

WIZ

#6, 15 September 1983, is the special Plunging-Into-The-Strange-Fandom-Dick-Bergeron-Inhabits-Issue or perhaps it's the special Down-There-On-Fannish-Acid-Issue or is it the special Return-Of-The-Living-Dead-Issue? No. It must be the special Publish-And-Be-Damned-Issue. I think.

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Fast Breaking News From US Fandom: involves the latest issue of Paul Flores' Basfan -- a rather cracked mirror of San Francisco Bay Area goings on which strikes me as the nuttiest thing I've seen since Slant #5 (or am I thinking of Star Rockets?). One never knows. The presence of Ray Nelson and an amazing con report by Paul which makes "Performance" seem positively sane by comparison is the tip-off that the casual reader has wandered into a never-never land from which there doesn't seem any particular necessity to vacate the premise. The colophon states "All unsigned material (some of the signed material, too) is by the editor" -- an indication that a piece in this newszine (?) bylined 'Bran Don Carl' may actually be Flores who may himself be a transparent resurrection of Carl Brandon. Since Wiz has a wide ranging circulation in UK fandom and a reputation for being up-to-the-moment (and sometimes beyond it) I intend to make bold (even at risk of being sued for \$85,000 by Le Flores) and reveal the latest events in the country of the tooth fairy (which is what D. West thinks US fandom still believes in). Take it away 'BDC' or Flores or whomsoever ye may be:

Hubbard/Dr. Who Con Hoax Revealed. Radical Fan Group Involved? (by Bran Don Carl):

Amidst allegations that ex-Basfan editor and feature writer Paul Thorne has been intentionally trying to disrupt science fiction fandom as well as sabotage and discredit the Bay Area Science Fiction & Fantasy Society (BASFAS or BASFASociety), Paul Flores, founder of the Society and editor of Basfan, announced that he has ordered Thorne off the editorial and publishing staff of Basfan, and will be taking measures to have Thorne's BASFASociety membership revoked.

In an emotionally charged statement issued to fandom and the fan press, Flores outlined Thorne's motives and his efforts to ruin fandom and the Society. "I found the man in a fannish gutter, so to speak. He had so much potential. He wanted to publish a fanzine and become wealthy and famous. Rather than disappoint him with the facts, I dumped the editorial and publishing reins of Basfan into his lap. I thought that he had a fannish gleam in his eye. Oh, how wrong I was! I was profoundly shocked and shaken to the core." Thorne proceeded to do practically nothing as editor, preferring to sit around brainstorming. "I don't think that he could separate fantasy from reality. He kept coming up with the most ludicrous and frighteningly bizarre ideas. He should have been the perfect editor," said Flores. Flores completed and published the first issue of the newsletter soon after Thorne began complaining that the 'karma' wasn't right yet for an issue.

After requesting and receiving Thorne's resignation as editor, Flores decided to give Thorne a second chance to prove himself by keeping him on as proofreader and publisher. "The man has such charisma-he gets what he wants. He was also a funny guy to have around. The problems came with a very pressing deadline for Basfan 2. I turned the layouts over to Thorne for proofreading and that was the last I saw of them or him until I received a copy of the newsletter in the mail two days later. I was shocked. Truly shocked. He had tampered with the layout and had altered portions of that issue beyond recognition. It was a cruel and ugly and totally unfunny hoax perpetrated by Thorne to discredit the newsletter and myself in retaliation for forcing him to resign. Whatta mess."

Cited as examples of Thorne's tamperings were altered photos printed of officials of the Elves, Gnomes and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder and Marching Society, the printing of a scandalous report on the Dr. Who convention held in Palo Alto on the May 27th Memorial Day weekend, and the senseless repetition of other items within the same issue. Challenges Flores, "Show me where he proofread!"

This goes back-to-back with the widespread belief that Thorne, working with members of at least one of the reknown Bay Area radical fan groups dedicated to the disruption of serious literary studies of science fiction, may have staged a 'skit' at the Palo Alto Dr. Who Convention, with an imposter playing the part of Scientologist founder and sf writer L. Ron Hubbard and Thorne in the role of a loin-clothed, battleaxe-armed security guard, who is said to have chased the Hubbard impersonator away from the convention hotel. Convention authorities claim to have absolutely no knowledge of such a staged event, and there was no mention of it in the program guide. The identity of the proposed 'ELRon' impersonator is unknown, with most fans not really interested anyway.

Motives for the ELRon/Dr.Who incident and the Basfan 2 sabotage reportedly vary from Thorne's personal obsession to meet Hubbard, to his fanatical hatred of fandom that resulted from his removal as Basfan editor.

The extent of Thorne's involvement with the San Francisco Bay Area radical fan movements is unknown.

Says Flores, "These people take fandom far too seriously. They're extremists, revolutionary types who will do anything to make serious sf look bad -- to have it discredited as 'kid's stuff.' They rarely read sf, they don't subscribe to Analog and they have a very low opinion of Trekkies and media fans. These anti-fannish activists are so upset about the massive growth in the popularity of sf and of fandom that they would go to any means to disrupt both and cause trouble. The efforts of these insensitive and self-serving few may very well lead fandom as we know it to the brink of destruction."

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To discourage future attacks against science fiction and the fan community, Flores is asking members of BASFASociety to vote their support in removing Thorne from the membership rolls of the Society, and also to levy a fine of \$85,000 against Thorne for damages.

Thorne could not be reached for comment.

RB Here: I absentmindedly corrected some of what may very well have been typographical errors in the above. The unexpurgated edition and even more can be obtained from Paul Flores at PO Box 2681, San Jose, Calif., 95159. Recommended with very few reservations as the American answer to the Battle of Titans between Harrison and Brunner raging in recent Ansibles.

To Go From The Sublime To The, Er, Trenchant: for a moment, I suppose its time I rushed the following into print. I recieved the manuscript you are about to read some months ago but what with one thing and another never succeeded in publishing it. In the interests of living in the past, I present this fascinating (not to say "meta-fannish" -- remember that?) look at fandom as it was back in March of this year. This makes Flores look sane:

Willis And Nose-Blowing: An Epistemological History (by Greg Benford): At the creation of Walter Alexander Willis his presumptive heirs fell to bickering. Everything had been done to make the occasion convivial: James White brought the hot dogs and Bob Shaw the marshmallows. All to no avail. As the raging funeral pyre lanced spiking yellow fingers up into the somber wine-dark Irish sky, reminding everyone of how easy it is to overwrite, idealogical disputes over the one true tradition broke out.

