

WIZ

#7, 15 October 1983, is a sort of black hole into which all fandom has been compressed. Or maybe it's a 10 page fanzine with a 600 page fanzine struggling to get out of it. Art by Hoffman Nothing, Ink, & Bergeron's Magic Transformations, Ltd *de Puerto Rico*. Hobby horses ridden free.

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Regurgitation Of The Jedi: Primordial forces at work here: a multi-million dollar cinematic extravaganza playing on prepuberal and infantile yearnings of fear/love/hatred (pick one or arrange in any order or combination) for the father with redemption of same after dearly departed. Stir in a primitive culture based on the cuddly security blanket with arms, legs, and bright black button eyes which mother finally had to have the local sanitation department remove when we turned nine. Now we've tapped the five year old movie going public: a market whose birth rate overwhelmingly overshadows its death rate. Straight ahead loomes oral gratification and the Jungian jungle against the vast backdrop of the womb. How to exploit this with Star Wars IV? Perhaps a great mammary refuge shaped like a woman's breast orbiting the earth: a "Golden Door Moments of Bliss" satellite? No. A Death Star with a nipple. Father is safely dead and the cosmic revelation can be made: the whole saga sucks.

Thoughts On Australian Aerogrammes: It seems Ozie aerogrammes are extravagantly illustrated with antipodean scenes in full four color photoengraving. I wonder how much of the totality of Australian life is revealed in this medium and what my friend John Bangsund makes of them? Two examples are at hand.

The first shows a man on horseback with a couple sheep dogs surveying his large flock grazing under a huge tree in the countryside. Mr. Bansund has drawn in a balloon over the rider's head and written therein "I know I'll never find another ewe!" I didn't know he cared.

A later letter is decorated with a row boat containing four men in full rowing regalia crashing into some heavy surf. Above them, penned in, is the caption "You blokes sure this is the way to Puerto Rico?"

I think John has created a new fannish artform -- one immanently suited to thousands of flights of fancy.

The Trouble Is I Crack Up Every Time I Think About It: Maybe it's one of those bits of cross cultural humor that don't quite make it across the Atlantic -- like breaking wind in the ionosphere or those pitfalls of peculiarly American sarcasm of which Chris Priest ran afoul in Deadloss: you know the ones about the Spurious Capital Letters and US fans being preoccupied with Chuck & Di. I don't know what else to make of it unless I choose to take seriously Rob Hansen in Epsilon 14 tut-tutting a scandalous cover on the BSFA magazine Matrix (in strongly spinsterish tones very unlike the raunchy artist/author of Trufan & Junior fame who often panders to the fishnet stocking traffic). Seems Simon Polley is the current editor of what I understand to be the organization's cultured overlook of the science fiction scene (with a side helping of fanzine commentary -- a sort of sugar coated pill of arsenic designed to lure the non-fannish hoards of fandom across the backyard into our own brand of sleaze). Anyway, seems Hansen noticed this cover and reacted with a life-like rendition of an aghast biology teacher discovering the school cheerleader getting laid in the men's room on the pissoir. But Rob tells it much better than I: it "depicts a half-naked woman lying on the floor and masturbating with a rolled up apa-mailing while lapping up the semen raining down from the muscular barbarian standing over her...and this travesty was perpetrated not by a repressed teenage adolescent but by a supposedly responsible adult." Rob wonders "can we now assume that for a future cover you would not be averse to drawing something like, say, a bunch of ape-like blacks, enormous cocks dragging on the ground behind"? Well, after that taunt it's almost inevitable isn't it? and I can see D. West at the easel now sketching the outlines of those blacks leering at, you guessed it, Rob Hansen. Rob asks "what was going through his mind when he decided it was fit for publication?" and "intends taking a critical look at the BSFS magazines as a whole in a future Epsilon" -- an article I'm looking forward to mightily since elsewhere in this Epsilon he combines his "Notions" column which usually has the cohesiveness of a legal brief with a fanzine review column notable for an array of acute perceptions. Trenchant stuff, indeed.

But getting back to Pete Lyon's cover (for, yes, it is by the arty member of the Leeds gang -- West, Ounsley, Polley, and Lyons -- who must spend their time scouring the local sewers looking for ways into our fannish hearts as a look at Still It Moves (the journal of "Decayedent Fandom") makes abundantly clear. (Sorry, Simon only printed a few copies for the cognoscenti.)

I'm reminded that the more things change the more they stay the same. Back in 1950, I think it was, there was this fanzine called Incinerations which ran into trouble with the post office for publishing a Christmas issue with an illustration of the baby Jesus taking a painful bite at the breast of the Blessed Virgin and elsewhere ran a drawing of the Mona Lisa smirkingly giving the finger. Fandom, of course, was properly shocked by this graffiti with which it was already familiar from the walls of railway men's rooms. The Lyon cover is of slightly different ilk, it strikes me, since it is clearly a political statement aimed at that British refuge from the slights of we hulks known as A Woman's Periodical (APA). I don't intend to fall into the trap of defining how far humor can go in political commentary (pretty far when you think of the lies of Hunter S. Thompson) but I'm insatiably curious about the rest of Polley's ed-

2

itorial reign at Matrix and look forward to Rob's comments on it.

Frankly, I don't find the Lyon cover much funnier than the Incinerations stuff but the image of the British science fiction bourgeoisie opening their BSFA envelopes, encountering this scatological doodle and reacting in a perfect imitation of Rob Hansen causes me to fall down on the floor laughing like an idiot. Sorry. I know we purveyors of good taste must stand in a phalanx before the assault of these barbarians but I think dirty boys can be pretty cute once in a great while. A little slumming gives us reason to value our virginity just that much more, don't you think?

Pondering the subject of 'good taste' we have only to turn to the cover of this very Epsilon where we find the #1 Fan Face at it again. Steffan's cover (inked by Hansen or vice-versa) reveals a man in a long coat standing on a grotty rendition of the Epsilon logo taking a nocturnal piss into a sump of defecation and sewage against the backdrop of the evening skyline of a big city. Is this a political comment too? Probably, since the issue number is seen floating in the stream on a sheet of paper we take to be from Epsilon itself. Tasty, what? But is it funny? Remember all those forgettable drawings of puckered anuses which Dan used to use as illuminations in Pong? And what about that cover of a robot horsefucking a duck which disgraced a cover of Boonfark and which all properly brought up members of the fraternity everywhere could only look down on through their lorgnettes and react to with a fervent tisk-tisk. I do recall writing to the NHs that I liked BNF but wondered what such a deplorable example of bad taste was doing on its cover. This didn't stop the rest of fandom from being awed by its technical, er, virtuosity, though, and Dan went on to tromp all over the work of more tasteful fanartists (like myself) on his way to being named Number One Fan Artist. Good taste is often a snare and a delusion.

