THE MOST PERFECT CREATION OF THE VALAR UPON MIDDLE EARTH IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE FAPA CONSTITUTION :: THE ONLY REASON I KNOW THIS ISN'T REALLY *ALGOL* IS BECAUSE I SAW SEVERAL ISSUES AT A BERKELEY BOOKSTORE :: *WARHOON* NEVER DIED--IT JUST HAD PERIODS OF HIBERNATION :: A FANZINE WITHOUT INTERLINEATIONS IS LIKE AN ATTACK OF HIVES WITHOUT FINGERNAILS :: HEAVEN IS AN ETERNITY OF MAKING MAILING COMMENTS ON RELIGIOUS TOPICS? SOUNDS MORE LIKE HELL TO ME :: JUST BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU HURL THOSE BRICKBATS :: HOW *DID* I GET THAT TWIG UP MY NOSE? :: GEORGE GAVE EACH OF US A DEFINITE *MAYBE* :: THE FLIGHT DOWN WAS THE BEST KIND--UNEVENTFUL :: BEING THE ONLY FAPAN IN LOUISIANA MAY BE A RESPONSIBILITY :: SUNCON--POLAND'S GIFT TO WORLDCONS :: ACADEMICS ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO DO ANYTHING *USEFUL* :: HISTORY IS MERELY LIES AGREED ON--SO IS NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING :: OF COURSE WHEN YOU'RE HANK REINHARDT YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU BLOODY WELL PLEASE :: IT'S A GOOD THING MY EGO HAS BEEN PICKLED IN ALCOHOL :: THE STYLE OF THE FONTAINEBLEAU HOTEL IS HIGH TACKY :: MAYBE SANTA ROSA IS A PARALLEL WORLD :: WHAT, AFTER ALL, IS A CON WITHOUT *ELEVATORS*? :: IT'S HARD TO GET A GOOD MEMORY THESE DAYS :: I AM NOT YET WILLING TO DIE FOR THE SAKE OF BEING UNDERSTOOD:: COULD IT BE REDNECK CHIC? :: AROUND HERE WE PRAY FOR RAIN EVEN IF WE HAVE TO RUN IN IT :: AND THIS HAS BEEN STILL ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE TRADITIONAL BREEN FAPA QUOTECOVERS, PROVING THAT SOME THINGS STILL HAVE NOT CHANGED. IF FAPANS KEEP ON MAKING INSTANT LINOS AT THIS RATE, MAYBE SOMEDAY DAG WILL REVIVE *FILLER* AND 6TH FANDOM WILL RISE AGAIN? IS THE *WARHOON* WILLISH A 600 PAGE STRAW IN THE WIND? TUNE IN NEXT YEAR AND FIND OUT!

Walter Breen's

A L L E R L E I

for FAPA

and friends

February, 1978

ALL THE ABOVE ARE FROM FAPA 161 :: CREDITS BOUTILLIER,DAG, FRIERSON, CARR, BANGSUND, LIEN, HAYDEN, GLICKSOHN, WRIGHT, AND HUGHES ::

ALLERLEI. February 1978. Published by Walter Breen, Box 352, Berkeley, CA 94701, for FAPA and a few friends and the fun of it.

A FILM FOR ALL SEASONS: "This had better be good," I warned Jack Collins as we got into the block-long line in front of the Hollywood Cinerama Theatre an hour before CLOSE ENCOUNTERS was due to show. "You can trust me. It was worth the four hours I spent waiting for it the first time," my friend shrugged. Before us--and very soon also behind us--stretched the usual incongruous mixture of local types --incongruous, perhaps, for Weyauwega or Upton, Wyoming, but today commonplace for Berkeley or Hollywood: frank intersexes, people dressed in their various cult images, everything from bikies to Beverly Hills "in" people. Not quite the kind of people who populate the similar lines waiting for STAR WARS; a wider age range, for one thing.

