

FOOLY #16

KatzenJammer

Confessions of a Careless Correspondent

I'm so ashamed.

I'm not sure I can expiate the sin even with a truly sincere wallow in self-abasement. I'll say it plainly: She's gonna kill me when she finds out.

As I hope most *Folly* readers recall, I devoted almost all of #14 to chronicling my step by step progress through Corflu 9. At one point, I described how the carryings-on of two raucous femmefans disrupted the single-minded focus -- what Andrew Hooper called "the mystic bond that unites all fans of science fiction" -- during a particularly solemn auction.

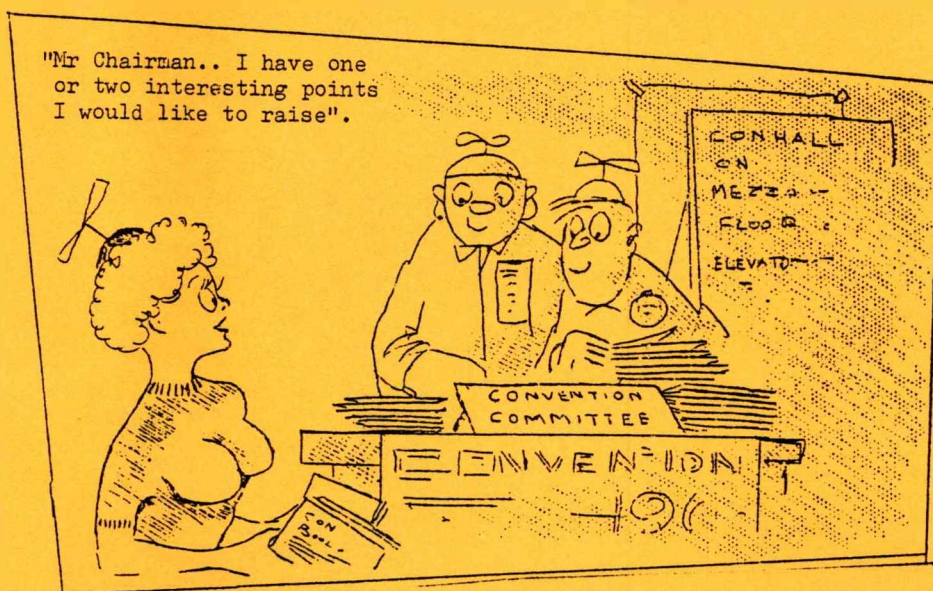
I attributed the commotion that caused one of these rambunctious women to move to a distant seat to end a humorous discussion turning on the question of whether TAFF could make more money

by auctioning off Woody Bernardi -- or blackmailing someone into paying to prevent such an occurrence.

Now it can be told. I was sitting across the room when merriment overcame decorum. My hearing is not exceptional, acute nor do I read lips. I am, however, a journalist and know how to interview people, gather facts for a story. "I shall put this awesome professional skill to the service of fandom," I resolved. "I will interview those who overheard the conversation and add this no-doubt amusing bit of historical literature of the hobby we love. I staggered, momentarily overcome by the majesty of my high purpose.

After local law enforcement authorities restored order and the auction resumed sucking money from the assembly in an orderly fashion, I talked to several self-proclaimed eyewitnesses. I took notes. Copious notes. Some were legible.

From this vast reservoir of data, I crafted the anecdote



contained in "Folly Goes to Corflu". When it was done, I bowed my head in silent "thanks".

Then I got the letter from Geri Sullivan. It came folded in quarters, tucked into a disk mailer that also had the *third* try at sending me bootable files of *three* installments of "Through Brightest Fandom". My Macintosh and hers do not seem to be able to agree on what

constitutes a valid *Microsoft Word* or *Macwrite* file.

Her letter brilliantly presents her version of circumstances that caused her and Jeanne Bowman to call such flagrant attention to themselves. Not only does her story have first-person recollection on its side, but I am fairly sure it was funnier than mine. It also made me wonder why one alleged witness corrected my first draft,

altering the dialogue to read as it does in *Folly* #14.

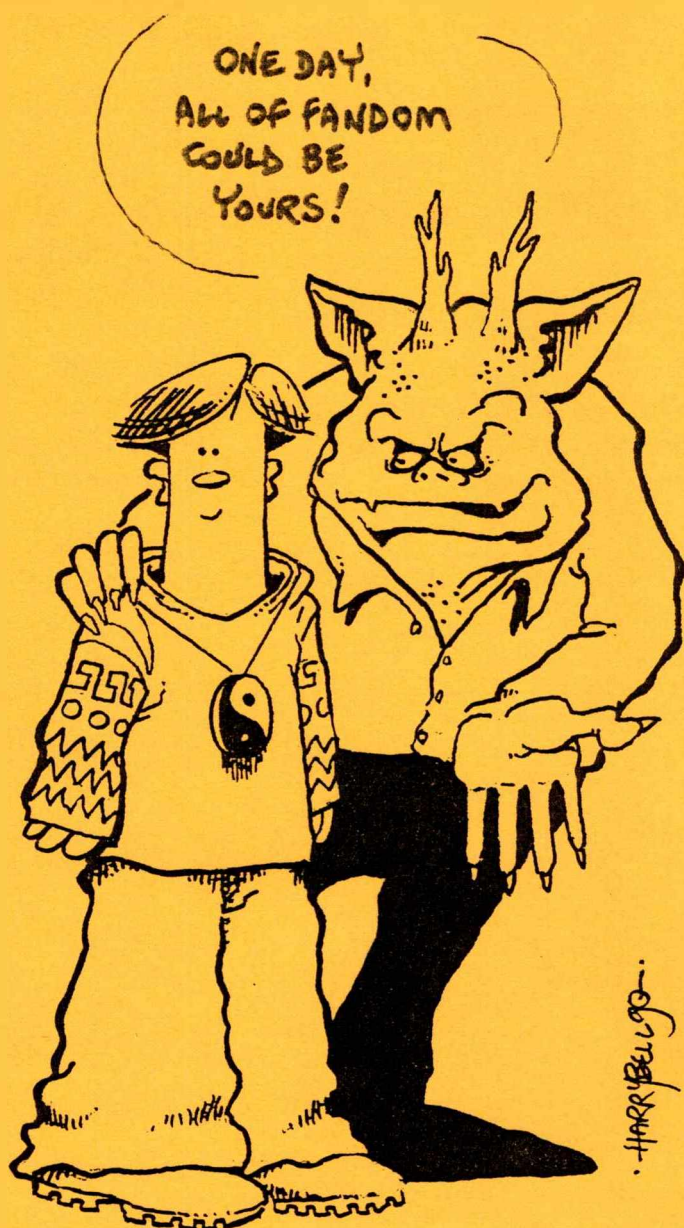
So I toiled away on a new issue of *Folly*, secure in the knowledge that my misreporting would be corrected at the first opportunity, and that Geri (and by inference Jeanne) would regain the respect for my journalistic ability damaged by my major mistake in *Folly* #14.

But when it came time to type the letter column for *Folly* #16, I couldn't locate the loc. It wasn't in the folder with other *Folly* letters, and a search of desk, file cabinet and pockets of dirty pants came up empty.

Keeping my worry under tight control, I conducted a more methodical search. I looked at every sheet of paper in every drawer. At first, I checked only white sheets. When that proved fruitless, I went back over the same territory, only much much more methodically. I carefully examined every scrap of paper in every drawer, file, and pile, regardless of size or hue. Had Geri's letter possibly been written on recycled newsprint? Twiltone? Onionskin?

I left no page unturned. I shook out every book, magazine, and catalog in my office. How I yearned to see the telltale flutter of a hidden document tumbling from between the pages of the latest *Idea* or the new *Spent Brass*!

Calling Minnesota for a replacement was out of the question. I had already eaten up too much of this busy woman's time with the problems arising from her trip report disks. Even Geri's patience and kindness are not



infinite, however close they may approach this ideal.

A plea for a second copy of her finely crafted letter might be the last straw. "This bozo can't do *anything* right," Geri might say as she cast me into the Great Dark inhabited by those denied her society.

The horror of this paralyzed me. Geri Sullivan was the first new fan I met when I returned to activity. My first letter from Willis contained her address and phone number -- and an exhortation to become her friend. This seemed so unlike WAW's usual retiring manner that I rushed to make contact to discover what had captivated him so completely.

It took only a few minutes' conversation with her to find out. Geri has become a good fan friend in the last couple of years, and I trembled at the estrangement my lapse might engender. And what would Walter Himself say about this cavalier treatment of one so dear to him?

I searched again. Maybe it hadn't been a sheet of white paper folded in quarters after all. Perhaps Geri had scrawled her note on the inside cover of *The Betty Pages*. I left nothing to chance. I shifted computers and moved furniture. I delved repeatedly into the cavernous storage area beneath the bay

window seat behind my desk. Geri's letter, like the Tablets of the Angel Moroni, was Gone. And unlike Smith, I hadn't thought to make a copy of it before the disappearance!

