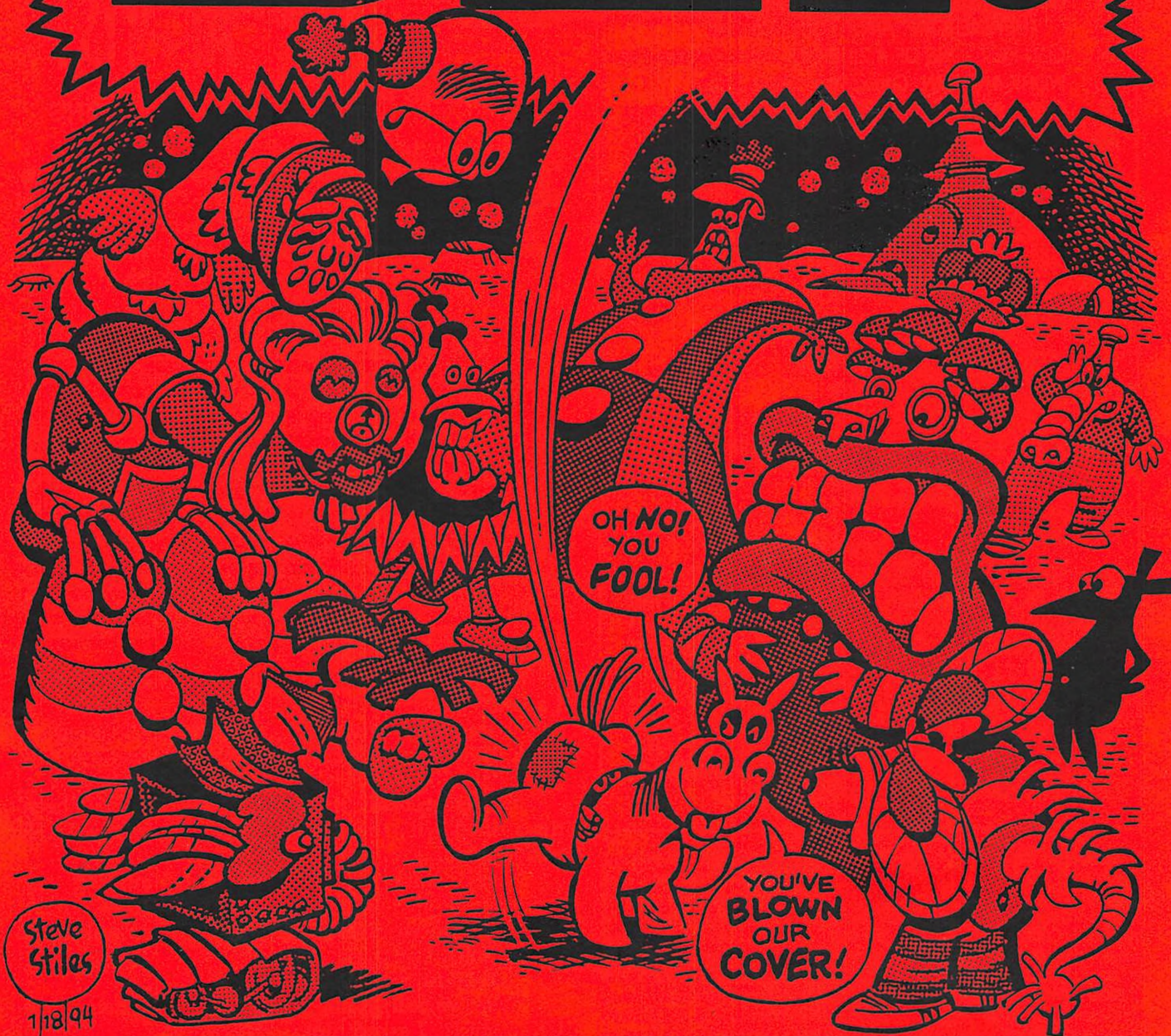


# BLAT!



Steve  
Stiles

1/18/94





*What if there were no hypothetical questions?*

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**TAFF INFECTION (Part One)** I'd been thinking about it for quite a while and finally, last fall, after hearing all the stories of fun at the Worldcon in San Francisco, I made my decision. Sorta. I decided that I would stand as a candidate for TAFF — the TransAtlantic Fan Fund. Maybe. Possibly.

A couple of days later I visited my co-editor at his mountain-top estate, Castle Venom. Ted had just finished his afternoon chores — the usual stuff: disemboweling kittens, selling battery acid down by the playground, reviewing fanzines, kidnapping and torturing unsuspecting civil servants, etc. — when I brought up the subject of TAFF.

"TAFF is a fine old fannish institution," he told me. "It was started as a campaign to bring Walt Willis over here to the Chicago Worldcon in 1952."

"I know that," I replied. "But, technically, wasn't TAFF started *after* Willis discovered America?"

"Well, yes," he humphed. "Technically, you're right. Technically, TAFF was created by Willis and Don Ford a couple years after the success of 'WAW With the Crew in '52.' What's your point?"

"Nothing really," I answered weakly. "It's just, well, TAFF was started as a means to help pay for a trip overseas for some deserving (but poor) fan, right?"

Ted was momentarily distracted by the whimpering noises that seemed to be coming from a large wicker basket in the corner; a basket that was pierced many times by many swords. "Uh-huh," he answered, leaning hard on one of the swords. "Damned Southern fans," he grumbled. "Travel was prohibitively expensive in those days," he continued, "and a fund was the only way that a respected fan like Willis could ever make it over here for Worldcon. It was a damned good idea and it caught on. After Walt's trip it quickly became a perennial event."

"Do you think TAFF is still a valid fannish idea?" I asked.

"Sure," Ted answered confidently. "Though I think the Brits are a little weary of most American fans these days."

"That's probably true," I whined. "They've been dissatisfied with the social skills of American TAFF winners for a long time. They. . ."

"They don't drink?" Ted said, finishing my thought.

"It's been years since an American has puked on British soil," I quipped.

"Or British shoes," Ted added.

"But I've still got a pretty good reputation in the UK, don't I?" I asked him.

"I don't know," he thought out loud. "Have you

# BULLSHIT ARTIST

## DANOTATIONS

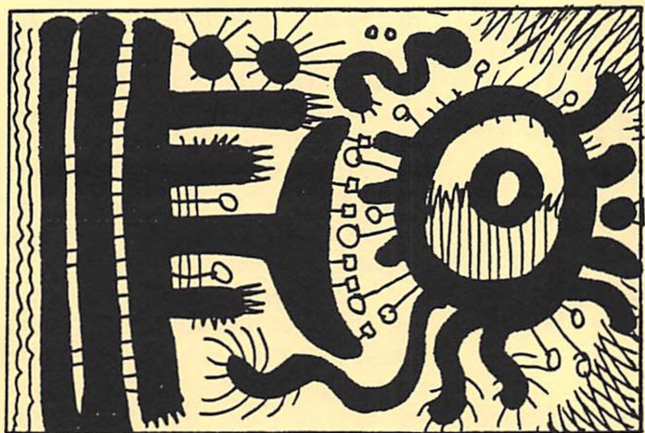


ever vomited on anybody's shoes but mine?"

"That's not what I meant," I scolded. "I'm talking about TAFF."

"Are you thinking of running for TAFF?" he asked, turning away from the Trekkie Pinata he'd been whacking with a baseball bat.

"Yeah, I guess I am," I replied thoughtfully. "Lynn and I would really like to go to the Scottish Worldcon in Glasgow, but there's no way we could



ever afford to pay both of our expenses. We could probably afford for one of us to go, but that wouldn't be any fun, would it? So I thought I would run for TAFF to pay for my expenses and then pay for Lynn out of savings.

"Sounds like a plan," Ted agreed. "Now all you have to do is WIN."

"Sigh," I sighed.

A few days later I telephoned Jeanne Bowman, the current American TAFF administrator. I wanted to ask her some basic questions about running and such, but more importantly, I needed to find out about the schedule for the next race. Technically, the race was due to send a deserving American over to the UK in 1994. That meant that the '95 campaign would bring a UK fan over here, which would completely circumvent the Glasgow convention — which didn't make much sense to me.

My talk with Jeanne cleared things up immediately. She told me that she and Abbie Frost had decided that there would be no TAFF race in '94; they agreed that sending an American to Scotland in 1995 was a better idea than the original trans-Atlantic schedule. Instead they planned to take a year off and use the extra time to fortify the fund's bank account, drum up some new enthusiasm in the fannish ranks and find a couple of good candidates.

When I reported back to Ted with the results of my conversation he seemed pleased that the TAFF administrators had shown such cleverness. "I'll be glad to be one of your nominators," he said hopefully.

"I'll get back to you," I told him. I still wasn't sure I wanted to take the plunge. I knew that winning TAFF and going to Glasgow was the easy part of the job. After the trip was over, after the rolls of film have

been developed, after the lawsuits had died down, I would be left with the odious task of paper shuffling and fund raising. I would be the TAFF administrator for the next two years. Did I really want to become a bureaucrat after all these years of wild hedonism? Did I really want to exchange my charter membership in the Couch Potatoes of America to become the poster boy for fannish deportation?

I decided to ask my friends.

"Personally, I think you're bonkers for even considering running for TAFF," was Greg Pickersgill's reaction, when I wrote to him. "Mind you," he continued, "you should bear in mind that I am hardly known as a great enthusiast for TAFF, having thought for years that it no longer fulfills its initial purpose."

I was not encouraged by this response. Greg had won TAFF in 1986 and had had a whirlwind tour of the states, including a couple days at our house in Washington, DC — during which he visited a local correctional facility, heard some live rock 'n' roll and, yes, threw up in our bathroom — and, I thought, generally enjoyed himself. I couldn't help but wonder if I should take heed of his cynicism and forget my plans.

But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that I *was* standing for TAFF for all the right reasons. I am a well-known fanzine fan and fanartist, a former Hugo nominee, publisher and editor of a whole mess of high quality fanzines — *Boonfark*, *Pong*, *Science Fiction Eye*, and now *BLAT!* — and, there was no way I could afford the trip without the fund. Isn't that the "initial purpose" of TAFF? Further along in Greg's letter came my answer: "I certainly think that [despite my reservations] if TAFF is going to continue then it's persons like yourself that should be winning it."

Alright. Yeah. I can handle a couple years of bookkeeping in the name of fannish good fellowship. I can be fandom's Ambassador to Scotland. Yes, I'm sure of it. I can do it. I can travel overseas and be just as goddamned grumpy as any British TAFF winner. I can complain about the food and the beer. Just watch me.

So, with Pickersgill's -er- encouragement, I started writing other English fans for advice and nominations. 1980 TAFF winner Dave Langford considered his options and agreed to nominate me because of my sensitive fannish face, my cosmic mind, my drinking skills, and because "[You know] too many of my dark 1970s secrets and that the only way to prevent their cruel publication in *BLAT!* is to buy [you] off with a TAFF nomination."

Finally, if I had any doubts left, I got another piece of mail that solidified my purpose. Walt Willis, the guy who started it all, agreed to be one of my nominators for the 1995 TAFF race. I knew I wasn't gonna do any better than that. I had covered the whole spectrum of UK fanzine fandom — from Pickersgill to Langford to Willis — and they all seemed to think my candidacy was a good idea. Who was I to argue with them?

When I asked noted hermit and 1979 TAFF winner



Terry Hughes what he thought of my candidacy he looked down from high atop his nose and laughed. "I thought you should have run for TAFF years ago," he replied. "But don't ask me to be one of your nominators. No sir. I've worked long and hard at becoming a fannish has-been. Nobody even remembers my name anymore," he said proudly. "But I still think it would be a good idea: if you run for TAFF. At least now they'll have somebody who'll stay up all night drinking with them."

"Well," I hesitated, "I'm not sure I could drink with them ALL night. I'm not as young as I used to be."

"No, no," Terry said, "I was talking about your wife, Lynn. Surely *she* will be able to stay up all night with them. No matter how old *you* are. . . ." I had to agree. Running for TAFF would be an excellent opportunity for me to, once again, use my lovely wife to make up for my many shortcomings. Hell, if they get her loaded she'll even show them her tattoos.

Now all I needed was a couple more stateside nominations (besides my co-editor, of course) and my fate would be sealed. There was no backing out now.

**TAFF INFECTION (Part Two)** In early March of this year, Andy Hooper started publishing an ensmallled, weekly, elitist fanzine called *Apparatchik* for the purpose of discussing various topics of serious fannish import. A lot of the first issue concerned itself with the future of TAFF, and mentioned (in passing) Andy's interest in standing for the next TAFF race. However, Andy seemed even more skeptical about it than I was and, in the course of his ruminations on things TAFFish, raised a couple of excellent questions about the fund. Questions I think I can answer.

"What can [be done] about the fact that there is apparently no fan in North America that anyone in British Fandom would like to meet?" Andy asked.

A valid question, I thought, but not one that really applies to me. My encounters with British Fandom go back to the mid-1970s. As the captive staff artist for Terry Hughes' *Mota*, I made many acquaintances in British Fandom and drew a lot of covers for British fanzines. Through my association with Terry I met and partied with fans like Peter Roberts, Rob Jackson, Kevin Smith, Ian Maule and Malcolm Edwards. "If they were still active in fandom you'd be a shoe-in," teased my wife, looking over my shoulder.

Then in the 1980s — the *Pong* decade — my relationship with Britfans really blossomed and I made many friends over there. "Some of whom are still alive and breathing," added Lynn.

During the '80s many travelling Brits made visits to Fabulous Falls Church Fandom: Malcolm Edwards, Christine Atkins, Avedon (just kidding), Rob Hansen,



Harry Bell, Jim Barker and, of course, the previously mentioned Mr. Pickersgill. "I think the last four have all thrown up at our house," Lynn commented. "There's no way they wouldn't want to extend the same privilege to you." (It's so helpful having a live-in cheerleader.)

Andy's next question was harder. "What can [be done] to correct the impression that most British fans would rather be torn apart with dental tools than attend an American Worldcon?" Andy offered two suggestions: Open TAFF up to the hoary masses of Fandom At Large or admit to TAFF's elitist base and forget about the pretense of the fund's universal appeal.

I considered the options. Opening the race up to the unwashed masses wasn't going to accomplish anything. The candidates would

only become more obscure and the hosts would become even more hostile. Sure, there would probably be a lot more money floating around, but do we really want to substitute money for friends? I don't think the Brits would be any happier to have an unknown fan visitor amongst them, even if he did fly first class and stay in a hotel suite — instead of sleeping on Rob and Avedon's couch.

Andy's second suggestion wouldn't work either. While it may look good on paper, I think it would end up alienating fans from the process. There are already too many cliques and too much regional insulation in fanzine fandom as it is. Narrowing the scope of TAFF would only serve to piss off some BillyBob who feels that *his* camp in the Ozarks is where Trufandom really is, not in the big cities like Possum Gulch and Glen Ellen. That would only create animosity which would, in the long run, lead to poorer relations between all fans. And as one of our late, great Presidents once said, "That would be wrong."

It seems to me that the real reason to stand for TAFF is to have fun. Isn't that why fans brought Walt Willis to Chicago in 1952 and 1962? Isn't that why any of us would want to meet a fan from overseas? Isn't that why I want to run for TAFF?

I think that coming to the US is particularly hard for most UK fans. The country is so damned huge and the fans are spread out so far apart. (Remember, you can drive across England in less than a day.) It must be really disorienting to find oneself dropped into the middle of such vastness. A TAFF delegate to the US spends a lot of time just travelling from city to city, all the while trying to hang onto some semblance of their ego and personality while, at the same time, trying to cope with the next batch of Big Ol' Yanks that are waiting at the airport. Their only real link is fandom and, as we all know, that can often be a Missing Link. They never know who they're gonna meet or what they're



expected to do. Eventually they wind up at an enormous American Worldcon and a sea of faceless people who have, with maybe one or two hundred exceptions, have never ever heard of them, or TAFF. Jeez, I'd prefer dental surgery to that, too.

Obviously this wouldn't be a problem for me — I'm gregarious and like crowds. I am standing for TAFF because I want to go to the Worldcon in Scotland. I want to see the old castles and the old fans. The UK is a relatively small place, which makes a TAFF trip over there much easier to deal with. I couldn't travel for days if I tried. That intimacy is part of the appeal of the trip and part of the reason I want to enter the TAFF race. I want to spend some time in London and maybe a few days in Ireland. I want to make new friends and to renew old acquaintances. I want to puke on Harry Bell's shoes.

This is a simple dream, but it is my own. It is why I am entering the race. Other people's expectations have *nothing* to do with it.

If I win a TAFF trip to Intersection in Scotland I will do everything in my power to make sure that I have a lot of fun. I will go out of my way to make sure my British hosts have a lot of fun. I will pursue TAFF's "initial purpose" with vigor and humor and, when it's all over, I'll do whatever it takes to make sure that future TAFF delegates have as good a time as I did. Otherwise, what's the point?

Life is about choices and I am making my choices right now; right at the beginning. I choose to stand for TAFF. The rest of the choices are up to you. You can choose to vote for me or for Andy Hooper or for nobody. Either way: Let's put the Fun back in the Fund.

**TAFF INFECTION (Part Three)** The first two parts of this article were written for a small fanzine called *Group Mind*, that was handed out at this year's SilverCon in Las Vegas. I wrote them for several reasons: To address some of the noteworthy points of discussion raised in *Apparatchik* and to announce my intention to stand for the next TAFF race. I felt fairly certain that there was nothing in *this* issue of *Group Mind* that would upset anyone — I definitely didn't want a repeat of the controversy that accompanied the fanzine's first issue.

When we checked into the hotel on Friday I unpacked the pile of *Group Minds* and put most of them out in the empty fanroom, kept a few for myself, and gave the rest of them to Ted to pass out as he saw fit. When I walked into the Katz's suite, a short while later, the first thing I saw was Andy Hooper sitting off to one side of the room reading the fanzine — Andy was one

of the first people Ted gave a copy to — his face looked tight and angry; there seemed to be a dark cloud hanging over his head. Oh Shit, I thought, I've done it again.

But Andy and I are friends and I decided not to let my paranoia get the better of me. I walked over to where he was sitting and slapped him on the back and asked him what he thought of our fanzine. His face remained tight, but I didn't let that alter my warm feelings for him. I didn't want to get into a big hassle with Andy, far from it, I just wanted to have some fun and, if possible, go to the Scottish worldcon in 1995. Unbeknownst to me, Andy felt exactly the same way. Apparently, his expression of interest in *Apparatchik*, about standing for TAFF, was more serious than I had realized and, in fact, he had already decided to enter the race. Suddenly, I had gone from being a comrade-in-arms to being an opponent. I *had* done it again. Fortunately, Andy is a pretty reasonable guy and — though he was obviously a little pissed off — he didn't want any bad blood between us either, and we did our best to discuss things TAFFish in a friendly manner.

"Good luck finding nominators in the UK," he told me.

"But I've already got my UK nominators," I answered.

"Who?" Andy asked.

"Uh," I replied snappily. "Well, Walt Willis for one."

"What?" Andy seemed surprised. "I've got Willis as a nominator."

"You do?" Now it was *my* turn to be surprised.

"When did he nominate you?" Andy asked, his face getting tight again.

"Er, um, November or December," I answered, not being too sure of my dates.

"Ahh," Andy replied, his face softening again. "He nominated me last May."

"He did?" I said, feeling a bit foolish. "Well, I guess you've got seniority then."

"Walt must have forgotten," Andy said reassuringly.

"Well, I guess it's a good thing I had three nominators," I said, explaining that I'd gotten the TAFF rules all mixed up and thought I needed three supporters in the host country, instead of two.

"Who's that," asked The Starlighter.

"Pickersgill and Langford," I said, hoping to avoid another coincidence. When Andy said nothing I let loose a sigh of relief. I was safe. As our conversation continued we realized that we shared a lot of the same ideas about the TAFF race and that it would be awfully foolish for us to be





anything but friendly rivals. Of course, while we did acknowledge that a close race between us might split up the votes and result in an Eliot Shorter-type victory for a dark-horse third party, we decided to pool our efforts, anyway. We talked about doing mutual mailings — maybe even a mutual TAFF fanzine — and, finally, to be one of each other's nominators in the US. After that we spent the rest of the weekend partying and getting sercon. TAFF was hardly mentioned again.

Other than that, the reaction to my decision to stand for TAFF has been overwhelmingly positive — even from cranky, old cynics like Pickersgill. Bill Rotsler has shown his support by drawing a couple thousand Steffan-for-TAFF cartoons, while others have promised their votes in exchange for just the bare minimum of sexual favors. Those I've contacted in Britain have been very supportive, though they've complained bitterly that my winning would mean that they'd actually *have* to attend the damned worldcon. (Which is, apparently, a more expensive proposition in the UK, than it will be for those of us who would be coming across The Pond.) So far, nobody (except, of course, for Pickersgill) has told me I am out of my tiny mind for wanting to become the next TAFF Guy — though there is always a chance that somebody like Chuck Connor will go after me, just to be contrary. If you know what I mean. . . .

Beyond that, Andy and I have decided to cool our jets for a while. So far TAFF administrators Jeanne Bowman and Abi Frost haven't set an opening date for the race, and we don't want to do anything to intimidate or antagonize them. The race, after all, is in their hands and we really couldn't or shouldn't get too far into it before they are ready for us. Nonetheless, plans are afoot for fundraising and hellraising and, before long, you will all have a chance to get good and tired of Andy and me, or, as we are calling ourselves: The TAFFat Boys.

Watch the skies for further details.

**BABY SEAL HUNT: An Update** The response to my editorial last issue, about Harlan Ellison, was impressive. In fact, it may have been the most commented upon piece in the whole fanzine. I was gratified by all the compliments about my prose and bolstered by the consensus of opinion. Everyone seemed to agree that Harlan's performance on the Tom Snyder program was outside the bounds of good taste and did far more damage to him than it did to Andy Porter. In fact, I am told, the response to *SF Chronicle's* Hugo Award victory in San Francisco was so overwhelming that you'd think Andy had won the World Cup, instead of a silly, ol' Hugo. My spies

informed me that the applause was deafening.

Undoubtedly, some of the reaction was because of Hugo-voter backlash against *Locus's* tedious monopoly over the awards, but the rest of it was definitely a show of support for Andy — sf fandom's own Baby Seal. Rumor has it that Harlan was infuriated by Andy's Hugo victory and took many opportunities to further abuse him during his appearances at the con.

Naturally, Mr. Ellison did not respond to my comments last issue — though I feel certain that he saw them — nor did I really expect him to. In fact, I had hoped that he would *not* respond. Frankly, I didn't want to try and deal with an angry, bitter, temper tantrum from him. I knew that I couldn't compete with Harlan's superior command of the English language and would lose any argument I might have with him — no matter how right I might be. I did not

want to have to compromise my honest reactions to his comments, just to get off the phone with my eardrums intact.

What I had hoped for, really, was a moment of calm reflection on Harlan's part. I had hoped that maybe he would acknowledge his fucked-up behavior and make amends with Andy. I hoped that somehow Harlan would realize what a fool he'd made of himself and respond with the kind of generosity he is occasionally known for. At the very least, I had hoped that he'd give his crusade a rest and move on to his next victim. And for a while it

looked like he had. Reports from ConFrancisco confirmed that NESFA had become his latest whipping boy, for publishing a Cordwainer Smith story that he'd been sitting on for 20 years. But apparently that was only a passing fancy.

The other night Harlan made yet another appearance, of sorts, on the Tom Snyder Show and once again his topic of discussion was Andy Porter, though he didn't mention him by name this time. Lynn and I happened to be watching the program that night because Snyder had replaced the show we usually watch in that timeslot — there had been a fire in the network's New Jersey studios that afternoon which effectively cancelled all their programming, except ol' Tom from the West Coast. Snyder had been on the air for several hours by the time he got around to Harlan, who had apparently been contacted by Tom's producers to help fill all that dead airtime.

They'd called him up and begged him to come down to the studio to give his old pal a hand, but Harlan was feeling ill that day and begged off. Out of desperation Tom had to settle for a phone call from Harlan's sickbed.

They spent most of the short interview talking about the pinched nerve in his leg and an amusing





story about Harlan's misadventures on a mystery cruise, that ended with his comment that "I shouldn't be let out in public."

A short time later, after plugging a book, Tom and Harlan once again went to the well.

"You know, the last time I was on your show I got in such trouble," Harlan began, "major, major trouble with you."

"Oh, was this when you talked about the guy?" Tom asked.

"Yeah, you know, you know — nobody understood," Harlan replied. "What happened was, you blindsided me with the quote. The quote was a terrific quote, 'Ellison burns his bridges before he gets to them.' And you said, 'this New York critic' and I thought, well, this is going to be great. You know, who said this? Somebody from *The New Yorker*? Somebody from *The New York Times*? And you mentioned this guy and this guy has been a life-long enemy of mine."

"I know," Tom replied with a huge grin. "He hates you, Harlan."

"I mean, it was just like, like spring loaded. I said all manner of strange things," Harlan said sheepishly, almost apologetically. "So, now, get this. About three, four months ago I get a call from editor of *Penthouse* magazine and he says, 'We're coming up on our 25th Anniversary Issue and we want you to do an article about the 25 worst people of the last 25 years, and. . .'"

"Yeah," interrupted Snyder, "I'll bet you put him in there, didn't you?"

". . . and I'm . . . I'm . . ." Harlan sputtered. "Will you stop killing my punchline," he said, getting a little hot under the collar.

"I'm trying to get this thing over within 20 seconds," replied Tom, matter-of-factly.

"Oh, that's alright," Harlan answered, his voice getting small and a little hurt. "Just say goodbye. I'll see you later."

"I'll see you later," Tom said flatly.

"Alright, bye," said Harlan, his voice almost too low to hear.

"Take care," Tom said. "Good night, Harlan, and feel better, okay? Bye-bye."

"Yeah, I will. Bye, Tom," replied Harlan, also in a flat voice, adding, "Who was that man?"

Tom finished up by saying that Harlan could finish his story the next time he was on the show and went to commercial. I turned to my wife and she just shook her head in disbelief.

"Jesus, this guy just doesn't know when to quit, does he," said Lynn.

"I guess Andy was right," I answered. "He really does burn his bridges. This was a perfect opportunity for him to make up for his awful faux pas from last time. But apparently, he just can't let go of something like this, no matter how dumb it is."

"And now he's going to compound it all by writing about Andy in *Penthouse*," she said incredulously. "Is he really that crazy?"

"Apparently he is," I told her. "It seems that he

just won't let the truth get in his way, when it comes to things like this."

"It's like a misinformation campaign," Lynn continued. "Like the Pentagon does to cover up things like 'Friendly Fire' or \$900 toilet seats. It makes no sense."

"Sounds to me like he needs a Spin Doctor, instead of a doctor for his leg," I added.

"And Andy needs a damned good lawyer," Lynn replied. "Especially if Harlan *does* write about him in that article."

Later, when I reviewed the tape, I realized that there was a lot of misinformation in Harlan's little recapping of his "trouble" on last summer's Snyder show. For instance, on that show Snyder never said anything about a New York critic. What he, in fact, did say was, "You probably know this fella . . . the fella who said, 'Harlan Ellison burns his bridges before he crosses them.' This man is Andy Porter, the editor of. . ." That's all. Before Tom could continue, before he could even say the name of Andy's magazine, Harlan launched into his attack with the classic line, "Andy Porter? That simpering bag of monkey-nuts!" And the rest is history.

Now I do give Harlan some credit for acknowledging that Andy's quote was "terrific," and that he had just gone off and said "all manner of strange things" about Andy, but that still doesn't make up for his rudeness, bad manners and general overkill. And for Harlan to even consider continuing his campaign against Andy in print, in *Penthouse*, is just plain nutso. What can he possibly hope to gain by doing such a thing? Does he really believe that he can warp the truth by repeating his paranoid fantasies over and over again? Does he really believe that Andy Porter has been his "life-long enemy?" Does Harlan really believe that Andy has some kind of magical power over his career? Andy Porter?

Shit. My wife is right. Andy Porter needs a damned good lawyer.

And Harlan needs a long rest somewhere quiet.

**A SPRIG OF ROSEMARY** The phone rang about ten o'clock Monday morning and I (for remembrance) stumbled out of bed to answer

it. Our phone is located in the kitchen, and reaching it before it stops ringing usually means a mad, sleepy-eyed dash for the receiver. This morning was particularly bad. It was only two days after Christmas and Lynn and I had been taking advantage of her holiday vacation by staying up *Much Too Late*. Fortunately, I got to it in time.

"Dan, Dan," said the voice on the phone. I immediately recognized it as Frank Lunney's. He sounded stressed.

"Frank, what's going on?"

"The worst possible thing has happened," he answered. Immediately, my mind started racing and I suddenly felt a lot more awake. The worst possible thing? What did he mean?

"Catherine's dead," he said.



I let out a loud, "WHAT?" Loud enough to bring Lynn charging out of the bedroom.

"Catherine's dead," he repeated. "She died at four o'clock this morning. She died in my arms."

I didn't know how to reply, except to mouth the words "Catherine's dead!" to Lynn as she entered the kitchen. As I spoke, she raised her hand to her mouth in disbelief, tears welling in her eyes.

"Dan, she begged me not to let her die," Frank said softly.

In 1971, when I first heard about Catherine Jackson, she had a completely different name. Her name was Cathy Canfield, and she was married to the hottest new fanartist in fandom, Grant Canfield. We had gotten to know each other after I had written to Grant for some cartoons to print in my first genzine, *Lizard Inn*. Grant had replied generously, (I distinctly remember opening his manila envelope and the feeling of real joy I got from seeing the drawings for the first time) and, much to my surprise and delight, our correspondence — after a rocky start — grew into a genuine friendship. His letters to me always mentioned Cathy; sometimes it was only a passed-on greeting, but before long I felt like I was getting to know her, too — though she probably didn't even know I existed. I was really in awe of Grant's talents and lifestyle. He was six years older than I was, drew like a pro, and lived in San Francisco with a beautiful woman — what more could a man want?

By the next year, even though we'd never met, Grant was one of my best friends in fandom. He contributed regularly to my fanzines (both art and writing) and, when he started publishing his zine *Waste Paper*, I returned the favor. Occasionally, when I was beside myself with boredom, I would call Casa Canfield for a little bit of relief. Cathy usually answered the phone and always seemed genuinely glad to hear from me — even though I was almost a complete stranger to her. And a teenaged stranger at that. Nonetheless, her voice was always warm and friendly.

(In later years, I realized that she was that way with everyone she met. When you talked to her she always looked you straight in the eyes and always made you feel like she appreciated every word you were saying, even when you were speaking nonsense — which happens to be my speciality. Catherine had the ability to make people feel important, even if they were meeting her for the first time. I often marvelled at her warmth, and her willingness to pass it on to somebody who needed it. She gave GREAT hug.)

In the summer of 1973, I flew out to San Francisco to attend my first Westercon and, more importantly, to meet Grant and Catherine (she'd recently taken advantage of a new job to begin using her full name). I was excited about meeting them, and a little nervous, too. I wasn't sure that they'd like me in the flesh — of which I had more than my share. They were older and hipper than I was, and I was certain they'd be repulsed by me. (Yeah, I had a *slight* image problem — wanna make something of it?) Fortunately, they

were not. Grant and I got along famously and cemented a friendship that has lasted more than twenty years.

I visited their apartment on Atalaya Terrace a couple of times that week. My admiration for their lifestyle turned to envy when I saw the place. It was, to my naive, upstate New York eyes, the perfect San Francisco apartment. Catherine had filled it with comfortable furniture and antiques that suited the place's Victorian/hippie flavor. Off the kitchen, Grant had a whole room for a studio, with french doors and lots of light. Books and comics were everywhere. Catherine cheerfully fed me supper and passed me a joint for dessert. I was in heaven.

Our next meeting took place a couple of months later in Toronto, at Torcon 2, that year's worldcon. I'd travelled to the con in the company of Jay Kinney and Frank Lunney — who were also cultivating budding friendships with Grant and Catherine — and finding them was our first order of business. When we did bump into each other, we renewed our friendship and spent most of our time together. Except for the afternoon the Canfields borrowed my car for a trip to Niagara Falls, we were inseparable.

Various fans from both coasts gathered at that convention and formed a fannish gang (of sorts) that was based on mutual interests — like fanzines, rock and roll, and dope. This gang included the five of us, as well as: John Berry, Terry Hughes, rich brown, Colleen Brown, alpajpuri, Jeff Schalles, Ted and Robin White, Chris Couch, Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell, Will Straw, Dave Hulvey, Brad Balfour, Eileen, Richard Sneed, Neal Goldfarb and several others. Amazingly, most of those folks — except for the couples — slept in my hotel room during the con, as I had the only reservation. By the second day of the convention, we had all bonded into a powerful and fannishly influential Group Mind, that lasted throughout the weekend and is, for many of us, still intact today.

Grant was nominated for his first Fanartist Hugo that year, and we all sat together during the awards so we could cheer him on. Catherine sat between Grant and me and happily acted as the conduit for our snide remarks and rude comments. When Tim Kirk was announced as the Hugo winner in the Fanartist category, she comforted Grant and told him that there was always next year. Surely he'd win next year. (Little did she, or anyone for that matter, realize that this was just the first of Grant's six consecutive losses.) Her compassion was palpable. And a short time later I had the opportunity to experience a little bit of it myself.

Bill Rotsler was the Fan GoH that year and his speech was a rousing pep rally for fanartists. As I recall, he talked about the great wave of new talents that had come into fanzines in the past couple of years, and singled out Grant and Tim for well deserved praise. But then he did a truly astonishing thing; he mentioned *my* name. He said that I, along with Jay Kinney and Ken Fletcher, and a few others, were young and talented and the future of fanart. We were Artists to Watch Out For.



I was stunned. Nobody had ever mentioned my name from a podium before. And then to add, in front of a couple thousand people, that I had talent. . . . I was beyond stunned. I sat there with my mouth hanging open and all the blood in my body rushing towards my head. I turned to Catherine with a look of total disbelief and she, in return, put her arms around me and gave me a little hug and a pat on the back.

"Da-an!" she said enthusiastically, splitting my name into two syllables. You'd have thought that I'd just won something. She had instinctively picked up on my joy — understanding that this kind of public affirmation was a rare and magical thing for me.

"Gee," I said to her, "maybe this means that someday even I'll win a *Hogu*." Catherine just nodded and patted my back again, ignoring that I was so flustered that I'd mispronounced the name of the award. Wow.

I guess it was right there, sitting in that auditorium in Toronto, that I fell a little bit in love with her. And now I *really* was in awe of Grant.

I didn't see the Canfields again for a couple of years after that — I was busy working construction and struggling through art school — but did manage to continue our sporadic correspondence.

In 1974, I moved to the Washington, DC area in time to attend the local worldcon, Discon 2. Grant and Catherine couldn't attend the worldcon that year for financial reasons, which had also kept me from making it to that year's Westercon. The 1975 Worldcon was in Australia, which meant that nobody went away for Labor Day — except John D. "Itchy Feet" Berry, that is.

The next meeting of the Group Mind was in Kansas City in 1976. Most of the 1973 participants put in an appearance that year, including the Canfields, and it very quickly became one of those conventions that passes into legend. When I close my eyes now, I see memory bites of Catherine and Ted dancing to the hotel band at dinner one night; being barred from an elevator by the GoH's Dorsai goonsquad; Frank Lunney quacking at people in costumes; doing Whippets during the Hugo Awards; Ted passing out in his pizza from the Quaalude that Frank had talked him into taking; Heinlein demanding a blood donation in exchange for his autograph; Mark Kernes and the *Boo-Hoo Bible*; Heinlein telling us all that "radiation is good for you" during his GoH speech; and Grant's third Hugo loss.

Grant seemed to take his loss pretty hard and sort of withdrew from activity by the time the con was over. It was only later that I found out that Catherine had decided to break up with him during the convention — which, I'm sure, made the Hugo loss seem irrelevant.

The following summer I spent a month living in

Madison, Wisconsin, as a guest of Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell — they had generously rescued me from a patch of poverty and took me home with them to meet Underground Comix publisher, Denis Kitchen. Thanks to them I finally had a paying career as a cartoonist. For which I am ever grateful.

After that, I travelled with Jeanne Gomoll to Seattle and Vancouver for the 1977 Westercon, and then on to San Francisco. During the con, Grant invited me to stay with him for a couple of weeks and I took him up on his offer. He and Catherine had gotten divorced earlier that year, and he seemed to welcome the company. It was during this time that I really began to know Catherine as an individual. She was no longer my buddy's wife, but an independent woman. At first, I was worried that she wouldn't want or need to know me any longer, now that she didn't *have* to. Fortunately, to my relief, she was happy to see me and even took me out to dinner one night.

That year's worldcon was in Miami and both Grant and Catherine attended the con, though separately. By this time, Catherine and Frank were already an item, and Ted and I were concerned that this new arrangement would be the source of friction amongst our little group of hedonists. But, as usual, our friends rose to the occasion and got along without any obvious conflict. Our worries were completely unnecessary. The Group Mind continued to function as it had in the past, except with someone different sitting next to Catherine.

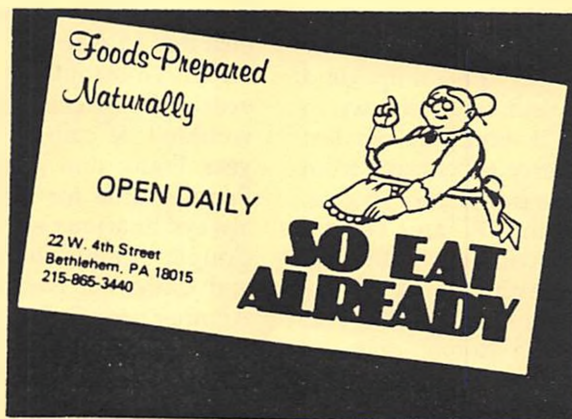
It was on occasions like this that I realized how sensitive she was. Not once, to my experience, did Catherine stoop to pushing Grant's buttons or rubbing his nose in the steaming, hot pile of Frank that was standing right in front of him. She knew Grant well enough to know that he was still in love with her and smarting from her proximity. It seemed to me that she was still committed to being his friend, no matter what their marital status.

SunCon was also the place where Catherine mooned me through the giant glass porthole in the side of the swimming pool at the Fontainebleu Hotel. Talk about yer Moon Over Miami. . . .

In 1978, Catherine left San Francisco and relocated to Quakertown, Pennsylvania to live with Frank and run the natural foods restaurant, *So Eat Already*, they'd bought together in nearby Bethlehem. SEA was a very fannish eat-

ery and over the years they used ads and menus designed by Grant, a full-size billboard designed by Jay Kinney, and a number of hand-made signs and a logo for their business cards and front window, by yerz truly.

Running the restaurant was a completely new challenge for Catherine, but it didn't take her very long





to acclimate herself and make the place her own. Before she became a partner, the place had been a deli, rather than a restaurant — serving typical deli sandwiches along with the natural foods — but that didn't last for long. (I may have eaten the last liverwurst sandwich ever made in the place. I can still recall her asking me, "Da-an, do you actually know what's in liverwurst?") Within a year *So Eat Already* had a proper menu and served nothing but good, new age, home-grown, natural meals.

The Group Mind came together again for the 1978 worldcon in Phoenix, but now there seemed to be a few cracks in our facade. Many of us were concerned that our style of con partying was beginning to wear thin — just how many different drugs can a person take in one weekend? Everybody was still friendly, but it seemed a bit harder to keep everybody happy. Grant was experiencing further anxiety because one or two of his post-Catherine lovers were also in attendance at the convention. At one point he pulled me aside and voiced his discomfort, "Last night," he said, "I looked around

me and realized that I was sitting on a bed with my ex-wife and three of my former lovers, and I broke out in a cold sweat."

This meant that the group started to splinter and break off into smaller units. Grant and me. Catherine and Ted. Grant and Jerry. Frank and me, etc. By the end of the weekend we had all spent Quality Time with each other, but, unlike previous worldcon bacchanals, it mostly happened in little spurts. The group parties were still fun, but for some of us it seemed like we were starting to know too much about each other.

Our next worldcon was in Boston two years later and, after a good rest from each other, the Group Mind pulled itself up by its bootstraps and came to town in force. Little did we realize that it would be our last gathering en masse. Grant and Jerry Jacks came from San Francisco, Frank and Catherine from Pennsylvania, Ted and Lynn and I came from the DC area (as did Jeff Schalles, who had moved to Arlington at the end of 1978), among others. (Interestingly, all of the couples from the original Toronto Group Mind had split up by this point — Ted and Robin, rich and Colleen, Brad and Eileen, Hank and Lesleigh and, of course, Grant and Catherine.)

Lynn was immediately accepted by the group and made to feel like one of the guys. Her presence was especially welcomed by Catherine, who had, until this point, been pretty much the only female in our ranks with any staying power. We shared a room with Jerry that weekend, and the rest of the people were scattered over two other hotels. That meant that we ended up treating the streets of Boston like very long hotel corridors,

as we wandered from party to party. At one hotel, Catherine had discovered a room party with a huge Nitrous Oxide tank and led us to it with all the satisfaction of a Stanley showing off his Livingston. For the next two nights everybody walked around with huge balloons filled with laughing gas and big, shit-eating grins on their faces. At one point, Catherine mentioned that Nitrous was an inert gas and could be passed on, after the original user was through with it.

This led to a round of pseudo-kissing between a group of us that resulted in gales of silly laughter as the lung-full of gas made its way around the room.

Lynn and Catherine became good friends after that convention, assuming the role of con buddies — to keep each other company while Frank and I were off being Much Too Fannish. It was a role they maintained until Catherine's death. These occasions gave them a chance to talk intimately and discover their many similarities and mutual enthusiasms. They became the kind of friends that share secrets and joys, as only two women can. (Or as only

men think two women can.)

Lynn and I saw a lot more of Frank and Catherine after Noreascon 2 — Bethlehem is only a 4-hour drive from DC — and we took advantage of it. Frank and Catherine attended our wedding in 1981 and we became regular worldcon pals for the next couple of years. Even after Lynn and I stopped going to worldcons, after the 1983 ConStellation in Baltimore, we kept on seeing them. For the next ten years, we traded Thanksgiving dinners back and forth between our houses, and occasionally celebrated Frank's and my birthday in August.

For most of the eighties, Lynn and I hosted a yearly Halloween bash; a costume party for those who wouldn't be caught dead at a costume party. Every year Frank and Catherine would come down from Pennsylvania for the party and their costumes were always hilarious — one year they came as The Toxic Couple: Frank was dressed as a giant Rely Tampon and Catherine was an equally huge Tylenol capsule. Another year Catherine showed up as a nun, complete with habit and wooden ruler — unbeknownst to her, Lynn had also gotten a nun's habit for her costume that year (though they were from different orders) and they teased me mercilessly, as only hot nun babes can. Woo.

Catherine would always burst through the door with her arms loaded with little gifts: flowers, cake, vegetables, a book, whatever. These gifts were rarely random last-minute things, but items that she had picked up at local flea markets, dairies and other stores. Once she called me long distance to make sure



Sister Lynn and Sister Catherine from Pong 25



I didn't already have a particular "Tweety" glass she'd found for my collection of cartoon character glasses.

Whenever we'd visit them in Pennsylvania, we *always* went to the local flea markets, which are some of the best I've ever been to. We were always able to pick up a piece of Fiestaware or some McCoy bowls for a couple of bucks. On our last visit, Thanksgiving 1993, we helped Catherine with her latest collecting frenzy: little wax Christmas candles. It was easy for her to walk away with 20 new candles from a single visit to the flea market. Hell, nobody else wanted them — let alone appreciated them — except for Catherine, of course.

During that last visit, she insisted that the four of us have our picture taken with the Santa that was on duty at the flea market. Naturally, being a cynical old bugger, I protested the idea as foolishness. I wasn't going to have my picture taken with Santa — Are You Kidding? The three of them knew better than to argue with me and went to take the photo without me.

I have that picture in front of me now as I write this. Lynn and Catherine are each sitting on the arms of Santa's chair, and Frank is standing behind them, his hand on each of their shoulders. They are all smiling like total idiots. Beaming. It's a great picture.

I've never regretted anything as much as I regret not being in that photo. I am missing. When you look at it, it's almost as if I was the one who died, not Catherine.

In 1990, Lynn and I attended our first worldcon in six years. I had gotten curious about fandom again that year and the lure of Holland was too strong to ignore. We had been interested in visiting Amsterdam for several years and joined forces with Frank and Catherine for ten days of hedonistic fun.

We spent most of our time in Amsterdam. We toured the Rijksmuseum, and the astonishing Van Gogh museum. We walked the ancient streets and parks, drinking fine beer wherever we found it, and visiting as many Coffee Shops as we possibly could. We made side trips to Delft — home of the master painter Vermeer (though there aren't any of his paintings in the town) — and, of course, to The Hague for the convention and the Hugo Awards.

Catherine had promised Alexei and Cory Panshin that she would accept the Hugo for their book, *The World Beyond the Hill: Science Fiction and the Quest for Transcendence*, should it win the non-fiction category. We attended the awards being none too sure of the book's chances — it was up against a volume of Heinlein letters, among others — but knew the spectacle of it all would be good entertainment. And it was; the awards ceremony had the aura of a formal United Nations function. Eurosuave-like.

But, for Frank and I, the *real* entertainment started when the winner was announced in the non-fiction category. The Panshins had won the damned thing. We were exhilarated, that is, until Catherine realized that she now had to *actually* go up on the stage and *accept* the rocket for her friends. Naturally, being cynics, we hadn't bothered to sit in the Hugo area,

which meant that she had to run to get to the stage in time. Once she'd made it, however, it was obvious that she was not happy to be there. As she approached the presenter, his open mike picked up the faint sound of her voice saying, "I really don't want to be here." Frank and I were the only ones who laughed.

After the ceremonies were over, Catherine had to go back to the stage to appear in a group photo of that year's Hugo winners. She stood in the back looking embarrassed and lost. A few weeks later, when the picture appeared in the pages of *Locus*, she was identified as "Unknown," which finally made her feel better about the whole experience.

