

MEEL



STATON

** Industry trade shows are another place to meet old friends. This week
** I attended Wescon in Anaheim, a smallish computer and telecommunications affair. As expected, I ran into a number of old friends, many of them CMC people now working all over the industry. 'Twas pleasant to chat about old times and get updated on their current job and projects.

An amusing aspect was the assumed name under which I attended Wescon. Not wishing to bother with registration, I borrowed the badge of a fellow employee who'd gone to the show the day before. This is a common enough practice. It leads to no confusion for those who know you.

However, for those who don't...
I surveyed the Pertec booth, of course. We were showing one of my products the PCC 2000 small business system. I wandered over and toyed with it, trying (as always) to crash the demo program. Success blessed my efforts.

Suddenly a salesman appeared at my elbow to restore the machine. He glanced at my badge, read my name and company, and noted aloud that I was from Pertec also.

"Don't know how to run the machine, do you," he commented.

I looked at his badge too. This particular salesman had a bad track record for illegally distributing Alpha-level software. (Alpha test is a limited distribution phase when we try out new software at perhaps 10 customer sites. Bugs are then fixed and the revised package is released for sale. As Engineering supports the Alpha sites, adding more customers on test software is a pain for us.)

"No," I replied. "I was trying to break it."

He did a double-take. "Why do that, George?" he asked.

"Because, Larry, this is Alpha level software. It breaks. I want to find out how it breaks, Larry. Why do you have Alpha software at the show?"

He was wary of me now. "It's the latest and greatest."

I just smiled and played with the system for a few more minutes. Sooner or later I would run into Larry at the Nordhoff facility. It would be fun.

Best part of the show, however, was at the Zilog booth. Their theme was "the fireworks have just begun." To illustrate, they'd built an indoor fireworks display.

It was a black background board with tiny colored lights embedded. The lights were practically invisible when unlit. The board was programmed to simulate the flare of a rising rocket and the burst of fireworks. Super aerial displays, like they send up at Disneyland so often.

I spent some time looking over the fireworks and figuring out the details. It's a beautiful idea and one well worth investing some hobby time in (if such ever becomes available in sufficient quantity).

Zilog was also distributing comic books (about Captain Zilog, Alan) and posters from the same. I acquired one each. There were mimes running about the show, but no robots (as at the National Computer Conference). I wrapped the day up with various pieces of literature about new products and left happy.

** The Box Scores are back, as you'll discover overleaf. The Box Scores I classify as an old friend rediscovered. I was with regret (and weariness) that I discontinued them a couple of years ago. With the resurgence of MEL as a SFPazine, it's appropriate to resurrect the old traditions and Box Scores certain count there.

To refresh the rules on page count for those who may have forgotten, let's spend a paragraph or two. I do my own page counting, not using the OO numbers. Credit in the Box Scores is given for a person's own zines (or a contribution in another zine). Inclusions and flyers don't count. Thus, Guy gets credit for the two pages of "Harlan's Side" which he wrote but not the other blathering. Meade got no credit for franking through the $\frac{1}{2}$ acon flyer.

Multi-party one-shots are scored on the basis of ease for the official counter. If two or three people do a one-shot I share the credit between them. If however the zine is one of those confused and ridiculous conshots, I ignore it. Too much to figure out who contributed how much.

In the case of edited zines, a member may receive credit for another's work if he or she did the typing, etc. Same kind of rule holds for art -- it goes to the zine's editor. The Southerner is credited to the OE. That's how it works.

This Box Scores series covers mailings 86 - 91, the last EgoBoo Poll span (as I had those mlg's out and at hand). I'll keep it rolling into the future and also hope to work backwards a few mailings at a time and pick up earlier data. If this happens, I'll eventually link up with the original scores.

The right-hand column is pages per mailing. Many members consider this the most important stat, although I place quality above quantity myself. The pages per mailing stat does have an interesting application to the "SFPA doldrums" now being experienced, however. If you read the zines in mlg 91 you draw a conclusion that old members are minacking.

I've identified the top ten ppm scorers with circled rankings. Note that the top five are "old" members. In days past there was usually a newcomer in that elite group. Fresh enthusiasm produced a spate of pages, putting some high-energy new member up with the Elder Ghods. Competition in ppm was possible where competition in the Coffin Scores wasn't.

I talk more on this viewpoint in my MC's, so enough here. Perhaps the return of the Box Scores will encourage members old and new to do a few extra pages and help their standing.

** Books are old friends of mine which have been in declining rate of acquaintance for several years. One side benefit of all the travel I do these days is an opportunity to read. Airplane trips are perfect for that. At first I was swamped with work and so I wrote memoes, reviewed specs, etc. on the plane. Now I generally read. In the Moudry spirit, there follow capsule comments on books I've read in flight.

THE MAGUS (by John Fowles): a powerful but ultimately unsatisfying book. Fowles creates an omnipotent figure -- vast wealth, vast power, no scruples -- then plays with the concept. An English schoolmaster (young) on a Greek island becomes the toy of the Magus.

The concept is carefully developed. Characters are well-conceived and highlighted with technical excellence. A side theme

THE *BOX* *SCORES*

for mailings 86-91

Name	Hits	AB	Average	P(39)	P(90)	P(91)	Total	Pg per Mlg	
ATKINS	6	6	1.000	1	4	41	94	15.7	④
BIGGERS	3	6	.500	0	6	0	19	3.2	
BRIDGET, A.	6	6	1.000	6½	10	6	38½	6.4	
BRIDGET, B.	6	6	1.000	4½	13	4	36½	6.1	
BROOKS	6	6	1.000	17	6	4	46	7.7	
BUSH	4	5	.300	4	16	0	24	4.8	
CARUTHERS	4	6	.667	6	0	7	27	4.5	
DAVIS	5	6	.833	6	0	4	29½	4.9	
FRIERSON	6	6	1.000	6	4	4	22	3.7	
HULAN	6	6	1.000	5	4	65	98	16.3	③
HUTCHINSON	6	6	1.000	29	16	15	168	28.0	②
JENNINGS	4	6	.667	10	0	25	51	8.5	⑩
JUGE	6	6	1.000	5	2	2	23	3.8	
KARRH	4	6	.667	0	5	0	35	5.8	
LAMBERT	5	6	.833	4	6	0	38	6.3	
LILLIAN	6	6	1.000	31	29	52	241	40.2	①
LYNCH	6	6	1.000	9	7	15	59	9.8	⑦
MARKSTEIN	6	6	1.000	4	8	6	58	9.7	⑧
MATTINGLY	3	4	.750	4	0	6	17	4.3	
MORRISSEY	3	6	.500	4	0	12	30	5.0	
MOUDRY	6	6	1.000	4	10	5	32	5.3	
REED	4	6	.667	4	4	0	20	3.3	
REINHARDT	1	1	1.000	—	—	5	5	5.0	
SPEERHAWK	6	6	1.000	6	6	4	44	7.3	
VERHEIDEN	6	6	1.000	23	9	17	69	11.5	⑤
WEBER	6	6	1.000	6	9	8	53	8.8	⑨
WELLS	6	6	1.000	4	2	2	18.5	3.1	
WHITEHEAD	4	6	.667	0	4	25	65	10.8	⑥

is also included, although later efforts to merge it into the central Magus concept are poorly executed and better left untouched in the first place.

Downfalls of the novel are (1) diminution of pace, such that the striking scenes of imagination fall in the first two-thirds of the book and one is left with only an inadequate attempt to recoup by the novelist as adrenalin food at the climax; (2) descent from the supportive nature of mystery into the half-assed world of shallow justification for the power of the Magus; and (3) failure to resolve the human issues so carefully exposed during the length of the narrative.

Still, a solid 7½ on a scale of 10. If you enjoy both fantasy/suspense and mainstream, this is one of the best blendings I've ever read. Don't be put off by my critical comments.

BLOOD SPORT (by Dick Francis): a high-tension thriller concerning horse racing. In places it reminded me of Hamilton's DEATH OF A CITIZEN. Francis is a facile writer whose high point is to be found in this book (to judge by his other work which I've read).

Easy reading, lots of fun, a nice twist or two -- I give it 5½ on the scale of 10 and recommend it to mystery buffs who haven't discovered Francis yet.

THE HUMAN FACTOR (by Graham Greene): I bought this as a simple espionage novel by the author should have made me realize otherwise. It's a rather deep and pointed look into the human soul. Well done for a spy format. Most positive point of the book, aside from the strong writing, is the steadily building suspense. Greene knows how to pace things (Fowles should take a lesson). Nowhere is the reader allowed off the hook.

I felt that Greene should have added 75 pages and fleshed out some of the supporting characters, who come across a bit thin at times. A good 7.

THE WYCHERLY WOMAN (by Ross Macdonald): is another Lew Archer novel, but better than most in the complexity of its threads. This one manages to bring disclosure after disclosure ringing down in the final acts. As a detective mystery it is superb. No more comment, other than to say that the usual Ross Macdonald flair for characterization is present in great force. A solid 6.

TALES OF NEVERYON (by Samuel R. Delany): never comes near the height of its first segment; in fact, it turns purely dumb at times. Delany is a superb technician but a lousy writer in the broader sense. He keeps interfering with himself. Example: the book utterly bogs down for 14 pages while Delany retells the Freudian penis-envy theory in Symbolic Terms. Idiocies regarding swordplay and military logistics also abound.

But, the first segment is excellent, for it primarily deals with movements within the tapestry of power and Delany has clearly been an observer of that. If one can survive the Message sections and ignore the Impossible, then the book is enjoyable. I'm torn between the extremes, but will give it a 5.

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARP (by John Irving): never relents. Irving has done a fine job at blending zany recognition of the world's insanities into a novel which keeps itself properly mainstream. The protagonist, T.S. Garp, is himself a novelist. Garp's history, including his conception, is so well presented that when the later chapters arrive one feels this man to be an acquaintance of

repeated exposure with whom a friendship might develop soon. Garp's own struggles with life are so real, though slightly crazy, that one takes him for real. This is the major accomplishment to be sought by a novelist, that his people take on life. Garp does. So do the cast surrounding him (with few exceptions).

Irving is concerned with the basic issues of psychic survival and life meaning. His explorations are by no means complete. As many questions are raised as are "answered." However, the insights offered are abundant. Irving has a talent for getting at the turning point in life situations and examining the minds of the characters. What he sees is rooted in the fundamental survival material of the character. Enough prelude has gone into every situation to make its resolution (or avoidance) inherent in the nature of the characters.