The first eruptions came with articles by Ted White, directly accusing some newer fans of bland prose, inept editing and insufficiently understanding the sexual implications of Xeroxing vs. mimeography.

D. West countered that "If traditions are useful they will need no special support -- and if they cease to be useful they are already dead." His recommendation that White commit suicide by wetting his nose and inserting it into a light socket fell upon stony ground.

rich brown's blistering fanzine reviews took up the cry of declining standards by comparing several recent issues of Rune rather unfavorably with chicken flavored ice cream. Extension of this theorem to a larger class of fanzines, including those existing in four or more dimensions, was immediate.

Richard Bergeron, who had inadvertantly begun the fructifying split down the cerebellum of fandom by reprinting a great deal of Willis work merely because it was good, leaped into the fray. He accused D. West of ignorance, insensitivity and heinous typographical erros. "Those who refuse to learn from history," he said, "are doomed to stutter it."

Brian Earl Brown called for a rejection of old values and fancy expensive type-faces. He proposed a new, liberating method of fanzine distribution using crayon writing upon plastic suits which could then be worn to conventions. This, he maintained, would promote immediate feedback, close interaction, superior social values, and also would convert APAs immediately into sessions for group sex without any beating around the bush.

D. West stated that "The only proper place for old fanzine articles is in old fanzines." and called for a First Fannish International to mobilize the new fans in the cause of revolution against complete sentences and reactionary punctuation.

Meanwhile, Christine Atkinson countered by asking White if activities became fannish simply by having a fan write about them. White branded this a style-deaf intrusion by a neophyte in garter belt and hose. Atkinson countered with a screed in her new fanzine, Sufferin' Rejects, accusing White and other traditionalists of ostrich-like supporting the status quo and thus being political without realizing it.

White pointed out that Marxism was the central pivot for the old New York fandom dispute that swirled around the first worldcon in 1939, and that Don Wollheim, himself an ex-Communist, nonetheless wore both a belt and suspenders.

Other voices replied that White was a running dog of the fascist imperialist war-mongering elitists who had captured the tradition of Willis and wished to use it to suppress creative defiant new voices and stop women from having abortions and to send troops to El Salvador.

D. West issued a structuralist interpretation, titled "Bergeron's Class Unconsciousness and the Imperative for a New Fan Social Order". In it he urged direct transfers of egoboo to younger, weaker fans, confiscation of old fanzine files ("We shall brook no comparison with the past. History has become irrelevant. And anyway, what have the dead done for us lately?"), and a moratorium on reprinting anything from before last week.

Patrick Teresa John Nielsen Berry Hayden, in their screed, "Bush-WAW", framed a theoretical argument based on structuralist re-reading of the subtext of Willis and anti-Willis factions, concluding that, "To assure a greater fandom it is not enough to, as it were, invent a better mousetrap. We must construct, dialectically speaking, a better mouse as well."

Thus emerged the seminal idea of Fannish Man, a counterpart to the ethically superior Socialist Man, willing -- nay, yearning -- to share his illicitly gotten egoboo with all (or, considering the people you see at conventions, some).

Malcolm Edwards, in his ground-breaking piece, "Bean Sprouts, Dialectical Contradiction and the Coming Fannish Crisis," excited much comment. In it he proposed that fanzines publish all material anonymously so that egoboo would be an entirely private affair and could be distributed to the poor. "Socialize the means of egoboo production!" he cried. David Langford responded by stuffing a rolled-up copy of Interzone in one of

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Edwards' orifices.

D. West pioneered this Fannish Man notion with his own fanzine, X, wherein articles were identified with code numbers and the following issue's letter column had all proper names censored as well. He called for a higher ideal of fandom, based not on the crass and greedy seeking after egoboo and dusty fame, but upon love -- "Love of comrade for his cause, love as a mother for her child, love as one dainty headwaiter for another."

White accused West of making an elementary syllogistic error of the form, "I can pick my friends, I can pick my nose, therefore I can pick my friends' noses."

West replied by references to Wittgenstein and accused White of wearing peg pants.

White nominated West for the 1983 Charles Platt Memorial Pie Award. D. West won handily, and the presentation was made by Dan Steffan.

Benford entered the controversy, citing the good old days when fans read science fiction and valued clean prose. The entrance of punk rock, fantasy trilogies, costume balls and rude fanzines were part and parcel of a general decline, reflecting the deplorable erosion of debenture-weighted longterm prices in the municipal bond market. His attacks on fantasy gained some audience until it was realized that Benford thought of the fantasy genre primarily in terms of speculative narratives involving a black cocktail waitress and a pair of silver handcuffs.

When Tom Perry went on his annual pilgrimage to the Willis shrine he overstayed his time, brooding. "How insignificant I am," he mused to himself, since everyone else had gotten bored and gone home. "Look at that classic Irish sunset over that goddamn wine-dark sea. What a nothing I am, compared to Willis. Of course, I thought the same thing yesterday, and I was just reading a Jerry Pournelle novel."

Unable to resolve this quandary, but at last able to spell it, he stumbled away. He chanced to pass by a rude hut on the Irish coast and saw to his shock that Walter Alexander Willis was lounging outside.

Approaching, he cried out, "Wherefore art thou, Romeo?" without realizing he was in the wrong peak experience.

Willis peered at him intently. "Looking for paradigm lost," he said, and took off in a hurry.

