

Many Paths to Potlatch

by Andy Hooper

Potlatch was held at the University Plaza Hotel, a blocky building overlooking Interstate Five, which features an incongruous faux medieval interior motif that led me to refer to it as the "Tudor Nightmare Village" at Corflu Five nearly ten years ago. That was a fine convention, as was Potlatch Three, and several other events held there over the years. Walking back into the Tudor Nightmare Village, memories of all those great parties



and programs came back to me and made me feel about as comfortable as I have at any con. If only we could pack up the T.N.V. and put it down in the center of a Worldcon . . .

I arrived later than expected, because I had succumbed to a mad impulse to publish a fanzine for the convention about 14 hours before registration was scheduled to open. The Gafiate's Fakebook, as I eventually titled it, was a series of fanzine reviews cribbed from Apparatchik, with some expanded comments, and a FAAN awards ballot stapled to the back. I spent much of the evening forcing copies on everyone I met, with the observation that midnight Friday was the published deadline for valid ballots. Janice Murray later told me that at least 15 people had turned them in, and since I only made 60 copies, I felt like a 25% return rate was pretty impressive.

Another task which consumed part of Friday was following a path which Carrie had mapped out in anticipation of leading a walk through the neighborhood as part of Saturday afternoon's "nano-programming," self-organized informal programs which are a hallmark of Potlatch's participatory ethic. I found it a little ironic to be "participating" all by myself, while friends from as far afield as Belfast and Australia were presumably having a brilliant time back at the bar. A steady rain fell throughout the adventure, which caused the green "corrected" course I drew on Carrie's map to run and blotch badly. Did I really write: "2: SPHAGNUM GORILLA-DOG, 1.78 miles"? Neither party which followed the map over the next two days reported spotting a canine/primate/clubmoss hybrid, so the delirium may have been upon me by then.

Ah, but back to the convention. It was a revolutionary affair designed to delight every dedicated apparatchik. Potlatch concentrates on written SF, but does not perpetuate a class distinction between readers and writers. Authors such as Rod Garcia y Robertson and Suzy McKee Charnas, and editors like David Hartwell and Rachel Holmen, just show up and pay their money like anyone else. Local comic creators Donna Barr (*The Desert Peach*) and Roberta Gregory (*Naughty Bits*) were both around Friday night, and I'm pretty sure that not too many people knew who they were, even though Donna, in her signature broad hat, came as close as anyone to wearing a hall costume.

Anita Rowland's con suite was well-stocked all three nights, and aside from some panicked calls from the hotel asking us to please stop talking in the halls on Friday night (some front desk genius had placed some people undergoing treatment at the University Medical Center uncomfortably close to the party), it was an unqualified success.

The program began at ten the following morning. There were four scheduled major events for Saturday, and I made it to the first and last. David Hartwell led Robert L. Brown, Molly Gloss and Stephanie Smith in a mannered discussion of "Victorian Utopias." The panelists all had wide command of the material considered, but I didn't hear anything that struck me as especially surprising. The last half-hour of open discussion and comment was more lively, rather as if everyone was finally waking up as the hour approached noon.

Before going in to the panel, I had stopped near the registration table. Sitting out with the freebies were copies of the fanzine *Götterdämmerung*, confirming that Tommy Ferguson had arrived. Even if he had not been wearing a T-shirt advertising an Irish Pub, I think I might have

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This is the seventy-fifth issue of a tri-weekly fanzine, edited and published by Andy Hooper, carl juarez and Victor Gonzalez, members & founding member fwa, supporters afal, at The Starliter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. #103, Seattle, WA 98103, also available at fanmailAPH@aol.com. Correspondence for Victor should be sent to 403 1/2 Garfield Street S., #11, Tacoma, WA 98444, and at vxg@p.tribnet.com. carl accepts e-mail at cjuarez@oz.net. Apak is available for the usual, but trades must be sent to both Andy and Victor (carl just wants the good ones, sent care of Andy), and/or you can get Apparatchik for \$3.00 for a 3-month supply, a year's worth for \$12.00, a lifetime subscription for \$19.73, or in exchange for turdocken. See the back page for the addresses of our British and Australian mailing agents. This is Drag Bunt Press Production #288. Apparatchiki: Jae Leslie Adams, Gregory Benford, Randy Byers, Christina Lake, Steve Green, Irwin Hirsh, Lesley Reece, Martin Tudor, Pam Wells & Ted White. On the Web: <http://www.oz.net/~cjuarez/APAK> Art this issue: Pages one, seven by S. Mason, page eleven by I. Gunn. Photos: page two, three and four by D. Hartwell.

been able to pick him out in ten seconds. It wasn't just the haircut, or the pallor acquired by enduring a Toronto winter; it was his glasses. They looked like Tommy might have lifted them right off of Anuerin Bevan's face in about 1938.

Anyway, after first panel ended, I introduced myself to Tommy, and we retired to the con suite to talk through the rest of the morning program block. While others were discussing computer viruses, the role of single malt scotch in fantasy and Delany's protagonists, Tommy and I took advantage of the opportunity to leave the hotel and walk around in the pouring rain for an hour. I headed down to University Way to look for a last CD or two for the dance; Mr. Ferguson followed along, and allowed me to demonstrate that even the cheapest Chinese food in Seattle, is better than 97% of Chinese restaurants in the U.K.

On our return to the hotel, Tommy went looking for the gym, while I took the grand tour of the Dealer's room, which was actually smaller than the con suite. A half dozen book sellers had crammed their tables into the room. The material ran toward collectible editions and expensive used paperbacks, but David Hartwell had one copy of Howard Waldrop's new book *Going Home Again* from Australia's Eidolon Press. By the end of the weekend, I was afraid the constant drooling was going to damage the book's finish . . .

The final program of the afternoon was worth waiting for: Mr. Waldrop, Eileen Gunn and Ellen Klages discussed the Giant Rat of Sumatra as an introduction to great unwritten works of literature, which at least two of the panelists had dragging along behind them like a revenant's chain. As usual, the verbal gifts of those three panelists would have been sufficient to sustain a panel discussing dental hygiene, but with a topic which so thoroughly captured the imagination of the audience, they were lucky that we ever let them leave.

Saturday evening is slightly blurry to me. The monthly Vanguard fan party was held at Potlatch on Saturday evening, but I don't know who was there; I never got back up to the room. As soon as I got back from a brief dinner with Spike Parsons, Carrie Root and Karrie Dunning, Jerry Kaufman and I began trying to set up the sound system for the dance.

I had Jerry Kaufman's amp, speakers and CD player, while we have jury-rigged a connection with another CD player borrowed from Kate Schaefer and Glenn Hackney patched through the recording input channel. As soon as we got the system set up, I began trying to figure out which channel was which, and the delicate ballet of cue, pause, play, switch and volume adjustment that would command my attention until midnight. I screwed up a few times, and the "pause" button on one of the players had a disturbing tendency to act like "play" instead, but people seemed to have a good time. The hotel staff certainly did; they were bopping quietly at the edge of the room, and one of them asked me if I had any Duran Duran to play for him (I

ought to observe that they were all very helpful and nice; Suzle Tompkins has been working with the University Plaza staff for so long and so well I keep thinking they'll try to hire her). I even got people to dance (well, a little) to a Massive Attack remix of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's "Mustt Mustt." I always say, if you can get people to dance to Pakistani devotional music, you must know what you're doing.



Phil Manzanera's new album:
"Drumhead."

When the dance ended, it was about time to turn the revolutionary watch over to the late shift. I hung out in the con suite for a while, but the cobwebs were creeping in around the edges. I remember talking about the Mariners' prospects for 1997, the beauty of certain late 18th century Czech string quartets, and the origins and great eras of Seattle fandom. It was 2:30 by the time I left, and the con suite was starting to clear out, but lots of people held on much longer than I did.

There were three big events on Sunday, the brunch buffet, a reading by Howard Waldrop and the Clarion West benefit auction. The banquet was sold out by the time I decided I might like to get a ticket, but the Waldrop reading was hard to resist. Being so close to the con actually worked against me there; while there was never any question of spending the money for a hotel room so near to home, but to walk down to the hotel by noon, I'd have to get up by ten. Carrie would have given me a ride, but she was meeting some people for yet another nine am walk. I ended up having to stop and cough up a lung in the Aurora Avenue viaduct, which made me a little late; but of course, as I walked in, everyone was staring glumly at their used dishes as the staff drifted slowly around the room to clear the tables.

Howard had not stayed up all night writing a new story as he had often done in the past. As he put it, the new story he was working on would "change human consciousness forever," and as such, it did not seem proper to rush such a powerful process. Besides, he said, "I'm fifty and a half years old now. I don't *do* all that stuff I used to do." So, we were treated to an *almost* entirely new story, titled "Mr. Goober's Show," which he had completed for Swancon last month. It begins with a Jean Shepard-like evocation of bar conversation about forgotten TV shows, then leaps back in time to link a little-known part of America's technological history and a chance encounter with something not of this earth. Waldrop spans 40 years with brief epistolary passages, and says some very powerful things about how we'd feel if aliens really did contact us personally. To me, it was the climax of the weekend, and a fine addition to the Waldrop canon.