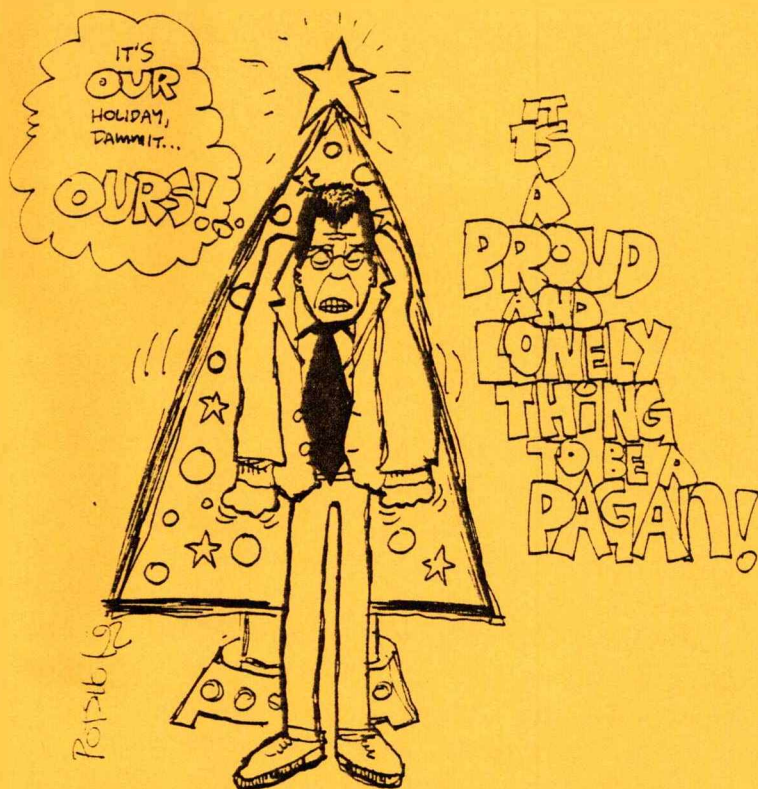
That's when I lost it. I don't remember much about those frenzied hours during which I apparently tore my office apart. It would have been worth the destruction and mess had I found anything in my berserk state, but this search had the same outcome as the ones which preceded it.

Sleepless, nightmare-ridden nights gave no relief from anxious days as I fretted about

the loss of Geri Sullivan's letter. Of all the things to lose! Even a charitable open-hearted person like Geri would find it easy to believe that I had orchestrated the loss of the letter to avoid parading my shoddy reportage before the *Folly* readership.

I couldn't even come up with a palatable excuse. My vision is serviceable since last year's operation, no one goes through my materials except me, and I don't even have a dog on whom I could foist the blame

I went from bad to worse. I took to sniffing corflu -- and I don't even own a mimeograph stencil! And then one after-



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June 18, 1992 Let's make it...**Fabulous!**

Folly is available for letter of comment, contribution of artwork or writing, or (arranged) all-for-all trade.

noon, as I sat at my word processor, a farewell to Fandom blazing on the screen, came *Deliverance*.

No, not those two dueling banjos. Joyce dropped an envelop on my desk and said, "It's from Jeanne Bowman." My fingers shook uncontrollably as I worried it open and extracted the half-page typed letter.

It began by offering me a section of Jeanne's TAFF Report (watch for it in an upcoming issue) and then -- Jeanne's account of the Corflu 9 incident!

I clicked my heels (I'm spry, but I admit I was still sitting down at the time) and shouted my ecstasy to the heavens. Jeanne's version agreed with Geri's report as I remembered it. I could print Jeanne's account and reduce my guilt. An accident, however unfortunate, is

easier to accept than an unconscious desire to avoid admitting my flub.

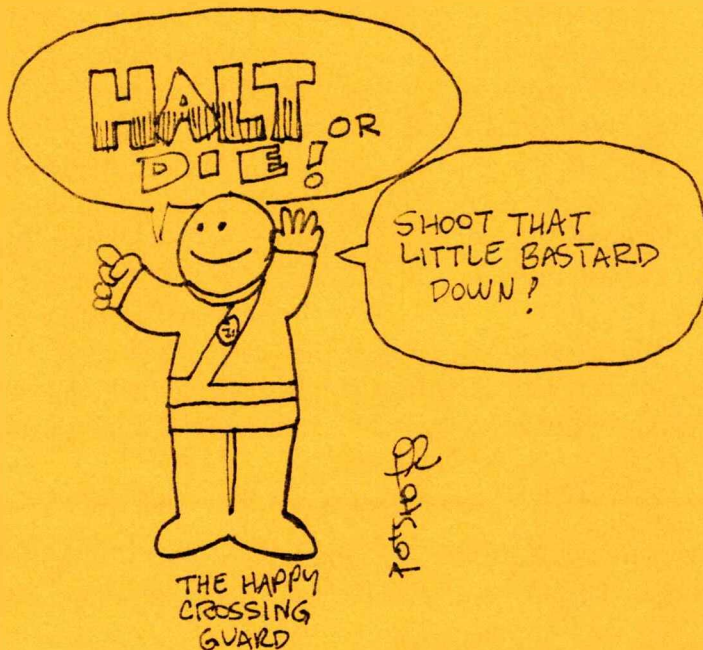
Hmmm... I think perhaps I'd better print Jeanne's comment right here in "Katzenjammer" and now, before I have a chance to misplace it, too:

"Hey, Geri Sullivan fell out of her chair at Corflu because, a) I said something funny about her shoes and the good traction they would give her on a slag heap, and b) a certain fan with bald tennis shoes (and the face to prove it) stuck his head around the corner *at exactly the same moment*."

It was too much for us. She did talk to me later, even if I was too bad an influence to be seated next to during the rest of the auction."

T.V. commercials to the contrary, I now spell "relief" "B-O-W-M-A-N". Justice, or as close as one is likely to come to it in one of my fanzines, has been done. My crime has been expiated, to my satisfaction if possibly not to the satisfaction of other people. Perhaps with time and judicious application of chocolate-flavored bribes, even the Geri Sullivan of the 1990s will find it in her heart, brimming as it is with a great, unselfish love of all fankind, to grant me a pardon.

Until then, I will pub my ish.



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Art Credits

ATom: 1, 11

Harry Bell: 2

Brad Foster: 5, 22

David Haugh: 8

Bill Kunkel: 3,4

Bill Rotsler: 5, 6, 10, 18,
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A Column by Chuch Harris

Charris-ma

Did you see the piece in the paper about our sex-mad nation Doing It right there on the carpet in front of the T.V. set, whilst my lovely, ladylike Anna Ford tries to concentrate on reading the 10 o'clock News?

It's not right. It's disrespectful. Current affairs are important, and we should all be aware of what is going on in the world instead of concentrating on what is going on on the carpet.

And it's not just one or two people, either. They reckon there are maybe six million people making mad passionate love whilst the 10 o'clock News in on T.V., people who couldn't care less about global disasters like Ted Kennedy or tomorrow's weather forecast.

And that's just the heteros in the UK., and makes no account of gerbil lovers, casual goat herds, or that dreadful inflatable doll fandom. (My mind, as Walter Himself once said, is so broad it is virtually two-dimensional, but gracious!... this new inflatable H.M. the Q. is,

Randolph Gets A Little Randy

ROTSER



well, lese majeste. The built-in audio tape for the deluxe model, "Arise, Sir Chuch! The whole of England lies before you," sounds very common, indeed, and the cheapo plastic crowns invariably fall off unless one fits an elastic chinstrap to them. This tends to spoil the whole roleplaying effect, and I feel one would do better to stick to

"Dungeons & Dragons" for the time being until the Margaret Thatcher kit comes out in time for the Christmas trade.)

And heaven only knows about the orgiastic American T.V. audiences, let alone the Japanese or the lubricious Italians, who pinched my Sue's ass black and blue when she went to Venice. (And don't ever think you can't get your bum pinched in a gondola. Believe me, *you can*.. and I make no mention of the dreadful risks of catching gondolier and suffering a lifetime of penicillin injections in the very same black and blue bottom. (Don't hesitate to rock the boat and, in extremity, trust in Ghod and walk across the water to the nearest rialto.)

I digress. Back to the six million hedonists. I don't have a very low boggle threshold, but doesn't *your* mind boggle a bit, too? Suppose we -- sorry, they - - all climax simultaneously and the earth moves for every single one of them? Think of the kinetic energy involved. Is it



not theoretically feasible that we could be jarred out of our orbit and heading for a new ice age before you could shout, "Oh! Oh! Oh!"