A Service To Fandom: Linda Blanchard in her entertaining Egoboodle caught my eye with "another regulation on bulk mailing is that the minimum count has to be two hundred pieces" mailed in the US. Well, that's true enough but it's only a half truth. This is a misapprehension the editors of Boonfark and Gambit used to labor under (in the days when they used to labor on those titles) and which may be misunderstood by many another of you. Since I had to set straight Ted and Dan, I might as well do the same for Linda and anyone else who could be evesdropping and similarly confused. The regulation is 200 copies or 50lbs. Presumably this means you could publish a single issue of your fanzine weighing 50lbs (print it on lead) and obtain the bulk rate. It does mean that 10 copies of Wrhn 28 (still in print) can be bulk rated. Or that I did bulk mail the 106 stateside copies of Wrhn 30 which weighed 50lbs. So all you people who were faunching to publish a one pound fanzine and have been apprehensive at the thought of producing 200 copies can relax. You only have to publish 50. :: Coming next issue: A column by L. Ron Hubbard.

Clues In The Case Of The Purlained Bishop: "I should say, too, that the late Bishop James A. Pike, in discussions with me, brought forth a wealth of theological material for my inspection, none of which I was previously acquainted with."

--Author's Forward to "A Maze of Death", Philip K. Dick, 1970.

"'Didn't your friend Bishop Pike die in the Dead Sea?'"

"Horselover Fat had known Jim Pike, a fact he always proudly narrated to people given a pretext. 'Yes,' he said. 'Jim and his wife had driven out onto the Dead Sea Desert in a Ford Cortina. They had two bottles of Coca-Cola with them; that's all.'"

"...For years Fat had brooded about Jim Pike's death. He imagined that it was somehow tied in with the murders of the Kennedys and Dr. King, but he had no evidence whatsoever for it." --"Valis", Philip K. Dick, 1981.

"When Timothy Archer flew to Israel, the NBC network news mentioned it briefly... I got a card from him, but the card arrived after the big newscoverage, the late breaking sensational story of Bishop Archer's abandoned Datsun found... but the news people knew that Tim Archer had died in the Dead Sea Desert because you cannot live out there ...Why had he ventured out on the desert alone with a gas station map and two bottles of Coca-Cola..." --"The Transmigration of Timothy Archer", Philip K. Dick, 1982.

Horselover Fat was, of course, Philip K. Dick.

Tim and Jim are names only one letter changed from each other.

An Archer deals with pointed instruments as did a Bishop whose name was Pike.

Wm. Gibson pens: Odd that Alexis saw "Bell Rings In Athens" as an exerpt. Or perhaps not. The only context it has (in which to be read with resulting lack of impact?) is that of Mr. Gibson's personal memories. (When fans tell you something should be in The New Yorker, it usually means they never read The New Yorker and imagine same to be full of all sorts of wonderful arcane grot. Would that it was.) :: The only thing that bugs me about all this groovy praise for my fan writing is I think my fiction is better. Hope it is, anyway; it's harder to write, that's for sure. But nobody in fandom reads it. It really does piss me off that I'm writing, in Omni, for an international audience of millions upon fucking millions of readers, and Rich Coad is positively smug about never having read a word of my fiction... And



4 he's a friend! (3180 West 3rd Ave, Vancouver, B.C. V6K IN3, Canada)
RB: That crack about Rich Coad sent me shamefacedly to my carry-on luggage where I'd stashed the Omni pages of "Burning Chrome" which Bill had sent many months earlier. It had traveled back and forth from Puerto Rico to New York several times and I'd never read it. A revelation. The world of "Burning Chrome" is easily as luminously realized as anything in PKD -- including Electric Sheep and Palmer Eldritch -- and (for those who've not yet read it) is an extension of humans into the imaginary universe of computer games: much as was "Tron". Bill says that neither "Tron" or he were aware of each other when he wrote it. :: Interestingly enough I thought (hoped) the Athens piece might have been an exerpt, too. It reads like a section out of the middle of a book on a summer in the Greek Isles. I suppose this is a tribute to the power of the characterization in even this brief sketch -- one has the feeling that these people are so totally alive that they must have sprung out of some much longer work; it being mildly inconceivable that they could be so completely realized in the space of a page of Wiz. :: I guess the following piece is about Mike Glicksohn and presumably it's not fiction. Or is it?

Hippie Hat Brain Parasite (by Wm. Gibson): "Bill," Kihn says, his voice all too clear, that unreal clarity of early AM long distance commsat voices speaking from the void or maybe Cleveland, "I've *seen* one." And something about the practised intensity of the spoken-word italics he brings to that *seen* triggers a memory-hologram, Mervyn Kihn in his patented Chas. Fort Hawaiian shirt, a screaming sail of lurid Taiwanese nylon ablaze with frogstorms, spontaneous human combustees, Lubbock lights, New Jersey mothmen, and a doomed wing of U.S. Navy torpedo bombers about to vanish forever into the Bermuda Triangle.

"Wait a minute, Merv. Where was it you said you were calling from?" It's collect, natch.

A pause. "Night falls," he intones.

"What?"

"Knight Falls," and he spells it out, "Ohio."

"Knight Falls," and he spells it out, "Ohio."

"Okay. Now what was it you were saying you'd seen?"

"Ah. Look. You've seen 'em yourself. Plenty. Wide stiff brim, high crown, cut out of a sheet of

Tandy cowhide and laced together like a *Boy's Life* project. Get the picture?"

"Those hats? Kind of Waylon Jennings *cum* L.A. pimp culture hats? Well, I can't say I've seen one *lately*, man."

"Right! And it's too *cold* for the motherfuckers, up there, that's why! Add that to the evidence!"

"What evidence, Merv? What motherfuckers?"

"Parasites," he whispers, "*alien fucking parasites...*"

Mervyn Kihn, Gonzo Fortean, author of nine paperback assemblies of Damned Things too unspeakably singular to warrant the attention of even the most depraved assemblers of modern apocrypha. The menstruating Barbie Dolls of Lone Butte. Luminous phantom Dachshunds, sighted flying in tight formation over Berlin, August '58. The Monopoly board unearthed in Crete and subsequently suppressed by Greek authorities. The bizarre case of Ruth Edith Fishleigh, the Birmingham psychic, found drowned in a Toyota full of Dr. Pepper...

"The Haight, that was the locus. That must have been where they landed. Maybe just one. Maybe just a spore. But I've definitely traced them to Frisco circa '68. Leather shops all over."

"Uh, wait a minute, Merv. I, uh..."