The following summer was the tenth anniversary of Lynn's and my wedding. I had cooked up an elaborate surprise party for Lynn that involved many complicated maneuvers, like flying friends in from California. I had rented a suite in a local hotel for the party and arranged for Frank and Catherine to help with the surprise. The plan was to pretend that they had won a weekend at a Ramada Inn, in a contest, and were spending it in Arlington — otherwise they were just making another normal weekend visit. I was sure that Lynn would see through such a flimsy deception, but she ended up swallowing it hook, line and sinker.

The plan entailed a return to "their" hotel room for a brief pit-stop after we'd gone to dinner. Frank claimed he needed to get something out of one of his bags. Lynn went along blindly and, even after we got to the suite, still didn't quite comprehend what was going on. Not even the presence of tables full of food, and rich brown (who had forgotten to hide in the next room with the others) tipped her off. It wasn't until Catherine and I led her into the next room, and twenty-five of her best friends yelled, "Surprise!," that the obvious began to sink in. Finally, with tears streaming down her face, she turned to Catherine and said, "Won a weekend in a contest, huh? *Riiiiight!*" The rest of us cheered and commenced drinking everything in sight.

In 1992, we attended MagiCon together. Walt Willis, James White and Chuck Harris were in attendance and the fanroom provided many hours of witty companionship. Joyce and Arnie Katz's appearance gave the con an even more festive atmosphere and provided many distractions for Frank, Ted and me. Lynn and Catherine, by contrast, spent a lot of their time off by themselves — often lying around the pool in an attempt to cram a summer's worth of tanning into four days. Sometimes Frank and I wouldn't know where they were for hours at a time, but often, when they were hanging around the convention, we knew exactly where to find them. On their thrones.

In the midst of the snack bars and booths in the convention hall's main concourse was an unused shoe shine stand. The stand consisted of two chairs mounted at the top of a terraced platform that allowed the occupants to tower over everybody else. Catherine and Lynn discovered the stand on their first visit to the hall and immediately took it for themselves. Nobody



else ever sat in those chairs but Lynn and Catherine. After that, Frank and I knew that, if they were in the building at all, we could always find them sitting on their thrones, smoking cigarettes and making snide remarks about the parade of fans that was passing in front of them. It was convenient for Frank and me, and put the girls where they belonged: Up on a pedestal. It seemed very appropriate, somehow.

We didn't make it to last year's worldcon in San Francisco. The previous year money had fallen out of the sky, allowing us to travel to Florida, but not this time. Despite regular calls from Catherine and Frank, Lynn and I had to stay at home, and they went by themselves. "Well," she said, a couple days before leaving, "better start saving for Scotland now. I'm not letting you off the hook again." We promised we would start saving.

It had been seven years since Catherine had last visited her old stomping grounds and she was excited about being in the Bay Area again. It turned out to be a great trip for the two of them. Staying with Jay and Dixie Kinney during and after the con, Catherine did many of the things she'd hoped to, like seeing old friends — like ex-husband Grant — and eating in favorite restaurants. (Though, she told us later, it was hard being there without being able to see Jerry.)

In retrospect, Lynn and I believe that the trip to the Bay Area was some kind of a divine gift; a rare opportunity to say goodbye to the city and the people she loved so much. Most people don't get that kind of chance in their life; existence is usually too cruel for such luxuries. But Catherine wasn't most people.

Lynn and I packed the car as soon as I got off the phone with Frank and headed north to Quakertown. It seemed like the only thing to do under the circumstances. Catherine was a special person in our lives, and we knew that she'd have done the same thing if the circumstances had been reversed. Frank didn't need to be alone at a time like that — he was, after all, going to be alone for a long, long time to come. We knew instinctively, in what was probably a vain attempt to make up for her sudden disappearance from our lives, that we needed to fill their house with our presence.

We arrived in the middle of the afternoon, about ten hours after Catherine's death. Frank met us at the door; he looked totally drained. Inside the house, the spirit of Christmas was everywhere. Gifts were still under the tree — opened, but still in their boxes. Her collection of little Christmas candles sat on the window sills at one end of the living room and on the glass shelves near the television. I immediately noticed that she had figured out how to clean them, without rubbing off the thin layer of painted decoration. Christmas cards — including ours — were taped to one of the kitchen cabinets, and others continued to arrive throughout our stay. As I looked around the house, the idea that Catherine was dead seemed utterly absurd. Surely, she had just gone out to pick up some eggs and cider, and would be walking through the

door any minute.

We sat with Frank at the kitchen table, just a few feet from the spot where she had died, and he told us the story of what had happened.

She had had the flu. It was bad enough that she couldn't eat Christmas dinner, choosing instead to go to bed and sleep it off. The next afternoon she began having trouble breathing, but still thought it would soon pass, and refused Frank's offer to take her to the hospital. But by that night things had gotten worse — she had developed circulatory problems that had robbed her of the feeling in her hands and feet — and finally, about 11 p.m., she acquiesced and let Frank call an ambulance.

Once they got to the hospital, the weary interns and doctors diagnosed her as yet another victim of this year's strain of the flu. They pumped her full of fluids and got her on her feet, both of which seemed to help her situation. Her symptoms seemed to ease as she calmed down — anxiety had only worsened them — and she finally started to feel a little better. About 1:00 a.m., the doctors released her from the hospital, gave her a Valium, and told her to "go home and pull the covers over your head until you feel better."

Three hours later Catherine was dead.

We stayed with Frank for the next four days, trying to make their house by the lake seem a little less empty and a little less quiet. We tried to get Frank to sleep and eat, and did everything we could to help with the preparations for her funeral. Frank spent most of his time on the phone talking to everyone he could think of. Drawing strength from their compassion and from telling them her story. It was part of his coping mechanism; it helped him make sense of it all.

In the meantime, Lynn and I kept busy trying to console friends and coordinate things for the memorial service on Thursday. We helped pick out the box for her ashes and I sat down and wrote her obituary for the papers. The latter was a very strange experience. I never considered that I might one day end up writing such a thing — especially about Catherine. I wanted to try to capture her essence in a couple of sentences; to somehow tell people who she was. But it was nearly impossible. Finally, out of desperation, I copied the format from one of the daily papers and hoped for the best. The end result said nothing about the woman I knew and loved, except the bare facts, which were, after all, all the papers really cared about.

By Thursday morning, we had done all we could and decided to just go with the flow from that point on. Catherine's mother and oddball brother, Roger, had flown in for the service and nobody was quite sure how they were going to react. (They weren't exactly crazy about the man Catherine had spent the last sixteen years with.) Fortunately, everything turned out well and the service went off without a hitch — it was only after everyone had left that her family started to misbehave (but that's another story).

The funeral home was jammed with huge flower arrangements from all over the country, including a lovely bouquet from Grant. Lynn and Frank had



gathered together a batch of photos of Catherine for display, which we arranged on a table near her ashes, and people started to arrive. By the time the service began, there were more than eighty people in attendance, filling the funeral home to capacity.

It was only when I scanned the gathered crowd that I really understood that Catherine had touched many other people's lives, just as she had touched ours. There were women in their eighties who regularly ate at the restaurant and there were children that she had known since their births. There were many friends from all over the northeast who gathered to say goodbye, while at the same time meeting for the first time. Finally, we all had faces to go with the names we'd heard so often. More than one person came up to Lynn and I and expressed their muted pleasure at finally meeting us, after hearing about our many travels over the years.

Music was played and songs were sung. Poetry written for Catherine was read aloud. As the preacher spoke a man played beautiful music on an Irish harp. People wept. It was the saddest moment of my life. It was so affirming to witness the love all these people had for one incredible woman, and yet the frustration and the helplessness, was overwhelming. As we filed out of the room where the service was held, someone had put out baskets filled with sprigs of rosemary for us to take, as is the Native American custom, in her memory.

After the service was over and the preacher had said his words, and the hugs were over, and everyone had finished blowing their noses, we all left the funeral home and silently drove to *So Eat Already* for a less formal gathering. The restaurant had been closed since Catherine's death, but the day before the service her employees opened the doors and cooked up all the food in the place, using many of Catherine's favorite

recipes. Beer and wine had been hauled in in great quantities and we commenced to have the closest thing I've ever experienced to an old fashioned Irish wake. Before long one hundred plus people had packed the tiny restaurant and everybody was eating and drinking in Catherine's honor.

It was the perfect way to celebrate her memory in the place she loved and worked so hard to keep going. As I looked around the room I marvelled at the great variety of people who had, like me, fallen in love with a sweet and humble woman from California; a woman who had made each and every one of them feel special. Unlike the service at the funeral home, the people in the restaurant were laughing and enjoying themselves. Telling stories and swapping legends. On several occasions I even noticed Frank smiling, as he talked to one of their many friends about the woman who had changed his life.

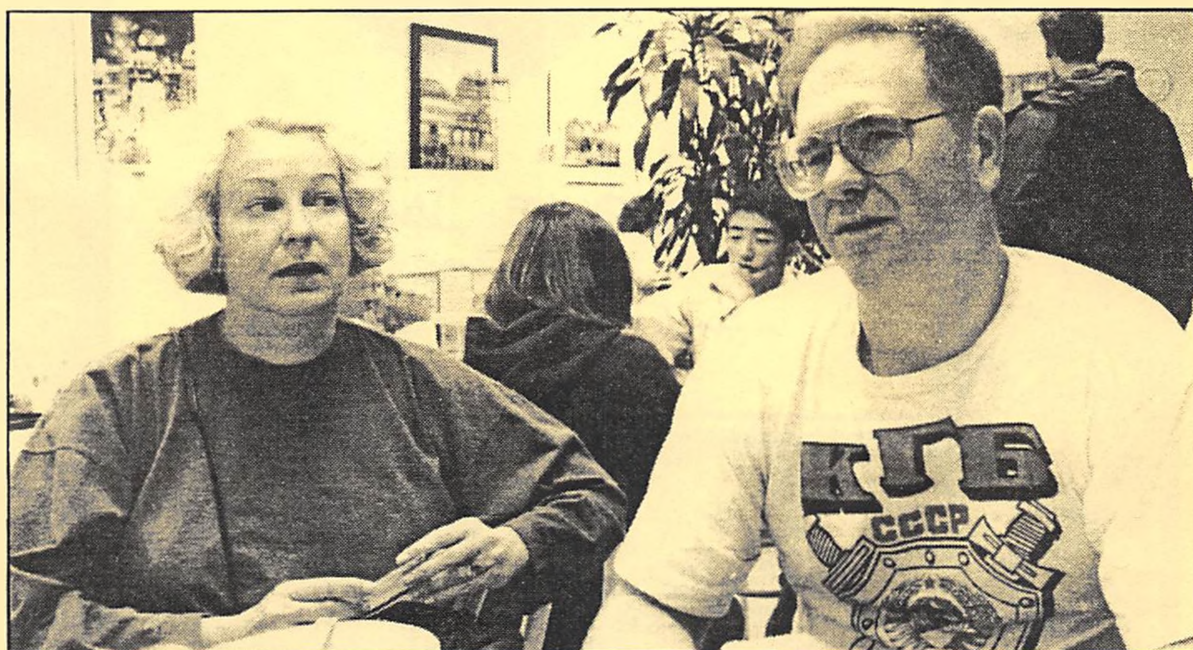
Lynn and I left for home directly from the party at the restaurant. For a while, we felt almost exhilarated by the emotions we had just shared with friends and strangers. We knew that Frank was in for a long period of pain and sadness, but felt that, somehow, the gathering at the restaurant was the best possible way for him to begin his journey. There was nothing else we, or anybody else could do now.

The drive home was long and mostly silent. We had to host a small New Year's Eve party the following night — we'd been unable to cancel it on such short notice — which we did, but with very little joy. Lynn had pulled out a pile of photos of Catherine from our archives, to share with our friends. They all knew her; they all understood. As we welcomed in the new year we all toasted our missing friend and noted that the future was going to be a little sadder from now on.

Damn it.

— Dan Steffan

Catherine  
and Frank  
at Con-  
Francisco  
(Septem-  
ber 1993)







CATHERINE JACKSON

1946 - 1993

- from a 1972 photograph -



# Catherine & Me

**W**hen I first met Catherine Jackson in August, 1969, it wasn't a case of love at first sight. It took almost a week before I was hopelessly, helplessly in love with her.

When Neil Armstrong walked on the moon in July that year, Catherine had just turned 23. She had graduated from California Polytechnic Institute in San Luis Obispo with a degree in social work, and was spending the summer in Lawrence, Kansas, home of the University of Kansas, where she had been accepted for the fall term in graduate school. I was seven months past my 23rd birthday and was living in a one room sublet on Riverside Drive, a few blocks from Columbia University. I had one semester left to go to graduate from the KU school of architecture. When Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, Catherine and I had yet to meet.

I had a summer job with a Manhattan architect, and I didn't much like it. For a boy from the Illinois prairie, New York was proving to be too expensive, too unfriendly, and a little too mean. When my friend Pat McGauley called me from Kansas with an offer to work on a crash project in Lawrence for the last six weeks of the summer, I jumped at the chance, and was back in the Midwest as soon as I could pack my bags and catch a flight.

Low income housing was big in those days, with federal funding available to companies that could produce cheap but innovative homes. A friend of McGauley's named Kurt Youngstrom, a clean cut business school dork, had unearthed one such small Kansas company, unimaginatively called Home Building Corporation, Inc., or HBC. In their factory in Leavenworth, HBC prefabricated components of modest modular houses, which they would truck to a construction site for erection. With a concrete slab in place, their field crew could assemble a complete one- or two-bedroom house in two days.

Youngstrom convinced HBC that what they needed to get in on the federal gravy train was a professionally produced descriptive report, a book to explain their fabrication process and extoll their virtues. And

he convinced them he could assemble a team of talented but inexpensive college students to write and illustrate that book by the end of the summer.

So he rented an apartment in Lawrence to serve as an office. He enlisted several friends from the KU English department (one of whom, I recall, was called Cazzie Russell, the same as the famous basketball star) to write the text, and a few guys from the architecture school — Pat McGauley, Louis Fisher, and myself — to draw the floor plans, elevations, assembly diagrams, and other illustrations. And he hired a graduate student in social work to manage the office and oversee the details of production. That was Catherine Jackson. Or Cathy, as she was called in those days.

Cathy was a gorgeous girl, tall and lean, with streaky blonde hair, a clear complexion, bright eyes, and a wide, dazzling smile. The streaks in the hair, a short-lived affectation, were fake, but nothing else about her was. Her natural hair color was light brown, naturally faded to blonde by the summer sun. She was smart and sassy, with an infectious laugh and a terrific sense of humor, as evidenced by the fact that she liked my stupid jokes. As long as I knew her, I always loved to hear her laugh.

She drove a Morgan +4 convertible at the time, a snazzy yellow sports car that looked something like an MG-TD. I may have been attracted to the car before I was attracted to Cathy herself. My own car was a beat-to-shit Chevy II.

Like all of us, Cathy usually wore the standard college student uniform, jeans and tee shirts, so it wasn't until we all went swimming in the pool at the apartment complex that I realized she also had a terrific tan, a great body, and world class legs. I believe I fell in love with her at poolside, within a week of meeting her.

Once we started going out together, we quickly became an acknowledged couple, an inseparable pair. Youthful hormones coursed through our bodies. We were constantly horny and in heat. McGauley and I rented a one-story shack at the south edge of town, which everyone called the Spider Farm because the

**By Grant  
Canfield**



place seemed to grow arachnids as if they were a cash crop. Cathy spent more nights with me there than she did in her own dorm room, so we soon decided to move in together. Before that could happen, however, two dramatic events occurred which demanded immediate attention.

First, I got sick. One evening McGauley and I were sitting around smoking a bong, when I started experiencing severe abdominal pains, worse than anything I'd ever felt in my life. McGauley rushed me to the hospital, where the diagnosis was gallstones. I needed an operation to have my gall bladder removed.

Rather than having it taken care of right away, however, I decided to put it off for a few weeks in order to finish the HBC project. Sometimes the stones would move around a little inside me, and I'd lay on my belly on the floor of the office apartment, moaning and waiting for the pain to pass. The medication I had didn't help much, but the pain, though excruciating, would usually subside in a few minutes. So during the same period when Cathy and I were beginning our relationship, she got to observe me writhing in agony once or twice a day. At any rate, I made plans to skip the fall semester of college to go home to Illinois for the operation.

In the meantime, the second dramatic event happened. Cathy and I were in bed together one night at the Spider Farm, when the door to my bedroom burst open. In the doorway, silhouetted by moonlight, stood a guy I had never seen before. In a voice like the whimper of a whipped cur, he said, "Cathy, how could you?" He turned to leave.

I started to get out of bed to go after him. After all, this stranger had walked into my house unannounced, had come into my bedroom where I lay with my lady, and had spoken to her in a disturbingly familiar manner. I was pissed. But Cathy held me back by the arm, saying ominously, "Wait. I have something I have to tell you."

With tears in her eyes, she told me the guy was named Bernie Brown, if memory serves. She said he was her husband. I could feel my heart sink to the pit of my stomach.

She said they had gotten married early in the summer, before she met me. She said she married him because she felt sorry for him, and had confused that for love. She said the marriage didn't take, that she had lived with him for only one week and then moved back into a dorm room. She said she didn't have anything to do with him anymore, except the Morgan was his. She said she loved me and nobody else.

The next day, we sought out a lawyer to see about an annulment. The lawyer asked what my interest in this matter was. I said, "I don't want her to be married to the sonofabitch, because I want to marry her myself."

Since the marriage had been consummated, annul-

ment was not an option, but we arranged a quick divorce, which Bernie did not contest. He wanted the Morgan back, though. I considered that a cheap price to pay for freeing the woman I wanted to spend my life with. From that point on, there was no question that we would be married. The only question was when.

The summer ended. McGauley, Fisher, Cathy, and the rest of my friends started the fall semester. I returned to my parents' home in Marissa, Illinois. They checked me into the hospital in Sparta, Illinois, for a cholecystectomy, or gall bladder removal. Sparta is the home of World Color Press, printer of many of the nation's comic books, as if I cared.

About a week after the operation, my doctor gave me some more bad news: I needed a follow-up operation to remove some gallstones that had lodged in the common bile duct, up under the liver where they weren't noticeable during the first operation. In this second operation, he also inserted a T-tube, a plastic hose that protruded from the incision and drained olive-colored bile into a glass jar. I had to carry that damned jar around with me like a colostomy bag, dumping out the bile into the toilet when it got too full. It was not a pretty picture.

I had always been a skinny kid, and two abdominal operations left me nearly skeletal. I got down to about 135 pounds, less than I'd weighed since I was a high school sophomore. I was also unattractively pale and pitifully weak. That was my state of recovery when Cathy came to visit the weekend of my 24th birthday, which coincided with KU's Thanksgiving break. She met my parents then for the first time.

Although they put her up in the guest room, she snuck into my room twice that weekend. We made love as quietly as possible, careful not to wake my folks, with the T-tube dangling out to the bile bottle on the floor, and my abdomen swathed in bandages. The sex wasn't that great, but the circumstances were unforgettable.

That weekend we went to a party in St. Louis with some friends of mine from Washington University, where I had been enrolled for my first three years of college before transferring to Kansas. I was a party animal for sure, carrying my bile bottle around in a pocket of my sport coat. Cathy didn't seem to mind being with such a bizarre specimen, though. Seeing her, being with her again, dancing with her, holding her, was the best tonic I could have received. I couldn't wait to get back to Lawrence to be with her all the time.

Shortly before Christmas, the doctor finally pronounced me sufficiently recovered. The T-tube had been removed, my bile ducts were functioning within normal parameters, and I was released back into the world. My parents gave me a new car, a 1968 Chevrolet Bel Air, to replace the Chevy II, which had finally



given up the ghost. I returned to Kansas on December 30, 1969, in time for a New Years party with my friends.

Cathy and I were hot to shack up together. Temporarily, however, I moved into an apartment with a friend named Mark Hammer, who we called "Floppo" because he always wore big floppy bell bottoms.

My best friends John Lee and his wife Maureen ("Reenie") — I had been best man at their wedding in Kansas City the previous spring — and Cathy and I, and our friend John Lynn, a bearded English major, decided to find a house to share. We found a three-bedroom rental about a mile outside of town, a big two-story farmhouse. The owners, Mr. and Mrs. Douglass, had lived in it most of their lives, and then built a one-story ranch-style house right in front of the farmhouse, thirty feet away. They moved into the ranch house, and rented the farmhouse out to college students like us. They apparently didn't care that we were such a mixed bag — one married couple, one unmarried couple, and one single hippie with a bushy beard.

The Douglasses owned a German shepherd named Duke, a really fine dog. Duke adopted us. He was as happy to see me or one of the Johns come home as he was to see his own master. He frequently romped and played with us, and was always welcome inside the farmhouse.

Duke especially liked Cathy. I retain one lingering image that I know will be with me as long as I live. A quarter of a century later, I can close my eyes and still see Duke and Cathy on a crisp, clear January day, joyfully playing with a stick in the grassy field behind the farmhouse. Cathy wore faded jeans, cowboy boots, and a Navy pea jacket over a plain white tee shirt. Sunshine filtered through leafless trees and reflected off dry grass and patches of snow, bathing everything in a wonderful golden glow, particularly her mane of wheat-colored hair. There were times when Kansas could be very beautiful indeed. On that day, I loved Cathy more than ever before, more than I had believed myself capable, to the fullness of my heart.

During the time we lived in the farmhouse, we were all quite poor, a circumstance that led us to frequent shoplifting of groceries. The three guys were nervous and not very good at it, but Reenie and Cathy were absolutely fearless. They'd stroll through the market, putting a few cheap items in the shopping cart, and stuffing their handbags and coats with so much stuff they looked pregnant. They would proceed through the checkout line as cool as you please. I once saw Cathy walk out with a full-size ham under her coat. None of us was ever caught.

Shortly after we moved into the farmhouse, the first of three local fires occurred. Because they seemed to us to be portentous omens, we later came to call these the three Fire Signs. The first Fire Sign was the

burning of the Spider Farm.

Pat McGauley was still living in the Spider Farm at the time, sharing the shack with another architecture student named Jay Simon. The old Danish modern furniture my parents had given me was still there. I was letting McGauley and Simon use it. Cathy and I didn't need it because our farmhouse was furnished.

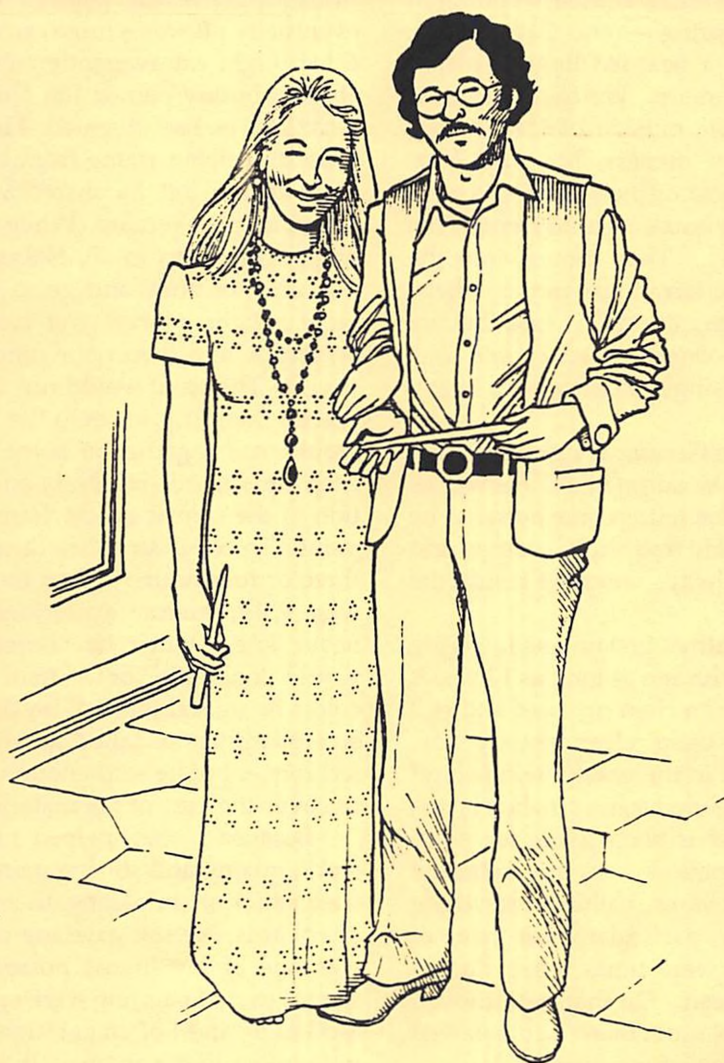
I had also left a large painting hanging on the wall in the Spider Farm, which I fully intended to recover eventually. It was a huge canvas, about 8 feet wide by 6 feet high, extravagantly colorful, painted by an art student buddy named Jim Nelson, using an elaborate technique he had invented. He would construct a haphazard skeleton frame from bits of pipe and two-by-fours in the loft he shared with a rock band called Bacon Lettuce Tomato. While the band practiced, their amps turned up to 10, Nelson would get loaded on pot, acid, or both, and go to work. He would drape large swaths of raw wet canvas over this skeleton armature, and then pour pints of liquid acrylic paint over it. The paint would run down the canvas, pool in places, then drip off onto the floor of the loft. Colors would run together in some spots, and streak over each other in others. Every so often he'd shift the position of the canvas on the frame, and pour some more paint. To cover an entire canvas was the work of but three or four hours. When the paint dried, the results were wild, random explosions of pure color. Nelson never knew when he started what the end result would look like, other than the general palette of colors he started with. With the big canvases and massive quantities of liquid acrylics, it was an expensive technique, but he sold enough of the paintings at least to cover the cost of his materials.

Because I often helped him, setting up a framework, mixing and stirring paint, bringing in buckets of fried chicken, reloading the bong, and cleaning up afterwards, Nelson gave me one evening's canvas. It was one of my prized possessions. The colors and shapes in that painting were spectacular, wild, vibrant. McGauley and I often got high and watched the painting almost like a movie. It was especially powerful when viewed on acid, when it seemed almost alive.

I kept the painting at the Spider Farm, where it hung on the wall over a heating grate in the floor. One day Simon dumped some dirty laundry on the grate. While he and McGauley were out, the laundry got hot and caught fire. That ignited the painting, and in a matter of minutes the entire house burned to the ground. Nothing was left except a smoldering pile of embers. My parents' Danish modern furniture, some books I still had there, and my Jim Nelson painting — all gone. That was the first Fire Sign.

Several weeks later came the second Fire Sign. Racial tension on campus led to demonstrations and rioting, and the National Guard was called in. Kent State in Ohio wasn't the only college campus in early





CATHERINE & ROBERT  
GAIL GRANT  
JACKSON CANFIELD

DANFORTH CHAPEL  
LAWRENCE, KANSAS  
March 19, 1970



1970 to experience armed Guardsmen patrolling the streets. At KU, the mix of racial problems and political activism, as students protested the war in Vietnam, proved extremely volatile. The ROTC building was fire-bombed, triggering a scary night of rioting and gunshots. That was the second Fire Sign. Many of us began to consider getting out of the Midwest. Cathy and I started talking about going to California when school was out.

The third Fire Sign happened closer to home.

About twenty yards behind the farmhouse stood a weathered old wooden shed that our landlords, the Douglasses, used to store rusty tools and bald tires. Near the shed sat a 55-gallon drum that had been converted to an incinerator for burning trash. The Douglasses used that incinerator regularly, as did those of us living in the farmhouse.

One day in late February we noticed a bunch of cars parked near the Douglass house. We thought nothing of that, as there were always half a dozen cars or more on the property. We had friends visiting all the time, and the Douglasses had their friends and relatives.

That morning, John Lee took out the trash to burn. It was a windy day, but almost every day in February is windy in eastern Kansas. He dumped the trash in the incinerator, and lit it. Before he could stop it, the wind blew some burning paper into the grassy field behind the house. The grass caught fire and started spreading, in a direction away from the tool shed and farmhouse. The rest of us in the house — Cathy, Reenie, John Lynn, and I, as well as our visitors Pat McGauley, our black friend Louis Fisher, and Louis's girlfriend Edith — ran out to try to stop it. We stomped on it, we beat on it with blankets soaked in the bathtub, we poked at it with rakes, all to no avail. The fire kept spreading.

Somebody called the fire department. Fire trucks started arriving, from Lawrence as well as neighboring towns. Before the firefighters got it under control, the fire burned off nearly two square miles of Kansas grassland, melted some plastic pipe in a drainage ditch, and threatened some houses on a knoll about three-quarters of a mile behind the farmhouse. We were lucky nobody was hurt, and that no serious damage was done to any homes.

By the time the fire engines left, we were all tired, dirty with soot, and shaken by the experience. That evening, the Douglasses sent their son, a young guy about eighteen years old, over to the farmhouse to give us a 30-day eviction notice.

"Jeez, why?" I said. "The fire was an accident. It could have happened to anybody, and there wasn't any serious damage done."

"It's not really that," he said sadly. The reason for all the cars being around, he explained, was that his parents had just received word the day before that

their eldest son, an Army helicopter pilot who was this kid's brother, had been killed in Vietnam. "My dad is dealing with that," he said, "and then he sees all these hippies and niggers burning down his property — I'm sorry, but that's the way he said it, please try to understand. I'm really sorry, but he wants you all out of here as soon as possible."

We had no choice but to leave. With this third Fire Sign, Cathy and I figured somebody up there was trying to tell us something. Since we have to move, we decided, let's move to California.

Cathy dropped out of graduate school. And with one semester to go until graduation, I quit architecture school. I hadn't yet paid my tuition for the spring semester, so it was easy to do.

As it turned out later, there was further campus violence in April, after Cathy and I had left, including a fourth Fire Sign that convinced us we had made the right decision. The Student Union was burned down in a riot.

The university decided to close the doors early that semester. Anybody that was in a course and was passing got full credit for the course without finishing. Including degree candidates. The university mailed diplomas to that year's graduates. In other words, if I had just hung around in Lawrence for another month or so, not even going to class, I would have been awarded my diploma. As it is, I never graduated, though I spent six years in college, most of those at the top of my class or on the Dean's List.

Cathy and I made plans for a wedding. We found a hip young bead-wearing Baptist minister that would marry us in the chapel on the KU campus, in a ceremony we wrote and designed ourselves. I Xeroxed off a batch of invitations of my own design, which we sent to everybody we knew. The picture on the invitation was a figure of a mustachioed gentleman in waistcoat and tails, bending over slightly, his finger in the air. This was Le Petomaine, a Parisian cabaret artist of the late 19th Century, whose talent, as it were, was farting. He could fart at will, on cue, in rhythm, and in key. His farts could blow out candles from ten paces. He was the world's greatest flatulent, and the toast of Paris. I forget why we thought his an appropriate image to use on our wedding invitations.

Cathy and I were married the morning of March 19, 1970, in a candlelit ceremony. John Lee was my best man, and Reenie was matron of honor. Some of the words we spoke to each other were more than a little pretentious, inspired by Kalhil Gilbran and Baba Ram Das. Cathy wore an off-white dress she made herself, and strings of beads. She was barefoot. I wore a leather vest and cowboy boots. We were the ultimate Kansas hippie couple. Mark "Floppo" Hammer took photographs of the ceremony with his 35 mm Pentax, and later bound them in a leather book, which I still have to this day.



After the ceremony, everybody returned to the farmhouse for the reception. Reenie and Edith had prepared cold cuts and salads for the guests, and John Lee and Louis had procured a sufficient quantity of jug wine. After the minister and my parents left, the joints and the bongos came out, and everybody got really loaded. When the party was in full swing, Cathy and I said our goodbyes to all our friends. As a wedding present, my parents had given us the Chevrolet I had been driving. The trunk and back seat were loaded with all our worldly possessions, except for a few boxes of books that John Lee would send us when we got settled. With very little money in our pockets and nothing but dreams and opportunities in front of us, we drove off, literally into the sunset, waving to our college friends, many of whom we would never see again.

(John and Reenie Lee later had a baby boy, then got divorced when Reenie had an affair with John Lynn, whom she then married. They moved to Los Angeles, where John Lynn opened a Volkswagen repair shop. John Lee stayed in Lawrence, where he developed a successful practice in historical preservation architecture and was eventually hired for the school of architecture faculty. He later remarried and had more kids. Mark Hammer married his girlfriend Bonnie and moved to Boston. I never saw Pat McGauley, Jay Simon, Louis Fisher, or Jim Nelson again.)

We spent our wedding night in Abilene, Kansas. After making love, we watched *The Fountainhead*, a movie about an architect, starring Gary Cooper and Patricia Neal, on the TV in the motel room. The next day we drove into Denver, and after that up to Wyoming, through Utah and Nevada, stopping frequently to see the sights, toss out unwanted possessions, and make love. We stopped in Reno for one night, long enough to cash in a collection of pennies and gamble it away on slot machines. Five days after leaving Kansas, we passed over the Sierra Nevada range into Truckee, California. The sky was so blue, the air so clear, the trees so green, it all seemed sort of magical. We knew California had been the right choice for us.

I had never been to northern California, and Cathy wanted me to see some special sights. She drove us into San Francisco from the north, crossing over the Golden Gate Bridge. I got excited when we passed an architectural landmark I had studied in school, the Marin County Civic Center, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and built after his death. We passed through San Francisco, then drove down the peninsula to Saratoga, where Cathy's parents lived.

Cathy's father, a large red-faced man, was an ex-Navy pilot, retired and devoting his life to his investments and his many hobbies. Her mother was a charming and beautiful woman with prematurely

white hair. Coincidentally, they had the same first names as my parents, Bob and Jean. I didn't know what to call them. "Mr. and Mrs. Jackson" seemed too formal, "Bob and Jean" too casual, "Mom and Dad" out of the question for somebody I just met. I wound up not calling them anything for the first four or five years I knew them, ultimately settling on "Bob" and "Jean."

I also met Cathy's brothers, Don and Roger. Don, her older brother was a handsome scuba-diving land surveyor who had (I think) three marriages, at least two of which had failed. Her younger brother Roger was a hairy young giant with an interest in radio and electronics.

The Jacksons put us up in a garage they had converted to a guest room. We lived there for two months, until I found a job and we had saved enough money to rent an apartment in San Francisco. The Jacksons later moved to Los Gatos, another peninsula town, and ultimately to Port Townsend, Washington, where they live now.

Our first apartment was on Oak Street, a busy one-way street bordering the south edge of Panhandle Park. The constant sound of traffic was occasionally punctuated by the yelps of a dog hit by a car.

Soon after we moved in, we traded in the Chevrolet my folks had given us for a Ford Econoline van with only one seat, which we considered more suited to our hippie self image. After a few months manhandling that clunky van around, we sold it as well, and spent the next six months with no car at all. We rode public transportation until we decided that personal mobility demanded we buy another car. We got a white 1972 Porsche 914, a two-seater that was really just a Volkswagen on steroids. It was the first new car either of us had ever bought, and we kept it for the rest of our marriage.

It was in the Oak Street apartment that Jerry Jacks first visited us, soon after I had started publishing a few cartoons in national magazines (*Saturday Evening Post*, *Cavalier*, *Good Housekeeping*, etc.), as well as in fanzines such as Al Snider's *Crossroads*, Richard Geis's *Science Fiction Review*, Dan Steffan's *Lizard Inn*, and Frank Lunney's *Beabohema*. The first time Jerry came over, he was accompanied by a truly strange individual named Randall G. Millen, the epitome of the creepy science fiction fan. Cathy and I were both very put off by Millen, but Jerry eventually became one of our closest friends.

We lived on Oak Street, three blocks from the corner of Haight and Ashbury, for about eight months. The Summer of Love was long gone. The Haight had become a wasteland of speed freaks, dog shit, boarded-up storefronts, and discarded hypodermic needles, so we moved into the upper flat of an old Victorian house in the Mission District, with embossed metal wainscoting and a lever at the top of the stairs for opening the



front door. Our downstairs neighbors were a piano-playing architect named Larry Dodge and his beautiful brunette wife Judy. Larry and Judy later broke up, but Judy remained one of Catherine's closest friends for the rest of her life. When Judy remarried years later, to a man who died young, Catherine was godmother to her daughters.

After 16 months, our building in the Mission District was sold to a couple from Texas who wanted to live in our flat, so we had to move. Cathy found an ad in the paper for a place on Atalaya Terrace, near the University of San Francisco. As soon as we looked at it, we knew it was perfect for us. It had hardwood floors, high ceilings, French doors, a fireplace, a walk-in closet, a dining room with a chandelier, and a room between the kitchen and the bedroom that would be perfect for my studio. The rent was \$175 a month. We moved in and stayed there for the rest of our marriage. I still live there, in fact, although the rent is considerably more these days.

Soon after moving to Atalaya Terrace, Cathy decided it was time to go by her proper name, Catherine. In a world where Paul Novitski was called Alpajpuri, and Wilma Demmon changed her name to India, Cathy to Catherine was not a tough adjustment to make. Besides, I always felt that Catherine fit her well. It was a classy name for a classy dame.

Not long after moving into the Atalaya Terrace flat, we met John Berry, who introduced us to Calvin and Wilma (later India) Demmon. John and Calvin started a well-written, highly entertaining personal fanzine titled *Hot Shit*. In an age of mimeographed zines, *Hot Shit* was Xeroxed. The editors often referred to the Staff Printing Person, and stated that the fanzine was printed on the Surreptitious Xerox. The Staff Printing Person was Catherine, of course, and the Surreptitious Xerox was the copier at her office.

For a while, Catherine was administrative assistant to Frank Oppenheimer, the director of the Exploratorium science museum. Frank was the brother of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, "the father of the atomic bomb." Frank had also worked as a physicist on the Manhattan Project, so we thought of him as "the uncle of the atomic bomb." That wasn't the job she had when she was the Staff Printing Person for *Hot Shit*, however. At that time she was administrative assistant to the controller of a company called American Building Maintenance, Inc. The building she worked in no longer exists.

Catherine made our life together comfortable and far more elegant than I ever could have alone. Frank Lunney once said he wasn't a complete person until Catherine came into his life, and I know exactly what he meant. She was a well-rounded, honest, gregarious, socially responsible, and generous woman, with a knack for shopping and a talent for making friends. She had an unerring eye for a bargain. She could find

the one true treasure in a roomful of garbage. Our apartment became a home, nicely but inexpensively decorated in a sort of California rustic style. Her wardrobe improved as well, though somewhere along the line she had become enamored of Birkenstocks, which were forever after her favored footwear.

Her gregariousness sometimes embarrassed me, but more often delighted me. She never hesitated to approach a celebrity. We were having brunch one Sunday at the Washington Square Bar and Grill, when she spotted Charles McCabe, a hard-drinking Irish columnist for the San Francisco *Chronicle*, now deceased. She went right up to him while he sat at the bar and started talking to him. He was a notorious woman-hater, but somehow Catherine charmed him.

On another occasion we were having dinner at Scoma's in Fisherman's Wharf, when she spotted actor David Hartman reading a script at the next table. He was appearing in a TV show called (I think) *The Bold Ones*, which was really three shows in one. One week it would be Hal Holbrook in an episode about lawyers, the next week E.G. Marshall in a doctor story, and the third week David Hartman in the series about teachers. Anyway, she leaned over to him and said, "Excuse me, are you David Hartman?" When he admitted he was, she said, "Well, I just want to tell you I think you're really far out." Then they proceeded to have a discussion not about his portion of the series, but about the Hal Holbrook segments, which were her favorite.

We once stood around all day watching a Hollywood crew film a major stunt for the movie *Freebie and the Bean*, in which a car races up a ramp and soars over a moving train during a chase. Spotting the stars James Caan and Alan Arkin, she said to me, "Let's go over and ask them if they want to grab a burger at Clown Alley." I do believe she would have done it, too, but I was too chicken.

She liked people of all ages, sizes, colors, stripes and types. Her circle of friends continually expanded in all directions, while mine was limited mostly to fandom. She made plenty of friends in fandom, too, particularly when we travelled to science fiction conventions, where we mostly hung out with, and came to number among our closest friends, people like Dan and (and later Lynn) Steffan, Ted White, Jerry Jacks, Dixie Tracy and Jay Kinn:ny — and Frank Lunney.

She knew how to save money. I did not. Once she mentioned to me that she thought it would be nice if we spent a week's vacation in Hawaii. I said, "Do you know how much that costs? How could we ever afford it?"

She knew exactly how much it would cost. She threw a handful of hundred dollar bills in my lap, saying with a radiant grin, "I've been saving up." What can you say to that? We went to Maui for one of the greatest weeks of our life together, where she developed another spectacular suntan. I always



thought she was beautiful, particularly those dynamite legs, but when well tanned she was unbelievable.

About five years into our marriage, when things were starting to go sour between us, her brother Roger came to live with us for about six months. At a time when we needed to come closer together, there was this big, hairy, hulking presence between us, with huge smelly feet. Instead of coming home from work to make love with my wife, I came home to find my brother-in-law playing my blues records, reading my underground comics, and getting in my face. Instead of going to movies or dinner as a couple, now we were a trio, and somehow I was the odd man out. He went everywhere with us, as we managed to cram the three of us into the tiny two-seater Porsche. I admit I resented him being around all the time. Our sex life diminished radically. I found myself withdrawing from her, and withholding affection. As astute as she was about most matters regarding relationships between people, Catherine would never admit that her brother was a problem in our life. And to be fair, he wasn't the whole problem. His presence just exacerbated an already deteriorating situation. When he finally moved out, I found I was missing two treasured albums, R. Crumb's *Cheap Suit Serenaders*, and a compilation of old-time raunchy blues called *Please Warm My Weiner*, with an album cover by Crumb.

Catherine and I were married for almost seven years. At the 1976 Worldcon in Kansas City, on the worst night of my life, she told me she was leaving me. A lot had gone wrong with our marriage in the later years, and I reckoned it was mostly my fault, so I couldn't really blame her. But I was badly hurt nevertheless. Thinking about that time now, and reflecting on what went wrong, is too bitter and painful to contemplate for long. When we split up, she took the Porsche and the money in our bank account. I got the apartment, the dishes, and our two excellent pussycats, Chloe and Roscoe, who both died six years later.

I have often pondered: If things had been better between us, Catherine might not have become romantically involved with Frank Lunney. But they weren't and she did. Shortly after our divorce was finalized in 1977, she moved to Pennsylvania to live with Frank. But before she did, she burnt out a clutch in the Porsche, and then wrecked it in Santa Cruz while visiting her grandmother. At Catherine's request, I drove out to the auto junkyard in Hayward where the Porsche wound up, and took photographs of it for insurance purposes. In my mind, seeing that dead car was like seeing the corpse of our marriage. That was another very bad day.

Catherine and Frank lived together for over sixteen years, more than twice as long as she and I were together. Not wanting to exclude her from my life altogether, I was determined that we would somehow remain friends. She seemed to want the same thing.

For a few years after the divorce, we saw each other frequently at science fiction conventions, where we all hung out with the same group of friends. When she and Frank came to San Francisco, we would all get together for dinner or an evening together, sometimes with the person I was seeing at the time, but more often just the three of us. I tried to be civilized and mature about it, though in reality I was inevitably consumed with jealousy and envy, as I had never stopped loving her. My friends observed that I was always an emotional wreck for at least a week after one of those visits. Later, as time allowed the wounds to scab over, it wasn't quite so difficult. Sometimes it was even enjoyable. Even so, at some point a few years after the divorce, realizing I couldn't keep encountering my ex-wife, her lover, and a carload of bitter memories and yet retain an emotional grip on my life, I gave up fandom altogether, ceding it to Catherine and Frank along with the better part of my soul. I haven't been to a science fiction convention in years, certainly not since Jerry Jacks died in 1986, and I've lost track of most of my fannish friends.

Catherine and Frank visited California for the last time around Labor Day for the 1993 Worldcon. Until she told me about it, I didn't even know that the convention was in San Francisco. I had not seen her for four or five years, though we had spoken on the telephone several times. (I used to say half-jokingly that she would only call me when she was miserable and wanted to share it.) She and I met for lunch one day, without Frank. We didn't recognize each other at first, as the years had added pounds to both our bodies, and changed the colors of our hair. We ate at Circolo's, talking and laughing for two and a half very enjoyable hours. Mostly I told her about my career, and she expressed happiness that I was doing well. I wanted her to think that, even if it's not so true; certainly I'm not doing well in any other part of my life other than architecture, and that's not so great either.

After the convention was over, Catherine and Frank stayed over for a while with Dixie and Jay Kinney. The night before they left to return to Pennsylvania, Catherine fixed a tofu-based dinner there for the five of us. That was a very pleasant and enjoyable evening. The last time I saw her in this lifetime was when we waved goodbye to each other at the end of the evening as she and Dixie entered the lesbian bar across the street from the Kinneys' for a nightcap.

After Catherine and I split up, I had a succession of different lovers, termed a "bachelor string" by one of my buddies. I was desperately trying to prove something to myself by sleeping with as many women as possible, as if that would reestablish my confidence in my manhood. It is no coincidence, I am sure, that I have never been able to sustain a relationship longer than eighteen months with any woman since Catherine left me. I know I compare every woman I meet to her,



at least on a subconscious level, and they all come up short. She was by far the most important person in my life, central to the core of my being. Losing her left a giant hole in my personal universe, a void that I could only attempt to patch over, but which I could never successfully fill. My personality became skewed, and I reverted to the basic dorkishness from which her presence had protected me. I am now middle-aged, overweight, out of shape, alone and lonely. I believe I am no longer attractive to women, so I hardly even try. I have tried to substitute work for love, but success in my career leaves me feeling only emptiness. I have tried to substitute comic books and laserdiscs for the presence of a warm human spirit, but all I have to show for it is a house full of paper and plastic, a collection of debts, and an unresolved emotional emptiness. I am truly unfulfilled. In my heart of hearts, I know there's nothing I want or need more than another love in my life, someone to replace the intensity of emotion and desire I felt for Catherine. But in my soul of souls, I darkly suspect that will never be.

Catherine died tragically on December 27, 1993. Frank himself called to tell me the news. It should be no surprise that he was an emotional basket case at the time, so I got most of the details of her death, and of the subsequent memorial service, from Dan Steffan.

