

This is the 29th Issue of a quarterly fanzine that bats down on the ball, as suggested by the Charley Lau/Walter Hrinia school of hitting. Edited and published by Andrew Hooper and Carrie Root, of 4228 Francis Ave. N. #103, Seattle, WA 98103, members fwa, supporters afal. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 230, 8/18/95 Available for the usual, i.e., letters of comment, submissions of art or prose, or your own fanzine in trade. Material in this issue comes from Andy, Tracy Benton, Janice Eisen, Elizabeth Hooper-Lane, Mark Manning, and our correspondents. Art by David Haugh (page 12), Steve Jeffery (page 5), Jay Kinney (title & page 9), Bill Kunkel (page 1), Bill Rotsler (pages 3 & 6). "Blowback" logo by Pat Virzi. Next issue out in Late October.

There's wood and then there's wood.

This summer of goodbye by Andy

THE LAST TIME I wrote an editorial for this fanzine, I expressed happiness at the return of major league baseball. The strike, while unsettled (as it is to this writing), was called off by the players, and the owners agreed to employ them under the old system. The season would be the second consecutive campaign to fail to play 162 scheduled games, but at least the delay would be at the beginning. Various teams I favor looked good on paper, and I had every expectation that the warm winds of summer would echo with the babble of a happy pennant race or three.

Instead, this has been the most sepulchral and unsettling baseball season that I can remember. It began with a concentration camp for ball players whose talents were sufficiently suspect that they had been offered no contract of any kind, by any team. A makeshift training camp - really an overgrown sandlot round-robin - was established at Homestead, Florida. There, players who had been big-shots making two to five million dollars a year as recently as eight months before, got together and played one o'cat and pepper and shagged fungoes in the hot spring Florida sunshine hoping that somebody, even someone in Minnesota or Japan, would give them a shot to play, and maybe even at something more than the minimum salary. And several dozen major league careers withered and died in that sunshine, and we will not see them again, outside of an old-timers game.

Then, right after the season began, a utility infielder named Gus Polidor, who had stumbled down through the Milwaukee Brewer and Florida Marlin organizations, was shot and killed in his native Venezuela, by parties still at large who had allegedly kidnapped one of his children. You don't see a lot of in depth reporting from Venezuela for some reason, so it was as if Polidor had just vanished into the jungle. And very shortly after that, Glenn Burke, once a highly-regarded prospect in the Los Angeles Dodger organization who was never allowed a fair shot at a major league career, allegedly due to Tommy Lasorda's disgust at the fact Burke was gay, died of AIDS in his hometown of Oakland, California.



Thinking about baseball was rapidly becoming oppressive.

As much as the deaths of Polidor and Burke were depressing, the sudden disappearance of much of the contemporary generation of All-Star quality ball players was even more striking. Plenty of people who can still hit, beefy sluggers like John Kruk and Kirk Gibson, and pitchers who would almost certainly be able to retain a job in the pitching-depleted majors, like Dave Stewart and Steve Bedrosian, have chosen to retire in the middle of the season. Kruk chose to bring his family to the ball park, got a single early and then left the ballpark right away because he was worried about them having to sit in the sun on one of the nastier days of what has been a very oppressive Chicago summer. Kirk Gibson slipped out and let the team announce that he was quitting, because he had been, in his words, "traded to his family." Analysts conjecture that many ball players are making similar decisions in the wake of the strike, which put many of them in close proximity to their wives and children for a period longer than the average off-season for the first time in their lives. Many of them, with ten years worth of six- and seven-figure contracts behind them, are secure enough that continuing to play actually makes little sense for them.

Other players with illustrious accomplishments but little talent remaining, have been cut loose by their

money-conscious employers, and have drifted away in the netherworld of insurance sales and minor-league base-coaching. And many other players have announced that this will be their final major-league season, included players who have been virtual fixtures at their position for a generation, like second basemen Lou Whitaker of the Detroit Tigers, 19 years at the same position for the same team! The last survivors of my one, heartfelt World Series championship, the brilliant 1984 Detroit club, are slipping away from the game. Lance Parrish is still catching, but across the Ontario border in Toronto. Gibson and Whitaker are leaving, and only shortstop Alan Trammell now remains, unsure what his future with the Tigers or any club may be. His job has been taken by a young glove man named Chris Gomez, and he has to make do with pinch-hitting and the occasional cameo in left field.

Against all of these departures, the past three months have seen another drama as one of the most loved baseball players in American history fought against cancer. Mickey Mantle, the ultimate 1950's athletic icon, a blonde cowboy in pinstripes, and above everything else, a winner. Mickey Mantle was the most significant author of one of the most stultifying periods in baseball history, if you were anything but a New York Yankee fan. Between 1949 and 1962, the Yankees won the World Series 10 times, and only twice did they fail to win the American League pennant. If you rooted for any other team in the American League, Mickey Mantle was a Stalinist figure, the most obvious expression of a brutal totalitarian regime. Under that kind of dilemma, most people will choose the path that holds some hope of personal happiness and join the party, so many thousands of baseball fans became Yankee fans during Mantle's era (The alternative, baseball insurgentism, was to become a Yankee hater, a lover of any team that happens to beat them).