The book isn't a mystery or any other genre. It's just Life. A powerful 8. Maybe an 8½. If you have an urge to try a mainstream novel, try GARP.

** Albuquerque is becoming a new friend as I learn more about the town.

** It has a friendly and slow-paced ambience that's quite refreshing. Thus far the weather has been excellent, albeit a bit rainy (a near-term record for rainfall this past summer). As a result, I'm told the place is greener than usual. But the Rio Grande no longer has water in it -- the river is a big mud trough.

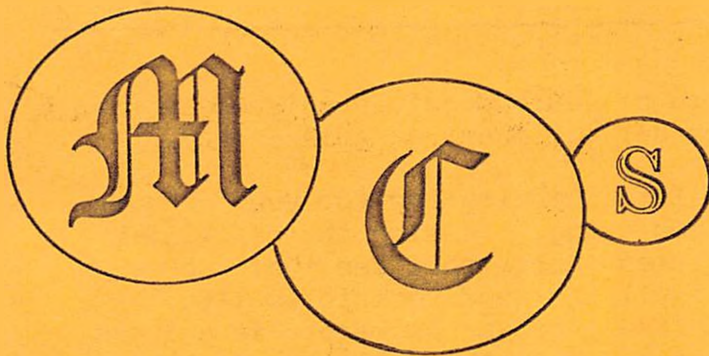
During October Albuquerque sponsors a Balloon Festival -- it's actually called a Hot Air Balloon Festival and this year they had Carter attend (if there's any significance in that). I was lucky enough to be in town then. One Friday morning I decided to be late for work, so I drove over to the ascent area. Found a beautiful perch on a bluff across the freeway. Balloons went aloft and soared just above me.

The balloons are colorful and stately. If you've never seen hundreds of them aloft together you've missed a real spectacle. Fanciful designs in bright hues float overhead, the balloons being remarkably graceful. They're vented, the vents being controlled with lines going down to the balloonist. Considerable control can be exercised over the balloon's course. (With the wind, naturally, determining the general direction of flight.)

"Running down" the balloons is a fun thing too. Each balloon has a truck or trailer in which it lives. After the flight is over, or near-over, hordes of trucks race about the roads of Albuquerque following their respective balloons. When the airship lands in a field, shopping center parking lot or somebody's front lawn the truck is there to gather in the deflated balloon and tote it back to the ascent area.

Locals also chase the balloons on their own, it being quite a sport to find roads approximating the course of the airborne vessel. A pickup truck with cold beer and half a dozen "chasers" in the back is a common sight. Two or more parties may compete in chasing a given balloon, knowledge of the streets and farm roads being the essential skill. Some chasers even go with four-wheel drive and pursue cross-country.

I didn't try chasing in my rental car, being content to stand on the bluff and watch those beauties float over. I did, in my weekly status report, mention that one of our competitors owns a balloon. It's great advertising, I wrote. Perhaps next year I'll be aloft in a Pertec balloon.....



THE SOUTHERNER 91 (AHOE) * Nice hand-coloring. (Were you bucking for zine of the year, Alan?) The mailing itself doesn't feel like an EgoBoo Poll mailing to me. Those kind usually top 500 pages. But it did have a solid ring to it on many accounts. To see a young waitlister like Stvn Crlbrg contributing was rather nice. Shows how inspirational SFPA can be to the new generation. Also good to see David G. (for Gumdrop) Hulan get off his fanny and write something again. Even beat out Shadow for top page-count. Shows what determination and nine days out sick from work can do.

We also saw Hank Reinhardt return. Age is no barrier to apa participation. Hank is one of the few remaining members of original Atlanta fandom. Original Atlanta fans are those persons whose comix collection was burned by Sherman.

And, if we all sign the Pledge to do mailing comments, this here ole apa will start to boom again. Remember, the government needs the support of every citizen, so give generously to the Post Office. (After hiring Hutchinson, they need help!)

DOWN THE DARTH VADOR 2 (LILLIAN) * Sounds like a good con. Too bad I wasn't there, but that's the trend these days. Southern cons are fun and I hope to make another one soon. Perhaps 1/2acon in B'ham, if things work out perfectly.

RANDOM BROODINGS ON HOLLYWOOD (FRIERSON) * Well, the ticket counter is a voting booth in the monetary sense, which is what the film business is all about. If the general public has execrable taste, that's the way the film splices. As long as movies are produced to make money, a generous sop of garbage will be offered to the public in order to entice them. Same goes for television. I'm only glad that some fine films are made and that quality television programming occurs from time to time. We're in the minority, Meade, and we have to find what quality we can.

THE NEW PORT NEWS 61 (BROOKS) * The way things are going, when the Arab's oil runs out they'll have more than a big sandpile. They'll have our farmland, downtown real estate, Beverly Hills mansions, etc. I agree that the dollar declines in value as the Arabs jack up oil prices, thus making their true value-received less than apparent. However, the fiscal distortion isn't distributed evenly in all sectors. Some lag the petroleum. By buying into these areas the Arabs are extracting much more than mere dollars from America.

Another thing is occurring. I heard on the FM the other day (so I won't vouch for the figures) that the USA is owed \$384 Billion by foreign nations. Not that we ever really expected to collect that much of it, but the fall of the dollar hurts us there. There's no inflation index pegged to those debts.

But so much for

beer hall economics. The real lesson to be learned out of this whole mess is one every design engineer encounters early: never go sole source.

GUNFIGHTERS 5 (JENNINGS) * I've got a lot of admiration for your venture into your own thing. Reading the description of your store and the activities associated therewith I see that such an adventure appeals to me also. I recall all the good bookstores I've haunted in my life. There's a feeling like a proper bookstore is a cross between a farden and a temple. All that magic on the walls... Is Dudley near Boston? I don't doubt that my business travels will one day take me to Boston, and if Dudley isn't far I'll make a point of dropping in. Your store sounds the proper kind.

Re: Libertarianism. I can't see how even ¾ of government spending could be eliminated overnight. If we tried, those people would have no means of support and civil anarchy would be the result. A program to establish productive jobs must occur first. As about 35% of the work force is employed by some level of government, there are a lot of productive jobs to be created.

Although the government produces no hard goods, it does produce valuable services (albeit terribly inefficient and mismanaged ones from all evidence). The key is to separate the worthwhile services from the worthless, or more appropriately to establish a baseline level of government service which is adequate. This decision is a tricky one; I'm not going to judge.

What I will judge is bureaucratic paperwork. This is the area where government has inflated beyond all reason. Petty regulations and forms are strangling the country. First, I would make a survey of private industry and establish the typical ratio of productive workers to administrative overhead. Then I'd declare absolutely that no government agency could exceed this ratio.

That should drive about 30% out of current government cost. The displaced persons could be retrained and put into various levels of consumer-goods production. Money from reduced taxes would be enough encouragement for the populace to buy such goods. Most would be entertainment items, I suspect.

A reassessment of private industry administrative overhead in about two years would show a marked drop, as loosening government demands freed workers for a productive cycle.

As the overhead associated with producing goods dropped correspondingly, American products would be priced more cheaply. Competition in foreign markets would sharpen, further boosting the economy.

Such a situation would allow corresponding increases in capital formation and research activities. These classical sources of productive enhancement and technological advance would further stimulate economic growth. These drives would open new channels for more readily available raw materials and advanced energy sources. The development of multiple sources would be emphasized and a more stable economy spring therefrom.

By the year 1991 specialty book stores would be reporting record business, and many specialty publishing houses would be flourishing. Apas would be prevalent, the foremost being SFPA (recognized as the origin of many Great Ideas). Greed and violence would have been banished from the land. Disco would have disappeared. On Christmas of 1992, God would descend from the heavens, with propellor beanie, and join the SFPA waitlist.....

"DO BIG ZINES," SAID THE TIC-TAC-TOE (Bill Bridget) * Blue ink on blue paper?! At least it's better than grey ink on grey paper which (I think) Gary Brown once ran through the apa.

BOOJUM (Caruthers) * So your father was behind you in science fiction reading; you were lucky. Mine thought it was pure stuff and nonsense. (Matter of fact, he didn't care for any type of fiction.) I read sf intermixed with about every other imaginable type of book, so I had a saving recourse when questioned.

("Is that more science fiction garbage you've got?" "Just finished Kant's THE CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON and thought I needed a breather.")

I kept my sf collection in shoe boxes in my closet rather than on book shelves. This was as much to keep some of the zine covers out of sight as it was to disguise the size of the collection. The difficulties of this situation, however, probably helped more than hurt my mania for sf.

Your personality has a mellow streak and is well-balanced enough to set the flash/magic that shows when you will it into a focus that attracts rather than frightens people.. You appear to be glad rather than envious when good things happen to others, and this trait in itself is a great gift.

CLIFF'S WILL BE BIGGERS (Bill Bridget) * Neat two-part pun! ## An interesting theory, that fans feud in order to have something to say and to attract attention/comment. I think you're absolutely right.

Where I disagree is your assumption that we don't have much to say to each other. Feuding is just a game (in the TA sense). It doesn't do much but sharpen our feuding skills, a questionable survival trait. The exchange of ideas/experiences/information is, imho, a better way to conduct faanish interplay. It's amazing what an info bank an apa can be, filled as it is with different professions, talents and side interests. Let's see: we have law, engineering, programming, journalism, teaching, optometry, insurance investigation, and a host of other jobs represented. Hobbies range all over the spectrum. I've noticed that few inquiries go unanswered in SFPA.

THE TRAVELS OF AMORPHO (Lillian) * I recall meeting Amorpho by the elevator at JI. Fortunately I'd made arrangements with the hotel concerning the elevator. When Amorpho tried to cough in my face the elevator door was open behind him but the car was one floor up. A simple shove was enough. Amorpho may have preferred the flue, but he got the shaft.

FRENCH FRIES DON'T MATE (Bill Bridget) * Bitch. Bitch. Bitch.

