

in for his clinic until 1:00. Why don't you go get some lunch and come back then?" I could hear the crunch as I reflexively ground my teeth. "Then why didn't they give me a 1:00 appointment?" I asked. He shrugged, didn't have anything to do with that sort of thing.

The girl at the receptionist's desk gave me directions to the hospital cafeteria, so I trudged off to get lunch (after pausing long enough to phone Davel and tell him I wouldn't be home as soon as we'd expected). No need to relate the problems involved with getting food without bankrupting myself. Suffice it to say that I reported back to the Ortho Clinic at one o'clock, belching from a greasy cheeseburger and psuedo-onion rings. The girl, an entirely different person from that morning, looked at me blankly when I said I was returning to see Dr. Bridwell. "Where's your appointment slip?" she asked. I sighed and told her the same story as I had the morning receptionist. She shook her head. "You have to have an appointment slip. No one sees the doctor without one. Go to Room 103 and see his secretary" (Ah! First clue that the receptionist wasn't the one who had called me!). Room 103 was a short walk down the hall, and held four desks, only one of which was occupied. "Are you Dr. Bridwell's secretary?" I asked. The woman shook her head. "She's just left for lunch." I told her my tale of woe. She frowned. A lot of people frowned at me that day... I gave as good as I got. "No one sees Dr. Bridwell without an appointment slip. We always mail patients an appointment slip." I repeated my story, adding that the person who had phoned me had given me the choice of two dates, and since I'd taken the earlier one, probably there hadn't been enough time to mail me a slip. Again came the slow, metronomic shaking of her head. "We don't do things that way here," she said firmly. I shrugged. It had been done, and I wasn't about to be told differently. She sighed and lifted the phone. "Is this perhaps something to do with the Rehabilitation Bureau?" she asked. I brightened. "I am dealing with them, through a Mr. Leugers," I offered. "We always send paperwork through the mail in those cases," she muttered. My stomach churned some more, my teeth lost a few more millimeters of enamel. She punched a number into the phone and spoke to someone. Smiling condescendingly, she looked back to me. "The X-ray department says they'e all through with you. You can go home." I stopped frowning and began glaring. "I was told to come-in-and-see-Dr.-Bridwell" I enunciated slowly and clearly, "I came in at the time I was told to, and was told by the doctor to come back at one o'clock. I am here, and I want to see the doctor." I could feel my face reddening, but I managed to prevent myself from shouting. The woman sighed and shook her head. "We'll send you an appointment slip in the mail," she smiled patronizingly. (Poor dumb patient. You don't know any better.) Unbidden tears were rushing to my eyes. "Look," I tried to reason, "I didn't call for this appointment, you people phoned me. I've been here for over three hours, I've spent nearly five dollars on bus fare and food and I have no money to waste. I saw a doctor this morning who said Dr. Bridwell wanted to see me and told me to return at one o'clock. I am here, and I WANT TO SEE BRIDWELL!" (I think I was shouting by the end of that statement. I am not the most patient of people...) I could tell by her eyes that a mental door had slammed. "Go home," she stated firmly. "An appointment slip will be sent in the mail."

I got up, frustration held me in check, and I stopped halfway to the door to look back at her, pleadingly. It was a good thing I had argued. One of the clerks from Ortho popped her head in the door. "Dr. Bridwell does want to see her. We've got all her paperwork in the clinic," Relief washed over me, my knees felt weakened. Giving the woman I'd struggled with a triumphant look, I followed the clerk to Ortho.

Immediately I was shown to an examination room, where I sat down and tried to calm myself by reading what was left of the latest issue of F&SF (most of it had been read that morning while waiting and at lunch). About ten minutes later a smiling, blond-haired doctor, wearing a knee-length white lab coat with "Dr Bridwell" embroidered on the breast, came in. I won't give a line-by-line recitation of our conversation--I was so keyed up by then I can only recall it that way with difficulty--but the crux of the matter was that Dr. Weiseltier--remember his name? Yeah, Old Asshole--had mentioned my case to him, and he, being in charge of the University's "Scoliosis Program" (!?! This was something new!) had wanted to check my records. After doing so, and taking yet another set of X-rays

(they couldn't find the ones from last year at all, and Bridwell needed to see the bending ones to ascertain the flexibility in my spine), thankfully at No Charge since the old ones had been checked out to Ortho several months earlier (the nurse suspected Dr. Weiseltier had them still, but didn't seem to be really concerned about them). After inspecting everything, and having me go through an odd set of "exercises" (jumping up to touch the rather low ceiling--I thought it would be cinch, but I couldn't reach it--walking to and fro on first my toes then my heels, squatting down like a baseball catcher--done not well because I have bad knees), he said that he thought I was an ideal candidate for a one-step procedure, rather than the two-stage surgery that had been mentioned so far. It would mean a shorter hospital stay, but otherwise was basically the same. However, in looking over the X-rays, he thought the bones "looked on the light side." Was I having menstrual irregularities? I snickered. No, since I'd had a hysterectomy in 1965. He asked when was the last time I had had a gynecological check-up. As I didn't have anything left but a single ovary, I told him--rather patiently I thought--I hadn't seen a gynecologist since 1966. What was there for him to check? Well, to him it looked as if I had osteoporosis (??), the leaching-out of calcium in the bones many females develop after menopause. He'd make an appointment for me at the Medical Sub-specialty clinic, or Ob-Gyn, to see if that was the case and if I'd need estrogen therapy prior to surgery. "The bones won't heal right if there's not enough calcium in them," he said. "And you know we're going to crunch these three," he pointed to my X-rays, "up pretty well. You have to knit them strongly or the surgery won't hold." I closed my eyes and sighed. More delay. I pointed out that it had been nearly a year since I had first come into this clinic in hopes of finding something to help me tolerate sitting at a desk all day so I could go back to work. I had been told that I would be crippled without this surgery we were discussing, and that I would need to have it reasonably soon. Also that I had been given tentative dates several times in the past six months, and that I wasn't sure how much more my nerves, much less my weakened financial status, could stand. Bridwell was sympathetic, but he needed to know more about my calcium level. I found out he wasn't in contact with Mr. Leugers, told him about what had been going on with the OBVR, and he said that I should find out if they would cover it, but if the bureau wouldn't, he saw no problem with getting the county to do so. I don't know if my doubt was that evident, but he repeated that. If OBVR couldn't pay for it, he'd get aid from the county.

When we were through, I went back to the receptionist and asked for an appointment in a month, as Bridwell had told me to. "Go to Room 103," she said. I did, and this time Bridwell's secretary was at her desk. It seems that she had been the one who had called me the Friday before, but hadn't noted it anywhere except for that slip of paper the a.m. clinic receptionist had found. I dunno, maybe she had thrown it away. It never seemed to reappear anywhere. I questioned the bill I had been given by the p.m. receptionist. Did I have to pay two \$20 fees? The secretary shook her head. "Ignore it," she said. "Dr. Bridwell wants you down as a morning clinic patient." (I'm not acquainted with the full concept of morning and afternoon clinics, but the morning ones seem to run to welfare patients and the afternoon ones are "private" patients--at least the log books are entirely different, and even the name of the headings are different, one being University of Cincinnati Hospital, and the other Christian Holmes School of Medicine.) I got my new appointment, slip officially filled out and everything (the woman I'd spoken with earlier pointedly refused to look in my direction...I wonder why?), and left. Got home at 4:35 and generally collapsed. A whole day and virtually nothing accomplished.

A week and a half later I visited Medical Sub-Specialties and saw a Dr. Webb, an endocrinologist. She had spoken with the Resident from the morning clinic, but I had to tell her everything from scratch as the usual hospital glitches had occurred and my charts had been misplaced *Sigh* She ordered a battery of blood tests, and I'm to see her for the results this Friday, with my appointment with Dr. Bridwell coming the following Tuesday. We shall see what we shall see...

Incidentally. I had been told to gain weight back last July; 12 pounds worth. I gasped when I was weighed in at MedSubSpec (aren't abbreviations fun?). 143 lbs. Now I have to lose as much as I've gained...you'd think being on the medical treadmill would have taken care of any excess poundage, wouldn't you?

Sorry to bore you (3 stencils worth!) with details like that, but I'm doing so probably more for my own benefit than anything else--I want to remember what all this was like a few years further down the path. And setting this down may also go far to explain to some of you just why it is that I'm not my formerly cheerful self and just why I don't want to repeat everything when people ask "How's it going lately?" This merry-go-round I've been on for the past year has really beaten me down. Having a somewhat depressive personality, in the vein of "expect the worst so you won't be surprised", and having a lot of "the worst" to deal with lately, I find myself withdrawing from contact with other people. I don't phone. I don't write. About all I do is read a lot, play solitaire when I can't con DaveL into yet another hand of gin, and spend an inordinate amount of time in planning meals, comparing prices in the various store-brochures and fliers, and thumb through recipe books (I even wasted three days indexing a Craig Clairborne recipe book DaveL had gotten as a freebie with a carton of cigarettes one time. Its 100+ recipes were useless indexed as they were. Would you believe "A Decidedly Delicious Way to Roast Beef" being set under the "A's" and nowhere else? Now they're set down by main and sub-main ingredients. Maybe I'll use the darn thing now...)

