



Les souris dansent 1

Done for ANZAPA by John Bangsund

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OK, I give up, sort of. I publish *Philosophical Gas* for FAPA and ANZAPA and the people in FAPA think it's really for ANZAPA and you think it's really for FAPA. I publish letters of comment and maybe you decide it's not an apazine at all. Might as well call it *Philosophical Bat*, unloved by bird nor beast. The problem seems to be mailing comments: if I write them for one apa, the other is offended or bemused; if I don't write any, I'm obviously talking to someone else. At my time of life I don't want to be publishing four fanzines, so this is what I will do: when I write mailing comments for ANZAPA they will appear in *Les souris dansent*; when I write them for FAPA they will appear in *Fibonacci & Mehitabel*; these two apazines may appear separately, as part of *Philosophical Gas*, or both. I trust this is clear.

JEANNE MEALY

I'm not sure why I didn't like *The Bank Dick* as much as other Fields films, but I have a theory. Remember what I wrote about *The Party*? It didn't seem as funny the third or fourth time. *The Bank Dick*, I suspect, is one of those films that doesn't seem as funny the first time. Putting it another way, I expected too much of it.

Your translation of *Le chat parti* as 'the party cat' isn't one of the puns I had in mind when I suggested the title to Sally, but it's a good one. The full quote is 'Le chat parti, les souris dansent' (French equivalent of 'While the cat's away the mice play').

.....
If fans is slans, then I'll cut off my tendrils.
.....
Julian Warner

LYN McCONCHIE

It is said that all knowledge is contained in fanzines, and it's true. I can't think how otherwise I would have learnt that two Siamese cats can howl at the rate of forty howls per minute — except by reading *The Cat Who Played Post Office*, but it's unlikely I would read that.

Reading about the retyping you do made my fingers ache, and I wondered whether you have ever thought about getting a computer. Then I reached the bit where you say that you have sold forty stories in as many months, as well as your *Farming Daze* book, and I think I'll just shut up.

DAVID GRIGG

The Age Good Weekend for 31 July has an article on what you can do to photos with digital imaging,

and it's pretty impressive. Kurt Foss, an American consultant, says that most US newspapers don't allow it: 'I think they felt that there's no room at all for alteration. You can't make this kind of judgment to remove a telephone pole from behind someone's head because you have to decide then where to draw the line . . .'

On *-or/-our*: As editor I am required to follow conventional Australian style, and I'm happy enough to do that, but as writer (even in the *Soc Eds Newsletter*, as you may have noticed) I use the *-or* ending. At the time of the Newcastle earthquake I realized that I had been misspelling *tremor* all my life. I read Fowler and others on the history of the suffix and decided, with Fowler, that there was no good reason to use *-our* at all. English has gradually been losing that *u* for many years: it's not all that long since *governour* and *authour*, for example, were correctly so spelt. It's absurd that *humour* and *honour* should co-exist with *humorist* and *honorary*. The consensus at recent Australian Style Councils has been that all such words should be spelt uniformly with *or* — but not yet. Spineless lot. We don't have a French-style Academy to decide these things, but Style Council (which is basically a front for the *Macquarie Dictionary*) could lead by example.

On *sulphur/sulfur*: The *Australian Writers' and Editors' Guide* notes that *sulfur* is 'recommended by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry and used in many schools'. Judith Butcher, in *Copy-editing: the Cambridge handbook* (3rd edn, 1992), says 'For all chemical terminology the recommendations of [IUPAC] should be followed' (p. 323). So as well as *sulfur* you have *sulfide*, *sulfate* and so on, and if it's correct in scientific contexts it seems to me it should be used in all contexts. (It's silly that *disk* and *program* should be regarded as correct in the context of computers, *disc* and *programme* elsewhere; I use the former everywhere. *Programme* is only a nineteenth-century affectation anyway.)

On the transliteration of Φ (phi): This oddity started off as an aspirated Π (pi), and at one stage the lettering was actually ΠH (which would later be pronounced *pee* or *pay*, but was then *p'h*). The ancient Greeks would have pronounced the word *sulphur*, if they had it, as *sulp-hur*. Perhaps that ΠH had some influence on the eventual transliteration *ph*. Preclassical Greek has a letter F , called digamma, which seems to have been pronounced *w* or *wh*. The letter (but not the pronunciation) passed into modern European languages as *F*.