When he first reached the major leagues, Mickey Mantle had a combination of speed and power that reminded most people of his immediate predecessor as the star of the Yankee outfield, Joe Dimaggio. The power never left him throughout his career, and his ability to tear any game open with truly prodigious home runs allowed put him in the Hall of Fame, and allowed him to set a record by playing more than 2,000 games, the most by any New York Yankee. But his legs, which had begun suffering a long series of injuries when he was still playing high school football, lost their speed quickly, and he was never without pain after stepping on a drain in the New York outfield in the 1951 World series.

That fall, as he lay in the hospital following surgery on his knee ligaments, Mantle's father lay dying of Hodgkin's disease in the next bed. His father had set out to shape him as a player from even before he was born, naming him after a major-league catcher who hated to lose, Mickey Cochrane. When he was still a young teenager, his father had anticipated the prevalence of platoon-systems in major league baseball, and taught his son to bat from both sides of

the plate. But he did not live to see much of Mickey's career, succumbing at age 41.

Mantle went on to win the triple crown of baseball (highest batting average, total of home runs and runs batted in) and set a career record for most home runs hit in the World Series. To a generation of Americans, he was the personification of baseball. But all this time, Mantle himself was full of gnawing self-doubt and loathing, submerged himself in alcohol for the better part of fifty years, as if to bury fears that he would be nothing, that he would follow his father into death at an early age. Of course, he had some fun along the way; another part of his appeal was the way he enjoyed his fame and wealth in ways that many Americans would. He had a good time, not all that unlike Jerry Garcia, who died earlier this week.

It was the 25 years since his playing career ended that were probably the hardest on him. Mantle battled depression through all those years, while card brokers and promoters used him as the engine that, more than any other single player, drove the revolution in the memorabilia industry over the past decade. But those memories were never far from the surface; his own son died of Hodgkins disease last year.

And then this year we have watched him dwindle away, looking grayer and thinner every time he appeared in public. He received a liver transplant, which turns out to have been useless from the beginning, since the doctors found the cancer had spread when they performed the procedure. They dithered around with a little chemotherapy, but it made him anemic, and it was apparently better to just make him comfortable as possible and let him slip away. And now we have someone else to say goodbye to, in this season of so many unexpected departures.

Baseball keeps grinning through it all, offering fresh and mysterious rookies in the place of our accustomed veterans, and we withhold judgement, knowing each one could be a hall-of-famer, an I-saw-him-play-when kind of player, capable of eclipsing all who came before. They have a heavy burden on them this season, as they wear familiar livery in the place of absent friends.

**And you should listen to Andy
because he has a fish through his head**

You'll notice that this issue of *Spent Brass* doesn't have the same kind of news and front matter that it used to. Since we're not coming out quite so often these days, pretty much any "news" we can come up with will largely be redundant by the time a new issue reaches you. Maybe that was always true, but at least we're admitting it to ourselves now. Life publishing a minor quarterly genzine isn't so bad. We will continue to run changes of address on the back page, and there will always be more GoH speeches for us to reprint. Just think of *Spent Brass* as one of those quiet little fish that keep the bottom of the tank clean. Sometimes they can be surprisingly opinionated, and have been known to possess expressive baritone voices.

True Grit or, The White Mustang in the Valley of Fire by Tracy Benton

Las Vegas had caused me to become vastly depressed. The man-made artificiality of the city smacked me in the face wherever I looked, and when confronted with a shrub in front of a casino I automatically dismissed it as plastic. Then, an angel appeared. An angel that looked like Carrie Root, with a certain gleam in her eye, and hints of horns holding up her halo. "Come with me out of city into the desert," she whispered in my ear. "I have a car." Resisting the urge to fall upon my knees and worship, I replied meekly: "Yes, Carrie."

I agreed to suborn Bill Bodden to accompany us, which required no effort whatsoever. Luckily I was present to see Carrie reel in Jeanne Bowman as well, who listened to even less of the sales pitch than I before exclaiming "When? When are you going?" The four of us agreed to meet at 7:00 AM Sunday morning in an attempt to see the desert and make it back in time to attend the banquet. I high-tailed it to bed, realizing that I would never get up in time otherwise. But Bill went out with Spike Parsons and others for a pre-adventure on the Strip in the car I would meet the next day: the White Mustang Convertible.

It was a chilly morning, as we could see from our hotel window; a neon sign across the street read 53 degrees. When we met at the car (NOT with the top down, far too cold) I was surprised to see Jeanne wearing shorts, but classed her as a hardier soul than myself. Our White Mustang angel appealed to us: which was it to be, Red Rocks or the Valley of Fire? After some waffling, I pointed out that I would pick the Valley of Fire on the name alone, which swayed the consensus in a northward direction. We stoked up on donuts and bottled water and set off on our one-hour-plus drive to get to the state park.

Carrie was obviously having far too much fun driving the Mustang: peeling out of stoplights, passing slow-goers without mercy, changing gears as if they were obstacles to overcome. I had previously thought that angels were sedate pilots of long expensive cars ("Swing Low, Sweet Cadillac"), but apparently Carrie Root is an angel from a different Paradise. At any rate (and it was high) we got off the highway and into the park roads. The scenery was overwhelmingly lovely. We stopped at a posted map to orient ourselves, which was difficult since the "You are Here" dot had disappeared, assuming that it had ever existed. Also disappearing was my judgment of Jeanne as either a lunatic or a woman of iron, since she repaired into the primitive facility to put on long pants. The winds were impressive—reaching 50 mph, I found out later—and I was glad of my nylon jacket. After some limited map-poring-over and hesitant time-checks, we decided to go to see the Petroglyphs and the Mouse's Tank, whatever that was; someone had told Jeanne not to miss it. We refolded ourselves into the Mustang

(have you ever tried to get into the back seat of one with the top up?) and proceeded.

