

KENNING #20 COMES TO YOU FROM JACKIE CAUSGROVE WHO LIVES AT 6828 ALPINE AVE., APT. 4,
 CINCINNATI, OH 45236. THIS COLOPHON IS BEING TYPED WITH THE "FORMS" ELEMENT AVAILABLE
 FROM QUILL, BUT I AM USING BILL BOWER'S SINCE HIS PRICE--FREE--IS MUCH EASIER ON THE
 POCKET BOOK THAN THE ONE QUILL CHARGES. IT IS RATHER DISCONCERTING TO USE THIS TYPE
 FACE, THOUGH. THE FORMS ELEMENT HAS TWO TYPEFACES, UPPER AND LOWER. THIS IS UPPER AND
 LACKS CERTAIN ESSENTIAL CHARACTERS--SUCH AS PERIODS, COMMAS, SEMICOLONS, AND NUMBERS.
 I MUST THEREFORE TYPE EACH LINE TWICE, AND HOPE TO HELL I'M LEAVING ENOUGH SPACE FOR
 THE INSERTIONS WHEN I SWITCH TO THE LOWER CASE. OH. I GUESS I SHOULD ADD, LEST YOU
 ALL THINK I AM EVEN MORE OF A CRETIN THAN I AM, THAT THE UPPER AND LOWER CASE DO NOT
 LINE UP. SINCE IBM SELECTRICS LACK HALF-LINE SPACING, THE MACHINE HAS TO BE BY-GUESS-
 AND-BY-GOLLY ADJUSTED IN ORDER TO APPEAR ON THE SAME LEVEL. AS THIS ELEMENT LACKS AN
 ASTERISK ENTIRELY, I FIND MYSELF UNABLE TO SIGN PROPERLY, TOO. ODDLY ENOUGH, I DO NOT
 FIND IT A PROBLEM AVOIDING TOUCHING THE SHIFT KEY, WHICH I HAD EXPECTED TO BOTHER ME.
 APPARENTLY THAT HALF YEAR OR SO OF DOING DATA ENTRY WORK ON A CRT INSTILLED RELEXES
 DEEPLY ENOUGH TO CALL ON EVEN AFTER SO LONG A PERIOD AWAY FROM THE NEED FOR SUCH A HABIT.
 WHAT THIS WILL MEAN TO THE REST OF THE COPY OF THIS ZINE, WHEN I SWITCH TO A MORE NORMAL
 ELEMENT, IS, OF COURSE, ANOTHER MATTER ENTIRELY. THIS BLATHERING HAS GONE ON LONG
 ENOUGH. ONCE I MENTION THAT KENNING #20 IS INTENDED FOR THE FEBRUARY '83 MLG, I'M
 switching elements, and not a moment too soon for my nerves. *Whew* The "Forms" ball
 does lovely work, no doubt about it, but there are some things for which it was not in-
 tended, and general typing is definitely one of them.

For those of you who note such things (I don't, but I know such people exist) this nat-
 ter portion is being done with the ELITE typeball. The one I previously used, COURIER
 12, for some reason or the other seemed to cause the carriage that bears the element to
 hang up at the end of a line. The one previous to that, REMINGTON #580, croaked during
 the stencilling of the last issue. Only the ELITE remains of the seriph typefaces in
 12 pitch (Ha! Almost forgot, again, that ELITE lacks a numeral one... I feel trium-
 phant whenever I can catch an error in mid-stroke, as it were), and the 10-pitch ele-
 ments "feel" too crowded for my tastes, so I don't use 'em.

I really wish I had loads of Ghod News to relate to those of you who have been follow-
 ing my ~~lack~~ of progress on the medical front, but, as has been all too frequently the
 case, there's damn little to report. My counsellor at the Ohio Bureau of Vocational
 Rehabilitation -- Phil Leugers -- told me a bit over two weeks ago that the next person
 I would hear from would be my surgeon. No other agency would assist the OBVR with the
 expense for my spinal fusion, but permission had been given to go ahead with them as-
 suming the entirety of the burden. Only one -- hopefully minor and quick -- step re-
 mained to be taken, and that was a cost estimate from two hospitals. Yes, this pro-
 cedure will be done using the Low Bidder system. I know we got to the moon that way,
 but we also had an awful lot of rotten highways built, too. Anyway, he said I should
 hear from Dr. Kahn with a month, so it is possible I may finally enter the hospital
 this month, or sometime in March at the latest. Ghod, I wish it were all over and be-
 hind me...

Also, as has all too frequently been the case (even reducing that phrase to an acronym
 would use too much space), I'm starting this zine practically on the deadline, and will
 have to skip reams of meaty material that I would more normally include, but I am sure
 you all will ~~still~~ ~~with~~ ~~relief~~ understand. This is being done under rather adverse con-
 ditions, I mean besides the ones caused by Looming Deadlines. I attended Confusion 101
 on the 28-31 of January, and haven't quite recovered as yet. (Like several other people
 there, I had been "coming down with something" for a few days before the con. Lack of
 sleep, tension, bodily abuse, and all the rest of it didn't hasten recovery any.) To
 be quite blunt, I feel rotten, and this state of condition might be reflected in my
 tone. Please read with that in mind... In fact, since it has been ages since I have
 felt anywhere close to decent, it might be best if you simply scanned everything I've
 written in the past couple of years in that light.

MAILING COMMENTS -- I debated, briefly, whether I should attempt to go back and respond to the Mlgs I missed. Common sense prevailed. I'm beginning with the first item in #19, FRONT PAGE-- RAE, BNC (oh, it would be so-o-o easy to handle this mailing if that's all I typed for each zine!).

DAVID HULAN -- TO PARADISE BY WAY OF KENSAL GREEN -- Excellent trip report. You capture the "flavor" of travel well, aches and pains as well as sights and scenes. The only quibble I would have is that you too often glossed over items I wish had been included, such as what you ate. (Why it is that I find the sorts of foods offered in overseas restaurants of interest I cannot say, but I do.) Everything else was covered in sufficient detail except the cuisine.

