



melikaphkhaz





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A year ago I was sitting before these same open windows, gazing out over the same green park scene, composing the editorial for Mel 77. A lot has happened in that year, yet curiously little has changed. The primary patterns of my life are similar to those of a year ago. More settled, reflecting a year's tenancy in this new place. Augmented by a few new additions. But little else.

My SFPA activity could be called predictable nowadays. The balance of the zines today includes more small items and not much monolithic fanfic epic, but the size is relatively constant. I look on the change as a bit of a loss, for I got more enjoyment out of creating the epics. I need a new one, but I'm tired.

Work is more exciting for me, and more demanding. It occupies much of my creative mind. I'm finding that imposing the organization, however gently, onto a small growing company is a more difficult task than I'd envisioned. The past is just too vital to the present. But I make progress, slowly, though it tires me.

My social life is mostly composed of fan parties, casual dating and excursions with friends. On weekends when Dawn is up, we take little trips. I enjoy those. Sometimes Rachel comes up too, and we may make a real outing of it, like the excursion to the Santa Barbara Arabian Horse Show, followed by the Zoo and the bird sanctuary there. I can relax, be truly at peace, forgetting all the pending demands. But underneath the rest is a growing restlessness, and I can't yet fathom its meaning. I just know it's there -- and that it tires me with its invisible tugs. And I am all too weary of late.

One thing added to my pattern is the



computer game. More than just the ones I've programmed, for interest in these games has taken hold of a part of my imagination. They have filled the games gap created by my abandonment of tournament chess. Strangely enough, I'm not tired of computer games, though I've not had much time for them recently. Too many other obligations press.

Reading has picked up, and I've gotten back into my old habit of keeping a book "going" to fill in the tiny crevices of time that dot one's lifestream. As a result, lots of books are being read and (mostly) enjoyed. But reading is in its way an escape. Perhaps it was realizing how much I was reading, and then recalling what that meant, that gave me to think about my life.

This section of natter is about at an end. I'll not try to philosophize, even should I want to. The key difference between this lazy July afternoon and that one a year ago when I typed editorial natter from park view, is that I was then hopeful of new discoveries in the fresh life ahead. That they might wash away pain and give new purpose. But today I find myself tired and unaccomplished. A hider in convenient retreats. Not to imply that I've lost touch with reality, nor loosened my hand on the rudder of my obligations, but rather that I'm no longer seeing so far ahead. Those vast and hazy future goals seem gone, gone from my horizon.

Perhaps it is merely exhaustion. Perhaps tomorrow my spirit will reconcile toward the future and winds blow away the still hazes. Yet I feel that I've driven myself too hard toward short-term goals, to longer-term regret. Myself does not feel right-attuned with myself.

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On a lighter note, let me prattle on about a new game I've thought of but not had time to do much with. It's a maze game. There are six cubes involved. A player sees but one face of the cube at a time. Each face is a six by six matrix with openings connecting some of the squares to form a maze. At points, exits allow movement to an adjacent face of the cube. From each face there are points where the player may go "up" or "down" to cubes on other levels. The greater cubic structure is also constructed so that each component cube may be viewed as a face of the greater cube. The maze encompasses all these faces. Everything "wraps around"; all is bounded.

While one face (6 x 6) is not complicated, the entire structure is. Not all points on a given face can be reached directly from that face. The player may have to change faces and levels before finding a path.

Onto this geometric structure I plan to install several different games. Games of solving, of chase, of point collection, of pursuit-and-chase. Later, I plan to add other maze patterns, but that's far off. A question I have about this idea is whether it might work in the arcade environment. My observation is that arcade games are slanted toward reflex, not thought. They also have rather simple logic, so that it can be incorporated at low cost into the devices. No mass storage device is allowed. (Whereas in Mazing, a disk file is a must, given moderate resident memory.)

My suspicions are that there are many kinds of computer games suitable for arcade adaptation, but that mine are not. So there goes the vast fortune I was planning to amass.....



# BOOKS

While I was indisposed for several days early in this mailing cycle, I took the opportunity to do more reading than has been my wont of late. Book reviews seem to make good SFPA material these days, so I stacked my reading and decided to make part of MEL look like a section out of THAL. The reviews are not intended to be "in-depth" examinations, but they are intended to gauge the material with more than reactive opinions.



THE NINJA (By Eric van Lustbader -- pb in Fawcett Crest, \$3.50).....

Violence is ever-popular and the Japanese influence is swelling in American thought. THE NINJA deals with the assassin offshoot of samurai discipline. Rather gaudily so. Combining gratuitous death with eposoidic sex encounters must have seemed a good formula for success to van Lustbader. He hit the Best Sellers ranks with it.

THE NINJA is a confusing book to me. On one level there is careful descriptive writing of the Japanese martial arts disciplines, especially the philosophies of life underlying the arts. On the other is a welter of unreasoned violence, graphic sexual scenes inserted without meaning into the text, and frenetic attempts to disguise the fact that this book has no plot at all. Indeed, it reads like a TV pilot for yet another "suspense" thriller.

This much wouldn't have confused me had not there been real promise in the style and detail of THE NINJA. I was ready to trash the novel countless times, but always I found a scene well-handled in isolation, a exposition on culture that captured my attention, a few paragraphs of beautifully melded prose.

To seek an explanation I tried to imagine what could be subtracted from the book to make it better. The book runs over 500 pages. I went on the assumption that it had been "pumped up" to include \*grabber\* material and that this was done without regard for an original structure. What I found was a book about half the size, with almost all sex excised, dealing with the visit of a Ninja to New York for purposes of assassination. But this was as far as I could go. And still there were gaps.

The incidents selected were an outline for



a tightly-paced action novel, with a backdrop of discursion into the mind-set behind Japanese martial arts. There was no connective tissue between the incidents. In the original novel these gaps had been filled with episodes of unrelated sex or violence. Worst, there was no change in the nature of the characters from the moment of their first introduction to the point of climax (of whichever kind). But within the selected incidents there was fine writing and excellent handling.

Conclusion: van Lustbaden is a novice, fitting himself into the Harold Robbins niche rather than establishing his own style in his own way. Evidence that he can do so is found in the flash-back sequences, which do show a progressive development in the protagonist and do illustrate writing skill. The heavy-impact mainline sequences are good examples of Shakespeare's old line: "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

THE NINJA is a book of much pretention, as it alludes to classic works as mirroring its structure. It fails, not through shallow references to the meanings of these texts, but through a lack of meaning and development within the work itself. It's fair entertainment, though cloying in its repetition. Within it are a few sequences of skilled word-smithing. It nets out better than most material on the racks these days. Shallow. Meaningless. It wastes its fine touches by sacrificing development to thrill. Its sadest moment is the last sentence of its afterword. A comparison of self.

THE FAR ARENA (By Richard Ben Sapir -- pb in Dell, \$2.75).... A less successful book by popular standards yet a far better literary achievement than THE NINJA, THE FAR ARENA owes its particular failings to a similar circumstance. Where van Lustbaden was clearly a student of the Japanese martial arts and their social significance, so is Sapir a student of Roman history. In THE FAR ARENA the premiere gladiator of Domitian's Rome is preserved, frozen, to be revived in our century. Again, flashback is the tool of character development for our protagonist.

The flashback here is a novel-within-a-novel. It consumes perhaps a third of the text. While only a single character -- the protagonist -- has any depth, the flashback sequences paint a broad social picture of compelling interest. Furthermore, they serve admirably to establish our frozen gladiator as a person, an identity, a power of mind and body.

But THE FAR ARENA breaks down in the present. The problem is the simple one of "where to go?" Sapir has no real plans including the emergence of our gladiator. As circumstances drive the novel onward, this becomes clear. The three characters banded together to perform the revival are all well-drawn during the first half of the book. By the time we reach a point where Decision is demanded, there is only a cop-out to be had. After being entertained and delighted for hundreds of pages, I was suddenly disappointed.

Once the gladiator has emerged, run his flashbacks to the end, we find a cold present. The supporting characters are reacting to the pressures of their own lives. (Least believable being the Soviet doctor.) They must choose between the personal welfare of the gladiator and the scripts their masters demand. I'll say no more about the ending, save that it's the weakest part of the book.



But THE FAR ARENA is a good-reading book, well worth the investment of time. The historical sequences are vivid. They tell us quite a bit about human character, and especially of the requirements of mob rule and mob-rule-survival in ancient Rome. The later failure of the book to deal believably and meaningfully with contemporary characterizations is excused by its patent true focus on the past. Again, this is a book trying to broach the best-seller ranks with formula work. But try it; it's good.

NOSTROMO (By Joseph Conrad -- pb in Signet Classic, \$2.25).... In search of a novel to use as a counter-example to Best Seller criteria one need look no further than NOSTROMO. As that novel was next on my list, I'll stop to moralize. NOSTROMO is a wonderfully conceived, deeply human adventure story written in the style so lacking in fashion these days. It is straight-forward (not abstract) and overwhelmingly human (without graphic sex or violence). It deals with human lives, and describes these developments obliquely but with tremendous accuracy and compassion. It deals with events of high emotion, yet places these events realistically within a literary fabric. It deals with an abstract theme, yet never resorts to the flashy word tricks of obfuscation. And it delivers on that theme, solely from the people it develops within its confines. In other words, NOSTROMO is what a novel should be. NOSTROMO has form.

It is form which is lacking in most novels I read today. THE NINJA had vain pretensions to form. It failed. THE FAR ARENA was begun with a powerful idea, but was developed without a corresponding form to support that idea. Why?

Conrad's introductory notes to NOSTROMO speak indirectly to this question. We learn of how he acquired the ideas for his novel, then spent years nourishing them into bloom. The theme itself was supported by individuals. In the growing of these persons, secondary themes sprang to startling life. Conrad used time to refine his concepts, so that the meaning of his novel was whole and entire when he set it to paper.

There's a Zen sound to that. van Lustbaden referenced Zen thought in his novel, yet he apparently doesn't relate it to what is told of Zen creation. It is said that a Zen artist will ponder a painting for years, making it whole in his mind, then create it on canvas within a span of minutes. The theme is secure, complete, connected. All those qualities are missing in this poor Best Seller work we see.

But what of NOSTROMO itself? Why is it so powerful? Conrad's ability to write about the human soul is probably the foremost reason. His novels stand as works of art because they are consistent on all levels, bringing the theme to crux with the plot in superb timing. But aside from that writing trick, Conrad is skillful at suggesting human motives in the pattern of human actions. And he selects emotional topics. The desires of his characters are more the desires of the questing mind than the momentary popping of gonadal longings, but they intensify with time as do all such emotions. They are deep, inner desires. To Conrad, the gonads are real but lesser. They occur in his writings, as do all the fickle and transitory emotions, but they are not the substance of his themes. Conrad's power lies in his ability to pick the thread of emotional direction in a human being -- and to follow the course of this direction through all of the tempests of living.

The open fabric of NOSTROMO deals with a long



segment of this history of Costaguana, a South American country. In particular, the focus is on Sulaco, the near-inaccessible coastal province where a great silver mine -- the Gould Concession -- resides. Here we find a cast of characters equal to the weight of the tale.

There are three major themes and numerous minor ones. I'll not elaborate, as this isn't a major review. I will say that revolution, greed, dedication, love and self-image are well examined. If you decide to read NOSTROMO, be prepared for a slower development than you are used to reading. If you stick it out (and it isn't boring, but slow) be prepared for Sulaco to grip you terribly tight. The reward of careful preparation by a skillful writer is tremendous involvement as the tale unfolds. And for the critical reader, the melding of theme with plot, the beautiful descriptive prose, the character vignettes of sharp portrayal, the balance -- these are the best rewards.

THE BEGINNING PLACE (By Ursula K. LeGuin -- pb in Bantam, \$2.25)..... It is uncommon for better writers to seek themes. LeGuin has been quite successful at it. This short novel (183 pp.) illustrates what happens when such a quest is too "pure". The quest after theme can come perilously close to usurping the novel itself. Hemingway strayed that way with THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA, but had the Old Man to serve as sole character, deeply human and suffusing the theme.

Perhaps Hemingway's otherwise advice, that themes should come into novels naturally, via the characters and their interactions, rather than being boldly introduced and pursued in naked chase, should have been taken.

I enjoyed THE BEGINNING PLACE a lot. The writing is excellent, the descriptions skilful visualizations. There's a nice brisk, though unfrantic, pace to the story. Only the last few pages drag -- after the Theme has made its bow and left the characters to fend for themselves.

This is a marvelous book in most ways. As described on the cover, it is "magic... lyrical... uncommonly graceful." But it skips on substance. One of the main characters is well-realized; the other is a bit too sketchy to bear much weight. The physical country is carefully described; the native culture is skimpily developed. The key confrontation sequence is almost entirely unsupported.

The reason is that all these things are serving symbolic purposes in support of the Theme. They are disposable props. THE BEGINNING PLACE is too long and detailed to be a fable or allegory; it is too short and unevenly developed to be a proper novel. It's something in between, and I enjoyed it rather a lot despite the irritating nature of its deficiencies.

LYCANTHIA (By Tanith Lee -- pb in DAW, \$2.25)..... This one is subtitled "The Children of Wolves" and it too has a theme, though one of those naturally emerging ones that Hemingway advocated. I've been impressed with Lee's writing talents in the past. Now I am very impressed. She is growing.

LYCANTHIA is externally a true-wrought tale of werewolves. It's a tale of mounting tension, a progression of portents, classical superstition and clever invention, and indelible characterizations. Few in the genre -- or any genre -- write this well. And so consistently within a form.



Taninth Lee builds her creation within an organic structure. The connective tissue is as strongly present here as it was absent in THE NINJA. It flows from consequence. Consequence flows both from circumstance and from the nature of the characters. There's a deterministic cast to the novel, as one might expect in a tale of feudal rights, magic and lycanthropy. But we shall see the reason for this bent, the deeper reason, in the climax.

For the book is constructed so that a natural theme emerges to complement and intertwine with the werewolves. It is a subtly-handled theme, never made blantant, but made inespacable. This second level of meaning strengthens the book and makes it an even more enjoyable reading experience. I give high marks to LYCANTHIA. Try it.

CALYPSO (By "Ed McBain" -- pb in Bantam, \$1.95).... This was the first 87th Precinct novel I'd read. Perhaps I'd better not judge the well-known series by one book, for CALYPSO was shallow and dissipated the suspense built in the first half of the novel during the last half. My reaction was "B.F.D." I developed little affinity with the characters, saw little of value in the book, was only marginally entertained, and thought that the technical aspects of the writing were mediocre. So why is there so much bally-hoo about the 87th Precinct series? Maybe I picked a lemon to start with...

CALYPSO relies heavily on stereotypes. So far as I could tell, only detectives Meyer and Monroe have any creative effort expended in their creation. Even they aren't very impressive. As the plot unfolded I found it less and less believable. Most of this feeling comes from the shuffling of cardboard images as the detectives investigate, and from the monotonous aspects of style. "Flat and semi-graphic" isn't "realism", and one has only to read Hammett or Chandler to understand this fact. There's a hell of a lot of art in the "flat" presentation of "realism". As far as I'm concerned, Evan Hunter's detective fiction is no different in quality than his science fiction. Mediocre. But "over 50 million" purchasers must disagree with me. (Hey! I'm one of those purchasers! Hope they don't count curiosity as endorsement...)

THE FUGITIVE PIGEON (By Donald E. Westlake -- pb in Charter, \$1.95).....

There's not much more in this flippant novel than there is in CALYPSO, but Westlake writes with a style that's capable of making us laugh along with the most banal of conditions and believe in ridiculous characters. In other words, Westlake has fun with his books.