The Petroglyphs, as it turned out, weren't handily written at just above eye level on a convenient rock, no sir. The ancient tribe to deposit this graffiti was either composed of 25-foot-tall artists or possessed of a rock-climbing cult. To see these mysterious inscriptions we were required to climb two flights of open iron stairs... in 50 mph winds... in the cold... did I mention that I have a fear of heights? No? Well, Bill and Jeanne scampered up the stairs before me as I clutched the railing with a death grip and concentrated on only the stair in front of me. Carrie did the guardian-angel bit ("only a little farther now, don't worry") quite well, but my main concern was that I couldn't really feel my hands any more on the banisters, they were so cold. The petroglyphs themselves were pretty neat, especially with my companions' translations ("ooh, look, carved by a skinny guy in a hat with giant feet"). Then, of course, the trip back down the stairs, with Carrie at the bottom to take my picture. I'm sure I looked like a giant balloon with the wind belling out my jacket. I was more than ready to get back in the car to escape the wind.

Now, I should make a point here that desert wind is not like our friendly southern Wisconsin wind. Desert winds got teeth, with showers of sharp sand and little pebbles. Carrie, Bill, and Jeanne proposed a short walk round the back of the big rock to see what was there, so of course I followed. This lasted all of thirty seconds before a veritable flying dune of sand blasted our faces, and we beat a hasty, well-scoured, defeat. The White Mustang bore us away to safety. I rubbed grit from my eyelashes.

On our way to find the Mouse's Tank, we stopped at a sheltered visitor's center. On our short walk through and around it, I discovered that my three fellow-travelers were very different species:

"Look! Look at that bird!" said Bill.

"Look! Look at that rock formation!" said Jeanne.

"Look! Look at that wildflower!" said Carrie.

This was the perfect recipe for whiplash; I was walking around with the Audobon Triplets. After a feeble attempt to comment intelligibly on everything I was reduced to smiling and nodding dumbly. Unfortunately, this caused me to collect sand in my teeth, but better that than to display the rocks in my head. After a few last admiring glances at the



blooming cacti, we moved on. The whole area was beautiful, with every possible shade of red, brown, and tan in the layered rocks, which had been sandblasted into fantastic shapes.

We learned that to actually get to the Mouse's Tank (which turned out to be a water cache which sustained a Paiute outlaw named Mouse), we would have to walk a quarter of a mile from the parking area. Okay, so we set off. Not a problem, I thought; I'm out of shape, but what's a quarter mile? Fifteen, twenty minutes? What the sign didn't mention was that it was a quarter-mile through soft sand. It reminded me of struggling through a foot of soft snow, except that normally the snow doesn't work its way inside your shoes and remove the skin from your feet. By the time we got to the Tank itself I was winded, to say the least, and "the best view" was from a bunch of rocks requiring a steep scramble. I declined to scramble, instead leaning on a rock and watching some unidentifiable birds flicker back and forth. The rest of the party skittered back down the slope and made horrified noises about the time. We would have to hurry back to the car. I allowed a groan to escape me... or perhaps it was the grinding of my bad hip. By the time we settled back into the Mustang I felt ready to collapse. What I didn't realize at the time was that I should have been drinking from our bottled water store throughout this period....

Carrie decided to take the Lake Mead road back to the city as opposed to the highway, since she'd heard it was quicker. Unfortunately it was just a little two-lane road, which meant that we were confronted with lumbering AirStreams to pass. It was a truly amazing road, going up and down... up and down... curving back and forth... back and forth.... I was watching the gorgeous scenery go by when I realized that I had left my stomach somewhere around ten S-bends back. I'm not normally prone to motion sickness unless I'm trying to read in the car, but I was getting dehydrated without knowing it. I fell into sort of a queasy stupor, and odd bits of conversation floated over me as I prayed to whomever might be listening that I would not throw up all over the spotless interior of a beautiful, rented White Mustang... even though I ride through the Valley of Fire, I fear no nausea, for the angel is driving; thy donuts and thy Evian, they comfort me....

"Be not afraid!" said the angel. "For lo, the city of Vegas is nigh!" Or maybe not quite in those words. But we made it back only an hour or so late for the banquet. I'm not too sure, since I went quickly and carefully to my room, where I threw off my clothes and fell into bed. I slept for three hours. When I awoke, I couldn't help but wonder... had I gone to the Valley of Fire? Had I traveled in the White Mustang? Did I dream it all? But no. It was real. For all about me on the floor was a fine layer of sand.

They keep building these dumb hospitals . . .

Little Paper Faces by Mark Manning

Two days past deadline, I finally succumb to the call of the typer. Yes, it's another installment of the fanzine review column recommended by more proctologists than any other toothpaste. But enough of this self-aggrandizement. Let's buckle down to the serious business of recording the incestuous fannish purview, to wit, fmz reviews.

And, oh mama, what a haul! As has been mentioned in such varied zines as the new *Trapdoor* and *Eyeballs in the Sky*, the stefnal zine scene is on a roll. What Leonardos and Medicis have been at work renaissancing away for us lately?