Synchronised screwing is a far greater danger to humanity than global warming ever will be. (And far more interesting, of course...) Consider the dramatic consequences... why do you think the climate changed and all the dinosaurs suddenly became extinct. Me and Charles Fort will tell you... it stands to reason that with a mating season confined to the fleeting moments of the sunset time of the summer solstice,

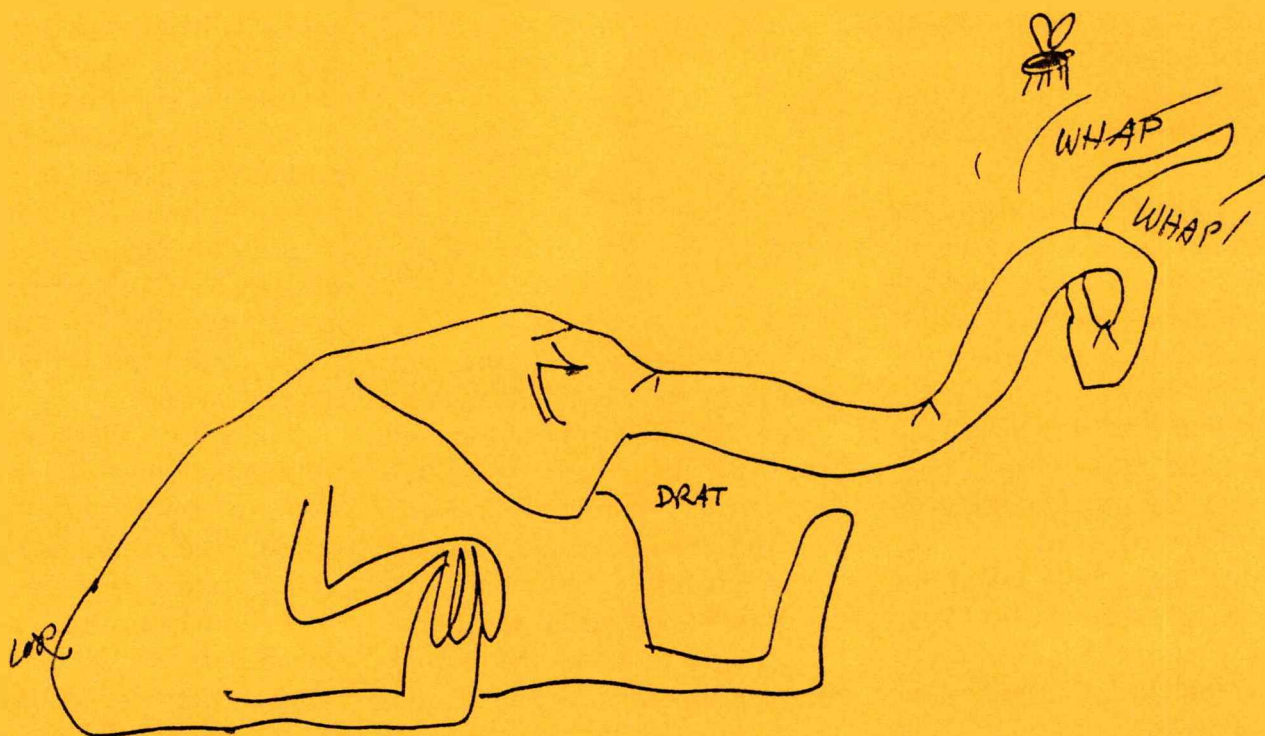
orgasmic synchronisation was inevitable. (And to demonstrate this Fortean theory on a smaller scale, if there is a sudden exodus from the convention program hall when the Magicon program reaches the "Science Fiction -- whither?" slot, would you care to bet that, 10 minutes later, the Peabody Inn doesn't fall apart and sink beneath the bayou?

But perhaps not. We trufans are different. When we leave the hall, we'll all be clutching sheaves of freebie fanzines, and Ghod in his wisdom has decreed that you need both hands to hold, and total concentration to savor, the

delights of *Pulp* or *Folly*.

But hardly any of us can read fanzines continually or stay calm in a cold shower cubicle for a whole weekend. Supposing there's nothing on T.V. but dreary old "Kojak" or "Columbo"... Come on, own up; everyone falls from Grace sometimes.

At Arntwee Hall, we have T.V. sets in every room except Geri's chaste cloister. The Relate Counselor, full of calm reassurance, says not to worry about Anna Ford, not to worry about Ice Ages or dinosaurs, or anything else. Just follow your natural instincts. Nudity is perfectly natural between lovers, but there is definitely nothing wrong or perverse if one partner wishes to keep his spectacles on so that he can read the Interfax/Ceefax subtitles... and... but I have to go now. Here is Big Ben on the screen and my lovely Anna Ford with her newsy clipboard.



Greg Benford CrimeTime

On February 18 I got a call from a man who said he was a CPA and an officer of the City Court of Los Angeles. He was handling the assets of a dealer in gold and silver securities, which had been seized years before by federal agents. The familiar jammed dockets and legal maneuverings had delayed final disposition of the bankrupt firm's assets, and when he had examined the holdings in safe deposit boxes, he found some 1982 British gold coins with my account information on them.

He knew that I had held a trading account in precious metals which did not have my social security number attached (which was legal), and these were still under that accounting. He would let me know how the court proceedings went in a few days. Okay, I said, talk to my broker. I only dimly recalled my dealings from the early 1980s.

My brother, Jim, had an asthma attack on February 20. I was going to a conference on heating of the solar corona at Stanford University, so came up

to the Bay Area on Feb. 21. I had planned dinner with people from the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, because I was chairman of their annual fund raiser, and so didn't get over to see Jim in Alta Bates hospital until Sunday, Feb. 22. He was doing well, still on oxygen lines but towing his bottle along behind him when he went for a walk.

Hilary and his son, Dominic, were there, too, and we had a mini-reunion in the small hospital room. About 5 PM Dominic and his girlfriend, Trudy, dropped me at the Rockridge Bay Area Rapid Transit station. I sat on a bench and read a physics paper, ignoring the noisy freeway traffic that flows on both sides of the exposed station platform.

Then I noticed that a man had stepped in front of me. I looked up and he said something, lost in the traffic murmur. I made a not-hearing gesture. He said something more. I gestured again. Then he said clearly, "Don't know

nothin', huh?" and spat in my face.

I hit him with my left as I came up off the bench. Just like that, no thinking, not even a perceived split second between seeing the gob of spit on my glasses and connecting with his right shoulder. That staggered him back. Then I was up, papers tossed aside. I feinted a punch with my left and then caught him with the right as he started to back away. I got behind it and my fist broke his lip open on the way up to finish in his eye. He staggered, almost fell, waving his fists around, and I backed him further, faking a left and circling, planning to one-two him off the edge of the platform and onto the tracks.

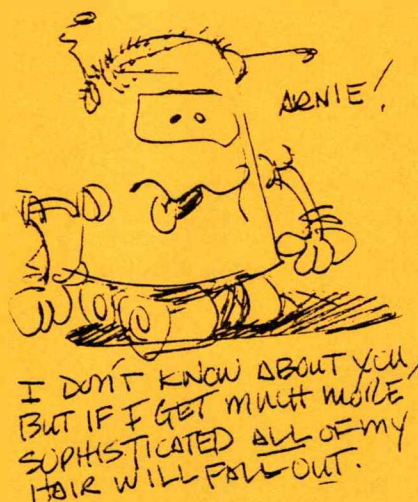
I wasn't thinking about whether this was particularly wise, mind, I just wanted to break him into small pieces. Then a big guy, six foot six easy, stepped between us saying, "Hey! Just back off now." I considered getting around him to have a few last hits and then remembered that I was carrying

a concealed weapon, a belt buckle that becomes a double-bladed knife, and it would not be wise to have the station cops find that out, since it's a felony.

So I turned and walked to the other end of the platform. A woman who had been sitting next to me said, "Y'know, I couldn't understand him either." and somebody else said the guy was a regular user of the trains here, just a regular guy, about 40 years old. I could see the big man talking to the guy I had hit, helping him stop the bleeding lip, no cops around, and then my train came and I got on and went to San Francisco.

When I got back from the Stanford meeting I got another call from the CPA. The court had finished its business and he was sending me a representative coin, since he was dispersing the assigned assets. It came Federal Express, a genuine 1982 sovereign. The story was that the firm I had dealt with had not, in fact, bought coins at full value for me, but instead used some of my cash account to buy leveraged accounts in gold. This was their illegal way of increasing their take, gambling in futures using other peoples' money. The whole game got frozen by the Feds, shortly after I zeroed out my account, but the firm still had some leveraged account in my name. A little bell went off in the back of my mind.

Then a broker from LA called, saying he had seen the announcement of assets and wondered if I wanted to sell my coins, since he had a Korean buyer who wanted some of that year. My own broker called the



CPA and couldn't get through his secretary to find out any details. The CPA then called me, saying he had to collect the remainder of the leveraged sum before delivering the rest of the coins. Could I do this within a day or two? He would send a messenger.

I called the Laguna Beach police and they said blandly, "Well, are you sure they're not legitimate?" I answered, "They both brush aside my question when I ask for their registered business number." An officer came by the house, listened, then said, "Well, there's no crime here yet."

I called the LAPD. A detective Swift in Bunko Division took down the information, including the two phone numbers the CPA and broker had given me. I mentioned that the "CPA" was using a car phone, since I could hear it fade in and out as he moved. It seemed an odd point. "We'll call back," Swift said, but belying his name, he didn't. For days I fielded calls from the CPA, who was hot to deliver the

coins. Joan deflected him nicely. I let my secretary at work tell him I was out and left the home phone on its answering machine. Nobody left a recorded message, but there were a lot of blanks.

A week went by. I got a call from Detective Feldman of the Glendale PD. She had gotten a lead on a bunko ring operating there and asked LAPD for anything further, which turned up my message. She and another detective worked through the phone company, intercepting them, and then faking the role of one of their marks. They were obligingly gullible, working out of an address not far from the motel where the ring was operating. They got the messenger to deliver. It was the "broker", quite startled, carrying brass fake coins.

They handcuffed him, then searched the motel. They found some cash and a lot of financial data, with lists of marks to call. A very systematic operation, with lots of old account information, plenty of detail to make their pitch convincing.

The "CPA" got away; he probably worked independently, she said, maybe not even meeting the "broker" very often. Very slick. They had taken a fairly long list of marks, including an 86-year-old woman in Texas who sent them \$180,000, her life savings. Breaking the news to that lady was the toughest part of the job, Feldman said.

"What'll you charge the broker with?" I asked.