THE FUGITIVE PIGEON has a rather uncluttered, linear plot and several delightful characters. It's easy reading, has no pretensions to deliver anything more than constant entertainment, and is even willing to make fun of itself. Westlake writes as if he had a background in fan fiction. Delightful froth!!

THE BUSY BODY (By Donald Westlake -- pb in Charter, \$1.95) .... Much like

PIGEON, but with a more complex plot. The same comedic touch, which amuses without turning mystery into farce, is present. Madcap capers, or ordinary capers with madcap descriptions -- take your choice. The book is a joy. In this one the reader is invited into speculation as the true nature of crazy events. Lots of permutations there. I had fun guessing. As entertainment, nothing more, THE BUSY BODY is tops!



WHIP HAND (By Dick Francis -- pb in Pocket Book, \$2.75)..... Francis has the ability of bringing his characters to life also, especially his heros. (I never quite believe in his villians, though.) WHIP HAND is of the current vintage (from 1979) of Francis books. They're more about the people involved than was the case a decade or so ago, but the tension level is as high as ever. The heros are almost always amateurs plunged into deep waters -- crime, conspiracy, violence. They bumble about at first, meeting the cast of characters from which will later emerge a Mastermind, but soon begin to use their wits to detect patterns. From the pattern detection comes a plan of action, requiring courage and skill. Then comes the obligatory scene or two in which our hero is threatened, beaten, tortured and/or placed in a position of sure death, much as in the old-time serials shown at Saturday matinees.

So if Dick Francis writes to a formula, why do I read all his books? Maybe because he brings his heros to life. I empathize with them. I enjoy their triumphs of deduction, their deeds of bravery. I hurt when they hurt. No two books are the same, even if the driving formula is, and Francis has new wrinkles, new mysteries, new thrills, in every novel. And he pretends to nothing more than what will be found in the book. No disappointments.

FOR KICKS (By Dick Francis -- pb in Pocket, \$2.50)..... Here's one from 1965, a period when there was a bit more plot complexity and a bit less character development in Francis' work. I enjoy both periods, the early and the later. FOR KICKS is excellent, despite a grafted-on ending after the real ending. It's intended to add a dimension to the novel, but it adds nothing but a few pages. Overtones of spy were in fashion in '65, so many that explains it. But the book is fine entertainment. Dick Francis doesn't seem to have written a bad novel in the lot.

KNIGHT'S GAMBIT (By William Faulkner -- pb in Vintage, \$1.95).....

The six detective stories which make up KNIGHT'S GAMBIT are all concerned with Gavin Stevens, graduate of Harvard and Heidelberg, now county attorney of Yoknapatawpha County. Stevens is a deep one. He has penetrating insight into human passions, motivations. He solves his cases by finding ways down to the bedrock of human emotion. As one might expect from Faulkner, the contradiction and consistency of human condition is the subject of all six stories. But they are all (save perhaps "Monk") all legitimate detective stories, and beautifully crafted.

I'll not take time to do more than mention the incredible word-smithy skills of Faulkner. Rather I'll observe that these stories span many years in the author's life. Evolution of style and form is easy to follow. The dense, significant packing of content into short stories is best seen in the first few tales. These are his earlier efforts, reflecting meticulous craft. As time goes on, the stories become looser in structure and include other elements besides a "pure" artistic concentration on character. The influence of Faulkner's days in Hollywood, and perhaps of Hammett and Chandler, adds plot complexity and flash to the later works. Indeed, the title story is almost a blend of early Faulkner and Chandler.

This is a book well worth reading. It is entertaining, not monolithic but a series of episodes, and contains magnificent writing. It's damned enjoyable, too. I wish there was more... and more... Gavin Stevens stories.



CASHELMARA (By Susan Howatch -- pb in Fawcett, \$1.95)..... Deb sent me this book (and THE FAR ARENA) with THE STAND. I was a bit hesitant to start CASHELMARA, not being sure what I'd find, but once I began I was entranced. Howatch tells a good story. This one covers 32 years and includes a host of characters. CASHELMARA deals with a family of the English peerage. Their Irish estate is called "Cashelmara" -- in many ways it is a character in its own right. Certainly, the influence it exerts on the family members under examination is palpable.

I found Howatch's technical writing skills to be quite competent, if not exceptional, but her canvas is large enough to allow superb development of a saga. The main power of this book comes from its collection of detail and chronicling of events. Howatch is meticulous in laying groundwork. We're fortunate that her flair for personality starts us with interesting characters and keeps us reading on through their foibles until the almost "historic" course of events is established. Much like NOSTROMO does, this novel is concerned as much with the changes time brings as it is with the interplay of its cast.

There weren't really genuine subthemes to CASHELMARA. It has a flavor of soap opera. But it is highly enjoyable reading, presents its characters well -- and from several points of view. There's a scope to the novel, place as well as time, that I found a refreshing change from the more narrow-focused novels I usually read. In senses, it reminded me of Uris' TRINITY; they both dealt with Ireland and its social problems. But CASHELMARA is about, if anything, the confines that people of all levels must live within. Confines of geography, of class, of culture, of inner need, of mind -- and of others. CASHELMARA is more about weakness than strength, though it deals with both. It finds both qualities in the same people, of course, if in different blends. When the novel is over, you find yourself curious as to how life went on. The method and subject are so well ingrained in your reader's mind by then that another 500 pages of story seems only natural. A fine book.

TO BUILD A SHIP (By Don Berry -- pb in Comstock, \$2.50)..... This historical novel takes a slice of Tillamook Oregon from the mid-1800s. We find good and bad pioneers, good and bad Indians, and a few odd characters tossed in. It's light flavorful reading with a warm human display of humor throughout. As the title implies, the book is structured around the building of a ship. How that comes to pass, and why, is the meat of the book. It's historically accurate, Berry is an expert on the history of the Pacific Northwest, and quite interesting for its detail. It's also good writing, with insight into people. Not a high-tension book, but excellent relaxation reading.

SECOND GAME (By Charles De Vet & Katherine MacLean -- pb in DAW, \$2.25)...

This started life as a novelette in the Campell ASTOUNDING of the latter fifties. It stretching it across the frame of a novel, even a 158 page as this is, the authors put too much strain on the fabric. I liked it for nostalgic reasons, but I saw too many flaws in the plot and the added material to recommend it very highly. Perhaps I've changed over the years, but the pat handling of a simple premise doesn't hold so much interest any more, even if it's done in a style that I cut my scifi teeth on. Not only is the plot stretched, so is the conceptual content.



THE OUTCASTS OF HEAVEN BELT (By Joan Vinge -- pb in Signet, \$1.75).....

A real turkey. I was encouraged by the author's fine short efforts, so the disjoint prose and muddled stumbling of OUTCASTS caught me by surprise. The book is practically unreadable. Nothing hangs together, the characters are poorly drawn, the societies aren't defined with enough explicit or implicit material to make them envisionable, the moralizing is absurd. Everybody can be excused for a blunder, and this is one for Vinge. And the editor. And the publisher.

334 (By Thomas Disch -- pb in Avon, \$2.25)..... Disch can be a marvellous writer, but he can be frustrating as hell. 334 is a good example. It is not really a novel, but a collection of stories about the degeneration of big city life, the tightening grip of government regulation of life, and the means of escape available then. Disch derives his vision from a scapel-clean and accurately-frightening extrapolation process. The stories are good, even superb. They're downers, but insightful and brilliantly crafted. What fails is trying to turn them into a novel.

Common surnames, guest appearances and the 334 address don't make capsulated short stories, strung together, into a novel -- not even when you contrive to call it a novel about 334. And adding a coda of snippet surrealsim subtracts. I was insulted by the claim. Disch is one of the finest craftsmen working in the genre. There was no need to damage the impact of his short work by trying to force it into a more lucrative form.

SMILEY'S PEOPLE (By John LeCarre -- pb in Bantam, \$3.50).... I picked this up after seeing the PBS presentation of TINKER, TAILOR... It's the sequel, and I was intrigued by watched I'd seen on the tube. If anything, SMILEY'S PEOPLE is an apt capper. It is the chronicle of Karla's fall. Of Smiley's last coup.

But while LeCarre may be a fine writer, he stretched a bit with this one. The basic gimmick of the book isn't enough to hold up nearly 400 pages. My only criticism is that some of the padding could have been removed, to the consequent tightening of action. But that little flaw aside, the novel is a first-rate thriller, relying as is the case with LeCarre on human internals to build the tension higher than mere events seem to warrant. Despite the insights, there's not much beyond entertainment in SMILEY'S PEOPLE. LeCarre is a fine writer, but he hasn't touched the points beyond suspense reached by Graham Greene. But, then, he doesn't seem to pretend to have.

THE HITCH-HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY (By Douglas Adams -- pb in Pan, \$?)  
Welll..... I suppose I liked it.

I'm not too sure, mind you, but I think so. As I mentioned earlier, I read many of these books while ill. When it came to HITCHHIKERS GUIDE I must have been delirious with a high fever. Images kept slipping off the pages and landing on my bed spread. I'd swear two white mice went waltzing thru the room discussing abstruse philosophy. Everytime I thought I was getting a clue as to what was happening, I wasn't. If there is a surface theme in HITCH-HIKERS GUIDE behind which a deeper theme might hide, I couldn't find. Likewise, a plot. Damn thing read like a radio show. Finally I judged it to be a mildly hilarious spoof on anything (not everything) and trundled off, foresaking the warm comfort of my sick bed, to mix myself a Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster. I needed one.



THE BLACK TOWER (By P.D. James -- pb in Popular Library, \$2.25).....

P.D. James is another writer that I'd heard good things about but not sampled until recently. I was certainly impressed by her vocabulary and style. If Dalgliesh, her protagonist writes poetry then so must P.D. James. Even a certain stiffness to the prose didn't put me off, as it seemed in character with the intent of the book.

Why did bother mw was the unfolding of the story. I thought it too stuffy, and as such I found myself feeling that the novel was too slow, too pretentious, too "armchair". I didn't enjoy THE BLACK TOWER nearly as much in the finishing as I did in the starting. Somewhere in between I got bored.

There's little specific to impeach. As I said, the writing itself is of solid technical quality. The plot isn't too contrived, only a bit so. The character of Dalgliesh is intriguing and the other cast members hold up reasonably well under scrutiny. It's just that to my tastes the book never got into sync. That happens sometimes, when a book is built rather than created. I'm sure that James spends considerable time working out her novels. This one had no gaping holes. But in the construction phase, in the doing, I found no signs of emotional involvement by the author. There was no power singing in the pages, nor empathy. I was disappointed.

THE CHINESE BELL MURDERS (All by Robert van Gulik -- pb from either the  
POETS AND MURDER University of Chicago Press or Scribners)  
THE CHINESE NAIL MURDERS  
THE MONKEY AND THE TIGER

Taking a tip from Dave Hulan's reviews of the Judge Dee mysteries, I bought a copy of THE CHINESE BELL MURDERS (not being able to find GOLD). Reading it converted me instantly to a Judge Dee fan and I picked up several other novels in the series, three of which I've completed as of today.

Dave has already given the particulars, so you know that Judge Dee is a Chinese magistrate of the T'ang Dynasty. Part of the charm of the books is the insight they bring into life in that time. Van Gulik explores many aspects of China of the time, including the sexual customs and social order. The flavor of that ancient culture is conveyed more expressively than most lesser writers are able to do for our own times.

I'm impressed with van Gulik's ability to use a very plain prose style to achieve the emotional impacts he conveys. His dialog is a bit stilted (but that may be to impart the formality of Chinese address). His descriptions are typically graphical, though he will sometimes wax poetic -- as in the opening scenes of "The Night of the Tiger" (in THE MONKEY AND THE TIGER) or the Medicine Hill scenes from THE CHINESE NAIL MURDERS. But however he does it, it works. The Judge, his assistants, the suspects -- even the bit-part players -- are all firmly realized.

The mysteries are good ones, though not what we find today in modus operandi... Highly entertaining, educational, insightful. I'm out of space (& time), but I urge you all to sample Judge Dee. I don't think chronological order is all that important. I found that the first book was acclimation -- then I whizzed along on the others. Great stuff!!



# HANK

ON

KNIFE FIGHTING

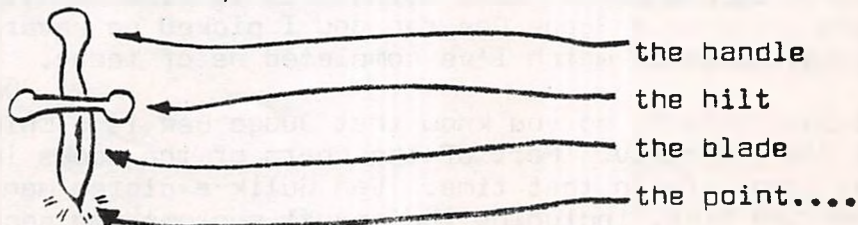
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This magazine is privileged to be able to present an excerpt from the soon to be published best seller, HANK ON KNIFE FIGHTING. The author, one Hank Reinharp, is a noted authority on hand-to-hand combat, edged weapons both modern and antique (he's been collecting since his boyhood...), and Oriental assassination techniques. Mr. Reinharp has previously authored the well known texts BARGAIN DAY SHOPPING METHODS, HOW TO HOLD YOUR PLACE IN LINE and THE REINHARP WAY TO LOSING HEARTS. Together with relative unknown Gerald W. Paragraph, Reinharp edited an anthology of thud'n'blunder titled RIDICULOUS FANTASY. We'd hoped for a foreword from Reinharp himself, but he's hospitalized with an ingrown toenail. Nevertheless, join us now in a exploration for "the Hank's" turgid prose...

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There are many types of knives in this wide world. Most of them are sharp. Some are sharper than others. Even the dull ones are some good for fighting. The sharp ones are better. Not many people realize this. But before I begin telling you the incredible truth about knife fighting, I will pause to demonstrate -- well, illustrate -- what a knife is.

A KNIFE:



You hold a knife by the handle, not the blade. Many people take several tries to learn this. (Don't feel bad. So did I.) The exception is when you're throwing the knife. I will discourse on knife throwing later.

The hilt is an important part of a knife. It keeps your fingers from slipping down onto the blade and getting cut. That can hurt. Some knives don't have hilts (butter knives, putty knives, etc.). I never use these kinds of knives and you shouldn't either. Good technique protects the fingers. Never forget that.

The blade is part of the "delivery system" of a knife. (Knives are just as complicated as computers and wind tunnels, dammit!) The blade is good for slicing, slashing, chopping, mincing, carving, and shaving. I devote a full chapter to each type of cut. Sometimes the blade is sharp on two sides, sometimes on one. The experts call these kinds of knives "one-edged" and "two-edged" knives.



The point is the sweetest part of a knife. You can stick people with it. The point is for thrusting, the blade for sweeps -- but we'll go into the sophisticated stuff later. The main difference between the point and the blade is that you can scoop peas with the blade but you can't balance them. With the point you can pick up the little boogers pea at a time and never worry about gravity.

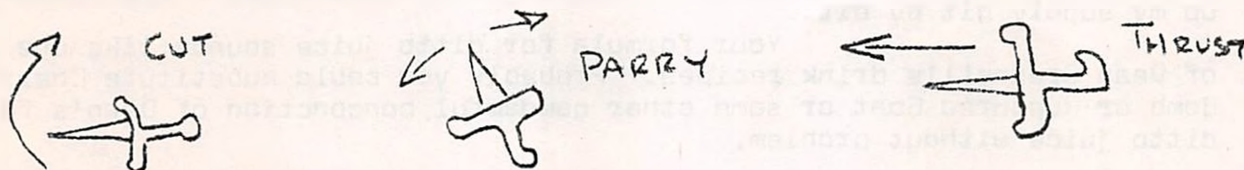
But we're not getting to the fighting part. Knife fighting is an art that goes back to 1808 when Col. David Bowie of Mission Control, Arkansas, invented the "Bowie knife". Being a new invention, there was a limited supply. People used to fight over them. And that's how knife fighting was born.