After the Clarion West auction, the effects of limited sleep across the weekend started to catch up with me. I still had the energy to stride out purposefully with Sheila Lightsey, who wanted to see the "waterfront." Unfortunately, only Lake Union was within walking distance; while this provided a gorgeous view of the downtown skyline in the setting sun, Sheila was slightly disappointed to hear that we were a canal and a set of locks away from salt water, and probably sixty miles from the open ocean. We trudged virtuously back up the hill to the hotel, and this little jaunt put me just under 20 miles walked for the weekend. This made it easy for me to agree with Carrie when she asked if we could go back home early, and I have to admit I didn't miss that staring, half-sleep feeling that characterizes most dead dog parties. I must leave it to others to comment on the long death throes of the weekend.

On the whole, this seemed like a slightly less elaborate and lavish event than Potlatch Three, the last time the convention was held in Seattle. Various Bay-area fans could be heard making plans to blow everyone's doors off at Potlatch Seven. But I was quite satisfied with my weekend. Any time a large number of my friends want to fly and drive across the country to hold a literate, generous and well-behaved relaxicon a few blocks away from my home, I promise I'll be there, especially if baseball season hasn't started yet.

Potlatch Snapshots

by Randy Byers

Here's one of Ron. He's stretched out on his back on a bed in the smoking con-suite, eyes closed, battered hat

crushed between his head and the mattress. It's late; he looks exhausted. A bearded man sits by his head, lips parted to form a word that has no origin or closure, that circles and circles around the void. In the center of the photo there is an almost unnoticeable distortion. It hovers in the air above Ron's face. Is it a warp in this cheap camera's focus? A patch of stale cigarette smoke? Or is Ron seeking to project himself into an astral escape from the eternal drone of loneliness?

- Oh, this is a good one. It's a long shot of the dance floor. To the left, Apak Shakur, aka DJ Vacuo, looks up, startled, from a neat array of CD's. His eyes have the feral red glint of the giant rat of Sumatra. To the right, Jerry alone lifts a foot in a Spanish step. In the middle distance, Lesley and Heather gesture, though I can't quite make out whether they are amazed or alarmed. That must be my foot straying from behind the speaker, definitely alarmed.

- This one's a standard panel shot: Howard Waldrop, Eileen Gunn, and Ellen Klages sit behind a long table. A toy rat sits on the mike, guarding against unwanted feedback. Howard and Ellen are looking at Eileen. Eileen is pointing at the camera. The white linen that covers the table could be the shroud of the undead stories that haunt this room. It is just as likely the birth sheet of a long labor. At the bottom of the frame is the unmistakable crown of Deb Notkin's head. Hm. Was she even in the room at the time?

- I wouldn't believe this if I hadn't seen the picture. Who is more astounded, Chairman Luke or the puckish Tami? Luke's bare chest peeks through a white frock coat. His bare willie peeks over the waist band of his outlandish golden harem pants, which Tami has tugged down from behind. Tami's face has I-thought-there'd-be-underwear written all over it. Luke's willie has Yikes! written all over it. To the side, Jeanne Bowman leans over to read it.

- Here's another one from the smoking suite. On the right, AP McQuiddy is laughing at something outside the frame. Sheila lounges in the middle, looking as though she feels three hours older than most everybody else. Victor, on the left, is looking at Sheila and rubbing his shoulder; in his eyes, the dreaminess of pain.



The author and his muse.

- Here are three bushy beards. Chuck Garvin's is stained with nicotine that has transmigrated from his restless fingers. Mark Manning's rides his stout chest with Tolkienesque irreality. Art's evokes Walt Whitman, Santa Claus, and God Almighty in rapid succession. By all accounts, it was the latter incarnation that showed up for the Friday night poker game.

- This, of course, is David Hartwell. His eyes are alight with holy fire, for he is telling me about *Phoenix Cafe*, the new novel by Gwyneth Jones, just out in the UK. Yes, that's the back of my head, inclined in an attitude of attention, or of prayer. My left hand reaches for the book, which isn't here yet. I look like a fanboy's dream of a hipster, but it's only an illusion. In the blurry background, that's Lesley not paying any attention.

- Ah, here's one of the few not taken at the hotel itself. The setting is the Elysian Brewpub. In the middle, we have Fast Tommy Ferguson, come to us from Belfast via Toronto. On his left are Ron and AP again. On his right, Carl is making an enigmatic sign with one hand. He's probably trying to protect his soul from the hunger of the camera, but it probably won't do him any good. Tommy is grinning, because he believes he has discovered that American fans like to have sex at conventions. The pint glasses are empty of pale ale.

- Ooh! Here's one of Hooper staring at a blurry dog. Or is it an ape? Andy's eyes are red in this one, too. Must be the camera.

- How sad. Here's another one of the dog, or ape, but now it's dead. All around the carcass, not quite coming into focus, is the real world. Looks like a picture of a hangover.

This logic is undeniably compelling at times, but then so is cocaine.

My Next Convention

by Lesley Reece

My involvement with fandom didn't happen until after I became a student. The unfortunate thing that has meant for me is that I haven't

been able to go to any out-of-town conventions. Most of the time I haven't had the money, but even if I think I can scare the cash up for a trip someplace, my school schedule always seems to get in the way. This year, for example, I had tentatively planned to attend Corflu. I almost had the finances worked out when I checked my calendar, and found that this year it's happening right in the middle of finals week. So I was glad Potlatch was located not only in Seattle, but at the University Plaza Hotel, a mere fifteen-minute bus ride from my Capitol Hill apartment. How cool, I thought, I can go and hang out without my conscience bothering me about homework.

Friday I went mainly so I could play poker. I'd never played

much until Andy talked me into joining him and Victor at the monthly games they play in. I've been getting a lot better at it, and I've actually come out ahead the last couple of times. Not that I win as much as the King of Weird Poker Games, Ian Hagemann, but at least I don't lose. I did have to endure some teasing about playing in the "Men's" game, but I had fun anyway as I watched Art Widner clean almost everyone out (I did win a couple of dollars, but he won eleven). When the game was over, I spent some time in the Consuite "Silly Area," smoking way too many cigarettes and talking to Rod Garcia y Robertson about the Pere Lachaises cemetery in Paris. He was also nice enough to give me a copy of *The Spiral Dance* (which I can't read until Spring Break!).

Saturday, I went for Vanguard, but ended up spending most of my evening dancing to the CDs Andy's been auditioning so carefully for the last couple of months. It was amusing to see Seattle fans actually dancing; I didn't think it ever happened,

but there they were. Afterward it was back to the Silly Area. Andy's memories of the evening may be fuzzy, but I distinctly remember hearing him give a lovely performance of "My Darling Clementine," set to Beethoven's Ode to Joy. I could be wrong, though; it was a bit of a late night.

I had so much fun I decided to go back for just a little while on Sunday, even though the Virgil and Ovid I had to read were beginning to loom large in my mind. I'm glad I went, though, because I finally got a chance to talk to Tommy Ferguson and confirm the favorable opinions of him that the other Apparatchiki had voiced. He and AP McQuiddy did try to make me eat dried, cheddar-cheese-flavored worms at several points

in the evening, but I somehow managed to resist. (Art Widner ate one and pronounced it "dry.")

I'll be done with my degree this year, and I've decided that once I become gainfully employed, more conventions will definitely be on the agenda. Until then, I'll be attending the ones I can get to. This last weekend I finally got an idea of what I've been missing all these years.

I knocked it up in Word 97 (you know, the one with the talking paper clip)

Those Wacky Americans and Their Cons

by Tommy Ferguson

Tommy, surely you jest . . . ?

I stayed in Vancouver for a few days before travelling down to Seattle for Potlatch on the Friday. I hit Vancouver, and that is not a simile, on Wednesday night and crashed in my hotel at 11:30 p.m. local time. No idea what was about in the real world. I stayed in English bay, just beside Stanley Park, in a very inexpensive hotel recommended by one of the local fans — who I met for lunch there the following day. Thursday morning, yeah you heard right, Thursday morning I got up for breakfast, to be greeted by my server ("Hi, I'm Sun Microsystems; I'll be your server for today . . .") would I like a window seat? I could barely see the windows at that time of the morning so nodded a vague assent.

She showed me to my table poured me coffee, without asking if I wanted any, and left me there. So windows, eh? I'd arrived in the thick of night and my view was essentially a Monty Python brick wall so I checked out the view. Well fuck me pink and call me medium rare — English Bay, Stanley Park and the whole works was just sitting out side my window. I didn't have to crane my neck to see it all, peer through trees to catch a glimpse or any of that — it was just laid out there, nice and neat especially for me. There was even a large Clapboard sign: "This view purposely assembled by hand for Tommy Ferguson." I fell in love with Vancouver, there and then.

Breakfast was a quick and hurried affair, I had to get out there. Seaweed. Waves splashing the shore. Gulls and cormorants squealing. That seaside breeze which cuts your face to ribbons. Mountains in the distance, beach in the foreground and water in between. I was transported to previous articles I've written. This was Fahan in Donegal, pure and simple. Well, the coffee was better, but you'd hardly notice. I checked out the beach, walked a few miles around Stanley Park, took a complete roll of film in the space of two hours and just felt my shoulders ease, my stride lengthen and my lungs begin to work to their capacity again. Toronto just doesn't have this shit in the winter. Ahhh, halcyon hours . . .