The news shook me to the marrow, and I felt her loss very deeply. But strangely I felt more empathy and sorrow for Frank than I did even for myself. My

own aching sorrow at her loss is really sixteen years old.

In my apartment I still see signs of Catherine everywhere — the restored antique clock her father gave me for a birthday present, the pieces of second-hand furniture she bought, a photo of her and John Lee standing beside an immense marijuana plant somewhere in Kansas, a piece of coral she brought back from Hawaii, even the goddamn dishes she bought that I eat off of every goddamn day. But these items are ephemera, the ghosts of a relationship long passed. They are but triggers for bittersweet memories.

Frank lives in a house chock full of Catherine's presence. Her scent, her stuff, her souvenirs, the things she brought into their house to enrich their lives — he is surrounded by all that, and by sixteen years of memories. She died in his arms. Knowing what I felt when I learned of her death, it was impossible for me not to consider what Frank must be feeling. No salve, no balm, no analgesic can ease such pain. I only hope that the passage of time will eventually dim the agony, because I know from experience that time will never erase the memories. After a while, the memories are all that are left. Catherine will always be with Frank, as she is with me.

When Frank told me of her death, he said, "I know you loved her too, Grant." I said yes, I always did.

And I always will.

— Grant Canfield



SPIRIT RISING

ROSEBERRY



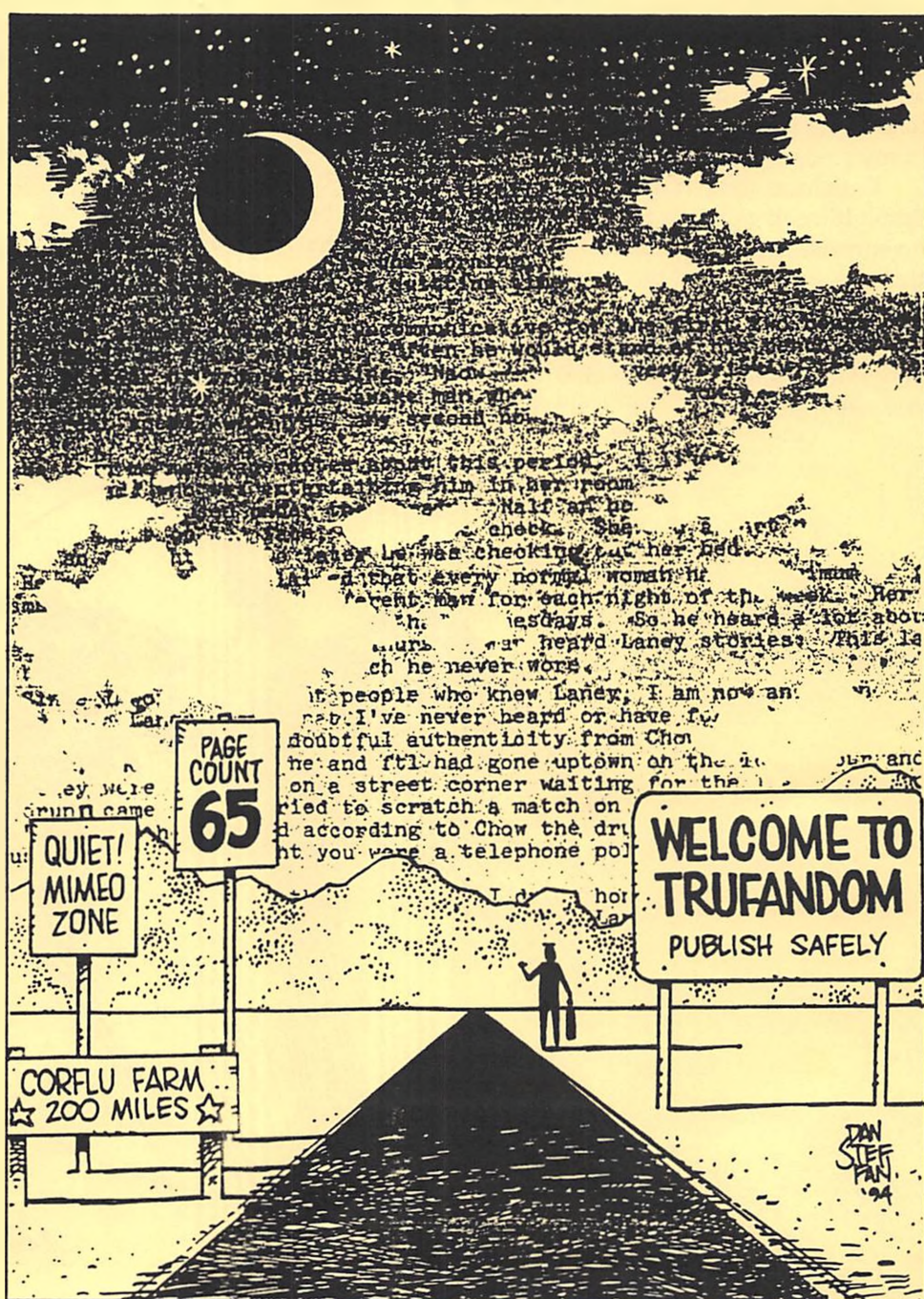
# CON-fessions of a Zinefan

## PREFACE

The article you are about to read was written ten years ago about events that took place fourteen years ago, but the opinions expressed still resemble those I currently hold. I guess I'm set in my ways. It was originally intended as the first of a series of columns under the collective title, "Feder Late Than Never," for Ted's excellent zine *Gambit*, an honor it missed through no fault of Ted's (or mine). I'm pleased that Ted and Dan consider it worth printing after all this time. Although they haven't even mentioned the possibility this time, allow me to assert that I have no intention of its being the first installment of a new column. Editors, even those odd hybrids, book club editors, don't have much time for fanac. (Which could explain why I haven't sent you a LoC lately!)

I should mention that this piece has had one previous appearance beyond the confines of my desk drawer. That was, logically enough as you'll soon see, in the MCFI internal apa.

Return with me now to those carefree days of yesteryear, to the city of Boston, to the surprisingly pleasant weather of Labor Day weekend 1980, and to one of the best large worldcons we've ever likely to see, Noreascon Two....





## by Moshe Feder

“... today's worldcons tend to consider traditional fandom as another tiresome and marginal 'special interest group' incomprehensible to the committee and requiring a skilled interpreter. Noreascon seemingly drafted Moshe Feder for just this purpose. . . .”

— DAVE LANGFORD, “The Transatlantic Hearing Aid,” Pt. 5, in *Tappen 3*

**W**ORLD-CON COMMITTEES ARE CONSERVATIVE. They are caterpillars busily weaving the cocoon of familiarity that will be the convention, preparing to turn briefly into butterflies who for a few days can't eat, sleep or sit still for more than an instant, and then will finally, after this fleeting, glorious burst of frenzied applied enthusiasm, die . . . er, gafiate. Their cocoon-spinning leaves them no energy to “waste” on innovation. They are so loathe to start their thinking from scratch, so concerned to avoid “reinventing the

wheel,” that it never occurs to them that we might in some years prefer a tubular-tired model to the traditional wooden one.

So you can be sure that the idea of fan programming did not arise for the sake of novelty. You can understand why the slow process of introducing it, like adding white-walls to those wooden wheels, had to be triggered and then sustained by a force just as basic and as powerful as the committees' conservatism, a force such as guilt.

If the same circumstances were only now coming into existence, it probably wouldn't happen the same way. Concomms have sailed too long up their own tributaries, losing sight of the primal fannish

stream. But a decade and more ago, when the process really did begin, concomms were still fannish enough to be sensitive to the changes in fandom, the “fading of the old ways,” the complaints of old-timers. They felt guilty about their and the worldcons' role in promoting, or at least, not inhibiting, those changes, and the fan program (in the sense of a whole, “separate but equal” program track, as opposed to the occasional isolated panel) was meant as that guilt's expiation. Then, because fanzines and not ephemeral conventions are the natural store of fannish memory, the conduits of tradition and identity, the time-binders, they perforce turned to fannish fanzine fans to create this new kind of programming.

Still, no matter how it might have appeared to a British fan at his first American worldcon, or how correct his conclusions are in general, Dave is mistaken about the Noreascon committee. They are certainly among the more fannishly well-

rounded con-running fans extant, and don't need me or anyone else as a cicerone where fannish fandom is concerned. Certainly the two committee members with whom I worked most closely, Chairman Leslie Turek and Program Director Tony Lewis, could have done my job as well or better themselves, and were as cooperative, helpful, sympathetic and understanding as one could wish. While my hypothesis of guilt's role in concomm planning may apply to them, at least on the subconscious level, I'm certain that neither of them (nor anyone else I dealt with on the Noreascon committee) wanted to relegate “traditional fandom” to an obscure corner reserved for “tiresome,” “incomprehensible” special interest groups. Why would they, when they would count themselves among us (and when their whole philosophy of convention running is to avoid reserving obscure corners for anyone)? The few problems we did have were due mostly to errors on my part (I haven't a fraction



of their convention experience) and to the simple fact that I was doing my planning in New York and they and the con were in Boston.

Dave's comment would be more correct vis-a-vis Noreascon if you substituted "fanzine fandom" for the "traditional fandom," since, and it's no surprise, few of the concomm (with the prominent exception of George Flynn) were active fanzine fans. They'd been devoting themselves to conac for years, and that's how they could run such a good worldcon. To that extent the committee naturally made the same assumption (for the reasons of timebinding referred to above) that Dave and more people do, that fanzine = fannish, an idea promoted with zeal by us fanzine fans, but a potential if not yet actual fallacy, and one I bent over backwards not to promote in my program.

In some parallel universe, it's not hard to imagine fannish programming arising spontaneously from convention-centered fannishness in a manner analogous to the way fannish writing came into existence in this one. Of course, what form that con-fannishness and the programming arising from it would take can only be speculated. One possibility, judging by our own reality, might be

competitions akin to the Fannish Olympic events I imagined for Noreascon, with a dash of the Cheyenne Sundance rite of passage thrown in.

I say this because the new macho martyr game played the last few years by the inside circle of conrunning manics, the "I-can-stay-up-longer-on-less-food-with-a-bigger-walkie-talkie-because-I'm-more-essential-to-the-salvation-of-the-worldcon-than-you-are" competition, is either a new form of participatory crypto-programming, or the self-proclaimed "permanent floating worldcon committee"'s version of applied fannish enthusiasm. That this is fannishness may not be immediately obvious (and I have little patience for it when my friends engage in it to the exclusion of social intercourse), but when we look at such parallel fanzine-fan activities as staying up all night to make an apa deadline or to run off a zine to distribute at the convention the next day, the production of fanzines via hecto, the hand-cranking and slip-sheeting of long mimeo runs for the sake of the solid blacks in the illos, etc., we begin to recognize the common elements of obsession, enthusiasm and pride in a job well done which make conrunners and fan publishers brothers and sisters under the skin.

**N**OREASCON II FAN-GOH BRUCE PELZ's GOH SPEECH was titled "The Fan in the Middle — The Need for the Generalist in Fandom." I missed it, because I was working, but I can guess his point. Fandom was healthier when more of us were generalists, when those points of common psychology were more openly expressed, when more fan publishers were involved in conventions and the fans who put on conventions did so at least partly to meet the people whose zines they'd been reading. Too much compartmentalizing leads to schismatic prejudices and pointless hostility based on ignorance. It's the ineffable effect of our favorite literature on our minds that makes us fannish, not the particular mode we choose to vent the resulting enthusiasm. Con-running fandom does seem to be developing its own modes of fannishness, and, to a lesser extent, so is con-attending fandom. But it's harder to put a finger on these phenomena because they are ephemeral, process-oriented, fleeting social

interactions, rather than ideas preserved on paper, and so they tend not to be discussed and analyzed into the meta-fannish, self-conscious way that fanzine fannishness is. Fanzine fandom may have invented fannishness, but we don't have a patent on it, and I tried never to forget that.

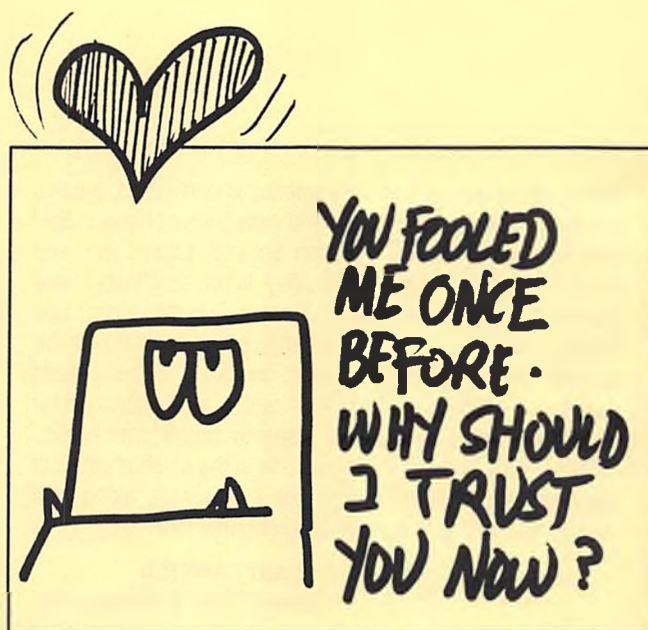
In consequence, and because there's no way of knowing who might show up at fan programming, I aimed to have something for everyone. I wanted to demonstrate our common roots, to have some con-centered items that didn't really rely on a knowledge of fanzines for their effect, to innovate, to encourage audience participation (because to me, participation is one of the keys to fannishness), to attract some of the fannish fans (people like me) who usually disdain the program and ignore it unless they're on it, and, at least once each programming day, to reach out the extent practical to the lowest common denominator of worldcon attendees and really pack in a crowd. Finally, I wanted some program items just to indulge myself, to convene people I've always wanted to see together interacting, to plumb the depths of fannish mystery and history and satisfy my own curiosity. Not counting three special events in the



evenings, I had 21 hours to fill over five days, a virtual con within a con.

At the very beginning I made a serious mistake that I regretted almost as soon as the con began, and still regret to this day. I insisted that fan program items be scattered throughout the rest of the program, with room assignments among the four large and small venues I was sharing with Tony based solely on our estimate of the audience they were likely to draw. Tony had no quarrel with this. I assume that he, like me, hoped to encourage in the con's attendees the idea that all programming is created equal and is potentially of interest to all. I wanted to believe that some of the audience from a sercon SF or science panel might just hang around and discover that a fan panel could be fun and informative. Unfortunately, where devoted program-attenders might tend to stay put and listen to whatever was offered to them at a single-track-program con, that is much less true at a multi-track con, which also, in the case of the worldcon, offers many other non-program distractions. It's a tough, perhaps unwinnable, challenge to con programmers.

Remembering our experience at SunCon



(where Gary Farber's solid fan program was hidden away with the fan-exhibit/mimeo-room deep in the Fountain-bleau's maze, in a location you would never just wander by in the course of other con activities; to which, indeed, you had to be guided), I was determined that the fan programming should not be isolated off by itself somewhere, should not be ghettoized. Thus with one hand I upheld the pretense that all of us at the con were equally fannish and interested in fan programming while with the other hand I planned my program knowing its wide variations in mass appeal. By insisting that fan items be spread around, I asserted their equality with the rest of the "entertainment," but ensured that they would never achieve their full potential, never gather momentum and build up a head of steam as

one item succeeded another and a dedicated, interested audience stayed on and grew. Where at SunCon the fan program was hard to find, but only had to be found once, at Noreascon II it was easy to stumble across, but had to be found over and over. (This may explain why I spent most of the first days of the con not talking to panelists or coaching my moderators, but making, or having made [Thank you Wendy Lindboe!] and putting up, signs, so that new arrivals at the con could find their way to my — and others' — carefully-planned events hidden away in the far reaches of the Sheraton's Hynes Auditorium.)

Obviously, I was more worried about this problem, so closely bound up with the sheer size of the facilities the con required (and complicated by the con's decision to identify program tracks by the suits

of the Tarot deck), on the first two days, before people had learned their way around. But even later, and, in general, overall, I wish I'd had the sense to choose one medium-sized room (preferably in the hotel) and stick with it. Even without formal provision of a lounge area, this could have become the natural meeting place and focus for the fannish fans at the con. It is now my feeling that serving them should have been my primary aim, and appealing to, educating and evangelizing everybody else while asserting, in my overly defensive way, the fan program's equality, should have come a far second.

**H**AVING GOTTEN THAT OFF MY CHEST, I'LL PAT MYSELF ON THE BACK THAT when people did seek out or stumble across my program they found some pretty interesting stuff. At least, I think so, looking back on it almost four years later. I can't really judge how they actually came out, or even report how well most were received, because out of 25 major and minor items, I saw substantial parts of only about a third. The brief



survey which follows is based on running glances at program items in progress, my pre-con planning notes, the pocket program, a set of daily news sheets and post-con rumor. You can see why Nor-eascon II is high on my list of worldline loci I'd like to make multiple time-travel visits to.

Among those events I missed were some like, "Living in Someone Else's Dreamworld — The Coventrians," that I'd programmed for myself, as much as for any hypothetical audience. In other cases I'm still not even sure if all my panelists showed up, and, if they didn't, who might have substituted for them. (I seem to remember hearing that this happened a couple of times. In one instance the moderator was a stand-in, while in the aforementioned Coventry panel, Bjo Trimble, who had previously declined my invitation to participate, showed up to watch the panel and ended up joining it.) The con had room monitors for each track who kept a record of this sort of thing and approximate attendance, but even three world-cons later, I have yet to see these documents (perhaps they'll be reproduced in the report the committee is working on), or, for that matter, listened to the tapes of the panels that I missed.

“As far as convention programming is concerned, the two most interesting panels to my mind were 'Homophobia in SF,' with Samuel R. Delany, Norman Spinrad, Lizzy Lynn, and Frank Robinson, moderated by Jerry Jacks, and 'Why I Hate Fandom,' in which Charles Platt, Norman Spinrad (again), Lou Stathis, John Shirley, and Dan Steffan generated some of the funniest lines of the convention, including Dan's classic description of the typical 'dorkish' fan: 'One eyebrow clear across the face, and thighs hanging below the knees.' 'Thighs below the knees' became one of the catch phrases of the convention among the people I was with, along with 'dorks,' 'twisted,' and 'fragmentation bombs.'”

— GRANT CANFIELD  
Waste Paper 10, January 1981

So, if people did manage to be present in a place where the fan program was happening, what did they find? Well, spread over the four main days were five "Timebinding" panels (inspired by Gary Farber's at SunCon) that were supposed to sum up fanhistory and provide a context for the rest of the program. Each one was to begin with the moderator (a fan active during the period in question) briefly summarizing the major events of the decade. (I'm not sure that any of them actually did their homework and did this. I also wonder now whether I should have defined the panels by numbered fandoms, rather than the arbitrary ten-year units of decades.) They were then to continue by asking leading questions to encourage the other panelists to reminisce and flesh out the opening outline with their

own personal experiences. The idea was to make fanhistory live, to take advantage of the fact that so many of our pioneers are still with us. Maybe they did, but I don't think any of them attracted more than 20 to 50 people out of the c. 5900 who were at the con.

I did my best to give these panels, like all my program items, catchy titles such as "Time Binding III: The Mad Dogs Have Knead Us in the Groin — Fandom in the 50s." There was some criticism of one title: "Time Binding V: In Which Jophan Discovers Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll — Fandom in the 70s and Beyond" as being historically inaccurate, more appropriate to the 60s than the 70s. I'd like to belatedly say in my defense that my impression has been that while the fannish avant garde, the bnfs and smofs, may have known about sex, drugs

and r&r in the 60s, Jophan, i.e., the average fan, did not mix them with his fanac until later. Since I only made contact with fandom as the 60s were ending, I stand ready to be corrected.

There were two great successes on the first day, Friday, one of which I helped plan and then gambled on and the other of which was a gift-wrapped surprise thrust into my lap. The first was "I Hate Fandom, or, Fandom is a Waste of Time." A lowest-common-denominator item suggested by Lou Stathis and moderated by him, it featured John Shirley, Dan Steffan, Charles Platt, Norman Spinrad and Lou animadverting about typical fannish foibles and losers. I was a little nervous that this could get nasty, but fans apparently enjoy being humorously insulted and the large room in Hynes was respectably filled and, the couple of times I stuck my head in, they seemed to be enjoying themselves.

The other surprise was a last-minute addition to the program, Jim Barker's cartoon side show "The Captive" (a fannish version of "The Prisoner" and not to be confused with Phil Foglio's "The Capture"). This is something I should have known about in advance, if I'd done all the pre-con letter writing I should



have. Luckily, Jim brought his slides and scripts with him anyway and the other British fans present were willing to pitch in and ham it up. The Logistics Department came up with some equipment despite the short notice we gave them and the unrehearsed performance came off quite entertainingly. I'm only sorry more people didn't find out about it in time to see it. This is one of the great frustrations in running programming at a con, that there's no way to quickly reach all the members with news. The best you can do (as we did, in this and other cases) is to make announcements at other program items and put a notice in the con daily newszine. Surely, given fandom's occupational proclivities, we aren't far from the day when our larger conventions have constantly updated schedules and announcements on computer-driven monitors scattered around the facility. I've also often thought that an electronic streamer or zipper sign (you know, light bulbs flashing on and off to form the illusion of a moving ticker "tape") set up in the main public area would be marvelous.

After these two successes, Friday brought me my single worst flop of the con; fiasco would not be too strong a

### TAFFMAN DISCOVERING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER



“Next came the great Meet the BNFs party, held in a foyer barely large enough to contain the names, let alone the fans. Here I and DUFF winner Keith Curtis combed the crowds in search of really famous fans as promised; we couldn't even find Bruce Pelz. Slowly the hideous realization crept over us: 'We have met the BNF,' I declared, 'and he is us!'. . . Mike Glicksohn appeared (as is his unfortunate habit) and we demanded his homage. 'BNFs should wear funny hats,' he grumbled. 'I don't recognize any here.'"

Famous Moshe ascended the stage — and through a small megaphone explained that BNF status was fleeting ('I don't like that,' whispered a worried Keith) and that, possibly to make sure of this, all BNFs would now have gold stars attached to some portion of their anatomy. 'And the garble BNFs I can see,' said the megaphone, 'are Dave Garble the TAFF grackle and Keith Crackle garble winner.' Suddenly Keith and I were up on chairs to make a joint speech which we instantly agreed to forget and which nobody else had any chance to remember, the megaphone's batteries plainly not having been changed since its former use by Paul Revere. Nevertheless our sheer force of personality caused someone in the audience to see the light and contribute all his worldly goods to the grackle fund. After shrewd TAFF/DUFF bargaining, the administrators pocketed 50¢ apiece and went looking for the beer, which had run out.

It certainly is a wonderful thing to be a fleeting BNF. Better not to reveal, in a family publication, where Moshe attached my coveted gold star. ”

— DAVE LANGFORD

"The Transatlantic Hearing Aid," Pt. 2  
Boonfark 5, August 1981

word. This was the "Meet the BNFs Party," the second of three night-time special events (the first, on Thursday night, had been a nostalgic, bring-your-own-slides show about Nor-eascon I, anchored by J.K. Klein). Having seen the writers feted so often at Meet the Pros Parties, I'd decided that important fans should get a crack at similar egoboo. Neos would get a chance to find out what the people they

ought to seek out to talk to looked like and the rest of us would have an excuse to get together and mingle in one place. Being the fan responsible and willing under these special circumstances to climb out on a limb, I took it upon myself to decide who the BNFs were. (There's got to be an article in that subject alone — but I'm not sure I'm going to write it!) Even interpreting the honor very broadly, as I did for

these purposes, I knew there would be people offended for being left out. But I would worry about them after the con.

It was an interesting idea in theory, but in reality the problems were manifold. Again, I should have done more letter writing before the con, but since I didn't finish generating the list until the drive to Boston (an unusually pleasant ride, thanks to a route via the Orient Point



Ferry across Long Island South to Connecticut) and even then wasn't sure who'd be coming, n.y BNFs had to be informed as they arrived at the con. Registration cooperated and special messages were inserted in their membership packets. I tried to buttonhole as many of them as I could, but even many of those who promised me face to face that they would come, did not. I'd originally planned to identify the BNFs after they were introduced on stage by pinning on them a "Shield of Umor" badge based on a Ross Chamberlain design that I was going to manufacture with a Mattel Vac-U-Form. Ross made a mold, and we finally tracked down a working Vac-U-Form, but we couldn't get the right plastic and had to give up. I decided to fall back on adhesive gold stars applied to badges and/or foreheads. It wasn't until I arrived at the con, however, that I discovered the worst problem of all.

The space I'd been assigned wasn't a function room at all, but a broad public hall between function rooms called the Constitution Foyer. It had no stage, no p.a. system and was directly in the path of traffic returning to the hotel from the Pro GoH speeches in the Hynes! This was the result of the only major failure of

communication between the Boston people and me, but it was a doozy — something comparable to booking the Hugo ceremony onto a subway platform — and considering the simple parallel between this and the traditional meet the pros affair, I'm still at a loss to understand how the misunderstanding which must have existed arose. It could never have happened if I'd lived in the city and had had a chance to approve all my space assignments after an on-site inspection.

I should probably have given up on the spot when I walked into the Constitution foyer that night and saw the milling crowds, the noise and confusion. But being the stubborn idiot I am, I proceeded to get up on a bench in front of a pillar and make a fool of myself with an electronic bullhorn. I pointed out my BNFs where they were hiding amidst the oblivious throng and shamed them into joining me on that wobbly bench. I stuck stars on them, explained who they were (or weren't — I still blush to recall that I temporarily confused Harry Bell and Jim Barker) and had some of them say a few words. I'm still having nightmares about it and having trouble believing I actually had the nerve to do it. "The Show Must Go On!" I must've

thought, and I was the clown.

**S**ATURDAY BROUGHT TWO MORE NOTABLE SUCCESSES, a good but flawed panel and a puzzling flop. I can't take much credit for the former and I'm still surprised by the latter. Jeanne Gomoll's humorous slide show, "The Dead Cat in History" (which anticipated Kliban and outdoes him in graphic guts), was the only fan program item to overflow its room. Jeanne had perfected her presentation at Wiscon and its reputation must have preceded it, because it could have filled a much larger room than tiny Modular A to which we'd assigned it. Why we didn't anticipate that of course fans would attend anything to do with cats I'll never know. This item had the best ratio of trouble for me (zero) to results (complete success) and I'm grateful to Jeanne for volunteering it.

The other success, much less of a surprise, was the Futurian panel. Some might call it cheating, but since one of the pro GoH's had a fan background, and had just written a book

about it, I didn't see any reason to hesitate to use him in my program. Damon teamed up with Isaac Asimov, Virginia Kidd and Fred Pohl to form a powerhouse attraction moderated by Terry Carr. This is what I meant before by a fan program item with lowest common denominator appeal — since we all do have SF in common, don't we? This drew a good crowd and kept them happy.

The good but flawed panel was called "The Alien Viewpoint: North American Fandom from an Overseas Perspective — How We Look to Them," which I think was an interesting switch on the usual thing where fans from abroad simply describe their home fandoms (although we did some of that too, in the course of making comparisons). Panelists included Keith Curtis, Dave Langford, Kees van Toorn, Pascal Thomas and Hector Pessina (and I think a couple of others) and the flaw was simply that there were too many panelists and not enough time. This was one of the only panels I attended in full, since I was the moderator, and I found it pretty interesting. One of the happiest dividends of my work on Noreascon was the friendship I formed with Pascal Thomas as a result of this panel.

Saturday's failure was the fancartoonists'



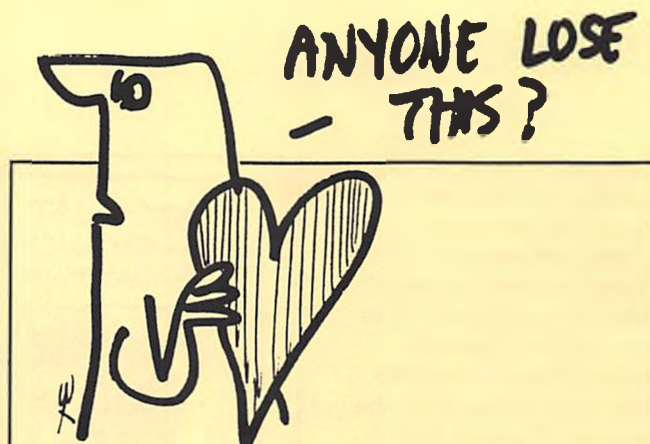
jam. This kind of thing has worked well in the past, but this time, perhaps because of our technical setup, and despite a stellar array of fanartists, it just didn't click. Luck plays an important part in such orchestrated yet spontaneous happenings, and I guess it wasn't with us.

Like Saturday, Sunday had its ups and downs. The author cults panel (about the phenomenon of specialized fandoms forming around certain single authors such as McCaffrey, Lichtenberg and Dickson) at noon had the potential for hot controversy, but moderator Don D'Amassa told me later that I'd miscalculated by packing it with cultists and forgetting to balance it with adversaries. It wasn't fair to expect him to play devil's advocate when he was so outnumbered, but I hear it was pretty interesting anyway. "The Great Debate — Resolved: The Worldcon Should Be Abolished" was my own idea and one of my favorites. I still think it could have been entertaining and provocative if carried out with rigor, but the debaters, I'm told, were insufficiently prepared (one couldn't help it, because he was a last-minute sub for a no-show) and the result fell flat. I'll never know for sure because this is the only one among my

program items that, due to an oversight, was not recorded.

Later that day Taral did a fine job presenting his personal view of the history of fanart with a slide-illustrated lecture; once Logistics got their act together and delivered the projector. This was an item that was planned long in advance and the need for the projector should have been on Logistics' schedule. I still don't understand how our projector got assigned to a special interest group meeting, but I did discover when I ran to Logistics while Taral's audience began to evaporate that even after the projector had become available they were refusing to hand it over to the Program Operations gofer who'd been sent to pick it up because he didn't have any legal i.d. on him! I blew my top when I heard this. Taral deserves credit for not doing likewise when his carefully-prepared presentation could only finally begin almost half an hour late. Looking back on it now, I guess you could say that Logistics' dismal performance in this instance was balanced by their helpfulness in coming up with a projector for Jim Barker on Friday, but I still remember this incident as the most aggravating of the con.

The delay of Taral's "Twiltone Window"



"We had a *hellava* time talking Harry Bell into going on the Cartoonist Jam with us — Jim Barker, Dan Steffan, Grant Canfield, Schirm, Ross Chamberlain, Alexis. The *worst* cartoon jam any of us have ever had. Don't know why. Small room, hard to find . . . a notice in the program that was so convoluted that I missed it . . . east coast fans who didn't understand we wanted them to contribute, get involved. A couple of LA fans tried, but there was a negative energy flow and it *bombed*."

— BILL ROTSLER  
Kteic, October 1980

"I was scheduled to appear on only one program event, the Great Cartoon Jam Session. I am sorry to report that this was one of the most dismal jam sessions I have yet participated in, despite such heavyweight talent as Rotsler, Harry Bell (who had to be *coaxed* to join us), Jim Barker, Ross Chamberlain, Dan Steffan, Marc Shirmeister, and Yertz Trooley. I think there were about a dozen cartoonists in all.

There were problems with the physical set-up, to begin with. We were strung linearly along a table, so we could relate well only to the person directly next to us. In order to show the cartoons to the audience, some chump kept turning out the lights and turning on an overhead projector. This tended to interrupt humorous trains of thought and dampen creative heads of steam. Moreover, the beam of the overhead projector was positioned sadistically to shine directly in my own personal eyes. I had to perform exotic yogic asanas to twist my head and shoulders out of the way of the projected image. Often I couldn't avoid having a critical part of a cartoon fall in a patch of light across my forehead.

We did not generate much top material in this particular jam session — sometimes I wonder if we'll ever again approach the quality and fun of the Great (Spontaneous) Cartoon Jam Session at Torcon in 1973 — but we did come up with a few mildly amusing items, in spite of an audience that was neither particularly helpful with suggestions and situations nor particularly interested. Dan and I got some fairly good laughs with Dr. Who jokes and ca-ca poo-poo stuff. Maybe it wasn't the best jam session I've ever been in, but it was still sort of fun. This proves the ancient adage, 'Bad jamming is better than no jamming at all.' Very ancient, that adage."

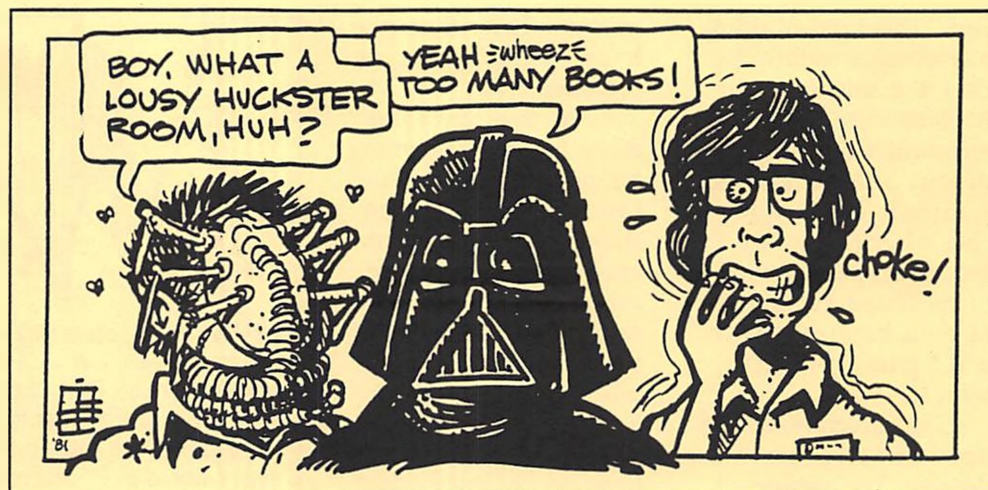
— GRANT CANFIELD  
Waste Paper 10, January 1981



was the final blow to another of my innovations, the so-called "guest editorials." These were to be short talks by prominent fans on topics of general topical fannish interest that would break up the parade of panel after panel and fill gaps in the schedule created by my decision that all fan program items needn't run a full hour. There were to be three of these editorials, one each on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, but only the first, by Sandra Miesel, took place. She spoke with aplomb and no complaint (thanks Sandra!) to a small but appreciative audience after the under-rehearsed "Roscoenian Opening Ceremony" I'd set up for Friday shambled off. (Never rely on your friends for a fanzine column, or to rehearse!) Avedon Carol (last year's fan programmer at Constellation) and Jon Singer never got their duo act together and Gary Farber was bumped by that delayed projector. This is a concept I'd like to see tried again.

Originally listed in the program schedule for Saturday afternoon had been one of my two most ambitious concepts, "Fandom's Greatest Hits," a

\* The other, for a fannish olympics, never made it as far as the schedule. [But was tested in miniature years later at Corlu 7, which I co-chaired in New York, where it worked well and the Boston team, appropriately, won. — MF]



musical review drawing on all the great fan-musicals, produced in the style of "Side By Side By Sondheim." I'd still like to do this someday, but in the summer of 1980 it proved to be one complicated project too many. Instead, we had another innovation (suggested by Lise Eisenberg) which worked so well that it's been imitated since, and deserves to become a regular worldcon feature. We called it "The Spanish Inquisition" and in it the members of the following year's worldcon committee (Denvention) generously allowed themselves to be subjected to tough, even hostile, questions from a panel of smofs, and then from the audience. Their Shields of Umor must have been well-polished, because they kept their cool. This was a great example of confandom-oriented fan-programming, and it worked very well.

Sunday night saw the last of my evening special events and the most successful. A participatory item suggested by Linda Bushyager, "The Claude Degler Memorial Scavenger Hunt" (n.b., Claude Degler yet lives) was fun for all concerned: the members of the hunt teams, the people they brought back to meet some of the requirements, the audience in the hall who watched while the panel of judges vetted the hunters' finds. It went remarkably smoothly and I only wish more people had taken up our invitation to observe if they chose not to hunt.

Monday had three fan program items. The panel on "Politics and Fandom — Should They Mix?" opened the day with lively debate, and the already mentioned 70s-and-beyond time-binding panel closed it. In between was another of my personal favorites, "The Has Beens of Fandom — Past

Worldcon Chairs Talk About Their Trials, Tribulations and Disappearances." It was a favorite because it was another response to my self-set challenge to include cons as well as zines in my fanprogramming, because it simultaneously did a service to a neglected portion of fandom by honoring its deserving fans, because it set a fannish record (most worldcon chairs in one place at one time, ever) and because by its simple existence (and the previous lack) it made an ideological point about the differences between fanzine and con fandoms — how one remembers its high achievers and the other forgets them.

Those differences were becoming keenly obvious to me by the end of Noreascon. I was frustrated by how often reality had fallen short of my plans. I was annoyed, even bitter, at having missed both most of my own



program and almost all the rest of the con. I still have no real sense of what Noreascon was like for the nonworking members. I was shocked to suddenly realize that with the con over all my work was gone with it, that I'd have nothing to show for my efforts but my confused and incomplete memories, that there was now no finished zine to be put on the shelf, no locs or egoboo could be expected. Indeed, that short of disaster a con worker is unlikely to get much feedback on his efforts. The motivation for convention-running activity must be something other than egoboo in the sense that fanzine fans understand it, perhaps a sense of power, or the pleasure of a smoothly running system. Working on Noreascon had, in a masochistic way, been fun while it lasted, and the work *was*, at times, its own reward. But somehow that wasn't enough. I realized as never before that much as I wanted to be a Pelzian generalist, my heart would always be with fanzines — with their smallness, which makes them controllable by one person; with their rich stream of egoboo; with their timebinding, tangible, permanence. Everyone must measure on their own scale of values, but for *me* zinefandom is "better" than confandom, a different kind of community.

American fans would probably agree that British fandom is "better" than U.S. fandom to the extent that it's smaller and tighter, that its members share common assumptions and knowledge of each other. Similarly, zinefandom in general is "better" than confandom to the extent that the parallel comparison is true. (Of course, I realize that a true confan probably wouldn't see it that way.)

So it was that after Noreascon I rededicated myself to fan publishing and writing, joined FAPA, started a new perszine, a column in *Raffles* and perhaps one here in *Gambit* (if this article proves to be more than a oneshot) and announced a project to assemble a *Fancyclopedia III* (since preempted by LACon II, but in a way that will leave someone — perhaps me — the job of producing a *Who's Who* of fandom, since they're planning to go much lighter on the biographical side than I would have). So it was that some of my attitudes and opinions have been changed and others confirmed.

**A**

FTER MY  
EXPERIENCES ON THE  
WORLDCON I HAVE

less patience than ever with worldcon bidders who never stop to think how the worldcon got to its current state — something like a once-sleek ship now encrusted with barnacles — and seem to believe that it sprang with all its now familiar features full-blown from Gernsback's brow (or SaM's, if they know little enough fanhistory to be dangerous). Most bidders seem convinced that voters want the same old things, except maybe more of them, and that they'll automatically vote against anything unfamiliar. Have we really come that far from being star-begotten, clear-eyed forerunners of tomorrow, fully inoculated by our reading matter against future shock?

I've long thought, and now more strongly than ever, that worldcon bids ought to compete not just in city, hotel and committee competence, but in the innovative ideas they offer, in their visions of the con. Although the idea will be considered heretical by some, I've long admired the courage of the much-maligned Mid-American committee in being willing to take a stand on certain controversial issues (even if I don't agree with all their positions). However wrongheaded some consider them, it was a refreshing change from the usual timid complacency. Obviously, given the situation described

above, that's going to remain quite rare. Whatever its utility, fan programming could never have been a campaign issue in the site selection, but had to arise from guilt, or, as one prominent con-running fan was once heard to say (about the related matter of the selection of the fan GoH), "as a sop to the fanzine fans." How ironic that it can't possibly do what it would have to do to get at the guilt's cause.

The underlying assumption of the con and zine fans who promoted the idea is that the fanprogram is supposed to compensate for the perceived fragmentation of the fannish community by somehow, in one weekend, indoctrinating and educating in the mores and folkways people who no longer have the opportunity (or interest?) to absorb them slowly from fanzines and year-long social interactions. This is just not possible. You don't really even get the chance to try, since only a tiny fraction of the attendees will even show up for anything that doesn't have a familiar pro name listed under its heading in the pocket program. How can you hope to create a common foundation of shared assumptions in such circumstances? In addition to the friends of the panelists and people who are in the wrong room expecting



to see Niven-Pournelle vs. Martin-Tuttle in tag-team wrestling (who will leave as soon as they realize that's upstairs in the main ballroom) those who do show up at the fan program are a self-selected tiny few who must already know enough about, or at least be curious about, fannish fandom, to think of coming. In other words, we preach to the converted and to those who can convert themselves without such elaborate help.

The fan program therefore serves no real, worldcon-scale purpose of edification and it's hard not to see it as the concomm's invitation to fannish fandom to engage in collective ego-masturbation in an out of the way freakshow while the rest of the less self-involved worldcon-carnival ignores us and goes on about its big business on the midway.

Beyond the welcome and useful provision of a fan room (And if all the *fans* are in that room, who are all the other people milling around outside?) for the spontaneous gatherings, conversations, debates and bull sessions fannish fans are best at — a fan program may have its flashes of redeeming value, as I hope mine did, but overall, and in the end, is just not worth the effort. The profit doesn't justify the investment, at least as

fan programming is currently conceived.

Only if the fan program were to become, in effect, the whole con, with all the attendees as its participants, that is, if all the programs were eliminated so that the fan room expanded to encompass the whole

convention, so that you put on something resembling a relaxacon (something I've been saying since '78 the worldcon ought to try at least once) would "fan programming" — now having taken on a radically different meaning; one more appropriate to

the participatory, creative, anarchic nature of trufandom — really be of value.

When *all the fans become the program*, the program can be forgotten and, zenlike, fannishness will be all.

— Moshe Feder, 1984

## AFTER WORD

I think a solution may become moot as the worldcon eventually casts loose all fannish ties to go sailing in the mainstream.

Near the end of the article I talked about my new dedication to fanzine fandom and my plans for future fanac. What happened?

I did write a number of column installments for *Raffles* before it folded, which were very well received. (They were, loosely speaking, "British Style" fanzine reviews without the knives.) I think it was the *Raffles* column which led Ted to invite me to write for *Gambit* and resulted in the article you've just read.

I was in FAPA for a few years, shamefully mincing, I regret to say. When I finally missed one deadline too many, I chose not to petition for an extension, as some advised, since I knew my work situation wasn't going to improve. Of course, as I could have predicted, as soon as I left, FAPA had an influx of new people and got really lively. \*sigh!\*

I did one issue of the personalzine, *Class Act*, and got my share of egoboo, although not many LoCs (poetic justice). I don't consider it dead, but sleeping, though I don't know when it might wake up.

I haven't made much more progress with *Who's Who in Fandom* than our friends in Los Angeles have made with *Fancyclopedia III*, but I still think it's a worthy project. One that becomes more urgent with each passing year.

There was one more major piece of fanac on the agenda that I couldn't anticipate in 1984; one that, in an ironic twist, combined my rededication to fanzine fandom with my Noreascon experience. Who could have imagined I would end up *co-chairing* a con myself, albeit one dedicated to fanzines? Due to some behind the scenes problems, and the theft of our remaining t-shirts Saturday night, Corflu 7 has some bitter memories for me, but for the typical attendee, I'm confident it was a success. In a sense it was an outgrowth of what I did in Boston in 1980.

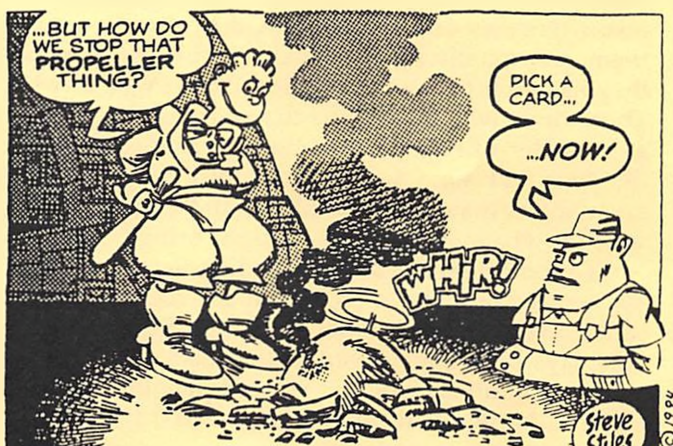
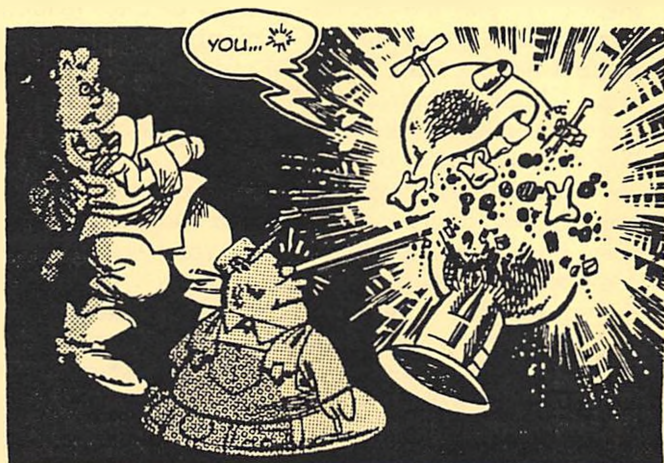
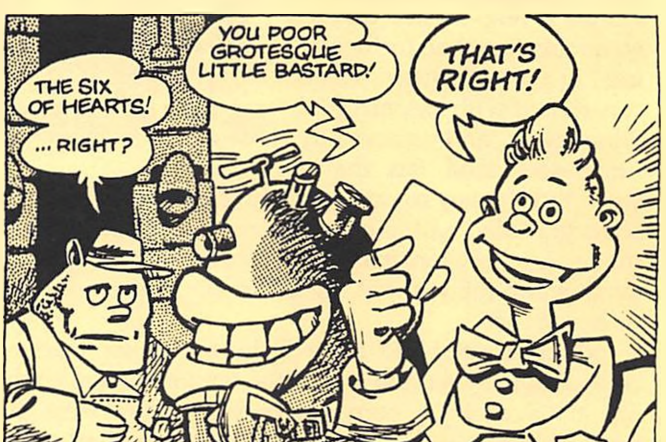
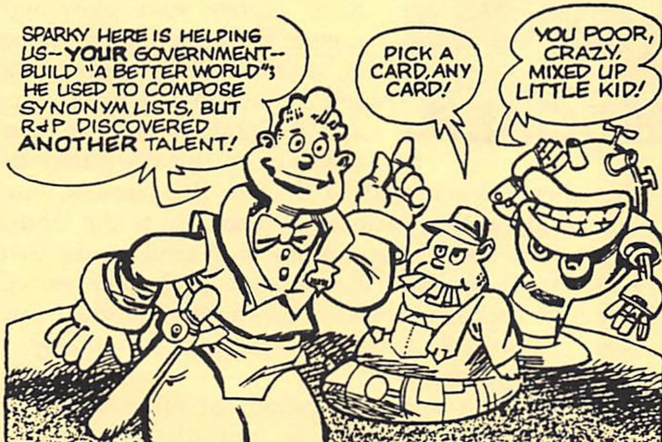
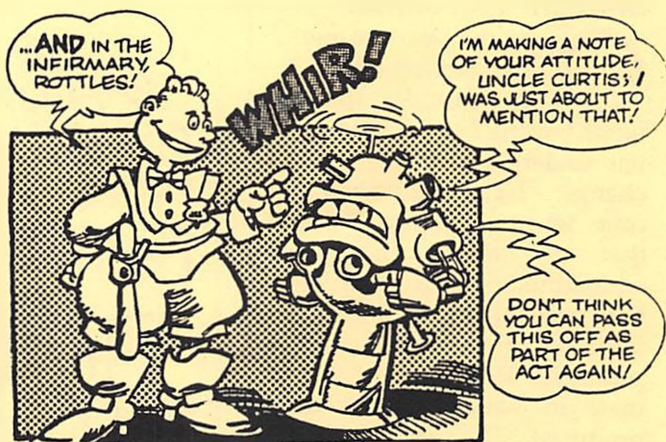
Perhaps of greatest potential import to fanzine fandom is a project I conceived at MagiCon. Its goal is to create a fanzine library on CD-ROM, thus preserving our literally crumbling past and providing a method for affordably distributing our dittoed and mimeod heritage beyond the basements and garages of a few lucky collectors. My work on this so far has consisted mostly of conversations with various experts, but I'm quite serious about this and will try to carry it through, finally redeeming my promise in this article. Since my track record shows I'm much better with projects than with periodicals, perhaps there's even some hope of success.

