

WFLA 50

AN
S+H
COVER

HUNTSPATCH
PHONE
CO.

SEP 16

ALONZO
P.
NEOFAN

POW!
SEP 16



Welcome to Melikaphkhaz #50, another issue of the ninth-best regular fanzine in SFPA. I'm your host, Lon Atkins. Tonight the show is coming to you from 12724 Caswell #1, in sunny Mar Vista, CA 90066.

Settle down, folks, and glue your eyes to the page. Tonight's show is dynamite! Guest stars include the Wolf Brothers Trio, Thomas Jefferson, Jackie Kennedy Onassis, the Swami Nembutal, and Humphrey Bogart.

I know you'll

love the show!

Melikaphkhaz is a Zugzwang Production.
It appears in SFPA.

Howdy, folks!

Here we are doing
issue number fifty -- a record
for us. It's traditional
to open the show with a
joke or two, so here
goes!

Funny thing
happened to me
at work today.
A programmer
came up to
me and
said
he

another popular favorite. Why does Alan
Hutchinson wear suspenders?

Rosie? ...Oh, they don't always. Well, you
should know.

And that's it for the witty informal
intro natter. Let's get right to the meat of the
show -- our first commercial!

Friends, does gastress make you grumpy and unsociable af-
ter gluttonous meals? Yes, gastress. Our trite contraction
of gastric distress. If so, then you need GLOP!

GLOP is the
fabulous modern miracle to relieve gastress. It coats like
axle grease and soothes like a Ronald Reagan speech. Here to
assure you of the beneficial effects of GLOP is an actual
testimonial from a satisfied user -- the Artichoke Heart That
Ate Los Angeles.

"Urpp. It ain't no picnic eatin' Los Angeles
lemme tell ya. Not like Blanchard, North Dakota, or those
out-of-thu-way places.

"No sir, Ellay is a big place. It
made for gastress! Ya see, I got carried away and had Long
Beach and Malibu at the same sitting. Did pass up Covina,
though.

"I was sittin' there belching happily when gastress
hit. Those freeway interchanges can do terrible things to
your digestion. I was miserable, don't mind telling you.



MEL 50

"Then a friend suggested I try GLOP. So I did. It was instant relief from gastress. Why don't you try it too?"

There you are, friends, a testimonial from an Artichoke Heart who should know. Put GLOP in your tummy and never fear overeating again!

Let's give a big round of applause for our first guest -- Guy Lillian, star of the thrilling new X-Rated motion picture, JACK. Come on out, Guy!

Clapclapclapclap.

Guy, I understand this is an intense psychological movie, based on the classic poetic epic "Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack jump over the candlestick."

"That's right, Lon. I was very pleased to be chosen for the lead in this important new picture about some very straight tough serious insights into life as it is today in many parts of our country and indeed maybe even the world. It's hard hitting. Jeez. Oh, yeah. Man. Right on. Wow. I'm with it."

Well, yes. The producers altered the script, I understand, to deal with the more predominant modern phenomenon of failure, rather than simple old-fashioned success. In the movie you make a great effort, but only get half-way over the candlestick. Is it true that you did your own stunt work?

"Oh, right. So groovy, so challenging, so artistic, so pleasurable. But I gotta run! Gotta run! Bye-bye."

Good-bye, Guy.

As our next guest comes on, let's pause for a word....

Friends, do you suffer from irregularity? Does that blocked feeling cause you to growl and snarl at loved ones?

If so, do like the Artichoke Heart That Ate Los Angeles did -- use Markstein's Little Pills. Listen to the Artichoke--

"After I ate Los Angeles I really got grumpy and antisocial. Those freeway interchanges just wouldn't go thru. Even my best friends couldn't stand my company. I screamed at everybody and passed lots of smog.

"Then I saw an ad for Markstein's Little Pills. It changed my life.

"I took some Pills and within eight hours I was comfortable again. Blessed relief. Try them. Tell the druggist that the Artichoke sent you."

Yes, friends, wise words from one helluva big artichoke. Remember our slogan -- Get It Out With Markstein's Little Pills. Nothing else works half so well.

Well, Professor, we're back on camera.

For the benefit of our viewers let me introduce Prof. George Inzer, whose new book OFF THE PARASITES is a coast-to-coast best sellers. Or at least a candidate to be so. Prof. Inzer was just explaining to me that one out of three jobs is with the government.

"Yes, Lon, it's true. By 1984 half the jobs in the country will be government. These positions are regulatory or bureaucratic in nature, not productive. This means we are paying the salaries of these people through taxes."

Gee, Professor, that's terrible. You mean honest hard-working men like talk-show emcees are being ripped off by the government?

"Exactly, Lon. We should set out to destroy these parasites!" We don't say things like that on the air, Professor. Not if we value our Neilsons, we don't!

"Kill the imperialist dogs!"

Fellows! Would you show the Professor to the wings. Heh. Heh. Couple of boys in blue here to maintain order. They'll help the Professor offstage. Oh! Get the camera off that! I hate blood. Let's have a commercial.

Fade in on Gary Steele, sulking in his fan den.

GARY: I don't get it. The girls don't seem to go for my fanzines these days.

Enter Cliff Biggers, smiling. CLIFF: It's your stencils, Gary. You should try Trojans, the sex appeal stencils.

GARY: Oh, yeah? I guess I will.

Fade out and into Gary at a con.

GARY: Have a fanzine, chickie.

A gorgeous femmefan with a low-cut dress takes a copy and wiggles. She looks at Gary with adoration. FEMMEFAN: Oh, Gary, since you switched to Trojans I have this delicious urge to give you a great big beautiful blow-job!

GARY: And I owe it all to Trojans..... Fadaway.

Yes, folks, the stencils you use can make a difference.

And now the Wolf Brothers Trio will do a medley of their greatest hits! Take it away, you silver-throat-----

CLICK!!!

One undeniable appeal of the media is our apparent control over it. If displeased, we merely change channels. In extremes, we turn the obnoxious machine off. When the paper comes, we may capriciously ignore the front page and turn directly to the comics. Even apa mailings can be managed. Who really reads all of every zine in the mailing?

By exercising selectivity we achieve control. The available selection limits this power. In the case of reading material, this is rarely a problem. The proliferation of books, magazines and fanzines is indeed a marvel. If it comes to a crunch, we can reread old favorites. With a broadcast media such as television, the selection is not so broad. We are at the mercy of the broadcasting stations, so frequently we may have no palatable alternative but abstinence.

Another difference, of nature rather than degree, between broadcast media and written is time stream. When we read, we control input rate and -- to the extent our environment allows -- input continuity. If a magazine article is interrupted by a full page ad, we skip the commercial content with the barest flicker of discontinuity. Not so with television. The broadcasters have us at their mercy. They use the time stream to inflict countless commercials on the viewers.

However we may seek to escape, we lose something of our sense of continuing action. The exciting chase scene is frozen by a word for some ridiculous product. Do we watch blankly, trying to escape the offending simplistic lies? Do we run for a quick relief stop? Or perhaps grab a bunch of munchies?

It doesn't matter. The building tension has been dispersed, theoretically to the benefit of the sponsor.

All the greater crime is cutting of teevee movies to make room for the sixty minutes of commercials that "must" be squeezed into the two-hour slot. If you've ever seen a movie butchered, you know how much can be lost. It would be interesting to see a law requiring admission of total movie air time, total commercial time, and minutes cut from the movie.

The other effect of time stream control is to lock us into the creator's pacing. With television you can't speed-read past the dull places, can't reread enigmatic passages, can't backtrack to confirm a suspicion, can't draw out the climactic scene. True, a fine artist knows the pacing of his work best. But how many mediocre works have had some enjoyment salvaged from them by reader-administered pacing? For me, a lot.

Finally, you can't put a marker in a television set, set it on the shelf, and come back to it later. You see, to use the teevee we must live in its time stream, while to be themselves alive, books must live in ours.

And now, a word from our sponsor.....

"swordfish"

*

This issue of Mel was a long time in coming. The labor pains were manifold. Toughest was having to miss the originally scheduled mailing. You've all heard that song. Second toughest was getting on the trail again. After solving some inking problems resulting from long mimeograph inactivity, I had the crank break down. A few Hankish oaths and some native mechanical ingenuity fixed things up. I progressed in fine fashion then.

The cover is a fine joint effort of Alan Hutchinson and Joe Staton. Joe had first crack; Alan finished and did the inking. I'm very appreciative of their talent and generosity. Hope you folks feast your eyeballs!

Swami Nembutal's work was an unsolicited contribution that I printed despite knowledge that the Swami frequently lifts his material from other sources. The saving grace is that when Swami gets through butchering ideas, nobody will claim them.

"Trapping" was begun over a year ago. The opening note pretty much tells the story. My apologies to Bruce Arthurs, but he should realize how notoriously unreliable I am. To the rest of you, I hope the long gestation period didn't fragment the thrust of the tale. It's all true, I swear by Hank's tonsils.

The conreport is fragmented, though. That was halfacon for me. Highs and lows. Looking back, those lows might have been part my fault. Not that there was any cohesion, outside of the Sunday Roast, but I knew where the attendees were and could have pursued congregation more vigorously. No blame -- just read it.

The Box Scores do not reflect the legal postmailing. (Note to Guy: they never reflect illegal postmailings.) I'll fix that next time.

Speaking of illegal postmailings, I didn't get the purported Inzine. George, can you forsake Box Score credit and send me a copy? I am interested.

On other fronts things are doing

well enough. I'm enjoying eleven days of holiday, thanks to a company decision that had us work two early Saturdays in December. The compensation days then augmented the holiday stretch.

Relaxation is a great thing. My only fear is that I'll have to be retrained in 1976. Relaxation, it turns out, is addictive.

Christmas was kind at chez Atkins. The kiddies are delighted with their new loot. The adults are likewise happy with theirs. The pussycats, who got a catnip mouse, dash about in frenzies of hunting joy. Last night winds from the desert blew all our smog onto the ocean. Today is blue and mild. A perfect day.

I wish you all pefect days.

"Elementary, my dear Watson."

A GAME REVIEW

Last Christmas Kathy gave me Backgammon. This year she hit gold again with a devilish plastic concoction called "Mastermind." Most likely, you've seen it. The playing board is a plastic rectangle full of little holes into which the players place colored pegs. A quick game to learn and a fine exercise of your deductive powers.

There are rows five holes in width for the colored pegs. There are eight colors, many pegs of each. One of the rows can be covered by a shield. Into it one player places five pegs, forming a pattern which the opponent must guess.

This pattern is called the Code. The guesser is the Codebreaker. There are twelve rows for the Codebreaker. Into the first he puts five colored pegs.

The Codemaker, who made the Code and can see it behind the shield, scores each guess by placing smaller pegs into an adjacent row. A black peg signifies that a correct color is in a correct hole. A white peg means a right color in a wrong hole. Up to five signal pegs may be used per guess. Pegs do not correspond to guess positions, but may be displayed in any order.

The Codebreaker collects information and deduces the Code. It's a real challenge to maximize the information obtained by each guess. When Kathy and I started playing it took from nine to ten guesses, but that quickly fell to an average of about six. I suppose that will come down a bit, but not much. As you're shooting entirely blind that first try, the odds of hitting the correct Code are one in 32,768.

I find a good technique is to begin with only two colors, divided three-two. The colors (or at least a few of them) must be isolated before going strong after position. Each color eliminated drastically cuts the number of permutations remaining.

After a couple of colors are identified, the search for their position can be combined with a test for the other colors. It can be tricky, as the Code may contain more than one peg of a given color. Obtaining the correct color count can thus be frustrating.

The game is a lot of fun. I enjoy puzzles and games both, and Mastermind combines the best aspects of both. It has a fannish appeal, like unto Hearts. Next time I come South I'll bring my set along, play Hank a game, and hope he doesn't eat all the colored pegs.....

MY TOPICAL SURVEY OF THE



ALLIGATORS: A fine mode of transportation to the airport, for which I am indebted to that fine long-time Southern fan, Bill Bruce. Without his assistance I might have missed my return flight.

BOOK OF THE ROAST: Presented to The Hank. This edition of one was the work of $\frac{1}{2}$ acon people. Sponsored by the ConCom, fabricated (I suppose) by Faruk von Turk, and drawn/written by attendees, this is a true collector's item. My favorite item was Alan Hutchinson's illo of the EoHank.

CHAIR FANDOM: Composed of Stven Carlberg. Throughout the convention he could be glimpsed in the halls, stairways and elevators carrying his faithful chair. I hope it fit in his suitcase.

CONCOM: Guy Lillian and John Guidry. It would have been a pleasure to meet these gentlemen, who set out to create new convention standards and certainly were successful, but apparently their busy schedules precluded attendance of the con.

1

A

C

O

N

2

DEADLY WEAPONS: Surely a commodity in evidence at $\frac{1}{2}$ acon. The nasty machinegun (plus pedigree papers) that Don Walsh carried with him everywhere was intimidating. The razor-sharp knives of The Hank were even more impressive (in his possession, at least). But the most horrible weapon of them all -- the weapon that devastated fourty people at the Roast -- was the sound of the Wolfbrother Trio. The voices of George Inzer, Craig Shukas and Eddie Ayers should be registered with the local police wherever they go.

ELEVATORS: A popular con complaint. These elevators, however, rated an impressive 8.9 on a scale of 10.

GUMBO: A soup, or perhaps stew, native to the New Orleans area. The best I had while in town was at a place called the River Bend, for which I have Doug Wirth to thank. Doug, George Inzer, Rosie and Alan Hutchinson & I had a most pleasant meal at the River Bend on Friday. It was a great relaxed opportunity to chat with these folks.

GUINNESS: A brew prized by some in bottles but preferred by me on draft at the local. George Inzer had twelve bottles for lunch on Saturday. He was not seen again for twelve hours. Perhaps this sheds some light on George's mysterious con habits.

HANK, THE: A brash neofan whose affinity for the Queen of Spades is unmistakeable. Also the GoH at this $\frac{1}{2}$ acon.

HEARTS: A game indulged in by many but enjoyed by few. This year's festivities saw a remarkable new development. Hearts is divided into Fun Games (known as bait) and Money Games (known as profit). It's been traditional for years that Hank and I win all the money games. At $\frac{1}{2}$ acon we were joined by a rookie who shows promise of continuing the old line of Iron Men.

Stven Carlberg played excellent Hearts. With daring passes and aggressive play, he won the first two of the six money games played. His style involves risky maneuvers, such as voiding himself in Spades, and frequent attempts at moonshots. It sufficed only until Stven attracted the attention of the Great. Thereafter he did not win a game.

Hank Reinhardt and I split the other four money games, two and two. With Hank's luck and my skill, it was inevitable. Alerted to Stven's gambling tactics, we spiked his mooning attempts with gleeful regularity. Still, he'd achieved a measure of immortality by winning a third of the cash encounters. I predict that as his style matures, Stven will become a dangerous competitor. It's a pleasure to see fresh talent appear. In time, Stven may be admitted to the Pantheon of Iron Men. Hank and I discussed it and resolved to encourage the fuzzy-cheeked stripling. May he bring lots of money to the next con...

The Award for Biggest Dumb Move of the Hearts sessions goes to me. Saturday, while watching the Arkansas - Texas A&M game, I failed to throw the bitch on Stven when a smoking lead forced the King from his hand. Seems Arkansas was scoring a TD. Two leads later I had to eat Her Majesty myself. Dumb.

The Runner-Up spot goes to Guy Lillian, who missed three chances to stop a Carlberg moonshot at no cost to himself. Everybody else knew Stven was trying to run them, but Guy just stared at the ceiling, hummed to himself, and sluffed Hearts only on Stven.

LONG-HAIRED HIPPIES: Only one of this breed was in evidence. A short fellow with long unruly red hair. He claimed to be Jerry Page. The nose was right, but we all know Jerry is the very respectable program editor for TV Guide and thus couldn't possibly have long hair.

MORAN'S ON THE RIVERSIDE: Site of the fanciest restrooms encountered in New Orleans this trip.

MOTORCYCLE: Alan and Rosie Hutchinson's vehicle. How they made it all the way from St. Pete on the thing must be a fabulous story -- perhaps Alan will reveal the details. While in New Orleans, however, Alan made the mistake of taking a short cut across a bayou and was arrested for operating a motor vehicle on a restricted waterway. He left New Orleans after being turned out on bail. Good luck at the trial, Alan!

MUSIC: There was none, unless you count the warmup of the public address system, which was likened to a Stven Carlberg song.

NEW FACES: Next to seeing treasured friends again, meeting new fans is the high point of any con for me. Halfacon seemed particularly rich in new faces, most of whom were known to me as fanzine people. It was a real pleasure to meet the following group of sterling fans.

Eddie Ayers. There's the nagging feeling that I met this wolf brother of Hank's years ago in Birmingham. Maybe it was just Hank's descriptions of his bearded ugly face. At any rate, Eddie was a nice guy for a ferocious blood-thirsty killer. He's a suitable comrade for gentle Hank.

Susan Biggers. Susan was every bit as charming and intelligent as I'd thought she'd be. Her husband Cliff I'd met very briefly at some earlier con, but this was the first time I'd had a chance to talk with him. Good people, both.

Rosie Hutchinson. How Alan landed a jewel like Rosie, quiet and cultured where Alan is taciturn and ignorant, I don't know. As with Hank and Janet, it must be that opposites attract. Rosie is a lovely lady with a smile like sunrise. Meeting so many fans at once must have been a shock. Bravo, Rosie! for enduring it all.

Cecil Hutto. Yes, I finally met Waylon. He was big and quiet. Didn't talk much. I guess the Cream of Wheat makes his teeth stick together. Now that Cecil's on the waitlist, I'm looking forward to seeing his interesting stuff running in SFPA again.

Nancy Mayberry. Don Markstein blessed me with a brief introduction to this talented lady as I was leaving for the airport.

JoAnn Montalbano. The first new face I saw at Halfacon, and indeed the second fan following Bill Bruce's greeting at the hotel desk. JoAnn is perky and pretty. As she's on the SFPA waitlist, I hope JoAnn writes as interestingly as she talks. Kevin Smith is a lucky fellow.

Joe & Phyllis Moudry. Pronounced "Mow-dree." I didn't get to know these fine people (& SFPA waitlisters) nearly as well as I wished. Behind Joe's bushy moustache is an erudite mind and a zingy dry wit. Phyllis' clear intelligence has to compete with the attractive packaging job nature did for her. (Joe doesn't have that

problem.) I hope to see more of them both at some future con.

Craig Shukas. Only a brief introduction to this former SFPAn, but I did hear more of his mellow songbird voice than I wanted. Craig seems very good-natured and certainly knows the scoop on Hank.

Ilaine Vignes. Another of those very brief introductions. Ilaine is pretty and vivacious, but does horrible one-shots with GHLIII.

Don Walsh. The first meeting (that I recall) with this "living legend" led to my discovery that he is indeed a federally licensed machine gun dealer. I know. I saw the papers.

Doug Wirth. I don't know how I missed Doug at the '74 DSC, but it was a real pleasure to meet him at last. He's another of those quiet artists, but you can see his mind going all the time. A man with enough courage to brave New Orleans rush hour traffic, Doug also knows the good places to go. I thoroughly enjoyed my too few discussions with Doug.

Lots of Others. I don't remember the names of all the fans I met. (Mea culpa.) There was the petit little lady called Boo who came into a Hearts game and leaned on Hank's shoulder. There was a fun lunch at Napoleon House with Geo and two fans named Brian and Mike. There were others. Maybe I'll see them all again next time I come South.

OLD FACES: Hank Reinhardt has an old face.

ORGANIZATION: That which was conspicuous by its absence.

PIPES: On our way back from lunch at Napoleon House George Inzer stopped to purchase a clay pipe. "It draws so cool," he said. I certainly don't dispute that, but as George doesn't smoke tobacco perhaps we have another clue to his mysterious disappearances at cons.

QUARTER, THE: An area of New Orleans, famous for its history, which swallowed fans and their bank balance indiscriminately.

REDEMPTION: Provided to the ConCom by the superb Roast.