"Listen. This is *crucial*, man. You think those things are just, like, some stupid kinda hat, right? Maybe *the* stupid kinda hat, and that's fucking brilliant. Last thing you'd be caught wearing, right? And it's people like you who pose the greatest threat, people with open minds, people who read my books. But I've finally *seen* one, man, and I *know*."

"How do you mean, *seen*?"

"Off. I saw one off. I was in Taos last week. Wave of mutilation cases. Totally unconnected."

"Cattle?"

"Rosicrucians."

"Jesus..."

"Not *people*, man, magazines. Someone's been clipping all of the coupons out of magazines, all those AMORC ads. You know, in the back of *Popular Mechanics*... But I was there, see, and I went into this coffee shop, and there's this guy wearing one of those *hats*. So I'm sitting there, trying to work up a new angle on the Rosicrucian caper, and I notice the guy's, sorta, like, nodding out, you know? Not drinking his coffee, and it's not so much like he's falling asleep, more like he's having a kind of very slow *seizure* of some kind. Kinda twitching and blinking, but all in slow motion. So we're alone in the place, except for the waitress, and I say, 'Hey buddy, you okay?' and he doesn't answer. They must've spread out from Haight-Ashbury, see, and now they're in these weird pocket areas of Sixties hipcult holdouts. You get some of these dudes in off the commune, man, they look pretty zombied-out anyway. Perfect. Perfect cover."

5 Like stick insects. Ever see a horseshoe crab?"

"Sort of helmet-shaped thing with a long spike for a tail?"

"Got it. Well, you imagine one of those, but no tail. Instead it's got this sort of stiff skirt, this *membrane*, sticking out all around it, and the helmet part's just the right size."

"The right size for what?"

"So I'm watching this guy, see, and he's right out of it, and I'm getting kinda worried. 'Hey,' I say to the waitress, 'is this guy okay?' She just pops her gum and shrugs. It's that kinda place. Then he picks up his coffee, raises it level with his mouth, and pours some into his lap, meanwhile making these *lip-motions* and *swallowing*. Well, right then, I got the *vibe*, man..." He falls silent. I listen to ten seconds of expensive static.

"What vibe, Merv?"

"The Unknown. Once again, I found myself confronted with the Unknown. It just happens to me. I'm *attuned*, and...?"

"Very slowly, like *very* slowly, he lowers the cup. And then he starts to fall forward. It was an *old* one, see, or maybe sick. But it's so slow, it doesn't look like he's falling, actually. Like he's very gradually *leaning* toward the counter... I don't figure, like, they're sold in stores, you know? You see one in a store, it's just a hat. Kinda like if stick insects talked people into manufacturing *sticks*, sort of. Weird variant on the mimetic trip, but we're talking *alien*, right? What they probably do, they probably *crawl around* on those Godawful little legs. Up walls. In windows. Some guy's wasted on his R. Crumb sofa, tv on, the bong near at hand, and he doesn't hear the *hat*..."

"Legs. You said *legs*?"

"Maybe a dozen, more. Kinda brownly transparent. Ever see a scorpion that's gotten too big? They get kinda pale and waxy. Like that. Anyway, there I am, belly to belly with the Unknown in this Taos coffee shop, and this guy's getting closer to the edge of the counter. Like he's toppling, but he hasn't heard about gravity. I hold my breath."

I hold mine.

"His chest touches the counter. Bip. Then it happened."

"Okay. What? Happened?"

"His hat fell off. Fell on the counter. I got a good look at the legs, the mouth parts. No eyes. Then I was off that stool like I'd had a cattleprod rammed up my ass. 'Cause he'd flopped off his stool man, and he was *dead*. Or something like it. No *brain*. No top to his *head*. Just neatly nibbled off at the...hatline. Kinda *scarred*, in there, healed over, grayish-pink. I saw where the hat had had its claws in, kinda puppet trip..."

"Merv. What about the waitress, Merv?"

"She said 'Have a nice day.' She was, you know, just real mellow. Didn't seem to notice anything."

I close my eyes, tight. "Merv, why did you call" I mean, why *me*?"

"You write about stuff like that."

"Right. And what about the Rosicrucian coupon-mutilators?"

"Moonies. It's a takeover bid. Every Moony in the United States joined the Rosicrucians last month. But you're hip to the infiltration trip the CIA's been running on Scientology, right? Same deal. The hot item there's that it was the *Disney* people who had Hubbard snuffed in Akron in '71. What they've got in there now is an advanced Animatronics dummy. Because, natch, they wanted L. Ron's cryogenics lab for what's left of Walt..."

"Thanks, Merv."

"Hey, no sweat. We're pals. I'll keep you posted baby. And for Christ's sake, stay out of those *headshops*, right?"

"Goodnight, Merv."

"Morning. It's morning here already."

Click.

RB: All of which leads us, inevitably enough, right up to Dave Langford who must be wondering whatever happened to Wiz, the money I owe him for forwarding the British copies of this thing, and what name I'm going to inflict on his column. Fan historians will recall that I was torn between the rather limp title I'd been using and:

The Wind In The Typewriter (by Dave Langford): Dear Dick: Your readers are no doubt palpitating with ill-concealed eagerness not to read the latest newflash on the disintegrating Langford home. Tough. As revealed in Twll-Ddu 20 -- not long to be denied you -- our newest folly has been to have the roof slates renailed at a cost so staggering as to compare with prices paid by Swedish fans for old copies of Fanzine Fanatique. As with many another technological fix there were appalling side effects, not unlike the apocryphal tale of the monk who found that pigs well purged with tartar emetic subsequently grew fat: experimentally he fed the stuff to fellow-monks, who before growing significantly fatter died in discouraging numbers, leading to the active principle's being called antimoine (anti-monk), or antimony. Sprinkle some around your vegetable patch today.