Something came up that is extremely awkward for me to cope with. I think I mentioned in some past issue that a "fund" had been set up by some well-meaning but anonymous friends, and that Davel and I had reacted quickly to nip it in the bud, as it were. Well, Joni Stopa sent me a check for \$50 a while ago, with a note attached saying that people had sent her money, she hadn't been able to send it back, and had put it in a savings account. Knowing how strapped we were/are for cash, she was sending it to me. Two weeks later I got another \$50 check. Two weeks after that we received a box with two casual shirts for Davel, a robe and a sweater for me, and a wristwatch (which had come out of its box and had a broken crystal, though I hasten to add it runs fine despite that damage) from Joni. I haven't written or phoned to say "Thanks", and I know I should have. The more time goes by, the worse I feel about it, but I don't know how to express what I'm feeling. I realize that this is not the way to perform social niceties like that, but with the apa-deadline forcing me to sit down at the typer, as it is, this is probably the only way I can get myself to bring the subject up. Joni, I'm begging your indulgence in this. I'm as grateful as I can be, but I'm totally at a loss for words. Forgive me, please.

In a lighter vein, we've been getting weird Anonymous Gifts, from Australia, which I deem as being from Eric Lindsay--two packets of "Vegemite", a fermented yeast product which Aussies spread on bread (and which, I heard on T.V., is being introduced in this country even as I write), and a "poster" from some outfit called the Imperial British Conservative Party, or The Wizard's Cosmological Research and Development Centre, Christchurch, N.Z. (take your pick, both are mentioned. one on each side) that displays the World as it "ought" to be shown, with the South Pole on top rather than on the bottom. Tongue-in-cheek (I most sincerely hope so, at least), the written material covers the writers' gripes about the inherent injustice in using maps which which "favor" we who live in the Northern Latitudes. Gee, Eric, thanks...I think. (We tried the Vegemite; DaveL likes it, I think it "bites" too much but might be fine if eaten along with something else on the bread--cheese or jam or just about anything).

Enough. Time's short. Best to get onto the Mailing Comments....

[illegible]

BERNADETTE BOSKY -- TO ALL INTENSIVE PURPOSES -- Welcome! So glad t'meet ya, and all that. Your intro-zine was very impressive-- definitely among the largest debuting issues we've had. Does this bode well for FLAP's page-count?

You're not alone in your lack of experience with ~~the joys of~~ publishing genzines. There are a number of other members whose only fanac is apa-ac and/or conventions. In fact two, Becky and Jutz, have published nothing but FLAPzines and serve as our resident ~~mixing~~ ~~gals~~ neos. A swift guesstimation shows 12 (Arthur, Dave Locke, Eric, Dean, David Hulan, Roytac, me, Bowers, Bruce, Dave Langford, Pauline, and Mike) who I'm sure "pubbed their ish", and two "well-maybe's" (Lon and Joni. Lon ran a zine, RALLY, some ~~ago~~ years back which leaned toward genzine status, and Joni has done fanac since being a wee tad which might have included a zine besides her letterhacking

and artwork.)

Your entry to fandom was via E*O*D? The only contact with that apa I've had is a few issues of Ben Indick's zine, IBID--the less said about that the better. Badly-written fan fiction has no comparison to badly-written horror-fan-fiction... (I always felt at a loss when Ben would send me a copy of a zine to which the only polite response is silence.) I assume that IBID was/is not representative of E*O*D's general quality.

Which Chicago suburb do you hail from? I was born in Chitown, raised in South Holland, attended school in Harvey, and lived in Dolton for a bit over four years before moving south to Beecher in eastern Will County in '67. I lived again in Chicago (near Clark & Diversey) for four months before moving in with DaveLo in California in 1977.

Fannish Godfathers do come in handy. If it weren't for Buck Coulson I never would have gotten into fandom or attended my first convention. I presume there are Godmothers around--in fact Martha Beck's and Joni Stopa's names come to mind as I write this--but most of the fans I've talked with had male mentors during their Initial Contact Stages.

You do "cooking & baking when the kitchen is clean..."? There's a story in there, somewhere. Who has clean-up detail in your arrangement? And who cooks and/or bakes when the kitchen is dirty? Do you eat out a lot? Oh, there's all sorts of questions that arise from an off-hand statement like that...

With your feet planted firmly in two camps, faaandom and litcrit, it's no wonder you feel somewhat disconcerted. I'm glad you seem to be working out a viable interface. The worst combo I could think of would be sercon/comix fandom, but yours is darn close to being two antithetical interests. Good luck in maintaining your balance.

RE yct Roytac: I've not only poured liquids from thermoses while driving, I've made sandwiches (bread, butter, mustard, lunchmeat) for myself (only once though--usually meals are packed in advance). Of course, on the level and straight stretches of Midwestern Interstates, that's not as big a deal as it may sound.

I've always preferred plinking to target shooting--more spontaneity to it and the target moves so unpredictably. The two times I tried target shooting I became bored after 20 rounds or so. You locate the bulls-eye and then you hit it. *yawn* Not having shot a gun for over 15 years, I don't know if my natural "eye" is still with me, but when it was, hitting targets was too easy to keep up my interest. Nowadays I suspect it's all but impossible to find a place to go plinking--though I'd guess that Kentucky, across the river from CinCity would be more lenient in that area than California was, or even Illinois.

RE yct DaveLo about Jean Weber's article. "If you can't get it up, don't worry, there are plenty of other things you can do to please her," has an awfully callous tone to it. How much better it could've scanned worded something like this: "If you can't get it up, don't worry; there's plenty of other things you both can enjoy." It's too, too one-sided as it stands. I wondered if I was reading a primer on mutually-enjoyable relationships or a military training manual.

RE yct Arthur: Do you mean to say there was a principle to your selection of items for the Glossary? Why, I thought it ~~was only a random selection of archaic terms~~ only a random selection of archaic terms. Next time I'll pay closer attention...

RE yct Suzi: calling oneself a "groupie" is just a fannish schtik. Some fans who hang around with other, better-known, fans were called that, with full scornful context, and some other fans--who felt the first bunch were being unfairly maligned--labelled themselves as "groupies" (often to lesser-known fans; e.g. Bill Bowers being a Lynn Parks Groupie) in a sort of reactive nose-thumbing gesture. Since then it's just something to say or do as is the case with any other schtik.

I've given blood twice, too. Last time was just before going up to the Stopa's for Wilcon. Dumb planning. I wasn't ill from the experience, but I was definitely tired and feeling a bit weak. Not in the best of shape to face 4 days of partying. I've never gotten around to donating again. No particular reason, just thoughtlessness. For awhile I'd considered selling blood,

or rather plasma. But when Al curry showed everyone his black-n-blue arms from the poor handling of donors (sellers?) at the Center here in town at last year's Midwestcon, I changed my mind. They're too damned clumsy at that place!

RE yct me: considering fandom as a family is dependent on one's own viewpoint I would presume, but how would doing so be considered in the light of its productivity? Do all of your relationships have to "produce" in order to be thought valid? In any case, there are a number of fans besides myself who think of fandom as "family"--the first I heard of it was during Torcon II in '73. Milt Stevens was comparing family/community analogs of fandom and though I think he finally wound up in the Fandom-As-Community camp, I preferred his reasoning to support the Family viewpoint. My Family (@ 1980 (?) Dotti Stefl--I think) consists of a humungous number of people, some of whom I haven't yet recognized as kin, some I wish weren't related, and others distant but still traceable on the family tree (it all begins with Bob Tucker, y'see.) Sure, it's not a hard-n-fast analogy, it's got more than a touch of schtik to it, but, still and all...there are people here closer to me than my mother, brother, children, or any of the Best Friends of school days. I've older aunts and uncles galore, a slew of kissin' cousins, quite a few sisters and brothers, a new generation (on stage or in the wings), a past generation (whose numbers all too sadly mount as time goes by), and even a few black sheep that embarrass me to own up to. See? Almost like a Real family...

Ah, but ET was clumsy in its manipulations, or I wouldn't have noticed it while watching the film.