But it has progressed since then. I myself had a significant influence on the evolution of style and technique. For example, I was the first to fight competitively in leotards. This stylistic innovation might be said to be derivative of ballet, when in point of the truth the exact opposite is the case. None of those fairy ballet dancers ever fought with knives. Shortly thereafter, that asshole Wagner started his sword stuff.

Technical innovations include my "quick chop" (this method did not originate with Benihana), my "high score" (this refers to a cut across the neck and not my Hearts play), and my "slow dispatch" (though here I must admit to stealing an idea from the Post Office).

The infusion of my style into my technique produces exciting ideas: chicken-fried steak, for example, or supply-side economics. For the novice knife fighter I urge less ambition. The basics suffice.

The cut-parry-thrust, for example. Simply hold your knife as shown in the diagram and infuse style. Smile insanely; hum "An Okie from Muskogee". Whatever suits your anima.



Knife fighting demands instantaneous reflexes and nerves of steel. Perhaps this explains my enormous success. Mental attitude is also very important. The skilled knife fighter blanks his mind of all other thoughts. This is easy for me. Then I let the proper attitude fill my thoughts. The proper attitude is "Kill!!!"

I might comment on blades. Mine are all custom-forged Solingen steel. They can be sharpened to razor keenness, as these scars on the inside of my fingers attest. I sharpen my own knives. A standard 8" blade will last through about two or three sharpenings. The best way to sharpen them is to drag them behind your car on the freeway.

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END OF EXCERPT: but don't miss the hardcover, out in December!!!

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good M's



THE SOUTHERNER (GHLIIIOE) \* While this mailing is a large one, a good one, it appears somewhat ragged beside the magnificent One Hundredth. It is the Pages Owed section that says the most. We pay a price for the huge effort: exhaustion. I'm looking forward to seeing us get back into rhythm.

Which brings us to the suggestion that the copy count be again raised for the twentieth anniversary mailing.

I vote NO.

A loud and pained NO.

We set the One Hundredth as our goal for posterity. I supported 50 copies then, for I wanted to see a wider distribution for our achievement.

But I can't accept another extra burden so soon. To my mind thirty-five copies are a bunch. I would not like to see it become common to levy extra copies. Not taxing the membership for the anniversary mlg prevents a step in that direction. But let's see what other members think.

THE NEW PORT NEWS (Brooks) \* I didn't mean to offend you with that quip about "minac" in Icepick. Anybody that's in the Top Ten in PPM for 25 or more mlg's hit, as you are, isn't a minacker. ## When I bought paper for Mel #81, the first paper I've bought in years, it was \$4.35 a ream at the local supply shop. A croggling increase. But then I've not bought mimeo paper for years, having been using up my supply bit by bit.

Your formula for ditto juice sounds like one of Dean Grennell's drink recipes. Probably you could substitute Cherry Bomb or Ruptured Goat or some other gawdawful concoction of Dean's for ditto juice without problem.

FRIENDS IN SPACE (Pickersgill) \* No Sunday funnies; no Saturday morning cartoon orgies; no Sunday afternoon monster movies. England is Culturally Deprived. ## Good writing of the wedding. Best wishes for long and happy life to you and Greg. Also a good con report. "British Bulldog" doesn't sound like it will soon replace the favorite Southern con activities....

THE BOOJUM OF RED STICK (Hyde) \* Glad to see you didn't drop like you were considering last mlg. Going to Dallas, eh? An interesting city. I lived there for a few months in 1968. Found it to be a town of positives and negatives. But Dallas has grown and evolved a bit since those days, so I'm not sure how accurate my perceptions are in 1981. Good luck. TI is a solid company.

Here I am on the bottom of yr page 7 reading, again, about apa problems. Don't drop. But why not write to the people you perceive as being pissed at you and ask "why?" -- if they have any substance to them, they'll answer and you



can decide how to handle it, based on real input. You have a brash style that probably lets things get through in less than appropriate phrasing. Take a look at what you wrote in the context of what the others saw. Then it's possible to reason, not just react. A return letter gives the other side this same opportunity. A small investment in effort for what may be the turning point in relationships.

Being a human creature myself, those creatures what makes mistakes, I've looked back at my words and apologized explicitly in the past. Never hurt me. I've also taken strong stands when called for. Find your ground -- but look at it from all eyes first.

There was an interesting TV coverage of a Moral Majority meeting in Birmingham on the other night. The group is organized as a professional lobbyist and PR group. They feel that not only can they be felt, as a minority (despite their name), but that they can leverage their activity by selective application of pressures. Obviously, they're right.

The thing that bothers me the most is that it's always easier to organize AGAINST a specific activity than it is to organize for it. Look at the Liberal organizational successes: even their "for" campaign for Black rights was cast in the form of "against" segregation movement. And the Moral Majority is launching its campaigns "against" freedom of choice, freedom from censorship. Terrifying.

If I find the ISE Spectrum magazine article hard to believe. We've been monitoring nuclear blasts with electronic equipment since the beginning, and I've heard no report of such consequences as Spectrum alleges, even from the biggest blasts. I also doubt that such pulses would penetrate the shielding most (if not practically all) sensitive systems have as a matter of routine. Besides, one-third of our nuclear capability is outside of the USA. And we're not the only members of the Nuclear Club. The French are strong enough to destroy the Russian heartland -- and the French are feisty. (Though perhaps having been invaded a couple of times recently has something to do with it.) Nope, I don't believe it.

I think it's important to set oneself goals. You're on the right track, there. When I've run short on goals, I've drifted. (That's not been terribly often, as I too have this habit of setting myself to tasks.) Perhaps my goals are a bit too much tempered by what I view as "reality", for I've never achieved the real "dreams" of my life. I either never get going strong, or when I get there I find that the dream was false. It's tended to make me set shorter term goals, though I think that the capability for an "ideal" goal is in me but has never seen the birthing circumstances. Until such occurs, I suppose I'll survive on the profusion of short-term goals I set, though there's an unspoken Purpose as well. But the Purpose is pattern, not incident.

Quick comment on BASIC. There are many implementations. Ours has IF-THEN-ELSE. What I want most is true indirect addressing... But you and I seem to be the only supporters of BASIC in the apa, and maybe we've made our points. The power of BASIC is in its immediacy. Programs can be developed very quickly, modified easily. The language has certain circumstrictures, yet they don't impede doing medium sized programs. Execution speed of BASIC is slow compared to compiled languages. It's a matter of what one wants to achieve; different tools best suit different needs.



NEW ZIP CODE (Wells) \* I've seen two or three other Nero Wolfe TV shows since that first one which I panned. My opinion hasn't changed much, though if anything it has mellowed a bit. My dislike for William Conrad's interpretation of Wolfe hasn't abated, however. The few Nero Wolfe books I've read imparted a very different picture. Perhaps because I had mentally pictured Wolfe as Orson Wells, seeing "Cannon" reincarnated didn't exactly strike me as proper. I'd enjoyed the "Cannon" series well enough (for standard TV fare). But Cannon was obviously a fake, as regards food, wine, etc. It was so clearly an affectation that I thought of its manifestations as a joke. Wolfe, I regarded quite differently. Therefore, when Conrad exhibited all the "Cannon" personality characteristics I could not accept him as Nero Wolfe. Plot and acting flaws in the overall show led to a very negative attitude. In reconsideration, it's no worst than other junk, like "MAGNUM, P.I."

SANDYSTONEDZINE (Paris) \* Felicitations. Live long and prosper. I hear you and that lucky turkey Barger got hitched recently. I'll refrain from the run-of-the-mill commentary on Instant Membership that's probably rife in this mailing. No sense encouraging this sort of thing. Fun zine. The only time I get stoned alone these days is to listen to albums. Cuts. Do my own dj number. But not often.

THIN ICE (Verheiden) \* Yeah, why didn't you get this one into SFPA 100? ### Concerning the OE Symposium, "power" isn't the "power" of the outside world (life or death, raise or fire), but more "responsibility". In a voluntary cooperative organization like SFPA, the responsibility of getting the mailings out, setting reasonable policy, moderating issues, etc., is "power". It vitally affects the apa. The "power" is real -- but it touches the organization, not the personal lives of the members.

You miss the point on "minac". It's there for exactly those circumstances you cite -- a minimum amount of activity to exhibit interest. If minac were enough to sustain the apa if every member engaged in such "perfectly legal activity" then it would have to be set much higher if the apa were to survive. Sensitivity to minac isn't amateur judiciary. It's concern for survival. But you're right... SFPA doesn't worry much about minac, because it doesn't have to now. But that hasn't always been the case -- and the wheel may turn again. So we notice. But we don't push. (much.)

My apologies if I came on too strong about sick violence movies. In doing so I didn't mean to imply that all horror/terror movies are to be condemned. Many excellent movies have been made in this vein. My anger is against films that might be called "pornography of violence". Films that dwell on a sick mind, in endless graphic detail, in the wanton destruction of human life. There's enough of this happening in real life without encouraging such thought. I agree with you that the "life is dirt" movies contribute to this. I think the revenge psychosis is even more dangerous in depiction.

I thought t studies had shown it was better to be on the slim side (not "skinny", but slim). Extra weight is a stress on the heart, etc. I know I'm carrying 15-20 pounds too much right now, and just can't get motivated to lose it. Even remembering that I feel and look better a few pounds lighter seems to make no difference. Guess Guy may be right about fat.

A page of MC's takes me from 15 to 45 minutes, depending



on my mood, whether I've got to dig to find hooks, the topic of the word flow, etc. If things are favorable, I can zip along at a pleasant clip. But I'd say the average page of MC's costs me 30-35 minutes. The typical fan fiction pages takes 15-20 minutes. A serious review may run an hour a page. That adds up to a bunch of time, and I would guess if I spent an equal amount of time pursuing pro status I'd likely have made it by now. But, like you, I enjoy my hobbies. Though I expect that next time I burn out on fanzines (probably coming soon), I'll spend my writing time on a novel or two.

When I make my fortune I'm going to get a luxury penthouse condo with a beautiful view. (Say, in the wilderness of northern Canada.) A big farden with lots of bookshelves will be the target. I'll have my apa mailings bound, of course. No steel filing cabinets if I were that rich. I enjoy browsing through back mailings, especially those five or more years old. Being a sucker for nostalgia, old apa mailings are fun things to me. When they're in jetpaks stacked, as they are now, reaching any besides the ones on the top is too much pain. So if I get only moderately rich, I'll buy those steel filing cabinets...

Great illos of the members. Too bad you didn't amass a gallery of the roster for the One Hundredth, but I'm glad you passed on what was complete. Funny cover, as usual. A solid zine. Maybe the movie will sell soon.

FLAMBEAU DE LA PETIT ROCHE (Caruthers) \* A big zine for you, full of art and photos. The drawings of the watch and the eye are interesting stylistically. Whose are they? (Or have you used my tact and culled from mass media?)

I thought fictional con reports, like Dolbear's, were a part of SFPA tradition. Nobody really believes what's written in most conreps anyway, right? And didn't somebody (Alan? Gary B.? Stven?) do a report on a con they didn't attend?

You lose a lot of zines... Years ago I started a file copy folder, then went through a long period of neglecting it. When I restarted about three years ago I found that I didn't have copies of all my stuff either. But I can't figure out where the errant file copies went. I have about ten cartons of fanzines, plus the jet-paks containing apa mailings. I suppose they're all in there somewhere.

SFPA is in no danger of becoming a comics apa -- that you're dead right about. I don't think SFPA<sup>A</sup> will ever be a theme apa, unless the theme is SFPA itself. Everything under the sun gets discussed in these pages. We all plow ahead with our pet topics and rarely is there a growl of dissatisfaction. SFPAs, in general, seem to have omniverous tastes.

A HIGHER ELEVATION (Montgomery) \* Well, Larry, the last protest on "David Mitchell" as I recall it was that he was a pseudo for Lamar Hollingsworth, though that was never confirmed absolutely to my satisfaction. If you want to claim credit for "Mitchell", let's talk about the specifics. In the meanwhile, as "David Mitchell" held a roster spot, he's in the listings. (And he will remain there, but perhaps asterisked -- like Roger Maris -- with his pages being reattributed to the proper contributor.) So, what say?

Glad to see you back on the waitlist. I can understand your feelings, as expressed, about SFPA and Souther fandom. Too much of the Los Angeles fan scene is of zero or negative interest to me



these daze. There are a couple of circles I move in, and that's it fandom-wise in Ellay. SFPA has remained the heart of my fanac for fifteen years. Glad to see your enthusiasm is rekindled -- but cut out that double-spacing! (Or I'll doc you in the Box Scores...)

WHERE THE SUMMER BEGINS (Barger) \* Excellent writing! I've not read anything by Karl Wagner, but I see that I should soon. No further hooks, save to say that if you really want to know how the mountains were created, you should ask Hank Reinhardt. He was a youngster then, in his mid-fifties, and probably has a few well-chosen and colorful words for those upheavals that forced him to change his base of operations so often...

UNPROVOKED ATTACK... (Barger) \* Hassles by hotel management are too common a theme in congoing these days. There've always, as long as I can recall, been battles occasionally. Shitty hotel management wants to squeeze every buck out of the convention, which means curfews (to limit late-shift and overtime pay), asshole negotiations over the cost of facilities and extrees, and uptight mentalities as the lousy management tries to gag and contain conventioners in the belief that their howls of indignation will damage the regular trade. I've never understood why such games are played -- management guarantees that they'll lose: short-term, long-term, or both. But as you say, people can rescue such a situation -- for the memory book, at least.

SFPA'S SECOND ONE HUNDRED (Barger) \* Enjoyed. Enjoyed...

NEW ZIP CODE (Wells) \* Hearing that you indeed have a bladder as an internal organ, George, is a matter of some concern. Having watching you, at some New Orleans convention of yore, put away Dixie beer as if you were fueling (through conversion of Dixie beer into heavy water) an internal fusion reactor, I can't lightly now accept that you're indeed not so equipped. I mean, what else could explain not only your prolific consumption of Dixie, but the fact that you preferred such a brew to something really good -- say, Moosehead?

THE COMIC BOOK AND ME, JUST US... (McGovern) \* Yea! Heavy and a Bottle of Bread. On the Basement Tapes album. Also on a bootleg called Million Dollar Bash, where it's titled A Heavy Amount of Bread. So here's one for you.... "...some of us'll wind up to be lawyers and things..." As far as cheating on Dylan refs if it's by him it's fair. I've got BLOOD ON THE TRACKS and love it dearly. I've got PLANET WAVES too, but have never listened much to it. The original listenings produced a negative impression. I guess I'm not so much a Dylan fanatic as a selective Dylan fanatic. \*Sigh\* PLANET WAVES is playing now, by the way, and I'm getting in tune. "Forever Young", in addition to being a fine tribute to Neil, is a good'un. I may Retry this album. Thanks.

I look at abortion from a different perspective than you seem to. If I were to subscribe to the "progressive development" theory then I'd be open to the charge that use of a condom is Attempted Murder. This makes no more sense than does infanticide. I take the view of the Indian national government: overpopulation is deadly.