Those side-effects. The first flood happened when our merry builders cracked the once waterproof seal on a flat piece of roof, simultaneously diverting all the rainfall for miles around onto said roof by a cunning system of blocked gutters. So much for the new carpet in our front room. Then came a party vaguely in honour of Avedon Carol, at which Chris Priest explained how much he disliked travelling and how he wouldn't be going all that immense distance to Albacon up in Glasgow. (Next day he and Lisa departed for Texas instead.) When the party was over, hordes of drunks perforce

6 stayed the night; Pam Wells and man-mountain Jeff Suter drew the short straw and got the top room which has gone undecorated for 105 years ("Jack will show you to your room; I have given you the room in the tower."), and no sooner had they tucked themselves in than Niagara started happening on their toes. Seems the jolly builders had left their current hole in the roof covered only by tissue paper lacking in wet strength... On the morning of our Glasgow trip, your hero took a bath -- it was that time of year -- and discovered yet another drain-pipe had been ingeniously blocked: I pulled the plug and my bath ended up in the cellar, where cardboard boxes and croquet sets were found floating disconsolately.

At last the floods were over, the Eastercon was over, the scaffolding about the house began to come down, and all looked rosy. Have you ever seen real professionals take down scaffolding, though? None of your subtlety or understatement: huge steel poles are unbolted from the top of the structure and hurled down like javelins to stick quivering in defenseless flower beds. Certain virtuoso throws impacted lower segments of the mighty scaffold with fascinating crashes, bouncing off at eldritch angles comprehensible only to students of forbidden Newtonian Mechanics. And yes, one such cushion shot went triumphantly through the largest window we possess, saving me the trouble of knocking to wake visiting US fans Mary and Bill Burns as they slept within that same room...

A Serious Question: If someone was throwing scaffolding poles through the window into your front room, what would you do? (Over to you, Dick.)

Another Serious Question: "What are we going to do about Dick Bergeron?" said svelte young playboy Rob Hansen to me at a BSFA meeting in April.

"Mine's a pint of John Bull," I told him quickly, handing over my and Malcolm Edwards's suddenly empty glasses. After a familiar pause he returned: "I mean, you and I know that 'Performance' was a damn good article by and large, Dave."

"True, o king. Though I can't resist pulling D's leg about its length."

"But the trouble is that because you and I picked up on D's bit of silliness about fanzine reprints, which doesn't follow from D's thesis and is just personal prejudice that he sneaked in, Bergeron has listed us along with Ted White and others as fans who take issue with the whole article. Hadn't someone better point this out, like you?"

"Well," I hedged, "I don't know that I'm a good enough writer to get across your famous Welsh accent in print if I should send in this dialogue..."

"Twill d'un bob saes, look you, bach, whatever," said the famous future TAFF candidate.

"Now that's more like it..."

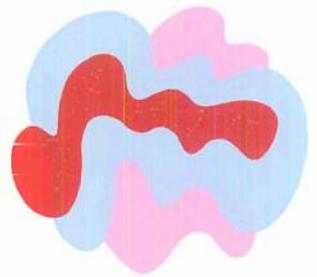
"Oh God," said Avedon on not quite the same occasion. "I've got to go back to where fanzine fandom consists of Ted White and Dan Steffan!" Her anguish was terrible to behold. We urged her to be strong. "Everyone was really just absolutely triffic," she writes, "and you see if I write my TAFF report right now it will be all mushy and effusive and dumb and even maudlin and not very funny and -- shit, now I know why no one ever finishes a TAFF report." You'll think of some good bitchy stuff eventually, Avedon. Even I managed to...

Meanwhile, an interesting point. The question most asked of Kev Smith at Chicon was, "Well, what's Joe Nicholas really like?" The question most asked of Avedon at Al-bacon was, our statisticians say, "Well, what's Ted White really like?" Opposite numbers, I suppose.

Greg Benford writes to ask "Why'd you quit Big Science Biz?" Greg is possibly not aware that even the meagre pittance of an author is, over here, somewhat more than a grateful government chooses to bestow on nuclear researchers struggling to shore up NATO in the sinister subcellars of the Ministry of Defense. (At one point Hazel, technically two grades below me in the hierarchy, was earning rather more since she was in the booming part of the Civil Service -- unemployment benefits.) As for the MoD, I am working even now on a satirical novel which Reveals All and will probably have to appear pseudonymously... George Flynn writes to remark that I seem to be inaccurate about Lewis Carroll as he can only find one 'forty-two' in The Hunting of the Snark. Ha ha, as Joe Nicholas used to say, George has fallen into my trap. As well as the reference in stanza 7 of the First Fit, the book The Hunting of the Snark has a Carroll preface to the poem, featuring in its fifth sentence... you guessed! Incidentally, in the year it was written (1874), Carroll himself was 42. Take that, Douglas Adams.

You keep asking for a snappy column title, Dick. As usual I'm short of clever notions. How about "Hot Wireless Sets," "Aspirin Tablets," "The Sandpaper Sides Of Used Matchboxes," "And Something That Might Have Been Castor Oil"?

RB: I prefer "Lies, All Lies" but I guess modesty prevents you from suggesting it as a title -- I only hope you haven't succeeded in creating (at the very least) acrimony between West and myself. I could point out that I never listed Ted White as one of the denouncers of "Performance" but I deliberately refrain knowing full well that to do so is to plunge into yet another Nicholasian Lanfordian Trap. I also wcn't mention that your carping at the West epic wasn't limited to it's length but seemed to deal with the crucial question of context and whether old reprints had any. And what's this damning with faint praise you attribute to the fabulous Hansen? "A Damn good article by and large". Hell, I did better than that in Wiz 4 and far as I know Ted has never even mentioned "Performance" (though D. has virtually begged him to do so). Wasn't it Bergeron who (according to West) idiotically offered to reprint all his golden phrases?