In Outworlds I see Terry Carr leaping into the art vs. content argument and seeming to contend that disreputable subject matter can prevent the triumph of art: a discussion I would have thought had been settled long ago by Picasso, Cezanne, and Warhol. Carr observes "Remember, some forms of writing are just crap no matter how well done" and finds himself at odds with his wife Carol over the film "Road Warrior" which he thought little more than a "demolition derby with sftrappings". Carol is content to reply "But it's so well done" which is sufficient but a case can be made for the film's content -- an after the bomb look at social values and an attempted escape from the horror into the future. "So what? Would you consider a movie good if it was the best possible example of a snuff movie?", Terry challenges. And goes on, "You may substitute any genre or sub-genre you wish in that remark... would a 'perfect' -- or as perfect as can be -- tract on Nazism be worthy of praise?" One has only to recall "Triumph Of The Will" by Leni Raffenstal -- her glorification of the rise of Hitler and the Third Reich which has been praised for decades as the ultimate example of the art of propaganda on film and alternately denounced as the prelude in a movement which lead to a bacchanalia of death. Take your pick.

The question of good taste vs. bad will be mulled longer than me and thee but I am made uneasy by those examples of the bad which are found to be entertaining against all 'better judgement' and would be tempted to tut-tut Hansen myself if I didn't think his own outrage was mock.

Meeting Bergeron (by Cesar Ignacio Ramos):

The sand was hot.

Monsters were gushing green ooze from their hair. It was one of those days.

I was at playa Escambron with the gringo. He's into graphic arts and is producing *serigrafias en ediciones limitadas*.

I told him about this poster I'd posted at UPR on which I'd added "Fandom Is A Way Of Living".

He got up and ran into the water shrieking, "A fan! A fan!"

I never saw him again.

RB: Actually, Cesar is joking. We see each other more than occasionally. He's read the Wash and thought it rather good -- oblivious to its irrelevance. Odd. Must mention this in Wiz.

He argues a slick case for a Third World Con -- not realizing that there have been several more than two. I've advised him to hold it in India.

He's thinking about re-inventing the wheel.

Terry Carr compliments and disassociates himself from noteworthy nuttiness: Any fanzine that features contributions from Benford, Gibson, and Langford has to be a class act -- I especially loved Greg's piece -- and when you put them together, as you do, with all those letters and quotations from other fans and your own musings, "oblique allusions" and all, then we get something rill triff. Wiz is obviously one of the top fanzines today, despite laboring under the awesome handicap of not resembling a Sixth Fandom fanzine at all. It's as if you'd studied the wooden wheel and the pneumatic tire and gone on to invent the propellor. Sort of.

The antics of Paul Flores and/or Paul Thorne are indeed noteworthy in a somewhat nutty way. Your note that "'Bran Don Carl' may actually be...a transparent resurrection of Carl Brandon" prompts me to deny that I, at least, have anything to do with all this fooforah and have certainly not sanctioned any use of Carl Brandon's name.

I'm sure "Gary Leiber" has it right /in a subsequent 'open letter' following Basfan 3/in saying that Paul Flores and Paul Thorne are the same person: as he says, "'Flores' means flower; and the thorn is part of the same plant." Plus the fact that Paul Thorne has consistently been presented as a thorn in Paul Flores's side. I suspect that Flores is the real person and Thorne is the hoax, used pretty consistently to pull hoaxes and japes (like the news item about Hubbard being thrown out of a Dr. Who con)

3

which Flores could then repudiate in tones of high dudgeon, even if dragged on. The basic joke seems to be characterizing "Thorne" as a member of one of those "radical fan movements" at which Flores likes to point with what I take to be satirical alarm. In the piece you quote, he says, "They rarely read sf, they don't subscribe to Analog and they have a very low opinion of Trekkies and media fans." In a passage you didn't quote, from Flores's Westercon report, he says these radical fans "insult fandom with their small print run fanzines that don't mention sf and who create hoaxes that may some day drag our hobby into a state of chaos." Both of these descriptions seem to fit fannish fans as seen by ultra-sercon movie-tv-comics-gaming fans of the sort who apparently dominate the scene in San Jose, where Flores lives; can we doubt that Flores is simply satirizing the latter fans, especially after reading in his Westercon report that Ray Nelson made him a member of the fannish Beanie Brigade?

I'm very little in touch with local fans and fan groups, despite having attended that Westercon, and I've never knowingly met Paul Flores or whatever his real name may be, so my guesses are little better than yours would be. However, I think it's clear that at least one hoax is going on here, and I'm reasonably sure that my remarks above explain most of what's going on. If I'm right, then Flores's hoaxing is in the great fannish tradition and I think it's great in outline; some of the details strike me as crude and inexact and quite possibly harmful, which is why I want to disassociate myself from the whole thing. It may turn out, on balance, to be one of the better fannish hoaxes, but good or bad, it's not one of mine. (11037 Broadway Terrace, Oakland, California, 94611)

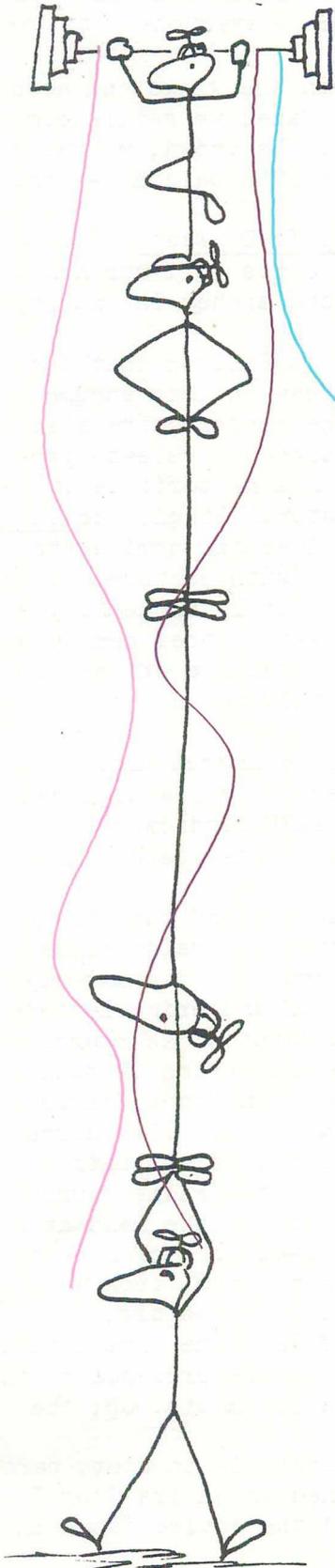
RB: Wiz dicta: Less is More. Your remarks on Wiz inspired three pages of fatuity on the art of the fanzine which I have mercifully deleted. I'd gone on and on about its effects and how it got that way but it now all seems the most obnoxious nonsense.