ROAST, THE: A turkey scorch. No need to go into detail, as Guy promises to publish a transcription, I do want to say that it was tremendous fun -- the best con event ever. The high point had to be Janet's merciless description of Life With Hank. My congratulations to Guy and John for organizing this bash.

ROOM PARTIES: Turbulent affairs, usually degenerating into a Hearts game. Perhaps because there was no con suite, any room party was subject to a vigorous inflow of fans. I saw a lot of faces that way, but sometimes found it difficult to talk with people I wanted to. The conversational side of conventions is a part I value.

SFPA: Fourteen members of SFPA were at $\frac{1}{2}$ acon. The mailing was distributed at the Roast. It was a very SFPA con.

TELEPHONE RATES: I thought 25¢ for room-to-room calls was a bit much.

ULRIC: Cirlu spelled backwards.

★ READ THE STARS ★

★ A man like the Swami Nembutal rarely saunters down the paths of life. When he does, we ordinary mortals benefit from his wisdom. I first met the Swami on a rainy day in Los Angeles. Most of the year the Swami lives in a storm drain near my apartment. I'd passed it a million times without realizing the treasure it held. This particular day was one of the four on which it rains in Los Angeles. The Swami was moving his bound collection of Reader's Digest to higher ground.

★ "Hey, you," he called. "I'll bet you've got an astrological sign!"

"Why, yes," I admitted, astounded that this man had detected it. "How did you know?"

★ "Cause you're fated to help me carry these volumes to high ground," he said. As I toted Reader's Digest I pondered the acute insight of this man. Later I discovered how very deeply he understood astrology. Indeed, the Swami Nembutal is the only seer to not worry about public reaction to truth. He's never pulled a punch or let a truth slip away unsaid. As a result he's as poor as a churchmouse.

I've persuaded Swami Nembutal to do a horoscope for SFPA. His only request was that I "ignore the sneers of the bastards in the apa -- and the other member too." Try as I might, I could not get him to reveal who that other member was. Owell. Enjoy his revelations, and be assured that the all-wise Swami Nembutal is never wrong.....

★ WITH SWAMI ★ ★ NEMBUTAL ★

AQUARIUS * JAN 20 - FEB 18 * The innate intelligence and quick minds of Aquarians allow them to lie a lot successfully. Their eccentric brilliance is balanced by a careless impracticality. They make the same mistakes over and over. People often call them dumb, but they're only self-defeating.

PISCES * FEB 19 - MAR 20 * Pisceans have a vivid imagination and often think they are being conspired against. Those born in the Fish sign talk a lot but rarely achieve because of cowardice. They do terrible things to small animals. Pisceans lack confidence and flaunt power if they get it.

ARIES * MAR 21 - APR 19 * The sign of Aries produces daring pioneer types who hold most people in contempt. They are quick-tempered, impetuous, scornful and arrogant. Aggressive spirits breed a tendency to cheat. Aries women are haughty bitches. Aries men are foolhardy jerks. They are not very nice.

TAURUS * APR 20 - MAY 20 * The practical and persistent Taureans work like hell. Most people think they are stubborn and bull-headed. This is because it's true. Taureans are loyal and rather stupid. If the truth were known, most born under the sign of the Bull are Communists.

GEMINI * MAY 21 - JUNE 20 * The Gemini are intelligent but restless. They are carefree and frequently bisexual. The astrological inclination to expect too much for too little makes them a bunch of cheapskates. Gemini are fickle. A characteristic of the bunch is incest.

CANCER * JUNE 21 - JULY 22 * Crabs are sympathetic and very understanding of other people's problems. That makes people think they're suckers. To make it worse, Cancer people procrastinate. They never achieve anything. Most Cancers wind up on welfare.

LEO * JULY 23 - AUG 22 * Leos think they are born leaders. Other people think they're pushy and arrogant. Leos are vain and dislike honest criticism because they are bullies at heart. These Lions are just big egos. They want the world, are are thus basically thieves all.

VIRGO * AUG 23 - SEPT 22 * The Virgo is a logical, orderly type who hates any sort of chaos. This nit-picking is sickening to their friends. Virgos are cold, controlled and unemotional. Sometimes they fall asleep while making love. Ultimately, Virgos make good bus drivers.

LIBRA * SEPT 23 - OCT 22 * Libras are very artistic and have a difficult time with reality. This sign produces many queers and prostitutes. Libran chances for employment and monetary gain are excellent. All Libra people die of venereal disease.

SCORPIO * OCT 23 - NOV 21 * Scorpions are shrewd in business and can't be trusted. They frequently reach the very pinnacle of success through their total lack of ethics. Scorpions have a strong will and like to spite people. Most are murdered.

SAGITARIUS * NOV 22 - DEC 21 * Children of the Archer are optimistic and enthusiastic. They move fast and tend to rely on luck to make up for their lack of talent. Sagitarians love physical activity. The majority are drunks or dopers. People often laugh at them behind their backs.

CAPRICORN * DEC 22 - JAN 19 * Capricorns are serious and conservative. Also stuffy and terribly afraid of taking risks. Consequently they don't achieve much. There has never been a Capricorn of any importance. Capricorns live in the suburbs and grow crabgrass. They should avoid standing still too long, for they tend to take root and become hedge shrubs.

charlybdi's

THE SOUTHERNER #66 (GHLIIIOE) * A record mailing without anything (significant) for me to creeb about! Bravo, Guy! Twenty-four participating roster slots, including five active couples, and Bob Jennings contributing gigantic zines. A bigger apa than the SFPA of my era. (Not that my era as a member has stopped. I was refering to my era as OE.) In those days there was never 135 pages of franked or waitlist material in a mailing. Our roster was limited to twenty. Couple participation was rare. It was a smaller, more in-turned group than today's (but I think more closely knit). The goal was to make SFPA a quality, prestige apa. Lots of talk was flapped about as to whether SFPA was close to SAPS or not. Even then, FAPA was deadly dull. SAPS had a super spirit and high quality material. A number of us were in both SAPS and SFPA. We compared opinions. During the early seventies I'd forgotten these aspirations and debates. To recall them now, when SFPA is the most lively and interesting apa around, is a kick. I kept the faith. It's a pleasure to see new fannish generations keeping it too.

My quarrels with your inclusions, by the way, are directly with you. I like Kelly Freas and think he's a great artist, but I get direct mail advertising from the gentleman already. There's absolutely no reason to send commercial advertising through SFPA. (Even for ole Kelly.) We get it anyway!!

I always have and still do object to club zines in SFPA. They are extra baggage. As OE I let them through, but tried to sh*t verbally upon the offending frankers. You do it as private member Guy Lillian. I hope OE Guy shows enough restraint another mlg (when no record is at stake -- I honestly won't want to deny you that) to sit on member Guy's impulses. Damn it! Too many pages can be as bad for an apa as too many!

On the forthcoming elections, are you going to have a voting bonus? Dave made some excellent comments on the subject. I endorse his views. In a sampling as small as the SFPA roster the voting bonus (or rather, the lack thereof) can have tangible effects on results. People should be encouraged to vote, rather than the reverse.

If that computer tabulation which the Hughes introduced last time is as popular as it seems, then I volunteer to provide it this year. I'm a computer professional, so I understand all the ramifications. Just send me the ballots and then I'll introduce my ballot and Kathy's. All those raw quivering points. Should this procedure disturb you I am perfectly willing to go against precedent and submit my votes in advance (and request Kathy to do the same). Either way, I have the computer and the expertise. I am a volunteer.

I consider myself neutral in this exercise, having been eliminated from serious consideration by my controversial stances of late. I would, however, object strenuously to any non-member of SFPA tallying the ballots. This applies to waitlisters. There's an interesting quote from DR. NO that I shan't bother repeating.

mailing comments

CELKO'S HOME COMPANION #15 (Joe Celko) * It's a surprise to see you back on the waitlist so soon, Joe. Back in Georgia, for that matter. Troubles? Tell us about it sometime. (More interesting than reprint articles.)

Yes, APL is a nice thing. It is mathematical. Nevertheless, I don't consider anybody a programmer who must have higher level languages to do programming. Hell, assembly is the truth. I write compilers, interpreters and meta-structural programs. If I deign to touch a higher-level language it's as an exercise. It's so much fun to take cheap little minicomputers and make them perform miracles. Good money for small independent companies too.

CELKO'S HOME COMPANION #14 (Joe Celko) * So how cum this issue arrived after #15? A full week. It is anchored in the past. Perhaps it might have saved your membership. Whatever, it is not current. I suppose your return to Georgia precipitated this onto us. Well, it's a long wait list. I'm sure you will have time to develop some fresh material while you're lingering on the list.

Go is a game I learned from a book as a child. For years I had no one to play it with, as my friends just never cared to learn. When I ran into Russ Chauvenet in 1965 he knew. But I met Russ at a chess tournament in Baltimore and there was no Go set available. Ron Ellik also played, but I never had a chance to play against him either. Finally I discovered that a fellow at CMC plays, but I beat him consistently. He knows even less than I do. Somehow I think fate is telling me to stick to chess. So I shall.

THE SFPA LIBERATION ARMY (Gary, Teri and Stven) * Oh you foolish few, to announce your intentions in advance to the California Mafia. Of course a contract was immediately let on all three of you. We didn't specify the method of execution, other than it be brutal and prolonged. Besides, Hank was glad to get the work. Mi Chin Hrt, indeed!

THE REST OF HUIT 9.1 (Meade Frierson) * This is a hard one to comment. When I said last mailing that I'd ignore the overwrought stuff I meant it. We all need a cool-down period. Let me tippy-toe thru Huit and see what I can find...

Your mention of winning two pulpzines as a prize kicks me into belated action. I just searched out the issue of Planet Stories contributed by D*v* H*1*n as prize for the Hank Reinhardt Parody Contest I've been intending to run for several mlg's now. Thanks for the impetus. See the official announcement elsewhere in this magazine. I trust you will be participating?

Yeah, '54 wasn't such a hot year. I liked '56 a lot better, myself. That's about it. I was never much good at ballet, but I suppose it's better than a simple "noted". Maybe 9.2.....

BOB JENNINGS FOR SFPA OE (Bob Jennings) * Gosh. Before this was able to tickle my eyeballs I'd already excitedly run off a test stencil for my revived mimeo, and that stencil featured my Hank for OE parody. Think not I was thieving. Why years ago I ran myself for OE against Don Markstein on a phoney platform. A fun but obvious idea.

A funny piece. The need to raise the copy requirement is however illusionary, as well as demanding of our current membership. I propose that we instead sell Supporting Memberships. Surely there are many fans, Southern and Yankee, who are launching for the opportunity to boost our glorious apa and at the same time cover themselves with prestige but who are simply too busy to be bothered with activity requirements. As official Supporting Members they would enjoy the fame associated with SFPA membership without the burden of activity, mailings or votes. All this for only \$7.50 a year. On an annual basis they would receive a copy of the Egoboo Poll results and a purple sucker.

IMK PUBLICATION #200 (Irvin Koch) * Well, here's Irvin Koch back on the waitlist. Congrats on two-hundred zines, Irvin. Still producing material of the same quality as you did in days of yore, I see. Better mimeo work, though.

Doesn't your Chattacon conflict a wee bit with the Halfacon? Did you consult Guy Lillian? There just aren't enough months in the year for all the cons these days, are there. Quite a hearty menu of fanac.

THE SFPA OF '76 (Alan and Rosie and Stven and Teri) * Hey, you guys should make a movie. With credits like you have on this zine how could it miss?

A nice fun effort. I laughed myself silly over this one. Of course I was under the influence of a Certain Vegetable Substance (paprika) but that only intensified my enjoyment of your narsty parodic efforts. It was strange, however, how well you captured the stylistic foibles of most apa members and failed so miserably when you attempted to attack my lucid, penetrating, stylistically brilliant style of chess annotation. Perhaps it was because you left out some moves. If I may: 6. ...B-QB6. 9. PxNRKP ch. 11. KxK, QxQ. That should get it.

THE GREAT RICH IS DEAD #1 (OE frank) * Ave atque vale.

THE NEW PORT NEWS #38 (Ned Brooks) * How did you and Sam Long get hooked up in a publishing project? That's incredible!

The squib on Rockefeller is funny. He has been done rather well by Mr. Max Ernst. The final touch, that litho title, is so transparent that even Rocky should have seen it. But I guess not.

Certainly there's no real power in an apa. Yeah, I was a trifle amazed also that the Hughes resigned. The root of it all is ego involvement. The human being identifies with things and makes the imaginary real. We all get upset when our pet thoughts are threatened. I know that my reaction to discovering that I was being called a power-grabbing desparado, willing to see SFPA die in order to gratify my fiendish desires, would have occasioned belly-laughes rather than outrage if I hadn't spent ten years of my life trying to build and nourish the apa. I was furious. It was the first time. After the

ridiculous flap of this first episode, I wouldn't react in this fashion again. I've learned. But the intangible power invoked in that struggle was painful to feel. I'm sure the Hughes hurt too. The sword of politics is two-edged. It only cuts those who are involved, however, and thus your mystification is understandable. You are right that it was silly and invisible. More's the pity.

Hmmm. Let me quarrel with you about that infinite number of two-dimensional shapes with constant diameter that are not circles. (There are, of course, an infinite number of circles.) As I understand diameter it is a line passing thru the geometric center of a closed curve. That "geometric center" is the key. Certainly you may generate a shape by rotating a diameter about the geometric center while "sliding" the diameter up and down the shape's center point.

Somehow this doesn't seem too clear, but you already know the shapes so I'll plunge on to the point. Which is: none of these shapes will work for a manhole cover. The reason is that while geometry may define them as constant diameter, there will always be a chord which exceeds the diameter in length. Such a cover could be dropped right through. Alas and ouch!

A circle works because the chord of maximum length is the diameter. More on this later, when n-sided regular polygons enter the discussion in another mailing comment. Plane geometry fans, arise!

IT COMES IN THE MAIL #17 (Ned Brooks) * Very interesting to thumb thru your zine and note the publications, the comments, the fannish rumors. Makes me dream of having time to read again. I've not read much in the last few years. (Not much non-technical stuff, that is, and I count chess literature of instructional type as technical stuff.) For pleasure reading, SFPA has probably made up a good third of my diet. That's getting too narrow. I'll have to make adjustments.

So where does "JABBERWOCKY -- novelty fox trot song" come from? Kathy may try it on the organ when I finish with ICITM.

DEEDS IN DETAIL (Gary Steele) * A conreport on red ink is hot indeed. Unless I was there, it's usually difficult to find comment hooks. I kinda watch for lines that can be taken more than one way. For instance, you say: "...P.L. and I changed clothes for the banquet." Did you look stunning in her outfit?

ATKINS: THE NIGHT SFPAN (Gary & Alan Kolchak) * Gee, thanks, you guys. After all these years I'm finally featured in SFPA fan fiction other than my own. I mean, it was getting embarrassing. Always a bit character, never a hero. At last things are set straight. In a fine, witty one-shot, too. I enjoyed the hell out of this. My favorite line was about George being stuffed into a Maytag and wishy-washed to death. (Don't take that wrong, George!) Funny, funny, funny.

WORLD FAAN CON DEPRESS REPORT (Don Markstein) * One of those things, I guess, but I'm sorry to hear that the WFC didn't work out. I know you well enough to realize that one setback will not phase you. (Or even faze you.) You are made of the same stern stuff as Lester Jaundice, who is famed for his pronouncement: "If at first you don't succeed, fuck it."

PENNY FRIERSON FOR OE! (Penny Frierson) * Well, hello, Ms. Candidate. There's no doubt of your qualifications. You have a long membership and a steady standing in the Box Scores. Shows genuine interest in SFPA. I guess the thing that puzzles me is the "Viable Alternative" jass. Alternative to what? Gene Reed personally? Stven Carlberg personally? They're your opposition. I know you can't mean your planks, because "fairness and equality" and "meeting deadlines" are things all candidates (serious ones, that is) promise reflexively. You wouldn't be saying that Gene and Stven don't represent fairness, for that would in itself be unfair.

Well, whatever. You're a good person and would do a fine job as OE, I'm sure. I've announced for Stven and continue that endorsement. I think he's the one truly most interested in the job. He'll be the one who remains as enthused at the end of a year as he is now. Meaning no offense, I can't feel as sure about you and Gene. Stven has also been an OE before. You cite lack of previous experience as one of the weaknesses of Guy's administration. Such would not be the case with Stven. But I would be happy under your administration (or Gene's).

COGITO ERGO SUM, COGITO (PL Caruthers) * Well, this demonstrates you can do legal activity. Congratulations! After that squeaky reentrance zine and a zippo mailing it was in doubt. Keep up the activity now. Make us all happy.

Fuzz of yours (from the cover sheet, of course) is glued to the exterior surface of the photo on my copy. Is this standard or extra-special? You gave The David an orange moustache.

Sounds like the liquor store job is a hard-working one, but good. You must be doing well. When the zine appeared four months ago I wondered about the permanence of the booze shop position. Sounded too good to be true. May the good luck continue.

As we seem to get back South every two years (and this was one of those years) it'll probably be a while before we pack up the chilluns and fly South. There'll probably be an Atkins family reunion in Alabama next June. No DSC, though. (Alas!) There's a slim chance that Kathy and I (or maybe I alone) will make the Halfa-con. I do hate missing the Reinhardt Roast! And I quarrel so rarely with Hank that if I did so at that particular convention it would be a rare roast beef. How can I ignore that?

THE FAN OF BRASS #1 (Doug Wirth) * What a pleasure it was to spy this zine in the mailing and realize that you'd found time to stay in! A nice section of mailing comments, even. My Apa Elitest heart beats warmer. I like quality material in the apa I like best. (And although there is some minor dispute over whether I have a right to hold opinions, much less express them publicly, I shall continue to like good material much better than poor material.) Glad you're still with us, Doug! If you'd resigned who would be left to send broken mirrors thru?

A funny parody. I hesitate to mention this, but a parody of Doc Savage in SFPA vein takes a certain kind of clear-thinking witty mind. Yes, Doug, it's been done before. Ten years ago. There've only been two minds in SFPA's history so similar as to produce the very same parody. Like individuals produce like results they say. Don't blush and shuffle your feet in modesty. Mr. Wirth, when I reveal that the other SFPAn who parodied

Doc Savage was none other than Dave Hulan. But I'm sure you won't. Dave's zine will have appeared earlier in this mailing and I'll bet he took three pages to tell you the same thing.

History is a rather valuable tool which aids evaluation of the present. You draw conclusions about people based on the huffings and puffings of the present when the clear pattern of several years behavior sheds much light. Just a comment, not a judgment. It took me a long time to learn this simple thing about life.

SPACE CHICKENS IN THE SUNSET #1 (Joe Staton) * I notice you comment on bad zines, so-so zines and good zines -- but not my zine. What's wrong, Joe? Do I say nothing at all or say it all right? Go ahead, tell me. I won't be hurt and besides there's a whole continent between us.

Saw FAREWELL, MY LOVELY last weekend. 'Twas most excellent, as hoped but not expected. Mitchum was tired and battered and tough. The sensitivity was played for, but didn't come across with as much authenticity. Of coors, I doubt if Marlowe himself let it show much. The sets were meticulously done. Really nice. Charlotte Rampling was a bit too emphatic with her High Money/Society Bitch act but alright on the whore side. Nice slim body too. The real artistic mistake was having Sam Yorty do a cameo streaking the Tujunga Canyon culvert. That was crass. I recommend the movie. Mitchum kicks the shit out of Eliot Gould.

Some very good sharp lines. The one to Guy on "tits" is a classic. The whole zine is filled with them. Much appreciated, but it'll teach you to buy those cheap cotton undershorts that shrink so much on the first washing.....

SOUTH OF THE MOON #10 (Tim Marion) * A good try, if incomplete. Thanks for franking it thru, Ned. Your SFPA write-up needs corrections. It may seem like it at times, but I wouldn't say that "much" of SFPA is one-shots. Not page-count, that is. Percentage of titles runs higher. Etc. Etc. Too gross and blasphemous an error to even mention is the substitution of "allegiance" for "alliance". For lesser errors than this, neofans have been bound with barbed wire, soaked in pitch, hanged and burned.