Go thou and do likewise. Remember, fandom is only as fannish as we make it.

— MF, April 1994



# WORK AND WIN





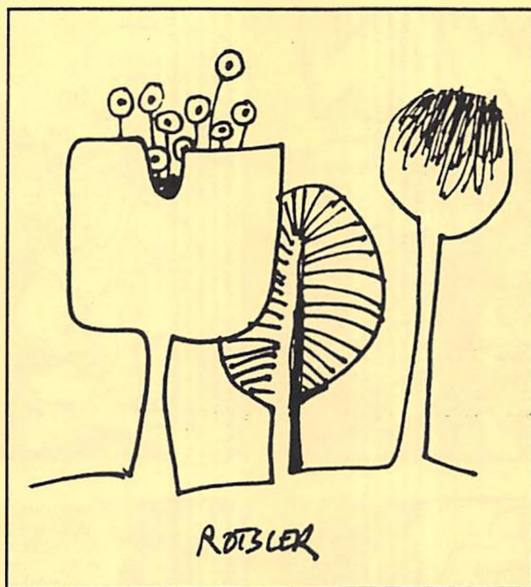
**DANGER! FAN CRITIC!**

Over the years of my brief fannish career, my attitude about what I want from a fanzine has undergone considerable change. I can remember a time when it annoyed me that so many fanzines seemed to spend so much of their time talking about other fanzines, or the people who produced them, or the climate in which they were produced. The first fanzines I ever saw were excruciatingly sercon, but so was I, and I hoped for more of the same as my experience of the field widened.

I'm not sure when the real nature of the fanzine universe ceased to annoy and began to fascinate me, but it didn't take very long. Fandom began to appear as a complex series of semi-mythic interactions between characters that were more roundly rendered than anyone I was meeting in fiction. People were often understandably less than forthcoming in conversation when confronted with me, arrested adolescent and classically under-socialized fan that I was. But the key to understanding all those conversations that died as I entered the room seemed to lie in the pages of fanzines, and their testimony was available to me without regard to who I was in status or experience.

Once printed and mailed, the fan editor loses all control of the eventual fate of the fanzine. People who haven't even been born yet may one day read this issue of BLAT!, and what will be their judgment of us? I feel that it's among the best and most admirable thing about fanzines and the fandom that clusters around them; in committing thoughts and beliefs to paper, they hazard interaction with God knows who or what. Those of us who have come to make this leap of faith as a matter of routine sometimes forget what it was like the first time we dropped our work into the anonymous maw of the mailbox, and began the long wait for whatever response it might bring.

To some degree, I am still reading fanzines with an eye toward building a picture of the society it represents. Even the most trivial and natter-filled personalzine says something about the fannish world it was sent to communicate with. When I pick up a fanzine, I like to know what its provenance is. If the editor



# **DON'T START ME TALKING BY ANDY HOOPER**

hands it to me, or it arrives new in the mail, I like to turn to the colophon or t.o.c., see how long ago it was finished, where and when it was mailed, who are the contributors, the artists, the authors. It frustrates me to be unable to divine these things, especially if the fanzine lacks any listing of its contents or authors. If the fanzine is one I come across in someone's collection, or at an auction, these niceties are even more essential to understanding it. Without provenance, any artifact, no matter how important, is limited in the degree to which it can be related to the world in which it was made and used.

In the course of sorting through crates full of old fanzines, I've come across issues which appear to lack dates, numbers, addresses, any mention of the editor or contributor's names, even titles. I sit there with the dittoed or mimeographed sheets, probably bound with a single staple driven through the upper left hand corner, and glow with rage at the mute idiocy of such an editor who let him or herself be swallowed up in time, and thought so little of themselves or of the work they did

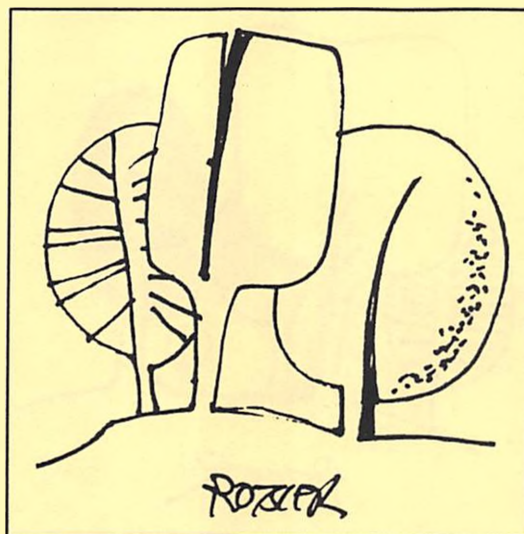
that they have turned to dust in the fannish wind. Something in them wanted to reach out to the fannish agora, but something equally powerful made them hang back, afraid of the possible consequences. Of criticism, and other forms of unwanted attention. Such fear hamstring a fanzine, leaving it unlikely to accomplish much.

There is a wide continuum of obfuscation that editors are prone to use to put distance between themselves and the critical opinions of their readers. Sometimes, a simple failure to number the pages can make it hard to find and point out an offending passage. Chuck Connor, publisher of the fanzine *Thingummybob*, used to do this, and affected an air of being too lazy or distracted to be able to get around to it. Given 36+ unnumbered pages of sometimes dimly mimeographed text, it was inconvenient to quote chapter and verse on something which caught your eye. Readers complained at length about this, so Chuck now grudgingly numbers his pages — with Roman numerals.

Actually, it's hard to imagine why anyone would be worried about the response to *Thingummybob*. Issues #8 and 9 were both superb, with Chuck using the gimmick of segregating each issue by sex. The device



itself was a suitable take-off point for some of the writers, and there were a variety of excellent essays. Issue #10 is mostly full of letters commenting on those two issues, and they make for good reading also. In between locs are Connor's own thumbnail fanzine reviews, and Australian artist Ian Gunn's interminable futuristic law-enforcement comic strip. Of the two, I far prefer Connor's reviews, although what kind of taste in art are we to expect from someone who has such an avowed dislike for Rotzler's work?



Most of Connor's reviews are pleasant little paragraphs, sometimes containing a trenchant observation or two, but his critical standards aren't particularly high. The one which stands out among the rest are his observations of Bill Donaho's second in the revived series of *Habbakuk*. Actually, he doesn't say very much about the fanzine as a whole, spending the better part of a page excoriating Ted White for his review of Guy H. Lillian III's *Challenger* #1. Connor attempts to refute Ted's observations on Lillian's character with a few ad hominem attacks of his own, and the impression one takes from the whole piece is that Chuck is very, very uncomfortable with strong critical opinion, and views those who have them as trouble-makers.

There's another piece of anti-critical theory in #10, "Xenophobia" by Chris Bell. This is one of those "Trufen are such monstrous snobs" articles, decrying the discrimination which fans direct at mundanes, costumers, filkers, and other long-suffering minorities. It's full of irrefutable generalizations like "WE ARE ALL PEOPLE," as well as the ever-popular attack on "the mass of lit'ry fans by the bar." When this, and other whiny, mealy-mouthed drivel like it has finally forced all those degenerates by the bar to finally piss off, who then will the author blame for the sour humor and poor character of British fandom? This piece actually stands in some ironic contrast to the overall tone of Connor's fanzine, which is full of jokes cribbed from vaguely off-color magazines, firmly set in the English "Razzle" tradition. He is also fond of sending his zine out in cleverly printed envelopes, begging postal authorities to be understanding in regard to the recipient's twisted perversions. Gawrsh, what a laff riot.

Whatever else you think of him, Connor always has one supremely redeeming feature to his fanzines. He prints his mailing list — the entire thing — in the back pages of *Thingummybob*. Through this and his copious lettercol, Connor is actually presenting an interesting slice of contemporary British fandom. Read it for this feature, and ignore the editor's appeals for

fair play and polite behavior. Besides, his next issue is supposed to contain some lengthy meditations on outlaw sexuality, so Chuck will presumably find out more than he wants to know about dismissive criticism when certain elements of fandom make their reactions known.

*The Reluctant Famulus* is another fanzine that worries about critics and their poison pens. After reading some things that Ted wrote in *Spent Brass*, the editor, Tom Sadler, wrote to me and exclaimed that Ted's reviews were just the kind of thing he (Sadler)

had always wanted to avoid by keeping Ted off of his mailing list. Actually, I get quite a lot of hate mail directed at Ted White; I have to thank him for so consistently taking the heat off of me and my poor little critical theses, which apparently offend to a much smaller degree. Anyway, this review is partly to let Tom know how hard it is to keep someone from seeing your stuff once you've taken the step of duplicating it two hundred times and dispersing it around the continent.

Actually, I can't see what Sadler has to worry about. In *TRF* he has published a workman-like sercon fanzine, not remarkable, but not by any means a crudzine. #31, from December of last year, is the fifth annish, and features a fascinating collection of columnists, including Willis, Ken Cheslin, Benoit Girard, Helen E. Davis and Joseph T. Major. It also features fiction by Jean Lamb, Buck Coulson and Steve Antczak, which I'm willing to say is not appreciably worse than a lot of stuff appearing in *F&SF* and *Analog*. The fiction and the presence of Buck Coulson are a useful clue; in many ways, *TRF* is a worthy successor to *Yandro*.

As a way of celebrating the fifth anniversary of the venture, Sadler offers a long piece of faan fiction to lead off the issue. This is, without question, the most useful piece in the entire fanzine. Through the insertion of his most significant correspondents and columnists as characters in the story, Sadler provides the reader with a ready-made roster of the cross-section of fandom represented in his fanzine. *TRF* is a fanzine which provides a forum for some of the harder-working and lesser-known writers and artists in fandom, and regards them as being first-rate contributors. I get some sense of a chip on the collective shoulder here, as if some of the writers are aware of being counted as second-rate by the fanzine "elite."

There isn't much here that I would count among the best things I've read this year, but it is entertaining stuff in the main. Willis and Cheslin's articles are the best, but Sadler's cogent ideas on the future of the SF field are well-written, and he gives himself the space



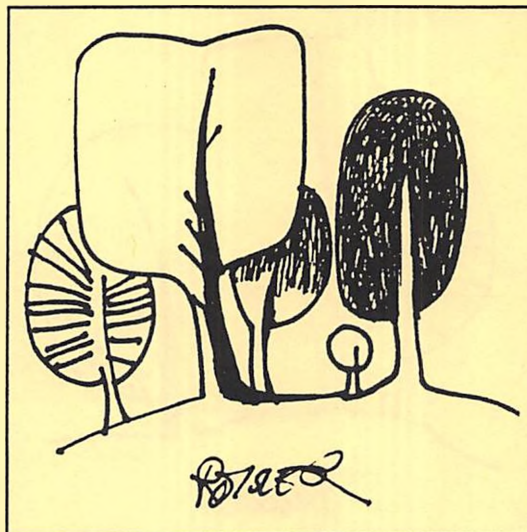
to develop his arguments, something which is far too uncommon in today's capsule-review environment.

There are some less successful pieces. Helen Davis' contribution is an exercise in syllogism in support of religion in SF, and Major's dismissive article on the fanzine scene of 1975 presents a tidy little thesis based on his limited experience of the field at that time. His references to some author by the name of "Harold Waldrop" is an indication of how well we can trust his conclusions. In physical lay-out, *TRF* reminds me of a less-crowded version of *Fosfax*. He uses a lot of art, but very little of it seems to have been executed with *TRF* in mind. Sadler has a liking for fan artists like Peggy Ransom, Linda Michaels and Diana Harlan Stein, who are very technically proficient, but whose work sometimes seems to have a generic character to it. I'd like to see some fan-editor really challenge any one of these artists to illustrate some specific material, and not settle for the garden-variety fantasy figures that they seem able to illustrate in their sleep. I think they would probably rise to the occasion.

At the end of the fanzine, Sadler says "One of my goals with *TRF* has been to get people to take it seriously as a fanzine and as a worthy place for those of us who write and draw to present their works. I seem to be still working on that goal with microscopic progress. But I am persevering, and eventually I hope *TRF* can feature the work of those fans I've seen in other zines as well as that of lesser known or unknown fans who have appeared here and who I hope will continue to appear here." Tom, you've nothing to fear in these regards. *TRF* is an attractive fanzine, and if the quality of material is uneven, every title is prone to that problem. Tom Sadler is a fan-editor with a well-framed editorial philosophy, and I can't imagine that he would garner anything but respect from the people whose critical opinions seem to so thoroughly unnerve him.

Of course, there are people who don't make their fanzines available to the so-called critical theorists of the field because they just don't care what supposed experts think. One such editor is Henry R. Welch, who publishes *The Knarley Knews*. (Okay, so it's a really bad title.) I have in my hand issue #44, from February of this year. It has a rather handsome cover, in a generic fantasy vein, by Irene Salzmann, disfigured with a really ugly "digital clock"-style title font. It also bears a price — \$1.50 — right out there on the cover. I don't imagine he sells too many copies, but hey, photocopying is expensive these days.

Turning to the first page, the editorial guidelines jump right out at me. The first thing they list is: "1.



All contributors may include a pseudonym (e.g., Knarley, Sydrous, Shit-for-Brains) at the contributor's whim." I don't recall ever seeing a fan editor actually invite people to make pseudonymous contributions to their fanzine before. To me, it indicates another case of unhealthy preoccupation with the critical consequences of one's work.

Henry (or his alter-ego, "Knarley") opens the issue with a mildly-ranting editorial about pleas of diminished responsibility in recent celebrated court cases. His personal philosophy seems to run

toward an easy strain of quasi-libertarian rhetoric, familiar to anyone who listens to AM radio talk shows. Seldom does he relate these editorials to fannish issues per se, because Henry still regards himself as something of an outsider in the fannish world. He professes a complete disinterest in fanzines more than a year or two old, and has thus far exhibited no desire to achieve assimilation into the social context of fandom. What he is trying to do instead is build his own parallel community from his correspondents and columnists.

I'd say he's having some success. The issue at hand contains only a little material beyond the editorializing of Welch and the pleasant natter of his wife Letha, but it does have a healthy lettercol. All fanzines strive in some way to stake out their own peer group within the fannish whole; *The Knarley Knews* seems to have achieved an interesting mix of correspondents. Some are just friendly fen who respond to most everything they get. Others are clearly attracted by Henry's rejection of fannish icons, and refusal to recognize any established fannish social order. Brian Earl Brown, "Lan" Laskowski, Joseph T. Major, and Buck Coulson all have healthy locs in this issue. Harry Cameron Andruschak also appears, beginning a regular column on non-fiction science books. Dr. Schak also has a notable presence in *The Reluctant Famulus* and *Thingumybob*, and I think it is time to recognize that as much as people like to dismiss Harry, he has become something of a BNF in some circles, and regardless of what you think of him he is one of the most prolific letter-hacks in fandom today.

Actually, *The Knarley Knews* is a fanzine that caters to the average letter-hack. It comes out frequently and dependably, it isn't so long that you can't respond to it in a page of comment, and it prints a large proportion of the letters received. There's no question that Henry is building the kind of fan group he wants to associate with through the medium of his publishing. The only grounds on which I can fault him are fan-historical. If Henry remains true to his anti-fan-historical ideals, he



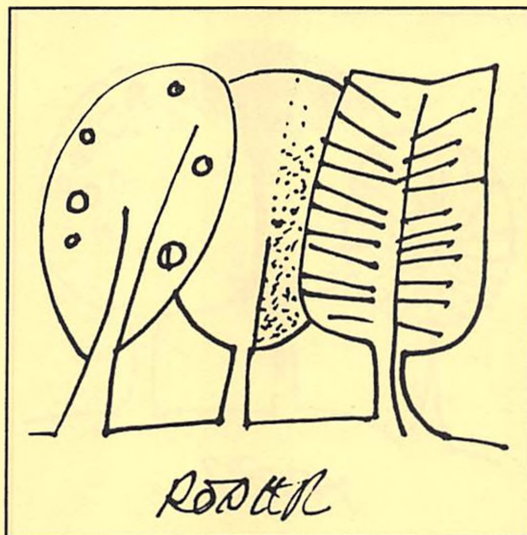
will never undertake to put his peer group, their efforts and achievements, into a historic context which can be understood by generations of fan as yet unborn. And no matter how banal and self-serving a facet of fandom may be, I doubt that it ever deserves to be forgotten altogether.

There's certainly no danger of that ever happening to Leah Zeldes Smith's friends and acquaintances. Her *Stet* #8 has made it's way into the mail, after hellish delays and diversions occasioned by their glorious DUFF victory and then being forced to move into a new house by the destruction of the old one to make way for an airport expansion. This issue was supposed to be a special "Chicago" issue, designed to prove to various naysayers that there is in fact fan-life in the Windy city. Unfortunately, she couldn't get any fans who actually live in Chicago to contribute, and so #8 has become the "Illinois" issue.

I think it may be my favorite issue so far. Not only does it have some really good articles, and the usual amazing mimeography of Dick Smith, but because their correspondence file still hasn't emerged from the moving chaos, the issue isn't dominated by the enormous letter columns as have other recent issues. I was especially impressed by the text of Betty Hull's address on secular values to a meeting of her academic peers, and by Gene Wolfe's entertaining musing on "How I got three zip codes." *Stet* also features a regular column on "Alternate Fandoms," and this time out we're treated to Neil Rest's description of Dead Head culture.

And there are other passages designed to warm a fan-historian's heart. Jackie Causgrove's "The LLL: A Herstory, or, Promiscuous Midwest Fannedom on the March. . . ." is willing to name names, and the inclusion of Larry Tucker's "I was a Sex Slave for the LLL" adds a further perspective. Bob Tucker's "Tucker's NEW! IMPROVED! Quotations" is only about one full page long but any taste of Bob's humor is always deeply appreciated.

In some ways, this issue of *Stet* is what *Mimosa* would be like if it had some kind of attitude about things. Dick and Leah are fans who have never been shy about defending their friends and the principles they think are important. Some of this forthright nature comes through on every page of *Stet*, as the lives and times of midwestern fannish notables are celebrated. I can't imagine Leah refusing to communicate with or send her zine to someone on the grounds of their critical opinion. She might hand them their head for their troubles, but I suspect she'd keep sending them her zine.



People often talk about regional and local chauvinism as a divisive, limiting force in fandom. But from a fanhistorical perspective, strong regional prejudices are actually much to be desired. I can open any of a dozen fanzines and get a handle on the universal concerns and features of fandom at large. But to find information on the character of a specific regional fandom, there are a limited number of sources available. The information gathered from such sources may not address things which the most rarefied fan-theorists regard as signifi-

cant, but I've never been able to make those distinctions very well. To me, it's all fascinating.

Another fanzine which seems to have no fears about critical response is Geri Sullivan's *Idea*. And Geri is in many ways the fan-historian's dream editor. Not too many fanzines come with a musical explanation of their titles on the back cover. The contributors' addresses are out in plain sight, on page three. She reproduces the signatures of letter hacks at the bottom of their letters. And Geri manages to simultaneously keep alive the spirit of crazy Minneapolis fandom, while tying in to the Spiritus Roscoe as tightly as any editor now publishing. Before anyone writes in to point this out, there is a difference between having an interest in issues important to a local fan group, and using that group as a means to avoid fandom at large. *Idea* is a great illustration of how to celebrate the special character of your home-town fan club, while discussing issues and ideas that everyone in fandom can relate to.

I have issue #8 in hand. It's a marvel. I freely admit that this is my favorite contemporary fanzine. I find other fanzines more impressive, or thoughtful, or even more entertaining, but *Idea* is just my favorite. #8 has yards of beautiful art, including a Ross Chamberlain multi-color cover. Physically, the only equal to come to mind from recent years was the last issue of *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly*. Fascinating articles by Jeanne Gomoll, Luke McGuff, Jeff Schalles, good (and funny) poetry by Terry Garey, and S&M humor by Bob Berlien. Who knows what that last bit will lead readers to say . . . probably they'll be too busy trying to decipher Ted White's faan fictitious "Nightmare at ConFrancisco."

Ted certainly does seem to be getting around these days, doesn't he? Perhaps Geri doesn't realize what a divisive force Ted is, in Chuck Connor's words, "Isn't it about time that the last dregs of the 60's drug culture came down from out of the clouds and found a nice little corner to OD in?"

Ted's piece in *IDEA* is his way of commenting on contemporary reactions to criticism. It's hard not to

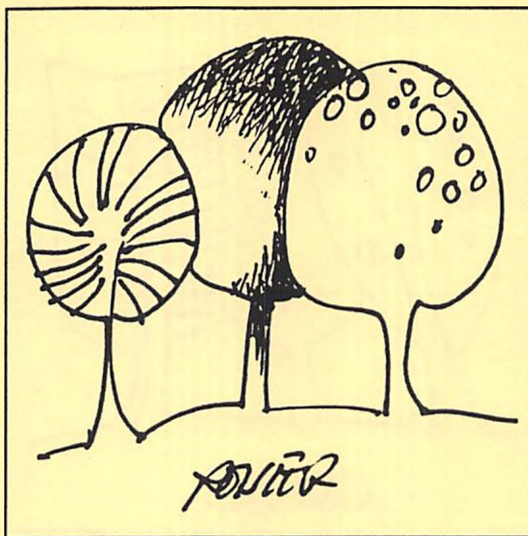


wonder if his surreal impressions of "The New Fandom" might not be an accurate assessment, when a piece of fanzine criticism can make people on another continent wish that he would just die. But I think the strident yelps of the skewered are a recurrent theme in fandom, and not representative of any particular trend. There have always been people who wanted to cut themselves off from what they perceived as the smoffish, snobby prejudices of fandom at large, and congealed little fannish communities around themselves.

They guarantee themselves unstinting praise and pleasant comments in response to their work, and in the process, freeze their achievements at whatever dubious level they have risen to in their cloister of yes-men.

I've never liked the idea. I don't enter into a kind of symbiosis with my correspondents and contributors, where I make them feel important in exchange for their praise. I've been stung with criticism from time to time, but I try to learn from the points people raise, and when I receive good notices, I know that I can trust most of them to be genuine. If we encourage an environment in which criticism has to be kept under control, lest someone's feelings be hurt, what kind of value can we put on a positive review? Without pygmies for perspective, how can we accurately name the giants?

All of the fanzines reviewed in this article are quite



successful by their own criteria. I just wish some of them might try to aim a little higher from time to time, even if it brought them to the attention of some critical ogres. After all, if editors like Leah and Geri, who serve a large, varied mailing-list, and publish some controversial material from time to time, weren't willing to risk brutal criticism, then they would never have been able to read this kind of fulsome, but well-deserved praise for their efforts.

#### FANZINES REVIEWED:

*Idea #8*, edited by Geri Sullivan, Toad Hall, 3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408-4315. Available for the usual.

*The Knarley Knews #44*, edited by Henry & Letha Welch, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton, WI 53024-8763, available for the usual, \$1.50 for a sample copy.

*The Reluctant Famulus #31* (5th Annish), edited by Thomas D. Sadler, 422 Maple Ave., Adrian, MI 49211-1627. Available for the usual, or \$1.50 an issue.

*Stet #8*, edited and published by Leah Zeldes Smith and Dick Smith, 410 W. Willow Rd., Prospect Heights, IL 60070-1250. Available for more or less the usual, sample copies available for \$3.00.

*Thingumybob #10*, edited by Chuck Connor, Sildan House, Chediston Rd., Wissett, Near Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF, United Kingdom, available for the usual, but at least one letter per three issues.

— Andy Hooper



**D. West  
sez**

"Listen kid," I tell him. "They talk a lot of crap about fandom being elitist and exclusive and a closed circle and all the rest of it. Well, yes, it *is* elitist and exclusive and a bit of a closed circle, but unless you're a complete fucking moron (or totally paranoid) it's not all that difficult to get *in*."

He stares at me rather as if he's wondering not how to get *in*, but how to get *out*.

"All you got to do," I say, gesturing oratorically, "is sort of hang around, take a few drinks —" (demonstration; this is making me hoarse) "fall over —" (demonstration; I seem to have had a few already) "make a fool of yourself —" (demonstration; *passim*) "and just generally *show willing*, and people will accept you in no time at all. I mean, look at some of the fucking idiots who made it already, right? But if you come on all hysterical and persecuted, and crouch under the table yelling 'Nobody loves me! It's all a fucking conspiracy!' and so on and so forth, all you're going to get is the old raised eyebrow and curled lip routine. You got to remember: *we were here first*. So if you want in on the scene you have to make a little effort on the local customs. If you don't like it — go start your own bunch of elitist wankers. Just bear in mind — nobody owes *you* anything, and they don't really give a shit whether you approve of them or not. It's all down to you — join up and have fun *our* way, or fuck off someplace else and do it *your* way."

— D. West, "Performance," *Tappen* 5, November 1982





**Mark  
Kernes**

artwork by  
*Craig Smith*

## My Life as a Porn Star

Three years ago, when I was a court reporter (public stenographer) in Media, Pennsylvania, I never dreamed that I would one day be displaying my more-than-ample rump for thousands (hopefully not millions) of Americans to jack off to.

For those who don't know me, I've been a fan for most of the last 20 years, now more-or-less gafiated. For about that same period of time, I've been writing movie reviews for *Adult Video News*, the porn industry's trade magazine. Those who *do* know me, are aware that I'd been talking about getting out of court reporting for years. When my boss at AVN announced that the magazine was about to pack up and move from Upper Darby, PA to Los Angeles, he asked did I want to come on board full time as an editor? I could hardly say no.

As it turned out, this change was more than just switching professions and coasts; it was an introduction to a whole other lifestyle. In many ways it was as different from my "normal" life as was my transition from dropping out of Carnegie Tech to entering the work force, after a few months in Haight-Ashbury in '67.

Without getting into it in too much depth, let me just say that the adult entertainment community (as we like to call ourselves) is a fairly insular group — it has to be to survive. Let's remember that America is obsessed with sex, and we're the ones who manufacture it for them. This makes porn actresses the targets of all sorts of weirdos and porn fanatics who want to know everything about their lives, and get as close to them as possible. There are also the various censorship groups (including the federal and various local governments) who believe porn is the work of Satan and that all us adult industry types should be burned at the stake. I suspect that if Ulysses had spent more time between Scylla and Charybdis, he'd have gone as delightfully batty as some of my new-found friends.

At least the people who work in adult films are interesting, some fascinating, with just the sort of twisted view on life that I've always savored. I was attracted to the lifestyle practically from the moment I started to



comprehend it. Interestingly, the same is not true of my two bosses, the publisher and editor-in-chief of the magazine. Even after more than two and a half years in this Mecca of porn production, neither has very many friends on the acting end of the business. Instead, they prefer to cultivate the tape manufacturers who are, for the most part — surprise! — a bunch of old (and a few young) Jewish guys who don't even get turned on by the stuff, and who rarely look at their own product before shipping it out. (And you wondered why there are so many boring, tepid porn tapes. . . .)

Anyway, one of the perks of my job is that I occasionally get to write an "on-the-set piece" about a feature currently in production. That means going to the sound stage where the production is being shot — of which there are about five in the San Fernando Valley just north of LA proper — or on location at various fine-looking houses in the Hollywood Hills and environs. It means talking to the director, performers, stage crew, etc., getting salient quotes for the article, and watching dialogue and sex scenes being performed so I can comment on them later.

Despite what the pundits say, there are people in porn films who can actually act. For drama, try Ashlyn Gere and Deidre Holland, who respectively won and were nominated for awards for 1992's *Chameleons*, a very sexy science-fiction offering that certainly touched some of my deepest fantasies. Joey Silvera, Randy Spears, Tony Tedeschi and, to a lesser extent, Mike Horner have all essayed dramatic roles and seemed believable. For comedy, you can hardly do better than *Haunted Nights*, starring porn's premiere comedy team, Jonathan Morgan and Steven St. Croix, who manage to out-slapstick The Three Stooges, the Marx Brothers and Abbott and Costello combined, admittedly by stealing from all of them, but it's tough not to be derivative these days, and the world of sex videos is very forgiving.

One thing you should know is that 95% of the features are made on a shoestring — \$4,000 to \$10,000 tops, most of which is taken up renting the sound stage, the cameras and other equipment, paying cast and crew, editing the movie, and shooting and printing the boxcover — so the term "cutting corners" takes on a whole new meaning. Among other things, it means that, except for the most expensive shoots, there are zero dollars to hire extras — which, in turn, means that anybody who happens to be hanging around the set (friends of the director or cast, AVN reporters, etc.)

may be solicited for non-sexual roles, like sitting at tables in a bar scene, or performing any sort of background movement that may be required to make things seem more realistic.

My first encounter with this phenomenon was in December of '91, when I was doing my first on-the-set piece about *Mummy III — The Parting*, starring Nina Hartley, Raven, Jenna Wells and several others. Since it was my first time, my immediate boss, Gene Ross, accompanied me to the set. We arrived about 11 a.m., that being when the first shot usually gets off though, depending on the make-up needed, the actors' call time may be as early as 6.

I found the actors' small talk while they sat around between scenes interesting. Much of it was gossip about other performers. The girls told each other where the best-paying dance gigs were, discussed who'd recently had her tits enlarged and by how much, which guys had trouble getting it up (called "getting wood" in the trade) last week, and who was fighting with his/her girl/boyfriend — it was great, kind of like being at a meeting of a secret clan. Hence, I was in no hurry to leave at 5 o'clock, when Gene decided to take off. I had only tasted a bit of the action, and felt it was my duty, in the words of the great journalist Hunter Thompson, to "cover the story."

It's not uncommon for porn shoots to go well into the night (this particular one didn't wrap until 2 a.m.), but one of the nice things about late nights is that when everybody gets nice and sleepy, anything's liable to happen. In this case, Jenna Wells, a German actress and, as it turned out, excellent torch singer, performed a couple of her original songs for us just after midnight.

Anyway, about 10 p.m., the director walked off the set, fuming that one of the actors who was supposed to perform in the next threeway hadn't showed up, so he (the director) was going to have to rewrite the script to make it just a boy/girl scene. Trouble was, the missing actor was also supposed to play the part of a guide who, after the (hopefully) earth-shattering sex, was supposed to direct the remaining guy and girl to rejoin their tour group. So what was missing was a segue — and then the director looked at me.

"So, ever been in a porn movie before?" he asked.

I admitted I had not.

"Look, we're kind of stuck here," he continued. "I need someone to walk in after Marissa [Malibu] and Ted [Wilson] have finished fucking and say a couple of lines. Feel up to it?"



Bobby Neuwave by Matt Howarth



## SIDEBAR

From time to time Mark has shipped his friends porn videos; since the Earthquake he's been sending huge boxes full of them, apparently swept up from off the floor after being dumped there. The last box I got had over forty tapes in it.

After watching many porn tapes I've come to the conclusion that most of them fall into one of three categories. (The remainder are kinky specialties, of which there are not many, and "historical" collections of porn films made in the twenties and thirties, most of them copies of copies and hard to watch.)

The first category might be called the "Feature Film," although it will never be shown in a theater, and was probably shot on tape. These tapes have the highest production values: good "photography" and good-looking actresses. But, as Mark points out, these tapes are made in the usual Hollywood way, with scenes shot over and over, etc., and one is almost always aware that what one is watching is being *acted*: it's not "real" in any emotional sense. With rare exceptions, these "Features" are very unimaginative. The "story" exists solely to bring together in various couplings the various actors. Each coupling is pretty much like those which preceded and followed it: each performs oral sex on the other, after which they fornicate in a variety of unlikely positions that allow the camera intimate access.

"Feature Films" present a single story in an hour or so (which may be preceded with "commercials" for 900-number sex lines: attractive women perform various sex acts on themselves and each other while holding a phone — and you could be on the other end of that phone! Yeah, sure.) but the second category of tapes are anthologies of scenes from a variety of Features: Best Of collections, sometimes grouped around a common theme, like oral sex, anal sex, transvestism ("she-males"), black-white sex, etc. These tend to be more variable in terms of production values, but they offer more bang for the buck, literally, since they cut out all the extraneous scenes (in which porn actors try to actually "act," and usually fail miserably) to concentrate on the sex scenes. One wonders whether these anthologies are just the sleazy producers' way of making more money out of the same footage, or if maybe they might be "boot-legs," clipping scenes from others' tapes without permission. (Mark?)

The third category is the one I find most fascinating: Amateur Videos. These are made by Real People. The women are often not beautiful (some are downright unattractive, to me at least), but you know that what you're watching is the document of something real: the woman is not faking her enjoyment and she is not chanting "Oo-ya!" over and over. Most appear to be "swingers;" their husband is often the man behind the camera, recording his wife's encounter with another man. These videos have the capacity to be far more genuinely erotic than those which are "acted" precisely because of their reality.

I used to be a big fan of *People's Court*; I watched nearly every show in its history. I loved it because the participants were *real*. No one wrote their lines. Although it's nowhere as good, I watch *Love Connection* for the same reason: real people thrust upon each other and what they do about it.

Similarly, although she's overweight and was never pretty, "Rhonda," of the Rhonda Series of amateur videos, has enough Attitude to turn me on. She's not acting: she's doing what she gets off on doing. "God, you're a Nasty Bitch," he husband says, approvingly, at the conclusion of one scene. Sex for her is good dirty fun.

I have no idea how Mark managed to watch — and review — so many porn videos without burning out on them. After a while the unimaginative majority begins to blend together. You start fast-forwarding, waiting for something fresh to occur, and find yourself at the end of another tape. If I had to review these videos, I'd pan most of them. No doubt that wouldn't make me very popular in the porn community. Oh well.

— Ted White

Well, the rest is history (and, incidentally, the genesis of that photo of me wearing a fez that AVN readers will be familiar with).

Since my debut in *Mummy III*, where I appeared under my stage name, Bobby Neuwave (a tribute to Matt Howarth's comic strip character), I've had bit parts in about a dozen features. The most extensive part took place last November at Springboard Studios for a picture named *Prescription For Pleasure*.

I'd actually been asked to do this role ahead of time by a videographer friend of mine, Kathy Mack, who was to be one of the camerapeople on the shoot. I was to play one of a pair of nerdy scientists who conjure up "virtual reality" sex scenes to try to stimulate the protagonist, who's having trouble getting it up.

My call time for the picture was 1 p.m., but they didn't get around to shooting my scenes until after 9, so I had a bit of time on my hands. Since the weather was pleasant, I waited outside with my fellow nerdy scientist, E.Z. Ryder. "Zack" is 55 years old and an ex-biker, which makes him simultaneously one of the oldest and one of the most unusual guys in the industry. Since I'm 45, he looks on me as a comrade, and we tend to have lively, often philosophical discussions when we find ourselves thrown together at industry functions.

This particular day, Zack and I were wandering around the parking lot when we met up with the studio's owner, Ed. The three of us were standing around, admiring Zack's new Harley, which he'd bought in Italy and had shipped back, when quite off-handedly, Ed said to me, "So, do you think you'd like to do hardcore?"

"You're kidding, right?"

"No," he replied. "I mean it."

"Well, first off, I don't know if my boss will let me," I said, trying in vain to remember what the office policy might be on this subject. "Second, I'm not sure if I want to, and third, I don't know if I *can*."

"Well, give it some thought and get back to me," he concluded and walked off.

So I thought about the offer, and thought a little more, and decided that I should at least get over the first hurdle before considering it further. So I casually mentioned to Paul, the publisher, that this guy Ed (whom Paul knew) had asked me to do a hardcore

scene and would it be okay, if I wanted to? To my surprise, he said, "Sure, if you really want to." At first, I didn't believe he'd agree so quickly. I expected Paul to take the same sort of hard line that Gene would (and eventually did). So I asked him a second time, and he laughed and again assented.

Okay; I had permission to do it if I wanted to. So the next question





became, did I want to? Now, very few people I know would turn down getting laid, but I knew enough about the business to know that what I was considering doing wasn't all that much fun. The typical hardcore sex scene takes about two hours to film (videotape, actually), and involves many changes of position with a lot of people who *have* to be there looking on — the director, cameraman, sound guy, various technicians — and pretty much the whole time I would have to stay hard without actually cumming.

But I've never been the type of guy who would say "no" to a semi-pleasurable experience that seemed to have no bad consequences. Now I was more preoccupied with the question of *could I?* rather than *do I want to?* Finally I decided that the only answer to *could I?* was to try it and see.

Ed was happy. As he later explained to me, "When I look at a sex scene between, say, Victoria Paris and Peter North [two very famous performers], it's not easy for me to put myself in Peter's place and imagine that I'm the one fucking Victoria. He's just too good-looking; I can't relate to him. Besides that, everybody and his brother has a scene of Peter North fucking Victoria Paris, but nobody else has a scene of Mark Kernes fucking anybody." So Ed started searching his address book for somebody for me to have my scene with.

I only had a couple of prerequisites for partners: no airheads and no space cadets — both terms subject to their usual definitions. However, the first partner Ed offered was Saki St. Jermaine, who presented a special problem. I'd known Saki and her husband Michael for a couple of years, and though she was a nice person — she once gave Wayne Summers a blowjob in his dressing room because he said draining off a little sperm would help him "keep wood" longer during his scene — she was also over 40 years old, and Michael had been after me off and on to give her some plugs in the magazine. I'd dodged the pleas because, frankly, I didn't find Saki particularly attractive, and I didn't think our readers did either. My own opinion was that she should retire gracefully, and I didn't want to inadvertently be the one that slowed that process. So I nixed the choice.

A few days later, Ed got back to me with a list of about ten actresses to choose

from. I don't remember them all, but a couple of names do stick out: Debi Diamond, one of the best performers around — she won Female Performer of the Year at our last awards show — Kaitlyn Ashley, a newcomer whom I'd interviewed shortly after she got in the business, and who continues to thank me for helping her career, and Lilli Xene, another good friend in the biz and also an excellent performer. I recall that somehow, I was able to give him my top three or four choices, but I did say that anyone on the list would be acceptable. Ed said he'd get back to me.

The next I heard from him, he said no one on the list was free when he wanted to shoot (though I suspect that more than one simply turned him down when she found out whom she'd be working with), but would I be interested in trying it with Sharon Mitchell, who'd indicated a willingness to work with me?

Now, "Mitch" (as she prefers to be called) is probably familiar to anyone who's watched more than ten porn movies. She's been making porn flicks for 17 years, and while I wouldn't describe her as beautiful, "she has her own face," as a Heinlein character might say, which is good enough for me. Besides, given the life I know she's led, there isn't too much she hasn't tried at least once and, more importantly, she's come through it all relatively unscathed. Mitch was one of the first porn stars I ever met, and we'd been friendly for more than two years, though we didn't (still don't) talk that often.

All of this flashed through my mind quickly, and I accepted Ed's offer on the spot. Now I had a co-star. The next step was the AIDS test. Since very few in the industry work with condoms, for reasons too complicated to go into here, most actors won't work with anyone who hasn't got a current AIDS test; "current" being defined as within the last three months. (It used to be six months before an industry-wide scare last summer.) There are several



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Total Iron See Reverse	Calcium 8.5-10.8 mg/dL	Ion. Ca. (Calc) 2.5-3.2 mg/dL	Phosphorus 2.5-4.5 mg/dL	LDH Up to 240 U/L	SGPT Up to 40 U/L	SGPT Up to 45 U/L	Alk. Phos. 25-140 U/L	GGT 0-45 U/L	Total Bil. Up to 1.2 mg/dL
Total Iron Binding Cap. See Reverse	%Saturation See Reverse	Ferritin See Reverse	CO <sub>2</sub> 22-32 mEq/L	LDL Cholesterol <130 mg/dL	CHOL/HDL RATIO See Reverse	T4 (RIA) 4.5-12.0 mcg/dL	FT <sub>4</sub> 1.1-1.9 ng/dL	T3 (RIA) 80-200 ng/dL	TSH 0.4-6.0 uIU/mL
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									RPR Serology
									Negative



local clinics that administer the test fairly cheaply, but only one or two that, believe it or not, will put your name on the test results, and for a porn actor, that part is important. So I went in one day after work and had my blood drawn (which took about a half hour, because nobody can seem to find my veins), and was told to come back the next day. The test cost \$45, and I was a little apprehensive about getting the results, since I'd never been tested before. Who knows what you can pick up from a toilet seat? Fortunately, as it turned out, I had nothing to worry about.

The shoot was set for Wednesday evening, December 15th, at Springboard. I hurried home after work that day, showered, deodorized, changed clothes to something suitable, and headed for the studio. I arrived about 6:30; Mitch and Ed were sitting in his office talking. I pulled up a chair and joined in whatever discussion was in progress. I was a little nervous, but strangely, it wasn't because I thought I wouldn't be able to perform; I was not nervous about that.

Finally, Ed said, "Shall we do it?" and led us upstairs to a smaller studio on the second floor, because the main stage was already built for a crew that would come in early the following morning. Our "set" consisted of a couch, end table, coffee table and some sort of backdrop. As I entered the room, Ed handed me a slip of paper with some lines written on it, the gist of which was that I had just lost my girlfriend and was feeling very unattractive to the opposite sex, when suddenly Mitch appears in a puff of smoke and seduces me à la *Tea And Sympathy*, to soothe my damaged ego.

The crew consisted of Barry, the cameraman; Ed the director; and Ed's partner, whose name I never did catch, as the monitor guy. I guess Ed was afraid that more people might cause me problems, but at this point, I'm inclined to doubt that it would.

Ed had me sit on the couch, admiring a photo of Mitch in some Japanese movie fan magazine, and look startled as he stopped and restarted the camera so Mitch could "magically" appear. We said our lines two or three times (for "safety"), and then did "singles" of most of them — so he could have a few close-ups — then into the action.

Ed, Mitch and I discussed beforehand what action he'd like. Ed said the reverse cowgirl position is every director's dream. That's where the woman sits astride

the man, facing his feet, and bounces up and down on his cock; he may or may not be stroking her breasts at the time. That position was fine with me, but we figured to work into it by way of a blowjob and some pussy licking — pretty normal stuff when it comes to a porn movie.

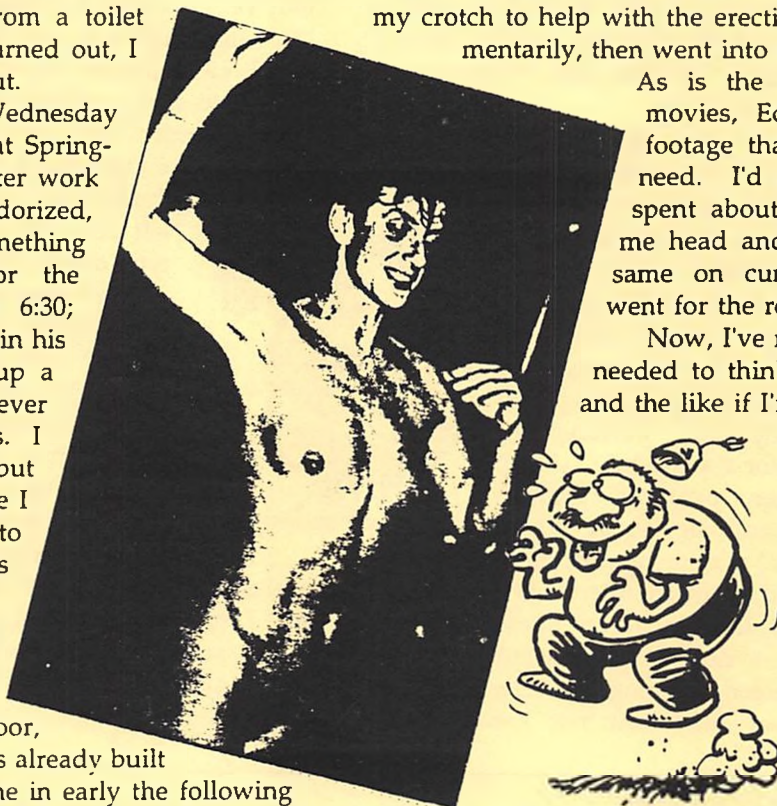
Back to the couch. Mitch undressed herself — she was wearing some sort of harem costume, as I recall — and then she started to undress me, while massaging my crotch to help with the erection. We kissed momentarily, then went into the clinch.