And it was immodest -- something I never am. (One must be one's own best critic.)

Instead I'll content myself with the thought that a fanzine is a paper world of words and air through which the reader passes as in a dream. But an odd dream, for all that, whose products are substantial artifacts extending forward and backward through space and time. In fact, I will argue that magazine making is the single most fascinating aspect of fandom with its infinite permutations of words, images and styles -- and for those who discover its joys an endlessly refreshing form of mental play which we will probably have with us for centuries: unlike science fiction. A fanzine should be a sort of slight of hand in which everything is exhibited for the reader's inspection and then assembled and shaped right before his/her incredulous eyes. (100 copies of Wiz are printed and available only to those most likely to participate -- either through their own fanzines or in these pages. Reviews are not desired if they are likely to appear in media or convention orientated fanzines. Next issue due Nov. 15. Write early to reserve your copy.)

Speaking of slight of hand: the Flores matter seems more fascinating for the style with which it has been carried off than for its substance. My theory is Flores is also a figment and behind him is the real mad genius operating on a level that only a few fans like Ray Nelson could achieve. A sort of Secret Second Second Foundation, a vanVogtian maze, and shifting realities worthy of PKDick: people writing each other out of existence, levels of satire, and over it all the implied mockery that the real culprit has scattered clues in full view pointing to his identity which we fannish geniuses aren't paying the least attention to. Reading BasFan I find Flores compounded of the most unlikely mixture of neofannishness and evidence of fanhistorical knowledge which only a long time fan could possess. If he is a new fan he has an uncanny grasp of fannish myth, role playing, and continuity. I doubt Flores has been around long enough to have such knowledge without my ever having heard of him. Somewhere in BasFan #3 there's a coy reference to run-on lines of type at the bottom of pages in the issue. Presumably these hold a key to something or other but I leave the instant glory which will accrue to the fan who penetrates the 'Flores' identity to someone else. The type reads: "meeting...Jan...Berk...M...O...F...F...forever" which sounds vaguely like someone being garotted in a dungeon. Then there's the delicious pulling of Mike Glycer's toga and a collection of what might be red herrings or might be actual events, cf, Paul Thorne's COA to which mail was not to be sent. What do you suppose actually exists at that address? Probably a vacant parking lot or a glowing door through which we enter Innsmouth.

Paul Flores descends into our midst: I have contacted my lawyers. I am suing you for \$82,000 (\$85,000 less \$3,000 for correcting typos) for having reprinted the Hubbard/Dr. Who



4 Con Hoax Revealed article without permission. Like Paul Thorne, you now must live with the stigma of owing me a great deal of money. Or maybe I should let you do my proofreading... /rb: Paul includes a letter by Gary Leiber and Larry Wolfe the sense of which is that Flores does not exist -- their address is Box 268, San Jose, Calif, I mention for the benefit of L. Ron Hubbard's solicitors who have contacted me.) I think fandom is deathly boring enough without my help. I've folded the newsletter and, after 12 years of fanac, have decided to gafiate and become a 'real person' for awhile. Naturally a quiet gafiation is not my way. :: There might be another issue of BasFan, The Newsletter, tho planned not even for RSN to tie up loose ends. Till then I'm happily returned to Mundania. (PO Box 26861, San Jose, Calif. 95159 or (as given on the envelope) 254 N. 14th St., San Jose, Calif. 95112

RB: See what I mean: check his addresses against the one given for Leiber and Wolfe. I think Flores is trying desperately to tell us something by smuggling these messages to us so cryptically. Perhaps the whole thing is an elaborate anagram spelling out "Help! I'm being held prisoner in the basement of the Chateau d'IF."

Evolution: Wiz is actually an elaboration of "Fangdom" the column I used to write which was last seen in Telos. You'll recall in the first instalment -- in Shaggy -- I explained I intended to use "Fangdom" as a report on what fandom looked like from voluntary exile: this replete with a continuity of letters, an articlette by Bob Shaw, and wide ranging commentary on everything that caught my eye. I continued this in Telos and added illustrations by LeeH worked into the text. And now we have the latest state of the art, again, complete with La Hoffwoman. The form, I think, goes back all the way to "File 13", The Harp, and Rich Elsberry's Odd column. It's well suited to comment of the moment reflecting what we see around us. In the current permutation I find Wizes within Wiz: PNHs new column commences below and old faithful D. Langford (sometimes known as 'Yellowstone') provide the same kind of reflection from their own perspectives. All delightfully incestuous, I'm sure, and of great fascination to everyone who loves to see his/her name in print.

Enough. I see that *quasi manu geniti infantis* is waiting in the wings and about to step out to the prosenium arch. Dissonances of the overture fade, we settle comfortably in our seats as the house lights dim and a hush falls over the crowd, we raise our theatre binoculars (after all, we're in the last row of the 10th balcony -- the house is packed!), he shuffles to centre stage and begins:

Cum Granu Salis (by Patrick Nielsen Hayden): "Send D. West To De West": "Do you know anybody willing to be one of Don West's TAFF nominators?" Joyce Scrivner asked me. We were sitting in the fan room at ConStellation. My eyebrows arched in inquiry, and the tale unfolded.

The details escape me, but the essence is clear. Deciding at Silicon that the Schrödingerian eisenstadt of Famous Dave's TAFF candidacy had gone on long enough, a number of civic-minded individuals including Joyce had taken the constructive step of waiting until 3AM and then denying West his room key until he signed a release promising to appear on the ballot and, if elected, attend LACon. In a historic capitulation to destiny not unlike the Diet of Worms (on which the pastoral Bingley braceros thrive), West's only stipulations were that Joyce round up the American nominators and that they consist at least partially of nubile young males ("with pictures"). Despite hardly qualifying for this latter condition Teresa and I promptly handed Joyce written nominations without batting an eyelash. The letter of West's other demand was quickly provided for by Tom Weber, promising 19-year-old recent graduate of the Gary Farber School of Fanhistory, who batted his eyelashes very prettily for Joyce's Instamatic.