Continued on next page

THROUGH BRICKEST FANDOM

with knife, fork, and spoon*

Chapter 3: Friends Old and New

by
Geri Sullivan

It was extraordinarily easy to tell Chuck Harris all about my stay in Ireland; I simply handed him my journal, opened to the appropriate page, and kept a close eye to make sure he didn't skip back to read what I'd written about him. (Why should

he have the pleasure before seeing it, along with the rest of you, in Folly?)

As usual, Sue served up the dinner plates in the kitchen, this time saying "A light dinner for Geri," which proved to mean smaller portions of the chicken, carrots, cauliflower, and roasted potatoes, with a break before afters.

Showing James White's

seven photos prompted a 2-hour, 6-person orgy on memory lane. The Harris Family photo albums came out along with Chuck's fan photos. Chuck, Sue, Sean, Samantha, Ray, and I poured over the pages, pointing, laughing, looking, reminiscing. It was high-speed, joyful mayhem — an absolute blast. Chuck pointed to a fan photo in his album at said, "I'll give you a quid if you can tell me who those people are."

It was as unfair as shooting fish in a barrel. I looked him straight in the eye and mouthed: "Lee Hoffman and Shelby Vick." Chuck's jaw dropped, and his hand dropped to his pocket. Out came the quid. At least I can remember a few of the people I saw in the photos at Walter's and Madeleine's well enough to identify them when I saw the same photo a day later!

Crime Time

Continued from previous page

"Up to the DA. Probably felony fraud. He's got a record, so he might do ten, fifteen years."

There were no leads on the "CPA". "What did the lady in Texas say?"

Feldman said quietly, "She hoped there was some misunderstanding. They seemed like such nice men. I found a pathetic note from her in the motel, asking when she was going to get the coins because she wanted to go on a trip with the earnings."

I said, "Fifteen years isn't enough."

Feldman said sourly, "We probably won't get that much."

I remembered how good it felt to punch the guy on the station platform around. The regret that I hadn't hit him more.

I thought about the fact that I was a potential felony case, too, for wearing the knife-buckle belt. And if I had dropped this matter when the Laguna Beach cops yawned it away, Detective Feldman wouldn't have gotten the telephone numbers from Swift at LAPD. It was a tangled tale, and I didn't really know what it meant, but the gritty everyday world had come shuffling a few steps further into my life, and I didn't like what I saw.

I still wear the belt when I go into major cities. When you need somebody, you're usually the only one there.

From the notepads:

9:10 pm:

Chuch Harris refers to me as a red-head!!!

Red-Letter Day!

Chuch promptly recovers:
"The light is bad in here."

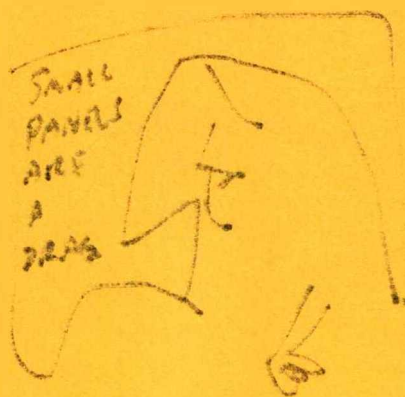
Chuck, Sue, and I ran

errands around Daventry the next morning, then were off to Warwick and lunch at the Tudor House Inn, with its hammered copper table tops. I had a "light" meal of vegetable soup, bread, fruit, and a pint of cider. Chuck had beef and kidney stew over a jacket potato and Sue ordered the vegetarian jacket potato with cottage cheese.

Warwick Castle was my first castle visit and I must admit, I wasn't expecting a lot. I'd perhaps taken Chuck too seriously when he said all the treasures had been sold off — yes, the paintings were less than first rate, but the overall condition of the castle was excellent — lovely plasterwork and overall appointments. Madame Tussauds wax works are stunning. It's frightening to imagine what results would come of Disney's Audio-Animatronics and Madame Tussauds wax figures if the two organizations were to embark on a joint venture.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. We started with the dungeon and torture chamber and I found my mind once again incapable of comprehending humankind's cruelty to itself. It all history, we've cruelly mistreated each other. I'm interested in the psychology of our so-called "civilization." What compels people to purposely hurt and kill? We see it in all aspects of life — from World Wars to fandom.

And the torture, with its grisly fascination. What's to be gained from crushing bones, pulping flesh, leaving people hanging upside down to die? Again, we find this and worse



throughout history, even in our own genre with Gene Wolfe's masterpiece, *The Book of the New Sun* — a disguised historical, for sure, but heralded by our own as the masterpiece it is.

Sue and I climbed some 250 steps for a walk around the ramparts and up to Guy's Tower. Upon finishing, we met up with Chuck awaiting us on a bench clearly marked for the elderly and infirm(!) It was the same bench he and Teresa Nielsen Hayden sat on a few years back — I recognized it from a picture he'd sent. I took a picture to send to Teresa. It showed Chuck gesturing to the empty seat next to him, asking, demanding, "Where are you?!"

After a look around the gift shop it was back to Daventry for yet another splendid meal of chicken pie, jacket potatoes, snow peas, and carrots, with cheesecake for afters — and the usual evening of conversation.

From the notepads:

How come we always remember the champagne after we've been drinking for hours?

Saturday we bound to Londontown. We arrived at Avedon Carol's and Rob

Hansen's and delved into fanzine distribution flurry — *Pulp*, *Born in the UK*, *Q*, and *Idea*. We toured the house and chatted a bit, then it was off to Vince Clarke's. We took a free ferry across the Thames, car and all.

I met Vince, Arthur Thomson, and eventually Martin Smith. We repeated the fannish rituals of paper exchange: *Q*, *Idea*, plus envelopes from ATom for each of us. Mine contained a Mr. Toad original and hand-coloured 1XPRL's Acme Repairs print — "These are for what you did for Chuck," Arthur explained earnestly.

We moved upstairs to the "fan room" where Vince and I started pulling out our respective photos, after our well-mannered host saw to the drink requests of all present. Once again, pictures added to the afternoon, serving as a focal point for stories new and old. I knew James White was a dangerously charming man, but I doubt that even he knew what he was starting when he first pulled out his photo album in Portstewart. We eventually paused from conversation long enough for sandwiches. Throughout, Vince kept pulling out antiquities galore.

I hadn't corresponded with Arthur (or Arfer, as Chuck called him) before my trip, so didn't really know him. His emphysema was advanced, and his breathing heavily labored. Yet he was so very alive! My pictures from that day show him goofing off with Chuck, eyes gleaming and a wide grin on his face.

Avedon presented him with the Science Fiction Chronicle Reader's Award for Best Fan Artist (1987). Arfer and Vine took over most of the written conversation with Chuck. It was fun to watch the comments fly, and a little unnerving to later look at the notepads and realize some of those comments were about me. Cute nose?!?

A few hours later, it was time to leave. Arthur was tired — he'd really pushed himself that afternoon. Vine gave me a copy of the ultimate D-I-Y book: Do-It-Yourself Brain Surgery as we left. I'd have to wait for another occasion to practice.

Chuck and Sue dropped us (Rob, Avedon, Martin, & me) off at the free ferry. We rode across as pedestrians this time, then caught a bus back to Plashet Grove. You might have thought we were embarking on a 50p international tour, first passing Viet Nam (bombed out buildings used in the filming of Full Metal Jacket), then the Alp (with its own "dry ski" slope — all artificial), finally returning to the Indian/Pakistani neighborhood where Rob and Avedon live.

We went to an Indian Vegetarian restaurant for dinner, where I had Marsela Rosa with coconut chutney, and Sweet Lassi to drink. The four of us returned to Avedon's and Rob's for TV news, Brighton Worldcon film clips, assorted videos, coffee, and conversation.

We'd spent some time together when Rob and Avedon were in Minneapolis for Corflu, but we hadn't corresponded much, and it showed. "What do you like to do? What are you

interested in? Do you want to tour bookstores?" It was strange to search for commonalties with people my own age after spending two weeks with close friends from another generation.

We talked mostly about families and world politics. I'm weak in the political arena, but thoroughly enjoy hearing how people view different political systems. Knowing people in different parts of the world helps make those systems more real to me, and a tiny bit more understandable.

Avedon made potato pancakes for breakfast the next morning, then we were off for my first ride on the Underground and the fanhistorical tour of London. Tube stations were quite like those in New York City (urine-permeated tile), but the cars were far better — upholstered seats, arm rests, quieter.

Rob's tour brought the London SF community closer to home: "Here's where it started. Here's where Bill Temple and Arthur C. Clarke lived. Here's

where the White Horse stood. Here's the One Tun. Here's the White Hart (site of current day meetings)."

Rob roasted chicken for dinner, accompanied by mashed potatoes, gravy, and peas. I had seconds of everything — good eating was obviously growing on me.

We had a quiet evening of looking at photos of friends and fans, Avedon's family, Rob's TAFF trip, Brit conventions. Picture magic worked once more.

Monday morning was spent in conversation over coffee with Avedon, then we went downtown to wander through bookshops and markets.

We had lunch in Chinatown — hot and sour soup, and squid with cashew nuts. I discovered that 84 Charing Cross Road houses a shop devoted to classical CDs. A vendor in a market near Covent Gardens sold Claddagh rings and gave me a pamphlet on their history. More shopping, then into a pub for a pint of cider, then to a restaurant for a peaches and cream crêpe. Avedon pointed



out curious street signs, like "Formerly Of Alley." Yep, it formerly was Of Alley. Seems there was a gent with a rather long name and when they put in the streets, each street in the area carried a portion of his name, including the "of."