Let's step back and take a look at the equations



of species survival. Almost every form of life on this globe overproduces in the offspring department. Nature sees to it that few of those offspring reach maturity, to reproduce in turn. High fecundity is nature's way of protecting against high mortality rates of the young.

You talk about it in this issue -- the life expectancy of early centuries being so affected by high infant mortality. Biologically, this is how the species is geared -- to produce more than are expected to live. But we've conquered most of that, through the medical science. Now we product too many young.

Overpopulation is draining the globe. It's producing an exponentially increasing use of natural resources. It will shuffle us out of civilization if we're not careful. That's the perspective I view birth control and abortion from. Our world has changed -- we have changed it. Now we must compensant for that biological survival factors which are built into us. Lest we perish in the new world we have made. Otherwise, where will we put the people? how will we feed the people? how will we supply the people with their birthright -- equality of opportunity? And how will we prevent the War when we can't??

On other, but equally controversial topics, I experienced for a while with a method of approaching the cover-impact problem in stapled-together apas. I ran the cover inside-out. That is, the blank side faced out and the cover faced in. The blank page put a clean break between my zine and its predecessor. The method attracted no notice save a few muddled suggestuons that it was I who was muddled. So I gave it up.

UTGARD (Hulan) \* I noticed your comment on THAL's true size too late for inclusion in this set of Box Scores, but will correct the error for next mlg, when the Occasion calls for running the All Time Top Twenty-Five. Plus the Prior Year Performance. Won't help you to catch me in total pages, though. You'll have to wait for my next Decline -- when your steady production will overwhelm me yet again...

I reread the OE Symposium recently, just to see how it came out. (I have to let a few weeks elapse between creation and critical reading or, like proofreading one's own material, the actual is subordinated to the anticipated.) Having done so, I must recant. I said that I only made up one of your "remarks" -- but I lied. What I meant was that I only fabricated a single remark for you which wasn't obvious poof -- the "humorous" interjections were mostly my creations. This goes for the others, as for you. But I tried to keep characterization true. And, yes, I had a marvelous revelry in the assembling of a "conversational" interweaving of the various monologs. Plus the wholecloth creation of "Hank."

Gee, I liked DON'T BITE THE SUN and DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE!!! There must be something in my book critiques that gives the impression I'm panning books when I'm really just trying to open them up for examination. Perhaps the problem is that I don't bother critique-rites with bad books. I ignore them or dismiss them with a brief sneer. If I remember and have time, I'll try to correct that this time around, when I review a batch of books I read when I was down with the Go\*Go Flu. (You Go\*Go all the time...) My feeling is that if I'm going to get into descibing my perceptions of a book, I should go all the way -- negatives and positives both. The measuring stick is simply the distillation of the finest writing I've ever read. So it figures...



Quick comment on the idea of a "voting license". Such exists today. It is indeed revokable, as convicted felons know. My idea was not to introduce a voter's license, as we already have it, but to attach some requirements of knowledge of the political and civic field to such a license. The governments exacts such requirements before granting other "operational" licenses. Why not for the franchise?

Newspaper logs must be properly treated and prepared in order to burn well. The inner core should be liberally salted with a mixture of phosphorus and thermite. The log, immediately prior to ignition, should be doused with aviation gasoline. Then, newspaper logs burn most gratifyingly.

While I glanced thru an Apanage mailing some years back, I'm not familiar with its current offerings. I am familiar with FLAP, and have read a few other mailings (mostly at The Tower) over the course of the past year. The result is that I feel SFPA has 'em all beat. I have to weigh the volume of good material heaviest, not the percentage of same. Apas are for browsing, not continuity reading. There's abundant dreck in all apas -- material which may have very localized interest but is otherwise horrible or inaccessible writing. The abundance of SFPA's excellent and good material is its claim. FLAP has a higher percentage of excellent writing, but loses in volume. When one is dealing with browsing reading, dreck has a less detrimental effect than otherwise. (One skips the dreck.) And claims are just that -- claims. In the absence of NFL-style playoffs, I feel SFPA has as strong a claim as any to the title of Best.

Just for fun, I ran a mythical rating of SFPA's writers (roster) against a six-place scale. Excellent, Good, Fair, Mediocre, Poor, Unacceptable. I used relative apa standards, not the critique standards I use in my book reviews. My results were.... Excellent: 4, Good: 9, Fair: 9, Mediocre: 6, Poor: 2, Unacceptable: 0. This ranks contributed value, not probable ability. I feel that 10 SFPAs could easily move up a category if they cared to. (I exculded myself, of couse, which no doubt helped the average.) To give a comparison I've rated another apa mlg, pulled from my mid-sixties collection, as 1-3-8-6-5-4. Or, to show the SFPA spread (disclaimer!) on my Absolute scale, let's gaze at 1-3-8-6 and bury the rest. But that tells me that, on my personal scales, SFPA is an order of magnitude better than most other apas. And 'nuff horse shit.

Your comments on "secretary" are very well taken. It's perhaps strange irony that most secretaries who do well in American business are advanced via change of ~~title~~ (but not necessarily responsibility). And that charges of favoritism, usually sexually based, are often made against these promotions. The female secretary acting as executive assistant to the boss takes a terrible chance when she outgrows the laughable pay scales assigned to "secretary" or "admin assistant" and advances to a visible higher grade. The jealous and the underminers all chortle sotto-voce that she must be "servicing" the boss quite well. In my experience and observation, this is so much horse manure.

It is, rather, a pathetic admission that the accusers understand little of the administrative side of management. These abilities have little to do with formal training (regardless of what the university theorests say -- they ain't in the war...) and nothing at all to do with sex, race, religion or age. These abilities are largely innate, susceptible to training, and find levels.



The real point is that standard promotional channels look too carefully at formal education and length of experience, not innate ability. There is some value in this caution. It protects against internal "wiring", against misguided enthusiasm and against some law suits. But it discards a valuable source of talent. Especially from within. After a proven inhouse track record is established, one would think that value to the company would override caution. Rarely so.

Those who suffer most from this syndrome are those without the benefits of credentials and those with "negative" preconceptual shading by virtue of category. Our "minority" groups fill this latter category.

The affirmative action program is a typical government answer to such problems -- install a bureaucracy and a bunch of senseless math norms. Measure against title. Measure in absence of the individuals involved. Dumb. Dumb. Dumb.

And counterproductive. Companies under the gun can create meaningless positions to satisfy the quotas and thereby shunt some real talent into deadend jobs. Not to mention raising the overhead on American made products in yet another way.

The real answers are all long-term ones. Education. Provision of incentives, as opposed to penalties. Spotlighting of successful "minority" managers in normal trade journals. Punitive action against proven abusers of the federal programs -- and this goes in spades for those who cry "discrimination" when they're brass turkies in clear proven format. I know how many incompetent and lazy minority group members screamed for an affirmative action investigation at the last company I worked for. One person reprimanded three times for malfeasance on the job, then dismissed for being absent without notification for two weeks, later discovered to have been arraigned on a narcotics charge, got an affirmative action investigation going. This is a failure of the system.

The balance will be reached. The rectification process is slowly underway. But social changes take a generation, at best, to be effected. Application of force usually slows true change. The War of Negro Emancipation was fought in the 1860's. Why did we need the federal actions of the sixties? The nineteen-sixties... Take a child and call him George. Beat George vigorously, then tell George that he was whipped because you want to make sure he's nice to Fred. What will George do to Fred when he thinks no one is looking?

We are all children inside. Threaten us, whip us, and we won't like Fred. We may meet all the outward standards when Uncle is watching. But Uncle can't watch all the time. You just wait.... I kinda think Uncle is fooling himself. I think Uncle fails to understand the simplest of real human motivation. I think Uncle oughta change his ways. Uncle oughta reevaluate...

THE SPRING OFFENSIVE (Markstein) \* Nice having the general distribution version of the "SFPA 100" button text. I only wish things had conspired pro rather than con. (Or is that "anti-con"?) As for the buttons being a SFPA collectible, I would assign them the same rank as an illegal postmailing. There's no difference in status, save perhaps to note that the buttons were not even distributed illegally to ALL SFPA members. In this sense, they don't even qualify at the same level that blanket illegal PM's do. The sentimental value, of



course, is tremendous. The Satyricon ceremony of collation was a great in-person event for SFPAs. In a collection including SFPA-related items it would rank high. (While a collection of SFPA includes only official items distributed by the OE to all members.) Had I managed to gather the several hundred bucks necessary for me to fly to Knoxville I'd have one now, probably on display. But, alas, those were leaner days.

I like the format of "The Spring Offensive". Reading the line items is a lot like listening to the radio. Pithy descriptive phrases reach out to massage the imagination. The image blossoms. Then we're off to another item. I think I enjoyed this description, round trip, best of all the Satyricon outing commentary. Our man in Knoxville... If we can't get mailing comments, at least the SFPA-oriented commentary still to be had from Don's typer.

Andrushak was a toughie, but he yielded to a bit of frank talk. It is only a side bonus that he's dropped the wl. (One theorizes, after his recent genzine dissected SFPA OE Guy Lillian for censorship...) For your MC, I get the impression that you don't know the full Harry Andrushak Story as regards the One Hundredth Mailing. Nevertheless, our feelings coincide. Your "clear" is clear.

Delightful zine, full of good bits. I look forward to the day when you start doing MC's again. The Markstein ability to fix detail in bright amber is legendary. I miss the debates as well. Now that Bob Jennings has retreated into semi-gafiation, there's nobody with both an interestingly divergent set of views AND the apa equivalent of leather lungs to argue with me. Hulan has this elegant formulation that covers all crevices. Besides, he sees certain balance values near-enough to my view so as to make no essential difference. And the man is so meticulously logical. Carlberg takes the issues to the veriest philosophical and aesthetic verities. He's fun to spar with, but who can pin him down? Biggers and Moudry are precisely academic. Hutch always has a pun in reply. Weber pontificates back. Others, they'd poke or ignore. But you and Bob would take hefty, well-considered swings back. Good swings. It was a lot of fun, though my studied elegance and irrefutable logic would always triumph, I enjoyed the encounters. When you gonna INTERACT with SFPA again, Don? We do miss you.

INTUITION (Crlbrg) \* Do I miscall, or is this the zine of the infamous Stvn Crlbrg? Man of mystery and mobile-residency. Known to take issues to the veriest extremes of philosophical and artistic bound. Owner of the Cleanest Reproduction in SFPA. (Who else amongst us rinses three times a day? Who else needs to?) Player of Immense Drunken Chess. Lord of the Fried. Hob-nobber with Shadows. Undisputed King of the fannish Piano Bar. Erstwhile Moon-shooter. Zen-almost-master. One mainstay of the SFPA legacy. Defender of late-Heinlein. Otherwise, man of Taste. Conversant. Fluent. Deep as the Pacific; high as the Andes. Friend of mine. Absentee comrade. ::: Hello.

I draw no conclusions on your sojourn in Ellay, but I will comment that short stays are hardly representative of the area. In a city overrun by seekers after musical immortality (neglecting the prospect of immense riches), one should hardly expect three weeks to serve as a sample. I well understand that there are many other factors: abience is perhaps the most critical. I question not your decision. But I believe had you stayed you would have won.



Heinlein, I think, reached a point where success and good money coming in steadily led him to discard certain trappings. I think he decided, whether consciously or not, to offer the readers more pure Heinlein and less of those superfluous things like plot complexity, methodical development, contemporary parallels, etc. I can't imagine that Heinlein has lost the popular writings skills that made so many books such big successes. I think instead that he feels he's paid his dues and now commands a market that will buy his books regardless. What we are seeing is probably of great significance to Heinlein himself -- but the connective tissue and the development are in his own mind, not on paper. That's the Posterity I think he's writing for -- the Posterity where he needs no artifices.

Let's see. First, I believe, "heart" and "mind" need a better definition. In my Hemingway/Fowles reflection analogy I was using "heart" to mean to composite direction of the emotions. The "mind" is the reasoning part of the brain; it conveys the rational intuitions we possess. One difference is this: the heart tells us what we want to do; the mind tells us what we ought to do. "Want" isn't caprice, nor is "ought" simple survival/advancement. The "want" and "ought" are those of intelligent creatures, and are, as you point out, intertwined.

But they differ.

I think Hemingway deals first with the heart. His style is based on implication, presenting strong background images and sparse action scenarios in which the feelings and thoughts of the characters are to be derived. In THE SUN ALSO RISES the development of visibility into Jake's condition is slow and oblique. We are intended to apprehend Jake's misfortune even as we understand the depth of his feelings for Brett -- and hers for him. As we see what it is that Jake wants in his heart, we see why he cannot ever have it.

In DANIEL MARTIN we see an inverted kind of development. Our window goes into Daniel's head, showing us his thoughts and observations on the life developments he is within. We will come to what Daniel "wants" only after a considerable development of his past and current intellectual beliefs -- and history of actions: the fruit, in large part, of what he "ought" to do.

But neither writer is content to create in a single dimension. Hemingway was impetuous in life, outwardly oriented and given to the Symbolic Act. I don't know so much about Fowles, but his scholarly bent is apparent in brief biog's and his writing. I think the prime motivator for Hemingway was the heart, and that is how his characters move: Jake Barnes, Robert Jordan, Nick Adams, etc.

Hemingway was too intelligent a man, and so are most of his characters, to let things sit at "want" alone. The mind must reconcile life with desire, and in the case of Jake Barnes we become terribly aware of the "armed truce" nature of his reconciliation. Where his heart has taken him he can do nothing about, but as for his actions in this place he can use his mind to understand what must be done to avoid madness and desperation. The fortifications, the wisdom of his mind, is what we are invited to observe, also, throughout the book. Hemingway shows how the mind has managed to follow where the heart has gone -- and to amend action to circumstance.

"Oh, Jake," Brett said, "we could have had such a damned good time together."

They are in a



taxi in Madrid, sitting close. Jake's arm is around her. 'Ahead was a mounted policeman in khaki directing traffic. He raised his baton. The car slowed suddenly pressing Brett against (Jake).'

"Yes, (Jake) said.

"Isn't it pretty to think so?"

Here is the meaning of the whole novel, bound with symbols of circumstance. It is a statement from the heart, met by a statement from the mind. Hemingway shows us how the mind follows where the heart goes.

The intrusion of "want" into the patterned career of Daniel Martin is another thing. It is a long novel because there is much to document about Dan Martin before we can truly understand how great those pressures of heart must be to cause him to act as he does. In another, equally valid sense, the novel is long because the span of time is great and there are two characters to be fully developed over that period. For the characters, the urges of the heart were mixed, even early, with the overrides of mental training and expectation.

But it is the heart which emerges and carries us forward, from Kitchener's Island to the tearing events of climax. But why is this the path of the heart? Daniel had Jenny -- young and true. And deeply in love with him. The answer lies in the following of the mind by the heart. Those same forces training the mind had brought an inner expectation. On the immensity of Fowles' canvas it is hard to separate the events, but at the end we can see the marriage of mind which the heart followed.

"That evening, in Oxford, leaning beside Jane in her kitchen while she cooked supper for them, Dan told her with a suitable irony that at least he had found a last sentence for the novel he was never going to write. She laughed at such flagrant Irishry: which is perhaps why, in the end, and in the knowledge that Dan's novel can never be read, lies eternally in the future, his ill-concealed ghost has made that impossible last his own impossible first."

So that's a shallow first cut at my ideas in this area (on paper). A stronger approach to the Fowles proposition could be made from THE MAGUS, where the concept of mental manipulation is forthright. Likewise, FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS is a better example of the Hemingway method. But we started with those other books, so I kept them. (And if there's a SFPAn out there who's missed any of the four books mentioned, they should correct the situation and discover some brilliant writing.)