During occasional conversational lulls, I got to thinking weedily about what makes a cult movie, the kind which has people lining up in hours -long queues to see for the dozenth time. Hype? Adroit psychic manipulation? Subliminal advertising? The desire to convince other suckers--or even oneself --that the experience was worth all that trouble the first time? Genuine response to God only knows what kind of inarticulate felt need? All of these? Something entirely different? But then how can it operate with people who (like me) were going there for the first time? Whatever it is, I am certainly not immune. I have seen STAR WARS ten times to date and could have gone 12 or more times; and I fully expect to see it again in NYC or at latest next February at the Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, if indeed it hasn't vanished by then. (BArea theatres had already--by November!--begun announcing other movies, including CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, to replace STAR WARS. And some stores were already remaindering STAR WARS T-shirts like any other dying fad. Sic transit and all that.) Why did I wait 3½ hours for my *second* viewing of STAR WARS when everyone who knows me is well aware of my aversion to waiting in long lines? Why was I willing to go through this line for CLOSE ENCOUNTERS? Why am I, as I write these words, cheerfully contemplating a repeat performance?

Probably if some UCLA sociologist with clipboard and cassette were to accost us in that line, the way a Jesus freak did while we were waiting for STAR WARS, he would get some strange answers, though perhaps no more than the situation called for. (The Jesus freak was trying to persuade us that the Force is Christ, Darth Vader is Satan, and we should be Going to Church instead of witnessing this glorification of evil. We countered with questions like "How do you know this movie glorifies evil? Have you seen it?"--he hadn't--and "Do you have to be a virgin to serve Jesus?"--he evaded that one.) But I am sure that a lot of the answers to the survey-research interviewer, however odd their terminology, would add up to something like "If you'd seen it you wouldn't have to ask--you'd be here with us."

I am not sure, though, how I would have answered such a question about the unseen CLOSE ENCOUNTERS. Jack's recommendation was certainly part of it. He has worked as a producer on many films with Winters-Rosen Productions in Hollywood, and during the last ten years he saw more movies than I have in my whole life. He has no patience with incompetence or hype, he does not suffer fools gladly, and his bullshit filter is operating at top efficiency, so I tended to trust his judgment. It was completely otherwise with STAR WARS, as I had not heard any recommendation from him--but I *did* attend a LASFS meeting when one of the producers or directors or something (was it Lucas himself?) described it and showed slides and drawings. Anyway, for my first STAR WARS showing I was lucky, managing to get in without an inordinate wait for tickets or a seat; the second time--including the 3½-hour wait--I was part of a theatre

party, helping shepherd around my son Patrick and some of the other guests at his best friend's birthday celebration. But that second time convinced me, more than the first; because that time I saw many details in the film which had slipped past me the first time--and they contributed to an even greater impact. Sight gags, throwaway details "adding verisimilitude to an otherwise unconvincing narrative," incredibly ingenious special effects, all constituting tiny bits of mosaic making the whole design seem more complete--and more vast--than the first time around, convincing and even compelling despite its unmistakable odor of 1950's pulp. But why ten times? Maybe it's just the sheer Sense of Wonder which comes through in every frame.

And then again, maybe it's something else altogether--what has been called its mythic value. Heads a lot wiser than mine have spelled out that humanity has a way of dramatizing its most deeply felt issues, of making myth out of them. Minds young and old (though perhaps especially the young) respond more intensely and wholeheartedly to myth than to sermons summarizing the same principles. And especially they respond to the kind of myth that begins "Once upon a time" and shows how a Hero overcomes overwhelming obstacles to win some necessary goal--especially when this goal ends an imminent danger to his people; and this kind of myth ends with his return to peace and "they all lived happily ever after." It doesn't have to be crude or obvious; but thousands of western movies, which shaped the consciousness of at least two or three generations in the USA, have shown that crudity is not a fatal handicap, and STAR WARS has shown at eighty decibels that it doesn't hurt to be obvious, either. The essential ingredient appears to be a life-and-death struggle, in which a likeable Hero (with whom people can identify just enough to project themselves into his plight)confronts opponents far greater in might, preferably at least some of them evil, manages to overcome them, or at least to outwit and escape them, reaches the goal and performs the necessary task, and comes home so that the rest may benefit. W.H.Auden (in *TOLKIEN AND THE CRITICS*), Lord Raglan (in *THE HERO*), and Joseph Campbell (in *THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES*) have gone into much deeper detail than is necessary here.

Nor is it enough to say that the villainous opponent is evil; sometimes he is merely the Hero of the Other Team. (But that is an issue for another time.) What helps a lot here is to show--and not merely tell us at a safe third-party remove--what he does and if possible why. The most immediate myths, those with the greatest impact, seem to be those in which the conflict between good and evil is most sharply depicted. Where even if the good side isn't perfect (is it ever?) its motivations are understandable and we can identify with them. Where the evil side is morally unambiguous (the way many of our enemies aren't) and where its motives are understandable too, even if we only know them in order to reject them. Usually the evil side turns out to be on a big power trip, its longrange goals clearly subjugation and enslavement. Sauron wanted to enslave all Middle Earth, like Hitler and Stalin, though they called their goals by different names. Darth Vader wasn't a great deal different.