The Day/
Night reversal gimmick you saw at London Zoo is employed elsewhere. Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago has a sizable collection of nocturnal creatures using a similar system, and here in Cincinnati, the zoo uses red light rather than dim normal lighting (which I think I'd prefer since the animal's colorations could be better appreciated. I also felt about as blind as they supposedly were in red light...). Chuckled at your complaint of sore feet after 2 hours. That's my limit for things like zoos and museums (or shopping, or...). Regardless of how much longer I'd like to stay and look, my feet say phooie on the whole idea.

Hey! Quit picking on your kid! There are cooks who don't scramble eggs in a bowl first. I do, you and Marcia apparently do, but it's not a Law engraved on stone, and I've seen more than one person crack eggs directly into the frying pan and scramble them quickly with a fork (generally it's done when milk isn't being added). Rachel sounded a bit miffed in her addendum to that section, and I feel sympathetic. Few things make a kid feel more kiddish than having an adult snatch something out of hand to "rescue" it.)

In comparing the game of hurling to baseball, you refer to the players tossing "the ball in the air like a baseball *fungo*" (italics mine). What's that term mean?

Anyone who can sit for hours, watching truly boring games like football, has no business making rude comments about tennis matches, especially Wimbledon. Really David, sometimes I can't fathom your tastes at all!

Your tale of the turkey in the Peugeot who behaved so abysmally in queue for the ferry reminded me of the nerd we ran into en route to Kings Island (for a tennis match). Traffic was backed up on the Interstate for 3-4 miles, and it took us at least, if not more than, 90 minutes to cover that short stretch. Cars would occasionally sneak past the solid line-up by zipping along the parking lane, but eventually Justice prevailed and they got squeezed off. A VW broke down in front of us and, just as we crept up the start of the exit ramp, one of these jerks snuck in line. The trooper at the top, who was directing traffic off the freeway and along the highway, noticed it (or heeded the angry shouts and honkings of horns) held this fellow up and waved us to join the main traffic stream. Our car then decided to succumb to the overheating strain it had been suffering through and died. The cop gave us time to get it started again, but the engine wouldn't cooperate. *Sigh* Vengeance was within our grasp, but the Buick simply couldn't handle it. But the wide swings in mood/adrenalin level somehow made the match pale by comparison.

Cincinnati
holds an Irish Coffee Contest each St. Patrick's Day and Hap's Pub -- a rather un-pub-bish but surely Irish bar -- has won as Most Authentic for several years. I know they use heavy unwhipped cream, but know not about the type of sugar used. Maybe we'll go try it one of these days. Former FLAPPan (who never actually sent in a zine) Al Curry plays there once in awhile. I've never understood "Most Authentic" Contests--seems all one would have to do is track down the recipe the judges consider "real" and copy it. What's tricky about that? The drink's not an Ancient Custom or anything like that.)

The
stopover at the Yolen's seemed as delightful as the rest of your trip; I'm glad the visit went off so well. I noted your comparison of green inter-urban stretches with lots of space/to the crowded dun-colored SoCal variety. Needless to say, I'm the sort

who prefers the sense of elbow-room to evenness of climate. Even apartment-house living makes me feel hemmed in.

DAVE LANGFORD -- CLOUD CHAMBER SIXTEEN -- You succeeded in saving your FLAP membership, and, while I can't speak for the rest of the roster (even if I do feel they'd all agree), I certainly am happy that you made it. Any other idle queries? Is this a contest? Do you award prizes?

You managed to make Brunner's woes seem so -- well -- trivial. I mean, if he truly went on and on (and on and on) as you say, he must have been in a frightful state. Had you no pity for the man? Wrestling with a recalcitrant computer ain't fun, after all, especially when forced to make do with such piddling royalties... (Actually, I should have said Word Processer, not computer. Forgive me, Eric!)

Is that bit of clicking, clanking fiction done by the very same Lionel Fanthorpe who, acted the DUFF ballot, Jerry Kaufman has made so ~~not~~ famous? No wonder Jerry does reading from his works--they must sound hilarious. They certainly *read* that way!

Who was your brother Jon trying to convince that he's homo? His ladyfriend or his/your mother? The preferred technique is rather different, depending on which one he means, y'know.

Shush now, Dave. One of Gordie's arrangers/organizers/hangers-on lurks within our roster. We don't want to start ill feelings by suggesting that Wixon's employer is not "t.g.S.F.w.o.t.a.", do we? (Ah, the ~~infamous~~ *BRITISH* Welsh humour. Nips a bit, it does.)

Do you write/type as fast as you (reportedly) talk? Must, to put out all the wordage you manage in fanzines as well as enough by which to earn a living. Not being a true Word Whipper (I just sorta nudge at 'em a bit), I sit in awe.

-- ANSIBLE 29 -- The Albacon hassles seem to prove that such folderol is not limited to this side of the pond. Can't really say it's cheerful news though. Have they gotten matter straightened out as yet?

Is that type of thing done often in British publishing circles? I mean where names can be arbitrarily deleted from the credits because, supposedly, "multiple credits lower sales". I thought that, if you wrote it, your name has to go on the cover (exceptions being made by the writer, not the publisher), just like the ~~big~~ *KIDS* more well-known names. Golly gee whiz. Hope you stabbed that wax image good and proper. Credit's life blood to a writer.

Does Peter Toluzzi's up-coming move to the U.S. affect his candidacy for MAFF? (Could a non-fan make heads or tails out of any this?)

I agree with Benford that Brit-fanwriting is "quick and bizarre, glinting intelligence", and that there is a lot of "laidbackism" in the U.S. (I don't draw the same conclusions, however.) But what the heck does he mean by writing "You have to be *hungry* to write good fan..."? Hungry for what?

Did a double take when reading Hazel's Language Lessons this time around. Thought your zine and Hlavaty's had gotten too cozy while waiting on the shelf or something...

ROY TACKETT -- TRILITHON NUMBER ONE -- As far as I can gather, one is free to interpret the three parts of your title as one wishes. I see them as Roy Tackett and Amiable Ole RoyTac propping up HORT (Horrible Old Roy Tackett). Hort's too crusty to stand alone, he needs the other two around so people can tolerate him...

There are so many times/places I'd like to see. Any list I could draw up would be totally changed within months, but, yes, ancient Britain/Western Europe would be one of them. Got into a Durant streak recently and covered, oh, roughly, a millineum in a week. I'd forgotten how old some of those civilized places were, and how damn long people of relatively unknown cultures had inhabited places before the larger (or at least literate) world discovered them. Had not realized, however, that the Standing Stones were pre-Pyramid, though. How can that be dated/verified?