If an abortion is being considered in a bond-couple situation, why then, yes, a mutual discussion should/would occur. But at the bottom line it is the woman who decides whether to climb atop that surgical table, and in most instances (assuming from the data I've been told by acquaintances) it's the woman's decision from Square One, no viable relationship being in existence when the event occurred. I find the statement "that's what building a life together is about" a bit off the wall in this context, although I do understand what you meant.

When DaveLo and I lived in CA our fanden had two desks, two typers, two lamps, etc. Here we have one desk, one typer, and two people who prefer peace-n-quiet (maybe the bloom has worn off over the years?) to interruption in train-of-thought while trying to compose. I never wrote except in isolation (or at least while whoever I was with was asleep in another part of the house) barring that period we lived in California. Also, here, I have to make DaveLo move out of his seat in order to gain access to the typer. That's a hassle for territorial me. (He doesn't mind--or says he doesn't--but I do.)

There are a ~~plenty~~ ~~small~~ number of fen who like doing one-shots, but you're the first I've encountered who admit to reading the darn things with enjoyment. Unique attitude, indeed. (Too bad that word can't have a superlative added to it--if ever it deserved one...)

Some people are tone deaf. I'm poem deaf. Apologies, but I read them without really understanding any of them (Well, HOUSEHOLDING seemed cute to me).

ARTHUR HLAVATY -- PUTRID VAPORS 17 -- RE yct Roytac: I somewhat share your regard for the works of Gene Wolfe. I like them, enough to keep on reading them at least, but I keep feeling there's something even deeper, somehow better, that eludes me. The short story "Fifth Head of Cerebus" came the closest to being "conquered" by me (or perhaps "grokked" is more what I mean).

Lovely wordage about Taral in yct Joni. Should we send a copy to him so he can have his worst/best fears realized? Naw, it's the uncertainty that keeps him going...

Funny. Eric was saying much the same thing as you quote in yct him while taking "immense swigs" of some vile, off-brand Tequila during Spacecon this past July. It amazed everyone (particularly those of us who sipped and agreed: it was undrinkable...)

RE yct Shoemaker: I read FOUNDATION'S EDGE recently and agree with your assessment. Mike Resnick does too--only he feels that comment to be an insult. Reasoning, sort of, that the man's writing should have improved so

much in the intervening years that to so closely copy the style/tone employed in a book from that long ago displays a lack of professional growth...or something like that. (I don't agree with that at all!)

RE yct me: I was teasing Bowers with that comment about Piers Anthony and his OUTWORLDS tirades. It just happened to pop up in a comment addressed to you.

While it's true that "Some people make the mistake of assuming that popular taste is infallibly bad," (after all, how else did "vulgar" acquire its current meaning?) trendy or faddish things aren't always part of "popular culture", in its fullest sense at least. Lacoste shirts, designer jeans, etc. were leaped upon by trendies--not Joe Doakes and kin from the steel mills (though they did purchase similar versions when the market produced cheaper items). And if Joe Doakes et al did begin wearing such things, the trendies dropped them like a hot Pet Rock. Trendies are generally snobs, and have the financial assets to keep themselves above the mundane taste. Elitism is more than a small part of being a trendy and if a "fave rave" item does become truly popular, then it's dropped as being too common for words.

-- DILLINGER FELIC #26 -- If the tearstains weren't so obvious on the page, I would've laughed even louder than I did when reading about your encounters with computer dealers. You make it all sound as funny as Lon Atkins talking about being out of a job (and that's a compliment!).

Why not give the old LOOMPANICS address to that Canadian who inquired. Wouldn't the P.O. forward mail?

I recently read DEAD EYE DICK and found it to be the poorest Vonnegut I've read yet. Not only was it slow, simplified to the Nth degree, and dull, but it vaguely disturbed me when he'd make some broad-brush assumptions that ran awfully close to stating that if it's impossible for every single individual to be/appreciate/enjoy/understand a thing, then said thing has no excuse for existing. I mean, really! No individual taste permitted at all? Combined with his Basic-Vocabulary-Understandable-To-Everyman/WHOP/XXXX/YYAA/XX/BBB, that attitude leads to a book that practically panders to the lowest common denominator--who, since most people don't read books anyway, most likely wouldn't see it in the first place. I do hope Vonnegut rids himself of that mindset...

How strange and marvelous it is that you, a Nyawk boy, can see a person from Idaho, first encountered in Illinois, at a limited-interest club meeting in North Carolina, where such person was stopping off while en route to Antarctica. Don't know why that tickles my sensawonda, but it does.

My assessment of Suzi's Big Boy letter was akin to yours. I nodded and tsk-tsked while reading it, but, really, what can the recipients of it actually do? At this late date and far remove--nothing.

GRUMP ALERT As a person who disapproves of abortion, I'm getting more than a tad weary of having all the attitudes I don't have attributed to me because of that one which I do have. I am not against people "fucking & getting away with it", I'm all for having fun in any responsible way you can. I'm for birth control by any means (though I.U.D. bothers me as being borderline abortion, though being borderline, I'm inclined to go along with it), and feel that birth control info and devices should be readily accessible--to everyone--and cheap (if not free) as possible. I think sterilization should be offered almost as freely. I'm against war and the death penalty. I'm a mish-mash of viewpoints from dozens of different camps, as are most people. Taking one facet of "political" belief and extrapolating so much else is sloppy thinking IMHO. To do so once, twice or occasionally to make a point in a discussion is one thing, but you do so almost every time the subject comes up and it's irritating. It's like assuming that all football fans are hulking, slavering dunces who feel Might makes Right, Killing-n-Crushing are fun, and Dallas Cowgirls epitomize the perfection of Amurric'n Womanhood. *END of GRUMP*

Your Russian/Andropov puns were eminently groanable.

Note Eric's zine for the difficulties met when trying to rent a car when you don't have a credit card. (I think they finally gave him one because they

couldn't figure out any way that he could take ^{it} home with 'im.)

Marvelous FALWELL/ASSHOLE
graphic-pun. Bet you smirked all the while it was printing...

In the main, I don't think the people who buy books and magazines about guns (Hi, Dean!) are the ones society should fear, no more than the ones who buy porn run around raping everyone they meet. Nice to see you follow that same sensible line of thought.

Sounds like you had a full, interesting year. May you have an endless list of 'em!

MIKE HORVAT -- WIDDERSHINS -- This has got to be the weirdest on-again-off-again apa-relationship I've heard of. Hope you stick around this time. I've enjoyed what you've done for FLAP so far.

This zine was written during a Tankcon? I'd be curious to know what the impetus was. ~~WTF? CARLA LEVETT GILLY~~ ~~CONFESSION~~ It seems odd to imagine writing an apazine in the midst of a party--even the leisurely, low-key, week-long affairs as I recall you describing in Slanapa.

RE yct
Suzi: oh yes, indeed! Jonathan's "coming along". Bill Cavin's going to start breaking him in as a gofer next year--maybe this one. Kid's big enough to tote ice now, almost. He's going to be one big hunk when he (Ha!) Grows Up.

"Having a baby certainly changes a person's life." That statement should be awarded the prize as Understatement of the Mailing, if not the apa-year. You're a Deep One, Mike...

I'm somewhat saddened by your final paragraph. *Oh well* To each their own concept of right and wrong, I suppose. It just didn't fit my mental picture of you.

DAVE LOCKE -- VIEW FROM UNDER A 60 WATT LAMP' #8 -- I imagine you noted while reading THE INNER SOURCE that Seigel, the psychiatrist who espouses hypnosis as a treatment for everything from asthma to ~~hysteria~~ ~~anxiety~~ aerophobia, feels somewhat negatively about the existence of Multiple Personality. Called them examples of "overactive imaginations" or some-such term. (He had met, and hypnotized Sybil, she of the 16+ personalities.) Was there a tie-in between your mention of Seigel's book and your take-off on the idea of Multiple Personalities, or am I just drawing parallels where none exist?

There must be some Brilliantly Witty commentary to make about your Internal Family, but I'll stick to my stodgy, literal-minded sort in saying that I found more than a grain of truth to your listing ^{of} alternate selves and I found myself nodding with familiarity instead of chuckling as much as I should've. Hey, it can be rough living with so many weirdos around here!

RE yct Pauline about the episode of 60 MINUTES which involved the NRA. Like you, I don't agree with the Ban All Guns crowd, and also like you I know there are a "lot of idiots out there with guns." It's one of those mental impasses Hlavaty wrote about a mailing or two ago. Main stumbling block is that people are quite willing to have guns kept away from the other dangerous jerks Out There, but who with a gun considers him/herself to be an idiot? So far there's no way to prevent guns from getting into the hands of the *ahem* dangerous or irresponsible elements of our society (ghod, that sounds so pompous!) and I have no notion of a way to draw up a workable law or system which grants a modicum of sense to the current situation. The NRA types seem to completely ignore the incredible number of gun-related deaths in this country, the Ban All Guns group ignore reality. No one has managed to ban anything from this country once it was in wide-spread use (well, it was close in the case of some drugs, like cocaine) and guns won't go away like magic, they'll just go underground.