In the current misguided nostalgia for the 1950's, this kind of polarization is regrettably one of the things being reawakened. And so in Senator J.R. McCarthy's campaign against the Commies, comsymps, fellowtravelers and pinkos which he claimed he found crawling under every rock and lurking under too many beds, in his denunciation of leftish screenwriters and political liberals as traitors, in his audacious identification with Jesus's despairingly bitter words "Whoever is not with me is against me," he echoed this same mythic struggle between Good and Evil, casting himself in the role of St.George vs. The Dragon. (Bilbo would have been too morally ambiguous.) And people responded to this myth-in-action, enough so that even today other demagogues are finding it a

very useful tool, while many former FBI agents regard any sneer at J.R.McCarthy or his twin-soul J.Edgar Hoover as prima facie evidence of treasonous beliefs, as I have learned to my cost.

For which reason demagogues have long tended to use this archetypal mythic imagery in justifying their own power trips. Ayn Rand viewed her struggle against "collectivism" (by which she meant everything from Fabian sociolist theorizers to Stalin) in the same light. Anita Bryant cites Leviticus in the same way, as "proof" that God puts gays in "the same category as murderers" (a direct quote)--though she does not argue for any of the other kosher laws, which is what Leviticus was all about; nor is it accidental in this context that she views herself as a direct emissary of God in a "Holy War"! Rev. Sun Myung Moon sees his own alleged messiahship as a divine mission against Satan alias Communism.

The element common to all these is xenophobia: green monkeys among pink ones, "different is dead." The difference, of course, is that we no longer live in the kind of world where most issues are so clear-cut as the demagogues would like us to believe. But sometimes it can be fun to look at it from that angle, in a temporary game situation (Dungeons & Dragons, anyone?), or as a way of gaining a different perspective on our own, or to reassure ourselves that all is not vain. Or, perhaps, to recall what the world used to be like when we could not yet say "We have met the enemy and he is US."

Not that myth automatically requires ethical dichromatism. The Good vs. Evil paradigm does suggest black vs. white, whether it's the colors of the hats in a western movie, or of the prose in Tolkien describing the Elves vs. the Enemy. After all, Old Norse myth made Odin as treacherous as Loki. Gollum was not completely evil, as even Frodo and Sam saw now and then before he led them into Cirith Ungol. "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away." Boromir was neither completely good nor completely bad. "Why do the good die young?" The very same St. Peter, Jesus's first choice, was also the weak reed who denied even knowing Jesus without a threat of capture, let alone torture. The cynical mercenary Han Solo is about as far from the idealism of Obi-wan Kenobi (Japanese --something like "Belt-power Swordbelt") or of Luke Skywalker, as any of them are from the even more cynical power-seeker Darth Vader. And the Book of Job deals with this and related issues--in a manner calculated to give orthodox theologians nightmares, which is why they seldom attempt to deal with it. In brief, the Battle of Good and Evil is a useful myth, but it has its limits like any other myth in attempting to render human experience understandable.

What are the necessary ingredients for a cult film, then, if not these? I was still wondering by the time we reached the theatre and (disregarding the bored ex-airline stewardess's megaphonic warnings) ran through the lobby to find good seats.

Nothing could have prepared me for what followed. Being a longtime reader of the less crackpottish of flying saucer literature (J.Allan Hynek, J.G.Fuller, Jim & Coral Lorenzen, Ivan Sanderson, Edward J. Ruppelt, and a few others whose bullshit filters were kept clean and ready for instant use), I was ready to see some pretty special effects, possibly rare documentary film clips from Project Bluebook files courtesy of the Freedom of Information Act, as wellas some of the less easily disbelieved UFO photographs from NASA. I knew from the display ads that the movie had something to do with all this, and specifically with the old familiar pulp theme of First Contact with Aliens. I also knew how over the years contactees have been discredited one and all: publishing obvious crackpottery, starting apocalyptic cults often with themselves as messiahs, etc., and

in more instances than one spending time in psychiatric hospitals. I was prepared for some of this, too. But of the film's plot and characterization, if any, I had seennothing and heard nothing. Not a word. (Even Jack would not tell me anything in detail--with good reason.) Everything had been kept under wraps. Advertising was restrained and uncommunicative compared with, say, THE STING--let alone STAR WARS. (I have since heard that the filmmaker Steven Spielberg swore everyone working on this film to secrecy; discussing it with their families at home would be grounds for dismissal.)