I picked up *Bisexual Lives* at the Silver Moon Bookstore for Elise Matthesen, only to later discover she'd already read it. Avedon and I enjoyed it, so all was not lost.

We returned home around 8:30 for a quiet evening of reading and comfy conversation about fans and the expectations people have when they first approach fandom.

All-in-all it was a comfortable, low-key day. I do wish I'd kept better track of the Minneapolis Censorship Ordinance, so as to give Avedon more information about it, but simply sharing experiences was enjoyable and interesting.

My itinerary for Tuesday was to tour the Tower of London, British Museum, obtain theatre tickets, shop at Harrod's, and meet Rob to see *Return to the Forbidden Planet*.

It was a welcome day on my own — one I'd insisted on. Sue had insisted that I visit the Tower of London, so I started there with a guided tour. I heard a detailed description of execution by beheading and the ceremonies and customs involved. (The victim routinely tipped the executioner to insure a sharp blade and strong, clean cut.) I then wandered along on my own, seeing the stunning Crown Jewels. There was a long line of people waiting to see the

torture chamber, while there were no lines anywhere else in the Tower, including the entrance to the Jewels. I again contemplated this thing we call "civilization" — the beauty created and the people enslaved.

On the way to the British Museum, I stopped by *Forbidden Planet* so I knew I'd be able to find it again in order to meet Rob at 7 pm.

At the museum, I visited the library first for more contemplation of civilization. Avedon was right, it was impossible to synthesize it all. I saw everything from the Magna Carta to handwritten drafts of Beatles songs. Then it was off through gallery after gallery of antiquities from several continents. Pick a century, any century. How did people have time to create, to build? Existence itself takes so much effort.

I picked up theatre tickets on the way to Harrod's. Two for £15, 5th row seats. Not bad.

To my shock and amazement, I found most every area in Harrod's I could think to look for. I had the best time choosing low cost, highly breakable Christmas ornaments and not-so-low cost, less fragile holiday cards.

Return to the Forbidden Planet at the Cambridge Theatre was great fun. It was rock'n'roll Shakespeare in an SF B-grade movie setting, complete with gut-wrenching puns. ("Beware the id that marches.") Any theatre stage that includes two, count 'em two, full drum kits holds a lot of promise. This play delivered. Songs included

Young Girl, Teenager in Love, All Shook Up, Mr. Spaceman, and other faves of the era. The set was great camp, as were the costumes and props, like the hair-dryer zap guns. We had a blast, and I'm glad to see the show has since made its way to New York.

The next morning I slept in, then packed for my return to Daventry. Avedon and I talked over potato pancakes, scrambled eggs, and coffee. I caught a Brit Rail train to Northampton, where Chuck picked me up at the station. We returned to Daventry in time for dinner. Sue served chicken breasts in vegetable stew, mashed potatoes, cauliflower, peas, and Chuck made fruit flan with pears, kiwis, and raspberries for afters. We washed it all down with at least three bottles of wine. Ah, another infamous evening at the Harris Hovel, talking about things serious and inconsequential until midnight. Cognac, coffee "roasted" (nuked) chestnuts, and Lindt chocolate sticks filled with more cognac. The conversation ran the gamut from fan gossip to views of marriage and the nature of commitment. Life was good.

From the notepads:

"Bloody dogs" — Chuch, please talk of your former girlfriends with a kinder tone!

Just because one doesn't believe in monogamy doesn't mean one sleeps with everyone who asks!

THE Hooper System

Rating Fanzine Quality

Arnie Revises Hooper's System for Quantifying Fanzine Quality

In the words of a very old song, "What was old is new again." And we owe it all to Andy Hooper. Everyone is certainly familiar with the Nielsen Ratings which have spelled life or death to television shows for the last 40 years or so. But back when network radio ruled broadcasting, it was the Hooper Rating that determined whether shows were renewed or not.

Andy's lead article in *Cube* #47 (edited by Steve Swartz, SF³, P.O. Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624) does the groundwork for a fanzine rating system that could become the yardstick to measure and compare (at least in a limited way) the quality of fanzines of *all* fandoms. The Hooper Rating – giving credit where it's due – is one of those deceptively simple ideas that somehow no one bothered to think about until Andy showed the way.

For those who haven't seen the article, the Hooper Rating (Mark I) is detailed in a sidebar accompanying this piece. Now that we're all on the same page, I think the Hooper Rating needs some tinkering before it's going to reach its full potential as an analytic tool.

The rating categories might benefit from some refinement. "Genre" and "Faanishness" seem to me to be descriptive of the fanzine without indicating anything about its quality. They'd be perfect if we were trying to concoct a sort of Dewey Decimal System for classifying fanzines, but neither "Genre" nor "Faanishness" yields a rating that reflects on the worth of the fanzine.

I guess this is an expression of my approach to fanzine publishing, but I don't see what devotion to science fiction and fantasy or any other specific topic has to do with quality. *Cursed*, Lenny Bailes and my fanzine debut, was quite stfnal, and it was also a "1" in overall quality on a 10-high scale. On the other hand, Peter Weston's *Speculation* was a superb science fiction fanzine.

As a side benefit, eliminating "Genre" makes it easier to more directly compare the quality of amateur publications arising from different fandoms. It also leaves the highly subject question of reader interest to one side. Obviously, if a fanzine is about subjects the reader has a vested interest in already, that fanzine seems more entertaining (better) than it might if the subjects were totally alien.

A few of the category definitions could use some tightening, too. "Layout" doesn't



The Hooper Rating System (Mark I)

The Hooper Rating (Mark I) rates all fanzines on a 1-10 scale in the following categories (reprinted verbatim from the *Cube* article):

Layout -- What kind of craftsmanship is displayed in the zine? How good are the physical qualities?

Art -- How well is art integrated into the production of the zine? Does the art serve the written material well, or alternatively, does it stand well on its own as a separate feature?

Congeniality -- How friendly is the zine? Does it encourage comment? Does it attract the reader to the subjects described?

Genre -- Does the fanzine focus on science fiction or fantasy? Does the fanzine openly espouse some other special interest?

Writing -- Does the written material embody that sheer sophistication of presentation, that fine characterization and narrative flow in its fiction, that clarity and inventiveness in its non-fiction, which we expect from our best fanzines.

Temporality -- Does the fanzine appear frequently and dependably? In the case of historical or one-shot efforts, does the fanzine successfully capture its moment?

Fannishness -- To what degree does the fanzine espouse fannish ideals, advance fannish causes, or provides information or education on the nature of fandom.

mention the pleasing arrangement of type and graphic elements on a page, repro, or legibility, all of which are prominent aspects of layout.

I suggest splitting this into two categories: "Format" and "Graphics". "Format" would include reproduction, legibility, and craftsmanship, while "Graphics" would gauge the arrangement of elements on the page, the effectiveness of the overall presentation, and the visual impact of non-illustrative visual materials.

The definition of "Art" doesn't mention artistic merit, which I think should be the main criterion, with suitability second.

The explanation of "Temporality" doesn't satisfy me. Many a great fanzine didn't reflect the mainstream fannish

concerns of its era. I also think it begs the essential question: *Frequency*. If we are rating a year's worth of each title, not just individual issues, then there should be a rating that reflects the impact of quantity. After all, if fanzine editor "A" produces one issue during the year and fanned "B" does 12, it's unfair to compare them as though they had an equal quantity of enjoyable material. If the best work in the monthly were distilled into an anthology the size of an annual, that anthology might dwarf the quality of the once-a-year effort.

My first thought was to inject frequency into the formula as a multiplier, but I quickly saw the error of my ways. This method thrusts two unappetizing choices on the would-be fannometrician: either instit-

uting a complex ratio system that would destroy the relative simplicity of the Hooper Rating (Mark I) or value monthly publication as five-10 times more important than a yearly schedule.

My proposal is much more moderate. Eliminate the category of "Temporality" (which we will save for that classification system, along with "Genre" and "Fannishness") and substitute "Frequency" with the usual 1-10 rating.

The rating would be equal to the number of issues a year, one point per issue, but with a maximum score of 10 to avoid giving weekly and biweekly publications excessive credit.

Another category I think should be added is "Liveliness". This would judge the excitement generated by the fanzine.

To recap the Hooper Rating (Revised) to this point, we now have seven categories:

Format
Graphics
Art
Writing
Congeniality
Liveliness
Frequency

Inappropriate categories are gone, a few new ones have been added, and the definitions are tighter. That should be a good improvement, but I believe there's still one more step to consider.

The Hooper Rating (Mark I) has everything on a 1-10 scale. That's all right, until Andy adds up all the individual ratings into a total and then ranks the titles

in high-to-low order based on that total. Once we throw all the ratings into the same pot, we're suddenly comparing them to each other in importance.

The Hooper Rating (Mark I) makes the assumption, perhaps unconsciously, that all categories are equal. Each contribute contributes exactly the same 14.3% (one-seventh) of the fanzine's Hooper Rating (total score).

I doubt that anyone thinks that "Congeniality" and "Writing" have the same effect on overall fanzine quality. A fanzine with low writing quality is a crudzine; one with low congeniality could be *Warhoon* or *Pulp*. (Admit it, you've yearned for years to see those two mentioned in the same sentence.)

If some factors carry more weight in the composition of a fanzine, then shouldn't those categories account for a greater share of the total score? I think so.