Marty is employing a familiar flip-flop of position in being against the spread of Federal Bureacracy in the case of education but apparently being all for it in the case of banning abortion. It's an easy thing to do without realizing it, and I think most people have done so on occasion without deliberately trying to obscure issues. It mostly depends on whether you're for or against various things. If

you support an action, you want the Guvmint to keep its damn nose outta your affairs, if you're against something, you want the Guvmint to Do More to aid the cause. It's natural. It's understandable. It's human. It's also frustrating as all hell!

I see in

yct Suzi that you're still in the midst of that "all books in one carton" fantasy. I also noted that you almost immediately afterward culled three books from your "collection" and added them to mine--hoping to make your claim true in a year or two? (HHOK)

RE your "aside" before commenting on my zine. This is my Irish coming out. Piss up a rope, Locke! Now I feel better. As for the comments themselves: a) your eyes are browner than mine. Guess why?; b) it takes more than one box to pack all your books; and c) I am not including books which used to be yours but are now in my accumulation.

I don't "bait mundanes" and kinda resent the fact that you would assume I would. No, the Fondlecon occurred where it did because it was the only area in the hotel with a large number of couches and chairs in on place, and it had a handy "railing" arrangement that could be used for sitting when the more usual seats were filled.

The anticipation of interruptions is undoubtedly one of my major hang-ups, but there are others. The main fact to consider though is that it's my problem, no one else's. Certainly not yours. My solution has been to simply not write--or draw much for that matter. After reading THE INNER SOURCE I'm beginning to wonder if I need to enter some sort of "trance state" in order to do any "creative" (dislike that term) work. At any rate, I know that when I'm in a certain working mind set and an interruption occurs, there's an almost physical "pop", like a bubble bursting and no matter how I try I cannot regain that same state, with the result that whatever I'm working on is severely affected or left undone.

"Stay warm" you say in closing. *Sigh* If only it were possible. After these past dozen or so weeks of wishing there were some way to tone down the heat, it's so damn chilly in here my fingers are stiff almost all the time. Feast or famine, as usual.

ERIC LINDSAY -- MISSED MAILINGS -- Glad to hear you got your ~~WIZARDRYZZZ~~ ~~WIKK~~ ~~PIZZA~~ computer boards home okay. I really had doubts it would be as simple as you said it would be--particularly after the guard at Cinti's airport had you open up everything and watched with a cocked eyebrow and I then considered the even more-rigorous airport checks you had yet to encounter. Glad those doubts were in vain...

That sounds ominous..."if I recover my financial footing from the trip." Were things that terrible when you got back? Do I assume this to be a wrong time to dun you for dues or tap you for a loan?

When did I ever try to "force" you to try White Castles? Honestly folks, it was always only friendly persuasion ~~XXXXXX THE BUBBLES~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ ~~AND SEEN TO WORK WELL~~.

The problem in recommending Midwestern small conventions to Becky and Jutz is that it'd cost them a small fortune to attend any! While the benefits are many, the expense is greater. Cost/benefit ratio really suffers!

Hoo-boy, is that ever a familiar problem. When one's reading vocabulary exceeds one's oral vocabulary it is so easy to fall into that "shut up lest people think you're even dumber than you are" mode when around "educated" people (even fans). A few drinks (okay, a lot) -- to loosen inhibitions -- helps on that score, but then the danger looms that drink too much and you can't pronounce even the words you know well. *Sigh*

That micro-elite you demonstrated looks neat. Now hang onto it, care for it, ~~PER XX DAILY~~ and maybe someday RealSoonNow we can discuss prices...

DEAN GRENNELL -- OUSTITI -- Gee, Dean, you didn't give enough time for everyone to comment on your zine. Apa-time is of the time-binding sort, y'know. Dave Wixon is the Prime Perpetrator of Living in the Past (though he is caught up as of now). I mean, I gave you better'n half a page of comments, Jutz a line (well, can't win 'em all), Suzi a third of a page, Arthur 3 lines, Marty 1/4 of a page, Pauline 4 lines, DaveLo 1/2 page, and Roytac 1 1/2 pages (ghood lad there!)--that's close to a 3-page

return on a 6-page investment--which I'd consider pretty good. This is not meant to ignite a quarrel; if you don't like doing mc's then don't write any, but please don't lay the blame for their lack on our poor response. It isn't fair. Please reconsider, *sniff*. Those mc's looked so darn purty!

How is OUSTITI pronounced? Am as curious about that as I am about what it is. "Item of hardware" was of no help at all. Too many objects fall in that category...

Did you note the mention Dick Bergeron made of your crate-making talents in WARHOON 30? I guess it impressed him more than the mimeo it contained (which frightened him so much he's still moving away from it--next stop Buenos Aires...).

Phoop. Thought we'd hear all about Ed Gein. When an unfamiliar name gets dropped twice in the same mailing I get curious.

DAVE WIXON -- BIG BRONZE FAKE #14 -- I share your inability to feel comfortable in a strange bed (shut up, Suzi!), although now that hard, orthopedic mattresses are more common in hotels it is less of a problem than it used to be, at conventions anyway.

Sounds like you caught a solid dose of the flu bug. Haven't been that sick since I had Mono as a teenager. DaveLo and I have been fighting off (none too well) some sort of illness almost ever since we moved here. Achey feeling in the muscles, throat irritation, ear disturbances, post-nasal drip (yucky subject) and sinus headaches. Wish it would either go away or develop into a full-blown something that we could recover from. Your bit in this mailing reminds me to count my blessings...

A perfectionist I am not (as if that's not obvious from these FLAPzines), but there lurks within me this mild urge to comment on everything that hooks me in these mailings. It bothers me to pass by material as I have, but it's less bothersome the more time passes. However, I didn't draft out mc's for the mailings I missed, so it's not the same as your desire not to waste the effort already expended. This is all to say that it's all right, DaveW. We won't psychoanalyze your compulsion to include mc's on year-old mailings.

There's no way to tell if you were writing those comments to Jutz about writing and illusions and dealing with the "meaningless of it all" while in a state of depression, but it ties in with similar thoughts I've had while in the midst of a Blue Funk. It's odd how considering a notion like the Meaning of Life can thrust one into the pits at one time, and yet be shrugged off at another without a quibble.

In your final comment to Arthur there is an ambiguity that I don't manage to resolve. "You do have a point when you cite 'equality' as a great enemy of intelligence--an example rose last June when N.O.W. announced that it was bringing suit against insurance companies over discriminatory pricing policies between males and females." Now I'm commenting as if you meant that negatively toward N.O.W., but keep in mind that I know I could be misinterpreting your remark. At first sight, the idea of women--who generally enjoy lower auto insurance rates because of their gender--bringing suit to equalize insurance rates seems stupid. However, the main thrust of the argument, as I understand it, is in regard to retirement benefits, although medical insurance could fall under the same sort of conditions. It's common knowledge that insurance companies use actuarial tables based on gender. They offer various arguments to support such use--in the case of life insurance or annuities the fact that females, on the average, live longer than males results in either higher premiums or reduced benefits for women. Superficially this practice seems fair, however a moment's reflection will bring to mind other, equally valid, categories where unbalance in age-at-death figures also exist. But the ONLY one that is used industry-wide is the one based on gender. Blacks, for instance, live on the average to a lesser age than whites. Other ethnic groups have death statistics which also waver widely from the "Norm". Are rates adjusted for these groups? Of course not, the antidiscrimination laws won't permit it, even though a good case could be made that doing so would make more sense than male/female discrimination. Now, considering that women participate in various forms of solo life insurance and annuity plans, and a goodly percentage of women drivers are covered under various "family" plans, which

"injustice" results in the greater damage? After reading some of the variances in retirement benefits and/or rates given to women in different states, I'd say those types of policies involve by and far the greater dollar amounts. Now who is the "enemy of intelligence"? N.O.W. or the insurance companies?

Wish you would go through with your plans for a one-shot from Minneapolis. I'm kinda curious how groups from other areas handle the critters...

As I mentioned to Arthur when he wrote about losing one of his cats, the surviving one often has a rough time adjusting^{to} the new solitary existence. I do hope you and caryl consider getting a new kitten for Cosmos to relate to.

Sounds like you've grasped the concept of positive stress in your likening it to a good session of Pac-Man. Good analogy there.

Tsk. I just remembered that I have a photo of you taken during the snowed-in visit you had with Hank and Martha Beck when you got stranded in Gary, Indiana en route to Confusion some years ago. Well, maybe for PhotoPage Experiment #3...(By the way, have you heard that Martha will be Fan GoH at Confusion next year? Mike Resnick was picked as Pro GoH.)