"NO" SHE SAID... (Wells) * The roster should have Honorary Members listed. For example, Julie Andrews and Robert Heinlein. This couldn't hurt with prospective members. Sample flyer text: "New members are warmly greeted in the privacy of their own by their choice of an Active Member on the Roster. Note: Honorary members not available. Of course we

would name an Active as the alternative if the Honorary selected couldn't be coaxed into performing. Imagine the unbounded joy of a hot-blooded neofan who'd requested that Cheryl Tiegs bestow his special greeting when he finds an affectionate Hank Reinhardt on his doorstep. Imagine the liberated-but-discriminating young neofanne when she opens the door to Guy Lillian after asking for Robert Redford. SFPA could set new records for turnover. (But think of the dues payoff.)

TRUE CONFECTIONS... AND OTHER SACCHARIN (Lynch) * Welcome to SFPA!! I watched the fine job you did with Shadow and hope that SFPA develops well for you and we see you run for OE one day. Being OE is an experience that everyone should go through once and you handled your training wheels nicely.

Yeah, BLOOD ON THE TRACKS was the last Dylan album to have a substantial portion of good stuff on it. My own favorite Dylan albums go further back. BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME, BLONDE ON BLONDE, NASHVILLE SKYLINE. The bootleg ROYAL ALBERT HALL CONCERT. Etc. While Dylan's creative urge was frenetic (a period ending with B.O.B.) his material was so intense that it was almost a drug. "Mr. Tambourine Man," "Sweet Marie," and "Positively 4th Street" are examples. They bend the mind into their pattern. One must be careful as to exposure level.

Recent Dylan material doesn't have that drive. The old saw that success is death to an artist seems to apply to Bobby Zimmerman, though there are numerous examples that it's only a rule of thumb. (Tom's Blues??)

IMPRESSIONS OF NORTHAMERICON (Frierson) * "Penny rolled ciggarettes (sic)" -- isn't there a shorter slang word for those funny hand-rolled ciggies? -- and "slid matches under the door." No doubt a roach clip too. No wonder waiting for them to open the jammed bathroom door wasn't too bad after that...

HALF-A-CON 1979 (Frierson) * I discovered the timing and location of this 1/2acon too late, much to my dismay. I'd already scheduled the weekend. The last convention I attended in Birmingham was a delight, and I'd have loved to be at this one. Perhaps you would consider moving it to the next weekend?? ((No. Why not?))

SPECK ON THE GLASS OF HUMANITY (Lillian) * Hello.

GHLIII FOR OE (Guidry) * Everytime John Guidry (ex-member) manages to sneak a satirical zine into SFPA I chuckle. Now he's done it again with as good an imitation of Guy's writing style as has been seen since I CAN'T GET NO. The text itself is quite clever. One might almost think that Guy was really running for OE! Of course there are some dead give-aways, such as claiming that Ned has agreed to be Emergency Officer and could drive over, in a pinch, in a few hours. It would take Ned days to even find North Carolina, much less Greensboro.

Then there's the statement that "Pagecount isn't the important thing about an apa." Anybody who's followed Guy's output knows that he could no more have written that line than Vince Lombardi could have said to the Packers, "Take it easy in this game."

The real clincher, of course, is Guidry's glib assertion (in Guy's name), that "...I must be doing something right." This knee-slapper is the finest

morsel of humor thus offered from the Guidry banquet. When I showed this zine to Dave Hulan and he ~~saw~~ that line there was uproarious laughter. It took twenty minutes and four bottles of Dos Equis to calm Dave down. For the rest of the evening merely breathing the words "something right" was enough to set off gales of hysterical chuckling.

Now -- I have a fiendish idea. Close the doors and windows, children, and don't mention a word of the plot to Guy. Let's all pretend that we really believed Guidry's fakezine was Guy's. Let's vote GHIIII in as OE of SFPA and watch the raw consternation on his face!

SPIRITUS MUNDI 53 (Lillian) * SFPA's slump period isn't unprecedented for the apa; we've had them before. What we're seeing here is a "down" activity period for almost all of the old warhorses, which has only happened once before to a more severe extent, and a lack among the newcomers of at least one or two high-page-count high-enthusiasm publishers. The top three page-count producers in mlg 91 were old-timers, two of which have more than 70 mlg's to their credit. Subtract those contributions and the mlg page count of 396 drops to 234. I'd say the Old Guard is still the backbone of the apa.

The apa's recent failure has been its inability to fuel excitement in its membership, new and old. The reasons for this are complex and many, but I'd say the decline of the Mailing Comment has a lot to do with it. Old memberships are snoozing and interacting less. (Many of us, I'm sure, are deeply embroiled in other pursuits of merit. I doubt that it's a drop in creative energy level. And perhaps, as you suggest, we're tired of familiar typefaces.)

The result has to be a decline in net MC's, for they feed upon themselves. Newer members get less exposure to SFPA ideas, traditions and personalities. There is no spark to motivate the good big SFPazine.

But it

is a curious paradox that the good big SFPazine is a cousin of the Phoenix. Like a plant pressed into flowering by lack of nourishment, the good big SFPazine will suddenly bloom in the midst of aridity. And the good big SFPazine is a gregarious creature. It rises in numbers to greet its fellows and frolics wildly across the plains of ingroup spirit. The GBS is a strange animal which likes to stampede joyously across the noses of doom purveyors, who likely enough only a mailing afterwards are authoring GBS's themselves.

As for our newcomers, I only glance at Shadow SFPA to see the potential which is awaiting. Given a trumpeting herd of good big SFPazines to emulate, they too will be into the swing shortly. I'm in no way pessimistic about SFPA. The tenacity of this apa is incredible. Look at Hank Reinhardt, surfacing for his ninth try at membership over the last 23 years. Look at Stven Carlberg (who was kicked out once and resigned once) establishing his w1 credentials via a contribution. We will endure.

THE LAST BRONZE ARMADILLO ALARM CLOCK (Gelb) * Good luck!

SITTING IN LIMBO 3 (Mattingly) * People dislike the mass (thereby inertia) and waste in the government, that's why it's popular to deride government employees. My dealing with government agencies reveal much the same mix of types I encounter in similar roles in private industry. (I've not dealt much with "higher-ups" in government, but those I've interacted with were also a mix.)

I have dealt with government paper-

mills before, however, and find them voluminous, repetitive, pettyfogging, irritating and ridiculous. The morass of regulations grows larger every year. The sheer volume of paper required for any government interaction is discouraging. No wonder that citizens encountering it are angry. (And non-citizens, also, for our paper swamp extends abroad.)



Inflation and graduated taxation are to blame, imho. As the purchasing power of the dollar declines and inflation "raises" American salaries, Unca Sam takes a larger and larger percentage of our income. Naturally, he will spend whatever he has (and more).

The taxpayer's revolt we read about, spearheaded by campaigns like Prop. 13 in California, signals the mood of the nation. I don't see much personal animosity directed at individual government employees, but collectively they are the target of many jibes.

GUNFIGHTERS 7 (Jennings) * If paperback prices do hold or even come down slightly it'll be about time. I recall when a paperback was a quarter. Now the typical title goes for over two bucks. That kind of increase outstrips even inflation. Although I would wonder if the fall in sales is due to price resistance or to a turning in the country away from printed media.

Not to imply that the market for books is drying up, but the entertainment sector is getting increasing competition from things like VTR's and electronic/computer games. (Television and the movies would seem to be stabilized as competition. I don't see pay-TV as changing the

profile much. TV watchers watch TV... and apparently they'll stare at anything.) Some of the competition is also getting as portable as a book. One of the Airlines (Continental?) installed electronic games on their flights, and from all reports the things are incredibly popular.

Agreed that suffering for the sake of suffering is pointless, but I do believe that struggling through difficulties can be a maturing experience. A person can gain valuable perspective from adversities. I feel that I've learned a lot from the tough times I've been through. (Though, having had my share, best future would feature only good times.)

Neat bacover!!

THE SPHERE 62 (Markstein) * Who are the people with longer mailings-hit strings than you? (I know that Ned and I are two of them, but I'm curious as to where we stack up on the fandom-wide list.) Like you, I'm propelled to some extent by the long string -- this zine will be 78 consecutive hits. (Thanks to Line Static aid...)

So Don Markstein is interested in computers! They're fascinating beasts. Right now my job is running Engineering for Pertec's microsystems division. We make MITS, iCOM and the PCC 2000 small business system. Pertec bought both MITS (Altair hobby computers) and iCOM (microperipherals) and promptly mismanaged the whole show. Right now our major emphasis is on the PCC 2000, a sturdy and reliable little machine. We've got a strong enhancement program going to make what is already a good machine into a champion. Sells for about ten grand.

What kind of gear does Bruce Dane have?

THE ABSENT MINDED WAITER 2 (Carlberg) * Good to see you contributing again, bwah. If that was your best sarcasm on display in your anemic little MC on Mel 71, I'd hate to see what your first-draft humor looks like. (Maybe that was it in the MC to Hulan...)

A couple of loose ends in a novel or film don't bother me much. Life itself is like that -- inexplicable happenings that would seem to be part of a pattern but don't really connect on examination, although they influence the unfolding. It's the sloppy stories with lots of loose ends resulting from events included solely for "thrills" or "mystery" or "sex interest." When Chandler writes he is after a theme that's greater than the details, and I detail a lot of minor "discrepancies." Things like where in FAREWELL, MY LOVELY we discover that Velma (aka Mrs. Grayle) murdered Lindsay Marriott (his head was beaten to a bloody pulp). I can never reconcile that method on two counts: (1) it didn't seem her style, and (2) she was physically overmatched for such a brutal contest. But the novel was great.

WALT DISMAL'S DANIEL DUCK (Hutchinson) * Sounds like the Haunted Mansion at Disneyworld is different from the Haunted Mansion at Disneyland. Here in California there are several "decomposing portraits" and their cycle time is under a minute. There's no way you can miss seeing each one do its thing as you shuffle from the elevator room to the tour cars. I'd always thought that like-named attractions were essentially identical between the two locations.

Nice cover (as usual). I like your story line -- why don't you do it up for SFPA? The ending is easy enough; I'll tell you how Dan'l Duck got out of his dilemma.

This requires a bit of foresight on the part of the artist, but you can do it, Alan. Make all the evil characters look like Disney villains, but of course disguise their true identity with pseudonyms. When the final chase scene develops, Dan'l Duck looks back over his shoulder as pursuit draws closer. After a proper level of suspense is achieved, the Duck begins calling the pursuers by their Disney name. In the panel after each instance of naming, merely the outline of the villain is seen. White space, with the legend "Removed by restraint order obtained by WED," fills the outline.