So far, the Hooper Rating (revised) has a maximum of 70 points, just like the original. The game designer in me says that people understand ratings based on "100" better than those based on "70". Since we're fiddling, I've arbitrarily decided to base the Hooper Rating on a 100-point system.

How do we get that 100? I made a few choices at this point that require explanation.

First, I decided that each individual rating should remain on a 1-10 scale. It makes it easier to interpret the category scores at a glance. I was tempted to reduce "Congeniality" and "Liveliness" and perhaps "Freq-

uency" and "Format") to 1-5-point categories. I didn't, and I feel I am a better person for having exercised this will-power while I was at it.

Second, simply increasing the maximum score within a category is not the answer. If we raise a category's scoring range to 1-30, the top would become 30 times the bottom, instead of 10 times the lowest possible score as now. That strikes me as

an unrealistically wide spread.

Third and last, I remained committed to the essential simplicity of the Hooper Rating. That made fractional multipliers *verbatim*. We want something you can figure in your head or the margin of a fanzine without a laptop computer.

In the Hooper Rating System, the appearance of a fanzine is represented by three categories, "Format", "Graphics"

The Hooper Rating System (Revised Version)

The categories that comprise the Hooper Rating System (Revised) are defined as follows:

Format -- What kind of craftsmanship is displayed in the zine? How good are the physical qualities, including reproduction and legibility?

Graphics -- Are art, type, and title elements pleasingly and effectively arranged on the page?

Art -- How good is the artistic quality of the illustrations? Does the art serve the written material well, or alternatively, does it stand well on its own as a separate feature?

Congeniality -- How friendly is the zine? Does it encourage comment? Does it attract the reader to the subjects described?

Writing -- Does the written material embody that sheer sophistication of presentation, that fine characterization and narrative flow in its fiction, that clarity and inventiveness in its non-fiction, which we expect from our best fanzines.

Liveliness -- How exciting the fanzine? Does it have a vivid editorial personality? Does it communicate energy and enthusiasm?

Frequency -- How often does this fanzine appear? (Consider 10 times per year or more a 10).

These individual ratings are combined to produce The Hooper Rating, a quantification of overall fanzine quality. The formulas for evaluating regular fanzines differ from the one for oneshots and special publications. For multi-issue fanzines: Add the scores of all categories *except Writing*, to four times the *Writing*.

For special pubs: Drop *Frequency*, add up all the other categories except *Writing*, and to that total add five times *Writing*.

and "Art". That's 30% of the total. I think "Writing" is more important to the total quality of a fanzine than its appearance. A perzine could have no art, utilitarian graphics, and a functional format, yet still be a great fanzine if other factors are strong enough. I'll admit that "Frequency", "Liveliness", and "Congeniality" would all help the overall quality of this hypothetical perzine, but none as much as good writing quality.

With straightforwardness in mind I have decided to simply multiply the "Writing" category by four when computing the actual Hooper Rating. That makes the seven categories add to 100, puts writing at 40% of the total, and leaves the other six ratings unmodified. (A complete description of The Hooper Rating in its revised form can be found in the appropriately labeled sidebar.)

Validating the Hooper Rating is an obvious priority. The best proof of the usefulness of The Hooper Rating Systems would be results that "feel" right to most fanzine fans. A rating system that puts fanzines on top that no one thinks belong there is probably not delivering valuable data.

Andy accompanies his *Cube* article with ratings for all 1991 fanzines. This is very interesting, but it doesn't prove the methodology. One person's ratings reflect individual tastes and biases to such a degree that it is impossible to judge the accuracy of the system itself.

The logical way to test The Hooper Rating System is to have many fanzine readers fill out such charts, and then average the responses. I'm distributing The Hooper Rating Validation Survey this issue. I hope some of you will take the time to complete it. I'll print the results in a couple of issues.

The Hooper Rating System Validation Study

Below are listed many of the top fanzines and special publications of 1991. Please fill in as many of the ratings as possible and send this ballot (or a photocopy) to Arnie. Each category should be rated on a 1-10 (10 is best) basis.

	Format	Graphics	Art	Writing	Congenial	Liveliness	Frequency
SF Five-Yearly (1)							
Mimosa (2)							
Tand (1)							
Trap Door (1)							
Spirochete (2)							
File 700 (4)							
Spangler (3)							
Yhos (1)							
Folly (7)							
Pulp (1)							
SF Commentary (1)							

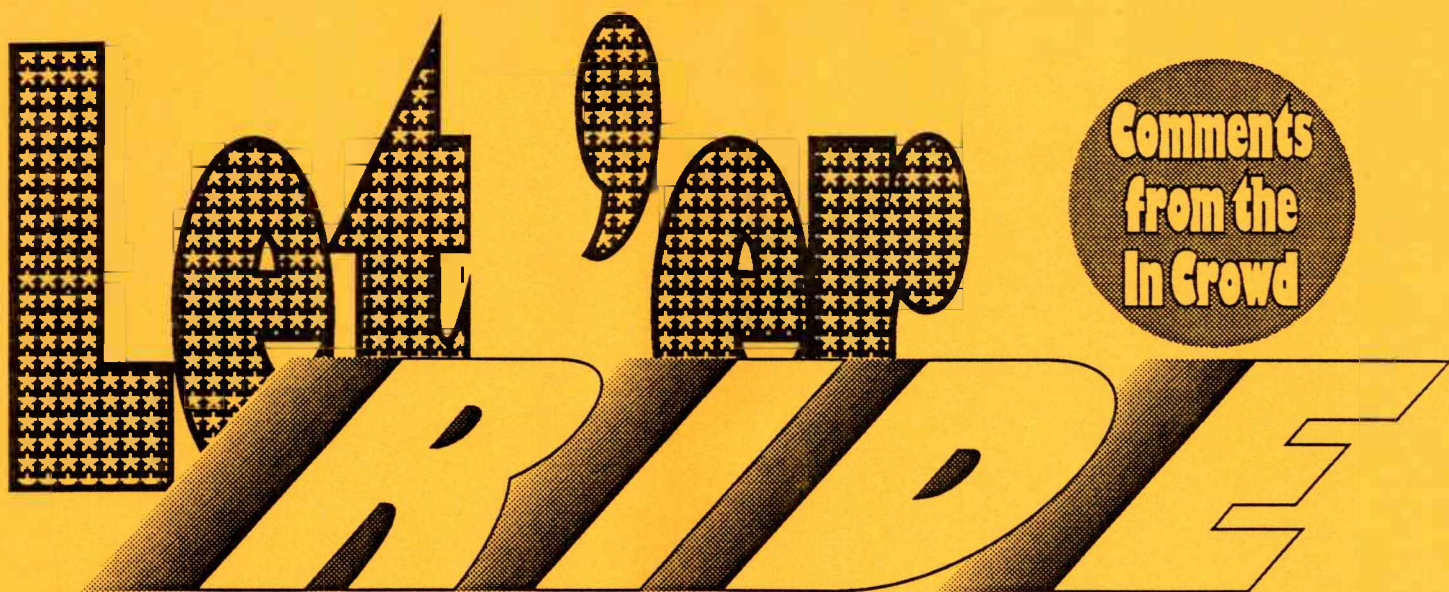
Number of 1991 issues in parentheses.

Fanzine Preference Check

Without reference to the ratings on the above chart, please list your choices for the best fanzines of 1991. Feel free to list titles not mentioned on the chart. Please do not select any oneshot or special publication; only periodical fanzines are eligible.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



Walter A. Willis' joy is unalloyed

32 Warren Rd., Donaghadee, Northern Ireland BT21 0PD

It's not often that I write a letter of comment these days so full of admiration and approval as I do for your Corflu Report in *Folly* #14. It really was an unalloyed pleasure to read. Not only factually informative, but conveying vividly what it was like to be there, so that one shared your joy. Your encounters with Forry Ackerman, Lenny Bailes, and Ted White were thrilling, and your mention of Vince Clarke reminds me of a conversation I had with Bob Shaw when we were both neofans and were speculating on the forms of egoboo one could experience. We decided that the ultimate accolade would be to be mentioned in a report of a convention one did not attend. Well, here it is happening to Vince Clarke, and never more richly deserved.

Your own remark, about the tuna sandwich, new to me, is the funniest thing in the fmz. I'm glad you included it. I shall use it myself when people ask me what I did between 1967 and 1976. It's handy to have a set piece for production at lulls in the conversation.

Bob Shaw has a few like this. Like at a meal, he'll ask what kind of lettuce is being served, and when asked why he wants to know, he will say he hates getting anonymous lettuce.

I loved the reference to John van Couvering I thought I was the only person who remembered that, and it gave me a warm glow,

like so much else in your Corflu Report.

But I thought it was in 1927 that Burbee invented sex.

Arnie: Your letter earned me a new reputation around Las Vegas as the Ancient Mariner of Fandom. It arrived on the Saturday of the May Social, and I spent the rest of the day stopping one of three, carefully unfolding the blue airletter and forcing my victims to read.