Loofah, as you inquired of Dave Langford, is a vegetable "sponge", shaped rather like an overgrown zucchini or cucumber. Its hard cellular walls remain after the pulp is removed (by what method I know not) and it's used to invigorate the skin (i.e. scrape the hell outta your hide) in showering or bathing. Martha Beck swears by 'em and has been using them for at least as long as I've known her. They are available in variety, drug, hardware, department, and sometimes health-food stores, and occasionally even in supermarkets.

Between your all-too-descriptive commentary on your flu symptoms and exactly how it feels to crush snails underfoot, I'm really pleased to be reading your zine between, instead of during, lunch or supper. Gross out!

Now that the Metrodome's roof has collapsed, I've read that some formerly enthusiastic boosters have changed their minds. How 'bout you? Do you consider an inflatable roof a sensible choice for snowy climes?

Do you mean to say you'd never heard your own voice before it was broadcast over radio? Odd, I assumed in this tape-recorder era that everyone was aware of how they sounded. My first time ~~that I was~~ happened in the early fifties. My family had made the 12-hour drive from Chicago to Detroit (this was pre-Interstate Highway System completion) to visit relatives in Birmingham (a northern Detroit suburb). As a sorta, kinda joke, my uncle had hidden a small reel-to-reel taper under the couch to capture our sparkling comments as we came in (Hi, how are you? The drive was fine. My, it's so nice to see all of you!). Later, while the grown-ups were conversing over beer and coffee in the kitchen they played it for all to hear. My Mom and I sounded almost identical, so close in fact that it initially puzzled us both. "Jackie didn't say that," my Mom protested at one point, "I did!" I was equally non-plussed when a phrase I distinctly recalled saying came out in her voice. Uncle Dan had both of us talk into the recorder (identical things, like the Gettysburg Address or some-such thing) and though our enunciation was different when you really listened, the tone of the voice itself was identical. For years we'd puzzled over the way people would get us confused over the phone--we sounded so different to each other! Since you hear your voice mostly via bone-transmission, it generally is lower than what others hear through the air, and hearing oneself as one really sounds can be disconcerting to say the least! Think back on members of your family--perhaps your voice is like some uncle's or other male relative's.

RE yct Dean about National Health Insurance--have you noticed how it seems to be usually the people with good coverage for low or no cost from employers who dismiss the need for nat'l health insurance? Oh, and Republicans, too, of course. On principle. I recall discussions with some of my ex-husband's co-workers on the topic. Interlake Steel's policy covered everyone quite adequately, so they saw no need for any national system. But I knew people who had no insurance at all, and because of restrictions about health history, would never be able to obtain any (at anywhere close to

affordable rates) through 'private' companies. It was an example of the "I'm all right, Jack," syndrome. (As an example of ^{how} outrageous generous coverage can be, once my ex was thinking of changing jobs, but because of his poor health record, didn't want to lose the coverage he had with his employer's group policy. He inquired about converting the policy, and even though the coverage would've been reduced (to 80% from 100%) the price quoted was over \$600 for him alone and nearly \$1,000 for the family--and this back in the early '60s when a buck went a heck of a lot further than it does today. (Those are yearly rates, of course) In essence, they wanted a full month's take-home salary. Now who on earth can afford rates like that? Especially if your health is poor and you aren't able to hold down a full-time job?

By saying "but that's no reason to stop doing them," you negated your entire paragraph on the boredom inherent in reading (and, IMHO, in doing) one-shots. Wixon, you're encouraging the little rascals!

Agree with your assessment of the movie GARP. I haven't yet seen THE THING yet, but hope to sometime, somehow--even if it's on someone's video tape player.

-- THE BIG BRONZE FAKE #15 -- You've Traveled? I had no idea. How old were you when you toured St. Peters? Or was it while you were in the service? (That would make it "traveled", in the lower case, by some arcane means my mind uses but does not explain) But--er--the Vatican is more than St. Peter's; 12 square miles of somewhat sovereign territory smack dab in the middle (sort of) of Rome. You seemed to use the term for the cathedral, which isn't called that anyway.

Your mention of Jim Webbert acting as a Gofer for Gordy at Westercon in place of the more usual goshwow neo made me grin a bit. If you've read WARHOON 28, where Walt Willis writes of this "fawning neofan" who annoyed him so during his 1952 trip to the States, you might have found it amusing too. (Willis did say, in his '62 trip report that Webbert had matured in the interim.)

RE yct Marty: I don't see "situational ethics" as dependent on any one sort of moral/value system. It more has to do with the way a person behaves--under whatever moral code--when more than one action is indicated and they conflict. (e.g.; your family's starving and there's this unguarded mound of foodstuffs before you...one man is beating to death another man who had raped the first one's child...a friend's peace of mind can be saved by a "little white lie") The course of action taken is dependent on your ethics as influenced by the situation. "The lesser of two evils", "the greatest good for the greatest number"--being two adages which reflect on that situation. The conflict, in other words, need not be between Authority and Self; it can be between two facets of one's own Code...

The interaction among card players is the only reason I play, too. In fact I became turned off from Bridge because of playing Duplicate--no talking, no nothing allowed during play; the Game Was All. I feel Duplicate is nice if one wishes to hone one's skills, but for me the discomfort wasn't worth the gain. It's playing the game and chit-chatting between and during the hands that I enjoy, not how well I do or how many I beat out. I'm the sort who feels bad when I win a large pot in a Poker game. I'll purposely keep bets low to encourage as many people to participate as possible, and feel irritated when some players bet the limit from the first card out in order to freeze out those who haven't as large a playing stake as they do. If you can't afford to stay in the game long enough to find out if your hand has any possibilities, the table then is left to only the Gamblers, not the social players.

RE yct Arthur--"mastiness & pain"; oh, is that your Navy background coming out again?

Me? Print an "amanda Break"? Heaven forbid! (And I don't want to "censor" Marty either--it's just that the initial humor in the bit has been stretched thin due to repetition.)

But Chicago, and other Midwestern big cities, has a "24-hour downtown"--it was the unstated assumption that Dubuque reflected the entirety of the Midwest that irked me. More than it deserved, admittedly.

Nice to see

that you're caught up again. May we all hope that this Blessed Condition remains in force...?

SUZI STEFL -- JUXTRAPROSE JOURNAL #20 -- The HAGAR cartoon heading this issue reminds me of a favorite adage of my Mother's--repeated so often that it became part of my subconscious "philosophy of Life": "If things seem to be going badly, don't worry--they'll get worse." This attitude forms a basic portion of my bedrock outlook on looking toward the future: expect the worst. That way you can never be disappointed, and frequently can be pleasantly surprised. (I never fail to marvel at how the Eternal Optimists of this world can cope with life's little adversities knowing that, no matter what they do, there's even more waiting to happen.)

Uh, Suzi, I wouldn't mention "Bow-hunter's association" in DaveLo's presence, particularly if you're trying to give a good impression of a wilderness area. Though I, too, considered bow hunters to be somehow "worthier" than those who used guns, DaveLo's experiences have convinced him otherwise. As in most such cases, there are exceptions to the rule, and apparently he ran into every single exception to the Good Guy image of bow-hunting that New York State had to offer. (I do suspect that he's judging the whole by the actions of the few, but he can be awfully stubborn...)

Please continue with the updates on Jonathan's progress in the--ah--mental arts. You've kept them brief and to the point so there's little air of "Mommyism" to them.

Regarding the discussion of Halloween customs--back when I was a kid (note my grey hair, quavering voice and ancient age) our neighborhood "Improvement Association" (honestly, that's what it was called) held parties for the kids of the subdivision in lieu of door-to-door trick or treating. Each household was asked for donations (usually running to 50¢-\$1.00), and a bunch of the Mothers would make cookies, cakes, and popcorn balls. On Halloween, just before sunset, all the kids, perhaps 75 or so, would assemble in costume on the grounds of the Clubhouse and march around the Figure-eight of the neighborhood's streets, returning to the clubhouse. Then prizes would be awarded in a slew of categories for the costumes (you know, the Really Big Loot, like coloring books, crayons, ball-n-jacks sets, jumping ropes...things like that) and the next three hours or so were spent in playing organized games--bobbing for apples, racing with eggs balanced on spoons, three-legged and wheelbarrow races, drop-the-clothespin-in-the-bottle. Kool-Aid, iced tea, and milk were offered with the baked goodies, and around nine o'clock or so, records were played so the teen-agers could dance and have "their" party. If the weather was cool enough a fire would be set in the fieldstone fireplace and marshmallows roasted. Sometimes popcorn was made in those wire baskets. Hot chocolate was fixed toward the end of the festivities for the younger kids, and again at 11 or so, when the bigger kids were sent home. What a lot of families did, mine among them, was send their offspring to the party, then after the Little Kid portion was over, drive them into Harvey to go trick-or-treating. Looking back I find that to be on the Unfair side--no one was allowed to go trick-or-treating within the sacred precincts of Riverside Subdivision--but we kids thought it the Best of Both Worlds. (In later years the party was given up on--too many "outsiders" were coming in and begging treats, and the homeowners didn't see any sense in paying for a party and for treats, too. But it was fun while it lasted...)