Vancouver is really cool. I will think about moving out there next year, if my plans don't work out. Even in the depths of winter it has bright sunshine and blue skies. Plus there is all that geography, something that I am missing in Toronto; the subtle subliminal absence of mountains and terrain, just a uniform flatness. I guess that contributes to my bouts of homesickness. After jogging a couple of miles around Stanley Park the following morning (I just couldn't let that opportunity go to

Potlatch, eh? Buckets of fun, people, absolute scads of fun was had and the strange thing is I had even more fun getting there. "Really,

waste) I caught the bus to Seattle.

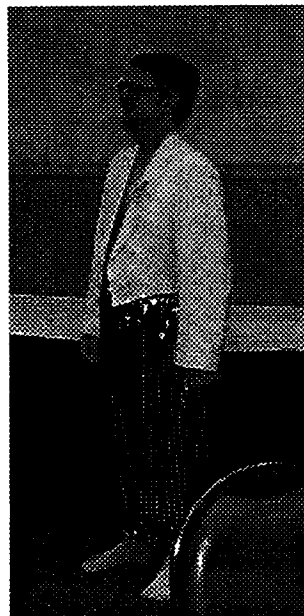
Potlatch. Defined in the program book as: "A ceremonial feast of the Northwest Pacific Coast Indians, marked by the hosts lavish distribution of gifts." The convention lived up to its moniker in the registration package: two free books (decent books to boot — Ursula LeGuin's *Four Ways to Forgiveness* and Connie Willis' *Remake*), some stuff from Archie McPhee (see later), and loads of bits and bobs from local companies and services. I picked this up on the Saturday as after travelling 5 hours on the coach from Vancouver I arrived late on Friday night, sick tired and fucked off at the local taxi person. Apparently hitting the sack at midnight on Friday meant that I missed a great bash which started in the consuite and apparently didn't end. So it goes . . .

Checking out my goodies in the program room (Victorian Utopias panel discussion — turgid until the Q&A session) I was approached by Andy Hooper: "Hi Tommy." "Er, Hi . . . um," sneaks a look at the badge, ". . . Andy, yeah, great to meet you at last." Shit this guy is good, I hadn't said a word or anything. "We haven't met, how did you know . . ." Apparently Andy is not all-knowing in fandom and the "Flannery's Pub, Ballinrobe, Ireland" tee shirt I was wearing was a bit of a give away.

We chatted for a while, met a bunch of people (Jerry Kaufman, with the Novacon 24 refrain: "Ah, you're Tommy Ferguson . . .") and then grabbed some lunch, a free shower and a bunch of shopping: comics and music before a hitting the con again. Andy turned out to be a nice guy. Shock, horror . . . His written persona, which can be somewhat abrasive, turned into an interesting and friendly guy in person. Of course he may have been chemically altered, but lets not spoil the image.

So Saturday night rolled around as it inevitably does. Met Victor Gonzalez and talked Joyce for a while. Met Spike Parsons who isn't a guy. Met Lesley Reece, much to my surprise. The con disco ("Fans Can't Dance," © me) had some cool music that I sat and listened to and no-one danced to; then some slightly worse music which most people danced to and I left to. So bar & con suite. I got to meet Janice Murray and Alan Rosenthal, a bunch of local fans who seem to just hang out, AP and Randy, Jeannes Gomoll and Bowman (wicked conversation, wicked . . .) chairman Luke McGuff and a whole bunch of fun people. This was turning into a right name fest, but lots of fun nonetheless.

Saturday night is always the highlight of any con for me — get dressed up, a few beers and then wander the party circuit to meet and greet. Potlatch's Saturday night was loads of fun. All these new people, who knew each other but not me, conversations I naturally floated into and out of, and that wacky American con thing of free beer. I seem to recall 4:30 a.m. on my watch as I fell asleep.



The Chairman (sans willie).

Sunday started early — 9:30 a.m. No, honest. Yeah, I realize it is hard to believe, but Jerry Kaufman, Kate Schaefer and Jae Leslie Adams can assert the fact that Tommy Ferguson actually surfaced before lunch on the Sunday of a convention. Okay, okay — surfaced before lunch on a Sunday. Why? What dragged me from my pit and the never-ending sleep of the Ferg? Nothing so inconsequential as food, I hear you say? Well, yes actually. The buffet brunch thing that Potlatch seems to do every year was at 11:00 (I mean, Jesus!) and I had stupidly paid in advance for, what turned out to be, the last ticket. Damned if I was going to waste that opportunity. So much orange juice and coffee ensued and what may, or may not, have been witty and entertaining conversation on my part. I certainly enjoyed meeting my fellow diners. In my condition though I kept seeing Maureen Kincaid Speller instead of Kate Schaefer. Weird.

The Clarion West auction duly followed and I picked up some interesting and choice items, one of which is a gift so will have to remain secret. I'm happy to say I got a nearly complete run of John Berry's Wing Window which I was told I sorely needed by an auctioneer and, for once, this advice turned out to be true and not a cheap, money grabbing auctioneer ruse. As if Tom Whitmore would stoop so low! The usual jollity ensued at the auction and everyone seemed happy, Clarion West especially, as a huge bunch of money was raised.

Sunday evening: The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul. Like Belfast, probably the entire world, Seattle is dead on Sunday

afternoons and evenings. So AP, Randy, a friend of theirs who may be called Shona and I took a trip to Archie McPhee's, a shop that sells stuff. Elvis Playing Cards, glow in the dark Madonna's, boxing nuns, plastic animals etc. Kitsch to the max and great fun. Bought a cool t-shirt: Old style Soviet image of Lenin exhorting the masses, with the caption "Marxism for the People." Of course, there is a rough, marker drawn mustache and glasses of Groucho scrawled on the head of Lenin. Fun.

We then did a quick tour of Seattle's brew Pubs Big Time Brewery and The Elysium — way cool joints — and back to the con. Bar and con suite. Parties. Beer. People. After unsuccessfully trying to light a lighter numerous times, to much frivolity, I was inducted into some secret cult of cigarette lighters. I hope someone reminds me of that as I went to great expense lighting cigarettes for Lesley Reece all night attempting to prove my worthiness. Later, when the beer was all gone, David Hartwell entertained a bunch of us, including Amy Thomson whose books I promise to read, with publishing stories and all sorts of Science Fiction stuff. At midnight he turfed us out, pausing only to mention that if anyone wanted to take a beer . . . All that time, if only I'd known!

And so to bed.

Monday. Travelling to Vancouver and thence Toronto. Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. — arrive in Toronto.

Wednesday — 3 p.m. wake up again. Wednesday — 5 p.m. Start my new job. Life goes down hill from here on in.

What does it matter that LondonONE will always sound like a pasta dish to the average Londoner?

Unusual Blood Types

by Victor M. Gonzalez
Staff Writer

feedback of conventions.

Fanzine feedback is more permanent in a way — one can look back upon it years later and enjoy the resonance of the past. But memory is more visceral than the printed page, and a con like Potlatch reminds me strongly that it is the inhabitants of fandom — and little else — who make fanac fun and interesting.

So meeting Tommy Ferguson and Sheila Lightsey made Potlatch a great convention for me. Tommy's fresh writing voice caught my attention through an essay about alcoholism in his e-zine Tommyworld. I've been going through my own adjustment — read "struggle" — with drinking, but I found it hard to believe I could be as honest as Tommy was if I wrote about it. Also, I'd just received Design For Life #1, wherein Tommy details some of the factors that led to him leaving his native Ireland for Ontario.

And, since I recently got a new computer, and I've been spending plenty of time playing around with Photoshop, I exclaimed "Photoshop! I'd bet a week's salary on it!" when I first looked at the intentionally (and deceptively) low-resolution distortion of skulls and a bottle on the cover of his zine. "Going Straight, Choosing Life." I've gotta say there's something to that.

So when Jerry Kaufman introduced us I knew I had something to talk about with Tommy, and it was better than I expected. We sat at a table at the side of the dance, conversing above the music being played by DJ Ronkmonster Apak Shakur. We talked about James Joyce, Flann O'Brien, Ireland in general, and fannish criticism. I'm looking forward to an article he said he's thinking about that would discuss the place and value of fanzine reviews. I can't wait. I, for one, am happy to welcome Tommy to North America.

Perhaps the greatest death spiral in any fan's thinking is wondering which is more important: the written feedback of fanzines or the personal

Sheila is much prettier than Tommy, and I enjoyed my opportunities to dance and have dinner with her. A long-time helper with Readercon in her hometown of Cambridge, she has stumbled over the precipice onto the slippery slope leading down to fanzine fandom, thanks largely to Christina Lake. Sheila accompanied Christina on her trip to Mexico, the one written up in Never Quite Arriving 5.

What with the vast interconnection between fanzine fandom and the pro crowd that comes to Readercon, we had no difficulty finding mutual acquaintances to gossip about as we ate Indian food Sunday night. We also talked about my injured back, her problem knees, and how physical therapy and massage can combine to help heal.