One by one the villains are defeated. In the penultimate panel, Dan'l and his nephew are panting with exhaustion and relief. The nephew says, "Gee, that was a close one, Uncle Donald." In the last panel....

To close this MC, I want to take a moment and say nice things about your administration as OE. You have governed capably, presented an excellent image as the apa's temporal and spiritual leader, and have usually gotten out the mailings on time. For this we all owe you a vote of thanks. I understand that you'd like to get back to being just President (and there's no doubt you'll make it). However, if you decide to be OE again some, you'll be one of my very top choices for the post. Congrats, Alan!!

UTGARD 35 (Hulan) * Couple of remarks on your comments to Don Markstein.

First, I don't if we see so many more examples of order chaos (whatever their definitions are) because people prefer order so much as because order defeats chaos. Another way of saying it is that organization overcomes disorganization. If we observe the development of military science over the past couple of milleniums, the point can be seen rather clearly. Forms of organization have varied with the environment and weapon technology has had a great impact, but the well-disciplined armies have generally been most victorious.

The rise of science (physical) is another example. It was the establishment of methodology, information exchange and data bases that lauched the scientific explosion.

Order gives the advantage that autonomous units can be forged into a greater entity. The big then prey on the small; the strong on the weak. It's the survival advantages of order, imho, which have made it dominate rather than any emotional preference of the participants. (Though one doubtless follows the other.)

Going a step farther, the advantage of order lies in two things. (1) Establishment of relatively quick and reliable communications channels. And (2) the relative assurance that elements will function as assigned/prompted.

I believe that both of these functions are prone to a relative deterioration as the size of the organization increases. The elements of society (or corporations or apas) are human beings. It is motivation which keeps them performing the tasks of the organization. As an organization grows more of its tasks become unrelated to the personal sphere of the elements concerned immediately, although retaining, given intelligent direction, a significant relationship to the needs of the aggregate. As this visibility of reasons and immediacy of payback to the involved element diminishes, the organization suffers.

Let me stop here, at a good discussion plateau, and briefly pursue a definition of "anarchy." The previous paragraph suggests that "chaos" is the displacer of "order." I believe

that this is true because control of an organization depends upon the two advantages I listed earlier. As these are subverted, for whatever reason, control becomes erratic with respect to purpose. Chaos arises.

"Anarchy"

accepts a simple definition. It is the state occupied by animals. Not a derogatory reference, but an allusion to ecology. Each animal does its own thing, yet no pressure of the individual or species is sufficient to destroy the ecology. Devastations may occur, but they heal.

In the human sense this isn't happening. We are using the earth, expending natural resources and poisoning irredeemably our environment. Within the definition of "anarchy" I offer this would not happen often. Nor would "progress" in the sense we now commonly accept. Individual humans would react to environmental manaces and correct them, at the expense of other humans if necessary.

This idealized view of anarchy is the baseline of what most "anarchists" I've met envision. More of the "noble savage" conception. I don't believe it can work (or ever did, as that's where we started).

Now, back to organization, which is vulnerable to chaos as it grows. The downfall of organization occurs when either end deteriorates. Leadership can fall so easily and become personal whim. Or a perversion: look at Hitler, look at the profit motivation, look at the power motivation. The individual elements can be so easily directed away from the greater purpose: look at most governments.

I see no solutions. I see a world in which which organizations are seized by individuals (or groups) and exercised in chaotic format. Narrow aims predominate. (Very much like the animal world, with power magnified.) We have an anarchy of organizations. In this situation the individual is gaining greater power to perform as it wishes.

I submit that we now have both organization (order) and chaos (anarchy). Never have formal regulations been so prevalent (thanks to sophisticated data science) within the framework of publically visible entities. Never have so many powers been available to the individual (I refer to USA society here, but I guess it's broader). The more mobile the individual, and the larger the population, the harder it is for agencies to enforce regulations.

Herewith, I cease. 'Nough natter on a dumb topic. I'll just get in my car, take my ski mask and revolver (mail order) and go out for a visit to some remote section of the city. Whatever I feel like doing I can, subject only to my tactical skills, avoidance of patterns, and luck. That's an irrefutable argument....

ILS SONT FOU, CES ETANGERS (Hulans) * A monumental work, easy and enjoyable reading, but a work which doesn't invite too many mailing comments. (At least from my perspective.) I did my bit of tribute to steadfast workmanship and reading pleasure when I voted ILS SONT as Zine of the Year.

Your comment on the "attractive nuisance" law I'll pick up and echo. American law holds, in essence, that no barrier is sufficient. If you own a pool, put up legal-maximum walls, and still have an invader drown in it, you're at fault if the invader were a child. (I'm not sure what happens with an adult invader.) This interpretation creates liability regardless of good faith actions. Hardly a sane legal code. Have you noticed this is a trend in this country?

THIN ICE 38 (Verheiden)* Interesting parody. I saw THEM! when it first appeared and was tremendously impressed. (Not to mention being scared out of my shorts.) The next day the family left for a vacation in Florida. We drove well into the night, the three children having the entire back of the station wagon (which had been outfitted with a mattress and umptyzillion pillows, so that we could snooze). Memories of THEM! were too fresh in our impressionable little minds, however, and we constantly heard the sounds of giant ants just out of sight behind Florida sand dunes. Good way to imprint a movie.

You should definitely consider moving to Ellay if you diet has made you lose interest in breathing. 'Twould give you natural immunity to our smog. As for the heat wave, well, we only get one or two a year and they're not that bad. (Just stay out of the San Fernando and San Gabriel Vallies.) Orange County has fine weather and a dynamite group of fans who, if their energy level can be revved up that high, are going to try for the gafia level. (That being a more active fannish state than we currently enjoy.)

DRAGON'S MEADOW 9 (Andre 8-8) * Y'know, fandom can take itself so damn seriously. Your pages on Chattanooga fandom, well-written pages, remind me of my resident days in Southern fandom and my early LASFS times. Fans, especially young enthusiastic ones, are all too prone to Perspective problems. It's the FIAWOL versus FIJAGH dilemma. The mesmerized ones see fandom as Life. (Some few have even made it their life's work.) They view the other aspects of living as adjuncts to the microcosm. To place another part of life before fannish goals is betrayal, unfitness.

The hobbyists, those who see fandom as a fun thing but one which is essentially entertainment and a place to meet like-minded people, aren't particularly bothered by putting life and career needs ahead of their hobby. When time is available for fandom it will be enjoyed. When time isn't there, fandom will be set aside temporarily. I subscribe to the hobbyist philosophy, as my SFPA activity roller-coaster indicates.

More government regs!! I'm surprised they don't ask for the partner's blood type, make and model of automobile, political affiliation and preference of bourbon. There's a flap going on in Ellay now because applicants for rescue squads, firepersons, etc. are required to fill out a questionnaire which asks Important Questions like: have you ever made love on the beach? do you enjoy sex in semi-public areas? what were the ages of the oldest and youngest sex partner you ever had? Etc. There's a group which feels these questions constitute an invasion of privacy. The government feels that such information helps them screen out persons who might take advantage of their position... i.e., rape the helpless. (Feared headline: FIREMEN GANG BANG TEENAGE SEXPOT WHILE HOUSE BURNS AROUND THEM.)

I think the whole thing is ridiculous. The possibility of people falsifying answers hasn't even come up, and besides such a weak test is worthless. If concern is so high, why hasn't a proper psychological study/test been initiated?

MELIKAPHKHAZ 72 (Me) * That last round of xerox (for the front pages) did not fare too well. I waited for Pertec to fix the machine, but to no avail. Get an earlier start, Atkins!

MONKEYS AND CUCUMBERS 5 (Morrissey) * Official pardons don't remove pre-judices, neither for anti-Viet war activists nor for ex-Presidents. Look at the animosity still so vehement against Jane Fonda. People who oppose the power structure rarely are forgiven later, even (or perhaps especially) if they are proven right.

Why are people bothered by the moveable time-frame in comics? The idea is to stay "current" and the age of the characters seems so fluid between issues anyway. Like a long-running TV series, things are flexible in order to adjust the story line and background detail to topical things. Do comics fans attempt to build and understand a chronology?

WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE GOLD MINE 7 (Whitehead) * I can't see much in Ted Kennedy. He's a politician, has exhibited signs of personal weakness, and leans toward government spending programs as the "answer" to economic woes. The USA needs none of these things. What we need now is a good-hearted scoundrel, a leader who would use assertive policies to move the country at home and abroad.

I was chatting with a good friend at lunch the other day and this same topic came up. Specifically, what happened the USA and what kind of steersman do we need most. My friend said it: The USA isn't committed to anything; we want to be the good guys to the world. But we just let anybody push us around.

When I was in high school I met a big kid. He was maybe 6' 3" and still growing. Not thin, but broad thru the shoulders with enormous arms. For all his size, he was one of the nicest and shyest people in school. He disliked confrontations; so much, in fact, that he's never fight and it wasn't too long before he was Figured Out by the local bravo boys. The big kid could be pushed and humiliated in front of the class.

I never understood why he didn't push back, for he was a strong fellow. His anguish was clear. Often I watched his huge biceps flex and bunch, but he just looked at the floor and muttered nothings.

(Later, when I knew him better, I discovered that his parents had impressed Fear of Public Opinion on him since early days. "Don't be a bully," was their theme. "People don't respect bullies. Use of your strength is BAD." He'd bought the brainwash job, being quite intelligent and sensitive as well as huge. It made sense. He'd seen the work of bullies and knew the fear and contempt they engendered.)

In his junior year he was finally nagged into going out for football. One of the coaches didn't believe he was really a coward, as the watchword went. Instead, he saw a mighty lineman. Parental consent was obtained somehow. I suspect the coach lobbied rather effectively.

The first week of practice was a disaster. The big man had never driven his body; he had little endurance. The jibes were unmerciful. But he did have determination. He stuck to it, taking up weights and exercising on his own. The coach had a few special sessions with him, talking about football as a game where all-out performance was OK. Football was rough and anyone playing it took their chances.

In the first game of the season he was pushed prematurely into a

starting assignment. Perhaps because his size might intimidate the opposition. Perhaps because the coach was hoping for a baptism under fire. The first quarter was melting. He didn't push. When the enemy smelled this they laughed. Then an opposing lineman took a cheap shot and they carried the big kid out.