Well, just take a glance at some of the folks who've gained membership in FAPA since I dropped out a couple years ago: Bill Donoho's up there, but, whoo-ee, so are Socorro and Charles Burbee!!! I'm stoked, too, to see that two of Europe's most interesting fans, Austria's Franz Miklis and Sweden's John-Henri Holmberg, have just joined. To be sure, the May bundle has plenty of good stuff by such luminaries as Bruce Pelz, Don Fitch, Harry Warner Jr., and Gordon Eklund. There's only a short waitlist these days, too, Meyer, so you, too, might wish to contact Secty-Treas Robert Lichtman about joining up.

Here's a zine that very few fans in the English-speaking world will see: *Galileo* 5, from J. C. Verrecchia in Buenos Aires, Argentina. There are plenty of fans in Argentina, but little enough money for fanning. So the work of good folk like Juan, whose masthead refers to the zine as a "publicación sin fines de lucro" (publication without purpose of lucre, for you monolinguals), is all the more needed. The zine has mostly fiction---my favorite being "Final" by Alberto Bratt, plus some genre-related news, a few lists of fans' favorite ten stefnal movies, letters, and a list of addresses for zines Juan's received in trade. Good layout & artwork, too. Worth a look, if you habla un poquito Español.

The contents of *Xuense* 44, from the dean of Belgian (and Francophone) fandom, Alain le Bussy, bear a resemblance to those of *Galileo*: Many of its riches are in the fiction end of things, and the artwork tends to be quite good. Layout was done (obviously, albeit cleanly) on a typewriter, though. Before I describe the fiction, note that I enjoyed the non-fiction features, beginning with Alain's sputtering editorial against about the TV coverage of the 12th Festival of Fantasy & SF Film, held in Brussels, in which the reporter characterized attendees as "fans of hemoglobin and intense sensation." This segues into a confession that Alain's most recent answer to the issue's fannish survey question (When do you find time to write?) is, while recovering from a broken collar bone. Elsewhere in the zine, Dominique Warfa worries about the sad state of French SF "since the start of 1990, Year of the Disappearance of Fiction," by which Warfa means SF prozines and publishers' lines of books. There was also a second survey, for which authors explained how they found their editors. OK,

the fiction now. Most of the fiction was quite slow-paced and European, but then there was the tale by Pierre Jean Brouillaud that startled me with its opening: "On the screen, baboons are fucking. The film corresponded in rough outline to a human couple: Visages contracted and deformed by orgasm." What more need be said?

Månblad Alfa 24 serves as the clubzine for one of the most active local fan scenes in Europe, the LSFS (Linköping SF Association), somewhere out in the Swedish hinterland. Two families head up much of the group's work, brothers Hans & Tommy Persson, and the married couple Andreas & Carina Björklind. Their activities include lots of book discussions and reviews, an annual con (ConFuse, sadly cancelled this year), and, wouldn't you guess?, printing some fiction. The long English-language transcript of a panel on gender in SF, and Hans Persson's long essay on time-travel fiction were solid highlights here.

The next item isn't exactly a zine. It's the first "fascicle" of a planned six comprising the *Catalog of SF in the Portuguese Language, 1921-1993*, by long-time São Paulo (Brazil) fan R. C. Nascimento. Bob, who was for some years the international contact for the Brazilian national SF club, has done an exemplary job here, producing a volume that many completists, for example, will find essential.

Another clubzine now, this one *Holland SF* Vol 29 #1 from the Dutch national fan club, the NCSF. Lots of goodies here, as usual: Jan van 't Ent gnatters at length about prozine and paperback cover art, Dirk Bontes contributes the text of his ConSeal presentation on crop circles, and various fans offer lots and lots of reviews.

Shards of Babel 42 arrived in my mailbox recently, postmarked Seattle. That's because editor Roelof Goudriaan visited our rain-soaked burg from his home in The Hague. If you've never seen *Shards*, suffice it to say that it's a much-respected newszine about world fandom. This issue features Roberto de Sousa Causo's account of Brazilian SF under 20 years of military dictatorship and a humorous talk on Mars by Dutch fan Paul Harland, as well as brief bits about Germany and the UK. There's no telling if Roelof's schedule will allow him to pub his ish again soon, or ever, but one can always hope.

Galacto-Celtic Newsflash 12 is the work of Salzburg's Franz Miklis. Lots of friendly burbling, intricately-realized fantasy art, LoCs, and zine reviews. I really enjoy Franz's enthusiastic fanac, and this zine, but somehow feel that I should push on to the fanworld of the English-speaking countries.

Thyme 102, *Australian SF News* 62, and *Artychoke* 12 come all in one cover, a bumper crop of rather sercon-flavored antipodean fanac. *Thyme* is the newszine: Lists of prize-winners, conreps, zines received in trade. *ASFN* reviews new books to be found at Merv Binns' stefnal bookstore. Both these zines are edited by Alan Stewart. Ian Gunn's *Artychoke*, which rounds out the package, is a fan/comics zine, this time offering a review of a

HABBAKUK?

NO THANKS, I'VE JUST PUT ONE OUT..