COOKIES MADE FROM ELVES (Alan Hutchinson) * Wow, a big zine with lots of comment hooks. (Now all I have to do is find them.) Following the prime law of egoscan, I'll start with your comments to me. Vern Hasz is the walrus.

I can see I should explain the Box Scoring to you. I guess you were standing behind the door last explanation. Or maybe not a member yet. The zines a person contributes while on the wait list count in the Box Scores if and only if the wl string extends into membership. That is, if Bob or Rachel miss a mailing they lose their wait list string.

On the other hand they're not penalized by a mailing-missed. The reasons for this convention or subtle and historical, owing something to English common law, but most of all to the fact that my first contribution was made as a wler. Is that clear?

And yes there is a fuzzy line between contribution-possible status and zippo. Take the case of a membership lapsing because of lacktivity. If there was material (under four pages) in the last mailing before expulsion, there the ex-

pelled member stills bats a thousand. If a member misses two mailings in a row and is dropped, then he gets only one miss in the Box Scores. My rule is to only count as At Bats those mailings in which a member appears on the roster. The exception is the wait-list continuity rule explained earlier.

For purposes of Box Score credit I only count fanzines. Con flyers, franks, etc. are not counted. However, a con flyer stapled into a zine, say as cover, does count because it is part of the fanzine. A bunch of con flyers stapled together don't count (because I don't regard them as a fanzine...). I'll admit that many cases require special judgment. There, I calls 'em as I sees 'em. Is that all clear?

We interrupt comments on SFPA 66
for a

S U P E R S H I F T

to...

S F P A 68

THE SOUTHERNER #68 (G&S) * A good mailing, more comfortable for my tastes than a giant one. With a membership the size of SFPA's, any mailing over 500 pages is going to have too much inclusion material for my taste. As this point has been debated in the past, I'll say no more.

A good idea of Guy's to identify waitlist zines on the contents page. I hope Stven continues it. The reason is simply that it makes things easier on me when computing the Box Scores, now that I'm including waitlisters with two or more consecutive mailings hit.

To Stven, my congratulations for his victory in the OElection. It was a calm one to my eyes. To Guy, congratulations for keeping SFPA alive and healthy during some turbulent days. Guy managed to avoid letting new hassles start during his administration, and for that I am grateful. It was a most interesting year.

To us all,
a belated Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. (And for Don Markstein and Dave Hulan, a Happy Chanuka.)

TALISMAN #4½ (Cliff Biggers) * For Christmas we got an Italian Monopoly set ("Monopoli") from Kathy's brother, who is with the USArmy in Italy. Last night we christened it with Dave, Marcia and Rachel. Sure does make one yearn for an Italian dictionary (and maybe grammar text). The equivalent cards for Chance and Community Chest are hard to read. We managed somehow, but made mistakes I'm sure. Just like Asterix in French, this would be a great way to learn languages.

The crime of rape covers a very broad range of actions and attitudes, which confuses discussion. I agree that it is despicable and that our legal postures should be reformed. As it presently stands the word "rape" is a catch-all to describe everything from sex with a willing underage female to brutal beating culminating in a forcible sex act. Are they the same thing? The law says so. I can't believe how ambiguous our legal standards are in this area, whereas in matters involving property the laws are so much more graduated. It's another sign of America's neurotic viewpoints.

Look at that wide range again. In California, if you have sex with a seventeen

year old hooker that you picked up in a bar (where twenty-one is the legal age of entrance), then you're guilty of rape. (On the other hand, the chick can simultaneously be prosecuted for prostitution -- a neat paradox of ideas.) You're guilty of exactly the same crime if you force a five year old child. Where's the reality?

The key is to reform the laws and processes. The violence involved should be prosecuted separately. Easier methods of report should be instituted. The legal archaism that equated any woman who's had sex out of wedlock with a prostitute must be overturned.

Many of the problems facing reform lie in the constrained and guilt-linked sexual concepts of the older power figures. (Not to mention the curious old idea that women are chattel, which lingers in quaint ways in our legal code, despite open repudiation of its validity.) This is an issue which needs public pressure on our legislative bodies. A campaign is clearly underway. To succeed it will need a vocal support from a good portion of the electorate. Issues like this are usually pendulum in nature, being emotional at root, and we must hope that proper care is taken in any reform measure.

APOLOGY (Gene Reed) * Mimeographs obey the Fzotz Perversity Laws for In animate (!) Objects to perfection. I've had many troubles in the past year with my machine. (Which is an ABDick 525 like the one at your church.) It would only be fair, however, to reveal that the beast gave eight years of flawless service before developing its cantankerousness. Your Rex serviceman sounds like a good guy and I wish you the best of repairs -- and infrequent ones.

DWERD'S DWELLING #19a (Gene Reed) * I think I got several of your trivia questions right, though I can't be sure. The one that stumped me was about "Gary Steele". What comic did he appear in? I don't think it was "The Amazing SFPA-fen". He's certainly not a Carl Barks character. Was it NPP?

I'll agree with Dave that you're one of the "core" members of SFPA. There are 29 on the roster. I then add Bob Jennings, our invitee, who's show real participation in his return wait up the wl. Of those 30, I count 15 as "core" members, characterized by regular participation and interaction (with tenure weighted in as a factor). In the first layer, surrounding the core in a less regular or intense fashion, I count 8. There are then 5 peripheral members, with sporadic participation (often characterized by non-interaction contributions). Finally, there are 2 marginal members who have yet to indicate more than token involvement.

I think this is a strong profile for an apa. To have 50% in the true core is a rarity. SFPA is a strong apa because of its large core group, but also because of the very few marginal members. This marginal area is where most of the turnover occurs. Too high a turnover rate can bring chaos, while too low a rate will introduce stagnation. SFPA seems about ideally balanced.

From my experience with big companies, I'd say they suffer from confusion of goals. You say that one can't work hard enough to please a big company. This is true from a certain viewpoint, that of the dollar profit production. Big companies seem to lose human contact within their extended and regulation-bound structures. The single remaining measurement becomes profit. Supervisors learn to drive their people, hold raises down, and maneuver in political ways rather than straightforward ones. Even humanistic supervisors find themselves practically powerless against the bureau-

cratic "company guidelines" that stipulate how much, when, etc. The individual human will likely be smothered. The mill regards them as mere cogs.

Unfortunate though this may be, it's easy to understand the evolution of such policy. When companies are small the principles can control the entire operation. As small companies rely on competent people at all levels to successfully compete, there is an attitude of concern for human values. As a company grows, more power is delivered into the hands of persons not so vitally concerned with the company itself, but more with salary and position. As the principles concurrently recede, they control by less direct methods. Standards of measurement, tending more and more towards dollar production, are used to replace direct visibility. The "guidelines" become gospel. Many of the exceptional people who made that small company grow then go elsewhere. Regimentation sets in.

I've watched it happen. If any way exists to combat this creeping strapwork, it is in the vital participation of company officers and latitude within the personnel department. Perhaps impossible goals when many thousands of employees are involved.

THE "I'M SO LONELY" ONE-SHOT (Mark Verheiden) * Go South, young man.

LAST TYPO IN PARIS #2 (Doug Wirth) * All of your silkscreens and special work has been very much appreciated in this quarter. If the comments weren't overly long, I suspect it's because it's hard to say a lot. I know the problem --- when I run a long piece of fiction that's taken me many hours and much creative energy to complete, it typically draws a one or two sentence comment, if that. The items that draw the lengthiest comments are rarely the creative things. Irritating, but I suppose inevitable. I guess the answer is to do balanced zines, with lots of interchange and a few controversial comments.

What is a "drawing clerk"? Does it have anything to do with artistic abilities?

I like march music too. It does rather nicely as background music for mailing comments as I hurry to meet a deadline. The tempo makes me type faster and more emphatically. Do your mc's pick up overtones of the background music? I think most people are affected. Guy plays the Stones and look at his stuff. I play Bob Dylan and look at mine. To judge by the length of his mc's, Dave Hulan must play "The Flight of the Bumblebee" in doubletime.

THE EVE OF THE DEADLINE #6 (Don Markstein) * Hmmmm. To place blame for the lateness of the mailing on the lateness of Mel #50, which was late indeed, is to far stretch a point. I asked for no such dispensation, though I'm flattered that Guy offered it. In fact, I called Guy the weekend after I returned from Columbus (and thus could commandeer the WATS line) to let him know that Mel #50 was definitely not on its way. He was kind enough to offer to postmail. The record straight now? (And, yes -- I appreciate your kind comment also.)

How will Charles Korbas come face to face with Lester Boutillier by climbing the wl? I guess you mean the SAPS wl, not our illustrious SFPA one. Sounds like a very good reason to not reconsider joining SAPS once more. Blehhh.

Not enough room to start a comment on another zine with only two lines left.

IGNITES (Various Neofen) * Absolutely no comment.

PERCHANCE TO DREAM #2 (Janet Davis) * Welcome into SFPA. You should have come to $\frac{1}{2}$ acon to boost my Members Met ratio, which now stands at 22/29. Well, I enjoyed your zine.

Correct about the Simon and Garfunkel songs in THE GRADUATE. Also, "April Come She Will" was played after his breakup with the girl and "The Big Bright Green Pleasure Machine" was on another car's radio when they stopped at the burger drive-in. Mike Nichols really hit on a good idea when he used Simon and Garfunkel. Their songs said as much about Benjamin's state of mind as Dustin Hoffman's superb acting did. I love the movie.

Some friends of mine attended Emory, but that was years ago. I feel old. You're planning on being a doctor? Emory does have a med school, right? (Or am I misremembering.) Lots of work ahead of you, but college is such a fun time of life that the toil goes practically unnoticed. Good luck!

THE NEW PORT NEWS #40 (Ned Brooks) * An issue of Clarges was sold for \$2?! Gee, I've got a fortune in my closet. Gotta run tell Kathy that all that clutter she complains about is really a valuable investment. (Errrr, did you get the name of the ~~sycker~~ clever fellow who paid two bucks?)

By the way, is that supposed to be your cover on page two?

I recall the Jerry Todd books. They were pretty much enjoyable. My favorites, I think by the same author, were the Poppy Ott books. Crazy, man. The church library had them all. That's twenty years and fifteen hundred miles away. I'd like to see a few again, just to stir old memories.

Aren't voice-prints a graph of the frequency distribution as a function of intensity? If so, then someone with supple vocal cords and access to such a machine could learn to mimic another's voice-print. Using feed-back techniques, people can do amazing things. I'm confident in the ability of the human organism to precisely control itself, even on the "involuntary" level. (I can even do something "impossible" myself, though I did learn before reading that it couldn't be done.) The human being is amazing. (Fantastic, Astounding, Weird.....)

GUY H. LILLIAN #30 (Spiritus Mundi) * Deidre's pome was appreciated. Your reply as well. Hank's letter was typical for the old man -- funny. I don't understand the presently popular practice of publishing letters in apazines, unless perhaps it's for page count, but these two were by members and dealt with germane topics, so I applaud.

There are boring diamonds, you know. They are the tips of diamond drills. (This in reference to your mc to Dave.)

I agree with you that there's nothing immoral in eating oysters. (Never again tell me that I've not sided with you against Don Markstein.) The dietetic moralities that exist in this world, most of religious nature make little sense to me. Cannibalism, I am against. (This more as a matter of potential self-preservation rather than morality.) ((For your benefit, Guy, let me say that in this discussion I define the "eating" of another human being as "ingestion and digestion".... Other definitions belong in other discussions, or perhaps New Orleans one-shots.)) In point of fact, just about everything that

can be digested is eaten by people somewhere on earth. The food crunch is felt severely in many parts of the globe. In Africa the lowly termite is considered an important source of protein. The Japanese eat things that make Don Markstein turn green. Even Americans, a picky people, are being sold food that would surprise them if only they knew. Things will only get worse in the foreseeable future. But enough sermonizing -- the sitter has arrived and Kathy & I are headed out for dinner at a local sushi bar.

Films. We don't share too many in the favorite ten category, though I do think you picked good ones. Some of mine include Inherit the Wind, The Apartment, Lawrence of Arabia, A Man for All Seasons, Sweet Bird of Youth and On the Waterfront. One of the best and most enjoyable, though perhaps not really a top ten number, is Casablanca. I also think One, Two, Three is one of the funniest ever made. Grand entertainment is The Sting. Best creation of a science fiction epic -- Clockwork Orange.

A couple of days ago Kathy and I journed to the Cinerama Dome in Hollywood to view Kubrick's latest, Barry Lyndon. The photography was superb, the costumes and settings opulent. The acting was weakest in the strongest roles. While Ryan O'Neal did a fabulous job as the con man in Paper Moon, he disappointed me here. His characterization was of a shallow man, a opportunistic but essentially stupid man. Throughout the movie there was change in the makeup and settings, but no discernible change in Barry Lyndon. Did he learn nothing, grow in no way? Apparently not. Such a waste, then, of 3½ hours worth of film.

I do think that Kubrick was responsible in some measure. He seemed to try keeping the incidents more as literary excerpts rather than cinema scenes. Incidents would fade into narration. Happenings and emotions would be described instead of demonstrated. Such a neutral feeling resulted that I could have cared less about Barry and his supporting characters. Was Kubrick attempting to preserve a flavor of Thackeray by this technique? I assume so. What he did was emasculate the film. If you see it, Guy, I'll be looking forward to your comments.

To clarify my involvment in the Unka Scrooge "ploy", let me state that for some time prior to the happening I'd been wanting to do that for the sake of my memories. U\$ was my all time favorite comic, and prolly will be forever. The fact that it presented opportunity to make a point was entirely secondary. For the same reasons I oppose inclusions, I'd have not engaged in an unredeemed ploy. Destructive plays may be giggles for a few, but they hurt everybody in the long run.

T. McGee, fine ruffian, is well encountered anytime. I wasn't aware that you'd not been into McGee untill recently. I always envy people just picking up the series, because I know the joy of reading those books for the first time. Other McDonald you might enjoy: The Girl, the Gold Watch and Everything (a classic fun 'un); The Brass Cupcake (tough private detective); The Only Girl in the Game (Vegas affair); A Flash of Green (Florida thriller, but not McGee); and The Last One Left (which was going to be a McGee, but got written for the hardback trade before ole Trav was Discovered).

Why so into the Jewish attack syndrone? I haven't read Dave's comments as preaching, especially not hard conversion stuff. Being exposed to good old fashioned Southern revivalism in my youth, I know whereof I speak. I think you misread Dave's personal interest in the topic for preachment.

EGOBOO POLL RESULTS (GHLIIIOE) * In which Alan Hutchinson is reconfirmed as our President and Spiritual Leader. I hope Alan recognizes his clear victory, and in it the high esteem in which SFPA holds him. Congratulations, Alan! Your work has consistently been at the top range of SFPA material. May you be inspired to continue this fine output for many years to come. If you do, there's no doubting you'll win more Egoboo Polls. And well deserve them!

As for me, I'll have to try harder in 1976. I promise you some competition, Alan. (Likewise to Guy, Gary, Dave, Stven, and Don.) This was my worst showing in ten years, though I did manage to hang in the top ten and that pleases me. Thanks to those who gave me points. I appreciate it.

YES! WE'RE GOING TO A PARTY! (Cecil Hutto) * / (Opening slash courtesy of a small Siamese cat name of Possum Blossum. I caught it trying to sit on my typer. It struck a key in its hasty departure.)

Well, y'all made it to the con and the parties. A pre-con oneshot is a good idea; will it be coupled with a post-con oneshot? Stay active, Cecil, and get Neal on the wl.

JIANT-SIZE MENATHEE TRAVELS (Gary Brown) * Received your note on page credit split for you and Alan, but after I'd already done the Box Scores. As a note to myself for next time, the split should have been Brown 21, Hutchinson 8. Right?

My favorite of this good art is "The Rainmaker". Loved the Nilsson song, though it played on sporadically on the AM in Ellay. Making the song into a Disney style comic strip was a stroke of inspiration. Now I may have to buy the Nilsson album.

Also liked the bacover, part of that series you were talking about. Very nice piece of table-turning.

DEEDS IN DETAIL '75 (Gary Steele) * Good photo on the cover and a thorough conreport. Sounds like Rivercon was much more in the style of Westercons than the loose organization "visit" conventions that I associate with the DSC. There's a lot to be said for both types. I like them both, though the attendees and my mood determine the favorite. If the group is small and congenial, then minicons are unbeatable. If there's a bunch, I prefer the pacing and variety of an organized con -- there will be short minicons in a chameleon series within the structure of the maxicon. DSCs would now seem to be the latter style. Next time there's one in Birmingham I'll have to come South for it.

IT COMES IN THE MAIL #18 (Ned Brooks) * Always interesting to discover what has been falling from the sky into your mailbox, but equally hard to find comment hooks. Your humorous asides are enjoyed, as was the photo page in this issue.

HOBGOBLINS AND POLISH JEWS #1 (Charles Korbas) * Unless you're having some fun at our expense, SFPA may have its first true bigot (racial style) since Larry Montgomery was riding high (and bedsheeted). Every Southern apa needs at least one bigot to maintain the image. I'm surprised to see ours headquartered in Hawaii. Perhaps this explains the difference in your

style from that of Larry. Or perhaps it's the times. You buttress opinions with the opinions of others and global generalizations. Well, we'll see what evolves.....

Agreed that Germany could not have mounted an invasion of the United States (assuming a successful conquest of Europe -- including Western Russia, of course). I think the real danger was of a different sort. German technology was highly geared for the tools of war. Their research wasn't far behind us in the race for a nuclear bomb. Their missile skills were far in advance of the West. Rocket strikes against England show their bent. As Germany solidified their hold on Europe, nuclear missiles would take shape. True, not ICBMs; but mid-Atlantic launches could have devastated our East Coast. (Make that "launches"...) The war would not have ended with the fall of Russia and England. America was embroiled. If Truman could do it to Japan, certainly Hitler was insane enough to order a nuclear attack on the American mainland. Not a pleasant alternate universe. (Though it might have precluded New York's fiscal problems.)

HOBGOBLINS AND POLISH JEWS #2 (Charles Korbas) * More of same, including genealogy by nose shape (!). Did you perform this miracle of observation from photographs? I would think statistics offer a more reliable assurance. If it were a photo you used, however, shouldn't you run a picture of yourself thru SFPA and let other experts have their fun?

Don't take my response as hostile. I've enjoyed reading your material and hope you continue to contribute.

TAILS FROM THE CRYPT v17 (Alan Hutchinson) * Check cashing in Florida is conditioned by the high number of transients. We have the same problem in California. You must realize that these here-today gone-tomorrow people cannot be trusted to honor their paper. Sharp-eyed clerks are trained to spot the shifty criminal type and demand a credit card as identification. Transients are also known for spitting on sidewalks.

I take back what I earlier said defaming letters in apazines. That Fulldrip Pulpbugle writes well.

In answer to your question about Box Score credit for zines franked thru SFPA, what franks get is not credit but the weiner. (And they'll relish it or I'll kick their buns.) Sorry if it means you can't catchup in the Box Scores.

Speaking of Norman Lear, did you see that introductory show for "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman"? Kathy saw it all. (I missed the first part, being stuck with the job of driving the babysitter home.) The insults were still there, but not nearly so evident as in AITF, etc. Mostly it was just funny commentary on American life, as seem thru the soupstrainer of American preconception. It promises to be super, though runs a bit late. Try to see an episode.

When you wrote "comic fans...discussed sex as it relates to their mania," didn't you mean to say "their mania as it relates to comics"? If there's any doubt as to relative priorities, we could appeal to Guy Lillian, ace comic fan, to set us straight. (Disclaimer!)

If Gene Reed had won the OElection he would indeed have been GROE, but he didn't so any such title has to be Unofficial Editor. This makes him GRUE -- Dean Grennell will sue.

If anyone were to rule over Purgatory (or Limbo), I think Hubert H. Humphrey would be the ideal candidate.