As is the case in the "real" movies, Ed shot much more footage than he was likely to need. I'd estimate that Mitch spent about 20 minutes giving me head and I spent about the same on cunnilingus; then we went for the reverse cowgirl.

Now, I've never been one who needed to think of baseball scores and the like if I'm fucking a girl I'm not infatuated with. (Infatuation situations have always been a disaster for me, but that's another story.) But even if I was, it really wouldn't have mattered. Mitch is enough of a

pro to know that even slightly varying her rhythm and position would be enough to bring me back from the edge — if I'd been near it. As it was, I just lay back on the couch and let her bounce, all the while trying to look like I was in the throes of ecstasy. I was enjoying the situation well enough, but I had to look like I was enjoying it, too.

After a while, Ed asked us to change position, so we "transitioned" into a doggie-style — and if you think that isn't a difficult position to maintain on a narrow couch, try it sometime. Worse, Ed kept asking me to raise my right leg so the camera could better capture the "in and out." I remember at this point wishing I were at least a couple of inches longer, as I couldn't imagine that they were getting any worthwhile footage of me plunging Mitch's pussy. But by using my left arm to support my weight on the couch back, I managed to give him 15 or 20 minutes of that. Then I surprised myself when I realized that I wasn't ready to cum yet. I'd apparently devoted so much willpower to making sure I got through this thing that the mind/body circuitry that tells you when you're ready to squirt, had gotten put on hold.





When Ed asked me if I was "ready," I had to tell him that I wasn't, adding that I usually did it best in the missionary position. So Mitch and I tried that for a while. Didn't work. Back to doggie style. Didn't work — and for the first time, we had to ask for some lube. (What? You thought porn stars get naturally wet for each other when called on to do sex? Please! *Astro-Glide* is the industry's favorite lube.)

Finally, I said, "I'm sure it'll happen if she gives me a blowjob. Hope that's okay?" Ed had no problem with it, so I settled back on the couch, and Mitch knelt in front of me, applying her lips with energy while I concentrated on the sensation.

Sure enough, after a couple of minutes, I was ready, and gave the cameraman the pre-arranged signal that I was only seconds away. That was his cue to zoom in, because if there's one thing that's *de rigueur* in XXX scenes, it's that ol' cumshot. It can usually only be done once (for obvious reasons), and if the camera misses it, they have to arrange for a stunt cock (yes, there are such things) to come in and "do the pop." Fortunately, there was no need for a stand in.

But things weren't over yet. Now I had to lay back and do about 20-30 seconds of "ecstasy," with the appropriate facial expression and moans, to intercut with the actual cumshot, to make it, Ed said, "more interesting" (?)(!)

Finally, we were done. Mitch went off to the showers. I got dressed, figuring I'd shower at home (I'd put on a lot of deodorant, not knowing how

sweaty we were going to be). Then our happy little group went downstairs, where Ed had us sign the usual "model release" forms and, to my surprise, he placed five \$50 bills in my hand. We hadn't discussed money before. I hadn't been at all sure I was even going to get paid for this gig, but there it was. Strangely enough, *now* I was nervous — shaking and dry in the mouth — something akin, I think, to the experience of athletes who have to "walk it off" after they've participated in some sporting event.

After Mitch returned from the shower, Ed invited us all out to dinner at a local bar/restaurant. During some pleasant mealtime conversation, he dropped another bomb: "You know, Mark," he said, "I've been thinking about building a whole story around you and the women you get after your girlfriend's left you. A sort of Walter Mitty dream-type thing. Think you're up for three or four more scenes?"

Is Mark Kernes "up for" more sex scenes? Is Larry Niven rich? Is Heinlein dead? You betchum, Red Ryder. Somehow, I mumbled my assent, and found myself in a state of blissful shock the entire drive home. The only thing I can remember about that trip down the Golden State Freeway towards Hollywood was realizing about halfway home, "*They paid me to have sex! They actually paid me to have sex!*"

In some ways, I have never received a greater compliment.

— Mark Kernes



## Proposed Entry for *Fancyclopedia 3:*

**sercon** — (Raeburn; Jacks) — Serious and Constructive. The term was coined (as "sercon") by Boyd Raeburn, in the early-middle 1950's (ca. 1954), and spoken with a slight sneer, as "*seercon*." Sercon fans were the ones who wanted to have serious discussions of subjects like Whither Science Fiction in fanzines. They had no sense of humor, sometimes threw away copies of *Hyphen* unopened, and, ergo, weren't fannish.

Later, "sercon" came to be an almost-neutral descriptive term, applied to even the best of those fanzines which still occasionally discussed sf, e.g., the Geis fanzines of the seventies.

In 1981, Jerry Jacks began using "sercon" as a code word for getting high on marijuana, in his Denvention report in *Pong 24*. ("I spent most of my time with the various, usual and new, members of the 'Drugs in Science Fiction' panel which floated from room to room to reconvene and get real Sercon.") The new usage caught on, and one still sees occasional mentions of "getting sercon" at parties and conventions.









NO, NO, NO!  
GIVE ME A BLAT  
WITH BODY!



DON'T LIKE  
THE SOUND!



OH, COME ON!  
LET'S SEE SOME  
ACTION!

*Blat!*

FLAVORSOME,  
WITH A PIQUANT  
QUALITY, BUT  
ULTIMATELY  
BANAL



TOO, UM...  
ECCENTRIC...



AH, PERFECT!

BLAT!

*Wotzler*



**JAY KINNEY** BLAT! 2 arrived and was duly (not dully) consumed — or at least most of it: I am saving some of the locs for later. Wait! That's not quite true, I have read the locs that mention my article and am saving the rest of the zine for later. Yes, that's more like it.

In any event, it is impressive to get a fanzine that is actually *longer* than an issue of my magazine, *Gnosis*. Now if you can only get your circulation up to 16,000 or so, and come out every three months you too can turn your hobby into a \$250,000 tar baby!

Nice design. It feels to me like this is the first desktop published zine you've done where all the elements have come together in a way that totally works. Three columns in the letters, two columns elsewhere, fannish art with wraps, and even drop caps. And yet it still maintains an accessible, fannish feel. Congratulations. (And bound next to *Spung* — with Ted's crappy old typewriter text, which I always considered the embodiment of fannish informality — the laser-printed BLAT! actually looks more inviting. How can this be?) The first issue was nearly there, but this issue nails it.

Steve Stiles remains one of the most amusing writers around. That rubber landing in Karen's plate — *Classic!*

And as Dan Steffan chronicles, Harlan Ellison remains one of the most amusing rubbers around. That Andy Porter landing in Tom Snyder's plate — *Classic!*

And so on and so forth. I'm reading the rest of this on an hourly basis. In fact, I've ground the issue up and put it in an *i.v.* along with some sugar water and am letting it Drip-drip-drip into my veins. [PO Box 14217, San Francisco, CA 94114]

**ALEXIS GILLILAND** Thank you for BLAT! 2, which you so kindly hand-delivered to me at the last WSFA meeting, and a big mother it is, too. Well, even brilliantly written, with lots of comment hooks. Perhaps I should write the several letters of comment it clearly deserves (instead of just only this one), or perhaps you should halve the size and double the frequency.

Still, some comment hooks are clearly more hooky than others. As, for instance, the immortal question: "Who sawed Courtney's boat?" In Canada, somewhere, it might have been Hamilton, Ontario, there is a steam-whistle museum which we once

made a detour to see, and next to the museum there is a little park with a statue of Ned somebody, an outstanding Canadian athlete, who among other things was set to row against Courtney for the first North American Rowing Championships. According to the bronze plaque on the statue, New York gamblers had bet heavily on their man but after the tryouts on the previous day, Canadian Ned had become the odds-on favorite. The watchman at the shed where Courtney's boat was kept testified that nobody went in except Courtney, and on the day of the race, when Courtney's boat was found sawed, the Canadians clearly felt that it was Courtney himself who had done the sawing. Canadian Ned may have won the title by default, but all bets were null and void.

Ted, citing chapter and verse, says *Jurassic Park* was a lousy movie and technically, he is correct. On the other hand, Spielberg made the number one grossing movie of all time on schedule and under budget, while advancing the state of the art for computer animation. This is no mean achievement. Nevertheless, the past and present directors who nominate for the Director's Oscar will, I am sure, once again find themselves in total agreement with Ted about what a lousy director Spielberg is, and what an inferior movie he made.

Elsewhere, discussing the poverty that dogged Avram Davidson, a superb prose stylist, for most of his life, Ted says: "Contrast that with the obscene success of a Jack Chalker." Oh, really. Taking due note of that qualifying "a," Chalker is a prolific, hard working writer who made *The New York Times* bestseller list recently. He is blessed because what he likes to write happens to be popular, and no, Jack doesn't write nearly as well as Avram did, but Davidson wasn't nearly as commercial as Chalker so any comparison is meaningless. To call Jack's success "obscene" because Ted doesn't like Chalker's writing displays an ungenerous spirit. What else?

Judy Lynn del Rey, of course. I was always a little scared of her to tell

you the truth. Not because she was so smart, but because she had so much drive that it was dangerous to get in her way, as your Bode story illustrates. She and Lester were a team, but she was the dominant one, and although Lester was smart and strong, Judy was stronger if not smarter, and he fol-



## BLATher LETTERS

lowed where she led. Which wasn't a bad deal for either of them, actually. Del Rey Books was named after its powerhouse publisher, Judy Lynn, and she made Lester the fantasy editor, where he established one of the most consistently profitable lines in the business for her. That should do for now. [4030 South 8th Street, Arlington, VA 22204]

*If Spielberg wins any Best Director Oscars this year — and you'll know by the time you read this — it won't be for Jurassic Park. But let me see if I understand your points here. Jurassic Park must be good because it made so much money. Jack Chalker's writing must be good because he's made a bestseller list; Avram Davidson's problem was just that he "wasn't nearly as commercial as Chalker." And the del Reys made lots of money as publishers (of fiction Lester would once have scorned as crap). If I didn't know you better, Alexis, I'd think you valued commercial success above all else. Here in this fanzine we adhere to higher standards. — tw*

*The way Judy Lynn treated Vaughn Bode is the way she treated many people. She bulldozed them, regardless of how right they were or how deserving of abuse they were. She made many enemies and proved, once and for all, the old saying about bullies coming in all sizes. — djs*

**ROBERT LICHTMAN** Little did I know when I proclaimed *Trap Door* 13 my 35th annish that Ted



would more or less simultaneously declare BLAT! 2 his 40th annish and write about his first fanzine. I mentioned mine, but I didn't really go into any detail about it. I sent away for my first fanzines over the summer of 1958 based on Bob Bloch's reviews. By September I was all hot to publish one of my own, hardly at all impeded by lack of money or material. Through a stroke of luck I learned that one of my school chums, Arv Underman, had a ditto machine at his house (a hand-fed Apeco Speedliner, my memory insists) and an ample supply of paper. His father was a



paper sales rep and had the ditto machine on hand for running off the occasional price list or whatever. The gobs of paper were odd lots of various grades and qualities of paper, mostly coated book paper. Perfect! All we had to do was write up some stuff and save up money for postage. By November '58 we had the first issue together, all 10 pages of it, as purple as you please (we didn't know about colored ditto masters at that point), and it ran off one-sided because not all the paper was coated on both sides. We made perhaps 80 or 90 copies of that first issue and sent out all but maybe ten of them. Unlike Ted, though, we weren't at all shy about sending it out to the Best of NFs whose addresses we could round up from the lettercols in the several dozen fanzines we'd seen by then and the review column in *Imagination*. Amazingly, despite our target audience, the amateurishness of our efforts and the almost unforgivable sin of naming the zine *Psi-Phi*, we attracted a good response. The second issue was twice as big, printed on both sides of the sheets (we took the time to sort double-coated stock out from all those mounds of free paper Arv's dad was constantly bringing home), and featured an Atom cover, interior artwork by Atom and Dan Adkins, and written contributions from Guy Terwilleger, John Berry (who appeared in practically every fanzine at that time), Roger Ebert (beginning a book review column) and Ted Johnstone — the latter beginning his series

of articles on making a movie out of the Tolkien trilogy, a subject that was to take over the magazine's lettercol as time went on and eventually led to my folding the zine (because I didn't know I could simply cut off discussion after it began to bore me). We also judiciously introduced colored ditto artwork. By the third issue we carried a six-page multi-color comic strip ("Super Squirrel") by Bjo — comic strips were rare things in fanzines then and it attracted a lot of attention — and considerably more colorful artwork and layout in general. And the fourth issue featured a color cover by none other than . . . Ted White (one of his series of "Morris" cartoons). On the basis of all this *Psi-Phi* came in 17th in the *Fanac* poll for that year and I squeaked in as No. 2 best new fan, wholly eclipsed by Leslie

Nirenberg, who burst full-bore on the scene that year (he also appeared in *Psi-Phi* 4 with a piece of fan-fiction). Oh, those were heady times!

I remember quite well when I first met Avram and Grania. It was in their hotel room at the 1962 Westercon. I believe it might have been Andy Main who led me there; he already knew them from having spent time in New York. I don't remember anything at all about what may have transpired between me and Avram at that first meeting, but I'll never forget the very pregnant Grania leaning against a sea of pillows and eating huge fresh strawberries from a bowl. With great largesse, she offered me one and I accepted. I didn't see them again for a number of years, though when they moved to Mexico I, like Ted, was able to follow there doings through the pages of *Apa X*, of which I was also a member. (Hell, I was a founder!) They eventually settled in the Bay Area, split up, and I saw both of them quite a bit. Grania's apartment was just a few blocks away from me when I lived on Lundy's Lane in San Francisco. Avram lived in a series of charmingly dreadful but cheap places on obscure alleys in the Fillmore District, a "baaaaad neighborhood" as Arv Underman's mother would have put it. I remember helping him move at least a couple of times. By the time

I returned to the Bay Area from The Farm in Tennessee, Avram had moved elsewhere. I only saw him a few times after that and noticed, as Ted observed, his declining health. Other than that, he was (as Ted reports) still the Avram of old, cranky but endearing. I miss him.

It was good to reread *Spung* and especially to reread Greg's account of the memorial for Terry in May 1987. Read side by side with Redd Boggs' lengthier recollection (*We Remember Terry Carr*, which Redd put into the 50th anniversary FAPA mailing in August 1987), it's almost as if one was there. Of course, I was there and I remember Greg Benford's voice as he belted out the three lines of the *Void Boys* song and did a little dance for us, followed by a round of amicable laughter. After the service some of us went to Carol's house for a smaller gathering. Greg and I went down to the basement and looked over the vast expanse of Terry's fanzine collection, which Carol and I had catalogued about half of, at that point. I pulled out a folder here and there and we oohed and aahed over the near-complete run of *Hyphen* (missing only the first issue) and the *Quandrys*. I brought out the folder containing the earliest fanzine efforts of Harlan Ellison. "If Harlan knew we had these down here," Greg said — Harlan was upstairs — "he'd come down and tear them up into little pieces." We both laughed and put them back just in case Harlan suddenly appeared. But he didn't, and that collection is now safe in the air-conditioned vaults at UC Riverside. I'd like to go visit it someday. . . .

It was interesting to read in Andy Hooper's article that a new collection of Tucker's writing was nixed by the Corflu committee for reasons of political correctness. I'm certainly glad that a similar fate isn't affecting the production of *The Incomplete Burbee, Volume II*, which Jeff Schalles reports is well underway. Burbee is far more "incorrect" than even Tucker. At least in his writing — as Laney always said, Burbee was

the dirtiest-talking man he ever met.

The ConFrancisco section was the first part of this issue of BLAT! that I read when it arrived. I liked Stu's





comparison of Ethan Davidson to Christopher Milne. In the spirit of "Andy Main can't be 50," (ghod, and Steve Stiles is 50, too!), I have to say "Ethan Davidson can't be 30." But he is. I hope Stu doesn't kill y'all for typoing Andi Schechter's name so badly. [Jeez, Robert, I only left out one "h" — believe me, I've typed much worse than that. — djs]

My reaction to *Fanthology* '88 was the same as Ted's. I picked it up, poked through it, didn't like what I saw, and put it down. I don't have any regrets about not having a copy of it in my collection, and I tend to agree with Dan that if it wasn't possible to take time to do it right it should have been skipped. There's no requirement that a *Fanthology* be produced for every year. (Though I've had thoughts about doing volumes like *Fanthology* '48 when I get Burbee's collection integrated into my own and more accessible.) Since you've published my list of selections for 1988, here are the ones I listed for 1989:

"Corflue Toastmaster Speech" by Jeanne Gomoll — *Pulp* 15

"The Great Supper Escalation" by Madeleine Willis — *Cry* 187

"Hanging Out In Bars" by Linda Pickersgill (Krawecka) — *Lip* 5

"More Fascinating Facts About Vikings" by Hazel Ashworth — *Lip* 5

"Close Encounters of the Nth Kind" by Simon Ownsley — *Lip* 5

"A Legend in His Own Lunchtime" by Lesley Ward — *A Free Lunch* 4

"The Trade in Heartaches" by Sherry Coldsmith — *A Free Lunch* 4

"First Chevy to the North Pole" by Jessica Amanda Salmonson — *Tand* 2

"Paradise" by Dick Lynch — *Mimosa* 6

"The House on Summit Avenue" by Harry Warner Jr. — *Mimosa* 6

"A Spirit Guide for the Perplexed" by Richard Brandt — *Pirate Jenny* 3

"TAFfman in Toronto" by Mike Glicksohn — *The Caprician* 4

"One the Charisma of Cowardice" by Simon Polley — *Vile Anchors* VI

Some of my selections were included and most of the rest mentioned in the rear of the collection except for the ones from *A Free Lunch* 4, which I guess is pretty obscure. [PO Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442]

We would like to publish another postcard worldcon report later this year, but we're having trouble finding anybody who intends on going to Winnipeg. Any volunteers?

The question of who is more politically incorrect — Tucker or Burbee — is besides

the point. The Madison fans, with a solid feminist core, have always been hyper sensitive about matter PC, which has colored some of their fanac for years. Personally, I think it is sad that they have fundamentally misunderstood Tucker's shtick. He is a charming guy, with a quip, a wink, or a grin for anyone who's willing to meet him half-way. The way he reacts around females may be a bit old fashioned, but it is not offensive. I think the PC fans are missing out on something special. — djs

**LENNY KAYE** Now it's really starting to seem like old times. A pile of fanzines awaiting v(ic)arious responses, including the latest *Habakkuk*(!), and your more recent Spring '93 issue, as well as the 40th anniversary special, not to mention a note from Bob Lichtman from last August asking; me to gather some on-the-rock-and-roll-road stories for the next issue of *Trap Door*, which should be well published by now. Hmmm... I can see I'm as on-the-ball a fan as when I was dropped from the FAPA mailing list for non-response after working my way up to number one over a span of five or so years. And this isn't mentioning the rock fanzines (*Black To Comm*, *Blue Blood*, *Skin Trade*) that need some reply or another. . . .

But perusing Number Two this morning over a cup of tea, I thought I'd get right to the point and drop a note now while the mood is fresh. Especially since I enjoyed the mag so damn much. I missed the San Francisco worldcon out of sheer lack of awareness; I was visiting my sister in S.F. the week before, and was due to return to the Bay area a week later to go to the U.S. Grand Prix motorcycle races at Laguna Seca (now there's a fandom. . . ), and had kind of scheduled things to return home in between that proved immovable, so therefore missed a worldcon I was perfectly positioned to attend. Reading the con-report was thus almost newsworthy. Well, maybe next year. . . .



But most wire-servicing was the Walter Breen-Avram Davidson updates (hate to bring them together like that), and Ted's jail notes. I always enjoyed Avram's writing and zen primate figure (kind of like Tuli Kupferberg's relation to the Fugs; a true Talmudic) and about the last thing I remember from my fannish days was the Breen controversy. I had forgotten most of the salient details, including the *A Current Affair* overtones, and a refresher course, however startling, was quite unsettlingly welcome. At the time, I think I was on the Breen side of unproven allegations being somewhat unfair to the injured parties; but it's always sad to see someone become a victim of their own inner urgings, and it's a twice-told tale, given the Michael Jackson scandal (not to mention Joey/Amy), that seems at the core of society's darker byways. I've spent too long advocating a world in which freedom of moral choice is essential, to be less than sympathetic the corollary being without harming the rights of others, especially impressionable minors. Let (s)he who is without demons cast the first stone.

Of course, that impacts on you, Ted, and the prison letters were chilling reminders of how one man's crime is another man's lifestyle. I heard the news of your bust a while back, quite amazed at what you must be going through. Getting arrested (and sent to jail!) is certainly a dose of reality no one needs; and of course when it happens to an old fannish hero. . . . I remember going past your Christopher Street address back in my neo days and gazing up as if in awe of a fannish shrine. Of course, I worshiped at it not knowing that you must have had a tiny apartment, the likes of which might barely fit a mimeograph. Still, the QWERTYUIC Press was held up as a shining example of printing quality, not to mention the words printed thereupon; and I know I traveled out to Brooklyn or whatever to get that special twilltone paper, improving my own Speed-O-Print Standard immeasurably.

On a more contemporary note of nostalgia, you might recall visiting the Patti Smith Group when we played some hall in Baltimore; especially gratifying and memorable for me since it was backstage there that I wrote the



chord sequence to "Broken Flag" from the *Wave* album, one of my favorite PSG songs and a certain climactic height to our art. After you've written an anthem, what else can you do but break up?

Anyway, it's great to be on the receiving end of BLAT! and to see that you're alive and well and wacky and wild as the nineties start careening toward the new century. Me? I've been a record producer for the last nine years or so (just about the time you started "dealing," Ted), with my only real hit being Suzanne Vega's first two albums and attendant hit single, "Luka," though a couple of others — Soul Asylum, James — have gone on to Greater Things. Just recently I worked with Kristen Hersh of Throwing Muses on a lovely solo album out in January, and play in a duo with poet-rockers Jim Carroll, not to mention my own occasional band, Dog-A-Bone. Producing seems to be on a recessive curve these days (the cynical nature of pop reinvent-the-cast-of-characters-every-five-years); and so I'm happy to report that I've returned to the literary front. I've just scored the assignment of helping Waylon Jennings write his autobiography, my first book-length project, and something that will enable me to work at home for the first time in years.

Hope to see you at Corflu in the Spring. I think it might be the same weekend as the British motorcycle rally in Olney, Maryland; two obsessions for the price of one! [216 Braeside Avenue, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301]

*Actually, that apartment on Christopher Street was an airy five rooms — not too cramped. And it was in DC — at the Celar Door — that I visited "backstage" with you, Patti, and John Cale. And I think it was then that you told me that you'd modelled your career in rock on mine in jazz, and I told you how much I envied you. Good to hear you're planning to attend Corflu; if half the people who say they're coming show up it will be a blast!* — tw

*I visited East Stroudsburg a couple of years ago. Frank Lunney and Catherine Jackson took my wife and me there so we could check out the Frank Frazetta museum. Apparently, Frazetta moved to rural Pennsylvania in the early 70s, using some of the fortune he made off those damned posters, to buy a country house and other bits of real estate. Among his acquisitions was a "downtown" city block that now houses several family owned businesses — including a sporting goods store and a*

*costume shop. The museum is located upstairs in a huge stone building. As soon as I saw the place I was skeptical — how could this dreary old building house the magical and primal images of my youth? I was sure we were wasting our time.*

*Inside we were greeted by a beautiful, coltish, young woman (one of Frank's daughters, it turned out) who took our admission fee and led us upstairs to the main gallery. I recognized a few minor paintings in the hallway and wondered what exactly I was going to see inside. I knew that Frazetta was notorious about keeping his original paintings and often repainted them — finished them, would probably be truer — after getting them back from the publishers, so I knew there was a chance that I might see something worthwhile. But my inbred cynicism didn't let me get my hopes up.*

*As soon as I walked into the main gallery space, my skepticism vanished and I instantly became a fourteen year old boy, with stars in my eyes. Virtually every important painting Frazetta has ever produced was hanging on the wall of his museum. On one side, all lined up next to each other, were all of the original Conan paintings. Stunning. On another wall were many of his best E.R. Burroughs paintings. I couldn't believe it; it was one of my teenage fantasies come to life. I hadn't experienced so much Goshwowboy-ohboy Sense of Wonder in years. It was a truly amazing thing to find hidden away in a sleepy little town in the middle of Nowhere. If you haven't stumbled on it yet, go out immediately and find it. You won't be sorry. Take some of your hotshot, too-cool, Rock and Roll pals there and watch them turn into gibbering fanboys.* — djs

**PATRICK NIELSEN HAYDEN** Yo! Reading BLAT! 2 in the back of Kip Williams & Cathy Doyle's car was such a transforming fannish experience that I almost sprouted a mimeograph on the spot, but now the days and weeks have passed with no BLAT! in the mailbox and Lenny Bailes tells us our name wasn't on the mailing list you gave Bill Donaho (though he sent us *Habukkuk* anyway) and, gosh, we wondered if you've completely given up on us. Not that we'd blame you if you had. [23 Winter Avenue, 1st Floor, Staten Island, NY 10301]

*We had problems with the Big Machine, so BLAT! 2 was produced in two batches, mailed out two or three weeks apart. Sorry yours was in the second batch, but at least your anxiety produced the first written communication we've had from you in*

*maybe five years, so perhaps we should delay mailing out your copies as a matter of policy. (And, hey, you were too on the mailing list we sent Bill.)* — tw

**TARAL** There's just something about Spielberg that goes up my nose. Nothing, then, amuses me more than a column or two of skillful Spielberg bashing. At that, I thought you were kind to *Jurassic Park*. The film was hardly more than a B-horror flick, *Valley of the Gwanga* with forty million dollars to overproduce it. Though it was grand to see herds of herbivorous sauropods browsing the tree-tops, the wonder was thoroughly counter-balanced by the walking cliché called *Tyrannosaurus*.

Some paleontologists seriously think T. Rex was a scavenger. But not Steven's T. Rex. It would be unthinkable. His T. Rex had to gulp its meals raw and bloody, brandishing its eight inch fangs with a grisly smile, shaking the earth as it strode. Think about that a moment. What hunter would stomp so heavily that it shook the earth? None that wanted its next meal, that's for sure. But never mind that, Mr. Spielberg Sir wanted his T. Rex to do all the fun but brainless things that Ray Harryhausen's might. So stomp it did.

Dare we examine other offenses to common sense? By all means. What of the inexplicable way the Velociraptors were delivered to the park? What animal handler would half electrify a specimen he could more easily have drugged. Why were there no safeguards to prevent the cage from being moved? And who ever heard of a wild animal that wouldn't simply bolt from its cage the moment the door was lifted? If not, why not only wait until it does? No, none of that would do... Mr. Spielberg the Genius wanted blood and the first spear-carrier at hand had to be chucked in headfirst.

But that's entertainment! Relax, don't think, let the Genius manipulate you. See the pretty lights? Don't they make up for everything? Those same smokey night lights have been in every Spielberg film to date, but anyone who can recognize true genius learns to appreciate unoriginality for Steven Spielberg.

Can anyone for one instant imagine that hundreds of millions of investment dollars could be spent on scientific breakthrough that was totally secret? (It's hard to spend tax money that way, let alone money belonging to greedy, suspicious corporations.)



For closers, were you as impressed as I was by the mystic lecture in the middle of the film, that warns us not to meddle with Nature?

It's been a long while since I saw *Jurassuck Park*. A few salient points irked me enough to remember without effort, the rest I'd as soon forget. Instead, let me relate a true story. A friend of mine keword for a season on *Tiny Toons*, in the Warner's studio. He prefers to be nameless, but otherwise he says spill the beans.

My friend has something of a warped sense of humor, even as ex-fanartists go. Seeing the possibilities in a harmless teaching aid, he tricked up a rubber brain with electronic components, wire, and a third eye. The finished prop, nested in a shoebox, was given to a co-worker he liked to kid. "Happy Valentine's Day Madge!" or to that effect. Everyone laughed and the swelling of his black eye went down almost immediately. Time goes by. My friend leaves Warner's for freelance work on *Battle-Toads* and *Sonic the Hedgehog*.

Shortly after his departure, Gawd himself makes one of his periodic tours of the studio. As usual, everyone is managing to look busy. Many actually *are* busy, because the work has to get done on schedule somehow. Spread on the drawing boards is a concentration of artistic talent that would look good at Disney. But Spielberg barely glances at the character sketches and background studies and finished in-betweens. It's only piddling detail to him, the sort of stuff the successful executive producer delegates to subordinates. He suffers to be shown this artist's work and that artist's, barely able to stifle his yawn.

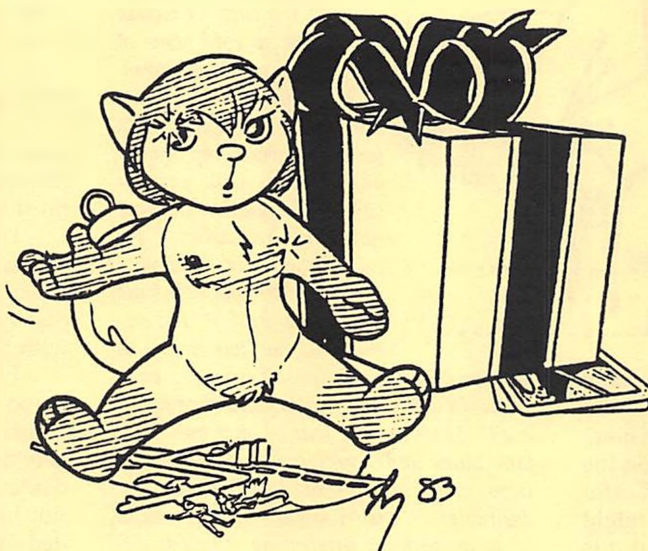
But suddenly Gawd stops. His eyes are drawn to something by the side of one of the animation boards. He goggles at a shoebox. And in the shoebox —

"Gosh! Hey lookit this! Wa-ow! That's a B\*E\*A\*U\*T! Golly, you know, did you make this yourself, I mean, gee, would you look at that, a rubber brain in a box! This is, what do you think, something *special*? You know, something really *special*!!!"

At this point, I have the impression he was close to having that rubber brain crammed in his mouth — transis-

tors, wire, glass eye and all. But he wasn't finished. "This is *so* fantastic, boy, the best thing I've seen all day, I'll give you a thousand bucks for it!" Evidently he went home that day disappointed.

Who sawed Courtney's boat? I don't suppose anyone in fandom really wants to know, since the full story has been several times told. Courtney sawed his own boat. Or rather, his manager is the most likely culprit. Tucker's account of the event is nearly



correct except that he has it wrong that Courtney was the favorite. Among his backers, surely he was. But the rowing champion for the previous decade was Ned Hanlan of Toronto. He had never been beaten in a match, and at the time of the Courtney challenge he still had several good years ahead of him. Hanlan was *so* good that he used to pull gags like sprint ahead to the finish line, then double back to his opponent before sprinting ahead again to win the race. He once won a match with a broken oarlock. No one but an idiot would have put their money on Courtney. His manager tried to put the fix in, but to no avail. So in the dawn light of the day of the big race, Courtney's boat was found to be sabotaged. Few doubted how it happened, but there were such things as libel laws even in the late nineteenth century.

Did you explain the meaning of "Blat" in the first issue or not? Curious that so burning an issue be forgotten in so short a time. It might, therefore, be presumptuous of me to assume that it's Russian. In the ex-Soviet Union "blat" was slang for "pull" or "influence." Which seems to be appropriate for a Falls Church fanzine. [245

Dunn Avenue #2111, Toronto, Ontario M6K 1S6, CANADA]

*Though you wouldn't know it from reading this fanzine, I am actually much more rabid, than my co-editor, about my dislike for Steven Spielberg's movies. Compared to me, Ted seems positively blasé about the subject. I am always offended by his heavy-handed manipulation of his characters AND his audience. I consider seeing most of his films to be a chore. The Tinkerbell-esque rebirth in E.T. made me want to rip my seat out of the theater floor and beat the usher to death with it. And the much ballyhooed Hook was downright excremental. A horrible movie. And Robin Williams worst performance to date — and that's saying something.*

*Despite all that, however, I do still check out his films in hope that he will someday live up to his potential. Color Purple and the movie he made from J.G. Ballard's book both exhibited his latent maturity and have kept me hoping. Which, of course, has also kept me disappointed. Schindler's List seems to be the work of a mature and sensitive mind, but I really think his next project will be the true test of his maturation. Schindler's List is a powerful enough story — with its own intense emotional baggage — that it probably would have been just as overwhelming in the hands of a far less facile director. — djs*

**WALT WILLIS** It's interesting to see

Ted's evaluation of Walter Breen. I agree with it. I also agree with his opinion of Avram Davidson, though my personal experience of the man was limited to the occasion when he brought bagels to Madeleine and me in Chicago, in 1962, and some earlier correspondence. I didn't know del Rey, or Judy Lynn, so have no opinion to offer except that Ted's attitude seems reasonable. The same applies to his account of the disagreement with Dick and Nikki Lynch. It's nice to see a feud stopped before it does any damage and Ted deserves a lot of credit for his behaviour, so different from what some people would have expected of him.

*Spung* came as a surprise to me, because I hadn't expected to know it. What stuck in my memory was the reference to me in the report of Greg Benford's speech at his Celebration of the life of Terry Carr. It was just the



words "save possibly Willis" but they were the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me, and I'll never forget them. It reminds me of the discussions Bob Shaw and I had about the different forms of egoboo: I think a reference in a funeral oration for someone else is in a category of its own.

Ted's letters from prison make for better reading now than they did, because the worry has been lifted as to what was going to happen to Ted before he gets out. This is all fascinating stuff, but I agree part of its appeal is that one knows the author.

Barnaby Rapoport's piece confused me because I wasn't sure whether part of it was a hoax, but the stuff about the Shaver mystery was interesting. Barnaby's verdict that the sheer imagination of his work has never been equalled makes me feel like having another look at my surviving copies of *Amazing*, but I doubt if I'll do it.

Hooper on Corflu was interesting, and worrying when it touched on the anti-Tucker feelings among the Corflu Committee. I can see that he might have irritated some feminists, but it is news to me that Political Correctness had spread so far into fandom as to endanger our relationship with one of fandom's Greats.

BLAther was great. I see I was wrong in believing Ted's review of *The Enchanted Convention* should be described as hostile, and I gladly withdraw. As far as I can remember it was just one sentence that gave me that impression, and I may have misunderstood it. But I would like to say that the story was primarily aimed at confans, and what reaction I have had from them was overwhelmingly favourable.

Dan's contribution was remarkable, not least for his comments on Harlan Ellison. His experience with Harlan so closely follows my own that I find myself following him in disillusion. I am anxiously awaiting Harlan's reaction, in hope that he will be able to redeem himself. [32 Warren Road, Donaghadee BT21 OPD, NORTHERN IRELAND]

*Ted and I made a conscious decision not to send Harlan a copy of our fanzine, even before I wrote my editorial comments last issue. You see, in the past, Mr. Ellison has made it very clear to me that he has*

*absolutely no interest in receiving fanzines of any kind. So, despite my long-standing rule about always sending a copy of my ish to those discussed therein, we have kept him off our mailing list. But, if the truth were to be told, we also decided that we didn't want to deal with the kind of response that might come from Harlan. Life is too damned short to have to endure one of his goofball screeds. I think the odds are pretty good that any reaction from him would be negative — no matter what one might say about him.*

*Obviously, I wish this weren't the case. I would really love to read some of Harlan's fannish memoirs. In his days as a fan, Harlan was a dynamo. His fanzines were top notch and he also took part in some of fandom's most notorious brouhahas. He became one of fandom's most popular and infamous characters and it puzzles me that he has tried so*

*hard to disassociate himself from his past. What, in retrospect, was so wretched about it all? Does the fact that he once published fanzines and happily attended conventions make him any less talented or desirable? I wish I knew. Things would be so much more interesting if he felt differently about fandom. — djs*

*The simple fact is that Harlan will probably see Dan's piece sooner or later (and these words as well) because he has Spies — well, sycophants anyway — who bring such things to his attention, hoping thereby to curry favor with him. A few months ago he called me up to ask me about a piece he'd been told about, which I'd had in the final issue of Doug Fratz's Thrust/Quantum. I told him that it had been a favorable (to him) commentary on the Michael Fleischer lawsuit (which Harlan and The Comics Journal had won), in response to a less favorable commentary by Charles Platt. Once this point was established the call ended. But more recently Harlan called and talked for around an hour. His reason for calling was to give me his perspective on Andy Porter (whom he linked with Platt, Gregory Feeley and Chris Priest, as some sort of cabal that was out to get him), but he let it drop along the way that he'd read my piece in Spent Brass (about Harlan, Andy Porter, and Short Form), and my story "The Bet," in Mimosa. "Why do I always come out like a jerk in the stories you write about me, Ted?" Harlan asked, more hurt in tone than angry. I didn't quite have the nerve*

*to tell him the truth. "We both come off like jerks in 'The Bet,'" I told him. Earlier I reminded him of the time — in the fifties — when George Wetzel had accused him of being part of a "Commie cell," along with Bob Silverberg, Dave Mason, and Larry Stark. I'd thrown that out after he'd told me about the "cabal" I referred to above, but I was too subtle for him and he didn't make the connection — or dismissed it out of hand. "Don't argue with me, Ted. I just want you to hear me out," he said. I was touched that it mattered to him what I thought about him, but I'm afraid I haven't changed my mind: I agree completely with Dan's comments last issue. — tw*

**PAUL DI FILIPPO** What a loud and thrilling BLAT! I'm in awe. Even with "the Big Machine" to help (aka "The Santa Claus Device"), it must have been an enormous task.

Deb and I lived for a while in the Mount Pleasant section of Providence. I believe it's a law that all old Northeast cities must have a neighborhood with that name.

Last Halloween ('92), local art school students decided to hold a Rave in a handy abandoned train tunnel (suitably dank and creepy). When the cops descended, a bottle and rock throwing riot broke out. The students quickly deduced that the cops in white shirts were officers, and targeted them over the others. Disable The Brass is the rule in warfare, right? Post-riot, the cops decreed that officers would dress like the regular cops from now on. Now if only we could do something about our ludicrous, overdressed state troopers (as seen on David Letterman).

Barnaby as a Wim Wenders angel: Right on target.

Lynn's essay was a fine example of "the emperor has no jockstrap." My disdain for empty, pseudo-intellectual "literary fiction" has only grown greater since I've worked in a bookstore. Not only does this crap obscure good pop-lit, but it also detracts from the real high-end stuff like Pynchon, Acker, et al. [2 Poplar Street, Providence, RI 02906]

**GREG PICKERSGILL** Reading BLAT! is a salutary experience in more ways than one; it's so well done that it makes most other fanzines — especially the British fanzines of the moment — look really weedy by comparison, which is no big deal I accept, as British fanzines right now are at a particularly low level. What really scares me about BLAT!, and





in particular the pieces by yourself and Ted, is the feeling I get that this is *adult* fan writing written by *grownups* who have real ideas and can express them well and clearly. This in comparison to most other fanwriting which is bodged, ill-conceived, and amateur in the worst sense. It certainly reinforced the feeling I've had throughout my fan-career that while there is an enormous amount of crap in American fandom your best is titanicly better than anything Britain has ever been able to put forward, especially considering it is done — by the same core group of people, admittedly — consistently over a period of years. Mind you, your cretins are even more cretinous than our local halfwits. . . . [3 Bethany Row, Narberth Road, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA61 2XG, WALES]

*You are correct, sir. Ted and I are Grown-ups and Adults. We are also Fearless and, naturally, Pure of Heart. And did I mention that we are also very, very Manly. So Manly, in fact, that our fanzine could definitely beat up your fanzine. Hell, one time in Tucson, I shot a Neofan, just to watch him die. — djs*

**BARNABY RAPOPORT** I suppose I should respond to Andy Hooper's letter. The New Rats! I like it. I've always been an admirer of the original Ratfandom. Still, I'm not sure I fit. In fact, right after World Fantasy in Minneapolis I spent a day hanging around Dreamhaven Books and had a friendly argument with Peter Larsen about exactly this sort of thing. Peter wants traditional fandom, or that percentage of it he sees as redeemable, to adapt itself to the vast new zine subculture symbolized by *Factsheet Five*. I argued that this zine culture had a lot more to learn from fandom than fandom could learn from it. After all, fandom's been dealing with the same basic opportunities for decades longer, both as a social practice — the zinesters are still buying each other's zines, a clumsy arrangement fandom sloughed off sometime before the Korean War — and as a literary form: in addressing a small and connected audience, zines have their own unique potential, one which has been developed into a unique rhetoric by writers like Willis and Burbee. I've seen good things in the zines, but

nothing that shows the same enlightenment.

Incidentally, in listing a bunch of semipro material for possible inclusion in a fanthology, I wasn't trying to go outside "the fannish micro-culture" — I see them as part of the faanish micro-culture.

Maybe I should also clarify what I was up to in my review of *Fanthology 88*. My disagreement was with its philosophy, and not its quality (though one leads to the other, so I discussed both). Of course editors must rely on their own taste, not mine. But I suspected that Glycer sacrificed quality by his standard to some ideal of the representative overview where quality was irrelevant if not deliberately levelled. That is, I thought it was *intellectually mistaken*, hence a valid subject for a broadside.

(Of course, every editor must resolve this tension between quality and diversity, but this has been done extremely well by the other fanthology editors like Richard Brandt, Andy Hooper and What's-his-name, the *File 770* guy, who picked the material for *Fanthology 1886*.)

I was excited to see *Spung* bound into BLAT!; I've never seen a zine of yours previous to *Pong 41*. (I've seen a couple of Dan's *Boonfarks*.) However, as I began to read, it began to seem familiar — very familiar. Then, when I reached your explanation of how you distributed copies at Corflu 7, all became clear. I guess I *have* seen one of your zines from before *Pong 41*.

I was disappointed by *Jurassic Park* too, though it was the least terrible Spielberg movie in a decade. My reaction was very complicated by the fact that I'd enjoyed the novel so much and found it such a cinematic experience —

curiously, more so than the movie, which was very disappointing *visually*, drab and claustrophobic. It was exciting and absorbing during the various dinosaur attacks, but the rest! While Spielberg was busy laddling on his own family values preoccupations — the *auteur* expresses himself! — down

the drain went all the good plot devices, like the raptors escaping on the boat, and visual sequences, like the pterodactyl attack in the vast aban-

doned dome. It does have one thing in common with the novel, though — neither Crichton nor Spielberg could think of an ending.

Will Straw's "There, At The Fall" meshed in my head with Jay Kinney's piece last issue, the letter by Terry Floyd, and also Guy DeBord's *Notes on the Society of the Spectacle*, a book I'm reviewing for *SF Eye*. We do live in a culture that is subtly but powerfully unfree, a low rent *Brave New World* — unfree two-party elections, unfree subsidized economy, unfree manipulated media — and this unfreedom is more overt and governmental than we are

used to thinking. This is the culture that was so disappointed by the collapse of the Soviet threat and is now embarrassed by the desire of Eastern Europeans to practice freedom and democracy, embarrassed because it has such a need for these concepts

to remain unfocused and meaningless: it can't utilize them without self-destructing, but it can't deny them without losing legitimacy. Meanwhile, the left opposition doesn't seem to have had a new idea, tactical or analytical, since 1965. I'm beginning to think "the sixties" were a lucky accident, a failure by the managerial elites to comprehend all the ramifications of postwar developments like television and youth culture. For a moment they didn't know how to fight. Everything came out wrong. The Vietnam war looked terrible, the civil rights workers looked heroic, and now there was a split between the standard, formerly idealized postures assumed by their own politicians and police, and what the audience actually saw. However, it wasn't the end of an era. It wasn't even a permanent disadvantage. It was just a slight lag between the surfacing of a new development in society and its colonization by the powers that be. Now youth culture is just a market and the government is better at using TV than the Movement ever was. Certainly protest demonstrations like those described by Jay Kinney and Terry Floyd are a tactic that the government



*I'll admit it...you've got a point!*





learned to handle a couple of decades ago. [PO Box 565, Storrs, CT 06268]

As it happens, BLAT! #2 got a rave review (in the "Editor's Choice" picks of the month) in Factsheet Five #51, and so far we've gotten around a dozen requests for copies. I've sent copies to everyone who sent money (in most cases it paid the postage), but I feel a bit dubious about it. I have no idea what these people will make of BLAT!, whether they will understand or appreciate any of it, and I feel a bit like a member of a family reunion dealing with well meaning gatecrashers. Dan and I discussed it and decided to refuse all requests to sell BLAT! in the various shops that have made that offer since the FF review. But we have decided to set a price on an issue of BLAT! — \$10.00 a copy. (But yours, of course, is still free!) — tw

During my editorial stint at SF Eye I often had a hard time pinpointing who our audience was. The vast majority of them never responded in any way, which pretty much left us in the dark. Fortunately, a small portion of our readership were traditional sf fans and knew how to play the game of call and response. Without them it would have been a totally thankless task, and even with them it was still a pretty quiet hobby. I can't imagine what it would have been like if our zine had been about a more mundane subject — like figure-skating, say. (Though I did think that the war between Tonya and Nancy seemed kinda like a fannish feud.) By the time I divorced myself from the magazine I was definitely ready for some Real Fanzines.

It is my understanding that the Critical Wave boys, Steve Green and Martin Tudor, have experienced almost the exact same problem which, eventually, drove them both back to publishing fanzines. I'm sure they both thought, as I did, that their serious review zine was a positive step forward in their fanzine evolution, only to discover, later, that it could turn into a regression.