But it was something of a surprise that we ate at all; Sheila wanted to try the place, and we walked through the brisk Seattle windy drizzle and walked in, to find the restaurant's owner stumbling about and mumbling incomprehensibly. I was oblivious, but Sheila was concerned, and scouted out the kitchen to make sure the cooks weren't in the same condition.

Then she came back, and told me that the owner was "fried." We decided to stick it out, and despite the fear I felt as the man's wobbly, uncertain hand tried to put a lamb curry down on the table, and the fact that we had to ask for our mango lassis at least three times, the food turned out well. It was clear from the inexperience of the waitress — it was her first day, and she was still more efficient than the waiter — that he had trouble keeping workers.

The owner eventually settled down to a conversation about opening up another restaurant with two customers he didn't know, and I corralled the waitress and paid the bill. We walked back to the hotel happy that he hadn't tried talking to us.

If every convention was like this, if at every convention I met two people I might someday consider fast friends, then the foibles of fandom would pale in comparison. I welcome new blood because it gives me the energy to continue.

Attitude: The Convention

by Pam Wells

about. I never seemed to be able to give them a coherent answer, or at least not one they considered satisfactory. Hell, I was just making it up as I went along. And then, one night during the convention, Alun and Greg asked me the same question again. I tried my best to explain.

"It's sort of like fandom used to be, you know; fans did fanzines and they ran conventions," I said. "Attitude is a fanzine and a convention. They're the same thing. They feed into each other. That's it."

Now, I've no idea if those were my actual words, since I didn't write them down at the time, but whatever it was that I said in the bar that night, it made sense to the both of them. So, that's what Attitude was for. And, as the other half of the same project as the fanzine, I think it worked pretty damn well.

The atmosphere of the hotel on the Friday, as people arrived and connected with the con, was a delight. Everybody knew each other, even if they didn't. It was like cutting the crap, removing the need for small-talk and those "what are we gonna do now?" conversations you often seem to get at other conventions. Everyone knew why they were there, or at least enough of them did to carry the rest on through. The convention had a Purpose, even if I'd never been able to explain very well what it was. It had a life of its own, right from the word go.

The hotel was a great help in all this, of course. Friendly staff and a congenial atmosphere, with us being the only event there all weekend (not counting a political dinner in the adjoining suite on the Sunday night), made for a cohesive and almost cosy experience. I'd felt it was vital to use a hotel that hadn't been used for a convention before, so that the attendees wouldn't have any carried-forward expectations from previous events held there. But, even so, we stamped our own identity on the space from the off, by pinning interlineations on the walls, and by having whoever was in charge of the con at the time wearing a large pink hat. When I left on the Monday night, there was still one rather obscure interlineation left pinned up in the bar

Participation was the key. We used over half our members on the program, and encouraged involvement from the floor — some of which was perhaps too enthusiastic; fandom could probably use some stronger moderators, in lieu of interruptors who Won't Wait Their Turn. But I think this is a better criticism than the one that an audience sits there passively like a bunch of stuffed dummies, not being encouraged to say their piece and not feeling involved.

We had a continuous single-stream program, running from (late) breakfast time until after midnight, and we used two programming rooms, alternating the items between them. Because the programming took place in two different rooms, this allowed popular items to over-run by up to an hour. Mexicans had tried the concept of a "continuation room" for heated items to move into, but this never really worked; once people move from their seats, the heat seems to go out of the arguments, and the bar beckons. Allowing people to stay just where they are and carry on (after the official "end" has been announced) proved to be an effective and popular move.

Another way we involved people was by giving them a bunch of questionnaires to fill in. There was the Religion Ques-

In the run-up to the con, people (usually Greg Pickersgill, Alun Harries or D West) would take me to one side and ask me what the hell

Attitude was supposed to be

tionnaire, prepared by Tibs, to be used as input to the Weird Religion panel (Sunday morning). There was the Family Fortunes questionnaire, prepared by me, to be used as a round in my mega-quiz Whose Round Is It Anyway? (Sunday night). And then there were the infamous Trilby Awards. Was it just competition for the Trilby award for "Best One-Shot Produced at the Con" that caused 14 one-shots to be produced at the con? (Or were we just lucky?) I was delighted to notice that the Trilby award for "Best Attitude," awarded to the hotel, was sitting at the top of the bar on the Monday night, in pride of place.

The Repro Room was largely a success; people had loaned all kinds of old and new technology, from Bridget Wilkinson's jelly duplicator via Maureen Speller's Gestetner duplicator and electrostenciller and the Critical Wave photocopier, to Dave Cox's state of the art Macintosh computer and color laser printer, and Simon Bisson's laptop PC and modem (which we used for the IRC link-up to Boskone on the Saturday night). All the equipment was used over the weekend. It was good to see Felix Cohen produce two one-shots, going from the stage of not knowing what to say at all and staring at a blank screen for a long time, to confidently producing and handing out a second issue. His was the only publication to be reproduced using two different technologies (the first photocopied, the second duplicated). Quite the most promising 14-year-old to be seen in fandom for many years. I believe Vince Clarke and Chuck Connor managed to get Maureen's Gestetner working better than it was before the convention, too. I was hoping that there would have been some formal demonstrations of the technology, but — hey — 14 one-shots will do just as well

The program contained quizzes and silly games, serious as well as more whimsical panel discussions, items of general interest, and items which came out of some of the articles in the fanzine. Just like the fanzine, the convention started out with an editorial and ended up with Stance, Erudition and Scorn. Cutting Room came towards the end (for audience feedback and the presentation of awards), and there were many articles — OK, program items — about science fiction, fanzines, conventions, all manner of topics of general interest, and even some fanzine reviews. It was, as near as dammit, a live fanzine, albeit a very long one

One of the criticisms that has often been levelled at Attitude: the Fanzine is that it is "too worthy." It's a criticism I don't like, largely because I've heard it too often, but also in part because I sympathise: damn those critics, I know exactly what they mean! Someone (I think it was Alison Scott) said to me at the convention, with surprise and admiration, "Hey, you know this convention isn't very worthy at all." I took that as high praise indeed.

One thing that several people have been asking for is a second Attitude convention. That won't happen. We're winding down the fanzine over the next two issues, and that will be that; by the end of this year, we'll all be involved in different projects. We hope that other people will come up with new ways of giving us innovative fannish entertainment; we've had our 15 minutes. You were either there or you weren't, and that (in my opinion) is as it should be. The worst thing we can do is stagnate. Another Attitude wouldn't be — couldn't be — as good as the first. Someone else's great new idea, though — well, that could be *much* better



Now I would like to introduce to you beautiful Korean women one by one.

Poetsarcds from Attitude

by Spike Parsons

industry. It's being re-furbished to something of its Victorian glory. Pam chose the hotel well, it has nice meeting rooms, a nice restaurant, and reasonable prices. (Well, ok the bar's a bit small, but comfy.)

Andy, everyone is here. (Well, o.k., not D. West or the other Leeds Mafia, nor Rob and Avedon) It's been a bit over 10 years since my first British convention (Rubicon) and I'm back.

We arrived on Thursday afternoon, terribly jet-lagged. Ahead of Pam, but Pickersgill was already ensconced. After a nap and a tasty hot meal in the hotel restaurant we retired to The Bar, with GP and Catherine McAuley, and the Australian, Kim Huett. Catherine brought us all a round of drinks. Tired, and talking mostly to myself as I thought about what sort of drink I wanted, Catherine caught me saying "iced tea" and promptly dispatched the barman to look for the book and make me one! The Shame! Bloody Americans!

An hour later (I think) the tea arrived, a big stein, Texas-sized, with plenty of ice. On a little tray. I reached for the handle, but caught myself before bringing the sparkling tanin-beverage to my parched lips: it was a tiny *pitcher* of iced tea. the liquid was meant to be decanted (past all those lovely irrelevant ice cubes) into the small fluted wine glass also presented on the tray. Saved from my second (or third?) Shameful Act of the evening! The tea was splendid, and revived me for a couple hours. The healing waters! The healthful brew! I believe!

We've had a splendid show of fanzines this con; I challenge the Corflu denizens to surpass it next month. We've acquired new issues of Attitude, Wallbanger. Plokta, Banana Wings, and The Disillusionist. Then there are the one shots, all competing for the coveted Trilby Award. As far as I can tell, this included Babes With Attitude (Marianne Cain), Welcome to the Year of the Cow (Judith Hanna), Snuffkin's Bum (Maureen Kincaid Speller), Lo-Tec (Bridget Wilkinson) (a hecto zine), and Altitude (Pat McMurray). Ms. Cain (Formerly Known As Pod) won the Trilby for best one-shot, Mr. McMurray won a special committee award, "Fanzine Most Likely to Become a Paper Airplane" (Perhaps it was the title?). Dave Langford won Greg Pickersgill's fanzine quiz, trouncing his former partner Dave Hicks. Greg presented him with the (less) coveted magnum of Lambrusco, "an award of real bloody value!" says Greg.