Fanac takes more time than you may have realized. It's not so apparent until the time vanishes, but after being there you see that many hours are used to read the mailing, type stencils (or masters), run them off, collate, staple, and deliver to the USPOD. In my case, it's up in the morning and get the kids off to school about eight, then on to work. I get home between six and seven on normal days. When I walk in the door I want to change clothes and relax for a while -- read the mail, see the family (not always in that order). Because I'm splitting the housework with Kathy, there's tasks to be done. (We don't really split 50-50; I've got maybe 35%, or very slightly more.) Monday nights I play chess. Friday too, if the game is adjourned. A couple of nights a week we go out. I usually work some on the weekends, and an occasional evening. Civic commitment takes some time. Some days are so rough that I just relax at night and don't even attempt thought. Fanac gets what's left. It ain't much. (I've thought about renouncing sleep, but I'm just dreaming...)

Your accident and small claims court experience draws twinges of sympathy from me. Several years ago I had similar problems. It's a reflection on the structure of the law, which supposedly protects us but really allows people like Milette to dodge. Gives them time, etc., in which to skip town. I doubt if there's much to be done about it. Most people are considerably more tied down -- job, home, comic collection -- and can't pull the midnight vanish act. Civil law seems designed to apply to the norm, not the criminal exception. Not too logical. My only suggestion for your predicament is that you put Hutch McAlan on the case.

Speaking of odd coincidences and Lee Sapiro punching out somebody after making a plane trip for that sole purpose, we were talking about that incident at the Hulans' New Years Eve party. My fiendish plan, based on this incident, is for a group of conspirators to attribute all sorts of nasty comments about Lee Sapiro to a Chosen Individual, then send the zines to Sapiro. Naturally he will locate this Chosen Individual and fly to his city to punch him out. To make things peachy keen good clean fun, the Chosen Individual will be Hank Reinhardt. Won't Lee Sapiro be surprised?

Assassination of heads of state, contenders for the throne, opposition leaders and powerful ministers has been a popular human game for untold centuries. In most parts of the world this fact is recognized as part of the risk of the job. Certainly it's an unfortunate and repugnant method, but so is skipping out on debts. Americans, caught more in the grip of media images than grim realities, prefer to view assassination as a madman's action. As a tool of power it's unthinkable (or at least unadmittable) in America. We'll admit that our power figures may be crooks, but not murderers. A glance thru the history books tells us how unrealistic such a posture is. Necessary, perhaps, for the National Security Blanket -- but foolish. Look at the reception most of SFPA is giving your Kennedy theories and you'll see what I mean. We're taught to think in terms of the American Idealism. We'll fight for it.

It's "Press" not "Publishing" Alliance. Read your O-O. (Just no accounting for these neofans...)

Peanut butter and banana sandwiches are quite tastes. The flavors blend well, if unexpectedly. Potatoes La Jolla is a dish in similar vein -- it's potatoes and bananas cooked together. Taste is a whole universe of experiences (the awareness of which, I

suppose, separates the gourmet from the gourmand). Some years ago, when I plunged into the field of Serious cooking, my only objective was to master the preparation of Sauce Bearnaise. Mission accomplished, as those who've dined at chez Atkins are invited to attest, I got interested in flavors. Mixing tastes fascinates me, perhaps because of my experience as a bartender making evial concoctions. I like to take two distinct flavors and marry them with a sauce. For example, when Dave and Marcia were here a couple of weeks ago, I chunked pieces of chicken and Canadian bacon together in an apricot juice and white wine sauce. It was nice enough, but the idea needs some work to bring it to full flower. Probably you'd like it better than peanut butter and banana, though.

Answers to your Monkees Trivia Quiz: 1) zero. 2) banana picker and peanut gatherer. 3) the **** flute. 4) the Bull Moose Party. 5) Citizen Kane. 6) comics with pictures in them because he can't read. 7) waitress. 8) red sox. 9) the Milton Berle Show. 10) Mickey Dolenz.

I checked your answers, but they were all wrong. Thought you might appreciate seeing the correct responses. No, don't thank me. I'd do as much for any fellow rock freak.

BLOTZ #3 (Stven Carlberg) * A nice piece of satire. I laughed at the clever way you did me in. Do I really sound like that in my annotations? If so, I should be selling professionally. Fred Reinfeld made a fortune out of such stuff.

Now suffer.

Skittles, 1964. White: Atkins. Black: Fornoff. 1.P-Q4, N-KB3. 2.N-QB3, P-QN3. 3.P-K4, B-N2. 4.P-B3, P-K3. 5.B-K3, B-N5. 6.B-Q3, O-O. 7.N-K2, P-B4. 8.O-O, PxP. 9.NxP!?, BxN. 10.PxB, P-Q4. The stage is set for a lesson in pawn structures. Black has just inflicted doubled isolated pawns on an open file upon White. This is ordinarily a fatal weakness, but in this case White plans stormy attack. Such is the only remedy for permanent weaknesses. 11.P-K5, KN-Q2. 12.P-KB4, N-B4. 13.BxP ch, KxB. 14.Q-R5 ch, K-N1. And so the storm breaks with a sacrifice. Black has few men to defend his King. 15.R-B3, R-K1. 16.R-R3, K-B1. Black's plan is to flee. White must act swiftly. 17.P-B5!, K-K2. 18.B-N5 ch, P-B3. 19.PxP ch, K-Q2. 20.Q-B7 ch, K-B1. The Black King has reached the Queenside but not safety. It doesn't much matter anymore. 21.PxNP, QxB. 22.QxR ch, K-B2. 23.N-N5 mate.

A NEW SCHOOL (Rachel Hulan) * Yes, ADAS (Area "D" Alternative School) is an interesting place. I wish there had been a place like this when I was in public school. Alas, the Alabama educational system was rather rigid. They frowned on excursions into learning. (Not all teachers, to be fair, but the vast majority. Perhaps it made them insecure.) I think ADAS has been very good for you, bright as you are, in letting you do the things that develop your mentality. What you lack is self-discipline. Maybe the typewriter will develop this virtue, as you'll be responsible for meeting deadlines on your own.

RIDICULOUS STRING SAVER (Marcia Hulan) * I promised to do you and Dave long mailing comments to make up for not mentioning you in my Con Report, and so I shall. I didn't recall at the time what small zines y'all had done. This complicates my task (and tempts me to simply add another page to the Con Report -- but it's already run off). Topics are a difficulty, as I can't very well comment on six lines. So.....

As you're an expert at sewing, etc., let me ask some questions about things that have always puzzled me. When I buy clothes I have trouble getting good fits unless I purchase good suits and have them altered by a tailor. Buying jeans is particularly irritating. If I find a pair that fits at the waist, I can't get into the things. The thighs just aren't big enough for me. On the other hand, if I fit from knees to hips, the waist is far too big for me. Don't clothes manufacturers provide a range of sizes? Am I shopping in the wrong places? What's the scoop?

Another question is what to do with tears in the fabric of favorite leisure shirts. Sometimes salvage is possible, but neither Kathy nor I have been able to save some. One, I cut the arms off and used it for beach wear. Volleyball, etc. But that was a waste in one sense. Any clever ideas?

When we were down Costa Mesa way over the New Years holiday I noticed your doll house (or miniature, if preferred) up against the wall looking forlorn and neglected. Are you giving up that hobby to do fanzines instead? While Xmas shopping for two rotten children I saw furniture that would go in your house. Wow! It is expensive. I'm surprised somebody doesn't get into the business. Labor has to be the major cost. Anybody reasonably clever with wood could turn our nice pieces in spare time. Are those kind of prices standard? If so, what marketing avenues are open? That stuff is a better profit medium than comics.

I was disappointed to see you miss the mailing with a zine of your own. Your material has been interesting and unique. I enjoy it. Get back into stride!

A MOVING EXPERIENCE (Dave Hulan) * Yeah, that was a moving experience. Fan moving parties must date in tradition back to the old "raising" parties of the frontier era. It's a very good feeling, friends all cooperating in a common cause. Dave Locke was even observed performing physical labor. A real first.

The Diplomacy game unfolds well. At this time I need a seventh player, but with all of SFPA to draw on that shouldn't be a big problem. If no one volunteers I'll just play the leftover country on a no-Diplomacy basis. Without allies, I should go fast, but no country will gain an advantage and the full board will be in play. Wilderness #1 should be in this mlg, so no more comments.

My backlog of fanart has been reused for years. I try to do permutations, so the original doesn't appear in the same form or setting. It works out well. A stingy use of masterpieces is a good thing. Another thing I've got is original unused art done on stencil by Steve Stiles for QUIP. To use it now is fair and appropriate. QUIP is dead and the art should see an outlet. (Does anybody know Steve Stiles current address?)

Yes, fanac should be fun or not at all. I went thru the same conflict earlier and came to the same conclusion you did. If I can't enjoy my hobby, I'll not participate. The stuff I do under pressure isn't really good reading, it's filler. I've got too much pride to do much of that.

That sorcery game looked extremely interesting, if complicated. It might be fun to do a postal Sorcery game after the Diplomacy is finished. The play would take lots more mailing, though. If I remember correctly, moves in the Sorcery game are sequential and not simultaneous (as in Diplomacy). The overhead could be enormous. Maybe a Sorcery party in more appropriate. I leave it to you to arrange.....

SPACE CHICKEN (Joe Staton) * Nice cover, catching the spirit of Hanna Barbarian just peachy sweet. Your talents as a satirist are being overlooked, Joe. Your ability to understand and reproduce styles, coupled with that cynical and devastating Staton wit, would make you dynamite as a nationally recognized satirist. Don't ask me how, just do it. (I'll write my congressman in praise.)

Omighod. You don't like people who say Sweet Things. Staton (Joseph Terwilliger), you are a Commie, a Moral Crud, a Markstein sympathiser, a Minacker and a Degenerate Participant in California One-Shots. There, that should make you feel better.

Guy miscounted your pages too? Phlewwplplwww... I guess all the Box Scores are wrong by some insignificant percentage. Damned if I'm going to recount myself. What was the difference?

Back to politeness. I agree that honesty is important, but I can't dispose of tact as condescension. Most "honesty" is opinion, not absolute fact, and thus rather subject to bias and emotion. Honesty is more than just airing feelings. It's an internal obligation as well. There is mental violence as well as physical. If you're mad at somebody do you take a swing? Probably not. You've been trained in the consequences of physical violence. No such training takes place with mental violence. Yet it can be more severely damaging than most physical encounters, which produce results that heal quickly. Unabashed verbal honesty, the unfiltered outpouring of feelings, is no different than unrestrained physical reaction.

Way back up there I said that honesty was important. I meant it. Within the richness of language there are many constructions which convey the same message. The difference is in the overtones. Is there not skill in the combining of words? A person of ability commands both actions and words. A human being knows the condition of all people.

You don't have children, Joe -- I've made the cut myself that denies more -- but they are a lesson in life. Take Dawn, my youngest, who comes with a drawing she has made with the best of her fine motor skills and abstract translative faculties. She says, "I drew it. Do you like it?" I see a crude representation of Santa and the reindeer. Were I not a proud poppa, seeing his five-year-old show creativity, would I say, "Yes, it's beautiful" or would I say "It's a piece of shit compared to what Joe Staton could do"???

What would you do? Honestly.....

EPISTLETTE #2 (Norene Wetherington) * Postal chess again, uh? Watch out, or Stven Carlberg will parody you. Seems the chessic hobbies are good targets for parody. It's fun. What is your playing strength? I know that I would be much better at postal chess because of my ability to take hold of a position and worry it to death. I'm murder in adjourned games. The weakness is patience. I simply lose interest in postal games of any sort. It's the adrenalin of cross-the-board encounters I crave, not the sheer mental exercise. There's the opponent, I want to beat a tough physically-present opponent -- which is why my performance rating versus Experts and Masters is 2248, while against "A" and below it's only 2039. The predominance of weaker foes makes my composite rating stay in the 2100 region. I'm a ripe target for upset is what it means -- motivation is the key.

Isn't half the fun of Christmas gifts in the wrapping? Buy early to avoid the crowds, then wrap with the season.

THE WOMAN WITH TANGLED GREEN HAIR (Diedre Mathews) * A zine with feeling. You seem happy, relaxed, interested in life. It makes me glad to see people happy -- I guess happiness is infectious. Wishes for continuing good life to you, and hopes that you're back with a dialog next mailing.

(Potential comment hook: have you tried the mood rings that are everywhere these days? If so, how do you correlate to the scale of emotions published by the ring makers?)

One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them.....

MENATHEE CELEBRATION #2 (Gary Brown) * Congratulations!

AN IMPORTANT NOTICE (CharlesKorbas) * After this important clarification, it becomes more urgent than ever that your photo (perhaps both profile and full-face) run in SFPA. I doubt if the controversy can be resolved without it.

CUSHLAMOCHREE #6 (Alan ~~xxxx~~ Hutchinson) * You can't fool me with this patently fraudulent issue, Alan. If I've ever seen an attempt to parody Gary Brown parodying Alan Hutchinson, this is it. Don't you realize we're not dumb? Put that in your Shoeless Pashley album and smoke it!

By the way, the cover of my copy is torn. Could you send me a replacement?

POTATO PEELINGS #4 (Kathy Atkins) * The xerox machine (or rather, the Saxon duplicator) wasn't working too well on second sides. Hope you don't mind. I could've spent another hour, but didn't. At least the tiger photo came out well.

Fun reading your comments, but I've answered them in person at some time or another. The sparring, yes too often gets more serious than it should. I've mellowed a lot in the last few years, you'll have to admit. (Wouldn't you?) The response I have to conflict was bred into me when I was a kid -- kill or be killed. When I'm earnest, I'm dead earnest. It's a trait that's served me well many times, though poorly at others. I work on modulating this response with a more intellectual judgment. (I can even play Hearts now without blood in my eye, as was illustrated at the 1/2acon.) By the time I'm as old as Hank is now, I'll be a pussycat.

Your comments really were good. I hope you do some more in this vein, as much time as it does demand. You've got a talent for communication.

ICEPICK #4 (Me) * Hey, Hank! Alabama won. True, they should have played Oklahoma, who would have made the Tide work a little harder for the win, but it was a Bowl Victory. Alabama barely worked up a sweat in beating Penn State. Next year, watch out!

BEDRIDDEN IN B'HAM (Meade Frierson) * Sorry for your illness and for missing you and Penny when I finally did make it South for 1/2acon. But there'll be other cons. Get well fast.

A few years back Kathy and I got a call from two English girls touring America. Billy Pettit had given them our name. They

weren't pushy -- just said hello from Billy and asked about what to see in Ellay. I was curious for news of Billy and, besides, they sounded like interesting people, so we invited them to stay a day or so with us. It worked out super, to our delight. Sue and Stella were really good people. They stayed four days. We took them to Disneyland, a place that blew their minds.

A couple of years later I was sent to London on business. Sue and Stella reciprocated in grand style, acting as tour guides to London and its civilized nightlife. I had a fantastic time. Serrindipity at its best.

A STRING-SAVER FROM PENNY (Penny Frierson) * Buyers at bazaars are funny creatures. A couple of years ago Kathy was in charge of the Boutique section of the PTA Carnival -- sort of a pot pourri sale. She specialized in making two types of items. She enameled lids of little jars, then put corn, beans, rice grains, etc., on with glue and shellacked the whole lid. They were very nice looking and drew all sorts of favorable comment from the shoppers -- but only a few sold until the prices were slashed during the closing minutes of the Carnival. Very strange.

The other item was a foam disk decorated with magic markers. We billed them as "indoor frisbees" and used a varying set of styles in the decoration. Everything from abstracts to Japanese screen methods, from watermelon slices to rocket saucers. For a hour nobody wanted one, then another guy and I started throwing one around. They caught on and sold out in thirty minutes. Who can predict public taste?

ODIN #?! (Hank Reinhardt) * Still nothing but lies, lies, lies. No doubt truth from you would destroy the image of Hank. (Perhaps this Diplomacy game will damage that image, when you're eliminated in Spring, 1903. I was smart -- I became Gamesmaster.) Truth from others (such as my lucid explanation of the Reinhardt method of "bench pressing" at the con) only seems to enhance your reputation. Is there no justice?

I hope you were kidding about wanting to vote for Reagan. He's just another bundle of Nixon, made smoother in presentation by his grade-B acting experience. After living under his California administration for many years, I came to cordially detest the man. He's a front for big business, he's a crook, and he's got absolutely no respect for human rights. Admittedly, it may be hard to find a qualified candidate, but almost anybody would be better than Ronald Reagan. I strongly urge you to reconsider. Listen to the man who had to endure the jerk. He's a disaster.

Interesting bit on the chimp, but inconclusive. The father and sons who raised her might have resembled you, Hank. In which case I don't blame the chimp. Or maybe she thought they were her mothers. In any event, a sample of one is rather small.

Fun poem. Enjoyed it, you disarmer.

THE BIRTHDAY SPECIAL: 24 (PL Caruthers) * Sleep is also my remedy for mental fatigue -- and physical illness as well. Shakespeare was right; it knits up the raveled sleeve of care. I zonk out of an hour or three and awaken refreshed and human. Mental stress, an occupational hazard of management, leaves me snappish and intolerant of environmental intrusions. This is tough, when you live in an apartment with a wife, two children, two insane pussycats, and a white mouse named Charlotte. Sleep

is good medicine. When it's not possible I resort to second-favorite remedy, a glass of scotch and lively music.

Astigmatism. You must not like zebra-watching. Write more next time. Larger zines generally do draw more comment in SFPA.

A WAITLISTER'S STRING SAVER (Joe Moudry) * I find it hard to read a lot of older stuff that I never read in earlier years. Rereading old favorites is a delight, but the memory of wonder that sustains those reading excursions isn't there for strange oldies. My tastes and viewpoint of the world have changed considerably in twenty years. I find myself thinking (too much) of making the "best" use of time. Perhaps I've forgotten how to relax. A big loss.....

THE NOCTUARY (Joe Moudry) * Phil Dick has had some popularity with the college set on the West Coast for several years now. To see him become a national phenonenon is logical enough, considering that many of the recent fads began in California. (With the exception of Tolkein, who sprang up all over at once.) Dick certainly provides enough latitude in interpretation to satisfy the various orientations of the campus. He's been in touch with most of the hip things. If Rolling Stone is sponsoring him, he'll probably make it. I'd be rather glad.

Are we into another apa-age? I'm not in touch enough to tell. My name dropped off so many trade lists when RALLY! went quiescent that I get few genzines these days. (I LoC so rarely that no zines come via that route.) I'm in two apas. SFPA has been independent of the general apa treads (though it filled its roster first in the apa boom of the mid-sixties and suffered with the subsequent apa bust). If there is a resurgence of apas on its way, we should see multi-apanas infiltrating the SFPA wl. Maybe they're already here.

Instant survey: how many SFPAs are in more than one apa? How many in more than four? Answers in your MC section, please.

THIN ICE #15 (Mark Verheiden) * Well, I've not met you yet but I did talk with you on the phone. Sorry you'll be missing our Diplomacy game, but understand. (For the benefit of the rest of the apa, we tried to recruit Mark because we thot he'd played before. Turns out he was lending his name to his brother. Diplomacy is a strange game.)

There've been two people blackballed off the SFPA waitlist. Dave did one and I did the other. Looking back, I don't think it was worth the furor, though I still agree with the essence of both decisions. SFPA has a lot of latitude. (After all, other people have joined -- and dropped -- who were worse than the blackballed individuals.) People who don't fit get tired of the scene and leave us.

Don't quite get what you mean by "physical" job. At first I thought you meant physical labor, as in digging ditches or installing aluminun siding, but I noticed you examples were meter reader and hamburger cook. The "office jobs" you cite, insurance and real estate salesmen, probably get more exercise than your short order cook does. They've got to be on the run constantly. (For that matter, I probably get more exercise than a short order cook.) The blue collar vs. white collar comparison you're making doesn't necessarily correlate in terms of health. Many blue collar workers are exposed to

pollutants extremely damaging to health. Not to mention the danger of accidents in the construction and manufacturing trades.