MARC ORTLIEB

Reading that Jefferson Airplane had made your musical year, I shuddered, then leapt to the tape-recorder for an antidote. Now playing: Bach, Goldberg Variations (Glenn Gould, 1981). Yes, I said tape-recorder. Remember them? You thought they had disappeared with the Selectric and English-teachers who could spell long words like 'enrolment', didn't you? This one is an Akai GX620, a lovely machine that I found recently in an unlovely condition, dusty and dirt cheap, in a junk shop in Brunswick. From the moment I sold my GX630 last year to pay the rent or some such extravagance I had wanted desperately and often to play tapes. Now I am gradually working my way through the collection, noting the tapes that still sound good, and loving it. Mostly I play Bach, Mozart, Schumann, Chopin, undemanding stuff, but lately I have been rediscovering longer works by Schoenberg, Morton Subotnick, Werner Egk, John Cage and others that I don't have on record or cassette. No CDs yet, alas.

I was delighted to have Lee's *Displaced Person* back, thank you, and surprised. I remember lending the book to Art Widner, in 1985 I think, and I assumed he had taken it home with him.

.....
In Jersey, I tied a native to a door frame and terrorized others with cello tape.

Weller

.....
KIM HUETT

You have some tough questions here, Kim. 'Isn't it de jure for one to feel the cold more as one becomes older?' It depends what you mean by 'de jure'. If you mean something like 'legally required', the answer is no. If you mean 'required by etiquette' or 'fashionable', you should have said *de rigueur*, but there are not many symptoms or discomforts of ageing that I would feel bound by etiquette or fashion to endure, so perhaps you just mean 'de facto'. Your question could then be turned into a statement: *de facto* life is that you feel the cold more as you get older.

A *quagmire* is an Earth Mother who has been left out in the rain too often.

Your other question, about the difference between *homoousian* and *homoiousian*, takes a little more answering. For a start they are adjectives, occasionally used to describe opposing schools of thought in the Arian Controversy of the fourth century. The Christian concept of a Holy Trinity — God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost — raises some questions about the nature of Jesus, questions that theologians lump together under the heading Christology. What they come down to, roughly, is this. If Jesus was a human being, isn't it wrong to worship him as God? If he was God, who was minding the shop? Arius of Alexandria decided that Jesus was neither fully man

nor fully God, but something in between, a *tertium quid*. The debate about this raged back and forth, with just about everyone agreeing that Arius had thrown out the baby with the baptismal font but not agreeing about much else. The Emperor Constantine organized a worldcon to sort the matter out and agree on a creed, and this was duly held at Nicaea in May 325. The Arians were thumped early in the business session. Eusebius of Caesarea put up a nice compromise creed, but some bush theologian (there's always one) managed to get an amendment passed that inserted the words 'of one essence [*homoousion*] with the Father', and Constantine decided OK, that's fixed, and everyone went home, except Arius and a couple of bishops who wouldn't sign, who were banished. Some people weren't happy with the wording of the amendment, especially Eusebius of Nicomedia, so Constantine appointed Athanasius of Alexandria to sort them out. As things settled down, Constantine thought it would be a nice gesture to reinstate Arius. No way! said Athanasius, so Constantine banished him. Soon afterwards, in 337, Constantine had himself baptized and died. The Empire was then divided among his three sons — you can read all that stuff in Gibbon. There are two important things going on here: first, theology had become a political matter, a matter of state, not something to be left to the fans; second, there was a tendency to decide these matters in Rome. For example, at a minicon in Sardica in 343 it was agreed that when bishops were deposed they could appeal to the bishop of Rome for reinstatement. This wasn't a big deal at the time, just good sense, but you can see things happening that were to become pretty important later. Meanwhile, the people who couldn't accept the *homoousion* provision were tending to mumble *homoiousion* at that point in the creed. *Homoiousios* strictly means 'like essence' or 'similar substance', but these people used it to mean 'equality of attributes', which is slightly different. By the time Emperor Julian (the so-called Apostate) died in 363 the whole matter was getting out of hand, because people were now arguing about the nature of the Holy Ghost — *homo* or *homoi*? — and it's so easy to lose the thread here that I think I'll just drop it. The Trinity that Athanasius believed in was one God leading a threefold personal life; the Trinity adopted at the second worldcon, Constantinople 381, was a God made up of three personalities and an abstract, impersonal essence. The Nicene Creed was revised: the one you know, if you know it, is not the one adopted at the Council of Nicaea but the one approved at the Second General Council fifty-six years later. And what has all this to do with shamrocks? Blessed if I know.

Pax vobiscum. Ave atque vale. Nihil obstat. Endit. See you at Anzapacon.