Where will it all end? Los Angeles, of course, where all good madmen ultimately tend and where the chain of "Dante" West's karma, even now, inexorably leads: scream by tiny scream. Further updates on "Famous Dave For TAFF", the TAFF candidacy that's also a breath mint, in upcoming issues of Malcolm Edwards' newly resuscitated fanzine, Drat! Skunk Lard.

Tell Me All About ConStellation: I can't imagine. Some images stand out, though. Getting stuck in the NYC subway system beneath Chinatown as torrential rains blocked all tunnels to Brooklyn, meanwhile watching Moshe Feder's face gradually do a passable imitation of bleached muslin. (Moshe's new job consists largely of answering letters of complaint received by the Transit Authority. This is to be understood as roughly the equivalent of being the guy who has to catch all those javelins during Olympic practice and bring them back to be thrown again.) Being asked by John-Henri Holmberg at Bill & Mary Burns' party, that first night in New York, why we looked like normal people and not like fans. "Yøu're nøt fät," was about how he put it. We apologised for our omission and hastily went to sleep. Endless sercon partying in fab Falls Church punctuated periodically by outbreaks of the seriously bizarre: such as the mass attack by 1½-inch wasps on Dan & Lynn's house which culminated in the co-editors of Pong taking a rolled-up newspaper and shutting themselves off in the dining room, from which we in the next room could only listen to cries such as "Ohmigod, it's too big, it'll kill me!" and speculate. "Does it hurt?" asked Chris Atkinson of Ted some time later, herself by then nearly recovered from the fetal crouch inspired by the presence of the stinging creatures. "Fuck shit goddamn yes," said Ted White with his mouth. Oh, the fannish banter flowed fast and heavy in Falls Church, you bet.

Actually, it did, and Ted, Dan and Lynn were incredibly hospitable to boot, particularly considering that we stayed nearly two weeks and published an entire 34pg Izard while we were at it. I say published: Ted, in fact, printed the entire issue in

5 an awesome display of fannish motor skills, arising magisterially from his chair during a party around midnight and announcing, "Well, time to Pub Your Ish." Which he proceeded to do with awesome dispatch: as a graduate of the Toronto Perfectionist Mimeograph's School, much given to slipsheets, finicky alignments, and all that rot, I'm here to announce that the man who ruined fandom in the first place has given it all up and it's a sight to see. A green blur, all the stars rushing together into the center of the screen, and bang! a completely printed fanzine. Looked pretty good, too. Thanks, Ted.

But I was going to say something about the convention itself. Will you look at that! Nearly out of space. Oh dear. Tough shit. (Check one.)

But Back To Our Original Topic: If "Performance" has a didactic core (not that it must, you understand), it is in the idea that we are performing and the corresponding implication that, ultimately, responsibility for subsequent reactions and the impressions others form is ours. "What is it (rhetorically, now)," complains Joseph Nicholas in Prevert 7, "about These Damn Americans that they think that just because I once said something rude about somebody's pride and joy back in, oh, Neolithic times then I must go on being rude about everything forever afterwards? Yawn yawn, it do get tedious (etc.). Bore the hell out of me, anyway, having to point such elementary fallacies of reasoning out all the time." Well, what is it about These Damn Americans, anyway? Could be that, not having Joseph's charming person around all the time, they've got nothing but his highly polemical written output to go on in forming an impression? Further: could it possibly be that, interesting though Joe is, few Americans watch his every move, his every change of mood, with the sort of subtle care and attention he seems to be demanding -- indeed, that like everyone does to everyone, they simply form vague impressions over the long run in response to his most noticeable characteristics? Naah, nothing like that; actually it's a conspiracy to pick on Joe, the more capriciously the better.

Compare and contrast with West himself in the last Wiz: "See how difficult 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." To be sure, there's a complaint here, and one we've all made (how dare anyone think I "worship" Sixth Fandom! Shock, outrage, existential horror &c.): significantly, though, West is realistic, and ironically amused by a process he knows to be unavoidable. Even better, West knows how to take an Image and wail with it, as indeed all that stuff in "Performance" about seducing fifteen-year-old boys was intended to do; if West has just cause to be irritated with Mr. Bergeron, it's for Dick's apparently not getting the joke. Despite which, West's plea for perspective in Wiz 6 carries credibility due to its level-headed self-amusedness, in sharp contrast to Joseph's everybody's-picking-on-me whine.

We all have Images, and they're all wrong. Partly our conscious creation, partly thrust upon us by others, ultimately they're blameable on no one but ourselves. If Joseph feels unfairly stuck with the KTF image by friend and foe alike it can only be because these were the short hairs he chose for years to display: here, grab a few and twist. If he wants a new image now, let him do something new, and keep on doing it for a good long time while fandom slowly catches on. (Slowly, because fandom is large and we don't all spend our time keeping detailed scorecards of Joseph Nicholas's evolution, bit by tiny bit.) And, for God's sake, let him shut up about "elementary fallacies of reasoning" -- as if perfect reason ever had anything to do with the impressions we all, including Joseph Nicholas, form of one another.

Wiz, A Fanzine About D. West: Honest to god, I know the topic is getting old, but having to a certain extent started this endless round in these pages I feel a vague responsibility to leave the discussion with a few final thoughts. When I originally wrote the first "Rough Mix" for Wrhn, it was with the idea of initiating in those blue pages a continuing column of critical appreciations of modern fanwriters not generally celebrated as BNFs, at least not in the US. Cavils at the 1977 Westorama notwithstanding, the thrust of the column was to bring West to US fandom's attention as someone to watch. Subsequent events were to render this rather unnecessary and by the time that column actually got published -- nearly a year after its composition -- it figured in Wrhn 30 as part of a veritable maelstrom of West-related dispute. Not what I would have wished at all.