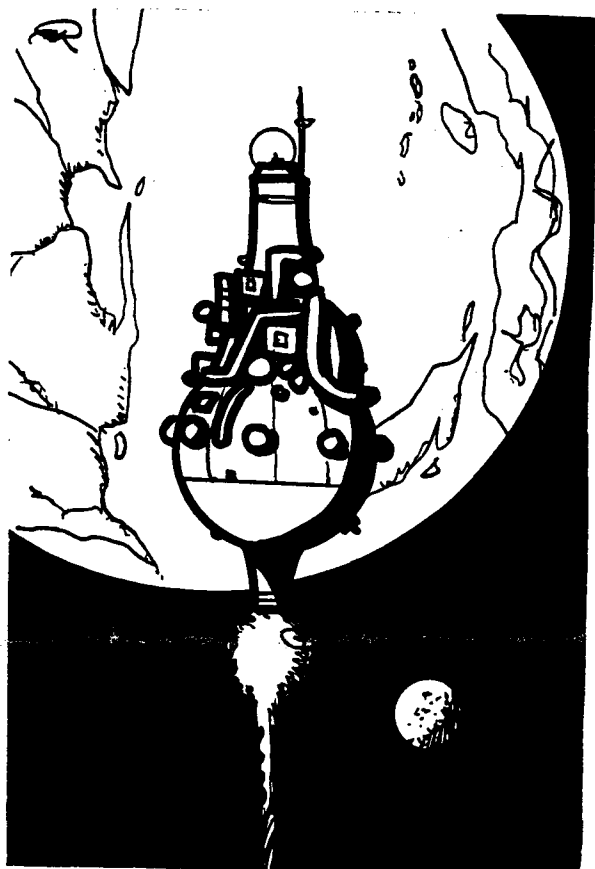
comicscon, another installment of a Gunn comic, and an appreciation of the work of Sir John Tenniel.

Kev McVeigh's *Malade*, his account of being IRA-baited and bashed in his hometown of Milnthorpe, says more in its 6 1/2 pages than many entire runs of certain zines I've read. It's a moody, tense tale of bigotry, personal terror, and, almost in spite of himself, a certain flickering hope. If this isn't on everyone's best-of-the-year lists of fanwriting, I'll be utterly amazed.

Terry Jeeves says that *Erg* 127 will be the last of the 35-year run of his quarterly fanzine. Not enough response to them, apparently. I don't understand why--the issue is pleasant enough: Some reviews, some techie writing about prime numbers, inventions & aircraft, a bit of humorous fiction by Terry, Ken Slater's page about quest tales, and so forth. Really, that describes what ought to be a noteworthy zine, and it is. Plus it has Terry's artwork, which I've always favored (though he ought to erase that drawing program from his new computer's harddisk!). Sorry to lose this one!

Tony Berry's *Eyeballs in the Sky* 9 reminds me of the classical model of a British fanzine. It's clearly cut from the same stock as, say, Chuck Connor's *Thingummybob*, though it lacks the frantic, manic humor of Chuck. Hmm, *Thingummybob* on Prozac? Anyway, this ish, all about banks, of all things, does almost everything right, from the cool Harry Bell/Sheryl Birkhead cover, to the grumbly editorial about the state of stefnal TV, to John D. Rickett's horny tale of his youth as a banker in Brazil (another candidate for your top fanwriting of the year picks).

Benoit Girard's *The Frozen Frog* 11 really has a hell of a lot going for it, starting with the pitchforks & brimstone scene of Steve Stiles' cover. Over the past couple of years, since Ben premiered this Quebec-based Anglophone fanzine, it's accrued a nice bunch of very active readers. And Ben himself has proven to be both enthusiastic and gracious. With this issue, he's



converted to a mostly letterzine format, which shows itself yet again capable of producing very engaging reading.

Another Ben, Ben Zuhl, publishes *Ben'Zine* 4. He might have been *fafia* for yonks, due to all the moving his family's done for the State Department---only 14 years since *Ben'Zine* 3! But he still has the ability to pull in good articles by Mike Glicksohn, Ro Nagey, and Larry Tucker, so maybe there's hope for the rest of us.

Wild Heirs 6, the Corflu issue of the collective zine of Las Vegrants, is, well, full of Corflu reports, not to mention artwork by Bills Kunkel and Rotsler, among other folks. A very good issue of this very likeable fanzine, not least because it's lighter on the references to "getting sercon" and the schoolboy locker room-type humor than previous numbers. Leaving such stuff out meant more room for some of the most heartfelt, enthusiastically fannish writing I've had the pleasure to read lately.

Can you be a Trufan, Meyer, without a taste for *Trapdoor* 15? Robert Lichtman's genzine, much of which is reprinted from various apas and personal letters, is a wonderful balance of light hearts and deep thinks. John Foyster explains how a bout with polio made him a SF fan. Arnie Katz maneuvers to get a Las Vegas deli to name a sandwich after him. Candi Strecker takes us into the world of fashion model babies. Redd Boggs---nothing I say about his "Penseroso" segments will sound right; suffice it to say that this is near-perfect writing. Socorro Burbee recalls working in the same machine shop as Laney & Burbee in the early 1950s. *Sigh* You need this zine.

Here's the 50th Anniversary Issue of Bill Danner's *Stefantasy* (#116), a pretty little letterzine, hand set in metal type since June 1945. No, not *this* issue, you bozo! *Ahem* Really up to 81.67 % milder, you can count on that!