The quizzes were delightful, but there was much more to The Programme. At breakfast Saturday Paul Kincaid, Joseph Nicholas and I worked out that we were victims of the first scheduling glitch, and were due to give our Fanzine Review panel at 11:30 a.m. rather than the 3 p.m. start time in our speakers letters. This meant waking up Lilian Edwards immediately; a job none of us was up for. Enter Mike Abbott, suitably horrified about the glitch (or the task at hand); he went off to handle the problem. (Mike Siddall said he went looking for a witch doctor to "shake the bones" over the Body, and see if it could be re-animated in less than an hour.) Paul, Joseph and I met in the program room, debating the best seating.

In the end we all ordered tea, and it was quite a civilized affair, this zine savaging-er- reviewing. Lilian arrived with a minute to spare, commandeered my tea, and off we went. As moderator, I began by berating Joseph for making us discuss Fosfax, then I let him read his rather concise condemnation of

Dear Andy:

It's been green with trees budding. So this is February in Jolly Old. It's quite acceptable. This is a Spa town, a product of the 19th century water cure

the zine. Great fun! The audience seemed to relish a tough moderator, so I instructed them to be quiet until I called on them. (This did little good, but drew shouts of encouragement.) Paul Kincaid then began to talk about Ian Sorensen's Bob, which he apparently didn't find funny enough to be considered a British zine. Or something like that; Paul uses such big words and eccentric British phrasing, I had to request commentary from Lilian and others to explain what he was saying. Lilian defended the latest issue of Bob, which deals somewhat explicitly with Sorensen's sex life, and called for more male heterosexual British fan writers to write about their sex lives. She opined that writings on male heterosexuality in general are in short supply, and she thinks it's time we heard from that corner. I was crogged, and unable to say anything.

I held up Plokta, and pointed at Lilian. She defended it's superfluous technology and found the lapses into internet and techie topics refreshing. The Plokta Cabal, visible in the front row, seemed stunned but pleased by Lilian's highest praise: it makes great bog reading. Again I was crogged—I'd heard "boff" reading—but after further side explanations to the moderator (really, they should have provided the American with an interpreter) I understood that Lilian reserves her highest praise for fanzines that can easily be read while on the toilet. I'm not sure if this depends on size, topic, number of staples, or what. But it provided a great segue to the Apparatchik dissection. Lilian seemed reluctant to give Apak her highest rating, and I got to vent my bad feelings about the placement and number of the staples. Apak columnists in the room slid down in their chairs when Paul decried the lack of a coherent editorial voice. I read from oneshot handed out by Judith Hanna: "Basically, it turns up in the mail and tells you about things going on, some of them in and around its twin home towns of Seattle and fandom. Tightly packed, sparse, energetic, with a quality of journalistic edge, it is working well as a frequent focal point fanzine." Over all the zine seems to be something of a Curiosity in the UK. Lots of people in the audience seemed familiar with it—I could tell when that shout went up, "Bring me the head of Victor Gonzalez!" Brought a tear to my eye.

Before I run out of room I should summarize. There were 30+ program items on a variety of topics, including stand-up humour, music, drugs, pornography, feminism, King Arthur, story-telling, conventions, and fanzines. I counted 55 speakers, which was about half the convention. There were two fan fund auctions, more or less run by the Plokta cabal, and raising about 170 pounds cash in each. (The second featured the auctioning of "services." Martin Smith paid to have a lovely woman put a t-shirt on him, then paid to have it removed. Everyone wanted the "Get Out of Greg Pickersgill Free" card, giving the holder a year of not being cursed by GP. In the end, we all chipped in and bought it for Rob Hansen, who was not at the con.) The near-last program, "Death of a Fanzine," was a very sercon discussion of reasons for ceasing publication, but carried a message of hope that there are other ways to continue to be part of the fanzine scene. While Tom Becker made a final point slowly and earnestly, and the audience listened politely, a certain Welshman (out of Tom's sight) slid quietly from his chair to the floor, crawled a bit, and put Caroline Mullan's foot in his mouth.

Somehow I don't think I've said how SPLENDID this convention was. Straight A's, as good as the Mexican in 1989 except better because I got to enter the party and pick up conversations easily because I'd been reading the zine. And the most telling fact: the committee was on good terms from start to finish, and seemed to enjoy doing things together. Imagine that!

"Hard-core juke-joint blues," it says on the cover.

Dispatches to Apak

[APH: We start the letter column with a note from HOWARD WALDROP (Box 5103 Oso General Store, 30230 Oso Loop Rd., Arlington, WA

98223, written scant hours after his return from Australia last month:]

'Won't give a trip report — it was too great and this is the Tuesday after a 39 hour set of Mondays getting back, but — the meeting with Dowling and Nick happened, but lasted ~ 39 minutes, instead of the projected 11 hours. Arrived in Sydney to find (on filling out my "do you own a horse?" questionnaire from the Australian Health Commission form) that the 12 hour stopover was on my itinerary, but my Ansett ticket was for a 10:55 am flight (this was at 7 am). The two young chums stood in line w/me at the international/domestic transfer counter (if you ever find yourself in Ansett trouble at Sydney, ask for Cedric). "Which is right?" I asked him. "Well, neither, which is obviously our fault," he said. "Which one would you like? Or, I can get you out of here in 27 minutes," he said.

"Go for it!" yelled the erstwhile pals. We went for it; they got me to the gate (in another terminal) just in time for the boarding announcement. I hope to see them (and the swell lady Terry was with) again. (Cedric too. I shook his hand.)

'Two memories: I collapsed three pm that same Sunday at Russell Farr's. I think I twitched twice. Then it was five a.m. Summer dawn. I walked to King's Park (two and a half miles, er . . . 4.75 kilometers away) — there's a Tobruk monument with a 76.2mm field gun; and the entire roadway was lined with trees planted for the dead Aussies — name, unit, date, age (17-year-old captains, 47-year-old privates . . .) of the dead of World War I, planted by (it says who) family, friends, wives, girlfriends, etc. — about half were from Gallipoli; (some were from Beaumont Hamel) Polygon Woods, etc. (some died in service in 1919 — the 'flu) it was sort of a true memorial — some trees just planted, some 40 feet high. And getting out of a car — me and him the only people in a park in Perth, was a piper in full regalia. And . . . and he started to play . . .

'What he started to play was "Happy Birthday to You."

'The other great memory — third day of Swancon — I was scheduled for two panels opposite each other, chose the funny-book one. Just as it started (this was on Australia Day) the ENTIRE CONVENTION came into the panel room and sang "Waltzing Matilda" to me, while I showed the words to it, clipped out of a Life magazine article on *On the Beach* in 1959, that I've carried in every billfold I've owned since I was 13 . . .

'You can't pay for quality experiences like those, son.

'P.S.: A friend just had the pleasure of opening an envelope and having a check for \$100,000 fall out of it . . . (You figure an amount like that is so big you have to write 2 checks for it).

'P.P.S.: *Going Home Again* is about the most beautiful book you'll ever see . . .

[APH: Having had a chance to see it now, I agree that it is one pretty book. Hope we all get a chance to buy it soon, Howard. And it's kind of touching to note that program schedules are hard to manage all over the world. Before everyone sends in their "most incongruous bagpipe music" anecdote, I'll shut it down right here: Princes St., Edinburgh, 1987. The piper stood at the foot of the Scott monument, of course. The tune: "Mama, weer all crazee now" by Slade.

Now, (RICHARD BRANDT 4740 N Mesa #111, El Paso TX 79912, e-mail this week to rsbrandt@cris.com) responds to Lesley Reece's article on rail travel in #72 with a train story of his own:]

'In order to reach my parents' house for Thanksgiving, we decided to fly into New Orleans Tuesday night, then catch the train into Mobile, leaving the Big E.Z. at five in the afternoon and getting in around eight. Unfortunately this was the weekend after the big Amtrak derailment (at least no riverboats plowed into the Riverwalk while we were searching for the Cafe du Monde annex — and hey, thank goodness the casino was spared), and we were treated to a three-hour delay while one of the bridges was inspected. One woman was unable to keep her two small children from running up and down the aisle — or the boy from stomping back and forth after he'd tuckered out the girl — so sleep was pretty much out of the

Apak Stat Box 4: Geographical Distribution of Letterhacks

Letters by North American Region Issues #1–70

Rank	Region	Letters Printed	% of total
1	Northern California	56	16.81
2	Washington & Oregon	46	13.81
3	New England	42	12.61
4	Texas and Sonora, Mexico	36	10.81
5	New York & New Jersey	34	10.21
6	D.C. and Environs	30	9.00
	Upper Midwest		
8	Southern California & Nevada	28	8.40
9	Western Maryland & Pennsylvania	11	3.30
10	Ontario	9	2.70

Letters by British Region Issues #1–70

Rank	Region	Letters Printed	% of total
1	London	27	29.67
2	South-Eastern England	25	27.47
3	Western England & Wales	13	14.28
4	Northern Ireland	11	12.08
5	Leeds & the Midlands	10	10.98
6	Scotland & Cumbria	5	5.49

Apparatchik printed a total of 424 letters with a definite geographic origin between issues #1 and 70 (several letters from fans we were unfamiliar with offered only e-mail addresses). Most of the regions and cities which produced the most letters did so through the efforts of one or two dedicated letterhacks, but some, like Seattle and Southern England, represented the cumulative effort of more than a dozen fans. Of course, this does not represent the true output of each region, as an ever-increasing number of letters have been WAHF'ed. The degree to which these figures represent the efforts of our readers as opposed to the prejudices of the editors we must leave for others to decide.