Another day; another stencil or three. I glanced through the ones already completed and shuddered, but since FLAP doesn't *demand* quality writing, merely hopefully wishing for same, I figured what was done was done and what the dickens can you guys do about it anyhow? Cancel your subscriptions?

The only reason I'm breaking into the Mailing Comments is to tell Dave Langford how well he's doing with his TAFF Trip Report. Just finished the fourth installment a few minutes ago and feel slightly light-headed from laughing so much. WARHOON 30 arrived yesterday and DaveLo read it before I could. He'd been making rude and grumping noises about Bergeron's discussion of fan standards/Chris Priest/Punk (y'know, those three topics halfway make sense when strung out like that), and then he suddenly started chuckling, tee-heeing, and occasionally guffawing. I knew via my sensitive cosmic mind that it wasn't Bergeron who tickled him so, and asked what he found so funny. "Langford," he replied, wiping tears from his eyes (since he had a largish ripe sty on one lid, this brought even more tears to his eyes, but that's a digression). Having read it, I agree with his assessment. For FLAP members who have yet to encounter Langford's thrilling saga, I suggest they run, not walk, to the nearest mailbox and deposit requests for the earlier (and current) installments. (1) TWLL-DDU 19, 50p (try \$1.50 US) from Langford, (2) BOONFARK 5, \$2.50 from Dan Steffan, 1010 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, VA 22046, (3) NABU 11 50p (Same amount/^{as mentioned above}suggested for US) -- proceeds for both Britzines go to TAFF, the charitable souls) from Ian Maule, 5 Beaconsfield Rd, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3HY, U.K., (4) WARHOON 30, \$5.00 (or the "usual" --contributions, trades, letters of comment, reviews) from Richard Bergeron, Box 5989, Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00905. The fifth installment should be forthcoming RealSoonNow from Malcolm Edwards, 28 Duckett Rd., London, N4 1BN, U.K. in his available-for-whim TAPPEN 3 (try a grovelling letter...) I should note that Langford claims a collected edition will be published, someday, but we should all realize what that really means. Obtaining all the above fanzines will set you back a bit of cash, but, believe me, they're all worth it, and not only for Langford's Trip Report alone. End of interruption.

Resuming Comments to TACKETT -- In yct Dean you speak of Zippo lighters as if they are a part of by-gone history. DaveLo still uses one, and it was only purchased a few years ago. Like safety pins, I assume they'll be around for as long as Mankind manages to make it (and US factories still function...).

difficulty with using the front pockets for carrying wallets is that, if the wallet is stuffed plumply enough, one looks as if one is wearing an oddly-placed cod piece under one's trousers. Daughter Sandra's husband, Greg, uses that location, too, and all of his blue jeans have this strange wear-pattern in the front. But then wallets wear out back pockets as well, so I suppose it all comes down to personal choice.

you think New Mexico drivers are any different than anywhere else in the U.S. If it's a bad habit, it's bound to have infected the entire country.

You seem to approve of garlic in your ct Arthur. DaveLo and I hold deep affection for that food as well. In fact, I like it so much, and eat it so frequently, that I forget there are people who actually dislike the stuff, and make warding-off gestures at one who has recently returned from a French restaurant after consuming garlic-smothered escargots. (At least I'm blaming the garlic for that reaction...) I feel those who react that way are missing out on a Ghood Thing, but then people who dote on jaiapano peppers say the same thing to me.

In yet Shoemaker, you mention a "5% service charge" companies pay to use credit cards. That service charge varies widely, and from what I've heard from businesses that have them, it depends mostly on which bank (not the card itself) you operate through. Mike Resnick's business -- a boarding kennel and pet shop -- pays 2%, but he had been quoted rates that went as high as 8%, and I've heard some businesses pay 12% (though I don't know how accurate that report was).

Re yct me; Brian's attempts, as you suspected (and Bowers, too) failed. But as of now I'm covered by the State of Ohio (knock wood to avoid budget cuts...), and I have hopes of actually having the surgery over-n-done with by next mailing.

Cincy has a GE plant which also builds jet engines, but I believe they've already laid off close to the number of Albu's/^{GE plant} total employment. Yeah, just looked it up in DaveLo's Business Directory; they employ close to 15,000 in the aircraft engine division (there are several divisions of GE in the area). The local paper keeps rather close track of lay-offs I've noticed, but seldom mentions any call-backs -- and some of those do occur. I recall when the lay-offs hit 1600, the paper's previously announced figures totalled way over 1800, but there were small call-backs during the interim that simply weren't told about. (The TV stations did, however.)

JONI STOPA -- ANOTHER MIDWESTERN B.P. -- Enjoyed the trip report (and enjoy the "souvenir" from it -- the tennies you bought that didn't fit -- as well) but don't have a darn thing else to say about it. Hope to see some snapshots from the vacation my next visit up to Wilmot, though. The ones you had from the Northwest trip were excellent!

ERIC LINDSAY -- MISSED MAILINGS -- And more wordage on yet more fannish travelling. Doesn't anyone stay home anymore?

I've read more reports on Westercon than on Chicon, and I must say that from what I've seen, the con in Phoenix seemed more interesting than the Worldcon in Chicago. I don't believe the difference is due so much to location is it is to size, though. If for no other reason, the bigger the con, the more confusion results, and the more likely reporters will be so daunted by complexity that reports are overly brief or just not done.

You recall "sitting and drinking with Dave, Jackie and Mike at several locations"? Gee, you did better than I...my memory of that period has little gaps in it here and there. Don't think we've imbibed as much during our entire tenure in the Midwest as we did during your visits here. *Sigh* Just how long was it until you guessed you'd be back?

Your mention of Tucker reminds me that I should tell you he's a bit under the weather now. Missed ConFusion because he'd slipped and fallen while emerging from a Jacuzzi at Chattacon (Chattanooga, Tennessee) a couple of weekends ago and broke his foot (well, several toes thereof) as well as gaining a bunch of scratches, cuts and bruises. I always wince when I hear of people Bob's age taking a spill -- so often Bad Things arise afterward.