One reason is that there is a classic mystery element, though the whodunit aspect of the plotline does not have to do with a murder, and this mystery does contribute heavily to the suspense which gives this film its maximal first-time impact. (After you've seen it once, you'll be looking for other details on later viewings, even as with STAR WARS.) If you've seen it already, you will know what I mean; if not, I am not going to spoil the suspense for you. For the moment, though, what I want to bring out is that this film enables us to see, from inside, the way a contactee becomes that way; how (s)he must feel; the sheer impact of a wordless contact on commonsense minds unaccustomed to anything of the kind. We are forced to realize how dependent we all are on sensory inputs for our continuous picture of the world, and what happens when that picture is abruptly changed by the sudden inescapable presence of new multisensory inputs too powerful to be ignored and too palpably objective to be shrugged off as "imaginary." (Like the repeatedly-reported electrical failures which accompany proximity of at least certain types of UFOs, to name only one of the most consistent findings.) We can get some dim idea of the urgency many people feel thereafter: the need to tell people that these UFOs are not illusion but reality, that they are inhabited, that they are studying us, that the Air Force's policy of "It's got to be the planet Venus" or "They were having hallucinations" is either invincible ignorance or deliberate deception--and it doesn't much matter which.

Now if you or I were suddenly thrust into confrontation with something so immense, so alien, so far above humanity in sheer power as to affect our electrical systems and our minds from a distance, without a word, and with equal indiscriminateness, would our familiarity with science fiction make us blasé? Or would we end up coming on like typical contactees with a Message? Don't be too hasty with your answer until you have seen CLOSE ENCOUNTERS. Preferably more than once.

And at the end, where we actually see close up what the contactees have been seeing more dimly and at a greater distance, when we learn the perfectly reasonable and understandable purpose of the Encounters, we have at least a taste of the awesome. (Nothing like the grim built-in threats of the Death Star.) Nor is "awesome" too strong a word; but you'll have to judge that for yourself. Basing his images largely on studies by his prime consultant J.Allen Hynek, the astronomer who was long the Air Force's consultant for Project Bluebook, but who resigned in protest over dishonest Air Force policies about UFO research, Spielberg has induced Douglas Trumbull to outdo himself here, making the effects in 2001, SILENT RUNNING and THE STARLOST seem like five-finger exercises, plucking archetypal images from the collective unconscious of mankind, mythic imagery in more than one sense. (The second and third times we saw it, Marion and I were both in tears at the end: "Why do we have to live in a world where this is not real?")

Going back to the hotel, speechless after that first viewing, I continued thinking about just what gives human minds the peculiar complex of impressions to which the emotional response is labeled "awe." So readily recognized, so poorly described, so often associated with gods or at least with powerful mythic images. I am not sure, with my own limited experience, that I can spell out

either the necessary or the sufficient conditions for an awesome experience. But I *am* sure that Spielberg and Trumbull have a clearer idea than most of us, and that they are on the right track.

Part of the experience of awe is sheer scale. Not size by itself, but scale, compared to human beings. Size contributes, certainly, but the key is *proportions*. We do not find anything awesome about a freeway or a transcontinental railroad or a 747, any more than about the Trade Towers, the Pentagon or O'Hare Airport. But many have found the Sphinx and the Great Pyramid awesome --even on films. (Not to mention the Millennium Falcon's crew confronting the Death Star for the first time.) Renaissance humanists were well aware of this; the famous study *THE ARCHITECTURE OF HUMANISM* gives numerous examples, characteristically Renaissance peoplesaying something about a building's measurements in attempting to account for its impact. No doubt the devotees of Athena, being admitted to the Parthenon for rituals and suddenly, through just-opened doors, confronting the gigantic statue, gleaming with gold and ivory, and with something like realistic flesh tones in the flickering lights of torches, felt something like awe--something not even hinted at in the Lincoln Memorial. No doubt the Egyptians felt awe confronting the colossal figures of their gods in the cliffs above High Aswan. And certainly many people have felt it on their first close-up view of Stonehenge. It is also a notoriously common reaction to the Grand Canyon.