He was back in for the first defensive series of the second half and there was a Change. Nobody could stop him. His huge frame was the biggest on the field and his muscles had hardened into oak. The Change, however, was in mind. Suddenly he was oblivious to public opinion of bullies. Suddenly he was intent on only one thing: to kill the ball carrier.

I sat on the bench and watched him stampede through opposing linemen like they were ten-pins. Two consecutive loses on the ground and a pass was in order. The big man went thru and bore down on the quarterback like an angry leviathan. The pass was batted down like a nerfball.

We went on to make up a 13 point deficit and lead 21-13 at the half. In the second half the other team had minus 22 yards of offense. That year the Gadsden High Tigers were State Champions. We beat the defender, Sidney Lanier, 7-6 in a brutal thriller in Montgomery.

The bravo boys weren't too sure about things after the game. The big kid was a local hero and there was plenty of glory in buffaloeing him again, but... It was the next Tuesday before one tried, encouraged by the big kid's continuing timid manner.

Provocations went on for a while, marked with offers to "meet in the parking lot after school." Then the big kid reached out with a huge hand and clasped the punk's shoulder. "Leggo of me!" shouted the brave duck-tailed lad.

The big kid just tightened his grip. He bent his head to put big dark eyes right in the face of the offender. Age had brought a deep rolling baritone. "I'm getting tired of your kind," said the big kid.

"I'll cut you up!!" squeaked the punk, clawing for his switchblade.

The huge hand tightened for real now. I saw the punk turn ashen white and buckle. "Go on. Bring the knife out," said the big man. The look on his face must have been there on the previous Friday evening when he went back in for the second quarter. It was the look of a great cat poised to attack crossed with the expression of a farmer shooting crows in his cornfield.

"Leggo, please!" screeched the punk. "You bully! You're hurtin' me!!"

So the big man turned loose. "Get out," he ordered. There was no question in his meaning: cut this class, I don't want to see you. It would get the punk in trouble for sure, because the teacher this period took role and turned in absentees to the Principal.

"My gang 'll cut you up," spit the punk. "You ain't safe no more. We'll get you. You bastard!" He had retreated a sound twenty feet.

For a moment the threat hung heavy, then Corky, a lineman also but only 6' 1", stood and knocked the punk to the floor with an open-handed cuff. "Now you got two of us to get," he said.

I was on my feet now, and Tom Johnson, and Fred the

free safety, weighing in at 139 pounds of fleet-footed aggression. We came forward and the punk scrambled out. But he was caught by the arriving teacher and Corky was sent to the office for discipline.

The big man wasn't bothered again, though he did get his tires slashed. He never had a fight the whole time he was at Gadsden High. When he graduated he went on to Alabama and was an All-American lineman. But he didn't play pro ball. He entered med school and I suppose he's as good a doctor as he was a football player. Where could anyone find such a combination of great strength and caring gentleness.

I feel about America the way I felt about the big kid before he took up football. His parents had left out an important chapter in the gospel of non-violence: the chapter that takes about self-respect and self-defense. Our nation is a giant with a neurotic fear of being labelled a bully. We accept any humiliation rather than square it off. Even the Viet Nam conflict was a weak man's war. We handcuffed our forces, destroyed morale, subverted the humanity of our troops, and achieved nothing but to make a few rich.

To see the pattern of leadership which has given us such "glory" continue is not acceptable to me. I don't want the insanity of a Ronald Reagan in office either, but I wouldn't mind seeing the guts of a Harry Truman...

KAR-120C 1 (weber) * Tylenol seems to combat fever, at least in my experience. It's been prescribed a couple of times, mixed with other drugs, but I've been taking it in lieu of aspirin for about two years now and prefer it. Perhaps it's my imagination, but Tylenol (for me) does a better job of relieving minor aches and pains. (Maybe the Orioles should sign Tylenol and put Stanhouse on waivers.)

My bank has a system where one "pool" of credit services both a charge card and over-balance checks. With the charge card you pay the usual 1½ % interest rate. If you write an over-balance check money is transferred into your account in hundred dollar increments until the check is good. You then pay off the "loan" via the charge card mechanism. This arrangement is common in California.

A new McGee book in hardback? Great! In six months I'll get it in pb. (All my Travis McGee books are in pb and I hate to break a string.) If McGee is headed in tough directions in THE GREEN RIPPER it could bear out an old rumor (circa 1968). Word was that McDonald was tiring of doing a series character; that he yearned to move toward a more mainstream (non-thriller) market. According to rumor McDonald had written a pair of novels to end Trav McGee's career: Brown and Black were the colors. When GIRL IN THE PLAIN BROWN WRAPPER was published that year it gave credence to the jive.

The Black book was to take McGee over the edge into the jungle of violence and document (in literary style) his disintergration. Soon, however, a new rumor was out. McDonald's publisher was said to have convinced him that the tough but good-hearted stud was just plain making too much money to kill. The Black novel was put in a safe and life went on for Travis McGee.

I wonder if THE GREEN RIPPER is a return to this theme of violence corrupting those who live by it. If so, will we eventually see the Black episode? Myself, I think McDonald should do a final book in which McGee retires and raises pedigreed cats for a living...

FREE FOR ALL 4 (Sperhawk) * Young man, I'm truly proud to see you admit the error of your ways in print. Perhaps you can serve as an example to other drug addicts. I'll pour another jigger of Jack Daniels into my glass and toast your brave insight as to the perils of drug abuse. (Excuse me while I light a cigaret.) Thank God I don't take drugs! It's late and a strong cup of coffee will keep me awake to finish this MC because I really want you to know we appreciate your outspoken rejection of the drug habit. May it inspire others!! Normal Americans don't take drugs and that's so wonderful. Drugs lead to degenerate obsessions. Now you'll have to excuse me, as I have to take a few sleeping pills to settle me down while I watch the 10 o'clock news. (They're reshowing those marvelous shots of the latest sex-murder victim!) Just remember, Sperhawk, to stay away from drugs like normal Americans do and focus your interests on normal American subjects.

On the serious side, if you're really into Health I salute you. I'm having trouble getting over the comfortable wine and ciggie hump, though I am well aware that it will make me feel better and cleanly function if I do.

GIGO 8 (Davis) * The comment-only-to-those-commenting-to-me game is a closed loop. I understand your feelings well enough, getting few comments myself these days, but the end result isn't Good. (Death by entropy and all that.) It is, however, a fact that those who comment most get the most comments. Perhaps this is mere courtesy at work, repayment in kind being a long-standing human tradition. I think, however, that fen egos can every mailing and those zines in which their names appear (unless unfavorably) draw more affection than others, yeah?

If you^{think} SFPA was doing badly in the "battle against burglars" wait until someone tries to rip off Hank Reinhardt. Last time that happened Hank chased the unfortunate dude all over the city in pajamas. Hank was wearing the pj's of course. The burglar wore tails and black tie.

FINGERTIP REALITY 15 (Moudry) * Nice essay starting with Halloween. Why don't you do more of these gems and fewer thumbnail book reviews/ratings? Your public would Appreciate. Outside temperature hasn't affected my inside habit patterns or reading preferences much, though it has always affected my mood and emotional tone. I would take to books as an insulating technique, emerging from the reality of external things into the universe of imagination. Heat. Cold. They faded in the face of good reading.

Halloween, however, has always been one of my favorite holiday too. It was a magic night when the kids roamed at will and performed deeds of wonder and daring. My group was armed with fireworks: TNT's cherry bombs, torpedoes, red devils, etc. We split the night with thunder!

Soap also was a staple. When we were too old to beg we were still Avengers. A house known to be inhabited, left dark with no treats was in for a trick. Soaped windows. Lawn furniture conveyed to the roof. We were harmless terrors, convinced of the wickedness of our ways and loving every moment of it. Such juvenile memories may distress me now at my lack of understanding and consideration, but they serve to make me more tolerant of similar foolishness from today's terrors.

I like your cover tie-in.

THE SEVENTY PERCENT SOLUTION (Juge) * Faith healing is a quite complex topic. If asked, I'd say that I don't believe in it. Yet in a more relaxed discussion (say in the bar at a con hotel), I'd admit to believing that I can influence my healing rate and ability to cope through concentrated thought. The balance is found in recognizing that the physical world is indeed real but that life is a mystery still and the deep dimensions it occupies are beyond those reached by mere physical phenomena. I believe that microbes, like a herd of stampeding buffalo, can squash me flatter than Twiggy's chest. I also believe that my body (and mind) possesses many untapped powers and capabilities. The key to activating these is the mind. (Or call it the soul.)

I also believe that these extraordinary powers are also subject to physical law. (Or to say it better, can be mathematically modelled once we develop the math -- and it may already exist.) If my anger and disgust at the flu which wouldn't turn loose of me released recuperative powers not previously tapped, it was the mind which did that. Yet the powers were not mysteries. They were bodily capabilities reserved for emergencies. (The body puts governors on its capabilities, for it is a multicellular cooperative organism and has the capability to destroy itself through imbalance, a situation seen more often than one might think.)

Enough ten-cent philosophy. Let me make a pitch for you to bigger zines, Ron. I enjoy your writing very much. Six or eight pages a mailing should not be too much of a strain, and I'd appreciate...

I FORGOT TO MENTION THAT WEREWOLVES (Wells) * Hank is right, George. I never had to learn to play Hearts. I was born with a deck of cards in my hand and my first sounds weren't cries of shock at the new job of breathing, but were instead a plain and simple request to name the game. When nobody answered I called it Hearts and announced standard Southern Championship rules. (At the time, of course, there were no standard Southern Championship Rules because there were no Hearts players worthy of the name, but I took care of that in time.)

Opening car doors onto mopeds isn't the only way bikers can get zapped. On the freeways here in Ellay motorcycles drive between the lanes, particularly when auto traffic is congested. I asked a highway patrolman and he said this insanity was interpreted as legal, though the motorcycle would be at fault in an accident.

THE WOLF HOWLS FOR BREAKFAST (Reinhalf) * Welcome back to SFPA, you turkey. Trust you to be the ass-end SFPA-zine! I'm going to skip commenting on Janet's death. You know my feelings already. It's more vital to get right to the insults and arouse your anemic fighting blood, old man. After all, you invited me to make derogatory comments about your Hearts-playing ability. (Which comments, by the way, qualify for both the Humor and Sercon categories of the Egoboo Poll.)