I think you're taking the proper attitude about White Castles. Don't want the demand to get so high that quality suffers, after all. I know you'll be thrilled to know that they now have a toll-free number where one can phone and order their "hamburgers" delivered anywhere in the country -- flash-frozen and air-shipped. I'm waiting until they offer International Service...

Denise's brother is named Doug. Considering the number of Dave's in fandom, I don't think there are many left out in mundania. (It was through him that we found this apartment, otherwise I probably wouldn't have noticed the error.)

Do you know my toe is still affected from walk in the country we took? The nail is only half attached, and still is slightly black-n-blue. Needless to say, I don't wear those/^{shoes} anymore (Joni gave me a different pair that fit a hell of a lot better).

DAVE LOCKE -- VIEW FROM UNDER A 60 WATT LAMP #7 -- Several friends expressed regrets: after hearing of that recruiter's seminar, I don't think you missed much. Of course you didn't have any fun fannish types to offset the obnoxious drunks, and that does make a bit of a difference...

As we both now know, the Midway Lodge Midwestcon will use has about the same-sized elevator as the one in Indianapolis. However, it's really

not really necessary to use it (I suspect it's only there because of elderly and/or handicapped guests). Most two- and three-story motels I've been in don't have elevators at all, and from what we saw, I doubt if it'll be used by many attendees.

You've misremembered how long it's been since your typer went "sprooing". It committed hari-kari sometime in '79 or '80, while we were living in Torrence. My ears still turn a blushing shade of pink whenever I recall your reaction. Wonder if we'll ever get it put back together? The way repair rates keeps increasing, it might be cheaper to buy a new one by the time we have the money to think about fixing it up. (And in the meanwhile this Selectric gets a bit more sicker each passing month...)

Really enjoyed your fannish "business card" headings for your mailing comments section. Think they would have shown up a bit neater with borders around them, but that's merely personal opinion (aren't they all, though?).

I guess the two of us are in the minority when it comes to our reaction towards Jean Weber's "primer" for fannish sexual contacts. I thought the piece was awfully sexist, and failed miserably the switch-genders test that I generally use when reading feminist material. If it had been a man writing that stuff about how women should behave we'd still be hearing the screams of outrage. But, as I said, we seem to be in a minority...

I was going to protest that I eat cottage cheese and enjoy it, but then I guess you'd say I was sorta, kinda on a diet (one that's been going on since the late sixties...). Howsomer, I used to eat it even when I was fat. It's good, if bland, and if you like milk I don't see why you'd dislike it. Cottage cheese simply seems to be one of the "niggers" of foods; everyone picks on it because hardly anyone objects. Maybe I'll start up a "Friends of Cottage Cheese" society and see if there are any others out there like me. After all, someone's buying a lot of the stuff; surely not everyone's on a diet!

PAULINE PALMER -- MOCK FENNEL SOUP #11 -- Has it been over a year now since Jack had his heart attack? Sure doesn't seem so long ago. Glad that he's doing so well and that the various life-style changes he's made prevent such a thing from reoccurring.

DaveLo uses a back-of-the-closet-door wire-rack shelving unit for his paperbacks, which is where he gets the notion that he only has one boxfull of books to his name. But over the years he has acquired a carousel-type book rack that holds maybe 24-30 paperbacks, a small desk-top shelf that contains another dozen or so, and a collection of BC and WIZARD OF ID and GARFIELD and several more hardbacks from the SF club and Lit'ry Guild, as well as trade pbs from QBC. He can deny until the last trump, but he really and truly does have more than one box of books. (Just got up and counted: 211 pbs, not including his reference works and hardcovers, or trade pbs, or pulpzines, or...) Jack and he seem to share similar views about the keeping of books; how'd book "keepers" like us get mixed in with their kind anyway?

Thanks again for the good wishes.

THE LOWER CASE continues to be chucklesome. Do you have any idea of how long it's been running in CJR?

MARTY HELGESEN -- FISH SAUCE (19 FZ) -- Re the comments on the removal of Huck Finn because of fear of offending blacks; I sometimes wonder whether, in the far future, books which deal with the inferiority of women will be on someone's Black List. I know I find myself cringing when reading many books, as I imagine blacks do when their race is treated shabbily in print. Howsomer, I would still feel such banning to be wrong. Hopefully speaking, books written with that attitude aren't being printed anymore (make that "wishfully"), but the one's done in the past should be kept around -- as object lessons, if nothing else.

Discussing people who quit smoking in your ct; Becky, you mention the withdrawal symptoms experienced when nicotine levels in the blood drop. In trying to avoid that (I'm supposed to be off cigarettes before my surgery) I'm tapering off. But rather than smoke a cigaretee, raise the

nicotine level to a high degree, I only take two or three puffs, then extinguish the cigarette. Hopefully this keeps the nicotine from building up in my system and (Theoretically) I can go further and further between puffs. I say theoretically because it hasn't worked out that way. I've varied the length of time a pack lasts from 40 to almost 107 hours. Seemingly it depends on how tense I feel at a given time. I do the worst while at a con, a bit better (but still badly) the few days afterward or while at a party, and best when fully occupied, both mentally and physically, at some activity. Writing, as an example, doesn't fill the bill. As soon as I stop actually putting down words my hand reaches for a cigarette. I use a Dean Grennell Snuffing Ashtray which puts out the coal almost instantly, then knock off the little "charcoal" bit before I relight it. This accomplishes two things; there's no off-flavor from relighting, and I'm avoiding some of the concentrated gunk that's still in the "charcoal". I'm still not "off" cigarettes, by any means, but going from 2-plus packs of unfiltered Pall Malls per day down to a half-pack or less of Ultra Lights is a Vast Improvement, IMHO. And I haven't felt any of the symptoms that I did when I tried to go cold turkey.

Yct Suzi regarding her qualms/quibbles about Catholics/^{as} being reflections of human, not religious failings made me grin. I can well recall bearing similar views about what I then thought of as Baptists (and now simply consider Fundamentalist Christians). When I was a parochial school kid, I thought if people didn't worship the way I did or follow the rules I did, why then, *ipso facto*, they weren't Christians. Fannish schisms follow similar reasoning; if you don't fan in my fashion then you're not a fan at all. Feels ~~lightened~~ good to be out of that mode of thought.