Choice of jobs is usually a matter of temperament and opportunity. If a person is worried about physical conditioning, there's nothing to prevent a regular exercise program in free hours. My boss, for example, jogs from three to five miles every day at lunch. One of my programmers is an excellent tennis player. He stays in perfect shape despite a desk job. (Me, I lift beer cans.)

College diplomas are supposed to represent the successful completion of a course of study including certain basic knowledge and training in fundamental language and math skills. That it doesn't mean that at all is unfortunate. Employers look for a diploma in the hope that those skills has been acquired. Also, the personnel department of the company may require a degree for various job classifications. It's an indication, not a guarantee. It's also a short cut for the lazy or unskilled interviewer. We're stuck with those forever. I don't require a degree. Some of my best people don't have one. They educated themselves.

Good zine. Enjoyed your natter and "Chimes".(Though I didn't quite connect with the chimes.)

OBLIO #24 (Gary Brown) * Superbowl kickoff just happened. Nifty reverse by Dallas, but no follow up on plays from scrimmage. Looks to be a good game. The Steelers are tough on the ground. Appropriate, with your many football comments in this zine, that the timing for your MC's was Superbowl time.

Enjoyed your "Unseen Incident". Good reporting and skillful manipulation of dialog and background music. I know what you mean about incidents turning wheels in our head close to the payoff spot. They are things that strike resonant chords in us. Questions of life, philosophies of living, that we think on at many levels of our mind.

Dallas touchdown! If the Cowboys can win this one it'll be fantastic! Landry has done an outstanding job of putting together a team. I've really got to admire him.

Worked your braintwister last night by the "grid" method. I set up truth tables for the sets of variables and just crunched it through. A crank-turner, as one of my professors used to call it. One solution (at least it fulfills all the conditions) is that the Norwegian drinks water, lives in a yellow house on the far left, owns a fox, and smokes Kools. The zebra is owned by a Japanese living in a green house on the far right. The Japanese drinks coffe and smokes Parliaments. The Ukrainian owns a horse, drinks tea, smokes Chesterfields, and lives in a blue house next door to the Norwegian. The Englishman raises snails, drinks milk, smokes Old Gold, and lives in a red house in the middle. The Spaniard owns a dog, smokes Lucky Strike, drinks orange juice, and lives in an ivory house next door to the Japanese.

Steeler TD! This will be a game.

Koch's attitude toward SFPA mailings (and individual zines) bothers me too. You've hit it right when you say "insult". From a strickly legalistic point of view I suppose he has the right to do whatever he wants to with his mailings. Use them for toilet paper if he gets his kicks that way. From a personal standpoint, I'm irritated. That I don't feel Koch's activity is often more than chaotic minac also aggravates. If Alan, for example, wrapped fish with his mailings, I'd feel hurt but would re-

cognize that my "value received" was far on the positive side. Still, ejection from the waitlist would be a severe penalty to levy against Koch, in the name of ego. I favor strict enforcement of the activity rules in such situations.

Almost a tie at the half. Looks very evenly matched to me. All those people who got Dallas and seven must be happy now. Wish I'd been able to get some.

I got a Norelco when my old Remington shaver succumbed to the ills of electrical devices. The Norelco works better by an order of magnitude. Those "rotary heads" they advertise are smoother and shave closer. Clean easier too.

My company put in their own print shop a while back to cut costs. They managed to get so backlogged that we have to send lots of stuff outside, which runs the bills up. Now they're wanting more equipment (& people) to handle the backlog themselves. A lot of the backlog, I think, is due to their own screw-ups. One policy is the minimum run. If I want ten copies of a memo, they run thirty (the minimum). Smart, huh? They also botch jobs with any thought involved. I sent down a 70-page reference document and requested two printed sides to the sheet. (To save money.) The page numbers were written in blue pencil, which doesn't reproduce. I use many of the reference sheets in a variety of documents, so I keep page numbers off them. The print shop apparently just stacks the sheets in random order, then puts on the second side when the ink has dried. My job came back randomly shuffled. The dummies had to do it over -- one side per page.

WILD YONDER BLUES (Doug Wirth) * You get the fourth quarter of the Super Bowl. Pittsburgh just blocked a punt for a safety. Aren't you thrilled?

Nice touch, that reflective tape bounding your cover. I see you've been stockpiling silkscreen work since 1973. I like it. I like it.

Round robins are fun if they maintain some continuity. If you want to see one going, why not start it yourself? Volunteer "The Fan of Brass" -- you said you were getting tired of it. I think the apa is ready once again for a free-wheeling fun bout of faaan fiction.

Enjoyed your zine but having a hard time finding comment hooks. I'm not knowledgeable of most of the things you discuss. Try writing about chess next time.

DIVINE DECADENCE #38 (Stven Carlberg) * Hello, our new OE. Next year you'll be able to distribute more EgoBoo Poll points if you so desire. I think the number of points allowed shapes the voting, to a great extent. Witness Doug's comment that he bunched his points for a few individuals and then didn't have enough left over. Too many points can be just as bad. It's a tricky balance; I wish you luck.

OK, opinion on the Koch thing is strong. Why not a straw poll on the apa's interest in his renewed membership? If he's tough on us, Gary had it when he said we could be tough on him. An issue likely to stir waves, however.

High school graduation night equals rite of passage into adulthood. This is less true today, when kids are tapped into more lines of action, but in my day -- in my small Southern town -- it was a damn BFD. In every sense of the old phrase.

Worst Heinlein novel? I've not read IWFNE, so that's out. My avoidance was based on the expectation of a losing investment of time.

Farnham's Freehold is a good candidate for worst. I agree your other three also qualify. My personal favorites are Door into Summer, SiaSL, and Double Star.

Why not have the DSC rotate between South Carolina, Texas and Montana? (Every fourth year a bid from New Jersey could be entertained.)

The other two great rock songs (besides "Help Me, Rhonda") are "Purple People Eater" and "Shu Rah"; everybody knows that.

Hank Reinhardt is the Methusala of SFPA --Anonymous

No pornography isn't real, but people are fundamentally sexual. That society both represses and titillates this nature is an unfortunance (and also the basis of pornography). Sex is a pleasure, an art, a way of expressing love, a natural mechanism which demands outlet. When natural expression is repressed, neurotic behavior results. The transfer of sexual content into cars and firearms are good examples. Pornography is merely another such.

Oreo has it.

I like Cher. She's not my idea of the Perfect Body, but she's got a good voice. "Walking the Quetzal" and "Cat Named Dog". I like "Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves" and "Halfbreed" and "Dark Lady" -- whatever the real titles are. She has a nice aggressive voice and I enjoy hearing it when she's doing suitable material, which isn't always. As far as her looks, she does a lot with what she's got. I've got nothing against Cher. (Though it might be fun....)

Why do you think people are missing your jokes if they don't make a point of acknowledging each one? Every sentence I write has a finely honed in joke involved, yet it doesn't bother me that you miss them. (Joke.) (Also a joke.) SFPA appreciates your material. (Now decide if that was a joke.) (Joke.)

Celko seems to have alienated a number of people. Certainly I'm disgusted with him, and my contact with the man has been minimal compared to yours. Why do DSC voters allow a committee associated with Celko to get a con? Dearth of choice? Disorganized opposition? I get the impression that a lot of uninformed voters attend DSC con site selection meetings.

THE SPHERE v39 #1 (Don Markstein) * Not a zine to be read or commented lightly. It oppugns. It lies like a heavy weight in the mailing; a lead sinker. I see it as a center of feud, another of those unfortunate chains. I wish it hadn't been. Yet in its pages I hear Don Markstein, my friend, crying out in pain, in anger, in perplexion.

Issues and actions, remote and subjective, I cannot and will not judge. Resolution is yours, not mine. Understanding of hurt is within my scope. All us peoples hurts. All us peoples got feelings. You. Me. Justin. Guy. Even Hank.

The most sensitive and vulnerable part of a person is the ego. When young, we learn to shield the ego. Few of us learn perfectly. Certainly not I. When the unexpected rips through our defenses and wounds us, our pain may provoke retaliation that feeds upon itself and our repairs may raise walls so high as to shut out empathy.

An eye for an eye, says the Old Testament. The ego keeps score. Who wins in such a contest? Perhaps the ego, but not the person. Countless, the times I have hurt myself in the act of justification. Self protection is rarely enough

satisfaction. The issue frequently broadens in unrelated directions. It engulfs personalities.

The pain a friend bears hurts me. For my friends, there are no barriers to empathy. The pain of sympathy is different than that of ego-wound. It questions; it seeks to heal. I question. I imply no fault when I ask questions that only you can answer.

Why is Justin to blame for the performance of his machine? Why did his personal history find its way into your public account? If you accept the human condition, as you say "the whole man", what latitude is there in the measure of friendship?

If I gave advice -- and I don't -- I'd say it was time to drop the issues. You're tired of bickering. Feuds are expensive in more ways than one. Internal adjustments can be manifested through selectivity. As new life inputs are experienced the old are buried. It takes effort to resurrect them.

Whatever happens, I'm your friend. That means I'm a friend of Don Markstein, but not always of his actions. There's room for a difference of opinions in my definition of friendship (and I hope in yours). Hang in there!

Enjoyed seeing you again at $\frac{1}{2}$ acon. Wish we'd had more opportunity to chat. (Alas, the obligations of Big Time Hearts.) Glad you found a new place. And most especially -- hope to see a big commentable Markstein-standard Sphere in the next mailing.

B.Y.O.L. #2 (Rose Hutchinson) * I notice that your colophon names you as "Rose", though Alan usually refers to you as "Rosie." Presumably this means you prefer "Rose." Please let me know which one you're more comfortable with. Fan names should always be comfortable.

Cats, including the big cats like lions, mark their territory by urinating on it at appropriate spots. Very different scents for each cat (to other cats, that is). We have problems with our domestic devils staking out claims in incredible places. (We've very nearly lost them several times. Thank ghu I have an iron self-control.) Your instance of the male lion marking his females is the first time I've heard of that extreme. Aren't we all glad the behavior doesn't extend to human beings?

Kathy gave me a Worlds of Fantasy calendar for Christmas. It has work by Frazetta and Tim Kirk in it, plus a lot of other artists I'd never heard of. Good paintings, though. I need to find a place to hang it. (It's oversized for my normal calendar slot.)

TALISMAN #5 (Cliff Biggers) * Needless to say, I failed to notice your absence at $\frac{1}{2}$ acon. I noticed your presence instead. Glad to see that things worked out for you and Susan to attend. It was a pleasure sharing a banquet table.

I have to disagree with your low opinion of faaanfiction. Fandom is certainly a legitimate area of character study (even a fertile area). Prose is, after all, prose. There are no intrinsic barriers to stylistic excellence, plot coherency or content in faaanfiction. The ingroup aspects often make for lots of fun. I write the stuff, yes, and am thus probably prejudiced in its favor, but I was enjoying reading faaanfiction long before I began my own endeavors. I think good faaanfiction is one of the best literary offerings of the microcosm.

When I was teaching (physics at UNC Chapel Hill) I got the lower level classes too. Never had any trouble controlling the classes, but did despair now and then at the large number of totally disinterested people taking the course because they had to. The few students honestly interested in the subject were just barely enough to keep me motivated. I think this is a common problem with survey courses.

OPOSSUM 100 (Alan Hutchinson) * So that's the source for Carver B.

SITZFLEISCH #5&6 (George Inzer) * It's really the reemergence of the writer as singer. Folk singers frequently wrote a lot of their material. In the pop field many singers wrote some of their material. I think the focus shifted to the point where a singer just about had to write, compose and play an instrument to get attention. It became a requirement, which is just as bad as the opposite.

You're very right, however, that many creative performers were given an opportunity to sing their material, which was suddenly allowed to be deep and personal. The trivial schlock lyrics of the pop world weren't the only sellers. People like Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell could put it out there on the line. I think you identified a true characteristic of the contemporary music scene. We're all the luckier for it.

Agreed about Springsteen. He's good, but he's a synthesis and not an original. There isn't another Dylan. What Springsteen is about is promotion. The vacuum must be filled. The record companies will see to it. I enjoy his stuff, but he's not an Immortal.

From the mailings I saw, PAAPA is a very interesting apa. It doesn't have the history and ingroup references of SFPA, but then it's a young apa. (It doesn't have the feuds, either -- they develop also.) I would have very much enjoyed being able to attend a combined convention.

Dreaming has always interested me. I don't usually remember my dreams, but in times of stress they come close to the surface. Kathy read about controlling dreams -- consciously guiding them in directions, I think, not dictating events and symbols. Undoubtedly, that idea is attractive. It's a skill worth developing, though I suppose one first has to be aware of the dream (on some level).

I decided that organized religion was more social than devout while I was in college. The Western idea of church -- getting everybody together on a regular schedule to praise the lord and pass the collection plate -- doesn't jibe with the ideas I get from Jesus' preachings in the New Testament. In many ways, it seems contrary.

Good thotzine. Stay in SFPA.....

TRUTH IN HOLLYWOOD (Teri Carlberg) * Well, your string is saved. Do something more next time or incur the wrath of the OE. He may Beat you.

FANS WHO HAVE KNOWN ME #3 (Stven Carlberg) * Very nice. Especially, I liked "Hank in his own words." Hank plans a rebuttal called "Stven in his own juices."

POSTMAILING: Seeing as $\frac{1}{2}$ acon was Considerable after the deadline, it would have been hard not to drop Hank Davis. I was sorry to see him go, but I was also sorry to see him contribute so little during his stay. Room must be made for new blood.

 THE BOX SCORES

MEMBER	HITS/AB	AVERAGE	P(66)	P(67)	P(68)	TOTAL	PAGES/MLB
Atkins, K.	10/11	.909	4	0	6	43	3.9
Atkins, L.	54/54	1.000	21	1	8	1315	24.4
Biggers	8/9	.889	18	10	11	100	11.1
Brooks	46/46	1.000	24	14	42	668	14.5
Brown	26/27	.963	54½	84½	35½	756	28.0
Carlberg, S.	38/38	1.000	31½	71	38	795½	20.9
Carlberg, T.	14/14	1.000	3½	4	1	50	3.6
Caruthers	9/10	.900	6	3	3	53½	5.4
Davis, J.	1/1	1.000	-	-	4	4	4.0
Frierson, M.	33/35	.943	34	45½	2	1162½	33.2
Frierson, P.	20/24	.833	8	7½	1	181½	7.6
Hulan, D.	42/46	.913	65	100	1	1514	32.9
Hulan, M.	7/7	1.000	17	19	0½	68	9.7
Hutchinson, A.	17/17	1.000	70	52½	62½	551	32.4
Hutchinson, R.	3/3	1.000	5	1	6	12	4.0
Inzer	30/31	.968	23	1½	24	440½	14.2
Lillian	30/30	1.000	58	72	57	1304½	43.5
Markstein	39/39	1.000	17½	41	14	1454½	37.3
Mathews	12/16	.750	10	0	5	167	10.4
Reed	24/24	1.000	16	4	12	358	14.9
Reinhardt	19/27	.704	7	0	6	140	5.2
Smith	5/7	.714	9	4	0	29½	4.2
Staton	23/27	.852	6	0	5	245	9.1
Steele	31/32	.969	20	22	21	505½	15.8
Verheiden	16/18	.889	14	23	28	281	15.6
Weber	1/2	.500	-	4	0	4	2.0
Wetherington	5/5	1.000	7	2	2	21	4.2
Wells	9/13	.692	2	6	0	43½	3.3
Wirth	17/19	.895	15	6	17	112	5.9
Hulan, R.	7/7	1.000	4	1	0½	23½	3.4
Koch (wl only)	3/3	1.000	3	2	2	7	2.3
Moudry, J.	3/3	1.000	6	8	6	20	6.7

Waitlisters hitting at least two consecutive mailings will be carried as space allows. Former members appearing in this category will not have their full statistics restored until they reach membership (or I get more energy -- whichever comes first).

ANNOUNCING!

THE SECOND ANNUAL

HANK REINHARDT WRITE-ALIKE

CONTEST



Yes, friends, it's time again for the Hank Reinhardt Write-Alike Contest. This years prize is a fine unmint copy of the Summer, 1955, issue of PLANET STORIES!! What a valuable item! There are stories by Poul Anderson, Leigh Brackett and Lyman D. Hinckley, among others. In the lettercol are missives from BNFs like Ted White and Norm Clarke. The cover is by Kelly Freas. This rare and exciting prize was donated by Dave Hulan, from his personal library. Wow!!

All members and waitlisters of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance are eligible for the contest. Work by these persons which appears in the 70th or 71st mailings of SFPA will be judged. Participants are encouraged to enter as many times as they like.

Here are the rules. (1) Each entry must be over twenty-five words in length. Despite the fact that there is debate as to whether Hank himself is capable of writing anything so long, this rule will be strictly adhered to.

(2) Any entry not containing at least one spelling error or gramatical flaw will be disqualified. It is, however, imperative that entries be legible.

(3) Any entry not containing the word "I" will be disqualified instantly. Note -- in some cases excessive use of the words "me", "my", and "mine" will be accepted as an adequate substitute. Participants utilizing this option are required to so notify the judge.

(4) Contestants are not required to be capable of jiggling their chest muscles, but it does help in establishing authenticity.

(5) Entries must appear in SFPA 70 or 71. Contestants must be members or waitlisters of that apa.

(6) If Dave Hulan wins, he gets as an alternative prize a copy of the February, 1957, issue of SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES, which features a short novel by Harlan Ellison.

(7) Bribes are accepted by the judge (Lon Atkins). Those wishing either to win or not to win should consider this method.

Those are the Rules. Now a reprint of last years winning entry to inspire you this year!

"Cut. Slash. Slice. Snicker-snack. Parry. Thrust. Gash. Carve. Penetrate. Hack. Chop. Scratch. Crosscut. Incise. Stick. Spike. Empale. Attack! Give no quarter! I kill! I kill! I kill!"

That was Hank Reinhardt's award-winning description of how he opens a can of baked beans. Second place went to Janet's article on how she makes Hank clean up the kitchen afterwards.

Maybe YOU will be the winner this year!!

AUTHOR'S NOTE

When Bruce Arthurs wrote and asked me to contribute to his special Ned Brooks fanzine I was pleased. Ned was an old friend. It was good to anticipate a special effort for him. I got my creative synapses clicking and thought of a nice piece of fiction that I would shape to star Ned. Bruce set an absolute deadline of Jan. 1 because of military reassignment. I knew the SFPA deadline was close, but calculated I could make it. The Christmas holiday and my vacation time would suffice. It looked good --- until the illness hit.

The day after Christmas I was hit by an infected throat. Mel was barely in the mail when fanac was abruptly derailed for ten days. *SIGH* It was clear that Bruce would not be getting a contribution from me.

Too bad, but that isn't going to prevent the writing of that story. I'll just do it for Mel instead. This way I'm not working against any deadline and I'm bearing the cost myself, so the story will be a little longer, better filled out. So read on -- enjoy -- and remember that every word is absolute truth.....

---Lon Atkins

TRAPPING

On a hot night in August the sleepy Carolina town of West Holley was visited by a demon. It came seeking Johnnie Keene. Opening a window across six planes of reality the demon dropped into the bedroom of its prey. The hiss and ozone of this event did not wake Johnnie.

What did was the rake of poisonous talons, searing from his left shoulderblade to the small of his back. He screamed. Sulphurous vapors gagged him. The scream died in a choking sputter. The agony of that mauling had filmed his eyes with red, but nothing could hide the leathery ember-eyed monster that stood over him.

"Keene!!" hissed the apparition. Increase members! Resign CAPS! Keene, die! I eat."

The yellowed talons reached for Johnnie's throat. Disgust and anger cut thru his fear and Johnnie struck at the demon in a hate reflex. Too much exertion. Too much lost blood. He faded into blackness with the stench of the beast insulting his nostrils.....

.....Johnnie awoke weak and feverish. The lacerations burned. Flesh that had contacted the demon talons was red and inflamed. It was agony to move, yet he staggered into the living room and dialed the number he knew dearest. Mandy's. The digital clock said it was 7:18 AM.