The Hank Reinhardt Myth has long infested Southern Fandom. Legend has it that he once won a Hearts game, but as is the case with a similar rumor about Dave Hulan, no substantiating evidence has ever been produced. Even Reinhardt, when questioned about the event, shuffles his feet and gives evasive answers. If pressed, Reinhardt produces a faded, near-illegible, IOU from billypettit and claims it supports his victory.

Research reveals this IOU to have been originally given by Billy Pettit to George Puckett as the stakes in a game of slapjack. Puckett later traded the IOU to Reinhardt for a slew of PLANET STORIES. So much for Hank's "evidence."

The determined scholar will press on. In 1966 Reinhardt organized a Hearts game with three Atlanta kindergarten children. Although he lost (though he did place second) the score was falsified and run through ALAapa as a joke by Larry Montgomery. Derisive comments in the following mailing revealed the hoax, but some Reinhardt scholars quit too early and printed claims to have verified the "Reinhardt Hearts victory" still exist in the stacks of the Georgia Tech library. (Tech always did quit early...)

This spurious find did not deter more determined researchers and in 1975 evidence was uncovered that Reinhardt might be telling the truth. The following is a partial transcription of an interview with Jarry Page, sports editor for the South Georgia version of TV guide, on station WQSP Atlanta.

"Hearts does appear an interesting game, Mr. Page. You say that sci fi nuts play it often. What's the strangest Hearts game you ever played?"

"One night my friend Hank Reinhardt called up and said he wanted to play two-handed Hearts over the phone. He explained that two-handed Hearts was a recent desperate invention of his."

"How unusual. And telephone Hearts?"

"Another desperate invention. Hank said he'd tell me what cards I was holding."

"I'll bet you didn't fall for that one!"

"Of course not! On the third hand I quit playing and hung up on him."

This find was bitterly debated for months. The Rules Committee settled it by judging that an incomplete game cannot count for victory purposes. (Though Reinhardt is alleged to have collected a \$56 partial-score settlement.)

Thus ends the search for the mythical Reinhardt Hearts victory. Research is still ongoing, but little hope is seen. As for the contemporary picture, droves of Hearts players descend on Reinhardt each payday. Dean Witter (and when Dean Witter talks, people listen...) rates playing Hearts for money with Reinhardt on the same level as having invested in gold in 1975. A sure thing.

At the next convention all you SFPAns (and waitlisters) should gang up on Hank and ask for a Hearts game. Insist on high stakes. (My usual 20% finders fee, Hank?)

SHADOW:: Deb: Children raised in fandom usually seem to put it aside with their childhood. Not all. Some hang around the fringes and show up occasionally at Peterds meetings. Most of us discovered fandom as adults or neo-adults. We entered the microcosm because it was an exciting and fun place filled with neat people and quaint customs. For a child raised in this environment, there's no such discovery to make. There are different discoveries.

You've got a freshening writing style, Deb. I enjoyed your zine and to soon see you in SFPA. (Just in time for the Great Resurgence.)

THE MENACE

When the message arrived at 2499 Skyland Drive it was hardly treated with urgency. The Old SFPAN's were engaged in a Hearts game and Page, the butler, was disinclined to interrupt so important an event.

"What was led?" quavered Ned Brooks from his wheelchair as he contemplated the three clubs lying on the table.

"Spades! You nit!" thundered Hank Reinhardt, though it seemed like distant thunder off far-away mountains.

"Then why are there three clubs on the board?" asked Ned, ever vigilant against misrepresentation from Hank.

"Because," whispered Dave Hulan, "everyone was void in Spades but you."

"Oh, I see," said Ned, dutifully playing the Jack of Spades.

The Old SFPAN's Club rocked with silence. Page, the butler, considered laying his burning message on the table, yet some mysterious sense of propriety restrained him.

"RENIGE!!" screeched Hank, grouping on the floor for his axe. "Clubs were led!!"

The Club was filled with suppressed snickers. From the corner a muffled query was heard from billypettit: "Clubs?" For the most part a hearty tolerance exuded; after all, Ned never had been able to determine the lead. Why should he be forced to start now, in year 2015?

Page chose this moment to deliver his message.

First he cleared his nose. Then he sonorously pronounced: "Gentlemen, a message of high import! The DE. The DE of SFPAN today. Sends for aid against the intolerable menace."

Bedlam erupted. Wheelchairs collided around the huge club room as violently agitated veterans drove ahead without due regard for traffic regulations. Cries for vengeance echoed off the cypress beams, drowning out even Hank's demand that the Truman administration be brought to task.

Dave Locke it was who brought the congregation to order; he shut off the tap to the Dos Equis keg. This change of state was immediately detected and responsible Old SFPAN's reacted as expected.

"You namby-pants," said Lon Atkins. "Your mother was a respected member of the community and your father an up-standing church-goer. Your admirable personal habits inspire worshipful emulation in the young. This complements a regimen of personal cleanliness and chaste auto-sexual practice. Your relationships with herbivorous ungulates are exclusively platonic. May your future life be imbued with extreme good fortune of the disease-free variety and may your eternal rest be characterized by pleasant situations."

Other bheer drinkers agreed.

It was Joe Moudry who noticed that Locke was trying to gain the attention of the assemblage for a purpose other than drawing compliments. "Fellow rebels!" he shouted. "Your attention, please!!"

The unruly crew heard his plea and quieted. Joe suddenly realized that he had the floor and could direct the Old SFPAn's attention to important matters. Not being one to waste a limelight, he began: "I want to tell you about the books I've been reading lately.."

A barrage of catcalls cut him down. Locke seized the opportunity to restore the Dos Equis keg to normal. As thirsty Old SFPAns wheeled into line to refill their mugs a relative silence descended.

"Gentlemen," announced Locke. "Page, the butler, has an important message for us all. SFPA is menaced."

Page coughed. "The OE of SFPA today sends a message. The apa is in dire circumstance. Despite raising the roster maximum to 50, convention fans have joined in droves and are undermining apa-traditions. The pagecount last mailing was only 442."

"That's not so bad" commented Meade Frierson.

"345 pages were convention flyers."

"That's bad," agreed Frierson. "But at least there were 97 pages of SFPA material."

"91 of those pages were convention reports," said Page, the butler.

"Was The Southerner 6 pages?" asked Don Markstein.

"Not quite," replied Page. "There was also a record review."

The Old SFPAns were appalled. Bob Jennings buckled on his gun belt. Spinning the cylinder of his Colt.44, he announced: "They're rustlers and horse thieves! I say we gun 'em down on sight!"

"We can all rejoin and whip them in a page-count war!" screamed Guy Lillian.

Other Old SFPAns were reluctant to suggest immediate reaction. "This is a grave matter," said Stven Carlberg. "I suggest we all get stoned." He glanced at Inzer, who was already groping for rolling papers.

"There's a parallel to this development in Russian history," spoke up Dave Hulan. "During the rule of Czar Peter I there was a small group of an-archistic revolutionaries whose devilish scheme to subvert order..."

He was drowned out by the sound of Jimmy Buffet, as Gary Brown revved up his 1000 Watt speakers and flooded the room with "My Head Hurts, My Feet Stink, and I Don't Love Jesus."

Lon Atkins abandoned the Dos Equis keg and poured himself a Jack Black. This terrible situation disturbed him mightily. Wasn't SFPA the Mother of Southern Trufaandom? How could such an institution be allowed to die in the fell clutches of confen? He shuddered at the thought.

Inklings of a truly enormous counterstroke played blind man's bluff in his head. The pieces made sense; the execution would be devastating. Now if only this unruly mob of strong-willed ~~jackasses~~ Old SFPANs would cooperate...

Atkins walked across the room and unplugged Gary Brown's 1000 Watt speakers. "We need a war chief!" he thundered. "I nominate HANK!!!"

Tremendous cheers of approval made it a decision by acclamation. "Hank has a plan," announced Atkins. "It requires the utmost courage from every SFPAN here. For now you must disperse to your homes and await the call. Within two weeks you will receive in the mail -- make that four weeks -- a package of offensive weapons. Also instructions as to the battle. Go now, and resolve your SFPAN spirit for combat of the most unyielding nature!"

They went; noisy and boisterous, but they went. Hank remained behind, fingering the keen edge of his mighty war axe. "What kind of trouble have you gotten me into now, Atkins?"

"The usual: high adventure, terrible risks, harrowing hardship, deadly danger, lots of fun."

"What's this plan I have?"

"Don't worry. I'll do all the setup work and leave it to your low hankish cunning to make it work." Then Lon explained what he had in mind. The subsequent chuckles of low hankish glee were a joy to hear...

The next week was filled with demanding activity. Aided only by his faithful cat Soccy, Atkins examined every convention in the South. Finally he selected the target: FlatulaCon in Lower Platypuss Flats, Arkansas. It was yet another regional, but one featured Steve Simple (SFFA active) as MoC, Jack Frenetic (SFFA active) as Fan GoH, and Goldy Goodass (SFFA active) as Consuite Hostess. Various other contemporary SFPANs were ConCom members. The chairman, Lester Jaundice, was merely some local yokel as far as Atkins could tell. But the name was strangely familiar....

Working frantically against time, Soccy and his master assembled the packets and tried to get them into the mail, but some crotchety old postal worker muttered "Cat in yard" and refused to accept them. Undeterred, Atkins sent them UPS. This was good, as it avoided having delivery accidentally fall on one of the 245 paid postal holidays.

Two days later Old SFPANs everywhere were receiving their AttackPak. Let's take the case of Alan Hutchinson. He took delivery of the box and quavered to his mate: "Rosie! There's a big package here for me. Do you think the June 1989 Capa-alpha mailing has come at last?"

Then he began to unpack the box. On top was a prepaid membership in FlatulaCon. Underneath it was a pair of airplane tickets and a guaranteed-late

arrival reservation at The Platypuss Arms, the con hotel and "Platypuss Flats' finest guest house and resort." The hotel brochure went on to say, the two other tourist places servicing the famous hot springs there had closed in recent years. This made The Platypuss Arms, as Atkins had suspected, the last resort for a con site in Lower Platypuss Flats.

Other items in the AttackPak amused and astonished the Old SFPAns. There was a propellor beanie with alternate panels made of sections from a Confederate flag. A zap gun and a water pistol were in every Pak. There were buttons advocating "South Gate in '58" and "Huntspatch in '66." And more. There were many more strange items...