It was wise that you inserted that disclaimer concerning the authorship of that poem (printed early in the MC section) before you ran out space in the zine: DAG's seemed a mite irritable of late and ghod knows what horrible form his vengeance may have taken...

ARTHUR HLA VATY -- ELVES IN BONDAGE -- I understand the lure of word processors, and if finances permitted would have one in front of me at this moment, even though I feel programs for them will improve in the future as well as dropping in price. With one, perhaps my formerly high level of correspondence would resume. Writing the same general natter, time after time, is really off-putting. WPs avoid that completely.

I look askanse at phrases like "Uniformity in schooling leads to dragging everyone down to the lowest common denominator." I agree it surely *works* that way in our current school system, but that doesn't mean it needs thus be. The concept should be used to raise the level of the common denominator, not drop the entire system to the level of those who aren't capable of learning much at all. One big factor in the problems of modern education is this insistance of lumping all kids of an age into one grade. If *X* ten year olds read at *Y* level, and *X* includes kids who will most likely never learn to read, then the system is at fault, not the concept. The main thrust of uniformity is that someone--of any age-- who has a High School diploma (or Grammar School, or Junior High School...) should be able to do certain things: show proficiency in reading, comprehension, writing, number manipulation, etc. at least as well as anyone else who has reached the same level. But this (to me) senseless insistance on keeping kids together in roughly the same age groups results in a continual lowering of standards as more and more of the uneducable children are brought into the system. Poor Johnny will never read past the fourth grade level, but he's the age most sixth graders are, so let's pass him along and just lower the standards for the next grades so he won't be embarrassed. StuffnNonsense.

That was kind of you to remind Eric of your meeting at MidSouthCon. You realize that he tends to forget things once he's been in the country for a few weeks. Unending fanac does that to anyone...

Cute mulberry wine/heart/red meat pun made to Suzi.

While it's possible that propriety (I doubt it was ignorance) led Lasher to omit certain "National" terms from his essay, I'll bet it was more due to the fact that his column runs in Cincinnati's Conservative newspaper. By most standards, the Liberal paper is right wing...

Read Bernadette's "Glossary" with interest, which surprised me since I don't normally find interest in lists. Surely it couldn't have been the subject matter that intrigued me; the 17th Century never held much appeal to my eyes...

-- THE DILLINGER RELIC 25 -- Please accept my regrets about the loss of your pet. I do hope you obtain a successor to him fairly soon -- it's often hard on a surviving pet to be left alone. And I also hope Ruby tests out to be free of the disease.

Osborne's computerized billing department making dumb errors does sound pretty silly on the surface, but I think most fans realize that goofs like that are due to input error, not program mistakes.

Where does "kill" enter the evolutionary picture? The success of an individual of a species lies in its ability to get its genes into the pool by reproducing. Competition for breeding partners is definitely part of the pattern, but to win the need is not to kill. Most species merely drive off or intimidate "losers", there's no need to kill, even among our simian cousins. Gee, deep down you're a vicious bastard, aren't you?

Regarding your celebration dinner (for Bernadette's passing of her prelims) at "Slug's in the Pines", could that name have been an example of reverse psychology at work? I mean the meal might have been considered as merely adequate if it had been eaten at La Maisonnette or some other high-fallutin'-sounding restaurant.

We've had occasion to use NY Air (in getting DaveLo's son from upstate New York to here for visits and back home again) and hadn't realized that they wouldn't mail tickets out. Mostly because we never asked; we always pick up tickets at the check-in counter. Why waste a trip?

I've attempted Brunner's SHOCKWAVE RIDER twice now, and have yet to make it past the third chapter or so. Since my habit is to give a book several tries if I have reason to believe it is of worth, SR hasn't struck out yet, but it's damn close.

I winced while reading about what happened when you printed up a bunch of mailing labels for your various apae and then some OEs moved, but my budding guilt trip was shunted aside by the thought that any fan who Plans Ahead deserves what he/she gets.

Enjoyable issue of DR, as always. I'm really getting into your discussions of your experiences with your Osborne. Between you and Eric, when/if I get one of the critters for my very own ("Gee, it just followed me home...") I'll feel as though I'll have whopping head start on learning how to use it.

SUZI STEFL -- JUXTAPROSE JOURNAL #19 -- That's a Joan Hanke-Woods name tag you ran on on your first page, isn't it? I like it.

This, too, is a reaction, not an argument to your response to Marty and Dave's discussion of abortion. Like yourself, I have an emotional tie-in to the subject and I disagree that to the mother abortion and adoption "feel" the same. The knowledge that the person to whom you have given birth is still alive and (assuming a responsible agency was used) is in good hands relieves a great deal of the guilt involved. True, there's no way for the natural mother to know the child's ultimate fate (after x years, is it still alive? In good health? Happy?), but since all of us face the same Ultimate Fate, the best a parent can hope for any child is that they die in their sleep with as little pain or discomfort as possible beforehand and as pleasant a life as possible in the meantime. Yes, guilt abides, but the degree just isn't the same. At least a chance for happiness in life was given; with abortion there's no alternative whatsoever. I throw no stones at those who are convinced that abortion is not the killing of human life, but those who do feel that way and still go through with it earn my unending...well, disgust isn't quite the term, but it's the closest I can come up with at the moment.

I like your term of "Dumb Ethnic" for use in jokes of that ilk. Dean uses "Rumanian", since he knows no one of that nationality. I have met at least one Rumanian, so won't employ it,

and I think D.E. a splendid substitute.

Oh, and thanx for asking Dean what "PBW" means in reference to DaveLo. I couldn't make heads nor tails out of it either.

DaveLo saves few fanzines. Those he does hang onto are stored in part of the upper drawer of his file cabinet. (Definition of "hurt": moving in with a friend of six years standing and discovering that he didn't keep any of your fanzines. *Sigh*) I can intellectually understand his viewpoint, but emotionally, never.

BRUCE ARTHURS -- LAST STAGE FOR SILVERWORLD #11 -- Excellent repro on the Xeroxed photo of the gorillas. What machine did you use that worked so well?

Oh, I see. Your writers' group, which hasn't met in over six weeks, increased its meeting frequency from once a month to every two weeks. Sure. Wanna run that by me again?