When she arrived he had collapsed again on the bed. She saw the bloody sheets and paled. Kissing his tortured face, taking a quick pulse count, she kept him from getting up. The wounds on his back were serious. Mandy called an ambulance and prayed.....

.....In two days the West Holley Doctors' Hospital had discharged him. They cleaned the poison from his wounds, washed and bandaged him. The questions were pointed and the questioners quite astonished. What creature on earth could make terrible wounds of this sort? Johnnie played it dumb. He'd been attacked in the night. It had been sudden and quick. He knew nothing more.

Eventually the doctors and the sheriff agreed it must have been a mountain lion, even though none had been spotted within two hundred miles of West Holley for the past forty years. For the next several months it was the ambition of every blooded hunter in the area to nail the big cat. It was hell for the local bobcat population.

After about a week of moderate and careful exercise Johnnie began to feel strong again. He clearly favored his left arm, but he was right-handed so that came naturally. With his return to activity came interrogations by all the local gossips, but Johnnie had only dull stuff to say and soon the mythological mountain lion had far outstripped its victim as an item of interest. This suited Johnnie well.

He took Mandy into his confidence of course. She knew that the screens had been in place, the doors firmly closed. No mountain lion has hands to let itself in and out. Her ideas ran to human fiends (though she didn't argue with Johnnie's conviction that it had been a supernatural incident). She knew of no one who hated Johnnie Keene. It troubled her soul, this vicious happening.

In two weeks Johnnie's resilient 26 year old body was healed fairly well, although red puckered scars defined the assault. He could move easily. Then the bimonthly deluge of CAPS zines began to storm into his Post Office Box and he remembered too well the words of the demon.

One sunny afternoon in early September he sat with Mandy on the screened porch of his house. They sipped iced tea and talked of Johnnie's thoughts. The CAPS deadline was only ten days away.

"That thing told me three things," said Johnnie. "It said to die, which I'm extremely reluctant to do. It said to resign from CAPS. I'm sure it said that. Just as depressing a course. But it's the third thing that really ties a pattern. Increase membership, the damn thing said. Increase membership. Strange."

"Frightening, you mean!" asserted Mandy. "That's what Lucius Rant and Gale Stoneham keep making a fuss over in CAPS. I can't imagine any human being so sick as to do a thing like.... Ughh! Maybe you dreamed the words, Johnnie."

"Then I dreamed the scars on my back too."

They sat in silence for a while. Johnnie pulled a speaker to the door of the porch and put Tubular Bells on the stereo. "Oldfield is creepy music for this conversation," said Mandy.

"Appropriate," replied Johnnie. "I feel the web. It's time to do something before that thing comes back. You touched my thoughts on Rant and Stoneham. Are they human? Are they the same by day as by night? I'm scared, Mandy."

"Johnnie, why don't you resign as OE of CAPS? There's only three more mailings to your term and you've been OE two times now. You tell me you don't think you'll run again. Please?"

"Call me--"

"A dummy! Yes, I will: you're a dummy! Johnnie, this is no fan sthick. I saw you. Practically murdered! I don't know what's going on. I'm ignorant and unfannish and terrified for your life."

"So how do I get out when I don't know what I'm in? It's like the mines of Moria. There's no way out but straight ahead. Don't worry. I've got some ideas. First is to get out of town. Can you go visit your cousins in Goldsboro?"

"Yes, I guess. But..."

"I'm going to be on my way tomorrow. I don't want you staying here. You're on the waitlist and everybody knows we go together."

"Where are you going, Johnnie?" Concern was written on her visage.

"First to Newport News. Then who knows?" And Mandy knew that he was angry, deep angry so far inside him that nothing would stop him short of death.....

713 Paul Street much resembles an ordinary Newport News house. What makes it different is not so much the oversized mailbox as the owner thereof. Neighbors rarely glimpse Cuyler Warnell Brooks. When they do his conservative mustache and decorous demeanor remind them of somebody's Uncle Arthur. Few know the secrets of 713 Paul Street.

When Johnnie Keene knocked on Ned Brooks' door that Sunday afternoon he knew only reputation. Through Johnnie's membership in the great Southern apa, SFPA, he had come to know of Ned's arcane interests and scholarship. It was his hope that Ned could shed light on the demon, its nature and probable master.

The man who answered the knock was mild-looking. "Yes?" he inquired.

"Are you Ned Books?"

"I am. Who are you?" The thing Johnnie noticed was Ned's eyes, bright and penetrating, surveying the situation minutely from behind disarming glasses.

"I'm Johnnie Keene. Joined SFPA last year."

"Oh, yes! Come in." Ned led the way into his den. Fannish plus. Freas and Burge on the walls. Shelves and shelves of books. Johnnie felt at ease. Here was a man he could talk with.

Ned brought grape Kool-Aid, as is the fannish tradition in southern Virginia, dating back to the FePuTo. The two fen sat back and talked a bit about the latest SFPA mailing before Johnnie revealed his problem. Ned listened quietly to the whole story, occasionally punctuating the discourse with a nod or raised eyebrow. To clinch the authenticity Johnnie showed the scars. Ned touched the wound gently and briefly.

"You are lucky," he said.

"This was done by a demon of the thirteenth level. When they enter -- and it is rare, for power is required beyond their ability alone -- it is with a great hunger. He fears his master if he failed to eat you. Or at least grab a nibble."

Johnnie shuddered. "He wanted to. I think he was a threat. I'm supposed to increase the roster in CAPS or resign as OE and let somebody fuggheaded like Lucius Rant take my place. It's so dumb. Demons aren't real!"

Brooks took a heavy leather-bound volume off the shelf. "Rather let us say they are incredible. You have too much proof to call them unreal. I have too much knowledge."

Ned opened the book and offered it to Johnnie. There was a hand-colored illustration. The text was in some language which Johnnie had never before seen, but the picture was definitely of his demon. The sight chilled his blood.

"That's it!" He bent over the book, wanting at the same time to close it, and studied the creature. "Ugly as sin."

"Merely functional, in its own way. But you said some things that disturb me. Are you sure that the phage was demanding your resignation from CAPS the apa. That's rather like using a tank in a lollipop robbery."

"I'm positive." Johnnie was nonetheless perplexed. Fandom was just a hobby, right?

"What do you do for a living, Johnnie?"

"I'm a wholesale fertilizer salesman." He blushed. "Don't tell me it's appropriate for a fan. Don Markstein already's said it."

"Any other money or power involvements? Be perfectly honest with me."

"No. I'm well enough off, but far from rich. The OEs of CAPS is the only pretention to power I've got. It doesn't make sense, does it. Was it a mistake?"

"There's no mistake when your name is known. I suggest we discover the underlying reason. This affair has aroused my curiosity."

After a hamburger for dinner they hit the road in Johnnie's vintage Chevy. Ned wanted to return to West Holley. He was interested in the CAPS mailings. There were still a good two hours before sunset and the first sixty miles passed in relative silence. Ned seemed interested in the roadside scenery. Johnnie was willing to wait for talk. He had plenty to think about.

It was Ned who reinvented conversation. "Tell me something about the history of CAPS. How was it founded? What are its professed goals?"

Sunlight was diffused now from across the horizon. For a few precious minutes there would be no sun, yet no night. It was a time Johnnie loved. With an effort he organized his thoughts, gaining in clarity from the splendor of dusk, and replied. "First mailing in May, 1972. Founded by Harry Luce, who circulated the first flyer. Since gaffiated beyond trace. Struggled for the first year with Luce as OE. I joined the third mailing. Tom Alexander then was OE for two terms. He recruited vigorously from Southern fandom. Suddenly the Confederate Amateur Press Society was a going thing."

"Yeah, that was a good time!" Johnnie perked from mellowness into snappy memory. "I ran for OE and won. Blew my mind. Tommy had stepped down and I beat J. Lucius Rant. To tell the truth, I don't think he's ever forgiven me. Neofans aren't supposed to trounce BNF'S."

"Anyway, we began to feel pretty good about CAPS. Of course SFPA was the prestige apa but we had a lot of fun. I think we're tighter knit. We've got fifteen members while SFPA has twenty-five. As far as professed goals we're just an apa. I guess our gimmick is being Southern, like SFPA, but there's no Yankee quota or anything."

"Hmmm. Typical enough. Let's talk about the membership increase movement. I know Lucius Rant. He's in SFPA as well as CAPS -- so are you, for that matter. He wants the membership there increased to thirty. Bigger is better. Atlanta BNF. Into everything. Makes every convention in the country. What's his stance in CAPS?"

"Much the same as in SFPA. He agitates for an increase to twenty so CAPS can have a bigger page count. His mind seems incapable in distinguishing between quantity and quality. We're always bickering."

"And other growth mongers?"

"Cale Stoneham. He got in about a year ago and started in immediately with opinions. Cale's got a vitriolic way of writing that burns like acid but behind it is a deadpan sense of humor that pokes through just enough to keep people from hating him. I like Cale myself, though I've never met him. He lives in the little mountain town of Archaic, West Virginia, and rarely leaves. Nobody knows much about him."

"A man of mystery." There was the slightest metallic taste of irony in Ned's voice.

"Very much so. He wants more members but never says why. He just zings me. Owell. There's also Fred Smith. A grown-up comics fan who lives in San Francisco. He wants us to increase to twenty-five members instantly and start an advertising campaign in genzines and con bulletins. Oh, yes -- he also wants to raise the copy requirement to thirty-five and sell the extra bundles at \$3 each. Nobody takes him very seriously."

"Sounds like he's in the wrong apa. Anybody else?"

"Nooooo. Those are the only really vocal ones."

"Who are your allies in the debate?"

"It's not a debate, just a grumble campaign. Tom Alexander is pretty firm about wanting to hold the line at fifteen. Mike and Susie Gleason are in favor of no increase. I guess the whole apa is pretty much against it, 'cause Lucius Rant's platform included an increase to twenty and I beat him by a two-to-one margin."

"I take it that this is why he slices you up so vehemently in SFPA."

"Lucius doesn't like to lose."

"No. The CAPS OEsip is similar to SFPA? You have the power to increase the membership without a plebiscite?"

"Yes." It was night. Headlight beams opened a tunnel through the darkness above the two-lane asphalt road. They weren't far from West Holley (which is located in eastern Carolina). Johnnie drove carefully over the narrow bridge spanning the Neuse. Fog was rising off the river. There was a sudden unseasonal nip in the air.

When they reached West Holley Johnnie turned left onto Cypress Avenue. With the car slowed to an amble they could hear insect songs from the darkness. A cat ran across the road.

The house was dark and silent. A comfortable one-storey place about twenty years old with lots of trees in the yard. Johnnie unlocked the door and pushed it open. He looked into the unlit entry hall for a long moment before he stepped inside and flicked on the overhead light. He realized that a fine sweat had

broken out on his brow and the palms of his hands.

"I'd like to see your file of CAPS mailings," said Ned. He'd walked on past Johnnie into the living room.

"Sure, they're in my den. I'll get the last few -- they've got the membership grumbles." Johnnie vanished thru the connecting door, leaving Ned standing.

The latest mailings were in the bottom drawer of Johnnie's file cabinet. He was kneeling in front of it when a crisp electric sound made him leap up. The demon was sliding thru a crackling blue shape that faded as the transition was made. "Hello, Keene," hissed the creature. Escape was blocked.

"What do you want?" asked Johnnie. If it talked, talk back to it. Johnnie thought of diving thru the window. The sulphur smell was terrible. It stunk like death.

"Blood!" The demon was trying to grin. It padded forward on leather feet. "Increase members, Keene. Do it!"

"Phage! Who is your master?" Johnnie hadn't heard Ned speak before in such bell-clear compelling tones. Neither had the demon. It wheeled about and hissed at Brooks, then leaped in attack. There had been no injunction against devouring intruders.

Ned raised his right arm with fingers spread. His whole hand seemed to glow from within. He uttered a liquid sound that flowed into Johnnie's ears and raced round and round inside his skull without ever admitting to syllables. The demon reacted as if swatted by King Kong. It fell on the floor and a thin croaking sound seeped from its mouth.

"Speak your master's name," commanded Ned. The creature was writhing, making small crackles of blue. Johnnie thought it was trying to escape. "Speak!" said Ned. He pointed an illuminated hand at the demon again and it winced.

Suddenly the crackling blue caught fire and flamed about the thing. Hate shot like sparks. It grew two feet in height, bumping the ceiling. With pure murder in mind it attacked Ned again.

He spoke in liquid tongue once more and the blue corona was washed out by the intense white light that filled the room. Above Ned's head was the outline of a translucent bird, like the ghost of an eagle. It made no sound but dived into the demon's path.

In a crazy way it reminded Johnnie of a Saturday morning cartoon. His wounds were burning, calling to their maker, and he knew it was horribly real. Parts of the demon were vanishing, some thru the blue corona and others into the hawk of light. In seconds both creatures had fallen thru the corona and it had closed behind them with a sizzle.

"Jesus," said Johnnie. "Aitch. Christ. Incredible."

"The different levels prey upon each other," said Ned. "Alas, the phage was not anxious to talk. Its master remains unknown. Where are those CAPS mailings?"

"You do more than read old books. You're a wizard."

"Why so astonished? Do you think I would have come to West Holley if all I could do was read? Come on! We have work to do."

Ned wanted to see all of the CAPS file. He began with the second mailing, which was the earlier Johnnie owned, and examined each zine with care. He read some, sniffed and felt all. Johnnie watched him running sensitive fingers over the paper. For what was he searching? It was a weird business.

Hungry work, too. After a couple of hours Johnnie went to the kitchen and made tuna sandwiches. There was a long night ahead. To pass the time he worked on mailing comments.

"Nothing," announced Ned. "Not a one of these zines has a touch of power on it. All were done with mimeo, ditto, xerox or some other normal repro method."

"You mean -- do you use magic?"

"No. Fandom is my hobby and I refuse shortcuts. Besides, that advertises to those who can perceive. I'm not so foolish and neither is our unknown antagonist." Ned munched his tuna sandwich.

"What do we do now?"

"You said the next deadline is soon."

"A week from next Tuesday. Wow!

It's after midnight already."

"I suggest we use that mailing to do a little fishing. When our friend discovers that his phage has been destroyed he's going to be very suspicious. He must know you have no conjuring abilities. That means a third force. He will move to protect his interests."

Johnnie was agitated. "Errr, fishing implies bait. I hope you're not offering me. This cat's gentle little hints are almost too much for me."

"Not you," chuckled Ned. "Have Rant, Stoneham or Smith submitted a zine yet?"

"Not Rant. His come on the last day. Stoneham's is in. Smith has nine one-shots so far. His apazine should arrive late this week. Why?"

"Bring me Stoneham's zine and I'll show you."

Johnnie fetched the stack of Mountain Cider. Ned took a copy and performed his testing, then read. "Aha! Do you know the passage that begins: 'Again our infallible pOpE informs us that we are a great apa because we are a small apa. His minuscule thoughts more qualify him for a civil position in Liechtenstein than the leadership of CAPS. He is afraid to dilute quality. A thought more suitable for good bourbon than the most dynamic young apa of the day.' --An outspoken fellow, Mr. Stoneham."

"Yes, I've read the zine. Cal enjoys complaint."

"He must. Now watch this." Ned replaced the zine on top of the stack. He placed his hands on it and chanted in a low voice more of this liquid words, yet different ones. This continued for about five minutes, then he stopped and took a deep breath. "Read this."

Johnnie flipped Mountain Cider open to the offending passage. It wasn't there. Instead he found the following: "Never is the advantage of personal correspondence so clear as when correcting a misunderstanding. The exchange of a few letters with Johnnie allowed me to arrive at a more precise understanding of the membership limit. Suffice it to say that I now endorse his position. Furthermore the

last minute brainchild of our youthful leader -- the CAPSCon -- will be a splendid celebration of solidarity. I shall attend."

Johnnie examined the second zine -- and the third and the tenth. They were the same. "Incredible! It's Cale's typeface and style. It fits in perfectly! So what's this CAPSCon?"

"Why, the bait! Get busy and type a flyer. A minicon just for CAPS members and waitlisters here in West Holley next month. The sooner the better -- but allow time for the mailing to get out. Or better yet, send the flyer out tomorrow by first class mail."

"I get it but I don't!" Johnnie walked to a window. "I still seem like the bait. What's out there waiting? What will be coming?" He faced Brooks.

"Meet a friend," said Ned. He spoke again in magic and a white light shown. The hawk of light was there. It settled on his shoulder. "Do you trust Mleeya's protection enough?"

"It will stay?"

"Yes, I will leave my friend with you. She appreciates the poetry of Robert Browning, read aloud. As for food, she'll forage. Any predator will do."

Johnnie approached. The light hawk preened. "How do you do, Mleeya. Are you the one who killed the demon? Welcome to my house."

"Yes, it was Mleeya," said Ned. "Are you willing to stick it out? I will be watching and ready. This is an outrage by old enemies, I suspect. There are few capable of commanding a phage so thoroughly. Had it not been protected I could have broken it to my will. This finger of empire which is outstretched to grasp shall prick itself upon a poison thorn: me!"

Johnnie felt the sincerity. Years upon centuries of arcane conflict filled the room. He perceived the presence of Ned and felt the unmeasured power. What battles must have been fought in history! Who was this man who posed behind the mild mustache and glazed glasses?

Ned saw his speculation.

"I am not the Great One. Make no mistake."

"OK, let's get the enemy.

What's the plan?"

"Plan the CAPSCon and get the flyer out. I'll be back before the mailing goes out to fix Rant's zine and Smith's. When do you assemble the mailing, by the way?"

"Usually the night after deadline. Sometimes later."

"Then I'll see you a week from next Wednesday." Ned folded his arms and rapidly faded away.....

.....The weeks passed with no more demons. Mleeya was the only supernatural manifestation. She came and went, haunting the nearby woods and fields. Strangely enough she did like Browning, pulsing on Johnnie's shoulder as he read. Mandy had returned. She and Mleeya hit it off from the beginning. (And Johnnie remarked to himself how right he was about the wonder of Mandy.) They tried other poetry on Mleeya and had good luck with Emily Dickinson. Mixed success with Robert Frost, Lord Byron and Dylan Thomas.

An outraged oneshot from Fred Smith landed in their mailbox, demanding impeachment and the gas chamber. Personal

Letters from the three injured parties arrived. Smith's was as incoherent as his one-shot. He threatened all sorts of things including a busted lip. He announced intent to come to the CAPSCon and drum Johnnie out of fandom.

Stoneham was acerbic and wry. He would like to chat at the CAPSCon. Expressing admiration for the technique involved in the hoax comment, he left the impression that he was less angry than curious.

Rant sent a bombastic missive filled with moral platitudes. He implied that contriteness, coupled with some public humiliation and a resignation, would satisfy him. He was bringing his file copies of "the legitimate fanzine" to the CAPSCon.

Johnnie sent disclaimers to all three. He promised a free discussion at the CAPSCon. Before he knew it the weeks had passed and it was the first Friday in October, opening the convention.....

.....West Holley, being off the beaten path, had no Holiday Inn or Quality Court. Its sole reputable hotel was the Holley House, run for these past thirty-five years by the Neiman brothers: Charley, Chester and Champ. Chester read science fiction. He was no fan but did have a run of Astounding that went back to the early fourties. He and Johnnie sometimes talked of the Golden Age. There was no difficulty in arranging the con.

Early Friday afternoon Johnnie dropped by the Holley House to check on the reservation list. Nobody fannish had been added. Tom Alexander was due tonight. Rant and Stoneham had Saturday reservations. Fred Smith had none at all, although he'd been rather vocal in announcing his intention to attend.

The party that night was small and mellow. Tom had flown into the Norfolk airport and driven down with Ned. Larry Mackey arrived from Chapel Hill. Johnnie talked Chester Neiman into opening the con suite a day early and joining the group. The five of them talked about the Campbell Era, Virgil Finlay, the decline of Heinlein, and the state of modern science fiction untill after midnight. Quite late indeed for West Holley.

Saturday came by surprise. Johnnie had troubles getting to sleep Friday night. The scars were pulsing with a foreboding life. Memories and anticipations swirled in his head. He tossed. When sleep finally relented and took him Johnnie surrendered totally. He must have turned off his alarm in a stupor and snored again. It was a bright 10:30 when the long ringing of his phone at last dragged him from bed.