What do all these things have in common? They give the impression that they might have been built by giants, by a people to whom we would be at best pygmies or even ants. A very similar point was made by Poul Anderson in *THE BYWORLDER*, where Yvonne is describing her reactions to the Sigman's taking her with Skip and Wang around the rings of Saturn:

> "If we could tell them when we get home...Tell them in a way to make them believe, how little we are, we humans; how big we could be; how squalid our intrigues and quarrels." (p. 138)

That is not very far away from the time-scale analogy in William Blake's

> "Infinity in a grain of sand,
> Eternity in an hour,"

or from the Psalmist's psychedelic comparison

> "A thousand years within Thy sight
> Are but as yesterday just past,
> Or as a watch within one night."

Part of the experience, similarly, is contact with evidence of knowledge and wisdom (or sometimes, technology) far in advance of anything we are familiar with at the time. Stephen Miller's monograph *MITHRANDIR* devotes some attention to showing this aspect of Gandalf, pointing out comparisons and connexions likely to be missed, which taken together display the old wizard as an awesome figure; and many in Gondor and Rohan reacted with awe, even if the Shire hobbits --or we jaded movie viewers--don't.

Part of it--closely linked with both the above--is an enormous complexity of vast design, often with independent simultaneous changes, which we can comprehend only in fragments in any one exposure. This is why astronomers studying galaxies have often spoken in such terms, and why more than one musician has declared that certain works of J.S.Bach (or, for others, the last five Beethoven quartets) are compelling proofs of the existence of God. In actuality, the scale of the design is a part of it; but the thrust here is that we see our own achievements, our own capacities, as only a tiny subdivision or special case of something enormously vaster. And there is at least a hint of this very quality in the final confrontation in CLOSE ENCOUNTERS.

There is more to the experience of awe than that, but I do not know an adequate way of describing it. A.O.Lovejoy, in his classic study *THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING,* attempted to touch this problem from the viewpoint of the Middle Ages--a perspective which nevertheless enables us to see some issues more clearly than we could without it. To medieval philosophers from Scotus at least through Aquinas, mankind was in the middle of a continuum of types of being, rather than the crown of creation. A series of ratios or proportions were thought to apply:

1) As a human being is to an animalcule *(= a microbe; these were then imagined, even though not seen until Leeuwenhoek's day)*, so is God to a human being in extent, complexity and wisdom.

2) As horses, dogs and cattle are to mankind, so are we to angelic forces. *(Tolkien tried to bring that one to life in describing, in descending order, the Valar, Gandalf, the High Elves, mankind, subhuman trolls, and animals incapable of speech.)*

3) As humanity (builder of cities like Paris or London or Rome) is to inanimate matter (which builds nothing of its own volition, but is acted on by everything else), so is God the builder of the cosmos to mankind.

In this view, awe is the normal reaction to contact with any force higher than humanity. (Much as to Jane Goodall's chimpanzees in the wild, thunderstorms and the rising Sun are objects of awe and what is interpreted as veneration and even worship.) Awe is also the normal response to contact with any evidence of a power or a wisdom beyond our own. Visions, whether induced by prolonged prayer and fasting with chanting of litanies (the Christian attempt at mantras!), or by ergot-contaminated rye bread or magic mushrooms, had similar properties: complexity continuously changing in designs faster than ordinary minds can grasp, often if not usually relating to images more or less similar to some associated with the viewer's religious training, or at worst translated from something totally incomprehensible into their nearest lookalikes in the viewer's vocabulary of images.

Which is why, in the long run, gods of ancient mythologies have been mostly tribal anthropomorphic images on a colossal scale, their behaviors familiar in kind but immensely magnified; why "the god of asses has long ears," why many anthropologists have managed to deduce very strange things about earlier tribal psychology by studying icons and myths about tribal gods.

Not that any gods are represented or claimed in this film. Karellen experienced awe when the children in *CHILDHOOD'S END* saw the Pillars of Dawn at the center of the universe, but mentioned no gods. The numinous experience (confrontation with gods) is sufficient cause for awe, but may not lesser things also stimulate it? But whatever the cause of the experience which changes one's picture of the world so drastically, one cannot remain totally unaffected. And this is ultimately, I believe, why UFO contactees become messianic--and so often tragically unstable confronting on the one hand scorn from "flat-earthers of the mind", and on the other, fuzzy-minded admiration. (Odd John's peers mostly ended in asylums, too.) One cannot go on fighting disbelief indefinitely, trying to keep a stable picture of the world, without what Harry Stack Sullivan used to call "consensual validation"--mutual confirmation of shared experiences. Which is perhaps why a messiah needs disciples--those who have shared his vision, not merely his words.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS compassionately makes more understandable the plight of UFO contactees. And possibly when you and I, years or decades from now, have joined their growing army, we will have been a little better prepared for the event.