One aspect of the Pournelle/Westercon incident disturbs me. A common attitude in fandom is irritation at Mundania for a senseless adhering to rules which cause endless hassles to liberty-loving fan and result in a feeling that rules are meant to be broken. Now it's obvious (since we are reasonable people) that the Guest Membership policy that Westercon used was written with a purpose in mind. But I really doubt if that reason was involved in Pournelle's case. Fans don't generally like Pournelle. Fans don't like the notion that Rank Hath Its Privileges. Ergo, insist on following the letter of the law despite common sense because it involves someone who could be considered as having higher status, and isn't liked anyway. Result: bitterness and acrimony. Pournelle's action cannot be defended, but his anger is understandable (the "alcoholic fog" is beside the point). I am assuming, of course, that his kids had identification or that there was someone around who recognized them (if that was not the case then Jerry had no right at all to be even irritated at the people at registration--it was his welfare that was being watched, not the con's). Fans are human and it is a very human failing to be bitchy and petty to those who are disliked. I think those who were at the registration area that morning (8 A.M! Good Ghod, I just noticed that--thought most cons didn't open up til 10 or so) acted very...human.

It was during E.T.'s "death scene" that my irritation with the film bloomed into full flower. That whole damn scene (*Now dolly in on the kid's face...Make-up!...More glycerine tears for his cheeks!*) was sheer (and since I noticed it) crude manipulation. The plot didn't require it, the character development wasn't advanced; illness would have achieved the same results. We already knew the kid and Spielberg's Doppelganger cared for the alien. The entire bit was string-pulling for string-pulling's sake. My feeling is that it is not a "good stupid movie", but that it's a well-made stupid movie.

Really had to chuckle out loud while reading about the ~~of~~ back-rub session you and Eric and Jutz and Becky had. Brought tears to my eyes. Wish the dickens I'd been able to share the good vibes. "...we're both interested in how the weapons-ban policy for Loscon and Spacecon work out." Spacecon has a policy? Is there another convention of that name beside the one run by Bowers and Hevelin?

MICHAEL SHOEMAKER -- MUGGINS' MUGGLES AND MUBBLEFUBBLES #16 -- "...satire is dead. It requires a recognition of absurdity, but nothing is absurd any longer." Amen, brother FLAPpan, amen.

I've looked, but cannot find, for the reference to the Turing test in Eric's zines (in Mlg 18) to which you were commenting. However, off the top of my head, from what I understand, there is no set style to the questions or answers (unless I'm confusing what the Turing test is, in my mind). All that is necessary is that a person, by asking questions, be unable to tell whether or not a human is giving the answers. In that case, the artificial intelligence (e.g. computer program) could be considered as "human"...though only in the sense of intellect.

Speaking of Language

By William E. Lasher

PREJUDICE AND DIALECTS

Imigrants to this country traditionally believed that one part of the American dream was to speak American English. And when the immigrants themselves had only partial success, still speaking English with a "foreign accent," they expected their children to do better.

Most first-generation Americans, those first born in this country, learn English just as easily as every other native-born American, and so, in just two generations, their families pass from one native language to another.

We have not had the problems found in Canada, with the French-speaking separatists, or in Spain with the Basques. French never really caught on here, and Spanish is not likely to at this late date. The real exceptions in this country have come when a group of immigrants has remained in a ghetto for some time. In that case, the changeover to English is slowed a bit, but it takes place nonetheless. The difference between native-born Americans who live in a ghetto and those who don't is simply that ghetto-dwellers are more likely to be bilingual—speaking both their parents' language and English.

There are really just two special cases of this type in our history, cases where English was not learned rapidly in the first generation. The American Indians, certainly natives if there are any here, were confined to reservations where native languages were spoken in place of English. In a sense, the Indians lived in the ultimate ghetto, and they were slower to learn English because they had no need for it on the reservation. That situation has changed today, but many of the native Indian languages survive perhaps only because of the reservations.

The other special case is that of the slaves who were brought to this country from Africa. These people spoke a multitude of languages when they arrived, so communication was a problem among them as well as with their white masters.

There is evidence that slaves responded to this problem by developing a pidgin English, which served as a means of communications among them. Pidgin is a kind of compromise language, a simplified form of some language like English or French, but with its own grammar and rules.

The slaves were forced into a ghetto, like the Indians, but they had more contact with whites who spoke English.

One theory about the development of the language of the blacks in this country has it that the earliest pidgin became a kind of standard, which gradually moved toward the mainstream of American speech. If that is the case, we might expect some differences even today in black speech, since it derives from a different language with different rules.

Many American blacks speak what is called "Black English," although the term implies a sameness among all its speakers that simply doesn't exist. But there are a few outstanding characteristics of this black dialect. It is an "r-less" dialect like that of white Southerners—"Jimmy Chtuh," for example—and in other ways sounds like a Southern dialect.

Unlike virtually all our other immigrants, blacks cannot simply learn American English and then blend into the culture. Because of their skin color, they find small ghettos wherever they go.

And because of their own feeling that their dialect, like their skin color, is not bad, many blacks have no desire to change the way they speak. Why should they? The only reason they may want to is an economic one: whites still control most of the jobs in this country, and speaking the "right" form of English does increase anyone's chances of employment and promotion.

Black students are required to write standard English and are often expected to speak like their white teachers, yet they must speak their own dialect as well to cope in the ghettos.

We are asking a great deal of them, and that will continue to be true as long as ghettos continue to exist and as long as some whites can say, "I didn't understand a word they said." Both are results of prejudice; both produce a split in our society.

The differences in language will exist as long as the social differences continue.

TEED OFF ABOUT GRAMMAR

One of the dirtiest words in the English language has

more than four letters and can be uttered in the politest company. Although a few people treat it as a kind of religion, many dislike the word "grammar" and all it stands for. I've even been accused of being against grammar, and I teach it. The trouble is that most of us think of grammar in the same way we think of the speed limit: something that's been set up to annoy us because someone else thinks it's important.

The real problem with grammar, as most of us know it, goes back even further than our first-grade teachers; it goes back to the first English grammar books. It's very hard to imagine how these volumes got published without looking at the circumstances, but we might look at golf as an analogy.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* points out that golf was originally a game of the "upper and upper-middle classes," but "a new class of golfer has arisen, requiring a code of rules framed rather more exactly than the older code." It seems that, as the game opened up to more classes of people, there was a demand for "a code of rules that should be lucid on every point."