Top Letterhack Municipalities, Issues #1–70

Rank	City	Letters Printed	% of total
1	Cambridge, MA	35	12.41
2	Seattle, WA	33	11.70
3	Glen Ellen, CA	28	9.92
4	Euless, TX	25	8.86
5	Manhattan, NY	21	7.44
6	Falls Church, VA	17	6.02
7	Hagerstown, MD	14	4.96
	Tottenham, London	14	4.96
9	El Paso, TX	11	3.90
	Madison, WI	11	3.90

— Compiled by Victor M. Gonzalez and Andy Hooper

question. One advantage of staying in a hotel though is the newspapers — we had the Times-Picayune, USA Today, and the Wall Street Journal, as a consequence of which I am now more of an authority on the turducken than you would dare to contemplate.

'Greg Benford's musing on the auctorial subconscious didn't really hit home for me until Joseph Nicholas related it to fanwriting — and by gum, I've had that experience myself. A piece I conceived and ultimately promised Robert for Trap Door lay gestating in my mind for a couple of years; then one day Michelle and I were munching on the all-you-can-eat buffet at Cici's Pizza when suddenly, unbidden, an image came into my mind from one of the experiences I was aiming to write about — desolate chile fields stretching to the flat horizon — and bang, all the pieces fell into place. We paid our check and skedaddled back home, and I bashed out the piece in one sitting. My subconscious is a hungry little beast, I gather.

Somewhere in me, for another example, is an article I would call "The Girl Who Mispronounced Fanzine," about the fanzine panel at Confederation in 1986. Katherine Scarritt, whose fanzine Universal Translator made the Hugo ballot that year thanks to a concerted push by mediazine fans, appeared to defend her claim against such stalwarts as Teresa Nielsen Hayden. (A real article would require sufficient research to produce the names of the other panelists, but my subconscious has not yet provoked me to this flurry of activity.) Someone had lent Katherine a stack of *fannish* 'zines so she could get a sense of what was up with that, but they didn't move her. "They seemed to be full of people going on about their medical problems," she reported. And so *plus ça change*. (The girl who mispronounced fanzine was an audience member, by the way. Rhymes with "roadsign." Repeatedly mispronounced the word in the course of a comment from the gallery until Teresa in her annoyance burst out with, "ZINE! ZINE! It's derived from magazine, for . . ." I keep this incident to heart as evidence that the gulf between fannish fanzine fans and media zine fans is due only in part to differences in our cultural grounding; in fact, some of them appear to be totally fucking clueless.)

[VMG: I'd like to see the spot where that freighter tried to parallel park — to my way of thinking that was one of the coolest stories of the year: freighter versus hotel, with no serious injuries. Whoa.

JERRY KAUFMAN (3522 NE 123rd St, Seattle WA 98125, e-mail to JAKaufman@aol.com) has lots of comments on #74:]

'Apak 74 is so good, I had to write to say so. I was laughing along with, or at, stuff in the issue when I ran across the Gordon Eklund line about the winter having been "like a porcupine in a sleeveless dress." The line hit me like a slug in the teeth. Hard to chew, hard to swallow. Hard to forget.

'I laughed with (or at) Randy Byers. "Fake fan" and "fringe fan" definitions so convincing, so detailed, so obsessive: only a trufan would delve so deep, so long. Come up for air, Randy. You're as true a fan as David Emerson was when he admitted, after ten conventions, five fanzines, and one slan shack that he was a fan.

'Lesley on Socrates was fun, too. I often had the reaction she had to Soc's method. He seemed to badger people until he got the answer he wanted, then used it to prove how wrong the answerer was. How about the way he "proved" reincarnation by getting a slave (or was it a child?) to demonstrate some Euclidean theorem, claiming that the slave had never been taught

math and so must be remembering it from a previous life?

'I don't know whether Ted left the Seattle Corflu out of his argument, or whether you excised it. Jane, Kate, Suzle, me and others put on the only Corflu that won a contested bid. I don't recall now whether the Texas fans or our group spoke first, and I don't recall anyone telling us that we were flouting tradition and ought to work things out behind the scenes. I do know that the tradition wasn't set in stone before then.

'It's quite possible, though, that the outcome was what led to the tradition becoming entrenched. The Texas group is the only one that has expressed interest without having the chance to follow through, to my knowledge. Shortly after we won the bid, Edd Vick moved to Seattle (becoming part of our committee). Not too long after that the other folks either moved or gaffed. They could have done a 1988 Corflu but by 1989 they were scattered. The theory is, I gather, that with the non-competitive bid process this shouldn't happen.

'I should also mention that bidding for Corflu was not an expensive deal. We printed and mailed some flyers, and I published a bid fanzine, Squinch, which also functioned as an outlet for some of my writing. Even with a hotly contested race (I recall ours as polite, friendly and mildly bantering, like Jim Barker and Dave Langford's TAFF race), there wouldn't be much point in Worldcon-style politicking, since there would be few potential voters at any one con.'

[APH: We did not cut any references from Ted's piece in #74. Your last point seems particularly instructive, Jerry: It is important to remember that there are probably less than 500 people in the whole world who really want to go to Corflu. Or, if one takes the opinions of DALE SPEIRS (Box 6830 Calgary, Alberta T2P 2E7 Canada) as being typical, perhaps that number is a whole lot smaller:]

'Apak #74 received today. Ted White's vision of Corflu going back to fanzine fandom's roots as a replacement for the original intent of Worldcons seems reasonable enough. In his penultimate paragraph he mentions the need to bring serconzines on side, and here, I think, is the critical factor for making Corflu the new gathering place for all fanzine fans. I'm not a congoer in the first place, so perhaps I am out of place in criticizing, but the distinct impression I get from reading con reports about Corflu and Ditto is that they are relaxicons, not "real" SF cons. It may be great for old friends to meet at Corflu, it may be fashionable to go restaurant-hopping instead of taking in the panels, and it may be traditional to vote GoHs and other fun things, but will that bring in the sercon zinesters? Many cities are now having zine fairs, where most of the zinesters are non-SF. Shouldn't this sort of thing be considered as a potential recruiting ground? Shouldn't Corflu be aiming at that kind of market instead of rehashing the TAFF wars? I only know about Corflu what I read in the zines, and thus get the distinct idea that is it were held in my city I wouldn't bother going to it because it was just a bunch of BOFs desperately trying to keep alive old traditions and partying.

'Speaking of traditions, don't forget a new one. World Wide Party #4. On June 21st at 21h00 local time wherever you are, raise a glass and toast fellow fans around the world. Have a party, do a one-shot zine, or just quietly make a salute. The idea is to get a wave circling the planet of fans celebrating. Afterwards, write up your account and send it to your local zine; if not Apak, then my zine Opuntia.'

[APH: Uh-huh, Dale. And this is innately entertaining, while Corflu is not. See my comment on Tom Feller's letter

later on for my general views on recruiting for Corflu. Meanwhile, HARRY CAMERON ANDRUSCHAK (P.O. Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309) does what he can to establish a "Them" to go with our "Us":]

'Received Apparatchik #74 today, and boy was I stunned to read Ted White's article that included, on page 2, the suggestion that Corflu was also the convention for Sercon fanzine fans. Such as myself. (I have contributed in the past to Lan's Lantern and continue to contribute to each issue of Fosfax. I also still read science fiction and fantasy.)

'And would Ted White's new open-mindedness even extend to Guy H. Lillian III and HIS fanzine? Well, if so, maybe just having a Corflu committee actually writing to faneds with an invite might be enough. Or at least make it clear in the Corflu publications that the term "fanzine fan" does not mean exclusively stuck-in-the-50s faannish zine publisher. Who knows . . . perhaps apans would be the next admitted to the Corflu fold?

'I did not find any fan achievement award ballot in my copy of the newsletter. I assume this reflects my lack of credentials in being a "faanish" style of fanzine fan. Quite right, because if a ballot had been enclosed I am sure I would have voted for FOSFAX.'

[VMG: I can't claim the kind of experience with Corflu that Ted or Andy can, but I think the main reason Corflu exists is to give science fiction fans a place to meet where they aren't surrounded by thousands. While Corflu will probably never be a sercon con (in the old sense of the term, and I'll stop there), I've never seen sercon conversation (or program items) disallowed. Corflu should welcome all fanzine fans, whether they are faanish or sercon.]

[APH: I'm sorry we somehow managed to leave the ballot out of your envelope, Harry; we were very tired when we assembled the last issue, and I imagine we might have missed one or two other people. On the other hand, the rest of your letter is the same mean-spirited and willfully stupid crap I've been reading from you for almost 20 years now, so there is a limit to how much sympathy I feel. The only real barriers in fandom are the ones we erect ourselves, and as far as I can tell, Fort Andruschak is completely impregnable.