Then came "Performance", and a reaction on my part I've already regretted elsewhere. On first reading, West's antifanhistory crotchet Got Me, resulting in a number of halfassed comments here in Wiz; it wasn't until a few weeks later, reading the article aloud to a cataplectic Teresa, that it occurred to me how brilliant so much else of the article was. Pax. I don't need, and don't intend, to further defend Walt Willis or fanhistorical reprints to D. West; we've each said our bit, and I doubt we'll convince each other. Nor need I defend Ted White, who in any case (it seems to me) has West's number as much as West has his -- else why would West go to so much trouble about him, as Simon Ounsley pointed out in more general terms in Still It Moves 4.

A Naive Point: which I made on a panel at ConStellation ("Do Fanzines Have To Be Good?"), co-starring Gary Farber, Teresa, Moshe Feder, Malcolm Edwards, and Taral) and which I'll continue to make, dippy and ponderous though it may be. That is: Fandom is



6 interesting to the extent that it's full of opinionated and crotchety people, trading verbiage and outrageous opinions as they generally see fit. They relish the feedback they get, but at the same time aren't overly worried about what the neighbours will think. And yet: Fandom is bloody dull to the extent that all us thickheaded cranks start throwing the kitchen implements at each other. The only thing more boring than "everything-in-the-garden-is-lovely" pseudo-tolerance is an empty arena from which all the former actors have stomped off in disgust. It's like, like man, like a Delicate Balance, like y'know? Heavy.

Remember all that soft-headed liberalism of the Carter years, and how dull and unimaginative it seemed. Yes? And now, if only we could somehow get it back...

I don't think I need to go on belabouring this point.

NB. Abi Frost: who protests, in le nouveau revue bleu, that "Dammit, man, nobody zaps the Haydens for using words like 'paideuma'." Oh, but Abi, they do, they do. With that fearful thought in mind I should doubtless hasten to explain the derivation of "Schrödingerian eisenstadt", which of course refers to the famous experiment in quantum mechanics in which D. West and Ted White are placed in a closed box with two typewriters and told that whichever one composes the longer fanzine article about the experience will be set free. The other will be shot. Ages of fanhistory roll by and eventually everyone forgets about the whole thing. If you people ever read anything other than your own names in each others' fanzines I wouldn't constantly be having to explain myself to you. Yawn yawn, it do get tedious (etc.).

RB: I think I'll take credit for trying to turn West's obsession into a joke. After all, I threw him that life-line in Wiz 5 by referring to his excessive "dramatic imagination" -- a life-line he pointedly declined by donning a leaky Mae West and pointing out that Lies Are Boring. I don't think he wants it both ways, but, personally, couldn't care less about his barnyard raids on the chicken coop. Different strokes as I've been saying all along, etc. In the meantime what do I have to do to become a D. ("Lies are boring...everyman his own work of fiction?) West nominator? No! Not that, thank you.

Bill Patterson adds: Let's just forget the six "theoretical" pages of "Performance" and accept the rest of the work on its own merits. Nobody is going to get anywhere trying to deal with West's cranky, naive, and remarkably inapt formulations. Leaving those out of consideration does wonders for one's wa, I assure you. What remains is almost unique in fanwriting: a well-written con report (surely the most... er... conventional form in the genre) by a true esthetic-decadent. A number of people have toyed with this approach before, but West manages to put on a truly Rimbaudian mantle of squalor, malice, and grotesquerie. (537 Jones St. #9943, SF, Calif 94102)

RB: Sigh. Wiz: the letter column of Tappen. Which, come to think of it, causes me to wonder where D. West would be without me...Edwards being on record as saying that the letter column is the least interesting part of any good fanzine. Hm, this verges on immodesty. Must be careful about that.

Avedon Carol avers: What, me pull shy old D. West's leg? How could you suggest such a thing? Why, you know I believe everything I read in fanzines. I'd almost be thrown into a dilemma with this letter of his here in Wiz, but fortunately, he doesn't actually deny being a degenerate wreck of a fishnet-stockings-and-chains freak -- which means I can still go by what he says in "Performance", right? 'Cause man, like all truth is contained in fanzines, just like Gary Farber told me so many years ago. (4409 Woodfield Rd. Kensington, Maryland, 20895)

RB: And we must not forget that one "isn't truly sophisticated until they've had carnal knowledge of a goat" as, I think, Chuch Harris once said.

This Could Give Standards A Bad Name: Maybe I owe another apology to Chris Priest. That ghastly thought crosses my mind as I peruse my first and the latest issue of Abi Frost's le nouveau revue bleu (as she spells it) or as we boobs used to know it (spelling it correctly) New River Blues. What is one to make of an editor who typos her own title in the colophon and just doesn't care enough to obliterate in the correction? This is where I'm reminded of what I thought (never having seen a copy) was Priest's vicious judgement of Frost's fanzine. You recall I took his comment "**The way fanzines are produced is not an excuse for laziness, carelessness and contempt**" and twisted it around into a dagger through Chris's own heart -- complete with typeface reeking of boring old fartishness. Those were the days. Or were they? Now I see what Priest's pronouncement was all about. Frost pays correct lip-service to all the things we like best about fanzines -- among them quality, style, content and serves it with perfect party line politesse. Except that the lady is a slob.

Take this example which is certainly calculated to make my hair stand on end (if not Dave Locke's): "Saying something is bad is not the same as erdaringtits perpetrator to improve is, let alone to take particular steps to improve it. ... Because peopæ have come to think of fanzine fandom as a nursery, that's why. There's a tacit assumption that fanzine writing ien't someting worth doing in its own right, but as a means to an end - the end being 'learning to be a writer'." Well, this says it all-- basically the old Pickersgill saw that it's not OK to do less than your best 'Just because it's a fanzine' -- but leaves a lot to be desired in the way of what (I assume) even Abi Frost would like to see as exemplary of good writing in fanzines. And so it goes...all the way through



7 le nouveau revue blaa.

Isn't there something about people who live in glass houses not stowing thrones? Or am I thinking that perhaps she should clean out her own Augean stables before turning up her nose at ours?

You were right, Chris.