Since Halloween is more-or-less a secular occasion, I don't see need for churches to get involved. All Souls' Eve (Halloween, to the Catholic Liturgical Calendar) was supposed to be set aside for sober reflection on our Dear Departed Ones--fun-n-games just didn't fit that concept.

Glad you can make sense out of that Speedwriting--I got lost about 2/3rds of the way through. Stumbled on WC, regained my balance, then fell flat at 2 wr t Sd...Huh?

Thanks for suggesting a backpack, but did you consider where my problem is? We use a wheeled grocery cart--or I should say, Dave does. He has yet to let me handle it. Works fine, but still, the walk is a bitch for me. Have to stop at least once to huff and puff til I get my breath back. Often I have come home, sticky with sweat (despite winter temperatures), and have to prop my feet up, pop a few 222's, and rest for 30-45 minutes to ward off muscle spasms. Simply cannot

tolerate being on my feet for very long.

You're right, of course. It's not the entire bottle that's changed at pharmacies when you don't want the "childproof" features--just the bottle cap. But the principle remains the same: supposedly, all you need do is ask.

LON ATKINS -- MELIKAPKHAZ #92 -- You can make the saddest Tale of Woe sound so funny! Thankee, sirrah, for making me laugh. I needed that.

Now that you've hired back on with Pertec, will you be selling your dream condo and re-locating back to Orange County? That daily commute sounds like a real killer--although DaveLo survived his 45-mile jaunt back and forth from Duarte to Torrence for 11 months with but minor damage to his body and psyche.

Best of luck on the job, with the Project, and everything else.

BECKY CARTWRIGHT -- ROUND TUIT #11, I THINK -- Who, I ask, choking back a cough, who in this apa puts out "erudite, typo-free" zines? Well, "erudite" I might buy (though not in my case). "Typo-free", on the other hand is one of those Ideals one aspires to but never actually reaches.

Sounds like you're having fun dealing with the day-to-day joys of "going computer" at your place of work. I'm in no position to guess where the blame lies for all those glitches--could be the fault of the programmer, the person who wrote the instruction manuals, or, most likely, the data entry clerks unfamiliar yet with the system. I've yet to hear of a business which could install a computerized system effortlessly and without error, though. Be patient, keep the faith; those bugs will go away--eventually.

Hey, those aren't "feeble excuses" you've given for doing minac. They sounded pretty healthy and solid to me. I'm sorry your "horsey hobby" cuts so deeply into your few spare hours, but that's the way it goes sometimes.

Sandy and Greg reported that they didn't care for Armadillocon at all--Sandy felt let down because it was Greg's first con. Now they're laying plans to fly in for Midwestcon this June so she can show him what a "real" convention is like. (Most likely the sort of people who like the ones like Armadillocon would shudder at our notion of "real".)

I far preferred taking a horse out for a ride in a large field, communing with it, nature, and myself for awhile. Injecting competition into the joys of riding would've destroyed that sense of peace it always gave me. But to each their own--I know "Playdays" are a big deal out in the western states; I've read occasional articles in magazines about them. You gave a good description of the individual events.

Good question. Now that he's no longer OE of FAPA, where is EdCo, and what's he doing? Hey, California FLAPPans, do you hear anything from the Old Codger any more?

DAVID HULAN -- THERE MUST BE LITTLE CUPIDS IN THE BRINEY -- Sounds like you made another enjoyable trip. Bet your budget appreciated the fact it was taken in California rather than foreign climes...

Liked your description of Marcia's grandmother's living arrangements. Several "Retirement Residences" have opened in the Cincinnati area recently. They are commercial ventures, rather than under the sponsorship of a church or organization, and sound quite neat for the older person who lives alone yet desires contact with similarly-aged folks. There's privacy when they want it, companionship when that's what's wished for, the security of living in a staffed building with medical help available if needed, and various accoutrements in the apartments to ease physical infirmities acquired in one's declining years. Unlike a retirement community--like Sun City and its ilk--you still live in the Real World, with access to shopping, shows, museums, etc., and you're not restricted as you'd be, say, in a nursing home. As you say, "I wouldn't half mind living in a similar place." Sounds more than just tolerable.

I'm a bit surprised that you ^{were} surprised at ET being sold out, even if it was 6 months after its release. Haven't you heard about what an anomaly it's been in the market place? Gives new meaning to the term "Hit Movie"...

While I enjoyed reading your natter--as always--I must admit to feeling great delight at seeing you return to doing mailing comments. No, I never thought you'd forgotten how to do them (at least that would've been some sort of an excuse...), but I was beginning to wonder if you were hoping that we would assume that and quit looking for any. Great to see them back; keep up the lovely work.

Putting out one's eye while applying mascara in a moving car sounds like one of those "dangers" Mothers warn their children about. You know, like "Don't climb that tree or you'll break your neck," or "Stay away from that strange dog; it might tear you to pieces!". You end your musing with "I'm amazed that more don't." You mean to say you've heard of someone actually poking out their eye with a mascara brush? Gee...

RE y't Joni: apparently there are a few fans who don't feel Taral is as weird as most ~~people~~ folks do. After all, he did get 14 votes in the TAFF race (but then, acto FILE 770, there was a phone campaign initiated by Moshe Feder to garner more votes for Taral, because Avedon Carol had taken such an overwhelming lead. This news amazed me. Not because I doubted Avedon's popularity, but because I had no idea that TAFF votes were tabulated and the results divulged before the voting deadline. I think that's Dirty Pool, indeed, and think Stu Shiffman, the current U.S. Administrator, ^{later}deserving of at least a firm "Tut, tut," from TAFF participants...), so there's apparently some people out there who think he's okay.

Thank goodness I'd just gotten to the part of Durant's STORY OF CIVILIZATION that covered the development of "trivium/quadrivium". Else I would have had to reveal my ignorance and ask what the heck you and Helgesen were talking about...

Though there's no way I can be sure, I'd guess that Arthur titled his zine DILLINGER RELIC because 1) he wanted to keep the same initials used for his previous zine, DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIPS, and 2) he has this somewhat bawdy **tough** turn of mind. Supposedly Dillinger had an uncommonly large penis, and it was purportedly removed from his corpse and put in some governmental collection (the Smithsonian?). Maybe Arthur thinks his zine is an "odd example" of sorts, too.

Why is it, d'y'suppose, that, if competition is indeed "programmed into the species", so much effort is expended in quashing its display? Many, if not most, eastern religions/philosophies urge, if not command, the setting aside of competitive feelings/actions, and for a good many centuries such signs were firmly discouraged in women (I was a victim of that sort of conditioning, and it took extremely well), in virtually all cultures. The setting of oneself "above" others (except if you were Royal, of course), or considering any ability you might have as anything else than the work of the Lord, is still considered Proper in some christian circles. If competition is so natural, why is the result of doing well--pride in one's accomplishments--considered so sinful? Ah well, I've never seen much logic in religion...

I don't think I said that Punk was "new", only that the FLAPPans who live in the hinterland might not have encountered any examples of that lifestyle--it's far more an urban phenomenon rather than country-wide (even if it is International in scope). I do think of it as "new" in the sense of "most recent", as I don't know of anything similar in music or PopCult that has taken its place. (I've heard that New Wave is supposedly different from Punk, but I'll be darned if I can see what the difference is...) It just seemed to be the likeliest explanation for the colorful apparition (Bēcky? Jutz? I've loaned my copy of that mailing to Joni, so I can't look it up and I've forgotten...) saw by the roadside.

ROY TACKETT -- DYNATRON #77 -- Really interesting report on your tour of the U.S.S.R.

I crogged at the casual mention of its price--\$2,000 apiece, particularly when you were trying to stick to a "retirement" budget, must've put quite a hole in your finances. Don't blame you a bit for succumbing to temptation, though. The opportunity to see Russia doesn't show up to us average citizens very often. I'd grab the chance, too, if it were remotely affordable (for me, however, \$2,000 might as well be \$2,000,000--they're equally unobtainable).

I hadn't heard about that

group--Youth For Jesus--praying for the souls of Westercon attendees. Did it do any good, you suppose?