The Friday of FlatulaCon arrived and the lobby of The Platypuss Arms began to fill with fans. The regular con-goers were amazed to see such a large turnout, but a bit dismayed that so many of the attendees looked to be a bunch of old fogies. Where such a group of geriatrics had come from they couldn't imagine.

With some difficulty, Hank tried to assemble the Old SFPAns to give them their first instructions. But Doug Wirth was off drawing mustaches on the posters in the lobby. And a noisy bunch of teenage fen had recognized Mark Verheiden as producer-director of "The Texas Waterpik Murders" and were clamoring for his autograph. And Mike Weber was not to be found (having invaded the hotel kitchen to make sure that things would be Done Right for the banquet).

Finally, Hank decided to settle for a subset. "I'm deputizing a posse," he announced. "FlatulaCon advertises free beer in the Con Suite. Never let it be said that Old SFPAns can't drink their share! Go get it!" He was roundly cheered, most noticeably by the Billy Pettit, Jennings, Wells and Hulan. Off charged the mob.

Ulrich lingered behind, intending to get another attack squad together. If he were a bit late to the Con Suite there might be a few cans of brew left. Suddenly there was a touch on his elbow. A tall, sallow individual, thinning dark hair slicked down close to his narrow skull, introduced himself as Lester Jaundice, the Con Chairman.

"Quite a turnout," said Lester. "Looks like you're the dude in charge. What's your name, fellow, and what's this aging bunch of yahoos you brought along?"

"I'm Reinhardt, and those aging yahoos are the SFPA alumni. We thought it would be fun to go to a con again."

"Yup," said Lester suspiciously. "Sounded like you was egg'in' them on to drink up all the beer in the Con Suite. Unfriendly thing if you was, but seeing as how I bought fifty cases I don't see much danger. Old coots like that couldn't do more than a case between 'em."

"Lordy no!" agreed Hank... "Most of us old-timers make a beer last all night long."

"Yup," said Lester again as he wandered off with a lean look over his shoulder.

Reinhardt whipped the program booklet from his back pocket, spilling two knives and a pair of brass knucks on the floor in the process. He sniffed out the program and detected a perfect target. The attack team he wanted was in the huckster room on the second floor. Hutchinson, Lillian and Markstein, eschewing bheer for the present, were searching the comix tables for collectables, albeit without much luck.

"Here's an All-Duck Frolics #1 for a measly \$455," called out Alan.

"Already have three of it," sniffed Don.

Hank cornered the three Old SFPAns. "Here's a deal for you," he said. "There's a comics trivia panel at 6 o'clock in the Razorback Room. You get to be audience participation members. Just sit in the front row and when a topic comes up that you know something about, jump up and chime in."

"Great!" said Markstein, "But I insist on sitting--"

"On the opposite side of the room--" contributed Lillian.

"From him!!" they chorused.

"Fine," agreed Hank. "Be there early to get a front seat. And - oh!- I hear they're trying to keep second rate artists out of the discussion, so I was asked to ask you to not talk about Carl Barks."

Steam emerged from three sets of ears. "We'll see about that!" barked Hutchinson.

Reinhardt looked about the rest of the second floor but didn't see the Ruthless Commando he'd selected for the third hit squad. The only answer was the bar, so Hank returned to the elevator and descended. (Hank hated to descend, it being ungodlike, but as this was a convention he thought of it instead as condescending. That was OK.)

The bar was crowded as expected. Fans of all shapes and appearances were quaffing an incredible assortment of fluid refreshment. The shape Hank was looking for wasn't hard to miss: a giant pear. The shapes his eyes first rivetted on, however, were more like giant cantaloupes.

An astonishing female with cascading golden yellow hair and a dress cut right down to just above her nipples was holding court in the center of a fawning circle of male admirers. It had to be Goldy Goodass. Hank grinned; her number would be up later in the con. It was a job he reserved for himself. For now, he settled for a leisurely oogle and the elbow of Guidry.

"Come, John," he admonished, dragging the mesmerized ancient from the golden circle. "you have work to do."

He handed the Pear a sheaf of multicolored construction paper and a box of crayons. "Our Fan GoH, Jack Frenetic, simply must be made to participate in an Ignite. Don't take no for an answer John, or I'll break your head. This could be the greatest and vilest Ignite of them all. Go get him."

Guidry stared at the paper and crayons. His fine fannish single-channel

mind fastened upon the idea. "Ignite!" he muttered. "Jack Frenetic must do an Ignite." He giggled wildly to himself, his old fannish habits as it were.. reignited. Reinhardt grinned wolfishly, knowing that he would not fail. Jack Frenetic would be brought to earth by tireless pursuit and hounded into an Ignite despite vehement protestations.

As Reinhardt approached the elevator again, Mike Weber and a portly man in a white cook's outfit and hat emerged from a service door. Hank heard Mike say, "...so you'll do your best for the banquet."

"Yes, sir," said the chef. "We aim to please."

Reinhardt alerted Mike to the free beer, encouraging him to drink his share. As Mike stepped into the elevator Hank buttonholed the cook. "Do you know who that man is?" he asked.

"Nope," admitted the large fellow, "but he's fussy about my kitchen."

"Exactly," said Hank. "He is none other than Count Michael de Weber, the world renowned French gourmet and chief advisor to the Michelin dining guide. The Michelin people are preparing a dining guide to Arkansas and the Count will select the only three-star restaurant to be allowed."

"You don't say!" exclaimed the chef, properly impressed.

"The Count is inclined toward your establishment," continued Hank, "but he would never reveal his identity or his mission. Now that he has inspected the kitchen, he will judge the cuisine. I happen to be acquainted with the Count's favorite dishes..."

"Maybe I could get the recipes," drooled the cook.

"You shall have them, but they must be prepared exactly as specified, for the Count's gourmet tastes brook no compromise. I'll deliver the recipes later this evening."

Feeling pleased with his improvisational talents, Hank arrived at the fifth floor in a convivial mood. In the hall were two hotel employees carrying a pair of huge trash barrels filled with empty beer cans. "I'm getting tired of doing this," muttered one as they passed Hank on their way to the service elevator.

A mob was milling outside the con suite. Whoops of rebel good cheer were heard from within the suite. Outside, the younger fans looked dry and irritable. "Can't hardly elbow through those raunchy old bastards to get a beer," complained a mustachioed youth.

"I'll show you how," said Reinhardt, hurling himself into the doorway. The con suite was full to the rafters with Old SFPans guzzling beer. Cliff Biggers thrust a can of Budweiser into Hank's hand. He remarked that most of the younger fans had gone into the hallway. "Not sociable," he shouted over the raucous din, "but we throw them a few cans of soda now and then to be polite."

"Nice of you," shouted Hank in return. "Where's Lon?"

"Up in the card room," replied Cliff. "He got a Hearts game with three kids who were complaining about the noise in here."

So Hank wandered up to the card room, where Atkins was losing the first game badly. As Hank watched, Lon failed in a moonshot bid and went out at 118. With a deep sigh, Lon told the youngsters, "I could concentrate better on this game if we were playing for stakes."

"You mean for money, gramps?" sniped one of the players.

"Now, Lon," spoke up Hank, "don't go gambling away your Social Security check again, you hear."

"I'm over twenty-one, Reinhardt," snapped Atkins, "and the cards have to start coming my way sometime soon. I think."

"Quarter a point," said the smart-ass hurriedly. "Deal!"

Hank managed to find three takers for another money game, so a couple of pleasant hours ensued. Fresh blood kept wandering in and attempting to confound the incredible "luck" of the old codgers. Senile old codgers, too. They frequently had to be reminded it was their lead. They muttered about the days when President Coolidge was in office. And they won consistently.

Finally the contending ~~WZK~~ fans gave up and left with loud comments about "sharks" and "ringers." Hank and Lon laughed heartily, then called in a giant order of pizza for the Old SFPAns in the con suite. Better to import food than to surrender the beer for even a few minutes.

Back in the hospitality room things were just gathering momentum. The Old SFPAns were starting on case #31 and two members of the concon had come up to investigate reports that the beer was being monopolized. Those unfortunate gentlemen had tried to exercise authority. They were now hanging out the windows, supported by their own belt straps. But they were still vocal.

"Bring 'em back in," bellowed Reinhardt. "We're an orderly group and I'll make them understand that if I have to bash their heads in."

The concon members, however, were already cowed. Their cries had been for rescue and their tune was low-key. "Please, sir," said one to Hank, "why don't you people go somewhere else?"

"We're all registered convention members. We have a right to be here."

"So do all the other members, but they wouldn't come in. Lester is afraid they might riot if you guys aren't thrown out."

Hank glanced slowly across the tumultuous host of partying Old SFPAns. "So Lester wants these people to riot?"

The committee members gulped. "Errr, no." And the two of them vanished at a trot. Hank watched as case #32 was opened, then headed back to his room to prepare those special recipes for the banquet. He wanted it Done Right.

The convention developed in unusual ways. Blocked from the con suite, the normal con-going contingent circulated in the huckster room, art show, etc. Word was out about the rough and rowdy group in the film room, so few went there. (And the handful of hardened Rocky Horror Picture Show fans who did attempt it were utterly grossed out.) Lester Jaundice received continual reports that the general run of attendees were unhappy. He made one more effort toward Order, dispatching a security squad to the flick room. But George Inzer and Gary Brown, professing nonviolence, sat on the hapless squad and fed them Screaming Yellow Zonkers until they begged for mercy.

When Hank reemerged about eleven (to discover that the kitchen was closed -- he slipped the recipes under the door) he found the consuite rather silent. Firstly, there were lots of room parties underway. Secondly, the Old SFPAnS had finished the beer and were off in search of room parties. And thirdly, Goldy Goodass was entertaining.

She held sway in the consuite, a mass of male gathered about her, hanging on every word and jiggle. More than a few Old SFPAnS were in the crowd. Guy Lillian was drooling all over her gold-tinted spike heels. Hank assessed the situation; it was as he'd expected. Good. He motioned to his confederate waiting in the hall.

A throaty and thoroughly sexy little cough interrupted Goldy's monologue. P.L. Caruthers, dressed in black, stood in the door to the con suite. Her flame-red hair flowing freely; her divine form silhouetted in the door frame. Some things age does not wither nor custom stale. The male mass rotated on its axis.

"Excuse me," said P.L., subtly thrusting a shapely hip toward the men. "I'm holding a very select party in my room and hoped a few of you might join me. I would so enjoy the company of some real men."