Great zine, but I'm rapidly running out of time. Gotta be on to other zines. Next time around I will broaden the scope of commentary, though perhaps decrease word count. I'm not meaning to suggest a Formal Solution to Hemingway and Fowles, of course. They are not formal systems. But to intrude a bit into their creative wellsprings and note method.

CATNIP (Dawn) \* You traced the cover, you said, but I think it came out quite well. And I do believe you captured the very essence of Bilbo, lazy worthless cat that he is. I'm also pleased to see Outlaw Star appear, knowing that you plan sequels. You gotta learn to write novels, kid, so I can afford to live in the style to which I wish to become accustomed. (You do plan to give your poor ole Dad an allowance, don't you??)



THE QUESTING BEAST (Barger) \* I'd not continued far into the Amber series (not past 9 Princes), but maybe I'll go onward if archetypical correspondence exists between Amber and SFPA. That should be good for lots of MC's... Sorry about SFPA being hard to penetrate, which is I believe a truth I'm seeing. (I'd always thought the opposite, but maybe time has changed things. Even if I always do comment to those who preceded me into the apa...) Part of the problem may be the common one of Getting Into Conversations Ongoing, as the MC matter is a bit circular and topics are discussed for several mailings running. (As does much of the commentary.)

Of coarse, the barrier may be perceived as bidirectional. Thake this typical quote by a newer member to some old fart: "I shudder at the thought of having to mc this zine."

Makes you wonder, doesn't it, if the Newer Member were part of the Problem are part of the Illusion. Fortunately, mc's were forthcoming. (At the rate of 1.1237 words per page of commented zine. But who's countering?) Not only that, but the mc contained seven superlatives and only four diminutives, which nets out ahead of a few Long Term Members' comments. On the balance, an excellent performance. (Superlatives and diminutives not expressly applicable to said zine null and voided.)

Yes, I was in Gadsden, Alabama, over a portion of the Christmas vacation. By way of a bees-knees trip to DC. The occasion was family, however, and my time was all budgeted. Besides, at the time I was fading on a back shelf of SFPA and didn't realize that I was Legendary. I have since been told that this is indeed the case (showing what longevity in a apa can do for an otherwise wallflower) and intend henceforth to announce my trips Southward well in advance and make a veritable fortune in personal appearance fees.

You'll have to pardon my erratic performance in this mc (or else...) But your stuff struck me as delightful, though disjoint, and KCET is simulcasting Mahler's Ninth with KUSC FM. The apartment is awash with sound. (Shuts out the firecrackers in the park.) And I'm floating on the good vibes of a fine weekend and a horribly demanding day at work tomorrow. I was struck by a three-part dichotomy. Namely, your mention of few mc's from Established Members, your positive phrases about Mel 81, and your sparcity of actual comments on same. I saw a paralell (parllel? who cares?) between your situation and mine. Like, why does it take the established members so long to draw a dialog from the Newer Members....

This isn't always the case, but it happens often enough to be a real tendency. I could dismiss the circumstance as being one of development: it takes time for newer members to gain the "roads" into conversation. Roads of topic. Roads of method. Roads of confidence.

Part of the answer, and part only, lies here. Topic is freely available. I skimmed thru Mel 82 and identified what I would call "general hooks" in the number of 31 before I stopped. If even a few of these hit, it should be enough. As for methods, the latest generation of SFPA produces excellent fanzines of all types. But the majority of comment space goes to other newcomers or Shadow members. Not a problem, but it's telling.

Maybe the issue is, in a sense, confidence. Not that our newer members aren't fully self-confident



in their own right and turf, but if SFPA is new and the Established Names are far way, then it may be a matter of Approach Etiquet. (Don't think I'm saying this is the answer; I have another observation in the pipeline.) In this matter, normal Cocktail Party rules apply. Say hello. Mention the weather. Wait for Chemistry. Try other topics. Find out where he/she stands before proceeding. This perfectly human pause goes both ways.

But, while the typical SFPA member has been dealing with other members entering SFPA and is perfectly willing to let time and an open attitude take care of the "problem", the newer members sometimes see this period as a tough one.

They were promised SFPA, right? Where the hell is it?

On the other side of the koan, the "established" members are putting out feelers with a bit of the same restraint. They may be at ease in the apa, but the apa is not people. The apa is an aggregate. And while the aggregate may be composed of people, it doesn't have the approach characteristics of a person. It's an aggregate.

So the established member can pontificate (ahem!) safely, but the newer members must beware the label of "flip'n'smug". If you look at typical approach patterns in the human race, you'll see that one is to come on super confident and all-knowing -- even sarcastic. This probably doesn't correspond to real feelings at all, but it's a facade designed to get around the slow approach of other methods -- and to disguise any perceived weaknesses. Some new members adopt this concept.

Others, the majority, don't. They rely on the slower approach methods of gradual self-revelation. This type of approach works in two fashions: it relies upon a growing perception of socially acceptable topics and positions. It relies upon a gradual (hopefully, rapid) accumulation of the social jargon and in-jokes and mores. That is to say, of the material and the tools of work. This takes time in any society, and it's naive to think that SFPA is an exception.

SFPA is open in the sense that new members are invited from a public waitlist, that older members will interact, and that a wide latitude of topic and style is not only acceptable but encouraged. SFPA is closed in the sense that unwritten rules of social intercourse apply. (Check out the Bridget caper for archetypical examples of what violates those unwritten rules. And check my comments to Bill for what is one SFPA's perceptions of how to conform to unwritten rules can be met.)

Examination of any mailing will show that SFPA's interpretation of the requirements of form (mainly legibility and 8 1/2 x 11 convention) are rather rather. Looser still are the requirements of topic. If experience serves, the only requirement here is that topic avoid repeated and broad personal attack on other members/waitlisters/human beings outside of public figures or public servants.

Now, lax standards produce low interest. What SFPA counters its looseness of standards with is a low-pressure (though persistent) demand for quality material. Herein lies the rub. All Approach Etiquet truth aside, I believe that the real difficulty of entry into SFPA can be found in this most tenuous concept of "quality". Just what the hell is it? And how does a new member know two important "facts"?



(Mahler is gone now. I have Bach's "A Musical Offering" on the stereo. My plans are to follow it with Bob Seger's "Stranger in Town". I like both, though it has been the dilemma of some guests here to discover that I was capable of playing both in the same evening. Had I no taste? they would ask. Of one music or the other...)

As SFPA proposes its own definition of quality, and as SFPA is furthermore a hobby-type investment of time and energy, rewarded by exactly that "quality" (and whatever "egoboo" it may entail), 'tis not hard to understand that every newly-realized member is faced with the questions that accompany a commitment.

"Is this quality one of the ones I'm interested in?" And... "Can I do it?"

I think these are two of the three root questions of SFPA membership. They come from within the new member. He/she (it, in some questionable cases) is faced with a need to decide commitment of true inner resources. Being "inner", such a question-set is not always resolved externally: that is to say, by publically announced intent. Such announcements tend too strongly to be influenced by peer expectations/trends to be reliable indications. The key is in performance alone.

Thus, while the Newer Member is saying, "Jeesh, are these crazy assholes really worth all the time and effort it will take me to build a comfortable niche in the Egoboo well, for I have my expectations of standing as well as temporal reward, and where does that leave me?" The members are saying, "Will this person bring Good Stuff to the apa? And should I encourage development or be Stony and see if the Necessary Drive is there? Or should I counterattack?"

Let's step back. (A) There are Approach Etiquettes which are universal in type, though differentiated in dance step. These apply to any organization, and SFPA is any organization. Such development takes time.

(B) There are Investment Decisions entirely apart from Approach Etiquets. These also take time, and are based on personal observations as to inherent worth of product (mlgs), valued level of investment, and standing resulting therefrom (relative to level of acceptability).

In (A) we find the commonly accepted explanations for the "slow entrance" period. Other theories abound -- "stuffy members", "shallow WL", etc. All are utter bullshit. The crux issue in SFPA membership, I submit, is one of VALUE.

What goes into a "good" SFPazine? Time. I think we all recognize that. Thought. Ditto. Perhaps a bit of invention, creativity, as well. In other words, a "good" SFPazine requires all the ingredients of quality material anywhere. A "good" SFPazine is an investment.

So, how does it pay off? Receipt of mailings. Receipt of comments from other members. And, yearly, receipt of Egoboo Poll votes. Slender stuff -- no \$\$\$ attached. So a SFPAn is in it for a bundle of paper plus intangibles. You know it's gotta be a hobby. The hobby equation is Much Work = Lots Of Fun But No Money.

The Investment Decision is a tough one. The steeper the ante, the harder the decision. Perhaps it's SFPA's reputation for good material that makes the entry process a slow one -- normal expectation



would be that meeting "standards" would require much effort, in terms of pages if not revision. Some work their way up the waitlist, join, look about -- then decide that hobby returns don't meet hobby demands. So they drop. Other hang in.

All the preceding bullshit is intended to broaden the focus, which has been more "what's wrong?" than "is this normal?" I think it takes a while to work into any organization, for a bunch of reasons. Sorry to have gotten so carried away in my little discourse, but I was in a mood to ramble. Used up your allotment of mc space, but a good zine.

TIN SOLDIER (Rogers) \* Concerning yct Clint, I find the opposite to be true for me: I enjoy artforms better when I have some understanding of "the mechanics." It means I can appreciate the nuances better, as well as the craftsmanship. Perhaps you referred to loss of that first thrill that comes with initial exposure to arts which strike a fancy. But I find that such excitement diminishes with time and exposure, so that discovery of nuance becomes the primary source of continuing interest. To this end, discovery of the craft itself is very useful. Indeed, once the objectives and mechanics are learned, one can see so much more in a work. Knowledge opens the depths below sweet surfaces.

The Japanese, from what I've seen and read, try to rely on all the pertinent resource pool for decision-making. This doesn't mean that everyone votes on every issue, nor that everyone's vote is valued equally in the decision process. But it does mean that those who have knowledge in an area are consulted, all the way down to the manufacturing line. This comes into play most importantly in the "day to day" decisions.

To contrast the typical American method from the Japanese, let's take some issue involving "policy". But in-plant policy. America goes top-down like this: senior management decided that things will be done "thus so". The idea is drafted and tested on the next level of management. Sometimes a study is commissioned. It is unusual for most of those who will be affected to know of this issue, save via the grapevine, until the decision is made.

The Japanese seem to rely on inputs from those affected. The idea is to encourage the workers to find solutions to problems perceived by management, though with the active assistance and participation. Our American policy issue might be handled as a goal by the Japanese, explained to all involved. An active stirring for answers would result. Of course management would search for solutions also, but if the issue were rooted in detail it's more likely that a clever detail worker might see a possible solution. What originated at the top went to the bottom, and back up, for solution.

Don't think that key decisions: what products to build, how to market, how to finance, etc., are delegated out. Senior management, whatever the country, makes these firmly. But in Japan there appears to be a willingness to give the workers a strong voice in how they will get their job done. Many executives here use the same approach. But it differs enough from the military heirarchy that Western business was molded upon to be not accepted in most areas.

(There is also a considerable complicating factor here -- unions. Unions view workers as a commodity, like wheat or iron ore, to be sold to management. Most union shops share the same idea. They get



what they can, at the expense of management, which is ultimately the expense of the company. Reducing efficiency, rather than increasing it, benefits a union. More workers are needed. More workers pay more union dues. It's simple economics. Recognizing the unions as businesses dealing in a commodity is all it takes to understand the very simple economics of the situation. But this isn't human emotion, and human emotion reduced the economic equation to an adversary position. Under these circumstances the Japanese model folds up. It relies on the willing and meaningful participation of all levels to work. Despite numerous case studies showing that such humanistic/team policies can succeed spectacularly in America, there's been no answer as to implementing these ideas in a hostile environment. REXON, by the way, is run much closer to the Japanese model than to the American. But we're a small outfit and can afford such "liberties" of structure.)

Congrats on your new typing element. I'm wistful for a Selectric, but have so far resisted the urge to make any major expenditure -- such as buying a Selectric so I could get neat typing elements too. The result will be a trip South, I hope. In the meanwhile, I'll use the Selectric at work. ## Enjoyed.

...And The Kid Goes For Broke (Batty) \* Good luck with your strip. Does Jerry do all the art, or do you collaborate? ### Ah!! Here's my answer, deeper in the zine. Sounds like a good arrangement. ## Your interview with yourself serves well as an intro technique -- dispenses with the stiffness often found in a strait narrative introduction.

HERE'S MY SFPAZINE -- (Batty) \* Chicken stews well also, and it's really inexpensive (relatively speaking). I even make chili with chicken or turkey. Lower calory and quite refreshing. I make a big batch (the only way!) and freeze half of it. With chopped onions and grated cheddar, even half a batch lasts several days. Then I'm tired of chili for awhile.

The OE Symposium was a set of answers to the questions by each participant, mailing in. I disassembled them in part, then put the pieces back together for a "conversational" format. ## "Melikaphkhaz" is from Eddison's THE WORM OUROBOROS.

I don't like Bob's idea of a mailing every six weeks. Two months is a bit of a rush as it is, and the fixed overhead of assembly and postal expeditions increases with the frequency of mailings. For brisk conversation I go to parties. What I want with an apa is writing. Which is, I suppose, the intro to a reply to your question about the nature of SFPA. I see it as a press association with human social ties binding the members. A "social club" per se is a way to while away time and meet people for other interactions. SFPA is more an end in itself. Just committing thought to paper is a level of permanence above the chatter of a club. And though social writing plays a prominent role, I think there is as much writing about thoughts here as there is writing about people. So take your choice.

ANOTHER GIRL, ANOTHER PLANET (Clark) \* Slicing it thin, aren't you. I do like your cover, though it was more properly suited for at least a ten-pager. I notice that Guy gave a full page of credit for this -- what does the #1 waitlister think? Rusty???



THE MUSING CELT POSES... (Burke) \* Sounds like singles life in K'ville is similar but different. (From Ellay, that is.) Taking a psychological shot at you opening tale, I'd say you're within the range of normalcy. (Though I'm not sure if I believe this passing out stuff...) Sounds like a typical drunk evening out. But well-written, I hasten to add, as is the entire zine. Looking forward to your MC's... someday. As for the con report, I enjoyed your description of SFPA 100 and the reaction to skimming it. Laughter, good laughter, is one of the best things SFPA evokes. Ingroup or not, our humor is damnfine stuff. (I still think Knavery could make a go...)

I WANNA HOLD YOUR TYPEWRITER (Donna B.) \* Hmmm. Not sixteen you say, but don't bother to note the delin-

eation as a max or min. Though if you're alluding to the neat Collins cover as pictorial, I presume I know the answer. An interesting first zine, though (again with reference to the Collins cat-girl cover) I'm surprised that you don't like cats. Cats are fannish. Why, there's even a cat on the SFPA waitlist. Not to preach, but I can't believe you'd hold that opinion if you really knew a good cat. I'm serious. Cats have personalities that fascinate. Their independence is no real barrier to acquaintance, only a slow-down. (Some think that makes it better later.) Indeed, cats are people. Cats react in remarkably similar ways. But... it's impossible to describe what I mean. I can allude to it, but until you get to know a cat as a friend you'll not understand. Enough. My abject

apologies. I should find something better than cats to discuss, but I'm not into New Wave (though I'm not negative). When Bob Seger sings "Old Time Rock and Roll" I applaud. When you get to be my age, and have seen the Best Years of your life -- the 50's and 60's -- pass, you find it hard to see much real "newness" in the many new waves. When I lived in Texas Buddy Holly told me one day, "Pops, you really like this music?" I said yes, it's new to me. And it was. Then.