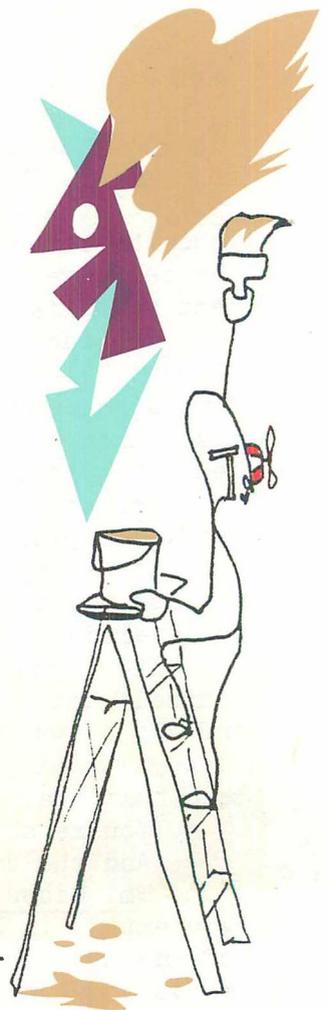
Another Priestly Observation From Deadloss: which deserves repeating about once every six months gets picked up again in the latest issue of John Berry's Wing Window. The first line of Deadloss, October, 1981, is to the effect that "Fanzines have started talking about each other again; a sure sign of a fannish spring" which I took the trouble to quote in the opening of my 8½ pages of remarks on Deadloss in Wrhn 30. The way JB puts it is "One of the things I like most in fanzines is when they talk about each other." (I see just below it in Deadloss that Chris also makes the obvious point that "writing being a form of communication and expression, the better one writes the more likely one is to succeed in one's aim. Letters, diaries, novels, plays, textbooks, biographies, posters, menus, poetry and graffitti are all given more point by attention to how one best expresses the words, just like fanzines" which certainly applies as a critique of le nouveau revue blaa, I should say.)

In Still It Moves 4 (an issue so good it almost is enough to make us forget the last Tappen) Simon Ounsley notes after summarizing the contents of Wrhn 30: "What does this leave? 14 pages out of a total 86 (16% of the fanzine dealing with less incestuous matters." (My underlining.) Simon includes Langford's Taff report in that 16% (which I wouldn't). About the only things in Wrhn 30 which weren't incestuous were the reprint from WAW's "The Improbable Irish" and my own remarks on Punk phenomena (both of which are barely even noticed by Ounsley). Such encouragement I can live with less of. The same applies to his comments on Wiz 5 where the bit I worked on for two weeks ("World's End" --RB in PR) is totally overlooked in favor of several pages of comment on a few lines dashed off in reply to D. (you guessed it) West. Apparently Ounsley hasn't noticed that Wrhn and Wiz are about incest: the interaction between fans, fandoms, and facades. That's what interests me most about fanzines and, apparently, Simon, and you if I'm to judge from the news that Wrhn 30 was named single best issue of a fanzine in 1982 in that spectral Pong Poll.

Fandom is or should be a continuity. And that's what Wiz is all about: sleeping with our mothers and fathers.

Judith Hanna responded to my wondering (in "Judith's Oversight") what she was talking about in Izzard #5 when she argued that Pong was focused on the past. I wasn't challenging what she might regard as "a significant reference to the past". Just (in the space of 4 lines) asking how she'd come to find 104 of them. Judith has a glorious ability to make you wish you hadn't. The following got crowded out last issue for one reason or another but mainly because I didn't have the mental fortitude to deal with a maze which in effect ends wondering why you bothered:

Let me point out your oversight, Richard. After West's just told you off for taking one or two sentences out of context and assuming that by demolishing them (which you don't do with any success anyway) you can demolish a whole argument, you go on and do the same again to what West has just written (again, rather missing your target) and now here you are doing the same to me. Didn't you notice, Richard, that the main point of my letter to Izzard was precisely that Ted's demand that his opponents should bog themselves down in a "name names, quote quotes, cite sources" pseudo-academic schtick was a pretty barren way to conduct an argument? That's not argument, that's mere contradiction! Which is pretty boring for all concerned. Of course you can challenge my judgement of what is a "significant" reference to the past -- after all, there just isn't any objective yardstick other than somebody's more or less arbitrary decision as to what they think qualifies. Since Patrick and Teresa had asked for short, concise letters I cut out a couple of paragraphs going on about the essential insignificance of such would-be hard-line pronouncements. But you do raise an interesting question, or rather two. On the one hand, why didn't your "Reefer Madness" which on rereading struck me as the only item with much vitality to it raise any great amount of comment at the time? I suspect it was for the same reason as your "World's End" trip report in this issue of Wiz is unlikely to raise much comment -- it's embedded in a context of controversy over completely different issues -- in this present case, the West debate, in the case of Pong in one or more of the other issues which dominated that zine -- ie, fanhistory, or rabid attacks on such present fans as Glycer, Wooster, Coulson, McGuff... these, I guess, are the 'zine reviews' which you accuse me of overlooking. Which brings us to the second question you raise -- what about articles like Dan's house-moving, teaching Steve Brown to fly, etc -- don't those count as references to the present. Well, no. "Isn't contemporary fandom part of the real world?" you ask. Certainly, there was nothing in the articles that appeared in Pong,



8 except the time that they were published, to suggest that they happened in the 60s or even the 50s -- not counting those articles was a conscious decision. Biassed, of course. But why should I pretend to any impartial superiority? Why should anyone? Rereading Pong, as I said in Izzard, 104 times I was struck by "a reference to the past", only once was I struck by a reference to the present. Not all of that disparity can be discounted by the sort of subjective variation you'd expect between observers. I did set out to count up references to the present, I simply didn't find them.

Now isn't all this retracking over the same old ground dreadfully boring? Especially since the subject doesn't matter all that much. Isn't it amazing how much time and ink we fans waste on such trivialities? Why do it? Other than for fun and to entertain each other? After all, we all know we're unlikely to provide any Ultimate Truth that will convince all or even any of our fuggheaded opponents. Is it all, as Teresa asked at the end of my letter in Izzard, "grandstanding for the benefit of interested onlookers"? Hell, that and the pure fun of debating seem to me the only possible reasons for doing it. Irresponsible, of course, if one's opponents really do believe that they're preaching some sort of divine revelation. But in that case, perhaps, even more than if they themselves are simply shit-stirring, a necessary corrective. Which does, of course, reduce all this debate which was so much a part of Pong and now of Wiz, to no more than as D. put it, "performance", to be judged on its verve and style as much as on its message. There's only the consideration that "lies are boring", less of a challenge than taking a good angle on the truth, to keep us honest.