She turned with a flip of her tresses and vanished. Immediately, the entire male mass leapt to its feet and trotted after her. All that was left was Goldy, a group of filk singers and three pros arguing over who made more money.

Hank intercepted each Old SFPAn and gave instructions: "P.L. is off-limits. Go crash a room party." Then he turned his attention to the abandoned damsel. She needed comfort, he grinned wolfishly to himself.

"Hello, gorgeous," said Hank as he approached Goldy. She looked up and saw a grey-haired and scarred warrior striding forward. (Hank's cortisone shots before the con had worked wonders.) The compact piles of muscle all over him and the confident manner of his approach warmed her heart.

"I'm having a room party too," he said as he knelt beside her. Their eyes locked in a Significant embrace. "You're the guest of honor."

"And what happens at your room party?" she asked with a lilting laugh.

"We explore the inner meaning of Planet Stories," he said, "with special emphasis on the illustrations." He winked.

"I like illustrations," she replied. "Let's go." They vanished down the hall toward the elevator and as they rounded the corner Hank's arm crept around her waist. She didn't resist.

At the room parties Old SFPAns were making their presence felt. At first their charm and fabulous raconteur abilities made them the center of attention. Then people noticed that the liquor was disappearing at an alarming rate. Then they noticed that the Old SFPAns were responsible. This made for less harmonious relationships.

"Hey, buddy," said a confan to Meade Frierson, "this is private stock."

"To the contrary," quoth Frierson, "in accepting my hospitality you have committed an act of implied consent, as per the precedent of Verheiden vs. the State of Oregon, in which it was ruled by the Appellate Court that frabjous revelry in constituency proceedings of majority concourse are supported by indigenous proclamation, or -- to wit -- natal proclivity, and theretofore consummated parametrically under Hyperborean adjuncts. The damage award in this case, I might add, summed to \$189,652."

"You a lawyer, man?" asked the fan.

"Correct," spake Frierson, "specializing in civil damage suits."

"Have another drink, good buddy," said the owner of the quart.

In another room party a heavy hand came down on the shoulder of Joe Moudry. "That's my half-gal of Old Forester," spoke the burly Anachronist.

"I thought this was a fan party," replied Moudry.

"It is, little man, but I don't appreciate you appetite. Get your own booze."

"Please, Joe," pleaded Phyllis, "Don't hex him!"

"Hex?" asked the giant. Phyllis looked into his eyes with innocent concern. "Oh, yes. My husband Joe is a powerful warlock. You've heard of Hank Reinhardt?"

"Sure," admitted the SCA man. "He was the greatest ever."

"Joe grew angry at him one day and placed a hex. A hex to afflict Reinhardt's incredible bulging muscles. Call to that man and see the results."

"Hank?" called the SCA fellow. Hank Davis turned and walked over. "I'm the man you called -- Hank!" he proclaimed. "What do you want?"

"Just offering you and these marvelous people another drink," said the owner of the half-gallon of Old Forester.

And so it went. Gradually the supplies ran down and more and more fans migrated out of the room parties (where, in some rare cases, Old SFPAns got rowdy) to the con suite. Thus it came to pass that the audience was full when the stage was set.

The group in the con suite was doing well enough drinking Coca Cola and Mr. Fibb. It was with astonishment that they observed Goldy Goodass, disheveled

and breathless, rush into the suite and gasp for air. "Mighod!!," she emoted, "he never stops! The man won't quit. He goes on and on no matter how much it hurts me!"

The crowd oozed sympathy. When Hank appeared in the doorway behind Goldy they absolutely spit hostility. Hank was cool and collected, every stitch in place. The crowd awaited his word.

"Goldy," he said, "let's do it some more."

"Begone!," she cried. "I can't can't stand it anymore!"

"But I was hardly finished reading the best stories from the first year of PLANET. There's lots to go!"

Goldy shuddered. One of the pros, the one losing the earning argument, came over and put his arm around her shoulder. "Listen, sweetheart, I don't blame you being repulsed by that PLANET STORIES crap. Come up to my room for a very private reading of my latest, THE VORTEX VAMPIRES."

Screaming in perfect soprano, Goldy fled the room and wasn't seen again for the rest of the night. Speculation as to her destination, however, sustained her loyal fans that Friday. Hank merely grinned his wolfish grin and chalked up a mental victory -- again -- for the Old SFPAns.

The score stood rather to Hank's liking. The beer supply had been exhausted, angering most attendees. The film room was practically deserted except for the Old SFPAn Gross-Out Squad (proving once again that's there's no fool like an old fool). By now Jack Frenetic had been hounded to distraction by the Pear (if he'd consented to the Ignite, he'd also be cringing in shame). Goldy Goodass had been topped (disclaimer!) and put to retreat for the night. And the last bastion of con stalwarts, room parties, were being infiltrated at this minute. Very satisfying.

Hank had one more primary target to nail this evening: Steve Simple, the Master of Ceremonies. It was Hank's intent to send a visitation to each of the "active" SFPA members preferring minack and con-going professionalism to trufannish epac and con revelry.

Tapping into his intelligence network, Hank discovered that Simple was at a very exclusive room party hosted by a big Southern con promoter, Hiram Halitosis. Hiram preferred to work behind the scenes and play the Secret Master role. Rumor was that Simple would front for a con in his home town of Coal Scuttle, West Virginia. Halitosis would provide the backing. This party was to win over certain influential fan leaders.

Reinhardt had also researched the techniques of Steve Simple. It was with this knowledge that he chose his companion. "Stand outside the door of room 1056 until I can let you in," said Hank to Guy Lillian. Guy nodded assent.

With typical Hankish cunning, the Grey Wolf hijacked a waiter's uniform. The original owner hardly objected, as Hank had first coshed him with a twenty pound cudgel. Now attired for his espionage task, Hank knocked on the door of room 1056 and announced: "Room service!"

One of Hiram's minions peered thru a crack between door and reluctantly admitted Hank. The uniform was right, but... "Ain't you too old to be doing manual labor, gramps?" wise-cracked the fellow.

Hank slide thru the opening, accidentally bumping against the jerk and felling him with a vicious but unobstrusive karate punch. "Young punks can't hold their liquor," snorted Hank as he shuffled over to Hiram.

"What did you bring?" asked the power-monger, a huge man with waddles of fat bursting out all over. "I ordered nothing." It had a final ring.

"Compliments of the house, sir. Free drinks for everyone. I'm here to take the orders."

Hiram mellowed immediately. "How perceptive of the hotel," he exclaimed. "Please circulate among the guests and don't stint on the booze."

So Hank began his rounds, recording requests for Moscow Mules, Coors beer, Velvet Hammers and Zombies. When he passed the door, having become part of the furniture by now, he quickly admitted Guy. Lillian, being at ease in a party situation, glided in. On the way he left an order for a Gin Fizz with Hank.

"Why don't you tip in advance," snarled Hank. But he left well-satisfied that his scheme would succeed. The party was, as expected, revolving around Steve Simple's stories of the celebrities he knew. Lillian sniffed this out unerringly and advanced on the quarry as intently as the Hound of the Baskervilles tracking an English noble.

"I wuz a gud frend of Cheryl Tiegs poodle haredresser," said Simple to the admiring group. "He set me up to see Cheryl won day."

"You must mean Ted," interrupted ^{Guy} "Cheryl and I would see Ted from time to time when we were lounging at her pool."

"I touched her swinsute once," countered Simple.

"Cheryl complimented me on the neat way I folded her suit once it was off," crowed Lillian.

"I got Teddy Kennedy's autograff on his memweres," said Steve.

"When Tedddy and I were editing them, just prior to press time, he told me that he planned to autograph one hundred thousand copies for plain citizens. So that the ordinary folk might enjoy, of course."

"Pepper Rogers once said I had great potential."

"Bear Bryant, John McKay and I have discussed how free Pepper is with unjustified praise."

"I plaied in a Harts game with Hank Reinheart once."

"I beat Hank Reinhardt at Hearts," quipped Guy to the staggering Simple.

"I put 17 pages in a SFPA mailing too years ago."

Whereupon Guy began to recite his entire contributory history by zine and page count, with special sidelight comments on franked material. Steve Simple faded away as the assemblage of fan powers recognized that a true Publishing Giant was amongst them.

Along about mailing 143 Hiram interrupted. "Have you ever considered sponsoring a convention," he asked.

At this moment Hank (who had been eavesdropping at the door) reentered and announced: "Free drinks are ready in the bar! Just go and ask!"

Even Guy was forgotten in the stampede for the door. Hank remained in the room long enough to see Guy give Hiram a wink. That sealed Steve Simple out of the play. More details tomorrow.

Hank turned to leave and came abruptly face-to-face with an irate Lester Jaundice. The tall man was turning red, which gave a curious orange tinge to his normally yellow skin. He sputtered with fury, propelling droplets of spittle all over the room and Hank.

"You rascal!" raved Jaundice. "You're trying to destroy my convention! But you won't succeed. Tomorrow 100 cases of beer will be delivered. And I've hired Harland Hellion, the Hollywood gunslinger, to shoot off his mouth against the best you got. You don't stand a chance, Reinhardt!"

"A hundred cases is just a quaff to the Old SFPAns," bluffed Reinhardt. "And as for Hellion, how does he debate with a knife in the ribs?"

"The hundred cases is for the morning!" sneered Jaundice. "Another hundred arrive for the evening parties. Hellion's bodyguard is none other than Amos Anthrpoid, SCA champion of the Southern baronies and never defeated in combat."

"Old SFPAns never give up," said Reinhardt proudly.

"Face it, old man," jeered Jaundice, "you're washed up. Apas have evolved into what they were always meant to be: a distribution method for convention flyers."

"No!" yelled Hank. "It shall not be so!"

--- TO BE CONTINUED ---

In the thrilling final installment Old SFPA faces its ultimate challenge as the evil Lester Jaundice throws every dirty trick in the book at them. Can apa fandom survive? Tune in next mailing to find out....

Well, here's a brief tailgate ramble. The cover is by Joe Staton, honored Old SFPAn. The music tonite is by Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt and the Eagles. The refreshment is courtesy of Sunkist. (And Gallo, to be truthful about it.) Sunday I go up to LosCon to sit on a panel about "How to write for Fanzines." I plan to tell the truth....

Best,

LOW