THE SPHERE (Markstein) \* Good luck on yr new apa. I'll not join, but if I had the latitude (by my definition of latitude) I'd give it a crack. ### As one who has sought continuity in life, to a degree characterized by sacrifice, let me state that I find your approach perhaps better. The standards I set have either proved false or been deteriorated by time and time's circumstances. Ten years ago I undertook what was to be a continuing program of study of Oriental philosophy: Zen and the I CHING were my focii. In Zen I found the mirror of Heisenberg. In the I CHING I discovered an oracle with curious properties. Between the two I have come to see more of the currents of life than ever before.



Life gets dull if the patterns within don't change, and life gets onerous if it's all drudgery, so I applaud your self-professed craziness. We're all a bit crazy, I think, though the madness of many is kept hidden as a social defense.

STAR\*JAZZER (Hammer-Johnson) \* Good compact writing to bring us up to date on the doings of Deb. Times are not dull, I see. Best of luck in shooting these rapids. It takes time to reestablish a position. A year and a half later I'm still trying, in a number of areas, to do just that. The patterns of life are complex and take time to build. The good ones, that is.

HUEY (Hutchinson) \* Nice hand-coloring on the cover. Nice layout, too. Effective, and in contrast to your usual style.

## 48½ hours of OVERTIME!! You sure you don't mean 48½ hours total? I mean, 48½ hours of OVERTIME is 16 hours and 42 minutes per day for a five day week, or 14 hours and 45 minutes per day for a six day week, or 12 hours and 38.57142 minutes per day for a seven day week. And here I thought I was a workaholic with my 60 hour weeks... Jeeze... No wonder you didn't feel like Hutching over a typewriter.

Most of my lettering guides are Gestetner or ABDick. Which kind do you mean -- that is, show me an example (or reference an example) and I'll tell you the number if it's still on the guide.

Interesting observation on Shadow, that it can homogenize newcomers. I had some of the difficulties you describe until fairly recently. At this point, though, I've read enough by the persons under discussion to distinguish their writing styles. Harkening back to my rambling comment to Vern Barger, another factor in the "slow" entry process is the brain needing time to "fix" recognition patterns. But it does come with time, and now I can tell Rusty Clark's work from Bob Burke's with ease.

The "growler" was apparently a temporary on my route, perhaps filling in for a vacation regular. (Or maybe the regular had collapsed from prostration after working 48½ hours of overtime.) At any rate, he left.

Well, I can accept your possible explanation of the misdirected letter. Mechanical sorters are indeed subject to occasional errors. That's to be expected, though it's mildly irritating to have it happen to me. But what about the staples across the longitudinal axis? The sorting machine sure as hell didn't do that. That mystifies me.

Hmmmm. My zines turn up missing sometimes, too. Do you think Guy is diluting the extras to create, say, seven partial mailings instead of five whole ones? This could bear investigation. HEY, GUY!!! Alan's onto you. This insidious plot to expand the copy requirement without legislation shall not go unpunished! You get mail, Guy? Through the Post Office? Alan has influence, you see.... Just you wait.

The video piracy rulings, then, must go beyond copyright laws for printed material. Despite efforts by publishers, including the extreme of putting unenforcible notices on books, reproducing material for private use is not illegal if one has paid for the original. You purchase a license for private use of the material in the cover price.



Hardly meant to sound preachy in that ~~sub~~ on the effects of media violence. Still, the fact remains that we all absorb ideas from our environment. Look at the social ideas we pick up, and how different they are between cultures. But cultures are just a body of ideas about what proper human behaviour is. I'd expect the media offerings to influence us in much the same way. We are, so to speak, what we eat.

I tie this idea to that of natural inclination. I think the majority of people learn early that violence is a poor way to get anything -- it has its price. Some don't. Some become criminals. Some are unstable -- they are borderline psychotics with a strong susceptibility to influence. For these, media violence may well be a trigger or a pattern book.

But even that worry isn't my major concern. I imagine such psychotic personalities find triggers in many places. And you can't censor the history of violence in our race. But you can portray violence differently. I see no need to dwell on the atrocities and practically glorify the insane killer. I think that's Asking For It. (Hello, Charlie Manson...)

INTENTIONAL MISUSE... (Ryan) \* You'd have had a hard time finding me in the phone book. I'm unlisted. This is more to avoid phone sales than it is to avoid friends. (Remind me to list my phone number in the colophon this.) Still, I got a call the other night from a survey taker. I was mellow and decided to take the trip. 'Twas fun. I was busily fabricating imposing word constructions and the pollster was busily writing them down and asking for clarification of spellings. (Though I'm the wrong one to ask there.) After a while I edged into a discussion of the telephone poll business, and she was pleased enough with the direction of the interview to talk. She'd dialed my number at random it seemed -- or so she said. She got so weary of going down the list in rote order that she every now and then "dialed blind". An interesting insight into the ways people defend themselves from boredom. But please do call if you're in Ellay again. You should meet SFPA West. We'll get the group together.

CLOSE TO THE BORDERLINE (Stewart) \* I suspect that all writers write about real people, but learn to isolate traits, aspects, characteristics -- and to combine and elaborate these into fresh characters. Lots of writers don't bother with even this much disguise but rather just attach the persona of a person they know to a character in their book. D.H. Lawrence certainly used this method. True, in fanfiction the "disguises" are transparent ones, which adds to the delight. Foibles can be exploited in the sense of good fun, and everyone has a good time. Speaking of which, it's time for me to start another SFPA fanfic serial.

PXR 5 (Ryder) \* A bit of down tone, placid though, in this zine. Your approach, your writings and your art add a unique flavor to the SFPA blend, and I for one am in no hurry to see either Sperhawk or Spermint Ryder shuffle off this paper stage. It's clear that you're addressing SFPA in your zines. You are, and we're listening. That counts.

Think- ing of one's work as "commercial" is, I think, a trap. Maybe it sells. It must also corrode pipes... of creativity. I don't really know. Maybe that is my problem: why I don't do anything but fan work. But the idea of



trying to "write for a market" sits cold with me. I've tried it, become unhappy with the results, and gone back to writing for me. Maybe I like fandom because I can write for me and write for friends at the same time. But, anyhow, what I meant was that your "Brainstorm" had potential for sale, in my estimation. But what's wrong with unicorns?

BREAKFAST AT MILLIWAYS (Nicki L.) \* An innovative California approach to leash laws is to put the leash on the dog, then let it run about the area. I've seen this in numerous places and consider it Dumb. I mean, it's dangerous to the dog, not to mention others. It's a curious fact that when people try to get around laws which inconvenience them they often create greater hazards. Part of the human condition, I suppose.

Agreed. History that connects with social conditions means more than a recitation of facts, even be they invasions and empires. I was lucky in college to have for one semester a history prof who thought that way. His bag was explaining events in terms of motives, which might be the personal hang-up of the monarch or might be the pressures of the populace, or...

Also having had a lit prof who felt that the circumstances of literary works were important to their understanding, I got two perspectives on an important concept. Your example, Dean Swift (I presume you didn't mean Tom Swift), is a good one. Swift was a penetrating social satirist. Much understanding of his work is lost if one neglects the political and social climate of his environment.

The same thing applies to us today. We see movies, read novels, listen to music -- in the context of our political and social environment. Because we're thoroughly immersed in such, it's easy to overlook how much most of these works rely on our understanding for content. It's kind of like taking a SFPA fanfic piece and having a non-fan read it. Any enjoyment must then come from circumstances broader than the specific artistic (?) environment. So should we view art lifted from other ages. While the invariant human content can be appreciated, what are we missing? Probably lots.

(And I hasten to note that you point out the converse, and that I noticed. The environment is not the work. With an ego-thrilling reference, I allege that no one would ever derive "The Curse of Fanac" from a mere social understanding of SFPA. Yet "Curse" is a valid piece of SFPA fanfic, and belongs to no other environment as intensely. Have I got it right?)

Science and religion are old enemies. Ask Galileo about it. The conflicts are on two levels: deepest is the issue of where faith is to be placed. Science says that faith is to be placed in our own understanding. Religion says that faith must be placed in a god, to the eschewment of our minds. This is a rather fundamental issue when you think about it. Galileo might have called it an issue of centrality.

On the second level we find the twin horns of doctrine and volition. To science (though not to all who call themselves scientists) doctrine is a matter of what I'll call Best Model. That just means that whatever theory can be demonstrated to best correspond to physical reality is Accepted. Until something more accurate comes along. Thus, to Science, doctrine is upheld by test. It may change.



For religion, doctrine is a holy matter. It relates not to practical tests available to anyone with the ability and resources to construct proofs, but to the policies of the ruling council. In this sense, religious doctrine is exactly political in nature. I'm not attaching connotative stigma with this word; I'm using it in a pure sense. Think about it. Examine the jokes about state legislatures decreeing the  $\pi = 3.0$  and relate the methods behind this idea to the church doctrine which Galileo faced: that the earth was the center of the universe.

Volition, the second horn, deals with freedom of action by the individual. Science imposes no penalties for violation of its doctrine, although it expects that natural consequence will educate. Religion offers excommunication. This is an idea of mankind exacted by mankind upon mankind. It has nothing to do with other than mankind. Yet it may be imposed for violation of doctrine, which is also established by mankind. With regard to the Christian religions, I know of no place in the Testaments where Jesus Christ utilizes, advocated or alluded to excommunication. Indeed, he seemed inclined to opposite types of remedies. I conclude that excommunication is an enforcement mechanism created by the defenders of the concept of doctrine.

Now lets go back to my opening sentence: "Science and religion are old enemies." Within the concept of science there is nothing to repudiate religion. Indeed, when Galileo recanted he did so without rejecting his scientific ideas. There was an element of survival in it, true, for heretics all too often wound up burned at the stake or tortured. But Galileo saw no conflict in use of intellect and its offspring to discover more about reality. For all I know he believed in the Christian God, despite the Old Testament warning of the Tower of Babel fable. Science simply does not exclude belief in a god. What it does exclude is human doctrine. Or rather, it insists that all doctrine be willing to subject itself to the test and abide by consequence.

So if we extract from the term "religion" two definitions, we can quickly conclude the discourse. (Meaning: I guess I took a long route to get to a position... but maybe I did it on purpose to draw out a point or two.) Let's go to Webster. (1) The service and adoration of a god. (2) One of the systems of faith and worship.

We see there is an individual definition and a group definition. There's a difference. A scientist may believe in a god (many do). But for a scientist to believe in "a system of faith and worship" is another matter (though many do). He must reconcile the doctrine proposed by other human beings, regardless of how holy they consider themselves, with the evidence of scientific test. There's the rub: science insists that a valid test must always apply, religion insists there be no tests at all. The varying shades of compromise existing in the world don't alter the irreconcilable fundamental philosophies. But let me stress that this conflict is not with the idea of a god, but with the systems of religion made and maintained by human beings.

Hope I've not offended you with this spiel. Not knowing the nature or temporal intensity of your religious convictions, I can't predict. To me, this was a discussion about human philosophy and institutions, not the concept of god. But I noticed your sharp reaction to Dave's comments on the Catholic church, and so I thought I'd add a clarification of intent.



YOURS, MINAC, AND OURS (Dick L.) \* SFPA 100 was nonfiction??? (The contents, I mean...) ### I did Knots Berry Farm with a friend about a month ago, and was persuaded to try the roller coasters. Montzuma's Revenge was one of the first of the "Big Rides" to surface. It takes you upside down thru a loop, slows until you're facing straight up, then reverses. On the other side of the loop you wind up looking straight down. Rather a precarious feeling. We also did The Corkscrew, which has classic roller coaster glides and concludes with two loops (the "corkscrew" of nomenclature). By this time I'd recovered from Montzuma's Revenge. This time I used my eyes for more than straight-ahead staring. Very nice. Then we did the Parachute Drop, which carries you up 150 yards in a gondola, then drops you. Descent is slowed by a fabric parachute (and little brakes on the guide wires). Again, much fun. The Log Ride was tame. I think I'm a roller coaster convert.

One of the social developments in Los Angeles, at least to my observation, is the formation of a distinct "middle class" in Black population distribution. This isn't a new thing, but I think over the past twenty years or so the size of this societal segment has grown considerably. In the racially-mixed condo complex I inhabit, my encounters with these people have been harmonious and relaxed. Their spoken opinions, in condo meetings, coincides remarkably with the White, Chicano, Japanese and Chinese middle class members also residing here. Indeed, they might even be a bit more hostile toward the growing invasion of young Black toughs into the area than are their racial colleagues. I suggest that class can become more important than race in many issues, once the class means a certain level of financial affluence.

Alekhine's Defense does have poor theoretical ratings, but the positions which can result are complex and rich in opportunity for both sides, given that Black understands what he's doing. It crops up in enough Grandmaster games to give it continuing legitimacy as a weapon to be employed if Black has no interest in a draw. While Petroff's is solid and tough to crack, it can too easily lead to the calm waters of the Four Knights if White plays 3.N-QB3. The Petroff also is a constant weapon in contemporary arsenals, in that it continues to hold some theoretical interest. In practice, there are more draws with the Petroff and more decisions with the Alekhine. So it's a matter of style and desire to win.

It 'tis pleasant to chat about chess ideas with yet another member. There are a few of us here in SFPA. I spot a Richard Lynch from New York in the June and December 1972 rating issues of Chess Life (& Review, at the time). Are you that Richard Lynch? With my sporadic activity that year I appeared only in the December issue. It's been worse since. No tournament activity from '76 onward.

SYN (Raub) \* The hidden zinger in copiers is the maintenance cost. The little bazoos go flooey all the time. Maint cost runs around 50-60 bucks an hour. Then add supplies. Unless you got a good tax write-off a copier is not for you. Be warned.

You know, I never heard of Mike Gunderloy. That might sound strange, but the LASFS circles are unto themselves and in the Ellay fanopolis fans vanish all the time. Somehow this topic came to the fore at the last Pelzian DREGS meeting. I was dragging out names of hyperactive fen from years past that I'd not seen in years. For a surprising



number the answer was a blank stare. The name and achievements were remembered, but the personage had vanished without trace. A dangerous occupation, being a big name in fandom. Maybe Judge Crater was a fan.

Funny thing, but the dentist receptionist I wrote about in KO is still there. I went back recently for a six month checkup. She recalled my face, was very helpful. Friendly. I suspect she recalls the mix-up and my restraint. Nobody likes being yelled at, whatever the reason. I suspect the old lady is appreciative that I didn't yell. I surely got Royal Treatment in the waiting room.

"Forty is too old"?? Come, child, you barely begin to appreciate the nuances of interplay and passion. Let us say that skills accumulate and understanding grows with experience. Carole King is doubtless a more desirable woman now than ever before. I too was in love with her songs. Still am.

I tried mailing in labels for a refund. (Net value \$6.) Nothing happened. I waited. Nothing happened. I wrote the manufacturer and complained in detail. Nothing happened. I sent a registered letter. Nothing happened. But maybe I got discouraged too soon.

Enjoyed the Quigley strips. Note that MC's on 100 were rather palid in comparison to the original. Note that your before/after cartoon was a riot! Note that this MC has ended...