7 Of course, I didn't mention to him that the sub-title of the booklet was to have been "What I said or did ten, fifteen, or twenty years ago is of not the slightest consequence to the fans of today" and that I'd designed this embossed cover of a clinched fist with index finger upward pointing. And Hansen, in Epsilon, did seem to go on and on about other aspects of the piece that struck him as not holding water -- among them (probably) D. West himself. The defense rests. As usual. :: Speaking of the Ogre brings us to:

Dan Steffan who confesses: I have nothing but admiration for Don West. He is a king mixer, and I really enjoy standing off to one side watching him do his thing. I enjoy it for all the obvious reasons of quality of writing and thought. I also enjoy it as West's own brand of fanning by example. He comes on strong in print -- which isn't all that new, really -- but he actually goes about the business of trying to support his thoughts and claims with his personal fannish actions. Right or wrong, I admire the hell out of that. It is a lot of work to persue this route, not to mention the already obvious drawback of dealing with everybody else's reactions. West really believes that a fan's time in fandom should be more than marking time, which is a sentiment I'm in agreement with. He believes it should be a platform for the occasional performance, and he carries this belief into all the parts of fandom he touches. He performs in epic articles and then, like a vaudeville hero, he passes through his audience giving smaller, more personal performances. It is obviously not enough for him to do his bit on the stage, but he takes it out into the lettercols, etc., in hopes of making his act more comprehensible to his audience. Ostensibly he is reinforcing his ideas to the rest of fandom, but I think he is really just trying to make an impression on a group he considers mostly unimpressible. If Don has to shock or insult to get remembered he will, because deep down he knows it is a good thing to be remembered. And, taking fandom's penchant for timebinding into hand, West goes out to make his mark. By which I mean that, like Willis, West will be remembered for having positively contributed to the art of fannish mythmaking. :: Your crafting of the contents and style of Wiz really impresses me. Every issue just seems to be packed with intricate patterns of thought and extrapolation. Like some kind of artistically hand-woven tapestry in the process of being created, Wiz always reveals itself to be more attractive and more complete with each issue. It seems so finely crafted like a micro-chip. Wiz is small, crammed with information, and takes the place of larger, out-dated forms of fan publishing. (1010 N. Tuckahoe St, Falls Church, Va. 22046)

RB: Aw, shucks, he blushed dragging his toe through the kitty litter. Now butter the other side. There, that's better. :: Actually there really isn't much about Wiz that's particularly 'ensmalled'. Izzard and Egoboodle have taken the micro-chip concept a bit further -- my deteriorating eyesight tells me. And how could one forget The Fancient which reduced elite type down to $\frac{1}{4}$ size...and in 13 issues totalling 464 pages (in a $4\frac{1}{4}$ "x $5\frac{1}{2}$ " size) still managed to be a huge fanzine.

Gary Hubbard: "Performance" is a very important work of writing, and not only innovative formally, but likely to be much imitated in the next few years. D. really lays his soul on the line, and people are going to take some of his most sleazily personal admissions the wrong way, but I'm glad he did it. I don't have the talent or the guts /rb: Oh, come, come. You have nothing to lose but your mind./ to do anything like it and it's a piece that indicates to me more than anything else lately that maybe we really are in that fannish fanzine renaissance. (4622 Green Acre, Kalamazoo, Mi 49009)

D. West stumbles in to (among other things) deny rumors that he's standing for Taff (remember those days?) which I find mildly puzzling in view of the clamor various US fans have been making about their desire to, er, meet him and in view of his "re-volving door" flirtation with fame. Whodathot he's shy! I rushed off an invitation to him to submit his Taff report to Wrhn even before I'd heard that he'd been named #1 fan writer (I thought he showed promise, but this is ridiculous). I offered to publish "The WolfFan Makes The Scene" complete in a single issue of Wrhn sans the usual editorial interpolations and back biting but he wasn't tempted in the least and was content with the following gentle complaints:

I don't think there's much to be added to the exchanges of "Performance", the argument having reached the stage when spectators have to make up their own minds (assuming they're still interested.) However, I would like to point out that you must have established some sort of record by quoting not only myself but Dave Langford, Rob Hansen, Simon Ounsley and Pete Lyon out of context... Still, I'll leave it to someone else to complain about that.

The 'form versus content' argument is one that could go on forever. My own point of view should be clear enough by now to most people (if not to Mike Glicksohn). Incidentally, I must refer you back to Wiz 4, in which you yourself referred to "the journeyman prose which constitutes 98% of fan writing at any given time". My point exactly. Most fanwriting is no better than journeyman prose (to put it kindly), so anyone who reads fanzines for prose style (rather than personal content) is either a halfwit or has low critical standards. This is a generalization, certainly, but a generalization that you admit applies to 98% of the material sounds reasonable to me.

Your own style has a certain tendency to wander off into oblique allusions, the meanings of which are not always readily apparent. Thus your remark that perhaps I "should review a little fanhistory before we find ourselves reinventing... one of its more ugly interludes alluded to in the opening of this snappy rejoinder" had me baffled for a while, since the reference seemed to be to "the writhing medusa head of US fandom 1964" which is not exactly the most transparent of metaphors. (Not to a British fan 19 years later, anyhow.) Eventually I figured out that this must be a delicate reference

8 to the Walter Breen affair (assuming I have the date right).
Well, I don't really think I stand in much danger of that kind of non-sense, but just to allay the apprehensions of nervous guardians of virtue everywhere, perhaps I should make the public statement that I am not in the least interested in children, animals, or BSFA members. I mean, you have to draw the line somewhere. (Oh all right -- maybe just a few BSFA members. But only the really cute ones, like Joseph. And I can assure you that Gerry Webb's pekes are safe with me.)

Still, I don't suppose it makes much difference what I say now, at least as far as American fans are concerned. I'm probably stuck with this lurid image you've invented forever after. Certainly, all your wild imaginings (about men in fishnet stockings etc etc) seem to have been taken as gospel truth by TAFF winner Avedon Carol. Despite the fact that when in her company at Glasgow I was notably well behaved (and did absolutely nothing more depraved than play dominoes) she informed me that I was exactly as expected; ie. an emaciated degenerate wreck, ready at the drop of a brassiere to leap into chains, leather boots and suspender belt and be whipped by voluptuous groupies while suspended upside down from a spiked chandelier. (Or something like that. Avedon has a really fertile imagination.) Anyway, what I'd like to know is how she got started on all these weird ideas, if not by the scandalous and scurrilous inventions of R. Bergeron? You have a lot to answer for.

And yet the reality of my life is that it's mostly so quiet it sends even me to sleep. Bloody hell. What it is to be a completely mythical person. (Confusing, that's what. It's got so that every time I sit down to read a book or watch television I feel guilty that I'm not out someplace making an effort and being depraved.)