Much as the description of the rules of golf may seem off the subject, it is a perfect way to look at the rules of grammar. About the same time golf was becoming popular with the English upper classes, the number of middle-class people who could read and write some English was expanding rapidly. These people did not come by the grammar of the upper classes naturally, and they felt the need to learn to speak as the king did. The king himself—James I—probably never gave much thought to English grammar, since his school days were filled with learning Latin grammar. But here was a new class of golfer—only in

this case, the people wanted to speak like the upper classes, not play their game with club and ball.

The first grammar books came along just to fill this need of the many people who were not part of the Establishment but wanted to be. These grammars, like the ones most of us know, took Latin as a model and correctness as a god. No one bothered to point out that neither the king nor his court thought much about correct English. It's just that "a code of rules that should be lucid on every point" seemed to be needed for English as well as for golf. If there was uncertainty about what was correct, someone made a decision anyway.

Nowadays, English grammar has become a full-blown myth. We all go through school thinking it's something we don't have but should get, when in fact we have an English grammar all along. What we may not have is "good grammar," which is what our teachers are trying to pound into our heads.

And all the while,

Prince Charles and Prince William grow up surrounded by good grammar—spoken by their parents, their friends, even their servants. Why didn't our teachers tell us they were grooming us for the presidency when they taught us grammar? Then those of us who didn't want to apply for the job could skip the lessons and go on with the grammar we had.

One reason we've been unsuccessful in teaching grammar—good grammar—to our children is the fact that they don't understand why they should learn it. With other subjects they either know something or they don't: either they can add and subtract, or they can't. With English grammar, the situation is different: everyone has a smattering of English that works almost all the time, so learning a slightly different grammar, a good grammar, may seem a waste of time.

Students feel no real incentive to change the way they speak: they speak the same way their friends do, and anything different would be laughed at. We fail in teaching good grammar because it can only be done with students who are motivated to learn. That explains why so many people change their speech after they leave school, when the chance for a job or a

promotion becomes a motivating factor in their decision.

In the meantime, I teach about all kinds of grammar—the good, the bad, and the ugly. Linguists are concerned with how people talk, not with how someone says they should talk. But I understand how frustrating it must be to teach good grammar to our high school students. It's like teaching the French and Indian War to students who didn't know they had that many Indians in France.

Perhaps good grammar can't be taught at all; perhaps students learn it by exposure—to much of what's on television, to teachers and parents, even to books.

If there is legitimate pressure to learn another form of speech, many people will learn it just by listening and copying. Otherwise, no amount of arm-twisting will affect the language used outside the classroom. After all, it's almost impossible to teach someone the rules of golf unless he's interested in the game.

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PUTTING THINGS IN ORDER

There seem to be some things that just can't be said. These aren't the four-letter words that are taboo for many people, or even certain names like Kurylowicz or Szemerényi, which seem impossible for English speakers to pronounce.

Instead, I'm thinking of things English speakers just don't say because they sound strange or even meaningless. On the one hand, "I and Harry saw the fireworks" is just as grammatical as "Harry and I saw the fireworks," but we hardly ever hear the first sentence: it sounds a bit strange. On the other hand, we have sentences like "The horse raced past the barn died," which strike us as meaningless. But the sentence "The horse carried past the barn died" seems perfectly understandable; why do we have so much trouble with the one and not the other?

The answer lies in the way we process the information we receive when someone else says something. We process "The horse raced past the barn" as a complete sentence before we hear "died," and the result is confusion. "The horse carried past the barn" doesn't sound like a sentence, so we wait for the verb "died." In fact, both are possible sentences in English, but the first one—meaning "The horse which was raced past the barn died"—is so confusing that we just don't use it.

We don't say some things simply because they sound funny: "Throw your mother down the stairs the laundry" is one of these, or "Throw the baby out the window a kiss." There is something about the way we process English that allows us to understand these sentences while chuckling at them. But how would you explain all this to someone

who is trying to learn English as his second language?

One kind of sentence that can't be said is the longest one imaginable. There are ways to keep a sentence going one and on, as in "This is the cat that ate the rat that found the cheese that . . ." But no one ever produces the longest sentence; no one has the time, the endurance, or the memory to do it. The limitations of memory are one reason we can't say sentences like "That that that the price of gas was going up again surprised Jerry seemed strange to Henry was reported in the paper." Yes, there is a better way to say that, even in one sentence: "It was reported in the paper that it seemed strange to Henry that it surprised Jerry that the price of gas was going up again."

We don't talk or write like this very often, but the fact is, we simply can't talk

like the first sentence at all. Sentences beginning with "that that that" are beyond our ability to produce or understand because they demand more from our short-term memory than it can deliver. Even a sentence like "That she finished sixth was surprising" is less likely to be said than the simpler "It was surprising that she finished sixth."

Another kind of sentence we just don't say goes something like this: "The plastic, red, old, beautiful pen is lost." There's really nothing wrong with that except that it doesn't sound as good as "The beautiful, old, red, plastic pen is

lost." It seems that as we process English we expect the least noun-like word, "beautiful," to come first, followed in order by increasingly noun-like words: "old," "red," and "plastic." Finally, we expect to hear the noun "pen" just before the verb "is." Any other order produces a kind of queer effect and may even make the sentence harder to understand.

As neat as these explanations are, imagine how difficult they would be for a foreigner learning English. How does he know which words are more or less noun-like? We know them intuitively, it

seems, but it's hard to explain that to someone else.

And what about these sentences: "Chuck threw a party" and "Chuck caught a cold"? Someone who doesn't know the language very well may think these are comments about softball, with Chuck throwing and catching like that.

There is more complexity to processing language than meets the ear, and it affects what we can say as well as what we can't. Since there are at least as many impossible sentences as possible ones, we all must be pretty good at understanding the difference.

ET TU, SIDNEY?

In a recent column Sydney J. Harris had this to say about "correctness" in language: "Correctness is important not in itself, but because once a language is allowed to degenerate, accurate communication is blocked or perverted."

Leaving aside the idea of correctness for the moment, what about allowing a language to "degenerate"? We read about language "degenerating" or "decaying" so often that we begin to believe it actually happens that way. Languages must get sick and die just like people.