The question is of course, what position do you and Ted argue from? Will you admit to simply contradicting, taking a contrary position, for the sheer fun of it? Or do you really believe that you have a monopoly on Truth, Justice and the American Way? Do you really want everybody to turn around and agree with you? No, I didn't think so. Right, so let's get a bit more life into it! More style, Bergeron, don't bog down in simply contradicting West, but try to expand the argument onto your own ground instead of pussyfooting around on his, where naturally he's at an advantage. Let's have more of that 'personal element' which you so enthusiastically preach actually in your own writing, and less plodding 'logic', which on such subjective ground, is hardly a reliable life-line.

All this, I admit, is Bergeron-baiting. In Izzard, far from White-baiting, I was responding to the bait he'd cast the previous issue -- you see the difference? (22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London, SW1V 2ER, England)

RB: Where are my pants? I have to write something.

On the third day he rose from bed to sit in judgment on Judith Hanna. He set the tape to play "She's A Maniac", pulled off his filthy stockings, ate two raw eggs, put a sheet of paper in the typewriter, and with calm deliberation:

One closes one's eyes for a moment and the mental image that rises out of the quagmire in a ghastly shimmer is... Joseph Nicholas. You don't suppose...? No. Only Paul Flores would sink that low.

I decline most of your gambits. You're entitled to your opinion. I can live with that. However: Yes, this "retracking over the same old ground" is "dreadfully boring" (which is one of the other reasons why your letter got crowded out last issue). I wasn't doing that. I was asking a question. Is that "contradicting...for the sheer fun of it?" Not in my book.

My impression of Pong is at variance to yours. You had the opportunity to tell me how mine was wrong. Could be you know. Simply contradicting doesn't do it. Nor does taking us further in a guided tour of this never-never-land where "Reefer Madness" inspired "passionate involvement", where Dan Steffan moved house in the 60s or 50s rather than this decade, and where "'zine reviews'" must be those "rabid attacks on...Glyer", etc, do it. To be plodding about it "fanzine reviews" referred to the 22 fanzine reviews that appeared in Pong. Many of them were indepth arguments and ranged well beyond the issues in an attempt to explain how fanzines and fandom work. They rank with the best ever written. Strange that you overlooked them. But I forget. You live in a nest where fanzine reviews have other uses: among them entrapment.

So, sadly, it's no surprise that you admit your game is baiting. (My God! The sun is out! The flowers are open! The bars are closed! It's 6AM!) Another reason I couldn't find space for your letter was the context that developed. It seemed jarringly out of place among the contributions of Benford, Gibson, and Rapp. The put-on has to be handled with wit or devolves to the simple level of gamesmanship. It has to be anchored in a bed of reality -- like, say, the jibe in Ansible at West's "Sense Defying Articles". The principle being that many a jest is told in truth.

It was my considered editorial judgment that this letter had neither style nor wit nor was it based in reality. But the readers may detect a level of hilarity in it which eludes me. I doubt it.

The broadest issue here is credibility. I wonder just what shred of it you've left yourself with a letter retracking the same old ground (and rather boringly, as you say) and why it was really necessary to print it. Aside from the fact that you'd scream blue bloody murder if I didn't. My only consolation in that event, I suppose, would have been that that was "Bergeron-baiting", too. And once again I'd walked into the trap.

You're absolutely right. Why do I waste space on you?

And she dances like she's never danced before.

Wm. Gibson confides: Considering the banal nature of most fannish prose, the style you employ in Wiz is sheer delight. :: You know, fanwriting has always made me kind of uncomfortable, and it dawns on me that this is because the game of fiction allows me to come on as any old sort of weirdo, whereas a piece for a fanzine will be presum-

9 ed to be, in some way, me. Writing, as oneself, in a fanzine, one has certain responsibilities -- or feels as though one does... I'm reminded of Nabokov's response to the critic who asked how he, Nabokov, a father, could produce "Lolita". N. said that, as father and citizen, he fully accepted his responsibilities, but that as a novelist it was absolutely essential that he accept none at all. The act of fanwriting strikes me somehow as falling rather awkwardly between the waking, social world and the dreamstate of fiction. (And of course it's D. West's impassioned blurring of the two, in "Performance", that finally brings the now battered tools of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson to fandom...) :: I once met someone who claimed to know Thompson well. Insisted that he was quiet, temperate, generally undrugged, and a dedicated family man. Makes a certain sense. (3180 West 3rd Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia, V6K 1N3, Canada)

Leigh Edmonds reveals: Something seems to have happened to Judith Hanna since she left these sunsoaked shores last year to go and live in the UK. It must be something in the air over there, or perhaps it's something that Maggie Thatcher has the Thought Police put in the water. Why on earth a simple and charming colonial girl should decide that there is any entertainment to be had in baiting Ted White and the like is beyond me. I can understand why your average British fan might find it a worthwhile exercise but we Australians don't seem to go in for that sort of philosophy which hinges on the meanings of words, at least I didn't think that we did. That's what seems to be going on from this distant vantage point -- concepts have been traded in for the meanings of words themselves. (PO Box 433, Civic Square, ACT 2608, Australia)

Leanne Frahm jumps in: I'm going to dip one toe-nail into the water, and say, quite unassumingly and quite conscious of the lack of worth of my own modest opinion, that 'style' in fanwriting is the only thing that can make a fanzine a joy to read, and a fanzine without style, no matter the subject, is dull, dull, dull. Dull and plodding. :: The thing that strikes me most forcefully in your publications is the vibrancy of this interplay between you and your correspondents -- needless to say, the Americans and the British. :: Every simple statement is pounced upon to become either the subject of a sort of reflex acrimony or the banner militant of fanatical devotees. Nothing like that happens in Australia. :: Nobody seems to care enough in Australian fanzines. Oh, yes, a debate of the worth of Nuclear Power, or whether the media fed are human too, inflames the passions somewhat, but the fire burns low, and is easily banked. It's a natural racial characteristic, really. Australians are great on apathy. (272 Slade Point Road, Slade Point, QLD 4741, Australia)

The Trans-Atlantic Hearing Aid: is in excellent working order I discovered after undertaking Emergency Measures (obliquely alluded to in the following) on one recent Holy Morning. And I see that Langford has finally come up with an original title for his piece -- having noticed it right at his fingertips all this time. :: A mere six days after my whinning importunateness I was clinching (sp. courtesy of Webster's) to my bosom Dave's current tale of malediction and cat shit. But he conveys its horrifying essence much better than I could ever. This is the sort of revulsion which comprises his domestic horizons:

Platen Stories (by Dave Langford): Dear Dick: For some reason the bit that struck me in Wiz 6 was your planned cover for a vast West anthology/necropolis, featuring "a clinched fist with index finger upward pointing". This is very American, not so much because over here we clench fists (pause to reflect that Thomas Covenant clenches everything in sight, leading to the immortal line "She stroked his clenching") as because the British up-yours is most definitely two fingers, index and second, knuckles towards person affronted to avoid confusion with Churchillian victory gesture. Can the difference in polite salutations be a rare example of American understatement? Do the languid British need twice as much fingering to provoke them? Normally it's the other way round: when a British faneditor, me for example, wants to prod a columnist he will typically do something mild and understated such as burn fiery crosses on the columnist's lawn, or arrange for a tactful intermediary to write "Dear Malcolm, Dave lies tossing and turning on his deathbed and in his final agony keeps calling piteously for the only thing he says can give him solace now, your report on ConStellation -- love, Hazel." By no means does the British faneditor adopt extreme shock tactics such as giving his victim a heart attack by phoning on a Sunday morning from Puerto Rico. Like -- but I shall name no names.

Even the vermin here are subtly understated. From time to time, between the lines of fanzines, one senses the Great American Cockroach Problem like the echo of a scream in a dark street. I still remember the ghastly white face of Andy Porter as he slammed his apartment door safely behind him with a hoarse cry of "I saw a roach down by the trash!", and spent several minutes securing the fatal portal with locks and bolts and chains, finally spraying door, floor, walls and British guests with an aerosol labeled Zyklon-B or similar. Here in the land of Mrs. Thatcher we do not have cockroaches (opportunity for cheap wisecrack here nobly ignored), except for a very few of us who live in conditions of thoroughgoing repugnance and squalor, like Leroy Kettle. Instead we, or at any rate Hazel and I, have invasions of woodlice, creeping hither and thither like tiny armadillos, boiling in an appalling woodlouse-and-sawdust cocktail out of rotten logs when I split them, creeping by devious routes into the cellar where they cling sullenly to the walls like fans at a long-drained room-party hoping against hope. Once in a while a woodlouse Columbus or Marco Polo journeys heroically to a remote piece of floor where the foot of arthropod has never before trod and where -- more often than not -- Hazel has just put her hand as she sits there reading. They even crept recently into my copy of New Scientist, where a horrible 20x magnified photo was captioned "The woodlouse, one of the larger soil animals" (would have thought that meant badgers, or moles

10

at the least), neglecting the plain fact that woodlice actually want to be larger carpet animals, or larger wall animals. Each night I make the rounds of the cellar walls, scraping the latest few dozen visitors into a plastic box and later hurling them for retaliatory reasons into our neighbours' garden.

Our neighbours are strange. They comprise the divorced and not-speaking-to-each-other couple upstairs (who also have one room downstairs), and a vaguely related but decidedly unchummy family downstairs (who also have one room upstairs). From time to time we gather that this menage is planning to go three separate ways as soon as they sell 96 London Road for a huge enough sum of money to buy three separate houses: at one stage it was on the market at £70,000 with no takers, our bit having cost not much more than half that and boasting advantages such as a working roof, gutters, drain-pipes, heating system and floor (Mrs. Upstairs fell embarrassingly through the rotten bit in her kitchen floor the other day). The general decrepitude arises naturally from the three factions' inability to agree who pays for what repairs: each year the biowar arsenals of deathtrap floorboards, dry rot, damp and woodworm rise to yet more terrifying megadeath levels, and each year the disarmament talks break down.

Further deterioration next door was evident when Mr. Upstairs, after standing in the front porch for most of an afternoon reciting incantations of great vileness, and later being observed climbing with many a groan through an upstairs rear window, came to us with pathetic tales of how he'd lost his keys. None of his ever-loving family, he implied, would let him in. When he returned from some nameless appointment that evening, could he perhaps come into our house and climb through the skylight at the very top into the odd bit of shared roof-space whence he might then drop through a matching skylight into his "own" top floor and appear to his unwilling ex-wife like a veritable god from the machine? Not wishing to set a precedent, and still feeling bitter about the cat, we mumbled evasive things and went to the pub until an advanced hour, by which time someone's compassion, or his own cunning, or death from exposure had removed Mr. Upstairs from where he promised to await us, shivering in the front porch.

The thing about the Upstairs cat is that it's been painstakingly trained not to relieve itself in the house, even downstairs, or their garden, and along with about five other wandering felines it makes free with ours when depositing its turds, droppings, faeces, dung, crap, jobbies, excrement and shit in leonine quantities all over the lovingly untended grass. Hazel has been hurling the results over likely walls to their probable rightful home, and I've followed up with second-strike cluster warheads of woodlice, but to no avail. After decontaminating my umpteenth shoe (a sufficiently loathsome process) I invested in a powerful catapult with which to conduct a course of aversion therapy. Next episode: RSPCA vs Langford in the Central Criminal Court. Hazel's father, who has similar problems, has thought the world of me ever since I succeeded in winging a specially malevolent tabby even as he watched.

But is this the right approach? Enter famous fan Chris Hughes, who one day will be a psychology PhD if his thesis on gerbils (somewhat thicker than a Piers Anthony trilogy, or even a Piers Anthony protagonist) is approved as a deathless contribution to world culture and the anti-tree campaign. Looming terrifyingly over me -- fancy going to the trouble of being six-foot-eight just for cheap effects like that -- he said with the smug certitude of a practised gerbil-torturer, "Aversion therapy never works. I mean it never works right. See, you'll get this cat half-conditioned and next time it comes into your garden it'll think Oh god this is that terrible place where pebbles come flying at me, and straightaway it'll shit itself with fright."

I pondered on the logic of this, from a man I recently manoeuvred into the avowal that if a majority vote of the population opined that Chris Hughes possessed no testicles then this must necessarily carry more weight than Chris's unsupported, or even supported by less than half the populace, opinion. Before we could start arguing about Pavlov, though, he changed the subject. "Funny neighbours you've got, Dave, every time I've visited lately there's been this suspicious character in the porch next door, working on keys with a file. Maybe you should report it to the police?"

If that bloody cat doesn't shortly learn to control its sphincters I shall be tempted, tempted...

Stand By For Repercussions: A copy of this Wiz is being posted to 96 London Road in the interests of fairplay. The Upstairs and Downstairs people sound delightfully fannish to me. Perhaps I should also notify the N3F to make its desultory approach.

TO:

WIZ

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