(Note that I've changed typeballs--the COURIER 12 kept slipping and trying to print between characters. Got worse the longer I typed. Now if I can only keep remembering that this typeball doesn't have a numeral "1"...))

I chuckled over the reaction of your friends and acquaintances to the news of your up-coming trip. Back in the late 50's I had subscribed to the Soviet magazine (name of which escapes now) that's intended to "strengthen the bonds of friendship between peace-loving nations" (or some-such lofty notion), and the looks of amazement were many and varied when visitors to the family home would spot the stack of issues sitting beneath the coffee table. Guess the Commie scare was still running strong back then, but I surely thought it would've died down by now...

Glad you explained the cryptic part of your previous issue--how you "attended" a convention which you did not attend.

Your informing us that Milt Steven's business--with the LA Police Department--was getting better all the time fits in with something I've note in recent months on TV. There's been rather an upsurge in bank robberies lately in this area; has such been noted in your area? Desperate solutions for desperate situations, I suppose...

I (to expose my ignorance) had never heard of this Nicholas Tesla--without knowledge of whom I have no business being here (act to you)--but in the few weeks that passed since your zine arrived, I have read his name in at least three other places. Why does that happen? Go all your life without hearing a certain name, word, or phrase, and then find it cropping up all over the place. Anyway, though I certainly won't denigrate Mr. Tesla's accomplishments, I fail to see how necessary it is to know about him in order to enjoy reading science fiction. Sometimes you First Fandomites get awfully picky...

While I'm certain that you're correct in saying that the Hotel Kosmos had been described adequately by others, their description didn't appear in this here apa, so most of us were left in the dark, as it were, unable to visualize the "appropriately named" building. So it goes...

Is the Stolichnaya (I'd recalled it with an "i" between the "l" and "c"--sorry) the same in Russia as it is in the States? One of the pleasanter happenstances of the '70s was discovering that brand of Vodka (via Wambaugh's raves about it in THE BLACK MARBLE). I don't care for vodka as a rule (it doesn't measure up?) but that stuff should be set in a category all by itself. I seldom drink booze straight--brandies, cordials and southern Comfort excepted--but that is the best way to take Russian vodka. Mmmmm

I'm sorry that your trip was such an overall disappointment. Touring a country, even one as remote from us as Russia is, isn't something that would particularly interest me, either (or at least as part of a guided group), and the fact that the tie-in with Science Fiction wasn't evident as it had been promised probably makes the name of McDermott smell to high heaven in your book. But at least you did get some new-n-strange experiences for your money, even if not quite the sort or quality you'd hoped for.

Gee, we see SFWA members frequently in this neck the woods--Mike Resnick, Andy Offutt, several others whose names escape me. Jon Stopa used to belong, so I'm sure Joni's had several bull sessions with SFWA members. (Gee, I really hate to step on an off-the-cuff line like that. Must be the devil in me today. Perhaps I should've attended Westercon so the Youth For Jesus folks coulda prayed it outta me?)

The symbol you drew as a copy of the only graffitti you saw in the USSR isn't the "ban the bomb symbol"--it's the Mercedes-Benz corporate logo. (The BTBS is a circle divided fully in half by the upright line, then with the two, shorter diagonal lines in the same place you depicted them--supposedly it was designed to incorporate the initials of some group overseas (England?), all I recall are the letters "N" and "D". I use a version of it in signing off correspondence.)

MARTY HELGESEN -- HOW THE GRINCH STOLE GROUNDHOG DAY (20FZ) -- Back in the early '70s, during my initial encounters with SF conventions, I'd sit in during F&K singing sessions and enjoyed them a great deal...until the repetition of having the same song sung over and over and over again finally got to me. Might drop in on one some of these days; they've surely altered their "program" by now!

"Six Days as a Toad" made me grin. Good Parodizing there.

I can't recall his name, but there was some fellow from the Midwest or upper South a few years ago who tried to set up a Christian "Mission" for SF fen. He published a zine, a copy or two I received (ghod knows why), and was involved in various aspects of running conventions for awhile (I think Martha Beck had some odd experience or the other with him during NASFIC in Louisville--when was that? 79?). Is he involved in the new group you say was formed during Chicon? I thought him friendly-sounding, but--well--strange. (No *cough* sin in that, but he seemed even stranger than your average fan.)

My vote (though I do thank you for the experience with her to date) is "thumbs down" on Amanda.

BILL BOWERS -- XENOLITH 22 -- I don't know if we'll try getting clearer copies of those pictures for another Photopage Xperiment or not. It's one of those many times I really grit my teeth at our budget restrictions. Color Xerox would work nicely for that sort of thing, but who can afford it? *Sigh*

As an aside to those of you who want you photos returned--~~try and get 'em~~, no, they will be sent RSN, but I've been playing around with doing sketches from them (can't turn out any worse than what's been done so far, eh?) and will mail them back when I'm finished or have given up. Lon? Arthur? Bernadette? Joyce? Mike Shoemaker? I'd really appreciate getting snapshots of you folks so I could include them...

were pretty close with "Selectric One", but no banana... Do you mean Selectric 71? You

Should we all take bets on just who ends up to be the last to see ET--you or the Hulans? We could have ourselves a hoss race, y'know...

I'm so happy that you're being so firm in stating that "things are going to get better" for us. Perhaps that's the tack to take; ghod knows nothing else seems to be working...

Good grief! No more comments? Sheesh, I wasn't prepared for that... Here I had just gotten my ellipsis-typing-mode fully warmed up...!

Nineteen lines left to go, hmmm? Well, that should be no problem. I overlooked asking Eric about the fires in the Blue Mountains anyway, and am glad to have the space to do so. TIME MAGAZINE ran a squib about the "45 months" of drought you guys have had down there. I had no idea that such was the case. Guess the USA isn't the only place having screwy weather. Though a nearly four-year-long drought isn't quite what I'd call "screwy". Disasterous would be better. Anyway, I certainly hope none of those big blazes got near your house.

Did I just say that filling these lines would be no problem? Well, I sat here for ten minutes, arms folded on my lap, listening the the HMMMM of this typer, and came up with absolutely nothing to write. *Sigh* I feel as awkward as I do when Joni Stopa or Bruce Arthurs phones up--completely blank-minded. It's a wonder I can remember my own name... (Gee, it was right there on the tip of my tongue a moment or two ago...) Guess I'll do the smart thing and simply sign off. There should be one or three Lasher columns attached to this zine. Hope you all enjoy them as much as DaveLo and I do. Til June?

Oh, yes. A special Thank You to Bill Bowers for Xeroxing those Lasher columns for me. I don't even have to cut them out any more, he's so ~~delicious~~ nice at clipping them from his own copy of the Enquirer and toting them to work for copying. It's a big help, Mr. Bowers, and it's appreciated. (~~maybe XXXX make delicious note of her.~~)

FOR A "MUNDANE" CON REPORT, THIS WASN'T BAD.
BILL CAVIN, LOCAL FAN & DICTATOR OF C.F.G.,
WAS FAN G.O.H. AT THIS CONFUSION. ANYWAY,
THIS IS ONE OF THE WAYS WE APPEAR TO OTHERS...

OF DETROIT FREE PRESS/SUNDAY, FEB. 6, 1983



They take a convention to the outer limits

Grab your No-Doz. In the future, everyone will sleep four hours a night.

That fact would be evident to anyone who polled a representative cross-section of futurists and bohemian visionaries, madmen and artists, science-fictioners and dreamers, and I'll tell you why no one's ever realized that before. It's because the control group all came together last week in one improbable place, bearing a ridiculous melange of crepe paper streamers, laser-light projectors, velvet capes, printed flares, useless acrylic ray guns and extraterrestrial artifacts to the Plymouth Hilton.

Through that scene — a vision of what might have happened if the Hilton were redecorated by a Transylvanian surrealist on a bad LSD trip — wandered hundreds of revelers in stages of advanced sleep deprivation. Science fiction conventioners subscribe to the Big Bang theory of party giving, and Confusion 101, the theme for the 10th annual Ann Arbor-area convention of science fiction fans, converged on the hotel with the energy of a thousand imploding suns. More than 700 costumed fans attended, much to the amazement of the hotel's mundane guests. ("Mundane" is the fans' code word for non-fans.)

ONE BULLNECKED mundane gripping a Scotch highball tottered through the entrance hall agog at the spectacle of it all. Clearly, he recognized in his surroundings a place so permeated with wonder, so resonant with the push-pull of the actual and the possible that it brings out the philosopher in all of us; makes the dullest of ponder, however dimly, the human condition. Bullneck focused on a tall man in green monk's robes. His face, swathed in sheer black fabric, was invisible beneath his hood.

"Who's he, E.T.?" Bullneck chortled to his mundane lady friend, his estimable belly jiggling with mirth. He looked around the hall, taking in the whole extravagant crowd, and barked "E.T. phone home! Ha! ha!" before peeling off into a waiting elevator.