Finally, I've got Brin-Marie McLaughlin's *Squeel*! 4. There's a nice rant by Dan Lopez against tabloid TV and for Saturday morning cartoons (he especially likes The Tick, Batman & Robin, and Eek! the Cat) to break up the main action of the zine. And that main action is discussion on BayCon and BArea fandom by both Brin-Marie and her husband John. Hoo-boy, but things seem hot down there: Costumers kicking out both fannish and sercon fans from leading positions with the con, problems with inexperienced hands at the helm of program book production, etc., etc. ~~Sounds like Seattle fanfighting.~~ All I hope is that Brin-Marie doesn't get burned out by all this BayCon foofaraw, and keeps on publishing her very good zine for years to come.

And that's all for now. Don't forget to send your zines for review to me at 1709 South Holgate, Seattle, WA 98144. See you in 3 months!

Addresses:

FAPA, *Trapdoor*: Robert Lichtman, PO Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442.

Galileo: J.C. Verrecchia, Calle 59 #3048, (7630) Necochea, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Xuense: Alain le Bussy, Rue du Cimetière 21, 4130 Esneux, Belgium.

Månblad Alfa: Andreas Björklind, Fanjunkaregatan 9, 582 46 Linköping, Sweden.

Catalog of Portuguese SF (US \$3/fascicle): Livraria Themus Livros, Av. São João 526, Centro---São Paulo SP, Brazil.

Holland SF: Redactie Holland SF, Postbus 77, 4020 BB Maurik, The Netherlands.

Shards of Babel: Roelof Goudriaan, Caan van Necklaan 63, 2281 Rijswijk ZH, The Netherlands.

Thyme, ASFN, Artychoke: c/o PO Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, VI 3005, Australia.

Galacto-Celtic Newsflash: Franz Miklis, A-5151 Nussdorf 64, Austria

Malade: Kev McVeigh, 37 Firs Rd, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7QF, UK.

Erg: Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Dr., Scarborough, N. Yorkshire YO12 5RQ, UK.

Eyeballs in the Sky: Tony Berry, 55 Seymour Rd., Oldbury, Warley, W. Midlands B69 4EP, UK

The Frozen Frog: Benoit Girard, 1016 Guillaume-Boisset, Cap-Rouge PQ G1Y 1Y9, Canada.

Ben'Zine: Ben Zuhl, 2239 Highland Ave., Falls Church VA 22046.

Wild Heirs: c/o Arnie & Joyce Katz, 330 S. Decatur--Suite 152, Las Vegas NV 89107.

Stefantasy: William M. Danner, R.D. 1, Kennerdell PA 16374.

Squeel: Brin-Marie McLaughlin, 247 19th Ave. #6, San Francisco CA 94121-2353.



A LETTER FROM HOUMA

By Elizabeth Hooper-Lane

PART II: Cajun Cooking

(Robust, inventive cooking evolved by the Acadian settlers of the bayou country, rooted in resourcefulness, use of available ingredients, and making do in artful ways.)

When Chris and I began dealing mentally with the idea of moving to the Louisiana Bayou, the idea of experiencing a proliferation of Cajun cuisine was placed in the "pro" column of our deliberations. The rich flavors and history of Cajun cooking are well known and loved throughout our community of friends and family. My coworkers in Madison enjoyed many a lunchtime shrimp Poboy at 'Da Cajun Way (A Madison restaurant), and Andy and Carrie's Christmas Eve Jambalaya tradition is a well established one.

Experiencing this cuisine first hand has been both interesting and extremely rich, even though in our part of the bayou there are a few basic Cajun dishes, and that's about it. We have found the essential ingredients for Cajun cooking to be: crawfish (or are as they are affectionately referred to down here, buttbugs), shrimp, okra, tomatoes, cabbage, green pepper, onion, white and red beans, popcorn rice, filé, roux and sauce piquante, Ettouffée, gumbo, jambalaya, dirty rice and beans are all staples of all the restaurants in our area. Each of these dishes seems to be essentially be made with the same ingredients in different combinations. They are all wonderful food, spicy and hearty, clearly devised as inexpensive ways to fill up hard laboring men, women and children. Each of many Cajun restaurants in our area has their particular specialty, and all the basic dishes vary strongly from one place to the next.

During crawfish and shrimp season hot, boiled-live shellfish is the most common dish of the day at all the local eateries. Huge beer trays of buttbugs, boiled in hot, spicy seasoned water, are smacked down on your table along with boiled potatoes, onions and corn on the cob. Empty trays are provided for the detritus and it's imperative that you never mix your discarded heads with uneaten crawfish; things become way too confusing as you rip heads off (and suck out the hot juices if you're really brave), peel carapaces back, pull the meat out of the tail, dip in the hot sauce and eat as fast as you can, before your tray gets cold. We have noticed the locals consider almost a right of passage for non-natives to suck the crawfish heads; one rises in local esteem to be able to claim this feat.

Besides boiled crawfish and shrimp, po-boys seem to me the most common menu item we have encountered. Essentially a submarine sandwich, po-boys are available in 1/4, 1/2 or whole sizes, or on a bun (your standard white hamburger type), or toast (your standard Mrs. Karl's white type). You can get typical sub sandwich meats, roast beef, turkey, etc., or choose the deep-fried oysters or shrimp. Toppings include finely shredded lettuce or cabbage, tomatoes, pickles and mayonnaise. Chris stops at this point while I prefer to liberally douse the creation with the ever-present bottle of hot sauce. The quality of po-boys varies drastically from one establishment to the next, and we have already determined the one to choose if you are in the mood for oysters, and the one that is best if you prefer shrimp.