Let's begin with the terminal cases. What happens when a language dies, and how do we know when it happens? Several hundred years ago Gothic, a Germanic language related to English, died quietly, with none of the fanfare that accompanied the passing of the passenger pigeon. Since the death of Gothic, several American Indian languages have died, also unheralded. If the Basque language in Spain were to die tomorrow, we would be surprised to see a headline that read, "Basque Dies," with a line informing us, "Goes quietly, with great dignity." In fact, only a few people would notice, since the death of a language comes when its last native speaker dies. The headline would more likely read, "Last Basque Dies," and it would be on Page 11.

How do we know when a language is sick or diseased? Is it true that communication can be "blocked and perverted," like the sinuses with a common cold? Take the case of one well-known dead language, Latin. Although it lives on in all the modern Romance languages, Latin itself has been embalmed and preserved rather well in Classical and Christian writings. There is no evidence that Latin died of blockage or

perversion, or even of degeneration: the Roman Empire fell long before the language succumbed. Only when we try to use Latin in running a nuclear reactor or a computer will we find that it suffers from the one fatal disease in a language: it is incapable of changing with the times. Since it has no native speakers, it has no mechanism for change.

Perhaps what Harris means to attack when he speaks of "blocked" communication is the use of slang, something English speakers are very adept at. In fact, French also has problems with slang, as does any language with many speakers who are literate. One way of defining slang is to say that it is spoken language which differs noticeably from the standard written language. But the very word "slang" has negative connotations, suggesting at least a symptom of some disease: "He uses slang" is a bit like "He sneezes constantly," either case to be avoided if possible.

Is the use of slang a symptom or a cause of language "degeneration"? There is no record of any language having died for its slang, or even of serious injury caused by such usage. Slang either comes to be a part of the language, or it passes away unmourned.

Above all, a statement like Harris' suggests, what must be avoided is the ever-present danger of "perverting" the language, which implies that we should avoid using language creatively at all. Certainly referring to an apartment complex inhabited by "swinging singles" as the Herpes Complex should be avoided at all costs. Puns are certainly perverse, and should be left only to those who can handle them. Other possibilities for perversions abound. Referring to the stock market as if it were a living thing is likewise to be avoided: "The market smelled blood

this week, and it would not be denied."

What we have here, in short, is a prescription for disaster: use the language only as it has been used, change nothing, and it will survive. But these are precisely the conditions under which a language will not survive. Change is crucial to language; cliches are deadly. The degeneration of language, its corruption and perversion are myths that recur annually, like the oriental flu. The surgeons who, like Harris, wish to operate on the language—to excise "cool chicks" along with "funky foxes"—will find that, just in case the surgery is successful, the patient will die.

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floor (oops) to find my roommate Bill Cavin (who also was guest of honor; fan variety). Briefly chatted with various folk until I located Bill, had him open the room so I could park my baggage, and then found Martha Beck. Her room was down on the 2nd floor and was stocked with munchies and coffee, so we went down there to visit in a more relaxed atmosphere than the con suite offered. Lynn Hickman and Ray Beam (old fen and tru) came by and they, us, and the Sims sat back and breathed awhile before leaping into the fray. Martha asked me out to dinner (which I gladly accepted) and just past 5:30 we moved toward the registration area. I had a scratchboard to put into the art show, all of us were mildly anxious to get registered and gather our program books and other paperwork ConFusion usually handed out, Rog and Pat needed to meet the folks they were dining with (Ray and Lynn and another o.f.& Fred Prophet had decided to join Martha, me and Martha's roomie, Mary Price), so we all mosied down to the main

floor. Registration finally opened while I was signing up in the art show room, and by the time I emerged, there were nearly a hundred fen waiting to sign in, get their books, and find out what the dickens was scheduled for that evening. Some Austin in '85 bidders came by and handed out gingersnap cookies formed in the shape of Texas to those in line (I brought mine home for DaveLo).

The Plymouth Hilton's restaurant, The Jolly Miller, has excellent food, among the best at any hotel I've dined at. I feasted on Chicken Oscar this time, but after their fantastic salad bar, several slices of home-made breads, and a southern comfort, there was no room for dessert (well another Southern Comfort took its place...). We waddled to the main program room in time to catch half of Mike Gould's song session (filker extroinaire), M.C. Ted Reynolds' Intro of the Notables talk, and then Bill Bowers' Annual ConFusion speech (or was he shilling for the custom T-shirt makers?). We wandered about for half an hour before the World Premiere of FAANS, Larry Tucker and his group of mad fans had been videotaping the darn thing for over a year at various conventions and most of Midwest fandom played at least bit parts. For an amateur production, featuring often drunk, hungover and/or stoned cast members, it came out damn well. The whole crew got a standing ovation afterward. The featured party for the evening was a reception (across the hall from the con suite) for cast, crew and friends, so we all marched upstairs to start off the night. Martha, in the meantime had offered me a mattress of my own in the room she and Mary shared, so I transferred my luggage to their place, ran across Suzi Stefl (who said to meet her in the consuite at midnight to start The Poker Game), and went back to congratulate the FAAN cast (I promised I wouldn't wash my hand after Rog Sims shook it, but I lied) and then spend an hour or so going back and forth waiting for Suzi to show up. Lord knows what time the poker game broke up, but we partied until the wee, wee hours, crashed for a few more and then woke up to/^{do} it all again another day.

I can see my room's running out. Compress! After coffee (bless Martha!) and a check-out of the con suite, I wandered downstairs for the "Will the Real Fan Guest of Honor..." panel (ill-attended and off-the-wall as usual) partied in the con suite, went back downstairs for the after-banquet speeches, met Jim Hansen (long-time friend seen for about 10 minutes the year before, after a stretch of nearly five years) and dragged him along to meet everyone. Partied, played poker, and partied more until the larger hours, ran downstairs to wash and change clothes before Martha and Mary checked out of their room, switched luggage back to Cavin's room, went down to the lobby, met Jim again, drove over to his place for a scrumptious breakfast (at 2 P.M.?) of fresh apple pancakes with walnuts and a three-hour slide show of Grand Canyon Photos and fan snapshots, back to the hotel for more partying and poker, crashed at 4:45, up at 7:20 *gasp*, breakfast, lunch and home by 8:15...fun, loved every minute, and wished cons would last a month.