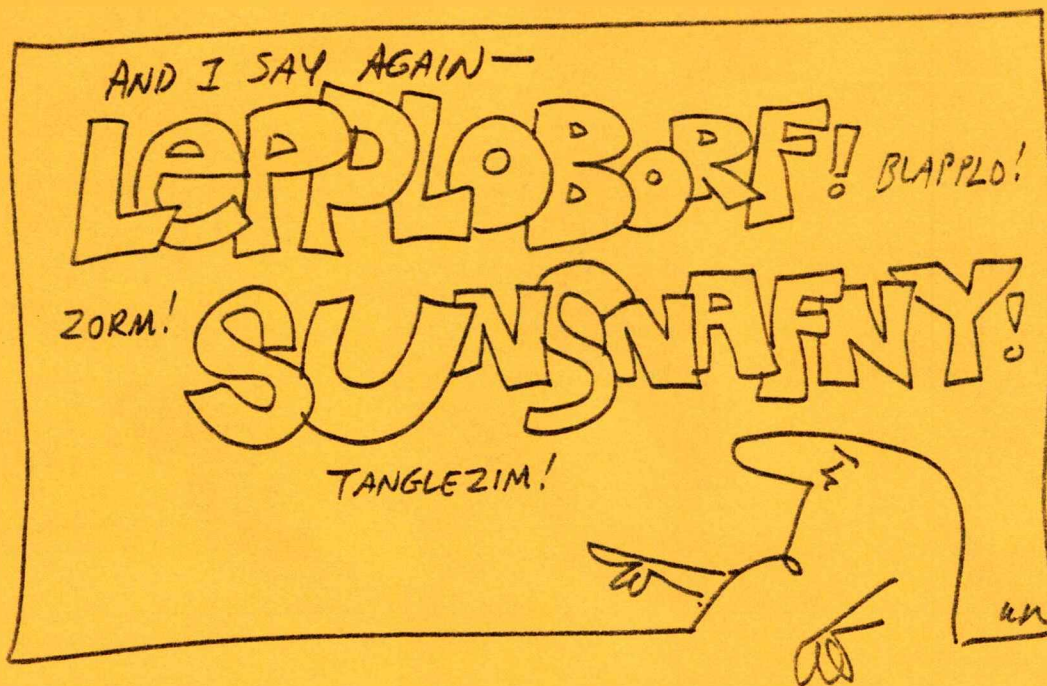
James White makes a (liner) cutting remark

2 West Drive, Portstewart, Co. Londonderry, N. Ireland BT56 7NO

Thank you for the numbered copy of "Willis Plays Vegas". I liked the long, complicated preparations during which your people became almost hopelessly entangled in their own web of deceit, your strange cast of characters (I'm sure I met one of them, Ross Chamberlain, at Lunacon in '82) and the technical detail and the frenetic juggling act during the culmination of your hoax, and the ending, which was completely unexpected.

The layout and illustrations were nice, too, but the one on page 11 (*the "Support the BOOB Fund" nude by Jay Kinney... Arnie*) would never have gotten into *Slant*. One reason would have been that black hairs are hard to do in linocut, but there are others. To pick a nit, however, did I get an incomplete copy? One of the pages is numbered "289", which means I may be missing 240-odd pages. Did you deliberately lighten the book to reduce the cost of sending it airmail?

Arnie: Your copy didn't have those 240 pages? My face



is redder than the last *Folly*. They would've clarified the significance of that slightly salacious drawing. Once you'd read of her fannish debut, the events at her first club meeting, and her date with Chuch Harris, the risqué pose would have assumed its proper perspective.

Speaking of bits missing, when I was visiting Walter in August, they showed me that terrific review you did on *BEDEC*, and you left a bit out of that, too. What did it make you want to do? Gafiate? Enter a monastery? (same thing) or throw up (or as we say in Sector General "regurgitate")? Or what? The narrative hook is an accepted writing technique for arousing or maintaining reader interest, but weren't you going a bit far?

Arnie: I'm not sure how I intended to finish the line, but I *think* it was either that *BEDEC* made me want to attend a convention, or that it gave me the overwhelming urge to misnumber pages in my next major publication.

***Folly* fulfills Greg Calkins' hopes**

P.O. Box 508, Jackson, CA 95642

The illo on page 11 of "Willis Plays Vegas" was the sort of thing we all hoped to see when we joined fandom and subbed to fanzines as horny pre-teenagers, and that our mothers were afraid we would find therein.

But never did.

And that FAPA OEs worried about for many years.

Not to mention Russell Watkins.

At last, at *long* last.

Arnie: Happy as I am to have fulfilled the fannish dream of someone whose fanzines have given me so much pleasure, I guess it's time to make a Serious Pronouncement about that now infamous illo on page 11. I truly had no idea that this sweet little cartoon would scandalize some fans. I guess this means I'd better cancel the pictorial essay "Girls of Vegas Fandom", eh?

Richard Brandt plays around

4740 N. Mesa, #111, El Paso, TX 79912

There have been steps toward designing a faanish computer game: No less than Steve Jackson was working on a computer version of NESFA's game that (predictably) imagines the player running a convention. I believe the rights eventually reverted to NESFA before Steve had a final version up and running, though.

Arnie: A programmer recently joined SNAFFU. Perhaps this will be the catalyst for Las Vegas Fandom developing a game. The expertise is there; we'll have to see about the level of interest.

Marc Cram's is a most impressive debut. His third tale is an especially well-wrought treatment of a conceptual breakthrough, the expansion beyond adolescent self-awareness. I have two bits of advice for him, however: The Portal to India may be rediscovered at any low-rent hotel in this quarter of the West, where Indian music and the strong smell of curry powder inevitably waft from

the back of the manager's desk, and (2) You expect those cool corporate jobs will net you lots of money; all you ever seem to see are bills.

Don Fitch's characterization of the differing views of Trufannishness and Insurgentism is intriguing -- that one views Egoboo as an inexhaustible resource, the other that it's finite. This may explain the concern on the part of some that excessive dilution of the pool of Egoboo will lead to a debasement of the currency; witness the jaundiced eye of many toward the fan Hugos, for example.

Arnie: I see some truth in Don's theory, but it may not be the whole story. Many Insurgents disdain fan Hugos, because they dislike awards that often ignore the pinnacle of fan achievement. It's not only that some Unworthies get rewarded, but that the fan Hugos seldom reflect the consensus of the 300 or so hardcore active fanzine fans. Another difference: The Insurgent frets about this; the Trufan knows that Egoboo is only the icing, not the cake, of fanac.

Shelby Vick's Book of Fannish Firsts

627 Barton Ave., Panama City, FL 32404

This must be a first, Arnie --

At least, a First since I've returned to fandom. I received and read a fanzine from cover to cover *the day I got it!* Including, I might add, your fan fiction.

Now, what caused this sudden change?

Well the grandkids weren't here, giving me the time to read. It was too cold out to work in the yard (matter of fact, if it isn't too cold to work in the yard, it's too hot to work in the yard or too wet to work in the yard or too dry to work in the yard.. or any other excuse). I wasn't in the middle of trying to rewrite a difficult passage in one of my books. In short, all the signs were right for fanzine perusal.

Besides, *Folly* #12 not only contained a letter from Suzanne (and that's another First; I don't think she's ever locced before), it also contained My First Column in Ages.

What happened is, I read Suzanne's letter and my column first, then felt guilty. I thot the least I could do was read everything else...

Arnie: *Folly*... the fanzine that asks the question: "Whaddaya want, good timing or good sense?"

It really was a memorable issue: Walt Willis,

Chuch Harris, a Look Behind WPV by Rob Hansen, the beginning of a series on gambling by a pro -- pro *dealer*, Aileen. That's all I meant! -- and a write up on the Von Erichs by Bill Kunkel. How about the Graham "family", Bill?

But where was Marc Cram?

Arnie: The press of business has prevented Marc from attending to his important work of writing delightful articles for *Folly*, but I've some hope this situation is about to change. He's been over a couple of times recently, and he *claims* a new piece is in gestation.

And then... and then.... a letter from Robert Bloch! (I challenged the writer as being a phony, since he didn't use his full name, "Robert-Bloch-Author-of-Psycho", but finally decided he was authentic.) Now this letter caused great distress in our house. *You contradicted him!* Suzanne said to tell you that you committed an almost-unpardonable sin; you do not contradict Grandpa! (He's been my Grandpa since back in the days when Lee Hoffman was twin teenage boys!) Besides, Suzanne points out, he was right! You don't want to be known as a gossip-monger, do you?

Arnie: Oh, Shelby, of course not! Otherwise, wouldn't I have blabbed about the Free Love Camp for Cosmen in the Florida panhandle?

Anywee, You are forgiven -- mainly because I had lost Grandpa's address somewhere along the way, and now you conveniently print it. I post-haste posted him a hasty letter.

Arnie: Oops... forgiven so quickly? I'm really glad I didn't mention the invitational, clothes-optional convention you and Suzy are throwing the weekend after Magicon.

Sam Moskowitz's Cataract Confidential

361 Roseville Ave., Newark, NJ 07107

I have received but cannot read *Folly* #12, at least for a few weeks, because imitating your precedent, I have just completed a cataract operation and have only limited vision through one nearsighted eye. While I wait for the one operated upon to heal, hopefully gain the expected degree of vision and get a new pair of eye glasses that will give me the vision to make it

possible to read, drive, and function again.

I'm afraid the endless series of television commercials about the ease of cataract operations has given most of us the wrong idea about them, making them appear no more disabling than a shave and a haircut. The commercials tell us we'll be picked up in a chauffeured limousine, the operation will be over in a jiffy, and we'll be driven back to our homes within an hour and maybe be back on the job the next morning.

The truth is that, preoperative, each patient undergoes a battery of tests, including blood and urine, as well as x-rays, EKG, and sundry other incidentals. On the day of the operation, you change into a hospital gown, fill out the various forms, get your blood pressure -- and then an IV penetrates your most prominent artery.