From time to time I have shared with you some few of my "Bristles and Barbs" columns from *COINS MAGAZINE*--those not technical enough to require too lengthy footnoting. Here are a few they haven't printed yet (though they did buy them), among the more timely of the bunch.

ROMANTIC LOST CAUSES DEPT.: Or maybe that should read STRANGE BEDFELLOWS DEPT. Madalyn Murray O'Hair has joined forces with a few of the most devout in objecting to the money motto IN (this) GOD WE TRUST. As usual, middle-of-the-road collectors are yelling as though she were Ms. Orange Juice trying to shove everyone back into some kind of closet. From a purely selfish viewpoint, they would have done better to support her proposal; after all, it would give them something new to collect, and even the chance of a rarity if the effective date of motto abolition comes close enough to either end of the year!

I am no defender of Ms. O'Hair, but I do think something can be said for the idea that the Creator's name belongs in church or temple rather than on money. What kind of reverence to God is shown by placing the name onto bills used to buy a prostitute's hire, a heroin fix, or a contract on someone's life? Is that any better than using it on paper to wrap fish? The same argument applies to coins. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," as Jesus reportedly said in a similar context.

Nor is the appeal to tradition or the Founding Fathers relevant. Over 90% of the mottoes found on colonial and Continental currency ((before the Revolution)) had to do with politics or economics. They ranged from pacifist sentiment like PAX TRIUMPHIS POTIOR "Peace counts more than victories" and SI COLLIGIMUS FRANGIMUR "If we hit each other we both break" (the ancestor of "Coexistence or no existence"), through A LESSON TO ARBITRARY KINGS AND WICKED MINISTERS all the way to the cynically hawkish ULTIMA RATIO "((The cannon is))the ultimate argument." Peptalks were common too, like FORTIS CADERE CEDERE NON POTEST "The brave can fall but not retreat" and the cliché DULCE PRO PATRIA MORI "It is sweet to die for the Fatherland." But colonial currency includes only 3 or 4 religious mottoes, notably the Lutheran DEUS NOBISCUM "God with us," while Continental Congress authorized only one among its 21 paper money mottoes: DEUS REGNAT EXULTET TERRA "God reigns, let the world rejoice," ((from Psalm 97)) which was a political barb--"God reigns here, not George III." But the archetype of all colonial money mottoes was, of course, QUAERENDA PECUNIA PRIMUM EST, "Moneygrabbing comes first."

Salmon P. Chase ((Lincoln's Secretary of Treasury, who gave our coins the motto IN GOD WE TRUST)) derived his motto from his college, IN DEO SPERAMUS (Brown Univ., Rhode Island); that in turn is from R.I.'s colonial motto IN TE DOMINE SPERAMUS "In thee, O Lord, we hope," found on almost all that colony's wretchedly debased paper currency, giving R.I. a ghastly reputation as "Rogue's Island," inducing the Constitution's framers to forbid states to issue paper money, and doubtless inspiring satirical completions like ...PRO PECUNIA VERA "...For real money," just as IN GOD WE TRUST has for a century inspired such completions as "...ALL OTHERS MUST PAY CASH," or respellings like IN GOLD WE TRUST. This kind of thing is doubtless why Theodore Roosevelt, who took the name of God too seriously to see it so used, attempted to have it omitted from the new gold coins ((1907-08)).

The motto's main reason for survival appears to be the same principle as the Act of Occasional Conformity or the pinch of incense flung on the altars of the Emperors. Voting to retain it was like voting for Prohibition in 1918: one's motives for *not* doing so would be automatically suspect. So before you take sides, think and decide WHY you are for or against it. There are better places for God's name than on sandwich metal coins or fiat currency; there are not many worse ones.

And this one might go with the HOGU Award proposals:

In the spirit of ESQUIRE Magazine's annual "Dubious Achievement" Awards, I would like to propose a Numismatic Hall of Infamy, made up of recipients of the annual Numismatic Booby Prizes: those people showing the most egregious obstructionism, public stupidity, or other behavior bringing the most discredit on the hobby. Lest you think this mere personal vindictiveness, political spite, or plain spleen, let's look at the first few nominations. I'm sure you'll get the idea.