See how difficult the truth is? A few minor facts get run up into Major History, and everything else gets lost. I guess all I can do is to resign myself and string along for the ride. Every man his own work of fiction. (48 Norman St, Bingley, West Yorks, BD16 4JT, England)

RB: I agree that it's time to let the readers make up their own minds (which is why I truncated my reply in #5). Incidentally, please forebare from citing the Pong Poll result as an indication that fandom overwhelmingly toes the West line. I think it's just evidence that most people are as schizophrenic as myself in this area. :: And isn't everything quoted out of context? I suppose you'd have me reprint the entire fanzine? The entire fandom? Say no. :: No need to refresh my memory on the journeyman nature of most fannish prose. I'm reminded all the time. I read fanzines for that elusive 2% which makes it all worthwhile while you are apparently wandering about in the 98% fascinated with all that soul baring personal revelation for which you denounce US fandom. As for the halfwits who read fanzines for style I'm reminded of your objection to Ted White in Wrhn 30 for "the terrible lack of style he shows." What was that you read fanzines for, again? :: You caught my timid reference to the events of 1964 and I am relieved to find where you draw the line. But confused by your admission (in Wiz 5) that you "think about seducing a fifteen year old boy" which I find even grottier than fishnet stockings -- at least the latter is adult though perhaps I've lead a sheltered life and haven't seen any fifteen year old boys walking around in fishnet stockings. Men, however, are a different matter and I direct your attention to the latest hit on Broadway which is just full of the darlings. Anyway, be that as it may, I'm delighted to let pass this particular cup of worms and chalk it up to your usual rhetorical excess. In passing, though, what is the legal age of consent in Britain? 10 years? :: Really now. I'm sure you're aware that Avedon Carol is even more gullible than myself (or is a greater master (mistress!) of pulling a leg than even yourself). And if I have anything to be blamed for it's for letting you have all the rope you wanted: or were those "twenty pages in Wrhn and /your/ half issue of Wiz" actually nothing more than deviousness on your part or evidence of my ability to manipulate you onto the gallows? Yes, let the readers decide -- as we draw the shade on this odd contretemps. They seem to have fallen asleep anyway -- though, I trust, not with D. West. "Things is tough all over" as he mentioned in "Performance".

Wake Up!: While we're wallowing about in nostalgia I recall that last time I was around it seemed everyone was sending me copies of their letters to West and/or Tappen. It was like having my own private fandom. Here I was hovering in the background recording all this evidence right under the monster's nose. Before we bid a fond adieu to 'meta-fannish' thinking (and other archaic concepts which might be even less than 7 months old) I'd like to quote (with rich brown's permission) this passage on the subject of the re-invention of the wheel. Yes, I know it's a dead horse of another color but rich's comments on the point make even the involved thought process of West, myself, and/or Dave Langford seem as lucid as a diamond.* What's more he even makes sense in this example of the, er, quintessence of the meta-fannish. Here, have a Tylenol first:

rich brown (to D. West): In your attempt to refute the "reinvention of the wheel" argument you say: "The wheel on a ten ton truck and the wheel on a wooden hand-cart share the same name and the same basic mechanical concept, but they are otherwise somewhat different and any insistence that they are 'the same' is neither useful nor informative." (My emphasis.) Nice of you to concede this point. Or don't you mean what you say? I'm sure we're neither of us authorities on the History of the Wheel, but we would probably be free from error in presuming a matter of process was involved. I assume even you do not think we went directly from the wheel on a hand-cart to one on a ten ton truck, but rather modified the same basic mechanical concept -- a circular disk or frame turning on a central axis -- as new applications were needed. No one in

*Well, in the case of Langford it might be rose quartz.

9 this discussion, to the best of my knowledge, has argued against improvements on the basic concept involved. In fact, to anyone who can read and comprehend the English language, the reverse is obviously true. But someone here has been holding forth at interminable length that the concept is bloody fucking irrelevant -- it being so old it can't possibly be applied to anything in this thoroughly modern world. Who would that be?

I've acknowledged I'm no authority on the History of the Wheel, but if you are -- or care to undertake research in the matter -- and as a result can tell me the man who invented the ten-ton-truck wheel had no knowledge of the concept (or discarded it as irrelevant and therefore useless), I will concede this whole line of argument. I doubt this was the case, but suppose in the first instance the inventor may have -- at the loss of some time, to say the least -- independently rediscovered the idea and then worked up from there. And for all I know, the fellow who discarded the basic concept could have pushed onward to something entirely innovative -- triangular-shaped wheels, perhaps. Howevermuch I might believe this would make for a "bumpy" ride, I'm willing to make the concessions if you can show me this was in fact the case. If, however, your researches reveal the person who accomplished this worthy end did so by making use of the basic concept, even though it was thousands of years old by that time, I would like to see a similar concession from you -- although, knowing what I do of you, I don't expect to get one.



I hate to shatter ego-centered delusions, but not every instance of the use of "reinventing the wheel" has been made to have some application to you. Nor, when it does apply, must it follow that Bergeron and I mean the same thing. What is generally meant is that it's a waste of time to develop wooden hand cart wheels for a ten-ton truck -- so it might be profitable to learn the basic concept first. At the very least this could save wear on "inventive" energies so they could be expended on something truly new. I know you're one of those keen-eyed individuals who recognize this for what it truly is -- a concerted effort to force you to Conform to the Old Standards, a total disregard (most likely prompted by jealousy) for your obvious superiority in designing wooden wheels and/or the moral equivalent of a fannish Loyalty Oath.

I suspect Bergeron thinks more of your "reinventions" than I do. Nor does it appear he's saying you're "just like Willis" or even that WAW was right to say certain things while you are wrong to say the same (although, eg, the pneumatic tire WAW "invented" was apt for the bicycle he was working with, it's "reinvention" for application to today's ten ton truck might not win praise -- although, considering your limitations, I wouldn't be surprised if this distinction escapes you entirely). I think Bergeron's been saying something more like, "Hey, look at how close this guy comes -- imagine what he could do if he knew what he was talking about!" Rather akin to how one might feel toward an idiot savant -- you know, one of those nine year olds from India with no formal education who can do logarithms in his head. My view is that idiot savants usually can't be taught anything else about mathematics (or, if they can, they tend to loose their "talent") and logarithms are available in tables, so the ability, while amazing, is also for all practical purposes useless. If they get praise for it, I at least think this should be viewed in the same light as applause for dogs who can walk on two legs -- as Dr. Johnson said, the wonder is not that they do it well but that they do it at all. (1632 19th St. NW, Apt. #2, Washington, DC. 20009)

Art Rapp (having published the 128th issue of Spacewarp -- who says the past is not still living? -- found time to write the following): Without a doubt the Three Elderfemmes of Fandom, Clotho with her mimeo, Lachesis with her stapler, and Atropos with her obliterated, have conspired to put us in contact at this time.

