of the best writers in fandom (or whatever he said).
 To Alexis Gilliland for not using the thing he gave me to use this issue which I was going to use but I got all fouled-up.
 To all of the people who have inadvertantly been left off the mailing list.
 To anyone else who thinks they should have been listed here.
 To all of the people who noticed the failed quotation mark experiment.

AND FINALLY This slightly short and awfully late issue of *Blatant* is now drawing to a close. We also heard from Joyce Scrivener and from Darroll Pardoe (who can't put TV's back together but has a brother who can--and who likes the Maules, and didn't tell me I spelled them wrong). And we got an anonymous poem from New Jersey which must be from Steve Davidson. And thanx for the letters, Pascal.

The Art this issue comes from: Cover--Arthur Thomson; 3,5, & 7--Alexis Gilliland; 8--Dan Steffan.

 "The only things you can be sure of in this life are negative patient-care outcome and revenue enhancement."

 —Pye Chamberlain

"Now that you've gotten all those locs out of the way, maybe you'll have room to write something next issue."

"Who says I have anything to say?"

"When you talk to yourself in Sign Language, it's usually a warning..."

"So what? My Sign Language stinks."

KEVIN SMITH *for TAFF*

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