1. To that Sioux Falls dealer who told a woman that her "1821 silver dollar" was worth $4,000,000, we'd like to award a brain transplant. ((*No such coin was struck by the USA; and the Latin American dollars of that date are not even worth $400.*))

2. To Eliot Janeway, who told us so authoritatively how the coin investment market is mere delusion and how a coin's value depends on the importance of the collection it's in and/or a few capricious buyers' whims, we'd suggest back files of the various coin investment newsletters since 1960. ((*Janeway is a national financial "expert", syndicated in thousands of papers; but when he got onto coins, he destroyed his credibility as irrevocably as Nixon's.*))

3. To the ANA's pet insurance company, which simultaneously cancels dealer policies and solicits collector policies--a new motto: "And the Lord saith unto Job: No reason for it--just Company Policy."

4. To FORBES Magazine, for that "1967-D" cent on its Aug. 1, 1977 cover ((*no such cent was ever made*)), and for its blasts at coin collectors since 1974, a new title: FORBES--THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY. And, as a special bonus, a well-used Red Book, on condition that they promise to read it before their next excursion into numismatics. ((*The Red Book is the standard elementary guide to U.S.coins.*))

5. To that Southeast Asian who made those cast "1803" and "1804" dollars from molds altered from an 1800--an honorary membership in the Watergate Burglars' Association. ((*If genuine,the "1804" would be worth maybe $50,000 up. But the sheer crudity of the product is laughable, its maker a manifest bungler.*))

6. To those Research Triangle Institute pundits who recommended abolishing the cent--a day apiece behind a centless cash register in Woolworth's, McDonald's, A&P, and Rexall Drug Stores, preferably during the week before Christmas.

7. To whichever of Pres. Carter's advisors persuaded him to try to have the Bureau of Engraving and Printing directorship changed to a political appointment --a chance to argue the merits of his proposal on the Gong Show. ((*The B of E & P prints all our paper money; the technical requirements are unsurpassed.*))

8. To those Secret Service agents who seized those restaurant matchbooks showing George Washington brandishing knife and fork, and their brothers who jailed Gale Wagner for "counterfeiting" because of his yard-long $30 Inflationary Notes--a sense of humor. ((*They had the* chutzpah *to claim that these things violated anticounterfeiting laws. The same thing was alleged against a bakery's cookies which showed an Indian head as on cents 1859-1909!*))

9. To the purveyors of those CINCINNATI MINING & TRACING CO. $20's, PARSONS replica ingots, and the other imitation pioneer items offered in mainstream magazines as "rare collectors' items" (one hopes the collectors are rarer than the items), "made in limited editions, originals worth $40,000"--$40,000 apiece, in counterfeit money.

10. To the people who tried to palm off those "1977/6" cents, a "mint sealed" bag of Mort Goodman's "authenticated" 1969 double die cents and 1964 multi-strike cents. ((*The purveyors of all these things have gone to jail.*))

11. To the Pretoria Mint and its cynical advertising representatives who have been pushing Krugerrands as ideal investments--a sense of shame and a new motto (courtesy of G.Washington): "The USA gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

12. To Madalyn Murray O'Hair--the special Romantic Lost Causes Award: a commission in the Confederate Air Force and a year on a desert island with Anita Bryant. ((*See previous column.*))

Further nominations will be welcome.

With the founding of something called the Society of Bearded Numismatists, or S.O.B.Numismatists for short, something vaguely like 6th Fandom hijinks began to make its presence known in coin fandom. This outfit, run by a pair of demi-presidents (Col. Grover Cleveland Criswell, president of the ANA--coin fandom's N3F--and Jack Veffer) out of Box 7 in Toronto, has been issuing fanzines and putting on con capers which can only be called fannish. And so when this group invited me to join, I replied in verses seen in a previous ALLERLEI; when it announced a contest for designing its new headquarters (specifications spelled out), the image was so much like the Tucker Con Hotel that temptation proved irresistible. Hence the following entry in their contest; among the requirements of the Int'l HQ are the equivalent of a bar in every room, the usual con hotel amenities only more so, and an auditorium/dining hall/orgy room which can hold 5,684 people (they didn't say why this number).