Of course, the beating heart and most ubiquitous feature (besides an utter lack of any malt beverage other than products of the Miller, Coors and Anheuser-Busch brewing empires, a trying condition for two Northerners from the land of Germanic neo-brewing), of each of these mom & pop style restaurants is the bottle of hot sauce on the table. Whether it's Tabasco, Crystal or a specialty brand, each is more than equipped to spice up dishes that are typically served from the kitchen a fairly mild state.

Obviously the experience of being immersed in this kind of cooking has been a real treat, something that the many people we know don't have the chance to enjoy, back in Madison, the Northwest, or Appleton, Wisconsin. But there does seem to be a price to pay. We have always loved foreign food, variety and experimentation. In Madison, we ate Italian, Greek, Lebanese, Chinese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, Japanese, German, French, Indian, Cajun, Mexican and American meat-n-potatoes. Chris and I used to play this game with each other: if you had to eat one cuisine every night for the rest of my life, what would it be? Let me tell you, my answer was not Cajun. Yet, outside of chain-store fast food, that is just about all there is here. For instance, on the hour-long drive from the Marine lab to the shopping mall on the far side of town, one passes China-on-Wheels, Danny's Fried Chicken, McDonald's, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, (don't forget the worldwide Shoney's), and the following places of Cajun delights: Sportsman's Paradise, A'Bear's, Bayou-Blue Po-Boys, Dave's Cajun Kitchen, Kiki's Kajun, Highway 24 Seafood, 1921 Club Seafood, Oyster Reef Seafood, Rick's Cajun, Robbie's Po-boy, Oakshire

Po-boy, Savoye's Louisiana Cooking, Spahr's Seafood, Dula and Edwin's Cajun, French Loaf Po-boys, Gino's Seafood and Pizza, LaFont's Cajun, Bubba II's Seafood, K-Jay's Seafood, Ms. Brandi's Seafood, and Mr. Po-boy. You have to go well out of your way to choose a non-Cajun, non-Seafood place in our little town.

So, despite our pervasive craving for a Parthenon gyros, Kang-Pet from Bahn Thai, and feta cheese and kalamata olives, we are learning much about cooking at home, which is a good thing to be able to do on a budget like ours. Our concern now is what to feed our non-seafood-loving visitors. A Louisiana-born vegetarian co-worker at the lab was surprised at our concern about feeding our vegetarian brother-in-law, Noel, exclaiming that there are plenty of fried potatoes, deep-fried vegetables, fried cheese sticks, etc. (she says she doesn't really like tofu anyway).

Love always, Liz.

P.S.: Some Definitions (from *Louisiana Legacy*, Thibidoux Service League, New Orleans: Celestial Publishing Co., 1982):

Crawfish (crayfish) - A small freshwater crustacean related to the lobster.

Dirty Rice - A Louisiana dish of rice cooked with bits of liver or meat and seasoned, usually with onion, green pepper and parsley.

Etouffée - Method of cooking something (usually shrimp or crawfish) smothered in chopped vegetables over low flame, tightly covered, until tender.

File - Powdered leaves of the sassafras tree sprinkled sparingly over gumbo as a flavoring and thickening agent.

Gumbo - A soup-like mixture made with many different combinations of meat, thickened with file or okra and served over rice.

Jambalaya - Highly seasoned mixture of any of several combinations of seafood, meat, poultry, sausage and vegetables, simmered with raw rice until liquid is absorbed.

Okra - Green tapered pod used for gumbo or as a vegetable.

Roux - A mixture of flour and fat cooked until it is very brown with nut-like flavor and aroma, then used for thickening sauces and soups.

Sauce Piquante - A thick sharp-flavored sauce made with roux and tomatoes, highly seasoned with herbs and peppers, simmered for hours.

♥☒♥

Hey, you've killed the Prince of Orange!

Prothonotary's Progress

As we walked past the frantic last-minute electioneers who crowded close outside the signs marking the allowable distance from the polling place, a woman thrust a Nestle's Crunch bar into my hand, saying, "Please vote for my husband." Around the wrapper had been attached a crudely printed piece of paper reading, "Phizacklea for Supervisor." Buying votes with chocolate. How far we've fallen from the good old days of machine politics, when operatives would offer bums drinks to come to the polls. (But chocolate might be effective in fannish contexts, I mused. True, you'd have to use better quality than Nestle's, but what would it take to buy a fan Hugo -- 40, 50 Lindt bars? It's worth thinking about.)

It's always difficult to vote in local elections in a place you're new to. A place like Johnstown, Pennsylvania (actually, we're in Richland Township, which is independent, but if Johnstown were large enough to be considered a metroplex, we'd be part of it) makes it even more difficult because of the web of acquaintanceship.

by Janice Eisen

Not only does everyone know everyone else, but often the same families have been running local government for a couple of centuries. As a result, at least for primary elections, not a great deal of information is spread to voters. In the run-up to this recent primary, our doorbell didn't ring once, and we received only one flyer in the mail. Most of our information had to come from newspaper ads and the rather scanty reports of candidates' positions in the local paper; the most common campaign material was roadside signs, which aren't the best basis on which to make a decision.