Nonetheless, the new zine subculture is where a lot of our potential new blood is getting distracted and lost. Zines have mass-media exposure. Lots of slick, newsstand magazines have done their own articles on the zine phenomenon which has, in turn — like the Pied Piper — led the youngsters away from home. All of these very vague articles give their young readers some clues about how to use their computer to get started, how to get other zines about skateboards, or Grrl rock, or whatever, but rarely give any real history of fanzines. Occasionally they'll interview somebody like Mike Gunderloy, but usually

they are completely uninformed. None of the several articles I've casually looked at have had any info about sf fanzines. And you can be sure they have never heard of apas — mundane or otherwise.

I've seen the origin of the fanzine phenom attributed many times to Rock fandom and Comics fandom, but only once have I seen sf even mentioned: In one article it was claimed that fanzines got started by teenagers writing about their favorite 1960s sci-fi TV shows. AAARGH! Is it any wonder that our numbers seem to be dwindling? — djs

**PAMELA BOAL** What a sad loss was Atom to fandom. Thank goodness he was so prolific, it will be years, if ever, before a new fan will ask the significance of the pointy nosed character.

It was my bad luck that I never met Atom in person but even without the evidence of his work, every mention, every anecdote, tells me that he was a person for whom I would have felt both affection and respect. I have never met Harlan Ellison and the contrast is considerable, every anecdote (verbal from the days when I attended cons and writers workshops, as well as written in fanzines) shows a person who is self-centered, mean-spirited and spiteful towards those whom he feels are not paying homage to his self-proclaimed genius. I cannot judge the man by his contributions to fandom for although I have received a wide range of zines (emanating from every English speaking country, as well as a few non-English speaking countries) for over twenty-five years I have never seen so much as a letter, let alone an article from Harlan Ellison, though successful authors from his era have contributed to zines as well as conventions.

Articles of vituperation in one or two limited circulation zines is not to my mind contribution. The various histories I have read do not credit Harlan Ellison with any significant contribution (I am talking about fandom not the professional world of publishing) and your mention, Dan, of his contribution as GoH for the 1970 Pittsburgh convention is the only comment I have come across to cast him in

a positive light.

Much as I enjoy fandom and regard many fellow fans as particularly agreeable and interesting people, I do not have illusions about fandom being

relevant in the real world. I even suspect that fandom is not overly significant to the growing respect for the sf genre and its gradual acceptance as an integral part of the body literature. Maybe it is just as well that I do not overestimate fandom's importance. It would be quite worrying to think that if I (with a preference to making up my own mind) can conceive an affection for one person and a distaste for another on the basis of a few conversations and reading zines, how

great could be the effect on generations raised to adulate or despise at the direction of the media?

Ted, your letters from prison are most interesting. One of the particularly skillful parts of your writing in those letters is the picture you give of the layout of the place (somewhat different to images I have of British prisons and procedures) without actually describing it. I have no patience with the modern tendency to blame society, television or even the victim for the action of law breakers. Even though I agree that the law is all too often an Ass, that justice is in short supply and that some circumstances push some people beyond endurance. The only recourse is to lobby the legislative body to change the laws and to work towards removing the adverse circumstances. In the case of Bernie though, I would have thought that an institution for the care and treatment of mental illness was more appropriate than prison.

I just do not have the time and energy just now to comment on every item, I hope it is enough to say both presentation and contents are great! Now that's odd! Never have been much of a comic strip fan (well, all right, I borrowed the odd *Beno* and *Dandy* in childhood days) but I knew right off that BLAT! was a comic strip sound effect. [6 Westfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7EW, ENGLAND]





The fact that you're largely unaware of Harlan's contributions to fandom is in part a tribute to his own goal of separating himself from fandom (which he did in the sixties) . . . although I hear he is now buying up old fanzines in which he had a letter or contribution. I did a two-part article on Harlan's fanzine, *Science Fantasy Bulletin/Dimensions*, for *Dan's Boonfark* (#7&8), back in the early 80s. Harlan became a fan in the early 50s, and was a major fanzine editor by 1953. His fanzine was bombastic and pretentious, but it was also very good and exciting to receive. Each issue was an Event. When Bob Silverberg updated *Speer on Numbered Fandoms* in an issue of *Quandry*, and announced that *Sixth Fandom* was waning, Harlan rose to the occasion and trumpeted

A bunny? A wombat?  
A howler monkey? A  
Gila monster?  
A Royal  
Lippizaner  
Stallion?



the birth of *Seventh Fandom* — the rising new fans of his generation. In a get-together at his house in Cleveland before a *Midwestcon*, Harlan and his new recruits (John Magnus, Jack Harriess, Bill Dignin, and others) formed *7APA*, which lasted a few mailings. In 1954, at another *Midwestcon*, Harlan dropped a water-filled balloon on Jim Harmon, who came storming up the stairs to Harlan's room and broke the door down. This "Door Incident" was much written and talked about at the time. Finally, Harlan answered his critics (and the criticisms of *Seventh Fandom*) in a piece in *Psychotic* in which he wrote the phrase that has come to live on in infamy, "The mad dogs have kneed us in the groin." By 1955 Harlan was beginning to turn professional, and had published his last fanzine, although in 1960 he still remained fannish enough to suggest to me that we jointly publish a final *Dimensions*, and he drew up a great table of

contents, assigning fandom's best writers topics with juicy, provocative titles. Despite the impression you have of him — which, given his recent activities, is one he deserves — Harlan has better, warmer, more generous sides as well. In fandom he was a brightly blazing comet, whose passage through fandom was brief but still, forty-some years later, talked about. It's a shame that he has disowned fandom and allowed his temper tantrums to become public. I have to assume that he never really "got" what fandom was truly about.

As for the title of this fanzine, I will say only that I cannot help recalling the title of the newspaper in *Carl Barks'* Donald Duck stories, the *Duckburg Daily BLAT*. — tw

When I got into fandom in the late '60s, Harlan was still popping up in fanzines from time to time. He wrote quite a bit for the early revival issues of *Psychotic/SFR*, and a few others. And he was still appearing in fanzine letter columns, too; mostly to challenge some criticism or witticism directed at him or his work. Hmm. Maybe that's what makes Harlan Ellison different from most other fans, authors, and fans-who-became-authors: There's very little separation between the man and his work. Criticism of Harlan's creative endeavors somehow become, in the end, criticisms of the creator himself, instead of just his prose. It's as if his personality has so permeated everything he does it becomes impossible to react only to what's on the paper. Jesus, that's almost scary enough a prospect to excuse his behavior. I'll bet even Harlan has a lot of trouble separating the two.

— djs

**LENNY BAILES** This issue of *BLAT!* crackles with the renewed energy that White-Steffan revivals always bring:

Let's twist again, like we did last summer!

Hi y yo. . .

I was thinking about late-night radio and science fiction fandom the evening before *BLAT! 2* arrived. Someone on *GENIE's Science Fiction Roundtable* asked about the origin of the phrase "Hour of the Wolf" (a film by Ingmar Bergman before it became the title of a venerable New York radio talkshow). This struck a chord in me. I drifted off to sleep

thinking about New York radio and how it had probably shaped the future course of my life. Before the discovery of fanzines and fandom, almost from the time I could read and write, I knew I was different from other kids, asking questions, fighting to check books out of the "Adult" section of the local library, etc. But I didn't know there was anyone else like me. All I knew of, hiding in the dark with receiver tuned to station WOR, was a strange family of nocturnal spirits called "The Long John Nebel Show." At a time when other kids were struggling to copy book reports out of *My Weekly Reader* and *Jr. Scholastic*, I would nod off each night, listening to Long John and the Amazing Randi interrogate fundamentalist ministers, and debunk authors of flying saucer novels.

"Oh yes," I remembered. Before I knew of them as science fiction authors, I knew the sharp voices and minds of amazing entities called John W. Campbell, Fredrick Pohl and Lester del Rey — midnight spirits singing out on the airwaves in a time before Sweet Ginny's (or my own) life was saved by rock 'n' roll.

"Why is this night different from all other nights?" I asked myself after turning off the computer and pouring the catfood. "How is it that I sit in this place of no all-night radio, and no mimeo paper, pining for the electronic ghosts of my childhood?"

The next day, I woke up and *BLAT! 2* was in the mail slot, calling more

substantially to the fan genetic programming buried within. I'll confess quietly that through all the time I've known Ted in fandom, I've always thought of him as a kind of avatar of Lester del Rey. (The cartoon on page 8 of this *BLAT!* could almost be a caricature of either man.) Knowing I title of Lester's later adventures in the world of bigtime publishing, my recollections of him are of smoke-filled rooms at *Discon 1* — a music-critic who would treat a 16-year-old's questions

with respect.

And also, I remember that earlier, pre-literate time on the radio.

Ted's editorial in this issue strikes

"... into a big scary bug."





me as continuing the spirit of Long John Nebel: circus trooper in from the carnival. Hey, suburbia, let's cut through the hoaxes — get at the truth! It's good to see that tightly-focused, auctorial voice again.

Steve Stiles' contribution to the issue provides just the right touch of timeless quality. From the alligator-filled bathrooms of Larry Shaw to the Rock of Eternity, Steve is the cosmic glue that binds the continuum. *Xero*, *Void*, *APA-F*, *Boonfark* and *BLAT!* — we laugh and become resonant electrons in a single faanish universe.

This year has been largely a time of drifting for me. I discovered what can happen when you leave the security of a paying job to become a freelance writer. I also fell into one of the dreamstate nonachievement fugues that overtake me every now and then. (I wrote about a similar period of my life in the first few *Whistlestars*.) As a result, no money, no initiative, I blew going to Corflu (as well as my usual trip to DC to visit my family and you guys at DisClave). I appreciated the Corflu musings in this issue of *BLAT!* (which also comprise the only Corflu reports I've seen, to date). I now feel almost up to date on this lost chunk of experience in the collective fan oversoul. I can see Arnie Katz triumphantly distributing envelopes, Don Fitch setting out cheeses, and imagine myself witnessing Jerry Kaufman's theatrical presentation. Barring another tough year in Nerd Cipherspace, I hope to be at Corflu Nova.

For years I've heard Dan Steffan say that his wife is the real brains in the family, but I've known only the quiet, unassuming Lynn who smiles in the background and wears the more interesting t-shirts. She should definitely be encouraged to contribute to future issues of *BLAT!* This issue's book report reveals more readability and human interest than a year's worth of subscription Critical Journals. When I think of all the restaurant and room-parties this woman has seen over the years . . . the mind boggles at the possibilities for future "Now It Can Be Told" material.

Re the sense of fanzine-loss created by GENIE's Science Fiction Round Table, the good news is that many people who participate there are pack-rats. They save everything ever posted in their favorite conferences, or by their favorite authors. The best stuff written by TNH will appear, shortly, in a small-press collection from NESFA Press. The collection will also include

some of Teresa's classic columns from *Telos* and *Izzard*.

"Oh, the modem and the mimeo should be friends . . . two, three, four . . . the modem and the mimeo should be friends. . . ."

I'm still toying with the idea I brought up a few years ago, of selecting some readable SFRT threads and publish them in an issue of *Whistlestar*. The object would be to create more cross-pollination between the fanzine and online communities. The possible selection choice is much wider, now, than it was in 1991 (when I showed Ted the "Claude Degler" thread that he didn't care for). And the occurrences of "paperfans" in the Science Fiction Round Table has multiplied to include a number of names that would be familiar to readers of *BLAT!* (I wouldn't have known that Greg Pickersgill is publishing again, if I hadn't read it first in Linda Bridges' "Nonmedia" fanzine topic.)

But in the meantime, it's great to have something like *BLAT!* loose on the world again. Although we've had Ted's voice with us occasionally in the years since Topic A, we've seen almost nothing of Dan since the demise of *Wiz* and *Boonfark*. (True, we've also seen very little of yours truly, but with zines like *BLAT!* circulating in the mailbox, that may change.) [504 Bartlett Street, San Francisco, CA 94110]

*I'm pleased you remember Boonfark fondly, but I think you are confused about my presence in the pages of Dick Bergeron's Wiz. At most, I may have had a letter in an early issue, but that's about it — are you sure you aren't thinking of Pong? I was, however, all over the pages of the first five issues of Science Fiction Eye. I left the zine in 1989, quite a while after Topic A died down. Still, it is true that I was completely dormant for the first couple years of the nineties.*

*Teresa Nielsen Hayden's collection was published in support, I believe, of her FanGoHship at this year's Boskone. It is called, Making Book, and is available from NESFA Press for \$9.95 per copy (plus \$2 P&H) [NESFA Press, PO Box 809, Framingham, MA 01701]. — djs*

**VICKIE ROSENZWEIG** I did see some discussion of how stupid *Jurassic Park* was: not in the daily papers, which are still easily impressed by special effects and by Spielberg, but in places like an on-line mailing list devoted to dinosaurs, and in talking to people who had already seen it (when I could convince them it

was okay, because while I hadn't seen it yet, it wasn't a movie people were going to for plot surprises). Maybe this is why I still haven't seen it. And as you say, Spielberg does get away with treating his audience like idiots: there seem to be a lot of people who will let you discard both plot consistency and character if you give them good visuals. As you may know, Crichton has yet another novel out: *Newsday's* reviewer took the tack that, rather than get good novelists to write novelizations under pseudonyms, the movie industry now has bad writers producing novelizations under their own names. The difference is that when a Michael Crichton writes a ready-for-filming novel, he includes neither characterization nor description. The unanswered question then becomes why anyone buys these things as novels. Even the trashy-novel market wants a few adjectives.

*Spung* is well-written, but it seems a bit late to comment on it now, other than to mention that I think I wound up with one of the copies that vanished at the New York Corflu, though I no longer remember whether you handed it to me or I picked it up off the table.

Barnaby's revisionist history of sf sounds good, but I think there are some essential flaws. For example, he objects to the fact that each writer extrapolates in one or two areas and borrows parts in the rest: but how is this more standardized than making all planets Earth-like, so that everyone is borrowing the whole thing in order to write the adventure stories that used to be set in Africa, Australia, the Amazon, or a hypothetical Arctic Eden? For that matter, did sf fail to anticipate the computer revolution? I seem to recall an interesting AI named Mike, in an obscure novel called *The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress*. And an Asimov story involving pocket computers and how dependent people had become on them. There isn't much sf about what I think they're calling "office automation," but I think that's mostly because few sf authors have written about office work (and I don't really blame them). If I thought Palmer's Shaver material would compete with Chalker, Anthony, and Norman for shelf space, I'd be all in favor of bringing it back; I suspect, though, that it would crowd out Octavia Butler, Damon Knight and Ursula Le Guin, because the bookstores wouldn't want to take space away from something that sells quickly, even if it's crap.

I doubt that Baen Books sees itself



as continuing the pulp esthetic: I suspect, rather, that they consider the ideology to be the main point (this was particularly noticeable in their *Destinies* "paperback magazine" series), and the adventure story layer is intended to lure young and impressionable readers in, with the hope that they'll be convinced. (There is something amusing about 15-year-old libertarians, almost all of whom buy their libertarian books with money given to them by their parents, and have never had to worry about whether there's enough money to buy groceries with. They've lived in an approximation of communism all their lives and don't even know it, but are ready to complain about tax money being spent to give other people the same comforts they take for granted. Sure, their parents may have chosen to give them at least some of those things, but it isn't their money that is being spent on welfare, because they've never earned any.) On the other hand, to be fair, I've always found that a little pulp fiction goes a long way, whether it's C.L. Moore, or Doc Smith (and "Shambleau" is a lot more vivid in my memory than any of the Lensmen stories).

A few random thoughts on Andy Hooper's article about Corflu: "like worldcon" is pejorative to those of us who are active in a single area of fandom (and it isn't just fanzine fans, filkers and costumers have their own cons these days as well) because worldcon's attempt to be everything results in, if nothing else, sore feet as you run around from one building to another trying to get to the events that interest you. But Corflu isn't, imho, like worldcon: at most it's like a middle-sized regional, in the sense that it may no longer be possible to have a real conversation with everyone there who you want to talk to. There isn't time, in three days, to talk seriously with fifty people unless you get very lucky. (There's always Ditto if you really want a small fanzine con.)

I don't think I ever elevated people because they had prickly in-print personalities. The people who impress me do so because their writing or art is particularly good, or they have particularly interesting ideas. But along with any feeling of certain people being BNFs is the reality that someone (like

you, Ted) who has been in fandom for decades and gets to one convention a year is, reasonably, going to be busy catching up with old friends, so it may be harder to get into a conversation with them. I doesn't mean they're snobs, it's another side of trying to cram so much into one weekend.

Corflu can survive having non-fanzine people show up; I think New York proved that. If there are only a few, they'll either decide that we have something they like, and maybe even start writing locs, or get bored and go away. If there are a lot, the worst that's likely to happen is they'll retreat to a corner and start talking about something else; it won't kill us. I



wasn't checking fannish credentials, but I liked all the Madison people I met at Corflu 10.

OK, I'm going to be crass and admit my ignorance. What exactly is Tucker's attitude toward women? It really isn't clear from Andy's piece whether he's the sort of sexist who is convinced that women exist only for men's amusement, or whether he is just blunter about his sexual impulses than is always considered polite. Need I worry about being patronized if I ever meet him? For that matter, does he have the basic good manners not to touch without an invitation? Certainly, his introduction later in this issue doesn't make him seem like a horrible person.

Once I got past the title, Lynn Steffan's book review "Don't Read This!" was amusing and informative.

I wonder where I've been, though, that I had never heard of this book. Is it time to subscribe to the *New York Times Book Review*, instead of just waiting for friends to recommend things and then tracking down more books by the same writer, if I like them? Nah — I think I'll trust my friends rather than the book reviewers. And take a chance on an occasional blurb, if I'm in the right mood or desperate for something to read on the subway.

I share Dan's distaste for the killing scenes on nature programs. I don't like any kind of violent television, and suspect this is just a high-brow form of gratuitous violence, allowing the viewers to claim (and maybe believe) that they're learning something, while they actually enjoy seeing something killed. Some of these programs have the decency to warn that sensitive viewers may not wish to watch what's coming up; when they do, I either change the channel or (if my partner is watching) leave the room. And yes, that particular Tom Snyder show did seem rather like a baby seal hunt, though it was truly surreal to see it on a tape brought to a party by the designated baby seal himself. Andy Porter seemed to be deriving a fair amount of amusement from the whole thing, possibly because it was tangible proof that Harlan Ellison had gone over the edge, even more so than the thing in *Short Form*. [33 Indian Road, 6-R, New York, NY 10034]

You're right that I want to catch up with old friends while at a convention, but that doesn't mean I don't want to meet new friends. I mean, after all, each of those old friends was a new acquaintance once. In fact, I used to assume that when I went to a Worldcon I'd meet at least a couple of people for the first time who would quickly become friends. But this happens a lot less often these days than it used to. I met Andy Hooper at the 1987 Worldcon in Brighton, for example, and I'm actually sorry he didn't join in on that Corflu conversation Moshe and I were having. I remember the occasion. He was sitting on a nearby bed. I thought we were boring him.

Bob Tucker is not a man you need feel any hesitation in meeting. Bob likes and appreciates women, and he likes to flirt with them if they are receptive. Look for the twinkle in his eye. This is one situation in which the Politically Correct



Feminists of Madison blew it. — tw

My aversion to violence on TV nature programs has to do with context. I find it disquieting that the producers feel the need to include a scene of fatal brutality in a program that is, otherwise, devoted to the wonder and beauty of that animal. It doesn't bother me, for instance, that a program about cheetahs will include footage of the cat running down a deer; that's appropriate and in context. But the sudden appearance of brutality, at the hands of men, always upsets me. I don't think it need be used for shock effect and I don't really think it adds anything to the so-called educational value of such a program. Man's violation of the animal's world has no place in the story of their "natural" lives. — djs

RICH BROWN "Fanzine fandom," as I said to someone a short while back, "is the fanzine you're reading at the moment." That's as close as I've come to saying anything even on the borderline of profundity anytime recently regarding our little microcosm. And even though it's only as deep as, oh, say, a sober D. West, or Brian Earl Brown in his cups, the point I want to make (which sort of bounces off my observation) is that all the time I was reading BLAT! #2, fanzine fandom was just bloody fucking marvelous, thank you very much.

I was amazed to hear (via Andy Hooper's column) that there were actually people in Madison who had serious feminist "objections" to Bob Tucker's toastmastering their Corflu, particularly considering that I agree that the Madison Corflu was the Best Yet. It's true that Bob likes to flirt outrageously and humorously (I'm just thinking, here, of his calling card: "Bob Tucker/Natural Inseminations/By Appointment") but I've never heard any woman complain — as I have about other men in the microcosm — that he doesn't keep his hands to himself or fail to act like the gentleman he truly is. I was amazed only "for a while" because it occurred to me that it's also possible to have those sort of feminist objections to, oh, say, Fred Astaire movies. In more than one, as I recall, the plot revolves around the fact that Astaire decides he's in love with the heroine, who makes it plain that

she doesn't feel the same way about him. But he doesn't know how to take "no" for an answer. He follows her places, embarrasses her in front of her friends, tries to do nice things for her (some of which fail). Eventually he gets her to dance with him and more or less dances his way into her heart. Today, I guess, to be politically correct, we'd have to call that "sexual harassment." So I guess I can see it. In both cases — Bob Tucker and Fred Astaire movies — all you have to do is close your eyes and ignore the charm.

I, too, found it hard to believe that the Madison Corflu Committee had any kind of axe to grind with Tucker, political correctness-wise. My assumption was that his legendary flirting was being misinterpreted by a few over-sensitive fans. I assumed that they were projecting their fear of harassment onto his "dirty old man" antics. I have been observing Bob at conventions for 20 years and never seen anything that would lead me to believe he is anything but a gentleman.

However, I recently heard a story from a woman that has given me some reason for pause. Apparently, Tucker's flirting does occasionally get physical. This woman stated that he was guilty of patting and pinching her behind. A relatively mild form of contact, admittedly, but nonetheless unwanted and unappreciated.

Although this incident does not dim my admiration for Bob Tucker one iota, it has taught me not to disregard people's concerns. They may have a point after all. Still, I wish the Madison folks had published a Tucker anthology anyway. — djs

KATE YULE Enjoyed BLAT!

— the zine that's hard to even mention without sounding enthusiastic. . . . There's a place down the street from us that has been "about to open" for some weeks now, an Oriental grocery called the Spring Market. Something about the typography on the sign made both David and I insist on reading that as the "Spung Market," and knowing us it will never be known by its right name in this household. I am

one of those elves who made the original copies of *Spung* (Issue the Only) disappear, though whether at Brighton or at NY Corflu I no longer remember.

I think a Madison Corflu was something that simply had to happen, and if we hadn't been on a different continent at the time we surely would have been there. I can think of no better context in which to encounter the legendary Madison, Wisconsin. Thank you, Dan, for a con report that helps us know what we missed. . . . Although both chronological and detailed, it avoided the "and then I did this" school of diary journalism.

I liked the idea of the pocsarcd con report — not unrelated to Abi Frost's TAffaxes to Langford — both have the virtue of immediacy, for one thing. (We are coming to admit that we are never going to write up any more of a trip report on the European sabbatical than what appeared in *Bento* 5. The moment has passed, the memories not firmly nailed down have receded over the horizon. Don't know whether this makes me more or less frustrated with past TAff & DUFF travellers who say yeah, yeah, I'm getting to it, honest. . . .) Your compilation also had the benefit of multiocular vision, so helpful in capturing the truth that everyone attends a different convention than anyone else. Especially at a worldcon. [1905 43rd Avenue, Portland, OR 97215]

I think that Madison fandom was primed and ready to host a Corflu. They had a history of putting on intense sercon conventions, that provided the strong body necessary to pull off a tightly run convention, and enough fannishness — in the guise of Jeanne and Andy and company — to provide the proper head on the con's shoulders. I really appreciated the extra stuff they gave out to attendees; like the program book, Bob Tucker, and two kegs of wonderful beer.

Sadly, they appear to have imploded after the convention. I haven't seen any more fanzines out of Madison since Corflu. Too bad. — djs

KATE SCHAEFER I assume you've already had numerous locs and pocsards from fen taking umbrage at Dan's remark that you were sending BLAT! to fans you should





probably ignore. Since I've never been on either of your mailing lists before, I took umbrage at it myself at first. Later, I realized that I'd thought Ted wrote the line; when I saw that Dan had written it, it seemed funnier.

Which gave me some perspective on my umbrage.

While you were in jail, Ted, Victor Gonzales periodically passed around copies of your letters. He always made sure to show them to me. "Aren't you a friend of Ted's, Kate?" he'd ask. "Well, not exactly. I've been in the same room with him, and of course I admire his writing, and he was a great editor, but I don't think I've ever met him," I'd answer. "No, really, weren't you there when we all got stoned that one time. . . ?" And he'd tell me about some great party which I had not gone to, at a convention I hadn't attended. These days Victor experiences more or less the same reality as everyone else. I'm a little sorry I didn't just tell him I was there. "Yeah, Victor, and I went to Baycon, too, even though I was only thirteen. And South Gate when I was three."

I always enjoyed reading the letters even though I didn't know you then, and I enjoyed the final installment also. Okay, maybe "enjoyed" is the wrong word for letters from prison. Maybe it isn't. I was sorry you were in stir — I'm sorry anyone ever is — and I was moved by your mostly dispassionate narration of what it was like, what the people around you were like, what you said, what they said.

Andy Hooper says, ". . . I have never, ever felt that anyone at Corflu was looking down on me. . . ." Only Andrew Brown can look down on Andy, unless Andy is seated. I liked reading about Andy's and Dan's Corflu. The Madison Corflu was my favorite so far, although my Corflu didn't overlap all that much with either of theirs. I thought we did a great job in Seattle in 1988. I didn't enjoy it very much, as I had walking pneumonia at the time and therefore didn't fulfill all my responsibilities very well, and every time I tried to go to sleep a Fan Who Was Having an

Emotional Crisis knocked on my door and told me all about it. The only problem I had in Madison was that the king-size bed the hotel gave us consisted of two twin beds of different heights shoved together, so that Glenn and I had to sleep in a very small space if we wanted to cuddle. It was a great convention, from Thursday's German restaurant where I ate the meat from the largest ribs I've seen outside La Brea, to Monday morning when somebody (was it Geri Sullivan?) chased after the van carrying Moshe Feder to the airport, trying to make him take back the sourdough bread he'd thrown out the window.

The extra space outside the consuite made a major contribution to the success of the convention. I don't think it can be emphasized enough that the best Corflus are those at which it's easy to talk to people, easy to find people. I mean, what do we do at Corflu? We talk. Sure, we got to the program. We go to the banquet. We pick up fanzines we won't read for weeks. Sometimes we bowl or play baseball. But mostly we talk. The layout in Madison made it very, very easy to form conversational groups large of small, easy to drift from one to another without being rude.

The low point of the convention for me was when I was standing in line to get food at the banquet, and Dan swooped in front of me and grabbed all the rest of the food, bar some scraps and sorts. Since this

was his second helping and we poor pathetic starving souls still in line hadn't had any food at all yet, there was talk of lynching him, but the waiters brought more

food. Better food than you got, Dan. [4012 Interlake Avenue North, Seattle, WA 98103]

Heh, heh. Gosh, Kate, is my face red. I hope you can forgive me for my faux pas. I can't tell you how embarrassed I am. However, there is some good to come from my bad manners; you see, I had no idea that I still even had the ability to swoop. Usually, when you get as fat as I am, swooping is completely out of the question. In fact, your swoop is usually the first thing to go. But now, thanks to your outrage, I know that I can once again hold my head up high and swoop with the best of them. Ghod bless you. (But this still doesn't mean you can cut in front of me in line, sister.) — djs

We've been at a number of Corflus without actually sitting down and talking to each other; indeed, at the Minneapolis Corflu we were part of the same dinner party (that upscale pizza place). One of these days we must have a conversation. — tw

**BEN INDICK** No matter how I say this it sounds preachy, better- or holier-than-thou, and this is not what I intend. Anyway, I must admit BLAT! 2 shook up some of my various firm convictions. As you may know, I was a pharmacist for four decades, I hung up my pestle August 1992, had a great trip to Egypt, which probably precipitated all the trouble there — I mean, if they let me in, what's next? The deluge? Well, I'm still around anyway. But one firm attitude was an abhorrence of "illegal" drug pushers, sellers, users, etc.

That has not changed. What has changed is the preconception of the individual as either villain or fool. The human element enters because of you, Ted White, are not some unknown newspaper name, a cipher, what have you. You are a person I can relate to who is somehow involved in this picture, and your discussion is frank, obviously honest (I hope that is not an oxymoron in this world of misconceptions) and quite moving as well as funny.

Harry Bond's letter asks about the





actual facts of your case, and you answer as you do at all times, not stating them, just allowing your plea to stand and be interpreted as we wish. You do, however, firmly reject an accusation of selling cocaine to minors, or, I think, by implication, to anyone else. I'll assume pot was the stuff. I'll accept that in lieu of a mea culpa, not that my willingness to "accept" anything matters a hoot — I am not the one facing the pokey!

I admired your courage in facing with equanimity such a bad situation. I felt your concern when Bernie, the wack, presented a threat to keep you locked up considerably longer by starting a fight. I think you came through it all well, and were lucky that your small revenge on the neighbors did not come back to haunt you. I think this part of your life has to be seen in the context of the times, and I hope it is all behind you, which is your own decision. I do not think there has ever been a time when human beings, wherever, did not find some sort of drugs, whether betel nuts, alcohol, nicotine or cocaine, so it is not merely a current phenomenon, and it will never go away, either. What has been terrible has been the result in our own culture, devastating in so many cases. And to me the most demeaning thing is the condition of slavery to which it subjects the user to his friendly neighborhood pusher. That remains abhorrent. But your case is worthwhile for making law officials reconsider legal attitudes, especially "mandatory sentences," which have too often disregarded the nature of the offense and the rights of the individual. [428 Sagamore Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666]

If you want my complete take on drugs and my role in their distribution and consumption, I must refer you to the late Don C. Thompson's *Don-O-Saur 59* (August 1990) for my "Inside Dope on Dealing." [Stop Press: Now available in the new fanthology published by Corflu Nova.] As for the "actual facts" of my case, I thought I had been pretty explicit about them. When arrested, I was in possession of around five pounds of marijuana, a pound or so of psychedelic mushrooms, and approximately 800 hits of LSD. The police took these, along with all the cash they found in the house and on my person — several thousand dollars. They left behind half-eaten pizza and half-drunk

7-11 cups of soda, which I traced to their various hiding places by the odors they subsequently emitted. They trashed my bedroom, VCRs, tapes, etc., and smashed the ceiling of the room. They didn't find most of my personal stash. "Pigs" struck me as a good description of the way they rooted around. They obviously caught me with my pants down, and once my lawyer had established that their legal case was solid (no broken chain of evidence), I saw no other choice than to plead guilty. I can assure you that I would not have entered that plea if I'd been innocent — which was Harry's question.

My arresting officer, Philip Hannum, perjured himself in court, anyway, gilding the lily of my arrest. Outside court he told me I was a foul human being and unfit to be a father. He was very self-righteous



about it. So imagine my surprise when, a few years later, my stepson, Spencer, became friends with Hannum's son in school. Hannum refused to allow his son to come to Spencer's birthday party — he was afraid I'd "get back at him" through his son! — but his son did invite Spencer to a party to celebrate when he and his mother left Hannum. Turns out Philip Hannum is an alcoholic (!) who abused and beat his wife and son (!). And when Hannum began writing conspiracy-theory articles for the local weekly paper, it came out that he'd left the police force (no one will say whether he quit or was fired) and

is now working for a Private Investigative Agency. So it goes. Life in a small town. . . — tw

**ETHEL LINDSAY** I found your prison memories engrossing and your pen portraits of the other men quite marvelous, Ted, but then you were always a very good writer. I have read recently that Gore Vidal advocates the complete legalization of all drugs on the grounds that this would cut out the criminal profits. Must say that makes a kind of sense to me. [69 Barry Road, Camoustie Angus DD7 7QQ, SCOTLAND]

Gore Vidal isn't the only one. Our Surgeon General has advocated studying legalizing drugs — and stirred up a hornet's nest of knee-jerk opposition. I think all drugs should be at least decriminalized — but there's Big Money in the status quo, not just for criminal cartels, but government bureaucracies as well. The DEA is a totally corrupt agency which thrives on the illegal drug trade, for example. These self-important jerks oppose even the medicinal use of marijuana, which is proven effective, because "it would send the wrong message" — e.g., that marijuana is not the brain-frying drug they claim it is. — tw

**JOSEPH NICHOLAS** Dave Rike suggests that my response to his comments about me will be to "whine something about how well I have never had to deal with the Stalinists he's had to combat." He will be disappointed, therefore, when I say instead that his remarks appear to be based more on a misinterpretation of one tiny remark of mine about D. West than anything I actually said. Indeed, the more of his letter one reads, the more apparent his indignation becomes — although why he thinks he had been personally attacked is unfathomable. He also appears to be oblivious of the ideological distinctions between Stalinism, Marxism, Maoism, and Trotskyism; and has failed to consider whether the tiny and narrowly based US left with which he is familiar is at all congruent with the European Lefts with which I am familiar and within which my remarks have to be contextualized. (There is, of course, no such congruency.) In addition, there's a third point of which he could not have been aware: that D. West's father was, in fact, a Stalinist.



Rike also manages to misinterpret my remarks about other amateur publications. I do not argue the *sf* fanzines are "no different" from these journals, but that they are clearly *part of* the world of amateur publishing, and thus *part of* the spectrum of material on offer. To say this is simply to state the obvious — so why does Rike, and why do so many others, have such trouble with it? Do they fear that acknowledging this point is tantamount to dissolving *sf* fanzines into the mass of amateur journalism in general? Yet, if *sf* fanzines have as distinct an identity as they claim, what is there to fear? It's notable, however, that Rike doesn't actually state how this identity may be characterized, relying instead on a claim that he knows "what a fanzine is from looking at it and reading it," but for analytical purposes this is wholly inadequate. If he knows how fanzines differ from other amateur journals, then he should be able to provide a clear and concise explanation of these differences. Two or more years since I first raised this issue, I'm still waiting for the defenders of *sf* fanzines' uniqueness to do so.

Dave Langford remarks that the postcards Judith and I send back from our travels contain paragraphs "less terse and sinewy and with even more parentheses" than his. This is because we write very small, and so can fit a lot in. You can no doubt view these cards for yourselves next time you visit the UK (for the Glasgow Worldcon, presumably, although we, like many other people we know, won't be attending it). (The cost of an attending membership currently stands at 60 pounds, and it's rumoured that it will rise to 90 pounds when the next increase is due. The reason for these high rates, apparently, is the very large number of people who voted in the site selection ballot at the 1992 Worldcon — all of whom thus became entitled to a hugely discounted conversion rate, which robbed the convention of anticipated start-up revenue and destroyed its original cash-flow projections. Hence the high rates now, in an attempt to catch up — although in my opinion they're so high that they will deter people from joining, further undermining the convention's financial position. The eventual result, I imagine, will be a drastic scaling-down by the committee of its plans for the convention, away from multiple programme streams with hundreds of participants towards something more minimalist and more focussed. But

will that then set a trend for future worldcon committees?)

I should say more, such as how much I enjoyed Terry Floyd's letter, Will Straw's article about the fall of the Berlin Wall, and Barnaby Rapoport's column — not least because it seems part of an emerging consensus that science fiction has somehow lost its way, and is no longer on the cutting edge of contemporary pop culture (see, for example, Charles Platt's article in the latest *SF Eye*, and some ruminations of my own on technocracy and post-modernism which will eventually appear in *FTT 16*) — but will have to stop. We are in the process of buying a house and preparing to move, and the inevitable upsets consequent upon this means that fanac is likely to go in suspension for some months. [15 Jansons Road, Tottenham, London N15 4JU, ENGLAND]

*It sounds like the people running the Glasgow Worldcon have a very unrealistic approach to convention finances, since the discounted memberships for site-selection voters is nothing new, and should have been taken into account when making those original cash-flow projections. One wonders just what kind of budget they're working with. — tw*

*Nothing you have to say about the Scottish Worldcon encourages my TAFF candidacy. From what I've been able to glean from Greg Pickersgill's recent writings on the subject, it is going to be a tough convention to attend, logistically. There seems to be a disturbing amount of inexperience among the committee membership, with people coming and going at regular intervals (revolving door-style). In a recent letter Greg referred to the convention's organization as "depressingly, frighteningly bad."*

*Still, for me, a TAFF trip to the Scottish Worldcon will hopefully include a tour of Scotland itself, a week or so in London, and, as I promised my wife, a couple of days (at least!) in Amsterdam. These things alone should make our visit totally rewarding. If the convention sucks: Oh well. I can take it. Remember, I attended the 1983 Worldcon in Baltimore and lived to tell about it, too. — djs*

IRWIN HIRSH I'm sort-of glad that BLAT! is not going to be a Pong-by-another-name. This is mainly because if it was a *P* style fanzine they'll always be someone doing some sort of comparison. Doing *B!* this way avoids the shackles of all that, allowing you to just get on with having fun. I'm also interested in watching you two get

on with the larger genzine-format (the New and Different, I suppose) while still being Dan&Ted (The Same).

One thing I was expecting from this fanzine is a strong visual identity, and I haven't been disappointed. The BLAT! logo is really good. It feels like you've built a three-dimensional logo and had it crushed under a great weight. I also like the Atom connection across the two covers on #1 and the front cover of #2, and the link between the back-cover of #1 and Dan's mentions of tattoos in his *Magicon* report. Yes, Atom certainly drew a fannish icon. When Dan heard about the man's death he emblazoned the figure onto the centre of his chest. (This is the first time I've consciously spelt Atom with a small t, thank you Avedon for the correction.) The "white space" on page 36 of #2 is striking, and thoughtful. On the other hand by the last pages of that same issue I was getting a little bored of the drawings being placed in the middle axis of the page.

Dan's comments about the aftermath of getting a tattoo was fascinating in another way. For a long, long time I couldn't understand why anyone would want to have a tattoo. The idea of a tattoo would make me shudder. Then I realised that my feelings were tied up with how I first encountered tattoos, which was learning that the Nazis engraved numbers on the arms on the people they'd sent to concentration camps. My parents and grandparents fled Poland prior to Germany's 1939 invasion, but a large portion of my family tree and my family's friends were killed in those camps. Intellectually, these days, I can now appreciate why people get tattoos, but emotionally the tattoo provides me with a link to the great sense of loss my grandparents lived with for the majority of their lives.

As is the usual I found my name within 2 seconds of taking the fanzines out of the envelope. And as is also the usual my name is surrounded by filthy lies. Marc Ortlieb is correct in saying that I have developed a life as a father and accountant (with that order of priorities, too) but I deny the "morass" and the "disappeared" bits. There's nothing morass about being a father, and gee, just a few months before he would've written his letter Marc published a fanzine which had an article/contribution from me.

Ted's comment to Cathy Doyle, about the illos to his article in *Mimosa* are spot on. In fact, I commented on



those illos in a LoC on that issue of *Mimosa*. I didn't notice that Peggy Ranson had depicted you as Dan Quayle, I'd merely noticed that you were depicted as Not Ted White. As I put it to Dick & Nicki, "Couldn't a photo of Ted have been supplied to Peggy, so that, in visual terms, Ted could be given equal time with Harlan Ellison?" I then pointed them in the direction of *A Wealth of Fable*, in particular page 91.

Andy Hooper can't have been reading too closely over his young friend's shoulder, for his description of *The Sneeches* is not exactly correct. The story's theme is certainly an object lesson in the folly of prejudice and pretension, however Andy has mixed up details in the plot. For instance, the race/class consciousness was there before the con man turned up; he merely robbed them of their money by playing on that consciousness. And the distinction was only ever between one star on the belly or none, never any more.

I haven't attended a Corflu (though for three or four years running I took out a supporting membership, only stopping the activity when my supply of US \$ ran dry). Andy talks about the Corflu traditions, but I tend to think of them as Corflu Continuities. Which is to say that the features Andy discusses are those which link one Corflu to the others, adding currency to its title. It strikes me that the thing which makes Corflu such an attractive con is that for a wide, geographically-speaking, group of people it is an important part of their convention calendar. Recently I overheard a remark about how there doesn't appear to be any rule against a non-American Corflu, indicating that someone in Melbourne wants to be a subject in the "squabbles about . . . who is 'qualified' to put on the convention." Placing that remark next to Andy's column I realised that while a Melbourne Corflu has appeal, I wouldn't want to see it

happen unless there was a good probability that some of the Corflu Regulars would be in attendance. A Corflu Down-Under could draw its GoH's name out of a hat, pub a commemorative fanzine, even elect the past President of the FWA, but I wonder if it would be a Corflu without some of the Corflu Regulars.

Regarding *Fanthology* 1988: I was one of the people who sent in a list of suggestions, and my fanthology would've been similar to Robert Lichtman's. Of the ten items I suggested, four appear on Robert's list and my list has a similar British bias (9 out of the 10 items). Having bothered to take time to construct my suggestions I wasn't impressed by Mike Glycer dubbing me a "self-appointed juror."

I, and Robert and Barnaby, made the effort because the LA Corflu committee made the invitation. Without that remark in their PR the idea of sending along a list would never have entered my head. I didn't send along copies of the suggested articles simply because that hadn't been part of their PR request. But I would've been happy to help out; my suggestions were made in October 1991, so there was still enough time for someone to send me a brief letter saying that they don't have access to articles X, Y, Z, and could I please send 'em a photocopy. I'm not

too bothered by Mike Glycer's *Fanthology* philosophy, but I know it is nothing like how I'd approach the task. However, like I said in *Idea*, it is almost as if Mike Glycer doesn't care that he doesn't get so many of those British fanzines, and that does bother me.

Will Straw's article was particularly interesting. As I was reading it I was waiting for the click, and there it was: "Clearly I had stumbled onto the most exciting event of my life." Back in 1989 I had a similar feeling as I was watching the events, mostly on relay from the US networks, on tv. (Did I see Will, I wonder.) Reading the pre-

vious days' newspaper reports about the events in East Germany I'd wondered if Something was going to happen, and here I was watching it. Half a world away from it all I was feeling a mighty *frisson*. [24 Jessamine Avenue, East Prahran, Victoria 3181, AUSTRALIA]

*A Corflu Down Under, eh? You're right that to be a real Corflu, there would have to be some of us Corflu Regulars in attendance, and a trip of that magnitude is expensive . . . probably too expensive for you guys to fly us all down as Would-be Guests of Honor, huh? Well, that was just a thought. . . . — tw*

**DICK LUPOFF** I was going to send you a long, glowing letter about BLAT! 2, especially about the splendid design and production job. Unfortunately, shortly after I received the magazine and before I had a chance to set my thoughts in order and write the letter, things got kind of crazy around here, in a manner which I'll get to shortly.

But things like BLAT! make my old fannish juices start to flow again — almost. And the capabilities of my newest computer system, which I'm just beginning to plumb, make me want to sit down and Pub my Ish. Pat took one look at the typefaces, column capabilities, automatic justification, and so forth, and said, "If only we'd had this when we were publishing *Xero*...."

But of course we didn't, mainly because the computer technology of those days went as far as thousand-word-memory machines the size of barns. If Dick Lupoff 1958 could see what Dick Lupoff 1994 has on his desk, he'd have got hysterical.

Anyway, for all the occasional urge that I feel to Get Fannish, I just find that other activities have a stronger lure for me these days. I *did* get to ConFrancisco and had a good time renewing old friendships (among other activities), and was sorry to learn you weren't there, but even my congoing these days is more in the nature of Pro Stuff than fannishness.

The times change and we change. Alas. But if you can still make a go of the old hobby (FIJAGDH, right?) and still get pleasure out of the old rat, more power to you. Certainly the contrast between most of BLAT! and that 1987 *Spung* says more than any adjectives could.

As for the craziness, well. . . . We had a birth and a death in the family. The birth was of a new grandson, our third grandchild. The death was of my





brother, Jerry. I used to think I was lucky to have two "brothers," both named Jerry. One was Jerry Jacks, my closest friend in fandom and as close to me as a real brother. The other was my biological brother, also Jerry, a wonderful man. Now they're both gone. [3208 Claremont Ave., Berkeley, CA 94705]

*Aw, come on, Dick — Get Fannish. Pub an ish. It doesn't have to be a big fancy genzine like Xero. A simple little letter-substitute will get the juices flowing, and I promise you it won't get to more than sixty pages by its third issue. Whaddya say, huh? How about it? — tw*

*Surely, it must be about time for an issue of SF94 by now, isn't it? — djs*

**GEORGE FLYNN** Herewith a belated response to BLAT! 2, which I am inclined to think is the best single fanzine issue of 1993, with a marvelous amount of material that's both serious and entertaining.

Oh, I've seen a few negative reviews of *Jurassic Park* (though maybe none outside the sf community, come to think of it). My own impression: marvelous effects; idiot plot; offensive message. Bet it wins the Hugo, though.

Hey, I was one of the people who got *Spung* at Brighton in 1987. And I even still have it, since I read it right away, so it wasn't in my briefcase when the latter was stolen in London a few days later. (As detailed in my monumental trip report, submitted for the semi-mythical New York Corflu combozine and never seen again.) But under the circumstances, it's understandable that I was too distracted to get around to locating it. (This totally plausible — and even true — excuse cleverly conceals the fact that I was writing hardly any locs that year anyway; even the trip report took me over two years to finish.)

As for commentary on *Spung*, well, I noted that "After each joke we'd sing the verse of the song. . ." had three periods concluding a sentence, while "*SFTimes* and *Shaggy* and *Burblings* and the missing *Hyphen* #1. . ." has four periods but *isn't* a sentence. (But I think things are more complicated than Terry's simple rule, which primarily applies to incomplete quotations; a statement that "trails off" probably deserves three dots even if it's technically a complete sentence.)

Andy Hooper talks about "people [at Corflu] sitting around in a corner with a glum look on their faces" and

assumes they're "resenting the rest of us who are actually having a good time." I'm dubious of this kind of analysis. You see, that description might be applied to me — I'm not very talkative, like to people-watch, and have a mouth shape that tends to resemble a frown when in repose — yet I always enjoy myself hugely at Corflu. Maybe Andy's right about other people, but. . .