Now, these opinions from JOSEPH NICHOLAS (15 Jansons Rd., South Tottenham, London N15 4JU UK) were combined from his last two letters; we wanted Joseph to have a chance to read *Never Quite Arriving* #5 before we printed his comments on Victor's review:]

' . . . In Apparatchik 71, Victor says in reply to Tracy Benton's comments about Christina Lake's *Never Quite Arriving* that "there is no way I could compress my feelings on seeing the AIDS quilt into two sentences and feel like I'd done it justice". I haven't seen the issue of NOA in question — I don't know if anyone in Britain has seen a copy, but then if I was going on an extended global jaunt I wouldn't worry about taking my mailing list — but that won't prevent me from making the general point that *Victor is not Christina*. And because Christina is not Victor, their reactions (to anything and everything) are bound to differ — so the fact that Victor can't compress his feelings about the AIDS quilt into two sentences tells us *absolutely nothing* about Christina or her writing. That he found her comments "throwaways" or "cinderblocks" suggest to me, particularly in the light of Tracy's comments that she has no problems, that Victor was upset that Christina didn't view the AIDS quilt in the same light as him. But why should she? If quilting is a particularly US occupation, as it seems to be, then

for a Briton it clearly won't have the same cultural resonance. Further, it may interest Victor to know that Christina has previously described the AIDS quilt as "typically American and over-emotional" — although I should add that (a) I'm quoting from memory, and (b) the remark appeared in a review of a Brian Earl Brown fanzine in which she was contrasting her initial impression of the thing in the manner in which he discussed it (i.e., she was concerned with the quality, not the object, of his description), so the phrase may not be truly representative of her views, either then or now.

[APH: This is from this week's postcard:]

'Incidentally, copies of NOA 5 have now appeared here, and having read it, I can't see what Victor's problem is. He's wrong and everyone who disagreed with him is right.'

[VMG: Hey Joseph. Let me set your mind at ease: At no point in my writing of fanzine reviews do I believe that the points I'm trying to make are unassailable. To believe that would be pompous, pretentious and certainly unrealistic, as I've made plenty of statements in the past that I later disagreed with. I write what I feel about the content and style in a fanzine; if I didn't get as much out of two paragraphs in Christina's piece as you did, then I'm sorry. We disagree, and I'm perfectly willing to listen to your arguments.

But I'm not going to stop being critical when I think it's called for. If part of an article falls short of the rest, I'll note that. In fact, had I not been acclimatized to Christina's fine writing, those paragraphs might not have had that effect; they would have seemed perfectly fine coming from the majority of fans who can't write as well as Christina. Christina tells of her mixed emotions in those passages but doesn't explicate. They suffered in contrast to the rest of her writing.

While I would genuinely prefer to resolve whatever it is that has put us at odds, I am compelled to make one other comment: Hammering on a person for making a single critical comment in an otherwise positive review might not be the best way to handle it. But that doesn't mean you don't have a point.

ROBERT LICHTMAN (P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442) brings us back to the Corflu discussion:]

'Except that the conversation between Ted, rich and Linda took place at Corflu 1, not 2, (is this a typo?) the other details are correct), everything in Dr. Fandom's Corflu Primer jibes with my own knowledge of Corflu folkways. I agree with Ted's observation that Corflu has become the Worldcon of fanzine fandom, and I think that the U.K. bid makes this even more obvious. What next — a rotation plan? I also agree that it would be good if more than "the faannish hardcore" started attending.

'For Randy Byers, I offer the following definition of "Fake Fan" from *Fancyclopedia II*: "Phrase coined about 1940, applied to Jack Wiedenbeck, who roomed with fans and enjoyed their company but shunned all responsibility in fan doings and institutions. Generally speaking, one who hangs around fans but takes no active part in fan affairs, and may not read fantasy. Fans are, after all, at least theoretically fantasy enthusiasts; fake fans are fandom enthusiasts. They don't read prozines. (Sometimes they don't even read fanzines.) They don't remember vast numbers of insignificant details about fantasy stories and their authors, illustrators and publishers. They don't collect books or proz. Fake fans do not have the haggard look that is the mark of the true fan trying to keep abreast of the latest developments in sfdom. And there are some fans who describe themselves as fakesfans to symbolize disinterest, but their continued fanac belies them." The

At night, she brought him amusing presents ripped from Bayley's stock

latter category, I imagine, could be considered both true fan (by dint of continued fanac) and fake fan (by proclamation, at least — “it takes one to know one” carried to its absolute), so Tami can still qualify for joint status. If she wants to.

‘Regarding Lesley’s article: I never read Plato’s *Symposium* but from other texts I seem to recall my impression of Socrates was also that he was an asshole. I’m annoyed by the misuse of “it’s” and “its” (as Andy well knows from the early days, before I Gave Up), but I don’t think it’s something to get worked up over. Point it out and drop it. When I lived on The Farm, we had three considerations we were supposed to ponder about what we might say before speaking to someone in a situation: Was it kind? Was it necessary? Would it help? Only if the answer to all three was in the affirmative was it okay to proceed. (Would that all there actually lived up to this ideal.) I’ve tried to apply this to my participation in fandom this time around as much as possible.

‘With the youngest of my four sons to turn 21 on Christmas Day 1997, I can tell Christine Bzdawka that you are never completely free of “the shackles of parenthood,” as you put it, although you have choice after they come of age as to how much you want to continue the “attendant responsibilities” once you’re no longer legally bound. And just who *are* these mysterious but anonymous “chronically ill fans” to whom she refers, who are “without generous health insurance benefits” but who “manage to function”? A strange accusation.’

[APH: I don’t know where that typo originated, but let us assume it was me for the sake of general amity. Personally, it seems to me that anyone capable of carrying on a meaningful internal dialogue as to their fake/fringe/trufan status has already answered the question.

GEORGE FLYNN (P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Square Station, Cambridge, MA 02142) emerges from the whirl of Boskone:]

‘I managed to miss all the internet fooferaw about the British Corflu, and heard about the whole thing in conversation at Boskone. I was wondering how much explication there would be in Apak . . . I’m glad the matter appears to be settled.

‘Ted asks, “Where are the publishers of Fosfax and Lan’s Lantern?” Well, they’ve both been at Dittos, if not Corflus. (But the tendency toward polarization between Corflu and Ditto is a whole other depressing issue. Hmm, I wonder if an overseas Corflu might tend to increase attendance at that year’s Ditto.)

‘Hey, let’s have none of these aspersions on “low-class convention fans with their meeting minutes”: that sort of thing has accounted for most of my pubbing of late. Why, I just got out a 34-page set of minutes for the L.A.con Business Meeting. (Mind you, maybe about 7 pages of that are *my* words, the rest being the texts of motions and reports, most of which I could just stick in electronically: I’m not *totally* crazy.)

‘I recently did a *very* quick skim through the Lensmen novels to find suitably grandiose bits to quote in the Boskone Newsletter. Yes, Gordon’s “as involving as a cereal box” is about right. Two m’s in “Don D’Ammassa” (and I don’t care if that makes Lesley think I’m an asshole; actually, what really annoys Don is that Locus nearly always gets it wrong).’

[APH: I think our devotion of this entire issue to convention reports and ideas should make it clear that we don’t consider cons a less-worthy form of fanac. And now, TOM FELLER (P.O. Box 13626 Jackson, MS 39236) wonders why Corflu can’t be more congenial to the average fan:]

‘Thanks for sending the zine and to Ted White and Andy Hooper for their explanations of the Corflu voting process.

Where the bidding process is completely informal, I can see how misunderstandings arise.

‘Ted White argues that Corflu “should be drawing the sercon . . . fanzine fans as well. Where are the publishers of Fosfax and Lan’s Lantern?” I can’t speak for Lan, but I discussed attending the Nashville Corflu with the Fosfax gang. In both our cases, the date was a problem. It was the same weekend as a big Sherlock Holmes conference in Dayton, Ohio, that they like and only one week from a convention in Memphis that I attend every year.

‘We were also not sure whether the Nashville Corflu organizers wanted us to attend. All the information I could get on Corflu was second-hand. No one responded to the SFC Bulletin I sent them that listed the convention. They were not visible at the Kubla-Khan prior to Corflu, nor did they even leave flyers on the freebie table. Anita, my fiancée, is a Nashville fan, and the only reason she heard about the Nashville Corflu was through me. In other words, if the organizers don’t make an effort to make me feel wanted, why should I make an effort to attend? I don’t expect people to go around the country hosting Corflu room parties, but there are little things that can be done.’

[APH: Tom, Lucy Huntzinger did not promote Corflu to Nashville fandom because she assumed they would have no interest in it, and in general, I think she was right. For all that Dale Speirs’ comments on Corflu bordered on insult, he’s quite correct that it has little to offer to people looking for a typical sf con. I’m all for encouraging people to come to the convention, but I must admit that I don’t find Corflu to be broke, and thus feel no impetus to fix it. We can certainly try to choose the date that accommodates the most people, but there is a convention somewhere every weekend: at some point you just have to develop the desire to go to a convention all about fanzines, and make plans to be there even if Mr. Holmes calls the irregulars to muster.