AN IMMODEST ~~PROPOSITION~~ PROPOSAL

Now that the Society has recognized its need for an International Headquarters and Tailquarters,* here are a few hairy suggestions for its construction.

As a bow to the current fad for recycling everything from old jokes to old politicians, and also as a bow to one of the Society's current (i.e. *flowing*) interests, I propose that the walls of the HQ&TQ be constructed of beer cans. (Empty, of course; stacked honeycomb fashion, and made rigid with strategically placed spots of epoxy cement.) Considering the Society's tastes, the net cost of the walls could be held to a minimum by having members collect the cans the morning (well, all right, the AFTERNOON) after each convention room party. Any resemblance to the Watts Towers is purely coincidental; any resemblance to the Berkeley Moon Tower project is even more purely coincidental. (This was seriously debated and jocosely attempted several times in the early 1960's. A group of science-fiction freaks who were then undergrads at Berkeley were planning to build a tower of beer cans tall enough to reach the moon. Unfortunately, they ran out of funds long before the local stores ran out of beer.)

As beer can walls will not support a great deal of weight, either pillars or dymaxion dome struts will be essential at certain points. Among MENTIONABLE stiff materials proposed for constructing these are hotel mattresses, the kinds of shirt collars many of us had to wear before we began growing our beards to conceal our abandoning them, and the necks of certain government officials. Failing those, we may have to fall back on something conventional. (Just so long as someone provides something to cushion the shock.)

As the metal of beer cans is not a good insulator against the Toronto cold, or for that matter the common cold, I propose an inner double wall for insulation, and the space between its panels can be conveniently filled with belly-button lint thoughtfully donated by members. (Packets may be sent to Box 7.) If enough is collected, it may be useful also in soundproofing the building and lowering the number of visits from the local unbearded police. Any unused amount over and above that needed for these purposes can be used for stuffing the mattresses, cushions and pillows which will be each room's major furniture. Shed beard hairs can supplement this low-cost resource.

As a card carrying science-fiction fan, I learned long ago the economical answer to a bar in every room: a central computerized refreshment dispenser with a terminal in every room, so that instead of interrupting proceedings one can simply dial one's needs and insert one's mug, or perhaps to save towels one's glass, under the spigot.

*Because we're COIN collectors, of course. You *must* have a dirty mind.

The HQ&TQ building complex can be conveniently designed as a series of cylindrical modules, the largest one with a dome roof and an ornamental neck-shaped finial (this will double as auditorium, dining room, and orgy room, according to the time of day or night). The smaller cylinders may contain such amenities as saunas, Jacuzzis, tennis courts (joggers would have to do their thing outside--there IS a limit!) and the aforementioned computerized refreshment dispenser. To make the Toronto complex even more self-contained, the roof of one of the cylinders could be equipped with a still and a greenhouse for growing suitable exotic herbs. Its swimming pool should have the contour of a tipped-up bottle, the neck being the deepest part; there are, however, too many technical difficulties to allow it to be made from an actual bottle, no matter how big. (Mainly, the egos of some of our members wouldn't fit in and leave any room for water.)

The twin bathrooms in the demi-presidential suite would of course be known as demijohns. (Use your dictionary.)

If--or rather, When--we have enough beer cans left over from the Toronto HQ&TQ construction site, a suitable use for them suggests itself. As the need for such a building exists in every city where our members will be attenting conventions, i.e. in every big city in this hemisphere, I proposesimilar smaller modules on truck bases. These can be driven to the nearest parking lot to each con hotel, providing an automatic answer to inflated hotel prices. Helicopters can land elsewhere in the same parking lot (even as in front of the Toronto complex) for the convenience of us Traveling Jiants. If we have enough of that insulating material, their noise shouldn't interrupt anything going on within.

For a suitable international and ecumenical emblem, the area above the main entrance (both of the Toronto HQ&TQ and the traveling modules) should represent a beard. If each of our members were to donate a beard hair or two apiece, we could make up such an emblem in as many colors (or colours, north of the Border) as you please, big enough to be seen miles off. They could do this without forfeiting membership; it doesn't say anything in the by-laws against plucking out single hairs! There might even be enough left over to make window curtains.

The last requirement for our Local Habitation is a name. The Cannery? No, that's been taken--it's a San Francisco shopping center. Hassle Castle? That's a building in Washington DC better known as the IRS. Considering the uses to which it's to be put, if the auditorium module design with the dome roof is approved, I suggest we call this place the Kubla Con Hotel.