MONKEYS AND CUCUMBERS (Morrissey) \* As a quick recap of why Carter's early concession had influence, let me note that election participation almost always declines as a percentage of the electorate as the "level" of the election steps down. State elections typically draw fewer voters than national ones. Municipal, fewer than state. Etc. When Jimmy the Carter conceded he removed a level of involvement from the election. West Coast and Hawaiian voters had no stake in the national. Unless they had a specific interest in other posts they would stay home. Whereas, so local theory goes, the Reagan supporters had a motivator to go on to the polls and drive the victory wedge deeper. Especially, to secure lesser posts for conservatives. I believe this theory. I also find non-uniform balloting conditions repugnant.

GODEL, ESCHER AND BACH is a fabulous book. A delight up to half-way, which is where I stand now on my reading of it. (The book should be taken in small measures, the better to preserve its reading duration. It becomes a bit disjoint if read too quickly. Hofstadter plans his chapters with care -- and the expectation of gradual absorbsion.) I intend to review the book next ish. High reccomendations.

...HYPERBOLIC PROCRASTINATION (Moudry) \* There was an article on "burn out" in the computer field in a recent DATAMATION. As is the case with most DATAMATION articles, a generous hyperbole characterized the style. It's still a relational node to your comments about burn-out in academic pursuit. My career involves the kind of stress that can produce burn-out. Though I've been taxed badly, I use a defense that, in my student days, was called "finessing it". When the load gets unbearable, I navigate by the seat of my pants. Some marvelous and unfortunate things have come to pass as a result. So, question: do you use the same retreat? Does it give satisfaction?



THE BRONZE ARMADILLO ALARM CLOCK RETURNETH (Gelb) \* Welcome back to the fold! Sorry to hear that Israel didn't work out you'd hoped, but perhaps sunny Southern California will be better. Language school is shorter here.

TALISMAN (Biggers) \* So, what year is Atlanta planning to bid for the Worldcon? It would be nice to see a Worldcon in the South, and Atlanta, hub of air traffic, seems ideal as a location. But campaigns seem long ones, these days, where the Worldcon is concerned. When are you guys going to announce?

AGGRAVATING STORIES (weber) \* The summer reruns have allowed me to catch up on some of the episodes of "Hill Street Blues" which I missed during the regular season. My liking for the show has even increased. I can understand the low ratings: being the usual prime time reward of good writing and good acting.

One electronic gadget I saw and like was a display somebody (Zilog, I think) had at the shows. It's a black cloth board in which are embedded red white and blue lights. The display is programmed to simulate a fireworks display. The rockets go up, explode, and the familiar aerial display is mimicked. Really well done. One would be neat on a living room wall.

CONSCIENCE MAKES COWBOYS OF US ALL (Dolbear) \* Fabulous reading, but I'm not clicking with cmts yet. Maybe this is the lazy mid-afternoon hour affecting me. I will put SFPA aside and go do other things. Morning shopping raids with Dawn mean that I now have about twenty new unread books stacked on my to-read shelf. But the afternoon is not for reading, either.

Powerful description of the differences between comix fen and faaans. I've never been to a comix convention, but I've seen some of the "painted harlot" zines you refer to. Most were quite vapid, save for the gorgeous illos. A few had some good writing about comix (at least I felt the quality of writing was good, though I couldn't really judge the subject matter). I suspect Sturgeon's Law applies here, too. But all in all my impressions have been that your observations are accurate. But let's wait and see what Don and Alan say...

Average tenure for today's SFPA is 34½ mailings of membership, though that's a bit distorted by the few who've dropped and rejoined, as my source is the Box Scores and that doesn't reflect hiatus. That kind of stat is indeed discouraging to waitlisters. On the other hand, turnover has averaged about one per mailing over the past three-four years. A bit more than one per mlg: call it seven a year. That says Dawn, in 28th position, is about four years away from membership. Your prediction looks rather accurate.

Corruption in the system, as characterized by Illinois and your comments on NOW's consternation of naivety there, bothers me disproportionately. I know all the saws about working with the system, but there's about corruption in public officialdom that really boils my blood. I favor the Ghenghis Khan system: dispassionate investigate and immediate execution upon proof of corruption. His officials weren't poor -- but they were damned careful about dishonesty in his service. The rapid disintegration of this standard following his death shows how much Ghenghis



was bucking human nature. This observation leads naturally to the question: "why fight it?" Indeed, acceptance, overt or implied, seems to be the standard in most of the world. My response to this issue is simple. I see no justification for corruption; I can't accept "everybody does it" as an explanation. It's just an excuse. I see stewardship as ethically binding. I see corruption as abandonment of stewardship. And if I were emperor, I'd be damn tempted to revive the methods of ole Ghenghis Khan...



Reagan's economic policy as President of These Newnited States is not the same as his economic policy as Guv'nor of Californicate. My experience with the Reagan ideas of California had me in fear, yes, and I have trepidations about his national policy. But with the nation he is attacking more across-the-board than he did in California, where only health, education and environment seemed to suffer, while the bureaucracy swelled in other areas. Now, he wields a broadsword, save for Defense. (I think our pattern of defense spending decisions is off-base, but I don't argue with the need to renovate our armed services.)

That story you tell about LSU Baton Rouge is told by just about every campus around. I heard it about W&L when I entered as a freshman in 1914. Though, in W&L's case, it was true. Only the magazine was changed.... ## Good and enjoyable zine, highlighted with good writing even. Amazing what capable neofans the wl is dredging up these days. Sorry that I couldn't find any MC's, but I'll do better next time ~~when/you/submit/it/to/line~~.

IF THIS LOOKS LIKE A SHORT ZINE... (Davis) \* Hi, Hank! We miss you.

SPIRITUS MONDAY (Lillian) \* Sorry to see you let down like this, Guy. I knew the rest of us would coast, but somehow I figured you for having more than a piffling 53-page Spiritus in mlg 101. Tsk. Tsk. What will the waitlist say? ### But seriously, nice! I'll even overlook the reprint cover. (Mine had a slit in it.) Good to see that at least one of us bounced back in volume.

Enjoyed your reports on all the activity. The list of OEs and Presidents was a good thing to have collected. One thing you might consider for future lists of this kind is listing also the Ego800 Poll winners. They may be Presidents, but when an OE wins he can't be President. It wouldn't hurt to include everything. And it wouldn't hurt to add any others listed on the OO masthead. That's part of the honor roll too.



Yes, there is a new edition of the SFPA in-group spirit around these days, still incorporating the "old" in-group ideas but extending to encompass a passle of good new folks. The new spirit is new, however, and needs to simmer a bit before developing its own distinct flavors. But as the recipe goes thus far, I applaud the taste. As to what Inzer meant by "essence" as opposed to "form", that's something I only think I understand. Be glad to share my ideas verbally when we next meet, but it's too difficult to put it all on paper.

I don't begrudge the extension given to Reinhardt for hurting his back. Trying to carry Hearts debts the weight of Hank's would damage anybody's back... ## And that premise property in South Alabama (I resent that term "swampland") is marvellous stuff. Great for agriculture or retirement residence. Let's make an appointment and I'll show it to you. At low tide, of course. ## And responding to your comment on beef and Ron Bounds, with Eobbi around why should Ron need "jerky"..? ## Utterly repulsive "Leda" poem. Loved it!

Gee, you don't like the fun neat roller coasters? I suppose it's akin to your air travel phobia. As I was remarking to Dick Lynch earlier, I'm now a fan of roller coasters. Never saw too much in them before, having not done much in that vein as a kid. But my latest experiences show that I was missing something. It's all a matter of release; release of anxiety. After all, once you're on the damned ride there's nothing you can do about it. So why not relax and ignore the odds? Why not Enjoy?

ALL THE KING'S MEN is a superb novel. I'd love to see a movie version of Robert Penn Warren's classic. It should do as well, if properly screen-written, as T. William's plays did. Most films of the past few years seem to lack content. Effects are apparently dominant. What a shame that this trend is apparently at the sacrifice of all else. I look back at movies like LAWRENCE OF ARABIA as examples of how superb effects can support depth in content.

Mostly agreed with your statement of the meaning of the sixties. I think that Dave's observation of "violence, hate and intolerance" is looking at symptoms and consequences, not basic nature. Hell, we've had violence hate and intolerance every decade since emotion was invented. The real key to the sixties is the surfacing of the underground: the concept of alternative life styles into the public social awareness. This was the optimism you cite, the power behind social reform and protest. The breaking-free we saw happen in the sixties destroyed the rigidity of dress codes, hair styles, sex stereotypes, etc. The changes aren't total, nor accepted everywhere, but their precedent continues. Into a monolithic American social standard, the sixties introduced Variety as an acceptable idea.

Irwin sounds like he's changed not a whit from the young fugghead he was in the past, when he specialized in trashing SFPA mailings, save to perhaps become an older fugghead. Charming in some ways, but incredibly out-of-phase in his perceptions of the universe. I never understood why; he's so enthusiastic, you think he'd learn.

There's a matter of interpretation in the phrase "former ex-SFPAn". Couldn't it legitimately mean, for example, a rejoined former member? Or a deceased former member? Seems like it depends on whether the modifiers to "SFPAn" refer to the same thing or not. (A previous SFPAn who shapes ("forms")) things???)



After hearing about Pac-Man from many sources, I finally saw one of the arcade games the other night at a bowling alley. Clever. From some descriptions, Pac-Man had seemed similar to Mouse, but when I looked at the game dynamics I see that different operant principles apply. Pac-Man is a reflex game, as are all the arcade-style games I've seen. The high score on this particular machine was 151 thousand plus change. In the opinion of Pac-Man freaks out there, is that good?

A fine Spiritus. Enjoyed your con report. (Enjoyed all the con reports in this mailing, for that matter.) Wish I'd been at Satyricon. Things do look good for the trip to DSC, though. I'm looking forward to meeting all these new SFPAns.

SHADOW COMMENTS

JIM COBB: Liked your definition of Obscenity in Birmingham: two people alone in the same room or one person alone smiling. I see that things (read: "mental outlooks") haven't changed much in Alabama since the days I was growing up there. Vulcan was nice, especially going to the top and tossing cherry bombs down into the goldfish ponds. But most of my time in B'ham was spent at the public library, where there were Unlimited Books as compared to Gadsden. I also liked the model trains on the top floor. I wonder if they're still there.

LIZ STEWART: What? A crop of physics majors on the w1? That was my major in college also, and I can tell you that it involves a lot of math as you go along. It's not so much hard as demanding. What eventually got me out into the real world was a feeling of isolation. I wanted to do something. My strengths turn out to be in organization rather than working alone, so I made a right move. But I learned many things in physics, about methods and approaches, that have been valuable in other fields.





THE SFPA BOX SCORES: MAILING 101

NAME	AB	HITS	PCT	P( 99)	P(100)	P(101)	TOTAL	PPM
ATKINS, L	87	87	1.000	54.	156.	46.	2405.	27.64
BARGER, B	8	8	1.000	17.5	51.	43.	149.	18.63
BIGGERS, C	42	30	.714	5.	28.	1.	316.5	7.54
BROOKS, N	79	79	1.000	4.	6.	6.	1144.5	14.49
BROWN, I	7	4	.571	12.	12.	0.	32.	4.57
CARLBERG, S	60	60	1.000	35.	43.	26.	1274.	21.23
CARUTHERS, P	34	31	.912	6.5	8.	11.	167.	4.91
CELKO, J	20	14	.700	0.	9.	0.	167.	8.35
CLARK, V	8	8	1.000	11.5	77.5	2.	140.5	17.56
DAVIS, H	31	25	.806	3.	10.	1.	164.5	5.31
FLORES, P	9	9	1.000	10.	7.	0.5	89.	9.89
FRIERSON, M	68	64	.941	18.	75.	0.	1587.5	23.35
HAMMER-JOHNSON, D	11	10	.909	15.	28.	4.	142.	12.91
HICKMAN, L	20	10	.500	14.	40.	0.	260.	13.00
HULAN, D	79	75	.949	37.	68.	14.	2305.	29.18
HUTCHINSON, A	50	50	1.000	14.	56.	10.	1539.	30.78
HYDE, C	10	10	1.000	13.	65.	26.	188.	18.80
JENNINGS, B	40	27	.675	6.5	13.	0.5	533.	13.33
LILLIAN, G	63	63	1.000	44.	173.	69.5	3081.	48.91
LYNCH, D	5	5	1.000	4.	25.	11.	49.	9.80
LYNCH, N	18	18	1.000	6.	55.	11.	288.	16.00
MARKSTEIN, D	72	72	1.000	8.	36.	13.	2265.	31.46
MORRISSEY, R	19	12	.632	6.5	1.	4.5	95.	5.00
MOUDRY, J	31	31	1.000	1.	15.	1.	214.5	6.92
PHILLIPS, S	14	8	.571	0.	22.	0.	83.	5.93
ROGERS, M	12	12	1.000	12.	37.	23.	170.	14.17
RYDER, S	19	18	.947	13.	11.	7.	129.	6.79
SCHWARZIN, L	20	17	.850	0.	7.	0.	115.5	5.78
VERHEIDEN, M	51	49	.961	4.	17.	26.	656.5	12.87
WEBER, M	35	33	.943	18.	56.	5.	614.5	17.56
WELLS, G	46	37	.804	5.	1.	3.	176.5	3.84
ATKINS, D	1	1	1.000	--	--	5.	5.	5.00
BARGER, D	1	1	1.000	--	--	6.	6.	6.00
BATTY, W	4	4	1.000	8.	24.	19.	55.	13.75
BURKE, R	6	6	1.000	23.5	28.5	16.	88.5	14.75
COBB, J	4	4	1.000	12.	23.	14.5	62.5	15.63
COLLINS, N	3	3	1.000	26.	6.	8.	40.	13.33
DOLBEAR, D	17	14	.824	16.	42.5	10.	205.5	12.09
FONTENAY, G	2	2	1.000	--	10.	8.	18.	9.00
GATEWOOD, T	2	2	1.000	--	16.	2.	18.	9.00
GELB, J	1	1	1.000	--	--	1.	1.	1.00
KOCH, I	23	23	1.000	--	9.	2.	187.	8.13
MCGOVERN, T	5	5	1.000	13.	24.	14.	65.	13.00
MONTGOMERY, L	24	22	.917	--	22.	11.	355.	14.79
PARIS, S	5	5	1.000	14.5	18.	5.	63.5	12.70
PICKERSGILL, L	12	10	.833	2.	14.	8.	65.	5.42
RAUB, M	16	13	.813	2.	7.	21.	131.	8.19
RYAN, D	6	6	1.000	6.5	13.	10.	45.5	7.58
SMITH, W	1	1	1.000	--	--	0.5	0.5	.50
STEWART, L	6	6	1.000	12.	8.	12.	52.5	8.75



THE SFPA STATS: MAILING 101

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TOTAL MEMBERSHIP AT-BATS = 1068

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP HITS = 976

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BATTING AVERAGE = .914

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP PAGES = 20541.