The delightful and unexpected arrival of Wiz 5 the other day surely portends events of great significance and terrific import. I of course dropped everything else in order to peruse it, if not from cover to cover (difficult to do with a coverless zine) at least from logo to signoff, with the usual sense of having walked into the middle of a conversation and not quite knowing what had inspired all the impassioned rhetoric. The D. West discussion is exceedingly cryptic to one who has not seen the article upon which it is based, not to mention being completely unfamiliar with D. West's prior career and reputation in fandom, which I assume is a prominent one. /Weeelll. -rb/ But it is obviously one of those grand and glorious brouhahas of the type which added so much interest and entertainment to the early days of Warhoon: HUAC and Nixon and "Last Year At Marienbad" come to mind from the mists of history. The arguments become ever more diverse and ad hominem, and the pyrotechnics ever more spectacular, until no one recalls what the original quibble was. Evidently you no doubt chortles obscenely when a manuscript falls into your hands that has the potential to ignite one of these fracasas. (Don't object to the spelling of the plural. I looked it up in the dictionary. The dictionary doesn't show a plural of fracas. Who ever heard of a noun without a plural? I deduce that I am free to invent one, and the above is it.)

How do you print those colored accents on Wiz's pages? To my inexpert eyes they appear to be silkscreened, but I cannot picture anyone so enmeshed in so many diverse fannish and mundane enterprises as you seem to be, spending weary hours at a silkscreen imprinting decorations on sheets of paper to be used in Wiz. /No?-rb/

Under the section titled "The Langford File", I was thrown into instant reverie by his lines on unusual words and phrases. I've always had an interest in the more

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arcane aspects of vocabulary and language usage, to the point that I read Evans' "A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage" as if it were a novel, and am positively delighted when I encounter in any reading matter a word that is so unfamiliar that its meaning cannot be deduced from context and perforce sends me to the dictionary for enlightenment. (Energumen, cataschrestic, wholistic, for example, the first time I ran across them). Books by British philosophers are rich veins of ore for mining this sort of esoteric gold. In one of those dreary required Freshman English courses in college, we were supposed to submit a list of ten words to be added to our vocabulary during the term: after considerable combing of the dictionary I produced the required ten, but I rather imagine the instructor still thinks I was being subtly sarcastic, tho she might have concluded otherwise after I maxed the standard tests designed to measure the average freshman's vocabulary. (Of course, that doesn't mean I am a model of verbal accuracy: according to Dick Eney it was I, in my neofannish days, who singlehandedly and unwittingly reversed the traditional meaning of Gafia by using it to mean escape from fandom into the tranquility of mundania, rather than the reverse. I can only plead that I was a mere instrument of destiny: fandom needed a word for crifanatic burnout, far more than for the lure of the hobby.

Your lyric paeon upon the scenic beauties of Puerto Rico and Rincon rang tantalizingly upon these ears frostbitten by an Appalachian winter, yet now that the crocus and daffodils are open and the peaches, plums and lilacs graced with swelling buds, I'm once again ready to shunt from consciousness the memory of carrying a hammer in my coat pocket while tending the poultry in the blizzardy dimness of winter dawn, in order to knock the ice out of the watering pans. Like the spring ritual of poking onion sets into ground that is muddy and only half-thawed, summer's eternal race with the lawnmower against the insidious upward climb of the grass, and autumn's campaign to gather the last of the tomatoes before a frosty night blackens the vines, these are parts of a varied seasonal ritual that I, personally, think I prefer to the all-year balminess of a subtropical paradise. Ah well, like Candide each of us must wander the world until we find the proper location in which to cultivate our garden. (282 Grovania Drive, Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, 17815)

RB: Nice to have you with us, Art. :: I should mention that Art has recently taken over the official editor duties of Saps again and is on the prowl in an attempt to lure likely candidates for membership into the organization. Once Saps was serious competition to Fapa for the title of best fannish apa (at a time when there may have been only two of them) and could even boast that two Hugo winning fanzines had originally been produced for its mailings, but now is one of what may be several dozen of the things. One less would be a step in the right direction toward a more cohesive fanzine fandom: I would trade the whole lot for a monthly ten page Spacewarp filled with a Rappian eye-view of the world mailed first class...in fact as inducement I'll even dangle the possibility of relinquishing Wrhn's current claim to "File 13"...back to the home from which it sprang.

John D. Berry: Alexis Gilliland's comment on Bill Gibson's "Bell Rings In Athens" puzzled me until I realized that Alexis thought it was an excerpt from something larger. As far as I know, it's not. That's why its one fault stands out: the setting in time isn't clear until the end, and it's misleading in the middle. I knew that Bill had been in Greece several years ago, not recently, but even so I was confused by the imprecision of "Just after the government fell...after the Colonels," because now it is "after the Colonels"; I didn't know whether it was the arrival of the Colonels or their departure that Yorgo was talking about, not yet realizing that the whole incident took place while the Colonels were still firmly in power. If Bill ever sends it to The New Yorker, he should do something about that misleading ambiguity. But it's wonderful stuff. Perhaps too compact for its own good, but perhaps just extraordinarily compressed; I haven't made up my mind. :: Just how does Joseph Nicholas pronounce "junta," if it seemed pedantic of Katie Hoare to insist on pronouncing it "hoonta"? For all that Americans are proverbially incompetent at any language but English, it's the British who most consistently and capriciously twist pronunciations of all introduced words as far from their original as possible. Who else, for instance, would have invented "Leghorn" as a wholly unnecessary anglicization of the Italian city of Livorno? (525 19th Avenue East, Seattle, Washington, 98112)

TO:

WIZ

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