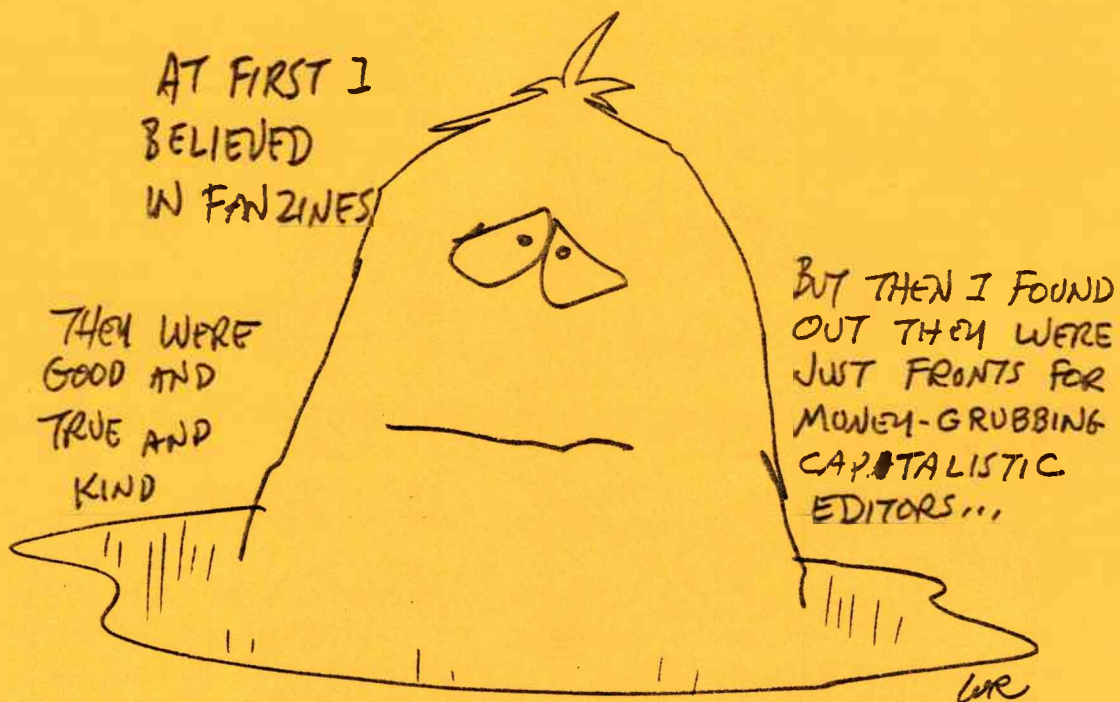
You are wheeled into the operating room, where your eye surgeon has an assistant, an anesthetist, and a nurse. You are given a local so that you are awake through the entire proceedings. The operation, rather than being over in a jiffy, requires, in my case, an hour-and-a-quarter of vigorous application by the surgeon, punctuated by disquieting operating-room

chatter, and periodic admonitions not to move.

About three-quarters of the way through the operation the IV has done its insidious work and your bladder has reached its limit. You tentatively, but gratefully, let go into a urinal under your blanket while the surgeons proceed without a break. When the ordeal has ended, you are wheeled into the recovery room, and then into a curtained enclosure where you are offered a light snack. It is true that they do let you go home the same day, but the procedure has taken from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Since you have a bandage and a protective cage over your eye, you can't put on your glasses, so you navigate hazily with the use of your nearsighted other eye. You are instructed not to bend your head down, lift anything, wash your face except standing up, no coughing or sneezing, stay indoors for several days, don't try to drive, put drops in your eyes four times a day when the bandage comes off, wear your glasses at all times as protection against rubbing your eye and bumping yourself or having the dog leap up into your face.

Even after you open your eye, the eyeglass prescription is no longer one you can see through



with clarity, so you must now grope around for weeks, fundamentally unable to do any reading, or watch television, or go for long walks, or drive, or move your books around, hoping that everything will heal just nicely so you can be fitted for new glasses and return to the real world, knowing all the time that an operation on the other eye is pending as soon as your doctor thinks you are ready, at which time you will have to endure the same procedure all over again. I don't suppose this is news to you, but at least you'll have a record of it.

Arnie: I know all *Folly* readers join me in wishing you a speedy and complete recovery and return to fanac.

Harry Warner Harps on a Musical Topic

423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740

The latest *Folly* was as enjoyable as all its predecessors with the exception of one unfortunate remark. I refer to your slighting comments on the jew's harp. This musical instrument will play a very important role in the novel I'll write and try to sell if interest rates drop much further and thus erode further my retirement income. So I feel benevolent toward everything about the instrument except its unfortunate name.

Perhaps ignorance of the noble history of the jew's harp could serve as a partial defense. You obviously don't know that an entire book about the jew's harp was published not too long ago. Do you realize that a mere soldier in the army of Frederick the Great became so skilled on the jew's harp that a concert he played for the king won him a lot of money and his discharge from the service, after which he made a fortune performing in concerts? Or that Charles Eulenstein created a sensation in the early 19th century in London with his performances leading an orchestra of 16 jew's harps? Or that musicologists once had a big controversy over the question of whether the tongue of the jew's harp produces tones by simple harmonics or by a more complex series of vibrations? Or that it's called a *brumneisen* in Germany, *guimbarde* in France, and *tromp* or *trump* in Scotland.

Arnie: (Should I do it?) That's a splendid array of jew's harp facts, all of which are new to me. (Should I?)

I'm a long-time practitioner of this instrument, and I have the microscopic pits in my teeth from hours of practice. (It's *soooo* classic.) I guess 19th century London must've been easier to awe than our present society. (I dood it!) I mean, 16 jew's harps, that's not too many. (I did it, and I'm proud. At least, I'm not ashamed. Well, not *very* ashamed.)

It's an immense relief to learn from the protagonist in the medical drama that Walter is well again and still capable of writing splendidly. I nodded knowingly when I came to his final paragraph with its worried reference to the possibility of having had part of his brain fall out during the illness.

It probably results from anesthesia and the missing segments will find their way back to their accustomed places gradually in the coming weeks and months. I was scared by a similar problem after my only encounter with a general anesthetic, although in my case the trouble was mostly memory loss in selected areas. I could remember, for instance, the main part of Chopin's F sharp minor polonaise well enough to write out the main themes without reference to the printed music, but the central portion of the composition had been wiped from my memory, and it was a long time returning to the rest of the polonaise. Just about the time my memory returned to normal, old age struck and now I have trouble remembering who Chopin was.

Arnie: My mind already plays tricks without anesthesia. Things I'm not using seem to move to some very high, back shelf where I find it difficult to retrieve them. It's a good thing I publish so frequently, or I'd quickly forget all my little production tricks and have to relearn them each time.

Aileen Forman dashed one of my secret hopes with the disclosure that the Mafia isn't welcome in Las Vegas. Ever since so many fans bobbed up in your city, you see, I'd been hopeful that someone in The Family would get involved in fanac. Then a few hints from other fans would persuade him to arrange for resumed production of mimeograph equipment and supplies, for special rates for fanzine duplication at copy shops for any fans who prefer that method of publishing fanzines, for the launching of a whole lot of new prozines with the same thickness and story quality and prices that prevailed during the 1940s and 1950s, and for

various other goodies that would benefit fanzine fandom.

However, this is the second Shelby Vick article I've commented on in the last 10 days, so maybe there's a Mafia fan becoming active in some other city who is already making arrangements for the good old days of fandom to resume.

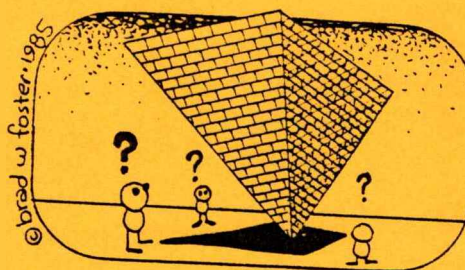
Arnie: There's some division of opinion among locals about how welcome members of *la cosa nostra* are in Paradise. While several acknowledge that organized crime no longer owns the casinos, it is still present in the unions, and, perhaps, investment capital. Of course, many locals, including prize neo Sal "The Bloody Razor" Cukamonga, label all theories about the Mafia as fantasy.

"Luck of the Fannish" is a splendid bit of research into fandom's past. You probably did the right thing when you labeled it a novel, since certain revelations in it could be harmful to the named individuals even today, if its factual basis became generally known. My only problem is that the book edition of "A Wealth of Fable" is too close to going to press for me to make to make the extensive insertion of new material than would be justified, now that you've blown the secret which fanzine editors had kept about this matter through common consent all these years. I was blamed by Bob Tucker in the original mimeographed edition of that fan history for not

including enough information about my own role in fan history, and he will undoubtedly grow even more peeved when he finds I haven't given myself credit for this adventure.

Arnie: Thanks for setting the record straight, Harry. I am looking forward to your notes for my forthcoming opus, tentatively titled, "Harry Warner, Time Master".

WAHF: David Bridges, Chuck Connor, Lloyd Penney, Shelby Vick, Harry Warner, Vinç Clarke, Mark Manning, Gary Deindorfer, Teddy Harvia, Laurie Yates, Peggy Burke, Taral Wayne, Dave, Szurek, Brian Earl Brown, Jeanne Bowman, Leah Zeldes Smith. As must be obvious, this is partially a "catch up" lettercol. Lots more next issue. See you then!



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