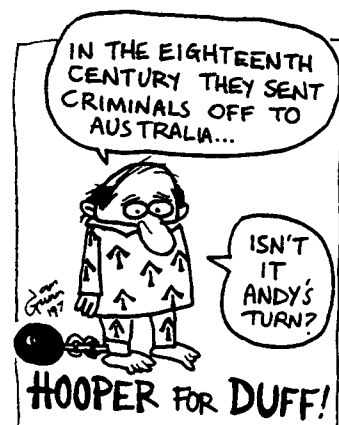
At the last second, here is a note from TED WHITE (1014 N. Tuckahoe, Falls Church, VA 22044, e-mail to Twhite@logotel.com) touching on some stuff mentioned earlier:]

‘I would like to get a minor clarification into #75: There is an awful typo (probably mine) in the opening line of my column in #74. To wit: It says “The event: Corflu 2.” Of course, as the date and the subsequent context makes clear, I am describing Corflu 1 — the FIRST Corflu. Ghod knows why I typed “2,” and I doubt even a fannish deity would know why I read past that “2” any number of times before noticing it with horror.

‘Anyway, a word to Randy Byers (whose recent publication about his travels with Tami Vining I really enjoyed): Fakefan is a term I first encountered in the early to mid-fifties, used to describe someone who wasn’t much (if at all) into science fiction, but, perhaps due to who he/she knew, was into fandom. In other words, a fakefan is a fan of fandom, but not of sf. Which may only underline his point.

[APH: As you say, I’m sure the identity of the convention in question was clear from context, Ted.

WAFH: Karen Babich, Elizabeth Garrett, Bill Humphries, Steve Jeffery and Dave Locke.]



“Whaddaya mean, diet? You were born fat, drink a soda like a person.”

1.) **Idea #10**, edited by Geri Sullivan, Toad Hall, 3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408-4315: I received more than 25 fanzines in the past three weeks, as well as the 40-zine February FAPA mailing. This is the best of the bunch. Probably the most remarkable thing about this 50-page issue is that Steve Stiles contributed every illustration that appears in it! His account of the abortive effort to return Lil' Abner to the comic pages of America, and the selection of sample strips he prepared are fascinating; his ability to reproduce the elements of Al Capp's style are extremely impressive. Mike Scott's quest for Pez collectibles, Sean Alan Wallace's intro to Ukrainian fandom, and Jeff Schalles' adventures in rock and roll drumming are also very good articles, but the topper is Kathy Routliffe's "My Trip to Jupiter." Kathy describes her experiences with mental illness in both unflinching and remarkably poetic, a piece that expresses the heights to which fan-writing can occasionally climb. And as always, Geri orchestrates a wonderful letter column. Time, I think, to make sure this fanzine makes the Hugo ballot this year . . .

2.) **Design for Life #1**, written and edited by Tommy Ferguson, 768 Manning Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6G 2W6 Canada: We've known that Tommy Ferguson can write for some time now, but it's still quite pleasing to see what he can do when he allows himself a little more room to work. In this first issue he covers his reasons for moving to Canada, his attitudes about sex and drink, some pretty hip music reviews, and an editorial suggesting what might actually be a revolutionary concept for many of us in fanzine fandom: that it might not be entirely appropriate for us to try and perpetuate fandom for generations yet to come. Empires fall, and civilizations vanish, and why should fandom be any different? A brief consideration of fan-nish gossip leads in to some level-headed thoughts on the TAFF crisis, and Tommy finishes the issue with a discussion of why he wanted to be Tom instead, and what this has to do with web-surfing. I quite liked this fanzine, and I am really looking forward to getting stuff from Mr. Ferguson at the speed of mere transcontinental mail service, rather than the standard for *inter*-continental delivery. Welcome to NAFTA-land, Tommy.

3.) **Plokta Vol. 2, #1**, edited by Steve Davies and Alison Scott, 42 Tower Hamlets Rd., Walthamstow, London E17 4RH UK: I sometimes get the feeling that reviewing or criticizing Plokta is really quite pointless. There is no other fanzine currently being published which achieves quite the same mix of delirium, hilarity and, well, techno-dweebiness. What does it really matter what I think or say about it? The Plokta cabal will go on having fun just the same. People seem to have had a little trouble grasping this at first, but the lettercolumn features many responses made in the same spirit as the articles and fanzine they comment on, so we seem to be catching up after all. This issue's highlight is probably Alison's account of the vagaries of having sex during her pregnancy, plus some speculation on the best recipes for serving placenta. Oh, and I was also quite amused by "Dr. Plokta's Justice League of Fandom," which

proposes a super-powered alter-ego for various cabal members and hangers-on, illustrated by the fluid pen of Sue Mason. Actually, I liked just about everything in this issue, even "Ask Dr. Plokta." You have no idea how thoroughly this frustrates me.

4.) **Oblong #5**, edited by Bruce Townley, 1732 Washington St. #8, San Francisco, CA 94109-3825: Bruce seems to have shifted into a slightly higher gear here, and this issue of Oblong is the best I've seen so far. The cover illustration of the late Jack Nance as he appeared in *Eraserhead* is quite appropriately unnerving — the eyes seem to follow me around the room, like the picture of the front of a bottle of Newman's Own salad dressing . . . Al Hoff's column "Pittsburgh: Don't Park Where You See a Chair" is a suitably silly lead, while Bruce's collection of responses to a bibliophilic questionnaire he sent out to friends by e-mail is likely to produce a lot of mail commenting on similar concerns. His slightly-jaundiced take on a ballgame at Candlestick Park (TRY to make me call it 3Com, I invite you) hit just right tone of wonder and disdain. A brief but pithy lettercol, hand-written fanzine reviews on the back cover (a case of parallel invention, I'm sure) and thoughts on movies and the MST3K episode a very entertaining issue. And where *does* one find Mr. T. rubber stamps, anyway, Bruce?

5.) **Raw Goof #1**, written and edited by Bill Bodden, 2717 Stevens St., Madison, WI 53705: A friendly yellow perzine from a long-time Madison Apa-hacker. Bill has been planning to issue a perzine for a long time, but as this issue attests, various things have gotten in the way. In the past year, he's been recovering from the effects of surgery to remove a large lipoma, so it is especially nice to see this issue from him, as perhaps it is a sign that his life has returned to normal, whatever that may be for Bill. Attractive illos by Stu Shiffman, John Kovalic and Chloe decorate the issue, produced with the mimeo expertise of Jae Leslie Adams. Bill's softball stories had a familiar ring to me, and filled me with anticipation of meeting him once again on the field of Corflu. Maybe the next issue will explain just how far he managed to hit my pitches . . .

Also Received: Wallbanger #16, Eve Harvey; Stairway to Cleveland #4, Marc Ortlieb; Götterdämmerung #9, Mark McCann, et al; Ansible #115, Dave Langford; Mark's Soup-Pot, Mark Maning; Lettersub #13, Terry Broome; Welcome to the Year of the Cow, Judith Hanna; Emerald City #18, Cheryl Morgan; Pinkette #15f, Karen Pender-Gunn; The Space Cadet Gazette #7, R. Graeme Cameron; Canadian Journal of Detournement #17 & Opuntia #30-31, Dale Speirs; The Reluctant Famulus #47, Tom Sadler; Gradient #15 & Visions of Paradise, Bob Sabella; Centerrifical Tales #3, Kevin Welch; Brum Group News #301-305, Martin Tudor for the BSFG; Situation Normal?? Vol. 8, #2, Aileen Forman for Snaffu; Vanamonde #198, John Hertz; Duff Talk-About #3, Pat & Roger Sims; De Profundis #297, Tim Merrigan for the LASFS; all of these are reviewed on our web site at <http://www.oz.net/~cjuarez/APAK>

— Andy Hooper

APPARATCHIK is the Steve Trout of fandom, a pitcher of middling-ability who has not played in the majors since 1990, and is attempting a comeback at age 39. Someone needs to point out to Mr. Trout what a difficult task he has set himself — after all, this is baseball we're talking about, not boxing. For readers in the United Kingdom, Martin Tudor will accept £10.00 for an annual subscription, £19.37 for a lifetime sub, from 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Off Clarke's Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX, UK. Australian readers can subscribe through Irwin Hirsh, 26 Jessamine Ave., East Prahran, Victoria 3181 Australia, for \$4.50, \$17.00 and \$28.09 Australian. Lifetime subscribers: Harry Andruschak, John Bangsund, Tom Becker, Judy Bemis, Tracy Benton, Bill Bodden, Richard Brandt, Steve Brewster, Chris Bzdawka, Vince Clarke, Scott Custis, John Dallman, Bruce Durocher, Don Fitch, Jill Flores, Ken Forman, Ian Hagemann, Margaret Organ Kean, John Hertz, Lucy Huntzinger, Nancy Lebovitz, Robert Lichtman, Michelle Lyons, Luke McGuff, A.P. McQuiddy, Janice Murray, Tony Parker, Greg Pickersgill, Mark Plummer, Barnaby Rapoport, Michael Rawdon, Alan Rosenthal, Anita Rowland, Karen Schaffer, Ruth & Rickey Shields, Leslie Smith, Nevenah Smith, Dale Speirs, Candi Strecker, Geri Sullivan, Alva Svoboda, Steve Swartz, David Thayer, Howard Waldrop, Tom Whitmore and Art Widner.