"Johnnie?"

"Mandy! Your voice is the sweetest sound I've ever awakened to. I think I'll fire the blue-birds outside my window. How's Goldsboro?"

"It's 10:30, Johnnie. Cale Stoneham's here and there's no registration desk. What shall I tell him? When will you be here?"

"Uhhh -- mwpfmk! You're not in Goldsboro!"

"No, I'm at the Holley House. I don't care what we said, Johnnie, I'm not leaving you alone. Get down here before we depose the con committee."

"You fabulous stubborn wonderful idiot! Tell Stoneham to cool his coattails. I'll be right there." And he was dressed and rolling in record time.

Cale Stoneham was a tall gaunt man who dressed to accentuate his grimness. He wore a black suit and a plain white shirt without a tie. Had there been a tie Johnnie knew it would have been a narrow black one. Cale's features were sharp and his head balding. His skin was no stranger to sun and wind. When he spoke it was in sepulchral tones, but on those infrequent occasions that he laughed it was hearty and wonderfully vital.

Johnnie found the group sitting in the comfortable lobby chairs of the Holley House. Ned was chatting with Cale about obscure old books of some sort. It didn't take long to move the fans up to the con suite once Champ Neiman had opened the room.

Registration went rapidly. Tom and Larry went out to get ice, beer and soft drinks for the bath tub. There seemed no other fannish use for the thing. Ned set up a card table and laid out a selection of books he'd brought to sell or trade.

Cale approached Johnnie. "I must say, young man, that was a remarkable job of forgery. I'd swear the typeface, paper and ink were mine. Don't know which I'm more curious about -- your methods or your motives."

"Cale, I wrote you that I didn't do it. That's the truth."

"Did you write that to Fred and Lucius too? I understand they had similar shenanigans pulled on them."

"So they claim. Lucius will be here -- he never misses a con -- and he's bringing file copies of what he says are the unaltered original zine. I don't know. I just send out what I get."

Cale's grin was toothy. "I brought file copies too. Thought the other members of CAPS might be interested in seeing them."

"So I'm supposed to have done three perfect jobs of forgery here in cosmopolitan West Holley where the miracles of Carolina science aided me in matching your typeface and paper so absolutely as to fool the originators themselves!" Johnnie paused for breath. Stoneham's manner had gotten under his skin. "Makes a lot more sense if these three people did the hoaxing themselves as a ploy. They've got the typers and the paper. I don't."

"Clever rascal. Do you really think you can turn things around on us that easily?"

"Cale, I believe that somebody hoaxed us. It wasn't me. I'll believe it wasn't you. Don't you think we should try to find out who's really responsible rather than blast each other?"

"Convenient of you to hold this convention. Not that I usually attend conventions. Damn waste of time from what few I've been to. But this should be interesting. I'll be watching to see what your game is, young fellow. I suspect it's a subtle one."

Cale nodded politely and strolled over to examine Ned's offerings. Johnnie was left to ponder the meaning of the exchange. There was something about Stoneham that frightened him. Some hint of the grave, the full moon, the midnight hour. These dark reveries were interrupted by the raucous arrival of Lucius Rant and party.

His familiar shiny red van, the one with the elven inscription from LotR painted around the vehicle in a band of gold letters, had parked in front under the con suite window. Lucius honked to announce himself. The van disgorged two

Atlanta neofen, yipping and screeching. Also in the van were Barney Kite, a CAPS member of neutral political coloration, and Jack Maloway, who had driven up from Jacksonville to join the caravan.

Lucius Rant was in the vicinity of 5' 10" and 200 pounds. His soft chubby face and florid complexion made him appear younger than his thirty-five years. While registering he asked Johnnie, "Do you have any overruns of the hoaxzine left? I'd like to show one together with a file copy of the legitimate zine."

The mildness nearly knocked Johnnie over. Was this the same man who'd written to suggest resignation? "I'm not responsible for the hoax, Lucius."

"Wish you weren't, you mean." With a broad smile and twinkling eye Rant continued: "It was a foolish mistake and I'm going to crucify you for it. At last CAPS may get some proper government. If you're not driven out of office immediately you'll go at election time. And good riddance."

"Why don't you go burn in hell with a blue flame, Rant."

"Aha! Unprovoked hostility. I knew better than to believe your protestations of innocence. I've suspected your intents for a long time."

Johnnie ignored the outburst. One of the neos interrupted to ask about getting on the CAPS waitlist. "My name's Bobbie Foster. How much is it, a buck? I hear -- I mean, Lucius says -- that there's a good chance of getting in soon 'cause the roster is gonna be increased. Is that so? Do you have back mailings for sale?"

While Johnnie was sorting this out a movement began to form a lunch team. Mandy was touting the super barbeque available at the Spare Rib. Her oratory excellence won the day. An enthusiastic barbeque bunch was departing on foot when Greg Teitel and a waitlister arrived from Knoxville. They were immediately recruited.

Ned seemed pleased. He and Johnnie lagged behind the main group in order to talk privately as they walked the half mile to the Spare Rib. "I didn't think Fred Smith was going to show," said Johnnie. "Do we forget him? Cale Stoneham is my candidate. He's creepy."

"I've not given up on Smith yet. As for Stoneham, I sense the emanation you refer to. There's more there than meets the eye. Rant is also not exactly transparent. There's a ruthless soul behind that chubby smiling facade."

Johnnie grimaced. "He's a fugghead. We're looking for a sorcerer and if I ever saw one it's Cale Stoneham. He's right out of the seventeenth century!"

"And am I?" Ned was amused. "Tell me what a sorcerer looks like."

"I see what you mean. So, how are we going to identify the enemy -- have a panel and ask the real sorcerer to Stand Up, Please?"

Ned chuckled. "No, we shall trap our friend. I expect that shall take place tonight."

"You expect. What are we going to do to trap him?"

"I have no idea. Our friend will probably trap himself if we are alert. Remember, we've no inkling of his real purpose. Does he expect to cover himself with international glory by

wresting control of the apa from you? Does the untold wealth of the CAPS treasury attract him? We don't know what the real game is yet. All we can do is pretend. We must convince him that we not only know but fully intend to muscle in on the action. If we succeed in this single pretense our friend will make himself known. Probably in a rather unpleasant way."

They reached the Spare Rib. Everyone agreed that the food was tremendous. A fine fannish session ensued, in which the animosity exhibited by Rant did not intrude. He was as jolly a fan as could be wished. Under the circumstances this disturbed Johnnie more than a continuation of hostilities.

Once back at the Holley House they began the first item on Johnnie's sketchy program: a CAPS trivial quiz. Johnnie was the non-competing Quizmaster. He'd culled questions from the CAPS mailings he possessed, which excluded almost nothing. It was intended as a fun thing.

Most con members were eliminated quickly. After fifteen minutes there were only four survivors, though they all looked to be strong contenders. Tom Alexander, a charter member and former OE, was the natural pick for favorite. Lucius Rant, omniapan and fanophile, was also expected. Barney Kite was a bit of a surprise, for although a charter member he'd never appeared to care about fannish trivia. The fourth and most startling player was Cale Stoneham, who'd not been in that long. He must have gotten back mailings somewhere. Johnnie wondered where.

"There have been two one-shots in CAPS history which were intentional parodies of previous one-shots. For a point each, name the four one-shots involved."

This was a momentous question, for it not only eliminated Kite (who missed two) and Stoneham (who missed one) but also ended the game by default. From the street below came a roar of motorcycles. "There's Hell's Angels down there!" yelled a neo. A mass rush to the windows resulted and the trivia was quite forgotten.

Three motorcycle riders were gunning their engines. Champ Neiman had come out and was shouting at them to stop. They shouted obscenities back. Black leather jackets, skull face decals, dirty tangled hair, a Nazi helmet, boots and beards. They looked to belong to that corner of humanity that includes the Hell's Angels. Something about the group however made Johnnie think they were less than the genuine article.

Champ retreated. This seemed the signal for the bikers to kill their engines. They came inside and soon clumped up the stairs to the con suite. The tall one with the blond beard was Fred Smith. He introduced his two companions as Slimy Jake and Stomach.

"We ain't joining the con," announced Fred. "We're just visiting. All we need is some floor space to crash. Lemme know whose room that'll be." He joined Slimy Jake and Stomach, who were helping themselves to beer.

A pall had fallen on the conversation. These uncouth intruders were on the rough side of Southern fannish expectations. It wasn't clear how to react. The bikers were setting an arrogant aggressive pace. Smith's declaration that they planned to freeload had prejudiced the fans.

Johnnie followed Fred to the beer tub. "Excuse me, Fred. We need to talk. I'm Johnnie Keene --"

"You're the turkey I came to cook! Well, well.

Mister Counterfeiter wants to brag a little, does he. It ain't wise to try and make Fred Smith look like a fool. Ole Fred gets mad, he does. Ole Fred stomps ass."

"Why doesn't ole Fred join the con if he plans to drink convention beer?"

Smith thrust his unwashed face forward. "Don't smart-mouth me! You're in trouble enough as it is. Right here, in front of all the snobby CAPS members, you're going to apologize for trying to pull one on me. Do it real nice and I may not break your face in."

"Smith, you're full of--"

A female screech and the loud pop of flesh on flesh interrupted the showdown. Slimy Jake and Stomach had closed in on Mandy. Now Jake was wearing a red cheek. Mandy was backed against the wall. "Hey, Snake!" said Jake. "The broad don't like to be touched. Imagine that."

Johnnie bolted across the room.

"Click!!" A switchblade appeared in Slimy Jake's hand. A tableau was set. Everybody froze, except for Stomach who popped open a blade too. There was a subtle motion in the room as everyone braced for either attack or flight.

"Back off, redneck," commanded Jake. "Why don't you get lost while we get to know the little lady better."

"Put the knife up, you coward. I'll kill you if you touch her again."

Suddenly there was a booming voice from the hall door. "Don't push him, Johnnie." It was Cal Worthington, the sheriff. He filled the doorway like a pillar of granite. Obviously Champ had been on the telephone for aid.

"The laaaaw!" sneered Jake. "Ain't nothing happening here," cried Stomach, who had better sense. "We're just showing these people the biker knife dance."

Cal walked slowly towards the two, nightstick swinging from his wrist. He was an intimidating figure. 6' 3". 275 pounds. Cal had played two years for the Packers under Lombardy before twisting a knee and ending a promising career. It didn't stop him from becoming sheriff of his home county. Unlike many ex-jocks, Cal didn't let himself run to fat. He was lean and mean.

One fluid motion of the nightstick, striking like a heron's bill, and the pair of switchblades were knocked from senseless hands. Cal stepped up and seized the bikers by the throat. He picked them up, one per hand, and slammed them against the wall. "You know there's an ordinance against that kind of foolishness. What you boys got to say for yourselves?"

There was no response but weak gasps. The slam against their larynx had practically paralyzed them. They were quite terrified.

"Tsk. Tsk. Refusing to cooperate." Cal frowned. Those who knew him recognized his Theatrical Mode. "Welllll, I guess I could let the Klan have 'em. Not a lynching here in over a year. Or... Yeah!"

Cal dropped the stunned bikers unceremoniously on the floor and turned to Johnnie. "Hey, Johnnie-boy! Do me a favor, son, and call Judge Dennison for me. See how many openings are left on the ...CHAIN ...GANG. I got two candidates for ten year terms."

There was a frantic scuffling sound that Cal ignored. Behind his back the two roused bikers fled on unsure feet. As they went out the door Cal slapped his knee and laughed. He went to the window and watched them kick their bikes into action and roar off north on US 399. A county car pulled out and followed them.

"Homer and Leroy will see them to the county line," said Cal. "But didn't Champ say there were three?"

"Well, come on, Johnnie," sang out Fred Smith. "Register me! Got my money right here! I sure do hope it's not too late to get a room here."

"You know this fellow, Johnnie?" asked Cal.

"This is Fred. He was about to give me two dollars to join the convention. -- Why, thanks, Fred! -- Oh, Cal. Fred was going to rent a room for the night. I wonder if you could show him where the desk is and help him register?"

As the giant sheriff escorted him from the room Fred darted Johnnie a look of pure hate. The conflict had not ended with this battle.

Johnnie took Mandy in his arms and kissed her. That made the world seem better. "Why did you let him stay?" she asked. "Cal would have run him over the county line like a shot."

"What would that have proved? He's lost his bully boys. Now we'll find out if he's the mysterious sorcerer -- though I suspect he's nothing but a punk." They kissed again. The con was returning to normal. Spirited chatter sprang up at several focal points. When Fred returned he got a beer and sulked in the corner. His presence was a bit dampening.

Johnnie decided to revive the fantrivia quiz. It was anticlimax, true, but it was the right direction. "Tom! Lucius! Come on over and finish your trivia battle!"

"OK!" said Tom. He'd caught Johnnie's intent. Lucius brought his court. Over half of the fans showed interest, while the others kept up their own conversations. From his position at the head of the table, Johnnie could see Ned take a seat.

"Let's start out with a easy one. It's almost a cliché in CAPS that 'death does not release you'. Every member has probably written it at least once. Who was first to do so, and what was the zine?"

As the two contestants wrote their answers on cards, Johnnie appealed to the audience to heighten interest. "Come on, you poor souls who've been eliminated -- try to match wits with the experts. See how many you can answer."

The corner of Johnnie's eye was captured by the expression on Ned's face. It wasn't wild astonishment, and it wasn't petrifying insight. It was a comfortable realization. On Ned's wise inscrutable face, that was a tip off. Johnnie reviewed the past few moments, but was left ignorant. Suddenly he wanted the trivia quiz to be over.

The quiz plowed onward for another fifteen questions before Lucius was eliminated. There was nothing of the gracious loser in Mr. Rant. "Well, Tom, you win," he said loudly. "Congratulations to you and your good buddy Johnnie. You were the best team in the quiz."

"Lucius, the heights you carry fuggheadery to will probably never be equalled. I'm constantly amazed at your blindness." Tom's riposte lacked fury.

The manifestations of animosity abated sharply somewhat later, when Lucius retired to his room to hold court, taking a group of his followers along. A mellow feeling set in, with the usually fannish stories and insults being traded. Twilight saw groups splitting off for supper. Ned invited Johnnie and Mandy to his room. The three managed to break away smoothly at the first opportunity.

"I hope room service is good here," said Ned. "We need to talk before the open CAPS meeting at eight."

Johnnie nodded. "It might be a good idea to enlist Tom Alexander. He's a good ally. Shall I get him?"

"You trust him with your politics," said Ned and paused. "Do you trust him with your life -- and Mandy's?"

A hard question. "He's a friend," replied Johnnie. "But I see what you mean. The enemy could be anyone at all. Even Tom."

"Even Tom." They went on to Ned's room, feeling grimmer than before. The closed door was a guard gate. Ned dialed Room Service and ordered three cheeseburgers with a big plate of fries. When the phone was hung up, they just looked at each other.

"You have a theory, don't you?" Johnnie asked Ned.

"A tentative one. Already I've hoped a hundred times that I'm wrong. I'm afraid the puzzle makes sense at last. I know why you're still alive -- yet in terrible danger."

"What?!" exclaimed Mandy.

"Perhaps I'm wrong," continued Ned. "Johnnie, put on your historian's hat. CAPS is a young apa. Has any member died?"

"Yes. About a year ago Al Morgan was killed in a car wreck. They say he skidded in the rain and went head-on into a transfer truck."

"Where was this?"

"On a state road east of Atlanta. It was pretty late at night."

"Any witnesses to the accident?"

"The truck driver wasn't hurt badly. I think the newspaper clipping that was run thru CAPS said Al's car just skidded. He was going fast. Maybe eighty. But what's your point? Do you think our enemy killed him? Why?"

A sharp rap rattled the door latch. Mandy's hand tightened on Johnnie's knee. "Yes?" spoke Ned.

Of course it was Room Service with the cheeseburgers. Big juicy burgers with lots of garni on the plates. Included unrequested on the cart was a bottle of bootleg bourbon ("compliments of Mr. Chester"), a bucket of ice and a bottle of Seven Up. Ned tipped well.

"In answer to your question," said Ned after finishing a mouthful of cheeseburger, "the enemy had every reason not to kill Al Morgan. I'm sure it was a real accident. What it may have done is precipitate this entire battle. If you have a fanzine done by Morgan's own hand for CAPS, I can resolve my doubts and fears."

"I do," said Johnnie, "but it's back at my place. There's probably not enough time to get it and be back to start the CAPS sess-

ion. We'll go over later."

"I must know before the CAPS meeting," said Ned. "If our strategy is to be effective that meeting is the key."

"So use your magic to bring my files here," suggested Johnnie.

"And advertise my Power? No magic has been used at this con, either by myself or the enemy. It would smell for miles. We must rely on the magic of gasoline for this trip."

"Then I'll go," announced Mandy.

"I know where Johnnie's files are and I'll be back before the meeting has gone too far."

"The hell you will!" said Johnnie. "What if one of those things is waiting?"

Ned smothered Mandy's "oh, yeah?" look by volunteering. "I shall go. I need privacy and must use Power. That will bring any surprises out of the woodwork fast. It would be a pleasure to encounter another phage. I was never properly introduced to the last one."

"OK," the others agreed. "But why not just bring them here if you're going to use magic anyway?"

"Because magic there is an enigma and a goad. Magic here is an admission of identity." Ned obtained the proper key and an indication of the file location. "I should leave soon. When I return you should be conducting the CAPS meeting. If I do nothing, let it procede normally, but if I hold up a fanzine, it'll be a signal. Here's what I want you to say in your capacity as OE....."

The con suite was already buzzing with noisy fans when Johnnie and Mandy entered. This open meeting of the apa promised to be a controversial one, and even neutral members were excited by the prospect of fanhistory in the making. No voting would take place tonight, but the debate would influence the forthcoming elections and the balance of power in CAPS.

Fred Smith was talking with Lucius Rant, clearly establishing an attack strategy. Cale Stoneham, who might have been with them, was instead examining some pulps that Barney Kite had for sale. Tom Alexander came right up to Johnnie. "They're going for your hide tonight. Old poison lips is inciting the troops and that California creep is making remarks about violence. You should have let Cal bust his ass."

"They don't scare me much, Tom. I can win tonight, but I may say some strange things. Can you trust me enough to support anything I say, no matter how much it may seem out of character?"

"I guess." Tom was agitated, not his usual calm self. "Tell me what it's about later."

"I promise." This display of faith heartened Johnnie, but twinged him with regret for excluding Tom earlier. It had been foolish caution.

The focus of attention turned to the table where Johnnie had set a copy of the latest mailing and his file of O-O's. It was time. Johnnie sat down and banged on the table with the bottle of corflu he'd brought as a gavel. The chatter died away.

"I hereby proclaim this session of CAPS-in-person open. Tonight we're going to discuss apa business of general interest. I see a lot of waitlisters are here. We welcome

their opinions too. CAPS has an open policy on participation. While I do want lots of free discussion, I don't want things to get out of hand. This gavel (he held the corflu bottle aloft) will be used to restore the floor to the chair -- gee, that sounds funny.

"OK, the first issue I want to open is a suggestion made a couple of mailings back that we go from bimonthly to six-weekly. Frankly, I don't like it. Anybody care to comment?"

This calculated manuever disposed of twenty minutes, as a couple of the hyperactive waitlisters argued for the more frequent mailings. After all, they stood to gain. A few grumpy remarks from established members counteracted the neos. With a grin Johnnie resolved to submit a straw ballot to the membership next mailing. He knew how it would go.

Now there was no avoiding the hot issue. Lucius Rant just seized the floor with a florid appeal for an airing of "the scandal which our power-mad OE seems intent on avoiding." Johnnie let him continue.

Lucius spoke of the "forged" zines, laying down accusations of tyranny. The bulk of his talk was devoted to advocating an increase in membership. He talked for so long that Fred Smith finally pulled him down. He wanted to get in some licks himself, and so spouted about what happens to finks in his circles. Johnnie let them rave. The longer the better. When Fred had finished, Cale Stoneham made a witty stabbing speech about the reactionary blockage of progress.