AVERAGE MEMBERSHIP PPM = 19.23

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SFPA TOP TEN: PAGES PER MAILING

1.	48.91	GUY LILLIAN
2.	31.46	DON MARKSTEIN
3.	30.78	ALAN HUTCHINSON
4.	29.18	DAVE HULAN
5.	27.64	LON ATKINS
6.	23.35	MEADE FRIERSON
7.	21.23	STVEN CARLBERG
8.	18.80	CLINT HYDE
9.	18.63	BOB BARGER
10.	17.56	VERN CLARK
10.	17.56	mike weber

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SFPA TOP TEN: BATTING AVERAGE (TOTAL HITS)

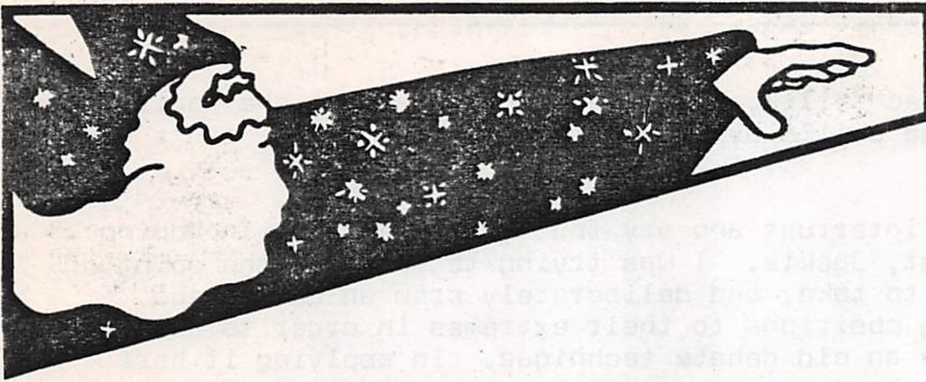
1.	1.000	( 87)	LON ATKINS
1.	1.000	( 79)	NED BROOKS
1.	1.000	( 72)	DON MARKSTEIN
1.	1.000	( 63)	GUY LILLIAN
1.	1.000	( 60)	STVEN CARLBERG
1.	1.000	( 50)	ALAN HUTCHINSON
1.	1.000	( 31)	JOE MOUDRY
1.	1.000	( 18)	NICKI LYNCH
1.	1.000	( 12)	MIKE ROGERS
1.	1.000	( 10)	CLINT HYDE
1.	1.000	( 9)	PAUL FLORES
1.	1.000	( 8)	BOB BARGER
1.	1.000	( 8)	VERN CLARK
1.	1.000	( 5)	DICK LYNCH

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SFPA TOP TEN: TOTAL PAGES

1.	3081.	GUY LILLIAN
2.	2405.	LON ATKINS
3.	2305.	DAVE HULAN
4.	2265.	DON MARKSTEIN
5.	1587.5	MEADE FRIERSON
6.	1539.	ALAN HUTCHINSON
7.	1274.	STVEN CARLBERG
8.	1144.5	NED BROOKS
9.	656.5	MARK VERHEIDEN
10.	614.5	MIKE WEBER





WE GET LETTERS...

from DAVE LOCKE, 4215 Romaine Drive #22, Cincinnati, OH 45209

There is a strange dichotomy concerning fans, that on the one hand they usually tend to be introverted and somewhat poorly adjusted, and on the other that fans are slans. This is in reference to your comments to Barger, wherein you scorn the former and embrace the latter. As someone who enjoys fandom but hates bullshit, my observation is that either statement possesses but the smallest grain of truth. In overview, they're both bullshit. I've met many poorly adjusted fans, and observed even more, but in any fair observation would have to admit that such is also the case most everywhere else. I've also met and observed some intelligent and capable fans, but certainly not in numbers which by any stretch could be called overwhelming. I would hazard to say that, on the average, fans are average.

A depressing thought, totally at odds with the élan frequently generated by ingroups -- at least, in those instances where that élan gets out of bounds. The fact that most of my friends are slans, introverted, and somewhat poorly adjusted has no bearing on any of this...

(( ( hmmm. I thot I was taking a line similar to yours, but noting that the simple ability to read and write possessed by probably a majority of fans qualified our group as "above average". At any rate, I agree with you and so does Harvey, my invisible rabbit... )) )

from GUY LILLIAN, 102 S. Mendenhall #13, Greensboro, NC 27403

Wow!!! Golley-gee-willikers!!! Super!! Great!!! I shook hands with Richard Nixon!! Great zine!!! Do more!! Deadline soon!!!!

from JACKIE CAUSGROVE, 4215 Romaine Drive #22, Cincinnati OH 45209

Your thoughts on the inequalities inherent in our current system of divorce, especially the unfair financial burdens applied to men, are extremely pertinent. However, I do believe you've allowed your understandable sense of outrage at being caught on the wrong side of the sexual discrimination matter to color your reasoning. The example you gave (in jest, I hope) of a heart surgeon and his wife was poor in the extreme. Assuming the first assumption you presented to be true, that the wife was responsible for half those skills, then it by no means would follow that



the wife would have those skills, but merely indicate that she facilitated the acquisition of those skills by her husband (which, again, ain't necessarily so).

(( ( real quick, let me interrupt and say that you were right in hoping the comment was jest, Jackie. I was trying to satirize the point of view the law seems to take, and deliberately drew an outrageous example. Reducing positions to their extremes in order to demonstrate absurdity is an old debate technique. In applying it here I was attempting to demonstrate a need for reexamination of prevailing legal posits, not to suggest it was genuine. )))

Your follow-up argument, drawing an analogy between a divorced wife and an unemployed man, has a weakness or two, but does present a sensible position. A person who has lost his/her job because of failure of the company is permitted to collect unemployment insurance in most cases. Wives are not, since husbands do not pay into the system. In that sense, alimony could be considered unemployment insurance. I'm personally against alimony, as it is so often seen in today's society, but feel there is a need for it at times. In a situation where the couple has been married a number of years, where the woman was encouraged not to work, to stay home and keep house and tend the children, then some recompense should be paid by the man who decides he wishes either to be single again or to acquire a newer model wife. Else, it is society which will bear the burden, as such a person is seldom able to find a job on today's intense labor market. We're talking about simple Justice here, not Revenge. On the other hand, I see no reason why a healthy female with average intelligence shouldn't be able to acquire skills within a reasonable period of time that should allow her to support herself.

With regard to a wife working outside the home, the point you seem to ignore is that an agreement was made between two people, a contract in law. That contract can affect whether the wife works outside the home or not. It is a personal agreement, to be made between the two parties, and not by law, that governs the area. If a couple have agreed that the wife should not be employed outside the home, then that is a risk ON BOTH OF THEIR PARTS, NOT ONLY THE WIFE'S. She surrenders the right to pursue a career or vocational goal; he assumes the obligation of providing for her welfare. If the marriage fails for some reason, then arrangements should be made, on the basis of ability to do so, to support her until she can support herself. (In the case of a woman without skills, who finds herself divorced in her mid-fifties -- an event not unheard of -- she'll never be able to support herself. In that case, arrangements should be made -- depending on the man's income -- to maintain her until at least Social Security can kick in at age 62.)

The entire issue is extremely complicated and confused, and as a result a lot of injustices, to men and women both, occur. Reform of our divorce laws will be made eventually. Progress is already apparent in many states.

(( ( good commentary. The point about agreement wasn't ignored. I had a word on it, or two. But what I neglected to address, you've covered well. Save one point. I tried to get at it indirectly in that MC you respond to, and you cover it implicitly in your well-



reasoned remarks. It's that phrase, "in the style to which she has become accustomed". While it's obvious, even to our feudal courts, that there's not enough income, in the typical divorce case, to allow this ideal to be honored, the male typically takes the big hit in division of sacrifice, particularly if children are involved.

Example: The court orders that the residence shall be maintained in joint ownership until the kids are 18. The man is stuck with half the rent but must move out. His equity is tied up, so he has to rent. The wife gets the house at ½ price. Neither the extra burden on the male nor the bonus for the wife "counts" as support in the decree.

But I don't see any answers, though I feel there must be a better way. As "real income" declines, we're headed for trouble. )))

from DDM Enterprises, PO Box 999, Phoenix, AZ 85019

Dear Occupant:

Now YOU can own a rare "I WAS THERE AT THE SFPA 100 Collation" button! Just send \$25 in check or money order to....

from DAVE LOCKE again...

Saw EXCALIBUR. My level of enjoyment was at 4 on a scale of 1 to 10. It did have its moments, but it had more than its share of flaws. The legend was totally rewritten for Hollywood. The fight scenes, and there were too many of them, seemed to be choreographed by someone who thought they were doing a Conan movie. The actor doing Merlin was superb, but the rest ranged from below par to amateur theatre. The pervasive mood of the film was well handled for the most part and there were many nice, light touches, but I came out of the theatre with the impression that I had just gone to see a comic book. A good comic book, and technically well-done of its type, but a comic book.

"Cycling at 101." I have this image of a Hearts game which doesn't end until someone hits 101 on the nose. What does the term really mean?

(( I've still not seen EXCALIBUR, and now may never do so. As for the "cycling at 101" bit, see the glossary of your Hearts Primer. The gimmick is that anyone hitting 101 exactly has their score reset to zero. A favorite dodge of Jerry Page in the old days. He might cycle three or four times in one game..... )))

from HANK REINHARDT, c/o Warden, Georgia State Penitentiary

I beg to differ with your records, Atkins. That's not \$452,311.96 I still owe you in unpaid Hearts debts -- it's \$452,311.95. Let's be accurate about these things. Enclosed is another 1¢ installment payment. Together with my autograph (hereto affixed) that reduced my debt by another \$100,00.01....



Exclusive to REALLY!

Headline:     ATKINS HITS THE SKIDS

The night of Saturday, June 20, 1981, saw the shattering of a legend. For the first time in recorded history, Lon Atkins lost at Hearts.

This reporter has secured exclusive interviews with the players. With the exception of Atkins, without the use of whose name this article would be fit only for lining bird cages, the players involved have had their true identities disguised by clever substitution of random polysyllabic combinations for their real names. With Atkins' name retained this article may still line the cages of birds. But a better class of birds.

The Hearts session got underway in typical fashion, as Glike Myer (not a real name) spread the word that he was in the market for a Heavy Game. Shortly thereafter, Lon Atkins appeared at the card table, looking carefully innocent and casually whistling the opening bars of the theme from "Jaws".

Myer later commented on the appearance of Atkins: "No sooner had Hearts been mentioned than he was there. But he looked tired and preoccupied that evening. I sensed that this might be the night he stumbled. I'm precognitive that way."

Next to show was Schwiz Larzin (not a real name). Complaining that she'd forgotten to bring her Hearts Primer, Larzin nevertheless agreed to join the fray if a sure loser could be located as fourth. The fourth proved to be Bobbi Armbruster (not a real name), whose consecutive string of Hearts Competition Avoidances was finally to be broken.

The cards were dealt; the syncopation begun. Atkins started as expected, sliding gently but firmly into the Low Man's spot. All the while, Glike Myer was starting an all-out assault on High Man's spot. Smiles came quickly to the lips of the kibitzers, as this game had the same feeling of inevitable outcome that thousands of past games had made a standard. But Incredible Happenings were lurking unseen in the deep corners of The Tower...

As the kibitzers drained from the card room, headed for the greener pastures of the all-nude hot tub, the cards began to turn. First is was surprise with a routine reverse elimination gambit: the distribution was incredibly bad. Atkins took points. On the next hand, while finessing the Club six in order to preserve the Club Deuce as an exit card, Atkins caught the Black Bitch against 39-1 odds.

Other plays noted a souring in Atkins' attitude. His usual cheerful heckling was eroding into dull indifference and snappish defense of his bad luck. There was the smell of blood in the air.



Schwiz Larzin commented that she doubted the Hearts Primer would have meant much after all. Glike Myer quit chewing on his copy of GARFIELD UNCHAINED. Bobbi Armbruster asked to see the score sheet. Again.

The mounting pressure showed on Atkins' face. Rivulets of sweat rolled down the channels of his frown-creases. He put all his skill into the next hand. A duel developed between Atkins and Armbruster. Diamonds flickered back and forth across the table as other players sluffed madly. Then Atkins made his fatal error. He led a Club instead of the low Diamond. Without a sign of mercy, Armbruster dumped the Dark Lady on him.

Armbruster recalls the incident: "I knew Lon had the low Diamond. We'd been trading the lead and now it was clear that he could put me back into a quandary. But his eyes were glazed. He was mumbling to himself, and I began to hope he'd miscounted. When he led the Club I knew he was finished. It was an amateur's mistake."

Yes, Atkins had erred horribly. Yet the players were still cautious. Could this be the set-up for some incredible Sting? But time showed that Atkins was truly cracking. His play had deteriorated almost to the Reinhardt level. Hand after hand he failed to escape unscathed.

That the disasters were inflicting deep psychic wounds became clear during a smoking break. At The Tower smoking is not allowed indoors, so the three smoking players had sojourned poolside to enjoy poisoning themselves for a while. Schwiz Larzin offered an idea for improving Atkins' last line of play. (A line of play which had netted him 22 points.) Instead of discussing the concept, Atkins raised his darkened eyes to the narrow moon. "The hand was synclastic," he proclaimed in a low voice. "There was no escape."

Larzin observed the agony on Atkins' face. "He was really torn up. I expected some elegant sarcasm and a logically impeccable refutation. Instead, he seemed to have decided he was beaten, that the gods were against him. It wasn't like Lon. I was disturbed -- I should have agreed to play for money."

The match settled into horrible routine. Would it be Glike Myer or Lon Atkins taking the Queen this hand? Who could botch it worst: Atkins or Myer? Who would amass the most Reinhardts: Myer or Atkins?

While there are many who say that Glike Myer's performance that evening was explained by nothing more than innate ability, there were few claiming the same for Atkins. Indeed, there seemed to have been an inexplicable mental breakdown on the part of the



great Champion. Could it be that he had lost the touch for winning Hearts? It certainly appeared so. His play had degenerated to terrible, matching his luck, and only pitiful vestiges of honor kept him afloat during these trying hours. (Though the vestiges of honor did have some help...)

It was the misfortune of Bruce Pelz that his abundant collection of miniature liquor bottles was housed in the card room. As Atkins' plight grew ever worse, his need for solace grew ever greater, and as a direct consequence the Pelz miniature collection grew ever more miniature.

As Atkins crashed in flames, made all the brighter by the generous and unknowing Pelz contributions, his whole manner became erratic. He would mumble senseless phrases to himself. His lower jaw dropped open and other players were forced to insist on a bib for the Champion, in order that the cards be protected from drool. It was a pitiful scene of decline...

Word spread like wildfire, and the host of kibitzers returned. Many were the cruel and needless remarks made at the staggering Champion's expense. Some hecklers were louder and more obnoxious than others. Soon it was clear to all that Atkins had hit the Skids.

We asked Glike Myer when he first realized. "I was dealing," says Myer, "and hadn't noticed Lon get up. I first knew he'd hit the Skids when I heard two solid thuds. I looked around and Joe and Artie Skid were lying on the floor. I guess Lon got fed up with LASFS-style kibitzing, though the Skids are no worse than most."

Although this incident served to calm the level of heckling, it had no positive effects on Atkins' play. Indeed, it illustrated the depths of deperation to which he had descended.

We asked independent Hearts expert J. Henry Reinhardt (not a real person) to comment. "I always knew Atkins was doing it on sheer luck," claimed Reinhardt. "How else can you explain his twenty-four consecutive years of world Hearts domination. Well, now his luck has run out."

But Reinhardt was not slow in drawing a moral. "I can't wait for the DSC. If Atkins shows up he'll be easy meat. Any skill he may have pretended to is gone. I plan to make a fortune!"

It sounds grim, and it is. We can only hope that unscrupulous sharks don't learn of Atkins' defenseless condition and lure him into high-stakes money games. We urge our readers to honor ethics and not go for the easy winnings. Therefore we say again, please don't HUSTLE ATKINS INTO HIGH-STAKES MONEY GAMES AT THE DSC JUST BECAUSE HE'S BOUND TO LOSE. Listen to your conscience and please don't WIN LOTS OF MONEY FROM ATKINS IN BIG-MONEY HEARTS GAMES. Atkins has too much pride left to refuse to play Hearts, so the obligation is on you not to PLAY MONEY HEARTS WITH ATKINS AND WIN.