No-face turned the other cheek, so to speak, explaining to a fascinated woman that he'd traveled from the Upper Peninsula for the convention. He added, with a note of apology, "I usually have glowing eyes."

That exchange illustrated what science fiction conventions are all about. For one blissful weekend, No-face was able to ignore the mundanes of the world and socialize with like-minded science fiction enthusiasts. The get-together was sponsored by the Ann Arbor Science Fiction Association, in co-operation with the University of Michigan science fiction club, known as the Stilyagi Air Corps. Those in the know say stilyagi is a Russian term that approximately means "punk." The Stilyagi Air Corps leads an insurrection in a lunar penal colony in Robert Heinlein's novel, "The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress." For fans, science fiction conventions provide a similar kind of liberation.

FANS STREAMED from display tables where hucksters sold fantasy artwork, books and memorabilia, to hospitality suites where Texan fans served three-alarm chili. They eddied into rooms where videocassettes of stunning Japanese animation continuously unreeled before rapt fans who couldn't understand a syllable of the soundtrack. The convention's high point, however, was the traditional masquerade ball, an affair something like a college mixer on Mars. The roll call, please.

There were people in neoclassical Greek tunics and Valkyrie outfits, pixies in blueface, a tall female ninja, dancing girls in vells and harem pants, a man with two heads and three arms, a portbellied dragon that looked like something out of a Flintstones cartoon, and rocket men galore. There were even a few specimens of that extinct creature, the hippie. Others were just mysteries to everyone.

Over yonder was C.J. Cherryh, author of the 1982 Hugo Award-winning science fiction novel "Downbelow Station," the convention's special guest. Cherryh, with a wry smile, said such get-togethers are not just fun, they're important. Cherryh and fellow authors run workshops to help young writers with their craft, she explained. (About half of the people

you meet at the conventions will, with some prodding, admit to being writers.)

"A workshop can give a beginner valuable encouragement," she said. "You can find jewels of talent." She prefers talking to conventioners rather than audiences convened by the League of Women Voters, she said, because "before you speak to them, you first have to define what a space station is, what a star is. At these conventions we all share a common vocabulary."

THERE WAS Ann Arbor writer Ted Reynolds, whose short fiction frequently appears in magazines such as Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine, drifting through the revel in a T-shirt bearing the slogan "Writers Have Character."

Nearby was fan extraordinaire Bill Cavin from Cincinnati, who works in a state mental hospital and has been attending these conventions since 1969, although the former fact is apparently unrelated to the latter. Cavin was holding forth on the life of sacrifice a truly committed fan must lead. "Most fans will go to most conventions in a 250-300 mile radius," he said. "Six or eight hour drives are par for the course. I've often slept in my car to save money. That's nothing," he added modestly. "People will crash five or six to a room in a hotel or someone's home. But it doesn't feel like a hardship. You get to go to the parties, meet your friends. You're not interested in normal things," he said as an afterthought.

But after 13 years of devotion to the cause, Cavin regretfully announced that he was planning to cut back to 10 or 12 conventions a year. After all, a man needs his sleep.

Speaking of Language

By William E. Lasher

VOICES

The ability to record voices is something man has possessed only in the last century, even though he has been drawing pictures for tens of thousands of years and writing for perhaps the last 5,000. The term "recorded history" has always brought to mind the written records of civilizations, but now it is taking on a new, more literal meaning: the recorded sound of man's own voice.

We don't have a recording of Lincoln giving his Gettysburg Address, just the memory of our high school civics teacher reciting it to us. But Martin Luther King's "I had a dream" speech has become one of the most memorable in our history because we have heard him deliver it, because we have heard his voice and recorded it.

Being able to record speech has changed the rules of the language game. Before the tape recorder, languages became extinct when their last speakers died. Now linguists have been known to rush out and record those dying languages for posterity: are they then dead or alive? Listening to T.S. Eliot read his poetry is a different experience from reading it for oneself—another level of understanding is added. So we have, for the first time, the ability to record speeches and poetry as they were spoken—real language, not just symbols on a page.

Another invention that is changing the rules rather rapidly is broadcasting speech—either by television or radio. For years we have known that speakers of a language who are separated for a few hundred years—as speakers of British and American English have been—will speak different dialects. If speakers of a language are separated for a few thousand years—as the speakers of modern English and German have been—they will speak different languages. But what happens when the British are watching Archie Bunker and J.R. Ewing, and the Americans spend their time with Alistair Cooke and Benny

Hill? What effect will this meeting of dialects have on speakers of English? Most people think it will have none at all, but one piece of evidence contradicts that: when British shows first came our way, Americans were fairly resistant to watching them because they didn't understand the language very well. That has been changed, on both sides of the Atlantic, by repeated exposure, so that the British can now reject Johnny Carson, not because they don't understand his speech, but because they don't understand his humor.

Closer to home, is it possible that Americans will start sounding more alike as each generation spends more time watching and listening to national programs? Will our kids start sounding like little Dan Rathers and Jane Pavleys? Perhaps our more recent innovations, cable television and computers, will be just as influential as broadcasting. America is getting wired, street by street, house by house. We are being connected into the world's largest communications network, and soon we'll be able to talk back to the world through computer interfaces with the network.

Will we develop a national dialect for communication through the network, or will we all simply learn to use computer English? In either case, our language is about to be changed by the technology we have developed. There are, today, Americans who spend more time watching—and listening to—television than they spend talking to other people. Why shouldn't that affect their language?

Because of our technology, we are becoming less insular, less isolated from the rest of the country and the world, and developing a greater awareness of our language and its dialects. Whether we will adopt different speech patterns for ourselves, or abandon some of our old ones, is open to question.

William E. Lasher is an associate professor of English at the University of Cincinnati. His field is linguistics.

Speaking of Language

By William E. Lasher

A NUMBER OF WORDS

To put it simply, there are word people and there are number people. There is some scientific evidence for this distinction, but most of us intuitively feel that we belong in one group or the other.

Word people are fascinated by the sound of words, or even the sound of turning pages. They like reading, writing, and playing with language, and they seem to develop a kind of maternal feeling toward it: they want to cherish and protect their language. Word people tend to do better in English class than in arithmetic, score higher on verbal tests, and grow up to become lawyers, journalists, salespersons, or just avid readers and writers of letters.

Number people are fascinated by quantities and operations: they do better in mathematics than in English. They enjoy playing with numbers and finding out how things work, and may grow up to become engineers, carpenters, or computer programmers.

It seems to the casual observer the word people dislike numbers, and number people dislike words. That's not quite accurate, because an engineer may feel that words can be quite useful, but their utility represents their only value. Language is there to be spoken, not to be appreciated like some work of art. The lawyer, on the other hand, is much more likely to love language for its own sake, for the sound of it and the feel of it on the tongue or on the page. He and his fellow word people are put off, not by numbers, but by the tyranny of numbers. They have no problem with simple arithmetic, but they despise the elegant problems and solutions which scientists and accountants are so fond of. The world cannot—should not—be reduced to numbers, they will tell you.

The real problem may be that word people and number people dislike each other, especially when it comes to language. Word people tend to be the Protectors and Guardians of the English language, writing letters to the editor about split infinitives and dangling modifiers. Number people are the constant, hapless victims of these Protectors: they seem doomed to make mistakes in speaking and writing, and their

guilt over having "bad grammar" simply makes them dislike word people all the more.

The two groups come to rather distorted views of each other. The number people are seen as a threat to the very existence of English; the word people are seen as pedagogues determined to make life into one huge English test.

There ought to be a middle ground. I think the center resides in a very simple fact: language consists of sound and meaning. Where you put the emphasis determines the group you belong to: number people want meaning; word people love the sound. Both groups have gone to the extreme in their desires: we have artificial languages used by number people for pure communication, and we have poetry written by word people which is virtually pure sound.

Linguists are number people who are fascinated by words, which explains why we're willing to let people use language as they wish. We simply want to show how it all works and what the process of language looks like. Paradoxically, musicians are word people who are fascinated by numbers: they deal with sound, but they do so through the mathematics of rhythm and harmony. Naturally they see music as an art, just as word people generally see language use as an art to be learned and cultivated.

There seems to be no end to this conflict, which may come down to the classic disagreement between art and science.

Before you correct someone's spoken English, pause to consider whether you'll be helping or simply frustrating him. Are you certain you're right in the first place? And if you are one of the victims, think about the other person's point of view. He thinks he's there to help you, to improve the way you sound to the rest of the world. And he's partially correct, because the word people will judge you by the way you talk. By their words shall you know them.

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*If you have a question or comment about language, write to Dr. Lasher
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