During Cale's oration Ned arrived. He took a seat on the periphery. The warm night compelled him to fan himself with an apazine. Johnnie read the signal.

When Cale sat down the gavel banged vigorously. "These gentlemen certainly are excitable tonight," said Jonnie, summoning up his thespian abilities. "A pity that, as usual, they're behind the times. Tom Alexander and I have worked out a plan which offers the greatest practical growth to CAPS while retaining the original spirit intact. I shall expand the membership limit to fifty."

A murmur swept the assembly. This was patently ridiculous! The gavel rapped. "Let me explain my plan. CAPS will henceforth have two classes of membership: voting and participating. New members will go into the participating class until they are qualified for full membership. These people will be genuine members of CAPS in all respects except the right to vote in elections. Thus our current membership will decide policy and no dilution will occur. The copy requirement will be 55."

The room roared in disbelief. "But who will decide when a member can vote?" demanded Lucius Rant.

"The OE will judge when a proper degree of CAPS spirit exists," replied Johnnie.

"Good lord! This is the most blatant attempt to seize and hold power I've ever seen! Surely you can't endorse this, Tom."

"I do," said Tom, though he was visibly distraught. "Johnnie has my full support, and I hope that of every true CAPS member."

"You asked for expansion, Lucius," said Johnnie. "Why is it suddenly so bitter in your mouth?"

Lucius was turning an ominous shade of purple. "You

young pup!" Rant sputtered. "I meant expansion, not empire. You can't expect to deny these people a say in the apa so your power group can continue to run things. I won't stand for it."

"You're out of order, Lucius. Drawing unwarranted conclusions, as usual. Sit down and observe at least some travesty of order. I'm sure there are others who want to comment."

"I refuse! You'll hear me out. No punk kid is going to tell Lucius Rant to shut up and get away with it. I'll speak as long as I--"

"LUCIUS! Did you pay for the con beer?"

"Damn right! And I'll drink all I please."

"Tom, will you call the sheriff and tell him we've got an unruly drunk here? Lucius, since you can't control yourself I'll bet you'll be a big hit in the drunk tank."

Rant was on the verge of apoplexy. "This is an outrage! You'll pay for this." But nevertheless, he promptly sat down.

"Cancel that call," said Johnnie. "Now. I'll recognize orderly speakers from the floor."

Bobbie Foster, Atlanta neofan, was the first to get his hand up. "It's not fair to let us in but not let us vote. I'll bet it violates our civil rights."

"How do you mean fair, Bobbie? Think about this: you'll be getting your vote as quickly this way as you would had there been no expansion. Maybe quicker. While you're waiting you'll be assured of a mailing and a roster slot. That's got to be a good deal, compared to the old waitlist."

Obviously this hadn't occurred to Bobbie. "Gee, you're right," he said and sat down.

"Don't think you can convince me that half a loaf is better than none!" spouted Lucius as he came to his feet.

"Out of order, Lucius. Too much beer?"

Rant collapsed into his chair. Fred Smith jumped up. "So how you going to explain away screwin' with our zines? You oughta be thrown out of CAPS for that!"

"May I answer that?" Cale Stoneham interjected. Johnnie nodded. "Thank you. As one of the injured parties, I'd like to congratulate Johnnie on his cleverness. He had his fun but quite obviously saw our point. The apa is going to grow. I'm sure it'll be only a matter of time before everyone has an equal say in apa government. Johnnie's method is the thoughtful approach -- and I for one appreciate that."

"Lucius. Fred. Join me in forgetting dead issues. Whatever bad feelings we have about the hoax can only be embarrassment. Let's recognize that and not beat a dead horse. I'd like to endorse Johnnie's idea. Will you all join me in a motion of commendation?"

The audience was taken with Cale's little speech. They shouted approval. In the storm of sentiment Rant saw his supporters deserting him. The pivotal issue he had worked to create had suddenly vanished. Even Fred Smith seemed to forgive. (Though perhaps Fred had been looking for a reason to do so.) With a stony face Lucius waited until the furor had died away. Then he called for the floor.

"I refuse to join in the applause. When someone who's been in the wrong twists the right point of view to his advantage, I don't call it capitulation. I call it weasel wording. Think about that."

Tom

Alexander didn't wait to be acknowledged. He just took the floor. "That poison mouth is going to get you in trouble, Lucius. Nobody likes a poor loser, and you're just that. I was disgusted with your nasty remarks after the trivia contest, but I'm really burned by this last load of verbal garbage. You're probably too much of a jerk to apologize. If CAPS would be better off without a member, it's you and not Johnnie." Tom paused in embarrassment. "Sorry, folks. I just can't stand seeing a friend slandered."

"Truth hurts!" shot off Rant. He seemed genuinely proud of his disturbance.

"Enough of this!" pronounced Johnnie. "Everybody's entitled to their own opinion. I want to get the business over so we can party some more. More comments?"

There were none of consequence. The wisecracks, like those tiny firecrackers called "ladyfingers", popped with no real damage or effect. Johnnie let them crackle thru the audience and play out. He squared himself, for he was about to throw dynamite.

"OK. There's one last unpleasant piece of business. With all this talk of hoax and dirty work, I've been carefully reviewing CAPSac. It started as an exercise to uncover the real hoaxster, but it had a grim finish." He had their full attention now. To heighten effect, he stopped for a swig of beer.

"Ahhhh. Good brew. Well, to continue. My studies revealed a surprising and unfortunate thing. I was dismayed, frankly. One of our members entered on illegal credentials."

As expected, a mutter of disbelief ran thru the assembly. "I know," continued Johnnie. "I was shocked too. I checked into the situation very carefully. It's true. I had a hard time deciding what to do. Tough as it was, there was only one way to go."

"Who is it?" asked Barney Kite with avid curiosity.

"This isn't the time to say," Johnnie said. "I intend to present the entire case in a fractional OO, which I'll publish tonight. CAPS should see all the facts at once. I don't think it's fair to allow emotional clouding of the issue tonight. We're edgy enough as it is."

"As I was saying, there's only one thing to do. The Constitution states that membership is impossible without proper credentials. Therefore, this person is not now and never has been a member of CAPS. With pain and regret, I am retroactively withdrawing membership. The fractional OO will expunge the actions of this person from CAPS records. Elections and other tallies will be corrected. Fortunately, it makes no difference to any outcome. Officially, under the CAPS Constitution, there will never have been such a member in the apa."

"Foul play!" cried Lucius Rant. "If ever there were a retaliatory abuse of power, this is it. Is the apa going to stand for such tactics?"

"This time I agree with my rabid colleague," said Cale Stoneham. "This is highly suspicious."

"If it's me you're going

to axe," roared Fred Smith, "not even Wonder Warthog is gonna save you from cremation!"

The gavel banged and banged. "Gentlemen! Are you all guilty to bring on this reaction? There's only one person, whose name you won't know until tomorrow. The fractional 00 will totally and irrevocably cancel that membership. It's the proper legal action. I want to be fair, though. I'm offering an adjusted position on the waitlist. This isn't a purge, it's a reckoning."

Again the gavel sounded. "This meeting is adjourned. Party and consort all you want, but CAPS business is ended for the night." Johnnie immediately went to get himself another beer. He was mobbed by both friends and curious neutrals on the way. The opposition was busy with a council of war.

A firm polite refusal to discuss the controversy soon turned away the merely curious. Johnnie continued to play it cool, revealing nothing more. Friends didn't press, and soon the group was talking on brighter topics. For Johnnie it was a welcome oasis between the uproar just passed and the trial yet to come.

In a far corner the dissatisfied plotted. The hot-pitched tones of Lucius Rant mingled with the hoots of Fred Smith. Like a basso undertone came the cavernous voice of Cale Stoneham, words indistinct. They debated for well over an hour before sending Barney Kite, as the most neutral emissary in their camp, to make a proposal.

"Johnnie, there's a lot of heat over there that I can't agree with, but I do think it's only fair if we have another CAPS meeting tomorrow. After you distribute your zine. What do you say?"

"That's a good idea, Barney.

After lunch is probably the right time."

As Barney carried word to the Rant caucus, Johnnie prepared for his own exit. "It's quarter past eleven, people. I've got work to do tonight. Chester says he'll close up the con suite whenever he gets tired of talking about science fiction, which may be never, so I'll leave it in his capable hands. I'm going to go publish."

Mandy and Johnnie said their good-byes for the evening. As they walked down the corridor towards the back stairs, sounds of merriment faded like vanishing hope. The empty hall whispered of unseen watchers. Johnnie held open the heavy rear door. Cricket songs from the night.

They descended the stairs into the parking lot. The yellow moon, one bite from full, threw shadows of tall pines across the lot. Somewhere, Ned had parked the car.

Johnnie located the vehicle on the far side of the lot. As they approached, a dark figure stepped from the shadows and resolved into Ned. He held out the car keys to Johnnie. A bird, perhaps an owl, flew across the moon.

"Let's go!" said Mandy. "This is creepy."

On the drive to Johnnie's place they discussed the meeting. "We really stirred them up," said Johnnie.

"Yes, I think our friend has identified himself," Ned agreed.

"For my money, it's Rant. Nobody else was as upset. He opposed everything. A pretty clear indication that he must be the enemy. Smith is just a punk after all."

"Lucius strikes me as jerky, not sinister," offered Mandy. "I can't see him as tough enough for deadly magic."

"Ned's said that appearances deceive."

"I have, and it's true. I agree with Mandy for another reason, though. Think of what we know about our faceless friend. He wants to achieve a particular goal with CAPS. Expansion of the membership. He's apparently willing to leave you as OE if you cooperate. If Rant were the one, do you think he'd refuse this gift on a platter? I think not."

"But he wants power!"

"Temporal power, yes. He wants to be OE. Our friend, however, desires a much more intangible and lasting power."

They had arrived at Johnnie's house. The three piled out of the car and approached the front door. Ned stood for a moment as if sniffing the air. "It's safe," he announced. They went inside and switched on every light in the house. Mleeya was another brightness in the room. She settled on the top of a bookshelf, waiting with the others.

Johnnie brought his typer from the den and set up shop on the coffee table. For a while the only sound was typewriter keys clacking. The fractional OO was taking shape. Only one piece of information was lacking. Johnnie looked up from the typer.

"You said I must name the enemy," he said to Ned.

"He will be sure to know if he is named. Likewise if he is not. Only certainty will bring him."

"You said it wasn't Rant. Just one suspect endorsed the expansion. Do you think---"

"Yes. Cale Stoneham."

As that name was cut onto stencil a burning electric tension gripped the room. A sudden wind shook the windowpanes. Mleeya flew off the bookcase and soared about the room. In the dead calm that followed, Ned spoke. "Our friend has come."

In a moment a firm knocking sounded on the front door. The three exchanged glances and Ned nodded. "Come in!" said Johnnie. "It's unlocked."

Cale Stoneham entered. "I hope I'm not intruding," he said, closing the door behind him.

"Not at all," replied Johnnie. "Have a seat. We were expecting you."

Cale smiled, showing all his teeth. "I came to advise. This is a potentially dangerous action you've embarked upon. Perhaps your youthful idealism is overriding common sense. You say you're concerned with the apa, yet what could be more damaging than a willfully disruptive action? You will create chaos."

Johnnie had trouble keeping the nervousness from his voice. "I've made up my mind, Cale. What I'm doing is right."

"Horsefeathers!" snorted Stoneham.

"My entrance requirements weren't illegal. I did the activity myself by conventional means. It stands. It's your action that's illegal."

"That may be so, but I'm the OE. My actions are official. When that zine is published you're expunged from CAPS, like it or not."

"I'm a powerful enemy." Stoneham's nostrils flared. The edge of his voice was death.

"You'll be less so when expelled!" shot back Johnnie, his shoulders tight as his clenched fists.

"So you do know," hissed Stoneham. His eyes darted to Ned and back. "Do you think you have the power to command? Or is it your spectacled friend here? Souls are not lightly managed. One must be strong..."

"Neither of us wants that mastery," answered Ned. "The trap must be destroyed."

"What! Destroy the finest natural soul trap ever discovered? You fools. These are healthy untwisted souls, not warped and knotted like those taken by conventional methods. Besides, what will you do -- dissolve CAPS? Try, and find it survives without you."

"First we'll remove you from the crease and sever your control. Then we'll find a way."

"You'll need more than words." Stoneham suddenly snatched the stencil from the typer. It burst into flames and burned in his hand. Johnnie stared; the hand was unscathed.

Stoneham laughed. Those tones Johnnie had thought so hearty now seemed the bark of the predator. "Once before you tasted my power." Stoneham's words injected dirty pain into Johnnie's scars. "Now taste it again."

He extended his hands and out shot orange flame. Johnnie leaped aside, but the flame had frozen in midstream and fallen to the floor in harmless tinkling shards. Ned had intervened.

The wizards faced each other. Recognition. "So, after five centuries we meet again," said Stoneham. "I'm much stronger this time."

"I am no weaker," replied Ned.

"No stronger either, I trust. You were always too much the fool to take the path of true power."

"The dark ways do not interest me. You would take souls. I would free them."

"Then perish!" A lance of flame struck at Ned. It died short. The air about the wizards became old with ancient hatred. Irridescent shimmering. Power that shook the room and sent the two mortals to the wall. Mleeya attacked, but rebounded from Stoneham's shield as a pale flicker.

"Feel my fury!" laughed Stoneham. He was glorying in his strength, as Ned was hard pressed to defend. "These are the fruit of years. These new powers, new weapons. The fine soul I captured from CAPS will be the spear I drive through your heart. Then I shall be unmatched on earth!"

Ned fought with silent determination. Whatever powers colored the air, half were his. If it came to stamina, though, it seemed Stoneham must win. He seemed fresh as ever, while Ned was grim and strained.

Johnnie felt the strain himself. It was as if an unseen hand were trying to pull his innards from the shell of his body. As if someone were stretching his very soul. And he realized the horrible meaning of the soul trap, for Stoneham must be drawing strength from every soul in CAPS to aid in his battle with Ned. It was a sickening realization.

Johnnie struggled to his feet and staggered into the den. Mandy followed. "Johnnie, we've got to help Ned!"

"I'm trying to," he gasped. He threw a stencil onto his lightbox and attacked it with a stylus. The writing came hard. His coordination was impeded, his concentration fragmented.

In shaky letters he wrote: "As OE of CAPS I proclaim the membership of Cale Stoneham null and void. Because he entered under false credentials his membership never existed. It is retroactively dissolved. It never was."

He signed it and put the stencil onto his mimeo. Then he collapsed with violent cramps. Cale Stoneham must have noticed. "Turn the crank!" he moaned to Mandy.

She sensed his urgency. The mimeo turned once, twice, thrice, then froze solid. Stoneham stood in the door of the room. His eyes were red. Somehow his face seemed longer and flatter. His teeth seemed sharpened.

Johnnie reached up and pulled a copy from the receiving tray of the mimeo. "You're expelled from CAPS, Stoneham."

"Little fools! You didn't meet the copy requirements. It's not a legal Capszine."

"Where's Ned?" asked Mandy.

Stoneham chuckled. "Resting, despairing. Your diversion saved him for a moment, but his strength is near exhausted. I'll finish him soon, but first..." The mimeo imploded, fused into a smoking mass.

"Don't go away, little fools. I don't intend to renounce use of your souls by being the agent of your death, but there are interesting games we can play later."

Suddenly Ned appeared between Stoneham and the others. He threw his shimmering shield around them and Johnnie felt the cramps lessen. "You are doomed, (-----)," said Ned. The harsh-tongued word was his name for the creature that called itself Cale Stoneham. "You have stepped inside the trap in your greed for souls. Now yours is lost."

Stoneham's wicked laughter was confident. "None are strong enough to wrest mastery from me. This OE, puny material, is tortured at my whim." To prove his point he jabbed a shooting pain through Ned's shield. Johnnie screamed. "Even you shall be destroyed."

"Do you really think this crease in the continuum is natural, a bountiful trap-line laid for your greedy benefit?"

"Are you jealous of my find? Sorcery merely fools the continuum. It doesn't change it. I take this trap for mine, and shall feast on the souls it brings me."

"Greedy fool! Do you forget what powers do mold the continuum? You have poached on a royal preserve. You shall know the anger of He who made it!!"

Terrible fear showed on Stoneham's face. He struck at Ned with all the concentrated fury he could command, but the shield held barely. From Ned's lips came a cry of such abominable syllables that it struck the pit of the stomach with disgust. A shattering call that was heard in the deepest reaches of Hell.

A rumble like mountains dying. Stoneham had time to say, "How did you know--" Then the floor opened,

yet did not. There was a hardwood floor, yet also a pit of fire. A great hand, eight-fingered like a spiny spider, reached from the pit and seized Stoneham in its talons. He screamed and struggled and spun weak flame about himself, to no avail.

The hand withdrew, taking its prey. The pit faded. The floor remained alone. "Poachers offend Him," said Ned. "Nowhere does the sin of vanity hold higher court."

The shock had left them dull. Johnnie examined his ruined mimeo. Mandy put her arms around him from behind and just held on. Ned sat down and nursed the diminished Mleeya. Eventually they went into the kitchen and had tuna sandwiches.

"What a mess we're left with," said Johnnie. "How're we going to explain Stoneham's vanishing?"

"I'll take care of that," said Ned. "Cale Stoneham will appear to check out tomorrow morning and drive away. His disappearance will confirm his guilt."

"Peachy keen. What about the expansion? I can't allow anybody else into CAPS knowing that I'm dooming them to Hell. And speaking of that, I don't like it myself."

"Can't say I blame you. This soul trap is an infringement, you realize. I could file a complaint and have it ruled a violation. Fanac is only a venal sin, afterall, not a mortal one. But the paperwork might take several centuries to process."

"You're a big help. Maybe you can fix my mimeo?"

"Of course." Ned waved his hands and mumbled soft words. "There. I took the liberty of giving you a silk screen -- that old drum machine is passe. Oh, and I threw in fifty quires of stencils."

"Well, thanks!" Johnnie was perking up. "How about paper? I hate to sound greedy, but I've been through a lot..."

"Gladly," said Ned and gestured again. "I take it I should start that paperwork."

"Yes," said Johnnie. "Just in case. I've got some ideas of my own. If nothing works, it'll be good to know I've got friends in court."

"Honestly!" Mandy exclaimed. "I don't understand you two. Here we were almost killed. The Devil himself appeared. Johnnie discovers his soul is caught. And still you sit there and talk fanac!"

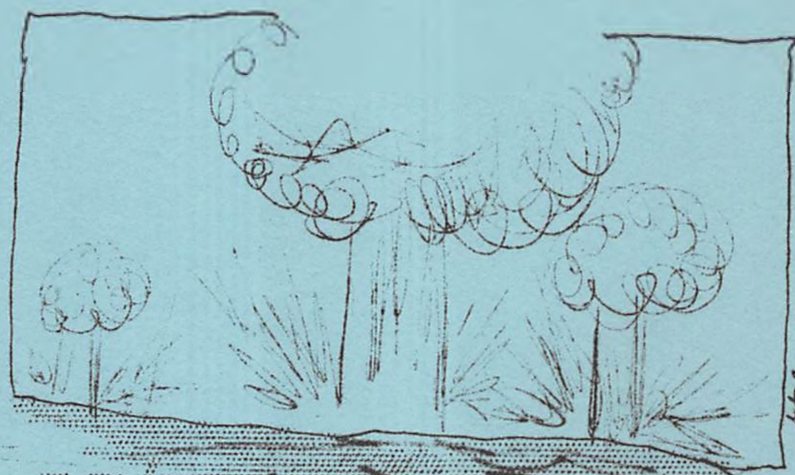
Ned smiled at her. "What else are we supposed to do? There aren't any easy answers. Why not go on living?"

Mandy smiled back. "You know, I knew that already. You just made me realize it."

Johnnie reached over and gently squeezed her hand. "Mandy, you're going to make a fine fannish wife."

And Ned discretely vanished.

— fin



Stiles '66



FUGGHEAD'S FREEHOLD