Andy Hooper, page 33: "It gave me the opportunity to opine that . . . we really did need a few people who just read fmz." Ted White responding to me, page 77: "As a matter of fact, I do [make fanzine activity a necessary part of being a trufan]." Compare and contrast. I'm with Andy.

Any chance someone could assemble a book of the material Joe Sanders rejected?

". . . the ANA Hotel (n o b o d y

knows what those initials mean)." All Nippon Airways, who own it. (The Japanese Are Coming!)

Barnaby Rapoport hadn't seen many of the pieces in Mike Glycer's fanthology; Robert Lichtman says he's seen hardly any of the items on Barnaby's list; and I (who get very few British zines) have seen very few of the items on Robert's list. As Dan says, "different fannish neighborhoods." Which raises the question whether *anyone* really knows what's going on in fanzine fandom as a whole (if that's even a meaningful concept any more). But things being as they are, it certainly seems most desirable that the less widely circulated stuff get more exposure.

Dave Langford's lovely "cries of rage as though one has shouted Sci-Fi in a crowded theater" may be my favorite phrase of the issue. [PO Box

1069, Kendall Square Stn., Cambridge, MA 02142]

"People . . . with glum looks on their faces," was, I believe, a reference to a certain well-known fan in attendance at last year's Corflu. This fan — who shall remain nameless — could be seen on several occasions sitting by himself, with the weight of the world on his shoulders. The only other thing I can tell you, George, is that you definitely were not the fan in question. Anything else you want to know you'll have to beat outta me. — djs

Andy's line about really needing "a few people who just read fmz," isn't actually that much of a contrast to my comment that I regard fanzine activity "a necessary

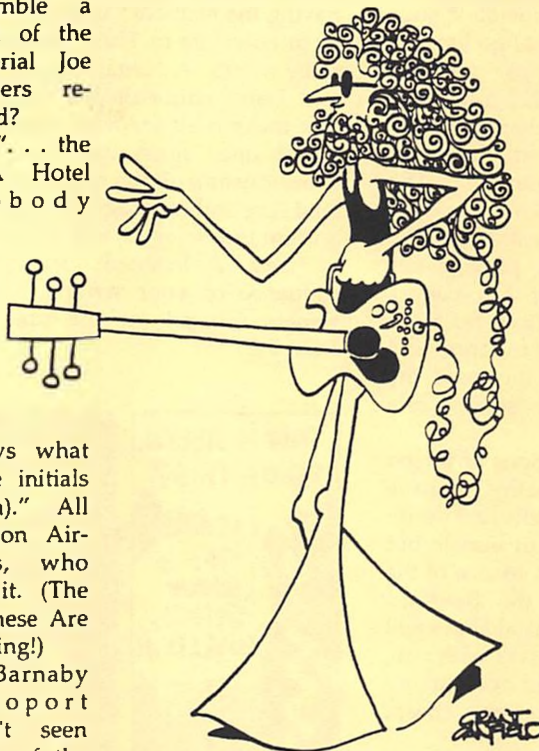
part of being a trufan." After all, Andy was talking about Corflu attendees, of whom he asked the question, "So, what fanzine do you publish?" That's a wholly different context from your discussion with me of Worldcon Chairs who were "trufen." I suppose it comes down to how you define people like yourself, say, who mostly read and LoC fanzines (and, yes, I know you do publish an occasional letter-substitute or apazine). To read fanzines is to be familiar with fanzines. Far too many Worldcon Chairs these days are not familiar with fanzines, more's the pity. — tw

**TOMISLAV DETELJ** For 3rd

issue of BLAT! there is nothing much to say, just — a very nice fanzine.

I enjoyed text "Don't Read This!". Well, I did not read *Mating*, but I know some books that have made same effect to me.

When I read a book, I attempt to finish it, whatever is good or bad because it's just another experience to me. That kept me until I came to a book by J.G. Ballard called *Crash*. It is simple, I just couldn't read the book after I have finished some 100 pages (book has about 190 pages). Well, I don't want to say that book is pure shit. What I want to say is that I did not find anything interesting to read in this book. If somebody has, then tell me!





Dan's editorial improves the BLAT! for about 35%. He is talking about friendship (a real friendship) which must be the only thing that rules (if the world is perfect). We all know that world is not a perfect place and that in this world are many things that make me shoot myself. [S. Glavaca 5, 42000 Varazdin, CROATIA]

*We were surprised to get your letter, Tomislav. We have never mailed any copies of BLAT! to Croatia and are, therefore, mystified as to exactly how you saw an issue of this fanzine. Did you borrow a friend's copy? — djs*

**DEREK PICKLES** I correct my statement, in my last letter, that by issue #10 BLAT! would make *Stet* look like a flyer — you'll achieve that target by issue #5 if your second issue is anything to go by.

The postage stamps on the envelope containing BLAT! 2 total \$4.33 which was, at the rate exchange in 1950 when I published the first issue of *Phantas*, almost 2 pounds. The complete publication and mailing costs of an issue of *PHT* was about 3 pounds, probably less, postage per issue was 1 pound for 133 copies. Postal costs must have risen far more than is accounted for by inflation and the Royal Mail has just increased the minimum printed paper surface rate from 24p to 48p.

I read your descriptions of prison with interest and sympathy. I have been in prisons, police cells and youth custody centres, not as an inmate but as a visitor when I was a Justice of the Peace (Magistrate) on the Bradford Petty Sessions. The unmistakable smell of all those institutions stays with you, sweat, urine and scrubbed over dirt, all overlaid by the smell of strong, cheap, disinfectant.

The total effect of BLAT! 2 is stunning; artwork, writing, printing and production. My mind boggles at the time you have spent typing, illustrating, editing and printing, but the result is definitely worth it. [44 Rooley Lane, Bankfoot, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD5 8LX, UK]

**ALLYN CADOGAN** Ok, this gets a response. The Stiles cartoon on page 43: Did this really happen? If so, I'm appalled that I ever under any circumstances insulted Steve Stiles, but I honestly have no memory of ever phoning him (assuming, somewhat egotistically perhaps, that I'm the only Allyn in fandom). Still, it's a funny cartoon.

I was going to do an actual loc here, but I never even in the height of impassioned fanac developed the habit of making notes in the margins of zines while I'm reading them, and I read BLAT! back when it first arrived smack in the midst of final exams, and spring semester starts again tomorrow, so I'm trying to get the desk cleared so I can at least *start* my classes organized, therefore I don't have time to reread BLAT! — which means you miss out on some classic Cadogan comments. I expect you'll be able to overcome your disappointment. I do recall that I enjoyed the entire zine enough that I read it cover to cover in one sitting which meant I had to stay up most of the night cramming for American and California Government; BLAT! was far more educational, not to mention having the textbooks beat hands down as to how Life in These United States *really* works. As usual, I enjoyed Ted's and Dan's editorials the most. You two make it all seem so fun and easy that I once again thought seriously about dusting off the mimeo (I've been studying anthropology; I'm hooked on ancient technologies) and churning out at least a lettersub, such is the influence of your writing. I'd best remain fafiated for the time being, however.



I went back to school about three years ago, starting in a script writing class and ending up in anthro — not dirt and bones, but North American cultures; every time I attend a powwow, I think of Don Fitch, who spent years trying to get me to go to them, but I used to think they were more scams put on by New Agers (I guess then they would have been

called Aquarians). Meanwhile, I'm finally finishing my General Ed B.A. in Social Work (see, it used to be sociologists and psychologists who got the jobs, then the trend shifted to cultural anthropologists a few years ago, but now all the big companies seem to be looking to degreed social workers; it's a rat race). Anyhow, I'm having a lot of fun hanging out with Indians these days, tho I've gotta tell ya AIM and IITC can be just as politically idiotic as faandom. Except I don't recall the feds ever coming after fan groups with live ammo, and I sincerely doubt the FBI ever reopened my file because they caught me taking pies to a fannish party. I sometimes wonder if sometime in the dim future our descendants will read about all this and realize how tragically funny it was. Oh, yeah, I now also make jewelry in my free time. [1732 Connecticut, Redwood City, CA 94061]

*Do you recall phoning Corflu? This was in 1986, and our "Falls Church" Corflu was the first one not under your supervision — and I would imagine you wanted to be here in spirit if not in fact. Does that jog any memories? — tw*

**TEDDY HARVIA** Ted's prison story seems ironic to me. The closest I've ever been to prison was 14 months in Vietnam, and drugs were readily available there. The drug mania struck me indirectly last year. I was preparing to hire a new man into my department when his replacement in his old department tested positive and he had to stay.

What kind of cards did you play in prison?

"Thots on a 50th Birthday" killed me. But then god would make me a slug rather than a snail. What the hell! Craig Smith's introductory art for Tucker's article was *great*. I recognized and laughed at all of them. "The Ted & Steffy Show" was a visual and laugh riot!

I have raised my daughter on nature shows. As a result, she doesn't have the childish prejudice for cute little animals. They are merely predator and prey. [701 Regency Drive, Hurst, TX 76054]

*Mostly we played Spades and Hearts, a little Bid Whist (which I didn't much like), and, for one brief period when we had enough people interested in learning it, Double-deck Pinochle. (It was then that I learned the "pass variation" on that game.) I was surprised at the different rules, not just for Hearts, but for Spades as well. (One version of Spades has the Deuce of*



*Spades second in rank behind the Ace and ahead of the King.) — tw*

**BILL DONAHO** Ted's remarks about Judy Lynn reminded me of an encounter she had with Harlan back in the 70s. "You're turning science fiction back twenty years!" Harlan yelled at her. "No, Harlan, thirty years," Judy Lynn replied. But I gather that Barnaby Rapoport would not agree that that's what she succeeded in doing.

But I dunno about Barnaby's point. I enjoy many pre-Campbell sf stories, but it was the Campbell golden age that really rang my bell. Of course, being in my early teens, I was the appropriate age for that. On the other hand I wished I could be moved by A\*N\*Y\*T\*H\*I\*N\*G as much as I was by Edgar Rice Burroughs, when I was ten years old. For some reason Barnaby doesn't even mention ERB. And yet he talks about imagination! ERB's imagination made Richard S. Shaver seem bloated and silly. I must admit I read all of Shaver at the time (I read all the magazines at the time), but even though in my early teens, I didn't like it very much. He never influenced my fantasies in the slightest. And when I wasn't actually reading them, his stories never came into mind.

Ted's Letters from Prison in *Spung* account of his departure from jail and his aftermath with his neighbors was quite absorbing. And Charles Platt expressed my reaction much better than I can.

Lynn's account of *Mating* was harrowing. However did she ever manage to read 193 pages of trash like that? But she has very kind words for *The Bridges of Madison County*. Now I haven't read that, but everyone else I know has who has read it and whose taste I respect has put it down most thoroughly. Even people who like sentimental stories. Some of the disgust even approaches Lynn's at *Mating*. And, come to think of it, I can't think of any man I know who has read it so all the put downs were from women.

Dan's account of present-day Harlan Ellison is saddening. I didn't realize that he had become that bad. In spite of the fact that I like to zing Harlan and do a fair amount of it, I have pleasant memories of him and regret that he has come to this. Your account of Harlan on the Tom Snyder show reinforced my opinion that Tom Snyder is not very bright. He used to have a late-night show and I tuned in one time about 3:00 am.

His guests were three or four teenage male hustlers and a Catholic priest and a social worker who worked with the boys. Tom's attitude was "What a terrible life these boys are leading through no fault of their own and what can we do to help them?" Both the priest and the social worker seemed to share this view.

Most of the boys were shy and quiet, but one was very articulate. And after a while it became obvious that he was there to put out a message: You don't have to put up with dorky parents and bad homes. Come on out to LA and you can make out Just Fine. He did everything but say so in so many words, but Tom didn't seem to have a clue as to what was going on.

Neither Tom nor the other two adults did or said anything to counteract this message. And it seems to me that any teenage boy watching TV at 3:00 a.m. is a prime candidate for that message.

Ted, the hemp atmosphere must have been pretty thick when you and Terry were discussing how people who gained most of their knowledge through reading could consistently mispronounce words. I say this because Terry and I had this discussion before he left Berkeley, and I was the

But neither Terry nor I smoked "hemp" in the early sixties, Bill. And I quite distinctly heard him claim the gaff as his own: it stuck in my mind, in fact, for years. Are you sure you haven't misremembered? Are you sure Terry didn't tell that story to you? (Well, \*sigh\* . . . probably not. But I can't imagine why Terry appropriated it as his own experience.) — tw

**Lynn sez:** I'd have to say that, for me, the most appealing aspect of *The Bridges of Madison County* was that the romance was between two unglamorous, "mature" adults. I grow weary of the beautiful, nubile (spoiled, empty-headed) heroine being "swept off her feet" by Fabio. The style of writing will never be considered great literature (for that, see *Jane Eyre*), but it's a treat to devour a book such as this like a bon-bon, especially after the arduous 193 pages of *Mating*.

**MARTYN TAYLOR** Having more or less gaffiated — I'll try and get to Intersection, time and money permitting — and having all my time eaten up being a house-husband looking after 3 energetic kids and an alcoholic ma-in-law while trying to earn a writing crust come the evening you probably have no idea the effect of the arrival of BLAT! had upon the assemblage of porridge which passes for my brain. I didn't loc the last issue of *Pong!* Wally'll kill me. . . .

Seriously, though, I only seem to get fanzines from America these days, the brave boys 'n' girls of the British scene having dismissed me as a boring old fart who won't even talk to them (they're probably right, but I would if somehow someone would arrange three or four extra hours in the day, preferably just after 9 p.m. when all the wee shavers are asleep, and guarantee I'd have the energy to stay awake. . .). I enjoy reading the ones I receive, largely because they are written by adults who appear to have long since passed the stage when they just have to impress people all the time and are content to just speak as they find, among friends. I may be only a vicarious member of that community, but it induces a sensation of well-being and fellow feeling in my attic workshop. I read them and put them to one side, smiling, promising myself that I'll write. First, though, I've got to do some real work.

Whaddya know? The real work takes over. I finish a spec script for *The Bill* (a British police "soap") only to be told they're writing out my lead



one who mispronounced misled as mizzled. Terry was amused and intrigued, but had never heard of this pronunciation before. Now I can't see Terry claiming credit for it, but I can see him not expressing himself clearly and/or your not hearing clearly, both due to the hemp atmosphere. [626 58th Street, Oakland, CA 94609]



character. I finish the first draft of a commissioned dramatized documentary only to be told the producer has discovered that the main character was not at all how the researcher described but seriously weird (even for a Victorian engineer) and can he have a revised first draft for Christmas? In the meantime, ma-in-law (the alcoholic) is taking me as her escort around the historical sites of Syria. Maisie is in a wheelchair and doesn't see many of said sights, but I do, and a novel springs fully formed into my head. Must be something to do with sleep deprivation. Then the producer at the BBC says he won't buy my radio play 'cos he's transferring to television, but if I make a few changes why don't I submit it again and say he sent me.

Who'd be a writer, eh?

And still I don't get any locs written.

So you didn't like *Jurassic Park* either? Whew. I thought I was the only one. Spielberg is a master at manipulating the emotional tics of his audience at exactly the right time — that's why he's so rich — but nowadays he seems to have got frightened of surprise. Remember *Jaws*? Richard Dreyfuss actually got eaten, and he was the hero! Not so in *Jurassic Park*. Who gets offed? The fat, bespectacled computer freak. The 'spic who smokes too much. The lawyer. The eccentric English game warden. Didn't you just know from word one they were going to get it? There were lots of shocks in the park, but no surprises. It was inevitable, even, that T. Rex should turn out the avenging angel in the last reel. Not a very satisfying confection to my mind, however ravishing it looked, however "real" the dinosaurs appeared. I knew I was having my strings pulled — as I always do in a Spielberg movie — but this time everything felt just a little too routine.

There is, of course, too much in BLAT! to respond to everything without making the loc the length of the zine, and I'm afraid I haven't got time to get back into zine production (maybe someday, when I'm rich in time).

That the edition should be topped and tailed by stories of repulsive behaviour is more than a little sad, and should serve as warnings to us all that we must not allow ourselves to grow smug and comfortable and inflate our own notions of self-worth at the expense of others. I suppose I missed the "flowering" of Harlan Ellison. By the time I got round to reading him I found nothing to impress me very

much — hey, were you people really rating this semi-literate with a few ideas alongside the likes of Aldiss, Dick and Ballard? Of course, by then he'd moved on to the world of being a critic rather than an author, and one of the Dorothy Parker school — not that we ever saw his stuff over here. So I guess I swallowed Chris Priest's summation of him pretty much whole — I don't know Chris that well, but that's very much more than I know Harlan, and I know which of them I trust. What sort of image must look back from his mirror that he feels personally enriched by publicly slagging off someone of whom most of the audience have never heard and who can't answer back? That's not the way a mature adult human being behaves. Maybe it's Harlan as well as Jeffy who's five.

As for your former neighbors, "san fairy ann" as my ma-in-law is prone to say. Life's tough enough without others taking out their problems on you — the Harlan Ellison spirit writ very small. I don't think I live in a "tough" neighborhood but a few months back two guys went to have a none too quiet word with one of their former wives in the street at the other side of the school playing field onto which we looked. That quiet word ended with one lying in the kitchen with his brains let out of his skull by a baseball bat and the other in the garden doing a Snowden impersonation after the boyfriend ripped his guts open with a carving knife. I wonder why we're seriously thinking about moving to the country. [14 Natal Road, Cambridge CB1 3NS, UK]

*I first encountered Harlan Ellison in the pages of late-sixties prozines, like Galaxy and Worlds of IF. Even though I was only 14 years old, I recognized in Harlan's stories a kind of brash newness that was somehow different from the other, older writers. His prose was glib and hip and a little brutal. And he always had great titles for his fiction that always got my attention — no easy task, considering the many distractions available to an adolescent. He was winning awards hand-over-fist and I just felt compelled to follow his career. When I went to my first convention, Harlan was the GoH and turned in what may be the best GoH performance I've ever seen. After that, I was hooked. But now, in retrospect, I recognize that Harlan's true skill is in the field of Self-Promotion and that he has always been willing to do whatever it takes to get attention. Early on he*

*discovered that writing stories in bookstore windows was a great promo tool, and exploited it all over the world. And became very famous. While it is true that I really enjoyed his fiction in the late 60s and early 70s, I actually enjoyed the Harlan Ellison show more. And I think Harlan did too. I don't remember anybody ever comparing Harlan's writing to that of Aldiss, Dick or Ballard — or to mundane authors like Hemingway or Balzac, for that matter — but I do recall times when Harlan would allude to others having said those sort of things about his writing. Eventually, I think even Harlan began to believe the hype — which can be very dangerous for any creative person. — djs*

**LUKE MCGUFF** This is handwritten 'cause my computer is in the shop, and if I don't respond, I ever will. (I started a loc to BLAT! 1 that I should have nailed and mailed, but didn't.) I seriously don't expect you to transcribe a handwritten loc.

In #1 you talked about The Big Machine — I temped in an office where they had a similar copier; if they had offered me a job, I would have taken it primarily to get at that copier. Yeah! It also struck me that The Big Machine would make "on demand" publications and short runs more practical — thus both cutting back on waste and extending "in print" status.

I think Andy's comments about "New Rats" sort of miss the point of what I think of fanzine fandom, other networks, DIY media, the whole 9 yards (so to speak). Good thing I only have this labor-intensive medium to work through or we'd have to bowl at opposite ends of the alley next Thursday.

One thing I've always appreciated about sf fandom, and one thing I've thought could benefit any other social/correspondence/networks I've been in or heard of — is "the usual." It's really sad that more networks don't have this — you'd be surprised at the number of times I get postcards back saying "Sorry, I can't afford to give away copies anymore." This pisses me off (as you might guess), especially if it was a zine I wanted to write for. Hah! Anyway, I think "the usual" is one of the strongest networking tools of sf fanzine fandom and has been, through all fan-dom's history, one of the great cornerstones of this particular social/correspondence network.

"History" is important in the previous paragraphs because the history of sf fanzine fandumb (oops) and the



obligations of that history, are one of the things that I've found most constraining.

It all boils down to whether we receive history as an obligation (any history — economics, Marxism, science, whatever) or as a tool.

The idea of history being a tool and not an obligation is a very recent one to me and one I greatly enjoy. (I'm just trying to avoid the word "empowering"). That is, the obligation of living up to the history of sf fandom silences my voice, kind of delegitimizes what I want to explore. People are successful in sf fandom to the extent that they live up to that history.

On the other hand, the history of sf fandom provides me with many vital tools, that I think could benefit other social/correspondence networks — i.e.: "the usual," the idea of social/correspondence networks, the convention, and probably others. For what it's worth, I've gotten in trouble in other networks, too. For instance, I once hung a mail art show and got in trouble with some folks for not hanging every item the show originally received. I was the third person to show it, and didn't feel like I had to show items that were to me what you might call "minac."

Another time, about 5 years ago, a guy tried starting up an APA for Litzine editors — except he didn't want to call it an APA, rejected everything about sf APAs, and wound up reinventing a square wheel. Oh well.

Since I've just written 2 pages about one off-hand comment in the lettercol, just think what I'd do if I had a computer, and had read the zine thoroughly, etc. Yikes!

I think there is a resurgence of interest in fanzine fandom. It's been fueled by conventions like Ditto and Corflu, and fanzine lounges in cons like Orycon and Worldcon. OK! Besides, Jane and I have received a veritable hogwash of fanzines — I think nearly ten since Orycon, two weeks ago as I write (by the way, "Hogwash" is my collective noun, not hers) — and we're not all that active. Hah! [4121 Interlake N., Seattle, WA 98103]

*Handwritten letters get into print through the good offices of Dan, who actually has to input them. Your handwriting is more legible than some, for which we're grateful. You're absolutely right about the prac-*

*ticity of "on demand" publication and short runs on The Big Machine. We've gone back to The Big Machine to publish additional copies of both #1 and #2, and, as long as we hold onto the originals, we can do this as often as we like for as long as we like.*

*I am fascinated by your feelings about "history," or, in this case, fanhistory. I've never felt constrained by the "obligations" of that history, I guess because I always saw it as a "tool," although that's not the word I'd choose. To me, fanhistory is simply context for the fanac we indulge in. Now that you've explained how it hit you,*



*I can better understand why we used to rub against each other the way we did, back in the early 80s. — tw*

*I've been sitting here in my Good Offices translating your letter, Luke, without much worry or trouble (though I'm still not entirely certain about "Litzine"). I didn't think it was a chore because you had interesting stuff to say, which is, for me anyway, the only thing that really matters. Sure, trying to figure out somebody's scrawl can be frustrating and tedious, but no more so than imputing a rily stupid letter from some Dickforbrains who can type. — djs*

**HARRY CAMERON ANDRUSCHAK** I am another fan who has not seen *Jurassic Park*, and this is due to the many fan comments on the movie. Sorry, Ted, but you are not the first to give this film a bad review. Many fans have given this film a bad review. True, they have done it in APAs and clubzines that you don't read, but they have done it. APA-

L members had a gleeful time pointing out the hundreds of bloop and plot holes in the film, as well as criticizing the general anti-science attitude of the film.

I must sadly agree with you at the way some fans have treated the death of Walter Breen. I wonder, could it happen today? Would accusations of being a child molester be grounds for refusing a con membership today? In this year 1993 going on 1994? I doubt it. After all, convicted drug dealers attend cons, so why not child molesters? Any moral difference between the two? Things were much different back in 1964. No better, perhaps, but different.

As far as Harlan Ellison goes, I wrote an article about my last encounter with him (he may have saved my life) for the fanzine *The Reluctant Famulus*. I don't know if you receive that zine, or if you can get a copy of the issue my article appeared in, but that is all I really have to say on the subject. [Can any of you readers supply the BLAT! editorial team with a copy of TRF, or a xerox of HCA's article therein? —djs] I also noted in TRF that I can identify with Harlan, since he seems to be an alcoholic who just never got around to drinking.

He has all the traits attributed to alcoholics: Such as an extreme case of perfectionism, demanding the impossible from others and, even worse, from himself. Setting standards that cannot be met, resulting in a deep well of ANGER — which sometimes cannot be controlled and breaks out in unfortunate ways. I think that is what has gone on in his relations to Andy Porter. Andy was just the convenient target, and now he cannot back down, because that would be admitting he made a mistake and was less than perfect.

Much of AA therapy for alcoholics like me is devoted to smashing these tendencies for perfectionist thinking. Is it any wonder that two of our slogans are "Easy Does It" and "Live and Let Live?" Of course, Harlan does not drink, but he sure as hell is smoking himself to death. Well, a lot of sober alcoholics in AA are also doing that, although I happen to be a non-smoker. [PO Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309]

*Last issue, at the end of Harry's letter, I asked two rhetorical questions about his career with the Post Office: "1) Why do so many disenfranchised Postal workers go nuts and shoot and kill their co-workers?"*



and "2) Do you own a gun?" Unfortunately, Harry missed my ironic tone-of-voice and took my queries seriously. \*sigh\*... This resulted in a couple envelopes worth of interesting (but more-than-I-wanted-to-know) clippings about the USPS's very real Big Brother philosophy and the stress it creates for the workers. In addition, Harry went on for several pages in an effort to answer my questions. For those of you who must know, here are Harry's answers:

1) "... These poor clerks and mailhandlers [are] running their asses off to make the numbers. In addition, many of them are worrying about their jobs, if they will be laid off in the next round of RIFS, right-sizing, reorganizations, and so on. Add in the way Congress keeps on playing games with our retirement benefits, health insurance benefits, thrift savings plan and social security, and you have a bunch of very worried, very frazzled, hyper-stressed, ANGRY, H\*O\*S\*T\*I\*L\*E workers. I am amazed we don't have even more shoot-em-ups than is the case."

2) "No, I do not own a gun, although I would like to." —djs

Various of my friends have made it a point to acquaint me with a recent FAPazine of yours, in which you said virtually the same thing about "convicted drug dealers" attending conventions. It's nice to know you're willing to say it to my face. Is there any moral difference between us convicted drug dealers and child molesters? Gosh, I hope so! Perhaps you'll enlighten us all and tell me what you find morally repugnant about my selling dope to my friends. (For myself, the biggest moral question was one about the ethics of making a profit off my friends. For years I resisted dealing for that very reason. But who was I to ignore the Message of the Eighties? I wanted some of that Reagan Prosperity, too.) —tw

**ANDY HOOPER** Responding to your efforts has become a major source of throbbing guilt in the back of my mind, because BLAT! #2 was one of the principal sources of fannish pleasure which I received in 1993; in fact, it may have been the best fanzine I ever received in the mail. I guess I've seen some old zines which I count as better in some way, through stature, quality of writing, and the ennobling sheen of the timebound. But the synthesis of your twin editorial presences, the design values of the zine, and the generally very high quality of the writing, even in the LoCs, make BLAT! #2 something very close to an ideal fanzine.

I love the self-timebinding nature of this issue, with the inclusion of *Spung* and *Spungnut*. Ted, your account of your legal experience shows a lot of class, subtle humor, and some very good reporting. Having the letters right next to the text was a good touch too; I note that you might have been carrying a few copies of the zine under your arm when we were first introduced on the street of many restaurants in Brighton. I'm glad I finally got a copy, heh-heh. . . .

My own brushes with the law have been shorter in duration, but enough to be able to say I was able to feel the boredom, and the cold, again while reading your piece. I had to spend a weekend in jail over Halloween a few years back, and have been through a few intakes, arraignments and watery no contest pleas. There's nothing like the sound of someone moaning as if murdered in a distant isolation cell — I occasionally dream of the sound even now, and that was a good ten years ago. I'm sure I was never in any real danger, and only minimally miserable, but I would never want to do three months of it.

Barnaby Rapoport is becoming Mozart to my Salieri. I may have to harm him, poor lad. He understands the visceral pleasure of fan-writing — that the best excuse for contributing to fanzines is being able to write lines like "Shaver may have been mad." His vision of the SF field as being a struggle between the forces of imagination and those who are embarrassed by it — what a superbly realized phrase, it really sums up the struggle between fun and dull pretension in fantastic arts — is one of the best signature pieces I've ever read in a fanzine. Barnaby manages to tell you a great deal about himself, his personal history and ideals as a fan, while retaining a focus on the view of the science fiction field that he wants the reader to get. It's a superb piece, full of great insights — one of my favorite points was the way that "realism" has squeezed the life out of pulp sf, leaving it lost in an "ideology of realpolitik, technological determinism, and social Darwinism." At last, some one has summed up — albeit in a phonetically challenging mass — just what it is I dislike about Orson Scott Card. Now I can forget all the folderol about apologism in support of scientology and homophobia and just concentrate on his realpolitik-ly technologically determinist social Darwinism until the big vein in my forehead starts to pulse

alarmingly.

I liked Steve Stiles' piece too. No matter what sort of personal experience Steve writes about, you get a psychic impression that Steve's self-image is that of himself as a slightly oppressed thirteen-year-old, who lost his virginity on \$50 raised through church work. This is not the case when meeting him in person, where he gives me an impression of being a lapsed novitiate of some sort, who fell in with card sharps at a critical point in his studies; an internal quietude only marred by an unshakable desire to play the big con. The best of his observations was the memory of the Casper Citron campaign, which put me in mind of Nicholas Von Hoffman's Watergate pastiche (Now, crimestoppers, what was that book called?) and the guy who is hired by the White House to carry abusive and obscene picket signs, and by extension, reflect poorly on the McGovern campaign. But this was little consolation to the man himself when looking down on a sign reading "Nixon Sucks Shit," knowing that his own people had paid for it.

The ConFrancisco postcards raise a lot of emotional responses in me. The various mentions of Catherine are painful, and make me angry in some ways. I feel cheated that I didn't get a chance to know her better, and then chastised at the thought of those closer to her, and the way they must feel. Fandom lets us belong to a little village, hewn out of the native slag of the human race, giving real family to mutants too preoccupied with borderline-schizophrenic hallucinations, grand sky-spanning armadas and whole worlds on the head of a pin, to go out and find one the regular way. Sometimes we get the bad parts too. I wish I had the presence of mind to do more than one card for you over the course of the entire weekend; I think I actually wrote the one while waiting backstage (for an hour and a half) for the Hugo ceremony to begin. If you asked me at this point what I remember of the convention, what comes back to me most clearly is the enormous amount of walking I did through the streets of the city. I hadn't been before, so I wasn't able to relate to the ubiquitous comments about how badly downhill the city had managed to go in recent years. To me, it was a remarkable place, extremely hard on the shoe leather. The convention, on the whole, was a great deal better than Chicon V, which it rather reminded me of in tone and organization. The party scene was



what lacked; the rest of the convention can go hang if one has a clean, well-lighted place in which to eat Macadamia nuts and dream of sweet, departed Roger's leather trousers.

The art in this zine is incredible! Tom Foster's page still elicits puzzled laughter after studying it for ten minutes. The little "spot" illos which you, Dan, insert into both your editorials, are priceless. Am I right in assuming that your hand looms large in the design and "look" of the zine? It seems so . . . well, beyond professional, which is what I guess we mean by "faanish" in the best sense. Zappa would have referred to the extra work you put into the thing as "putting the eyebrows on." This is a fanzine with very heavy eyebrows. My favorite piece of art is the "Ted & Steffy" strip at the back; no one in fandom has ever ripped off characters with the elan you do. [4228 Francis Avenue N., #103, Seattle, WA 98013]

*Barnaby missed his deadline this issue — was that your dark hand at work? As for the "look" of BLAT!, while I take pride in my role of Overseer, the plain and simple fact is that it's Dan's doing. There was a time when I was known for the art and layouts in my fanzines, and BLAT! fully follows in their tradition, but the work, talent, and skill is Dan's this time around. I look over his shoulder and exclaim, "That looks really neat! Wow, great stuff!" He has taken what I used to do one step further, integrating it with his experience as*

*the Art Director (and designer) of American Politics. Dan is hip to current-day magazine design, and uses it freely wher-*

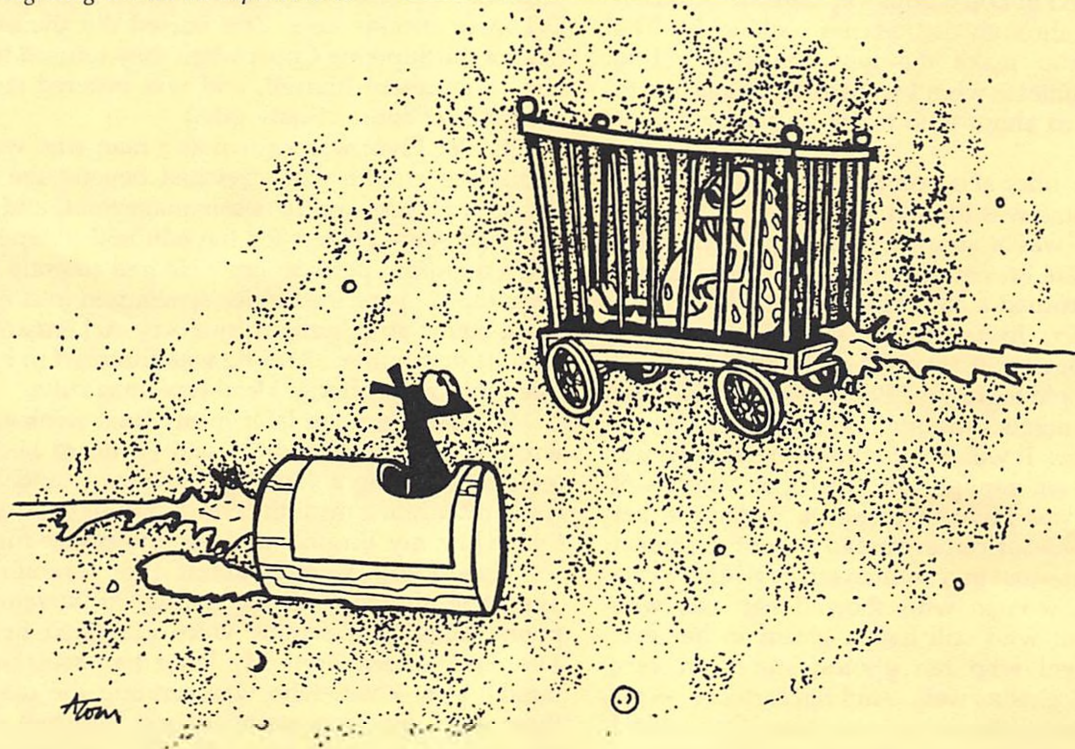
*ever it fits. I think he's proving that you can do this and still keep a "fannish" look and feel to a fanzine. — tw*

#### WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Simon Polley; Redd Boggs:

"Wow!"; Sharon Farber: "In '68 or '69 my Mom and I were in a nasty car wreck while visiting Los Angeles. As I flipped through the newspaper to learn the name and story of the dead woman in the other car, I learned a con was just down the road. I'd never been to a con before. As I stood outside the convention, a bit apprehensive, Harlan Ellison walked by and said something insulting to me, though in a pleasant tone of voice. So, I guess, in my mind, a brush with death and a sarcastic comment from Ellison are the Rites of Passage one must survive to enter fandom."; Catherine Mintz; Frank Lunney; Dave Langford: "One little thing about BLAT! I noticed that a passing mention of *Lan's Lantern* in my last letter was edited so it read *Laan's Laantern* or some such. I don't particularly want to be hauled into that Group Mind, thanks: call it what you like in your editorial material, but please don't write the jape into other people's letters."; Tracy Shannon; Sid Birchby: ". . . Here's to youse, Walt Willis, Terry Jeeves, Chuch, et al. Especially, Walt, I recall your ghoddminton on the occasion when I went for a job interview in Belfast (I didn't get it). That would be the time when I failed to make an obligatory pun when Walt greeted me at the gang-plank. Something about 'Hello, Walt! Long time no sea.' I was ever the man for the slow pun, the delayed-action repost. This one must have been on the back-burner for the best

part of 20 years."; Steve Stiles; J.K. Potter; Terry Hughes, Steve Green: "ref my loc: I didn't mean to imply that the 1980s represented a 'golden age,' but that the current calls for a 'fanzine renaissance' might lead relative newcomers to infer same, in which case the 'institutionalized mediocrity' Barnaby writes of (not an editorial goal but rather, as I wrote, the underlying flavour of the pieces chosen) would be a pretty shabby ad for the fanzine form. Ted may be right in his view that such low standards could spark a literary revolution, but surely it's just as likely to indicate that you needn't try too hard to be regarded as worthy of a 'best of' anthology."; Gary Deindorfer; Terry Jeeves: "'Raptor' presented some interesting half truths. It's easy to pan the Campbell era, but how many pre-Campbell yarns get anthologized compared with the number chosen from his era. Ask any old fan to name the best pre-war stories and he'll pick Campbell yarns. Before him was all slam-bang action trash."; Bill Rotsler (who sent about 5,000 drawings); Tom Foster; Rob Hansen; Clark Dimond; Bhub Stewart; Murray Moore (pre-LOC); and finally, none other than Francis T. Laney. Unfortunately, due to a bad case of death, FTL's handwriting has deteriorated beyond readability, which forced us to abandon our efforts to publish his comments. The only fragment that I could decipher said something about somebody not being a cocksucker.

NEXT ISSUE: No Shirt, No Shoes, No Fanzine!





**HUSTLED** On a Monday in the middle of August, 1980, shortly after I'd arrived at my office at the National Lampoon Inc., Len Mogel, the publisher of *Heavy Metal*, asked me to step into his office for a moment and told me that my position as editor of *HM* was being eliminated. I'd get four weeks severance, and I was promised lots of "work" to ease the burden of unemployment, but Friday was to be my last day.

Emotionally stunned, I wandered out of Len's corner office and down the short hallway to the art director's studio-office, where I found John Workman and Dan Steffan. "I was just fired," I told them. They were both surprised and incredulous.

I felt like a rug had been yanked out from under my feet. I'd completed a year with the magazine (or would have by that Friday) and I'd been full of plans for the upcoming year. I'd been pleased with the changes I'd made in the magazine, and had gotten no hint that management was less pleased (the changes had been, after all, the reason they'd hired me). Later, after all the promises of "work" had been broken, I realized that I'd been fired as part of a cost-cutting measure that reflected the company's growing nervousness with *The National Lampoon's* slipping sales, but right then I felt that I'd been on a roll and had built up a lot of momentum, and that if I had to leave *HM*, I ought to find another magazine with which to continue. Better yet, I'd start a new magazine!

Sitting around in Lou Stathis's apartment with Dan Steffan, I rifled through dictionaries looking for The Word that would make the new magazine's title instantly communicate what I wanted the magazine to be, and we talked about who to try to get for a publisher.

I found the title, and somewhere along the line Larry Flynt's name was bunted about.

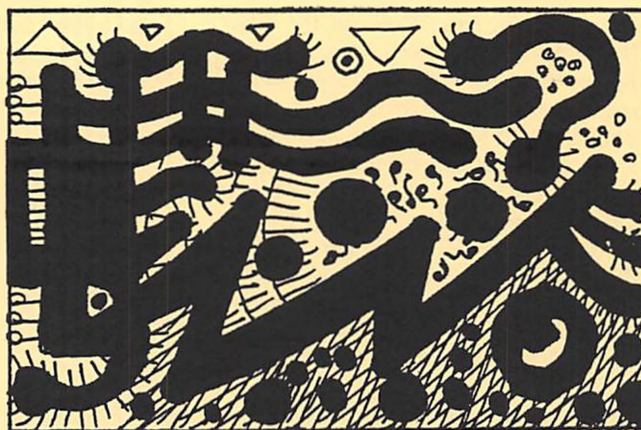
Larry Flynt was a strange man who launched a publishing empire on newsstand sleaze from Columbus, Ohio. He turned a club, the Hustler Club, into a magazine, *Hustler*. In its first few years *Hustler* was a magazine in a class of its own. Slick, like *Playboy*, and full of full-color photography, like *Penthouse*, it had the raunchy, idiosyncratic editorial personality of a sex tabloid like *Screw*. It was Flynt who pioneered the use of mirrors to beam sunlight into the open vaginas of his models. It was Flynt who used a woman in her fifties for his fold-out center-spread — not a woman whose beauty was that of a woman ten or twenty years younger, but a woman who showed her age, who looked used, but who still had a gleam in her eye. And it was Flynt who ran photo-features on very young teenaged girls as well. And his cartoons — his cartoons epitomized the very worst taste. One looked at them with astonishment. *Hustler*, in other words,

was everything the "class" men's mags were not. It was crude, raunchy, and surprisingly *real*. It was a blue collar men's mag. It catered to truck drivers rather than young professionals. And it was published by a midwestern redneck with less than a highschool education.

*Hustler* was an "overnight" publishing success, and suddenly Flynt had money. He used this money in odd ways. He bought up other publications, including *Ohio Magazine* and the *Plaines (Georgia) Gazette*.

## UFFISH THOTS

### TEDITORIAL



*Plaines* was the hometown of the man who was then president of the United States. Then Flynt was shot on the steps of a courthouse where he was being prosecuted for publishing pornography, and experienced a brief rebirth as a Baptist at the hands of the president's sister, with whom he professed great friendship.

Flynt was paralyzed below the waist and confined to a wheelchair after he was shot. In the mid-eighties, he was in the news with a crackpot campaign for the presidency, and obtained and released FBI tapes in the DeLorean cocaine case. (He cursed out the nine justices of the Supreme Court when they refused to allow him to represent himself, and was ordered jailed for contempt of court. Feisty guy.)

In 1980 Flynt was known as a man who wanted a publishing empire that stretched beyond the porno-sleeze of *Hustler* and its sister magazines, and a man who had some respect for the editorial independence of his non-porn publications. He had recently bought a pseudo-sf magazine (which specialized in sf film and ran a comic strip written by Forry Ackerman) along with its distributor. And he was rumored to be interested in doing a *Heavy Metal*-type magazine.

So, one afternoon later in my final week at *HM*, I wrote Flynt a brief letter. I said I'd heard he was interested in doing a *HM*-type magazine, and I said I could offer him almost the entire staff of the magazine. I gave him my Virginia address and phone number.

I heard nothing more about it for several months. Then one afternoon in the middle of November the phone rang. The female voice identified herself as Mrs. Flynt's secretary. My letter had somehow surfaced. Mrs. Flynt, who was running the magazines these days, was curious about me, and had decided she wanted to meet me. Would I be interested in



coming out to Los Angeles so she could see me?

Mrs. Flynt was Althea Leisure Flynt (the former Althea Leisure, who had worked in the original Hustler Club and had probably done more for some of the customers than just serve them drinks, and who had married the boss early in *Hustler's* publishing career), and in the aftermath of Larry's shooting had taken over much of the day-to-day work in running his business. (Flynt, in constant pain from his legs, was taking large quantities of drugs that left him unable to concentrate on details. Later he had an operation that cut his nerves and ended the pain, but left him incontinent. I strongly suspect that he was no longer capable of sexual enjoyment either, which has its ironies.)

In short order, Mrs. Flynt's secretary had arranged for me to fly out on November 18th for an afternoon meeting. Mrs. Flynt took care of the tickets.

I was met at L.A. airport, after some delay, by a friendly man perhaps ten years younger than I who was driving a big black (but slightly scruffy) Lincoln Continental. He took me to a Beverly Hills hotel and checked me in, bought me lunch, and drove me to Century Plaza. Century Plaza is an office-tower complex. Flynt had the 38th floors of both towers. The editorial offices (and the Flynts') were in one tower, and the business and accounting offices were in the other.

When we arrived, only a few moments before my scheduled appointment, we discovered that Althea was not there yet. She was at a recording studio, it turned out, supervising a recording project. She was, I was told, a good singer herself. She was described to me in tones almost of awe. In any case, we had some time to kill.

The man who'd picked me up had been hired by Paul Krassner, my old friend from his *Realist* days, who had briefly been editor of *Hustler* during one of Flynt's ambitious periods. Few of those hired by Paul were left, it seemed. He turned me over to one of the senior editors. (Gosh, I wish I could remember their names, but. . . .) This guy was even younger — in his late twenties. He also wrote thrillers, and spent much of his time while I was in his office talking on the phone to his agent in New York. During one extended phone call I picked up one of his books and read a little of it. Trashy.

After an hour of thumb-twiddling in the senior editor's office, I was offered a tour of the Flynt Publishing offices.

Basically the floor had the elevators and a reception area in its center, and individual offices around its outer walls. The area between, roughly donut-shaped, was open and continuous, but sectioned off into areas,

each area serving the production of one of the three or four "men's" magazines Flynt published. The women who worked as secretaries, clerks, etc., at desks scattered through this open area were all superficially attractive, but in a sleezoid, gum-chewing sort of way. Listening to their chatter I was struck by the fact that they, like the editorial staff, seemed to have mid-western, working-class origins — unlike virtually everyone else I've ever encountered in publishing. No sophistication here!



The walls in this open area were decorated solely with artwork — or photographs — from the appropriate magazines, all blown up large and framed like artworks. Thus, one might glance at a glossy, slick, colorful photograph that sprawled across four or five feet of wall, only to realize that one was staring at a larger-than-life-size blowup of a female torso, legs invitingly spread, labia moist and open, clitoris pink, erect and spotlighted brightly.

Other walls were used as layout boards for a current issue, full-sized pages, xeroxed, blue-lined, or just roughly pencilled, arranged in four or five tiers across ten feet of wallspace. Everywhere you looked, there were photos of nude women displaying their genitals. I wondered what it was like to work in such surroundings every day —

especially for the women.

By now Althea was more than two hours late. Apologies were made to me by her secretary, her secretary's secretary, and several editors, all of whom spoke of her in deferential tones. I was shown her office and Larry's office. Larry's was furnished in lavish period-French-style drapes and furniture and looked like a museum display. It was apparently rarely used, since Larry never came in.

I wandered through all this in an increasingly numbed state. Early on I'd tried to be friendly and conversational with the people to whom I'd been entrusted, but each of them had a faintly sleazy quality, a quality which made ongoing conversation difficult.

I'd gone out to see Mrs. Flynt with the hope of getting enough money to set up operations for my magazine in Northern Virginia, and I'd worked out a rough budget to present her. But each of the people I talked to seemed to assume that if anything came of this meeting it would mean my relocation to Los Angeles and my establishment somehow in their present offices. As the day wore on, I began to regard this prospect with increasing distaste, if not actual horror.

