

SHORT ENOUGH TO BE INTERESTING

SHORT ENOUGH TO BE INTERESTING comes to you from 2920 Victoria Ave., Apt. 12, Regina, Sask., S4T 1K7. Published for Apa-Q #whatever it is by the time this arrives. The title is dedicated to Mrs. Chronacher, my English teacher in 7th, 8th, and 9th grade, who taught me to write, and who, whenever she was asked how long an essay or a story should be, replied "Like a woman's skirt -- long enough to cover the subject, but short enough to be interesting."

Some general remarks, just to settle in: Jerry thoughtfully sent me #29,30,31, and 32, but I haven't yet (as of Dec. 20) gotten #27, with my previous contribution in it. I don't even remember what I wrote, except that I left out my name. Anyway. It is theoretically possible, if a mailing is sent to me right after collation, allowing 5 days for delivery, one clear weekend to do a zine, 5 days to send it to New York, mumble, mumble, carry the 4, differentiate twice, mumble, yes, ignoring relativistic effects, it should be possible for me to keep up with a bi-weekly apa.

But don't count on it.

I called Arnie Katz. "Arnie, I need the Fanoclasts. I am dying of temptation here, and I need the company of fannish saints if I am to take strength and survive. Now I understand I need an invitation to come to a Fanoclasts meeting. Can you get me one?"

"What's a 'fanoclast'?" he asked.

-- Jerry Kaufman, KRATOPHANY #1, Dec. 1971

Gary Farber: Thank you for the DRIFT. I really enjoyed reading it, since I knew most of the people you mention. As to the comment you wrote in it -- of course I know who you are; you sent me 50¢ for KRAT 5, it says here.

Tom Morley (disty #31): The verb may be "slip-sheet", but you should be cautioned that the verb's past tense, using the strong declension, is in common usage only applied to crudzines. Bowdlerized dictionaries, however, usually give this form of the verb as "slip-shod".

Debbie Notkin: I'm a Modesty Blaise fan, too; I got turned on to the books by a very close friend, and have now gotten a hold of all of them except for Pieces of Modesty (is that by any chance a short story collection?). What I like best about them is that they satisfy my craving for competent heroes. Every book gives you two(2) of them -- Modesty and her partner Willie Garvin, and sometimes even the supporting characters show a shred of sense (my favorite, for obvious reasons, was the witty and brilliant statistician Modesty picks up in one of the books). In fact, with some exceptions even the villains are competent (it's always more fun watching pros compete); once you forgive them the basic stupidity of not killing the Good Guys the first chance they get. By the way, the local library has the author, Peter O'Donnell, cross-referenced with a certain J.T. McIntosh. Is this our J.T. McIntosh? The books do tend to have a vague SFictional content, particularly as regards ESP.

Tom Whitmore: (disty #32) The only time I ever had mono, I didn't notice it either. But perhaps that was because I was too busy with my strep throat and my oral comp-rehensives (which, contrary to popular opinion, are graduate school exams, not a special group of wide-spectrum antibiotics).

"... and you will note that throughout the entire stencil, the bottle of corflu never left my hand!" (Wild applause) "Now, for my next trick, ladies and gentlemen, I will make this entire tube of ink disappear! May I have a slip-sheeter from the audience..."

Moshe: (#31) Please explain turning boxes inside out. It sounds like the summer I spent working for the Flushing Post Office stuffing mail bags inside of other mail bags. (This was actually a very responsible job, requiring quick wits and tremendous manual dexterity. For one thing, before a mail bag could be placed inside another mail bag, it had to be checked to see if any letters had been left inside. You can see that this required the ability to recognize a letter, a talent only the higher echelons in this Post Office had. I found a four month old letter once; but it couldn't have been anything important -- it was just from the Australian Consulate. Probably some schnook's visa or something.) What I mean is, I understand the process of turning boxes inside out (a simple inverse transformation); I just don't see why.

(#32) It was very nice to see that I got 1½ pages in the apa without even publishing. But I fear your rash action may bring disaster upon us all. I would like to point out that 24 hours after I put that letter in the mailbox, the Canadian Postal Service went out on strike; a strike, mind you, that caused immense hardship to millions of people, drove many businesses to bankruptcy, and cost the country much money. A completely useless strike, besides, since the final settlement (after a strike that cost the union an estimated \$1 million per day in lost wages), was almost identical to the government's pre-strike offer. Clearly, the strike had only one purpose: To serve as a Warning from Higher Powers that any such parody of "Camelot" should remain buried, out of the sight of decent people. There Are Some Things Fen Are Not Meant to Know. Well, now you've gone and done it. Let it be upon your head. I might as well note, now that the damage has been done, that credit for the original concept of a fannish musical based on "Camelot" belongs to Janet Kagan, who's been muttering for years about one called "Analog". I think she came up with "SFWA" as a parody-title of "C'est Moi".

Jon: You mean we shouldn't eat pennies? Why, I always thought that eating pennies gave you a pence-ive mind, often brought welcome change to your system, and invariably increased your cents-of-one there. (Private Singer, have a grenade!)

Some random thoughts on Fanoclasts: I discovered, through FSFSCU, the problems inherent in holding any sort of open club meeting in your own home. Even some of the nicest people in the world have obnoxious friends, and if they don't, their friends have obnoxious friends. It means that sooner or later you've either got to put your foot down, or kick the meetings out. Since I'm a very wishy-washy person who doesn't like hurting people's feelings, I finally stopped holding FSFSCU meetings at the Avocado Pit -- and they were held at the Pit far longer than Jerry or David cared for as it was. Practically speaking, the host always has a veto over membership; the hard thing is using the veto without destroying the organization. AAS you can see from that Lupoff reprint, Fanoclasts was founded out of such problems, and as far as I can see has changed substantially each time it's changed hosts. It's nice to maintain traditions ("Where are the Pepsis of yesteryear?"), but you can't step in the same river twice (certainly not without getting your feet wet). Why I can almost see it now: The struggle to maintain traditions in a changing world ... "A Fanoclast On the Roof"

No, that way lies madness.

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