Then, finally, Althea was there and ready to see me. We went back to her corner office.

She breezed in with a cassette in her hand and



said, "I want you all to hear this." She handed the cassette to one of her male flunkies and he put it into an expensive tape deck that was part of an equally expensive stereo system. "Listen to this!" Althea exclaimed, and we listened.

It was ostensibly a rock song, the melody line vaguely catchy but anonymously ordinary. The words were not ordinary. They described, in lascivious detail, an S&M encounter. I can recall only the refrain: "I knew he was mean when he reached for the Vaseline!"

"Is that you, singing?" one of the flunkies asked.

Althea preened herself, but admitted it was not. As soon as the song ended she demanded that it be played again. The tape was re-wound and we sat through it again. As we did she'd comment on a particularly well-turned phrase in the lyrics. Everyone smirked knowingly at the transparent allusions and laughed at the sniggering parts. Althea did a little dance, working her hips in a bump-and-grind, to show her pleasure with the song.

It was only after we'd heard the song twice that she and I were introduced, and I could tell already that this had only a faint chance of becoming a working relationship. I had been unable to work up sufficient enthusiasm for the smarmy song, and was probably already registered in Althea's mind as a Dull Fellow at best.

She sat behind a large desk. On the wall behind and above her was a painting, a portrait of her. In the painting she was a beautiful woman, her expression quiet and dignified. I kept glancing from the painting to her and back to the painting. In life she lacked the painting's finer qualities. Her features were somehow coarser although still the same. I decided it had to do with her expressions, the way she looked when animated. She still looked like a B-girl; her expressions tended towards a sneer and I can no longer remember whether she actually chewed gum or just looked like she was. I wondered whether she was aware of the contrast between the painting and herself, playing off that contrast by having the painting positioned where it was, or whether she had the ego and the naivete to believe it was a true likeness.

We talked for forty-five minutes. She told me she was thinking of doing a "rock and roll magazine." Did I like rock & roll? I said I did. She said it was her new enthusiasm and that she was really into it, producing records and everything. She hadn't, she said, known much about it until recently, but she was a fast study (something her editors had stressed) and learned fast. How about that song on the cassette, huh? I said it wasn't my type of rock. She asked me who I like. I named a half dozen groups. She'd heard of none of

them, and waved them away as unimportant.

She was thinking of using some comics in her new magazine. What did I think of that? She described a magazine with a comic section stuck into it. She'd seen my rock issue (Oct., '80) of *HM*. Kinda like that stuff, she said, only better.

I tried to trot out my own ideas. She sidetracked me by asking me questions about *HM*'s sales. I told her what facts I knew, based on the weekly distributor's reports Len had shown me. I knew mostly percentages rather than hard numbers. She stopped me, placed a call to someone in distribution and asked for all the numbers on *HM*. Minutes later the call was returned and she scribbled down some numbers on her pad and began telling me how *HM* was doing. Much of what she said contradicted what I'd said, leaving me wondering whether this was all a stunt, a device to impress me, based on previously-accumulated data of doubtful accuracy, or whether in fact she had a direct line to the facts and Len had been leading me on. Either way, the effect was to Put Me In My Place. I tried to sell her on the enormous market possibilities for a properly promoted adult comic magazine ("Think of all the people who liked comics when they were kids, and who would buy an adult comic if they knew it existed!") — one of my beefs with *HM* being the lack of promotion for the magazine — but

she cited *HM*'s sales (declining, according to her) as if they were the ceiling, the most an adult comic mag could expect in sales. "If that's all Matty Simmons can sell," was about the way she put it.

It ended with my promise to send her a written proposal and my résumé. I knew even as I was telling her I'd do it that I would not. It really didn't matter whether she liked my proposal or wanted to hire me, because I had no desire to work for her or her organization.

She must have reached the same conclusion, because instead of driving me back to my hotel, they pointed me out the front door to a cab stand, and washed their hands of me. I was on my own, free to get back to the airport the following morning by cab, at my own expense. Worse, when I got home I found I'd been billed for the needlessly expensive hotel room.

That evening I got in touch with Sandy Cohen (none of the other people I knew in L.A. answered their phones), he took me out to dinner, and after we'd smoked a little I delivered myself of an impassioned tirade against the Flynts and their organization. I was surprised by my own vehemence as I summed up the surroundings and the people on the 38th floor of the Century Plaza. "They're all scum, Sandy," I said, my voice quivering with outrage I hadn't realized I had.





"Dim people brutalized by the blatant, explicit pseudo-sexuality of their environment. Too dim to have any imagination, too dim to realize what trash they so proudly produce! And *Althea*! Amazingly unintelligent, but *canny*, in that way such people have. She knows how to manipulate people, and she's got everybody up there, man and woman alike, twisted around her little finger while she plays adolescent ego games! Boy, they sure left a bad taste in my mouth!" And Sandy nodded encouragingly and let me get it all off my chest until I'd calmed down and was able to hold a normal conversation with him once more.

**POSTSCRIPT** The foregoing piece was written about ten years ago, probably for the never-published *Gambit 57*. Rereading it refreshed my memory of those events in late 1980 — and my overpowering distaste for Mrs. Flynt. She's dead now, having committed suicide in her bathtub after learning she had AIDS.

It will do no harm to name the title I had selected for my proposed magazine. It was *Neon*. Chrysler is now using the name for a car. \*Sigh\* . . .

*Gambit 57* would have been a fine fanzine, had I published it. As proof I can offer not only the preceding portion of this editorial, but Moshe Feder's article in this issue, which was originally written for *Gambit 57*, and holds up very well, describing as it does the events of September 1980.

When Dan and I descended into my dank basement to run off the *Egoboo* stencils for this issue's installment of the BLAT! Archives — presented to you this time in the BLAT! Supplement — we discovered a number of cut stencils for *Gambit 57*, and we feel they are definitely Archives material. One of them is an article by Lee Hoffman, for example.

The idea of resurrecting their old fanzines in the BLAT! Archives is one that has been greeted enthusiastically by those to whom we've broached it. Terry Hughes, for example, never mailed out the final issue of *Mota*, and the Archives would seem perfect for its dissemination.

And Frank Lunney was very enthusiastic about putting together what he had for a final issue of *Syndrome* (originally scheduled for this issue) — until the sudden and inexplicable death of Catherine Jackson. (Grant Canfield's piece, this issue, says far more about the kind of person Catherine was than I ever could, but she was my friend for twenty years, and in recent years was the sister I never had, and I too will miss her very much.) We hope to do *Syndrome* sooner or later — whenever Frank wants to deal with it again.

**SILVERCON 3** I was the Fan Guest of Honor at this year's Silvercon in Las Vegas. Greg Benford was the Pro Guest of Honor. The *Void Boys* reunited. It was good to see Greg again. He was in good form.

Silvercon was thoroughly enjoyable for me. I had no problems of any kind, with the hotel, the convention, or any person. From the moment I stepped out of the airport doors and found Arnie Katz, looking like a Mafia hood with dark clothes and wraparound shades, standing impressively tall next to his Chrysler LeBaron and waiting for me, I knew I was going to enjoy myself.

Arnie introduced me to our driver (with Arnie's vision he can't drive his own car), John Wesley Hardin, to whom I quickly took a liking. Once we were up in my hotel room, I gave him a copy of our last issue, which I noticed him carrying around throughout the convention.

Once I'd stowed my stuff in my room we returned to the car and drove out to the Katzes' house in suburban Las Vegas. Almost the first thing I noticed upon entering the house were the cooked turkeys sitting in the kitchen (just off the entrance from the garage), waiting to become our dinner.

Art Widner, among others, was already in the Katzes' livingroom and soon the house filled up with fans. Some were locals, but many were like myself from out of town. Lenny Bailes, rich brown, Andy Hooper, Bill Donaho, Robert Lichtman, the Benfords, the Burbees, John ("Big D") Berry and Eileen Gunn, and, later, Dan and Lynn Steffan. (I'm sure I've omitted people like, oh, hey, Don Fitch, among others. . . .)

Joyce laid out a lavish spread of food and the party ran until well after midnight. I drank Pepsies like they were water, everyone got sercon, and a great party was enjoyed by all.

At one point late in the evening I found myself sitting with Art and Lenny, and the conversation turned serious, as first Lenny told us what had been happening to him, and then Art expressed his worries about aging. After seeing photos of Art Widner as a young man, I realized that Art has always been "in shape" if not better than that — and the inevitable deterioration of age must be harder to take if you've always had a good physique. Art complained, too, of auditory hallucinations: the sound of an old-fashioned phone-bell ringing, or his mother calling his name. I told him it sounded like old stored memories being randomly restimulated, and hopefully nothing to be concerned about.

Joyce drove Andy Hooper and me back to the hotel at some point well after midnight, and the two of us decided to check out the hotel's 24-hour restaurant/coffee shop. It advertised prime rib dinners at any hour for \$7.95 (later I realized this offer was ubiquitous in down-

town Las Vegas; some places offered prime rib for \$5.95!) and I decided to try it out. The prime rib was good, but everything else — peas from a can, reconstituted mashed potatoes, salad from a plastic bag — was low-rent diner food, and small portions as well. But for eight bucks. . . .

The next day the official con started. And it was





only Friday. The convention blended together for me. I signed a few autographs (and watched Greg sign many more), appeared on panels, and, at the banquet, gave my FGoH talk, which will be transcribed and published by Woody Bernardi. I enjoyed great meals in good restaurants, and the evenings partying in the Katzes' suite.

I kept having this odd feeling. It wasn't *exactly* *deja vu*. But I'd be deeply engrossed in a conversation with someone and look up and for a moment think that I was at a *Corflu*, rather than Silvercon. It had the same ambience as a convention. The programming — at least the parts I attended or was on — was remarkably *Corflu*-like, even to the fannish trivia contest conducted by Andy Hooper, a continuation of the one he conducted last year in Madison. And the core group was virtually the core group of every *Corflu*. (Add to that the fact that next year *Corflu* will be in Las Vegas, and you can perhaps understand my occasional confusion.) By me, this adds up to a fine convention. And Silvercon 3 definitely was.

When I walked into the Katzes' house Thursday I was handed a copy of *The Ted White Sampler*, Volume One. This contains 41 pages (of double-columned type) of My Words. The contents range from "A Day with Calvin Thomas Beck" (a 1960 classic, if I do say so myself) to the recently published (in *Mimosa*) "The Bet." I have a hard time quibbling over the actual selection — I have written so damned *much*, and anyway it wouldn't be seemly — but I would not have included the earliest material myself (the 1958 stuff). I asked Andy Hooper, who had a hand in the selection of material, why he'd picked my 1958 *Midwestcon* report. "Well, Ted," he said, "it just struck me as the ultimate report of its kind — all those car troubles, coming and going. . . ."

Arnie tells me there will be a second volume made available at the coming (1994) *Corflu*, and maybe a third. "You write so damned *much*, Ted," was about the way he put it. I await them with curiosity.

If I was editing the project, I think I'd present the material much more systematically: chronologically, to begin with, and with separate volumes devoted to certain long-lived columns like those in *Boonfark* and *Yandro* (one of the latter is in this volume). But that's me: anal-retentive and linear to a fault. Since I'm much too unorganized (and so is my fanzine collection), I've never attempted the task, so I can't complain if others take a different approach and actually do it.

(*The Ted White Sampler* is available from Joyce and Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107, for \$5.00 a copy.)

When I showed up, Saturday morning (ugh!) to do my stint at the autograph table I found myself seated between Greg and a woman named Vivian Schilling. I had never before heard of Ms. Schilling, but sitting in front of her on the table were a stack of copies of her hardcover novel, *Sacred Prey*. The book, published in 1994, carries a gold seal on its dustjacket that proclaims

it the winner of the 1993 "Golden Scroll Award for Outstanding Achievement in Literature," as awarded by The Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror, whatever that may be. She was, I discovered, not selling these books. She was *giving them away*. That surprised me; authors usually encourage the *sales* of their books, especially at \$19.95 (the list price of this one). But there was more! She was also giving away copies of her *video*: a 94-minute movie called *Soultaker*, written by and starring Vivian Schilling (with co-star Joe Estevez). (She gave me copies of each, autographing the book to me. All I could do in return was to autograph a copy of my *Sampler* for her.)

At first glance I thought she was a bimbo: very pretty, anorexically slender, and airhead-superficial in conversation. A quick look at the book — I read its first page — did nothing to dispel that notion: it was full of beginner-mistakes.

But then she appeared on a panel with Greg and me, and I used the opportunity to ask her a few probing questions. Her answers increased my respect for her. I don't know how good an actress she is (I've yet to crack the plastic wrap on the video), but I'll give her credit for trying to gain control over her life, to build a career for herself. She enjoys acting, but hates the lack of control actors have, and for that reason got into writing and directing (and maybe production), which in turn led to the book. (The book's publisher is an arm of the film company with which she is associated.) And her concept for the book, as she described it on that panel, was respectable (even though its execution may not be).

Later I was told that she'd been flown in for her Saturday appearances as part of a publicity tour for the book, the free copies of which were I guess just more PR.

As the con progressed I kept mulling, ever more sercon, over that "Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror" — of which I'd never before heard. How *convenient* it was for an "award" to hype that book — even if the award was given before the book was published. I remarked upon this to others.

"What we need is our *own* 'Academy,'" I announced at one point to the dregs of a late-night party. "We need an Academy of Fannish Arts & Letters."

"What would this Academy *do*?" Andy Hooper queried, blearily.

"Oh, I dunno," I said. "Think of it as a branch of Fanwriters of America. We could emblaze the covers of our fanzines with Golden Stencil Awards — for best-aligned staples, or maybe adequate margins. . . . You know: stuff like that. And all in the name of the AFAL, the Academy of Fannish Arts & Letters!"

At that point Andy fell off his stool.

I knew, going in, only a few of the Las Vegans besides the Katzes, Bill Kunkle, Laurie Yates, Ross Chamberlain, and Woody Bernardi. It was a pleasure meeting some of the others, like John Wesley Hardin and the Formans. Ken Forman took Lenny Bailes and





me to the airport Monday morning, and waited with me at my gate until boarding was announced. We found ourselves much common ground for conversation, and it was a great way to leave (and end) the convention.

My thanks to Las Vegas fandom for an excellent, very enjoyable convention.

**AZALEA OBSESSION** It didn't start out that way. My mother planted a number of azalea plants around our house when I was a kid. Today the biggest of them is around fifteen feet tall.

When I moved back into this house in 1970, the surrounding yard was vastly different than it is today. Originally the front yard (before the house was built) had been a vineyard. A few rows of grapevines remained through my childhood, but most of the front yard was by then a vegetable garden. (A bigger garden, out back, was reserved for corn and beans.) My second wife, Robin, enjoyed working in the garden and she maintained the front garden. (The back garden by then had a house in it; now it has several houses.) When we parted company I continued the front garden, using it for tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, and garden herbs. But gradually I allowed the lawn that fringed it to take over, maintaining little islands of plantings as a vestigial garden. (This year this means six tomato plants and dozen sweet potato plants given me by my neighbor, plus semi-permanent plantings of sage and rosemary, augmented by annual herbs like dill and basil.)

Once trash-trees like mulberries grew all along the driveway fence and the fence along the street. They gave me privacy, but closed the yard in. Ten years ago I cut them all down and began putting in flower beds. Today there are no fences and the yard looks almost like a showplace.

My mother had showed me how to "layer" azaleas so that branches that lie on the ground would develop roots. When this occurs, one can cut the branch from its parent plant and have a new azalea. I did this, and produced a dozen or so new plants which I put into the flower beds along the front and sides of the yard. Up to this point I was working with what I had, taking years to do it. (The layering can take several years by itself.) My mother's azaleas were the usual common sort: mostly whites, reds, and pinks, with a couple of lavenders as well. To fill in the flower beds, I began buying azaleas.

At first I simply went to the seasonal "shops" set up in various parking lots. Typically, azaleas could be had for two to five dollars (one such place is offering ten plants for \$25.00 this year). These plants are rarely identified as to breed, and come in the usual common colors, although with some petal variation.

In my general ignorance of azaleas I had only vague memories of the possibility of other colors. It

seemed to me I'd seen orange azaleas, for instance. But none were for sale in the parking lots.

Then, a couple years ago, I heard of the Landon Azalea Festival, which takes place each spring at the Landon School (a prep school for boys) in Bethesda, Maryland, and I went to check it out.

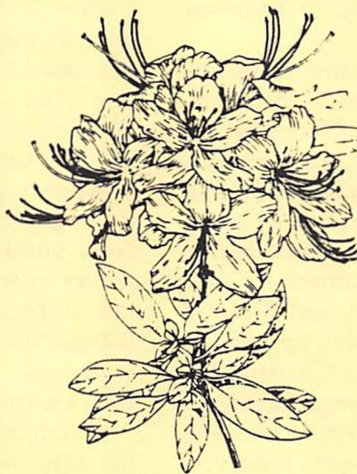
Landon School sits cheek-by-jowl with the Perkins Estate, which it now owns, and on which exists an incredible azalea garden, containing over 15,000 plants of over 200 varieties. The Festival is timed for the peak flowering period in the Perkins garden: a sight to behold. In addition, just up the hill from the Perkins Estate, on school grounds, potted azaleas are displayed and offered for sale.

But they didn't have orange azaleas either. Not for sale, anyway.

The Perkins garden, on the other hand, had a huge — almost a small tree — orange azalea, a smaller yellow azalea, and — almost inconspicuous in contrast — a smaller, different, orange-flowered azalea.

So these colors *did* exist! The next trick was to find some for sale.

My investigations had by then revealed to me that *all* the yellow and orange-colored azaleas were of a less-common type: deciduous azaleas. All the azaleas (but one — which I'll get to in a moment) on my property were of the more common "evergreen" varieties. (But last winter, with sustained below-zero temperatures, was rough on them and some lost most of their leaves.) Deciduous azaleas shed their leaves in the fall and stand naked throughout the winter. (Some will not produce fresh leaves until after flowering the next spring; others leaf up first.) I had one deciduous azalea: my mother referred to it as "the wild azalea"; it is native to the east coast of the U.S. and its flowers are smaller and more trumpet-shaped than those of evergreen azaleas. It was an ugly duckling, spindly and open, looking more like a small sapling than a shrub, and producing a few modest flowers. Only this year, having achieved a height of eight feet or so, has it bloomed more fully.



I mentioned all this on one occasion to Richard Moore, a local fringe-fan and mystery writer, and he told me the house he'd recently bought in Alexandria had a lot of azaleas, including yellow and orange ones. "Aha!" I thought. "I shall take cuttings, root them, and have plants of my own." And this, with Richard's cooperation, I tried twice to do, but the cuttings wilted before they took root (even using a rooting hormone), and died. (I now know what I did wrong, having read up on the subject. I should have put a plastic bag over them to maintain the

humidity they needed.) In the meantime, I went to my local nursery, NaturEarth, and discovered they had one deciduous azalea left for sale (I should have checked earlier), which produced a flower which was apricot-colored.



Not exactly what I wanted, but I bought it anyway. It was a start.

That was last year. This year I made several discoveries. One was Betty's Azalea Ranch. The place advertised "hundreds, including rare varieties" of azaleas. I decided to check it out.

The place occupies several acres and I've never fully explored it. But I *did* find the deciduous azaleas. None were yet blooming, but they had names like "Orangeade," "Gibraltar," "Lemondrop," and a variety of Exburys. (The one I'd bought the previous year had been an Exbury.) I bought half a dozen in the course of several trips.

Then I checked NaturEarth. They had told me a week or two earlier that they wouldn't be getting any "rare" azaleas this year, to my disappointment, but the fellow who told me that was wrong. I went back looking for something else and discovered several Exburys on display in full flower. They were mostly orange, but of differing types. (One had much frillier blossoms.) They were startling, dramatic in the profusion of flowers and richness of colors. And, when I inquired, I was shown a yellow plant out back. I bought three of them.

And finally, in a classic case of bad timing, I discovered a place that *produced* deciduous azaleas — on the last day before it was bulldozed into a parking lot. There had been a Going Out Of Business Sale — which I had all but missed. I picked up three plants, about all that was left.

I now have around a dozen deciduous azaleas, some of which have yet to bloom, planted both in front of my house and in the backyard, in good locations (some sun, some shade). I probably have more deciduous azaleas now than anyone in the area. I have five or six varieties of orange azaleas, three varieties of yellow (one makes a few big flowers; another produces "heads" of dozens of tiny flowers), as well as pale cream ("Cannon's Double"), rose-blushed with yellow (an Exbury), pink with yellow ("Crimson Tide"), vivid red ("Satan"), and others yet to bloom. I have an *abundance* of deciduous azaleas.

Lynda has all but lost patience with my obsession for azaleas, as much as she likes them — and has enjoyed the two Azalea Festivals to which I took her — feeling as she does that we had enough before my last few acquisitions, so I have stopped searching out new and different plants . . . this year. I have moved on to the next stage of my obsession: acquiring knowledge. It's all very well to pick up oddly named ("Hazel Hamilton") plants with showy blooms, but I really knew so *little* about the history and varieties of the azalea plant. Lynda had given me for Christmas a softcover book titled *Azaleas, Rhododendrons & Camellias*, which got me started but could be read cover to cover in an hour. It did clue me in on one fact, however: Azaleas are really a subclass of rhododendron. This didn't really surprise me because I have a few rhododendrons (another story, for another editorial), and I'd already noticed the striking similarity in the basic structure and nature of the flowers themselves, despite

the obvious differences in foliage. The book also names 37 varieties of deciduous azalea (mostly hybrids, from Ghent, Knap Hill and Exbury) — far more than I possess or hope to possess.

But that book only whetted my appetite. I began searching bookstores for the more comprehensive volume I was sure existed — and found it at Borders (the bookstore with an espresso bar). Fred C. Galle's "Revised and Enlarged Edition" of *Azaleas* (Timber Press) runs over 500 pages of small-type text, and has several hundred color plates in addition. It lists every variety of deciduous azalea that existed up to 1987 — I haven't counted, but the lists run on for pages and must total several hundred at least — as well as all the evergreen azaleas (the lists of which comprise two-thirds of the book). It deals with every technical aspect of the plant, from methods of classification and description, to the history of its discovery and hybridization, to its care and propagation. I intend to read the latter part thoroughly.

Because, you see, now that I have these plants I can propagate them myself. I can take cuttings and root them. And the book even explains in detail how to hybridize: I can create my own hybrids!

Maybe some day, in my old age, I will find my own name in a future edition of *Azaleas*. Such is the ever-elusive search for immortality.

"I'D LIKE TO FEUD WITH YOU, BUT —" So I got this phone call from Joe Maraglino. "I just read your story in *Idea*," he said, "and I have to tell you, I really enjoyed it. Very funny stuff."

This was my first phone call from Joe — and, indeed, my first direct contact of any sort with him . . . that I can recall. Joe tells me we may have met at the 1973 Torcon, possibly at a Mike Glicksohn party. I certainly don't recall it, but that doesn't mean it didn't happen.

In recent times Joe has been editing *Astromancer Quarterly*. I reviewed AQ in the latest *Habakkuk* (out only a week or two before this issue of BLAT!), and described therein the curious story of my relationship with AQ: after a year or so of receiving issues in the mail, my conscience got the better of me and I sent Joe a LoC, which he subsequently published. In an attempt to stay in the groove, so to speak, I LoCced the following issues in turn — but none of those letters were published. Rumors began to reach me that my letters upset Joe, so much so that not only were they not printed, they weren't even shown to his wife (Linda Michaels). I did not understand this, since they were your usual sort of LoC in which I commented in turn on various items in the issue.

In my *Habakkuk* review I speculated on the reasons for this, wondering how or in what manner I had apparently so deeply offended Joe. My conclusion was that Joe doesn't edit his fanzine the way I edit mine. He withholds the addresses of his contributors, for example, and bristles at the suggestion that he do otherwise. It would be "unprofessional," he said in the



last AQ, to print those addresses and expose his contributors to the direct assault (by mail) of his readers. (Other fanzines make a *point* of publishing the addresses of their contributors, and of course most fanzine contributors' addresses appear in the lettercols of those and other fanzines anyway.)

Somewhat before I wrote the review for *Habakkuk* I responded in a different fashion to the situation: I wrote a story, a work of fiction, called "Nightmare at ConFrancisco, or Down That Rabbit Hole Again." It was published in *Idea* #8, and appears to have been well received.

(But I do want to say that although some of the characters in that story were based wholly or in part on real fans, the character called "The Fat Queen" was not. She was completely inspired by the Red Queen in *Alice*, the work on which I'd loosely based my story. People have told me that they took the Fat Queen to be an actual fan, and I must apologize to that fan, since I had not intended the resemblance others observed.)

Joe obviously recognized himself in the story, but made a point of assuring me that he was not offended. "Hey," he said at one point early on (the phone call lasted fifteen or twenty minutes), "I'd like to feud with you, but I just can't right now." In context and from his tone of voice, I gather he meant "feuding" as a game, some sort of sport, but I can't be sure. Maybe he meant, "I'd like to take a poke at you, but it would be politically unwise." Because he did cite politics as his reason for refraining: the Niagara Falls Worldcon bid, which he heads.

Joe strikes me as a very careful man.

"Are you in fact AQ's editor," I asked him at one point, "or are you one of a group of editors?" AQ is, nominally, a clubzine.

"I'd prefer not to say," he replied.

"Oh, come on," I said. "Why be secretive about something like that?" And he admitted he was AQ's sole editor, albeit beholden to the club.

Joe explained his editorial policy to me. He publishes only *unedited* letters in AQ. To edit a letter in any way is, to Joe, a violation of the letter and a betrayal of the letterwriter. Thus, if one of my letters contained *one line* that he did not wish to publish, the entire letter would go unpublished.

"But Joe," I said. "When I write a LoC it is rarely an integral, organic whole. Usually it is a serial commentary on each item in an issue in turn. It would be easy enough to edit out the comments on one or more items without vitiating the letter as a whole."

But apparently he does not buy this concept. Nor does he buy the concept of a "WAHF" list at the end of a letter column. He seems to feel that it would be

rubbing a person's nose in rejection to publicly note that this person's letter did not make the cut.

"But Joe," I said. "The letter writer already *knows* you didn't publish his letter. The WAHF is just a way of bestowing a little recognition: 'These people also wrote letters to this zine.' People *appreciate* this; they're not insulted by it. It's still a form of egoboo." But Joe did not agree.

Until our phone conversation I'd had the mental image of Joe Maraglino as a young adult, probably somewhere in his twenties, maybe recently out of college. But that could hardly be the case with *any* adult attendee of the 1973 Worldcon, and near the close of our conversation Joe startled me with the statement, "I corresponded with Richard Nixon from 1968 until he died."

Joe *admired* Nixon — and still does. For him Clinton is "Slick Willie," and Nixonian politics were the best.

Joe Maraglino strikes me as a real smoothie, a man who plays 'em close to his vest and rarely utters an impolitic word, keeping his true feelings to himself. Combine that with his affinity for Nixon, and I don't trust him *at all*. His notions of how a fanzine should be edited also strike me as dubious.

Do we want to see this man chairing a Worldcon?

And, speaking of Nixon....

**RICHARD NIXON** He's dead. And to listen to the eulogies being bestowed on the man, you'd think he'd been a good president and a Major Good Guy. He wasn't. At no time in his career was Richard Nixon anything other than opportunistic slime. His eye was

always on the Main Chance — as he saw it. Coming out of World War II, and into politics in California, Nixon saw opportunities in the newly created "cold war," and made himself over into an "anti-Communist," which allowed him to call anyone he opposed — and anyone who opposed him! — a "pinko," a "Commie sympathizer" ("Comsymp") or "a dupe of the Commies." It worked better for Nixon than it did for Joe McCarthy, whose coattails it first seemed Nixon was riding.

I was 14 when Nixon made his famous 1952 "Checkers speech." I was a Democrat (in 1948 I was the only kid in my school who supported Truman), but I didn't know much about Nixon until I listened to his speech — which my father had on the radio. I was amazed at the smarmy words and tone of that speech. It dripped with unctuous hypocrisy. That it "saved the day" for Nixon (keeping him on the Republican ticket as Eisenhower's veep) was a source of total amazement to me — and still is, to this day. (The speech — or





excerpts from it — have been used in recent “memorial” broadcasts, and my memory is confirmed. But-ter wouldn’t have melted in his mouth, as my mother might have said.) Obviously you can’t underestimate the intelligence of the American voter. Look him in the face, tell him an insincere lie, and he’ll just love you for it. \*Sigh\*....

I have an lp with Nixon’s 1962 “You won’t have Nixon to kick around any more” speech on it — delivered to reporters after he lost his bid for the governorship of California. It’s a party record. It’s called *Sing Along with JFK*, and side one consists of Kennedy’s presidential speeches cut up into sing-alongs, in the style of those made so popular by Mitch Miller in the fifties. In the spirit of fair play, or something, side two offers a stultifyingly dull Eisenhower speech as “delivered at the Hollywood Bowl(ing Alley),” punctuated by the sounds of the occasional strike or spare, and the Nixon speech. The Nixon speech is presented as though it was a nightclub act. The actual speech is complete and unedited, but laughter and applause have been dubbed in at (in)appropriate moments. This cut from that record has been played repeatedly in my house over the thirty years since it was released. I’m glad I have it: a document on Nixon’s self-pity and bravado.

That Nixon was elected president — twice! — is another black mark against the American electorate: collectively a bunch of fools who still think he was “a great president,” hounded from office by a bunch of spoil-sports. They overlook the fact that he chose Spiro Agnew as his running mate — possibly the only choice that might make Nixon look good in contrast — and the frantic maneuvering to get Agnew out of office before Nixon left his so that we wouldn’t have a *cheap* crook for our next president. But then, they overlooked all the dishonest and immoral things Nixon had done to get into office since 1946.

He was a liar. His tapes revealed him to be a coarse man given to expletives-deleted and surprising malice. He was still lying as he resigned his presidency one step ahead of impeachment. And never, ever, in the twenty years that followed, did he admit the truth about Watergate and his role in it, or all the other covert plans he initiated to disrupt our democracy, his “enemies list” being only the tip of that iceberg.

Watergate still has its mysteries, the major one being the identity of “Deep Throat.” Well, now it can be told: Richard Nixon was Deep Throat.

Yes, conscience-stricken (he was raised a Quaker), Nixon was given to a peculiar form of sleep-walking, in which he would rise late in the evening from his bed, dress, and slip out of the White House to drive to a nearby parking garage, where, hidden by shadows,



whispering to disguise his voice, he fed Woodward and Bernstein all the inside details about the burglary and its coverup. He would complain, the next morning, of being tired and feeling that he had not slept well. Subsequently, he would make Henry Kissinger join him on bended knees in prayer, another sign of his mental deterioration in that period.

Nixon’s reputation today rests on his supposed expertise in foreign policy. He had none. His *entire* credentials in this area — starting with his “opening up” of China (which is to say, his abandonment of a policy he had been instrumental in setting up, of turning our backs on China) — are really those of Henry Kissinger, upon whom he relied, whose advice he took, and whose ideas he appropriated. A pragmatic “realist,” Nixon had no policies or goals of his own save one: to stay in power. Nixon was elected, in 1968, on the promise that he had a “secret plan” to end the war in Vietnam. Although commentators today are crediting him with ending that war, he didn’t. He had no secret plan, and it was his successor, Gerald Ford, who finally pulled us out of Vietnam — as losers.

Nothing the man wrote after he left the White House — several books giving his reading on aspects of foreign policy and affairs — will endure. I predict that within twenty years they will be debunked or dismissed as irrelevant. But somehow, by dint of holding on, Nixon “rehabilitated” himself.

Right.

Time — and karma — has a way of catching up with people, sooner or later. The “anti-communists” of the fifties are all revealed to have been viciously nasty men who enjoyed the power they had over the lives of others — whom they ruined for pleasure. None of them is well thought of today. One by one they’ve joined Joe McCarthy in history’s scrapheap.

Richard Nixon is dead. At last. But as one final finger to the American public, even in death he inconvenienced us. Federal offices closed on Wednesday, April 27th. No mail was delivered.

**HONDA, HONDA** If owning one Honda Civic Wagon is fun, then owning *two* Honda Civic Wagons should be twice as much fun. And it is.

Early last September, while many of you were enjoying yourselves at ConFrancisco, my wife Lynda was putting in long work weeks — 60 hours and up — to meet the deadline on the project she was managing. Her work extended into the weekends, and on one Saturday she happened to notice a dark metallic-blue Honda Civic Wagon parked at a nearby gas station with a “For Sale” sign on it.

Now this was no ordinary gas station. It occupies the ground floor of a church, which is built directly



over it. Locals refer to it, the owner told us, as "Our Lady of Exxon Church." Indeed, the station's owner, Larry H., is a deacon in the church.

He was selling the car, he said, for a member of the congregation. He had serviced her car since she'd bought it new, and could vouch for it being in excellent shape. He'd replaced the clutch and the timing belt, he told us, the latter at 60,000 miles.

The car was a 1987 model — one year younger than mine — with about a 100,000 miles less than mine: the low 70,000's. The major difference between the cars was that while mine is a front-wheel-drive with automatic transmission, this one was four-wheel-drive ("Real-Time," meaning all the time) with a six-speed manual transmission. (The lowest gear is "super-low," or "SL," and I've yet to find a use for it.)

We bought the car. (Actually Lynda bought it; it's in her name.) The price was under \$4,000 and a bargain. Or so we thought then. (Actually, we still do think that, despite the extra several hundred we had to put into it.)

Old Larry H. is a smooth-talking son-of-a-bitch, and he lied to us about a number of things. For instance, my mechanic quickly discovered that the timing belt had *not* been replaced, and was in such bad shape that it was in imminent danger of failing. (When a timing belt fails, the usual result is the near-total destruction of the engine.) And although he swore to Lynda that he knew of no problems with the car, we quickly discovered one: When driven any length of time — on short trips of less than half an hour even — it overheated.

My first thought was the thermostat — a device which opens when the coolant is hot enough, and allows it to pass to the radiator. When a thermostat fails, it stays closed and the coolant has no way to be cooled down, remaining trapped in the engine. (The first time a thermostat failed on me I was driving a 1953 Ford. Its engine got so hot that it burned all the oil and grunge off its outside surfaces.) But when my mechanic checked the Honda's thermostat he discovered that someone had taken a chisel to it and cut out its center — converting it, in essence, into an open hole. That "someone" had to be Larry H. or someone in his employ. Obviously he knew about the overheating problem.

Indeed, he'd applied more than one "band-aid" to the problem. He'd not only gutted the thermostat, he'd hot-wired the radiator fan (which normally runs only when needed) to run constantly. My mechanic pointed out to me the errant wire snaking through the engine compartment.

The problem itself was caused by the radiator, which was badly clogged — and filled with *pure* anti-freeze (which has a lower boiling point than a 50-

50 mixture of anti-freeze and water). A new radiator (and thermostat) solved the overheating problem.

So we spent several hundred dollars fixing these problems, and once that was done we still had a bargain of a car, and one with no other problems.

Mr. H. had been very insistent that Lynda allow him to continue servicing the car. Naturally, we have not, preferring our own mechanic, another Larry, Larry Rubendall. (When I met him in the mid-eighties, he was fixing cars out of his garage behind his house, a couple of blocks from my house. Arlington County shut him down — the zoning was against him — and he took a job at a local Shell station. Last year he bought the station. For as long as I've known him he's been competent and honest, a rare and valuable combination and one to be treasured when found.) As nearly as I can tell, Larry H., or his employees, or both, is neither competent nor honest. Only a fool would have filled the radiator with pure anti-freeze, for example. (We wonder if he really replaced the clutch. Our mechanic, who *has* changed the clutch of a four-wheel-drive Honda Civic Wagon, tells us that the first step it to remove the engine, no small task.)

I looked forward to last winter. I wanted to test the four-wheel-drive. I'd already learned that is was useful in heavy rain: while hydroplaning affects one or two wheels at a time, it rarely affects all four at once, so traction is rarely lost. Now I wanted to try it in snow.

Our first snow occurred Christmas night. I was disappointed that only an inch fell. But the temperature rapidly dropped by ten degrees (from around freezing to the low twenties), and within an hour after the snow stopped falling, conditions had changed drastically. Everywhere — most streets, and all major roads — wherever a car had driven, its tracks had become sheer ice. The snow was compressed and frozen. A short jaunt around the block turned into an adventure on glare ice.

The Honda handled the ice exceptionally well. I never took it out of second gear, and rarely exceeded 20 mph, using the engine to do most of my slowing and staying off the brakes as much as possible. I made no abrupt moves, and never lost traction on the ice. The car had no difficulties.

I wish I could say the same for the other cars I encountered. They were all over the place, spinning out and ending up parked crossways in streets, forming a major obstacle course through which I had to maneuver. The worst were the hills. One hill near my house was completely blocked by cars. To get around them I had to cross the median strip and go up the "wrong" side. I had no difficulty doing this once clear of cars blocking my access to a break in the median. Starting





at the bottom of that hill from a dead stop, our four-wheel-drive Honda went right up. I was amazed and gratified.

Well, it's a good thing the car *could* handle ice. We had little snow last winter (and most of that late in the season), but *fourteen* ice storms. Freezing rain (the temperature here at the ground was in the teens to low twenties) coated every surface with thick ice. Lynda described the rain on one occasion as being "thick, viscous, almost like jelly." She found it impossible to even *walk* in/on it. One storm gave us *five inches* of sleet. Driving through it was like driving in slippery sand of an equal depth. But the four-wheel-drive Honda handled it.

Now even my "old" Honda handled snow reasonably well. It took us through a blizzard on our way to Corflu 4 in Cincinnati, back in 1987. But I feel relieved knowing that we now have a car that can cope with pretty much anything winter throws at us.

**AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM** So I have this idea. It's entirely doable, amazingly practical, and — unfortunately — the Ultimate Daugherty Project.

Walter J. Daugherty was a LASFan of the forties, much heralded in song and story (I'm thinking in particular of "The Three-Minute Glass," among the stories). He probably didn't have a Cosmic Mind, but he did come up with a number of desirable and ambitious projects for Los Angeles fandom, all of which he announced with considerable fanfare, and none of which he completed. Hence, the term, "a Daugherty Project," for ideas too grandiose and ambitious to put into practice.

Well, my idea is, I'm sorry to say, the Ultimate Daugherty Project.

It is also the much-needed solution to a serious problem.

"Sigh". . .

The problem? The cost of fanac these days. Now, when I say "the cost of fanac" I am referring primarily to the cost of postage, and secondarily to other costs in the production of fanzines. I am *not* talking about the cost of attending a Worldcon, and the other expenses associated with social fanac.

Recently I had the occasion to mail a copy of *Warhoon 28* to someone in Great Britain. The recipient was looking forward to receiving the 600-page, hard-cover-bound fanzine, and I fully intended to ship it to him by airmail. I was, that is, until I discovered that it would cost me around \$27,000. I settled for surface mail and over \$5.00 in postage.

Dan and I mail out BLAT! first class. We do this because we want to get it out as quickly as possible, rather than settling for delivery in weeks (if not months) by bulk mail. But even bulk mail — which has a variety of special requirements not the least of

which is presorting by zipcode — is not *cheap*. It's only *cheaper*. If you publish a monthly fanzine (ahaha), it will still cost you over \$500.00 a year in postage (despite the fact that you've done 90% of the postal service's job for it).

The simple fact is that postage costs have risen at a rate far exceeding that of inflation, and are now proportionately a much bigger part of the total expense of putting out a fanzine. And next year the rates will go up — again! A first-class letter will likely cost \$1.00 within ten years.

It's probably a digression on my part to add that we fanzine fans are facing technological obsolescence: as our culture moves from paper to computer screens, and computer nets like GEnie replace fanzines — we've lost the Nielsen Haydens, Tom Perry, and several other valuable fans already — while E-mail replaces regular mail, and that old mimeo standby, Twill-Tone, has already disappeared from the market-

place — and say, whatever happened to *ditto*? — it's getting harder and harder to put one's ish. We can only hope that access to Big Machines that copy, collate and staple, and the spread of fax machines will in some respect compensate.)

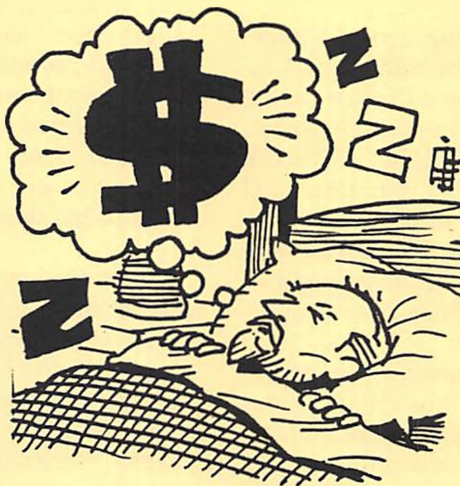
The solution? Money, of course. And where is that money?

I'm glad you asked. Because fandom is rolling in money. It sits in the bank accounts of certain enormously successful Worldcons. I am thinking primarily of Worldcons held in Los Angeles and Boston. The sponsoring bodies of these conventions have pulled in more

than a quarter of a million dollars — in some cases perhaps nearly as much as a million dollars — *in profit*. Since these sponsoring bodies are incorporated as non-profit institutions, there are certain conditions placed on the disposal (or distribution) of these profits. Basically, they can be disbursed only to *other* non-profit groups, or as grants and charities.

Naturally, the sponsoring bodies in question spent as much as they could on themselves: on real-estate (clubhouses) and publishing ventures. But *still* they had money left over. The LA in 1984 Worldcon has promised \$500 to TAFF and DUFF each time a TAFF or DUFF report is published — and, astonishingly enough, hasn't had to pay out a penny to either fund yet (so much for incentives; *nothing* will pry out those promised reports, portions of which have appeared in fanzines over the years). As "Sci-Fi Press," that Worldcon has published the hardcover, revised, *A Wealth of Fable*, and funded a few other fannish projects to the tune of a few hundred dollars each. It is my impression that a sizable amount of money remains — perhaps as much as \$100,000 or more. And LA will be putting on another Worldcon again, soon.

In other words, the Big Bucks Worldcons of the past decade are probably, in aggregate, sitting on over





a quarter of a million dollars, maybe half a million, doling it out in small dribbles, quietly, without any fanfare.

So there the money sits. And here *we* sit, bemoaning the expenses of pubbing our ishes. Why not create a connection? Why not use that money to fund fanac?

It seems so simple. They have the money. We need the money. Where's the problem?

The problem — the Ultimate Daugherty Project itself — lies in the logistics and the politics of using that money to fund fanac.

We can't get it from there to here.

Why? Let's consider the possibilities:

While one might consider *asking* each of the Big Bucks Worldcons to create the mechanism and structure for distributing money to fandom, it would place a burden on the committees of each of those conventions which they would more likely than not choose to refuse. And it would create overlapping and semi-redundant bureaucracies.

So it would make more sense to create a separate Fandom Foundation, fully incorporated as a non-profit corporation on its own, to which the Big Bucks Worldcons could make major contributions. This funnels all the money into one bureaucracy, from which it could be disbursed to individual faneds.

But right away, the problem is obvious, before we advance another step. Who *selects* the people who run the Fandom Foundation? What would their qualifications be? Would they be volunteers, or paid some salary? (Salaries would drain off much of the money, a strong argument against them; but volunteer fans could easily be as irresponsible — and prone to gaffiation without warning — as so many are anyway in fandom.) In what way would this Foundation rise above the mediocrity of such groups as the N3F — a model and a warning to us all of how fandom's bureaucracies really work. (Would the Fandom Foundation attract only the drudges and mediocrities who people the N3F's committees?) Fandom is a functioning anarchy, and attempts to organize it and to impose order upon it have always failed. How could a Fandom Foundation succeed?

But let us suppose for a moment that the Fandom Foundation is put into place and appropriately funded by those Big Bucks Worldcons. That's a lot to suppose, I admit, but let's pretend. Then what?

How do you disburse money to fandom in general? How would you fund its various fanzines? They don't all require equal amounts, but suppose (again) for the

moment that each got what it needed. How quickly would the shouts arise of unfair and unequal treatment? Suppose that Dan and I put in for the postage on BLAT! #2 — hundreds of dollars — while someone else, with a four-page personalzine, gets significantly less? And *who* would be covered? Fanzines have always gone off in odd directions — that's part of their charm — but now there's the whole field of mundane "zeens" into which we can merge and blend. When does a fanzine stop being a fanzine and become a "zeen"? And here's another notion: postage expenses are one significant factor presently limiting the circulation of most fanzines — holding most down to a few hundred copies. Frankly, I think that's one of the unique charms of fanzines — that they circulate among a known audience of fans — but the simple fact is that this "known audience" also blends into a larger group of people as more fanzines cease to overlap each other in their audiences. If you put together a list of everyone who gets at least *one* fanzine, that list would undoubtedly top 1,000. At present, only those who lust for a Hugo make a significant attempt to reach a majority of those people — and they pay dearly for it, with circulations of between 400 and 800. Why should we subsidize their attempts to win awards, by subsidizing those large circulations? And, for that matter, would subsidized postage encourage *more* fanzines to go after bigger audiences. (And, if they did, would that be *bad*? Maybe they'd cancel out the *Laan's Laanterns* and supply the Hugo voters with a more informed set of choices. . . .)

Well, you can see where this is going: There are ramifications in every direction, and choices to be made and problems created in each of those ramifications.

But of course, it couldn't get that far. There is virtually no possibility that a Fandom Foundation might set up bulk-mailing centers in every fan community, for example, because there is virtually no possibility that a Fandom Foundation could be set up satisfactorily in the first place. And if it was, it would be run by the wrong people and end up benefitting none of us who put out fanzines.

We just can't get from here to there: from where we are now to where such a Foundation might function well. It's too grandiose a scheme, too fraught with pitfalls. It's the Ultimate Daugherty Project, after all.

But wouldn't it be swell if. . . ?

Well, it's worth talking about, anyway.

— Ted White



THERE IS MUCH TO DO BEFORE LOVE SETS IN

ROSCONBY