Still, we tried. One key was knowing whom the county Democratic Committee had endorsed, and voting against them. Both county parties appear to be irredeemably corrupt. Naturally, then, for County Commissioner we voted for the insurgents -- one is actually an incumbent, but has never received his party's endorsement, and one is a local newspaper columnist and the endorsed candidates' main attack against her was that she'd only settled in the county several years earlier. Did I mention how parochial the Johnstown area is?

Then you get the weird offices. Who gets your vote as Register of Wills, or Coroner, or my personal favorite, Prothonotary (pronounced prothan-oh-tary), a kind of county legal clerk. Again, we started out by dismissing the endorsed candidates. For Prothonotary, our choice was easy: vote against the incumbent, whom an audit had recently caught pocketing passport fees that were supposed to go to the county. (He claimed he hadn't noticed a change in the law.) For the others, we had to pick an un-endorsed candidate based mostly on his ads.

Richland Township Supervisor was a difficult choice. According to the newspaper, every single candidate was in favor of fiscal responsibility. Not much help. I wasn't even sure how much our votes in the Democratic primary mattered in the long run, judging by the fact that, for three open slots, there were seven Republicans running and only four Democrats. Nevertheless, we had to choose. Oh look, our beloved baby-sitter's father is running: there's one. Unfortunately that was no help, since he was unopposed for his primary slot. We ended up voting for two other candidates he was jointly campaigning with, just because his daughter's so good with our four-year-old.

The School Board candidates were easier to choose, since they made their positions crystal clear in the paper. Richland is extremely property-rich, having two major shopping malls, their attendant satellites, and an industrial park, as well as the lowest property taxes in the area and utterly mediocre schools. One candidate we definitely chose not to vote for was the current Board President, who said his number-one priority was keeping taxes the lowest in the area.

(Not that we like paying higher taxes, mind; it just seems to us that a School Board member's *first* priority should be providing a good education. When we tried to tell people around here that, they looked at us as if we were Martians. No wonder we want to get out of the area before our son starts school.)

Since no sample ballots had been printed in the paper, we were taken aback on upon entering the voting booths to discover that we were also expected to vote for various state- and county-level judges. The only information provided on the ballot was name and place of residence; not even incumbency was indicated. I considered not voting for those offices at all, but then decided that my arbitrary choices were just as good as those most



voters were probably making, so I chose. I didn't feel good about it, though.

The results were mixed from our point of view. In a strong repudiation of the county committee, the insurgent Commissioner candidates won nomination by a landslide. The Prothonotary who'd been pocketing the money also won by a wide margin; according to the newspaper, this was because of his personal popularity. (We'd never heard of him before the primary.) Our Supervisor candidates won too, but we couldn't get very excited about that. As for the School Board, which we cared about most, the majority of the incumbents, most of whom we'd voted against, won renomination; the one whose priority is keeping taxes the lowest received by far the greatest number of votes. Anyone for private school?

Regarding the chocolate bar: It turned out I couldn't have voted for Mr. Phizacklea even if I wanted to, since he was a Republican. I ate his candy anyway.



"Captains Peter Weston and John Foyster were already on the field (carefully constructed of pebbles), as were the teams - though separating the latter from the audience was none too easy. The opposition seemed to have a lot of South Africans, Americans and Canadians for an Australian team, but no matter. I actually got the chance to bowl and got someone out - more than I ever did at school. We would have beaten the Australians, of course, had it not been for unorthodox play (Joyce Scrivener thundering down the beach for a wild baseball pitch -- the resulting six stopped only by Mike Glicksohn's rugby tackle of the batsman. Is this cricket?)"
-- Peter Roberts, writing of the England v. Australia cricket match held on Brighton beach at Seacon 1979.

BLOWBACK

[APH: Hi folks! We were a little slow getting this zine out, but here it is at last, while at least some of the fanzines Mark reviewed are still being published. We got quite a few kind letters in response to #28, so let's look at a few:]

Murray Moore
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Midland, Ontario L4R 3E2
Canada

Spent Brass 28: I do not know who the Gepids were, either. My guess would be that they are a star system. I didn't recognize Walter Dunkelberger's name either. Happily, I had the wit to check the index of my *All Our Yesterdays*. One of the pleasures of fanzines is coming across references, and later coming across related references, which together allow me to solve the puzzle. Topic A, for example: As Macbeth is the Scottish Play, Topic A, I gather, is the preferred reference to the TAFF Wars of the 1980s.

I would have been impressed by the inventiveness of John Bartelt's GoH speech at Corflu 11 under ordinary circumstances. The fact, as I understand it, that he produced it under short notice, increases my admiration.

The Third Annual *Spent Brass* Poll was useful as an overview of the fanzine world in 1994. Having access to the Second Annual *Spent Brass* Poll one year ago would have been useful to me in my re-discovery of fanzine fandom. Based on what I did receive, I agree with the Favorite Fanzine result, *Blat!*, *Habakkuk*, and *Mimosa* in that order. (I have yet to see an *Idea*, and did not see *Apparatchik* in 1994.)

My other reaction is, Is this all there is? I understand better the significance of the reappearance of Arnie Katz, and the excitement about the new fan publishers in Las Vegas.

The most intriguing to me of the data in the poll is the appearance of the late Vaughn Bodé's name in the Favorite Fan Artist for Cartooning category.

[APH: You were no more surprised than I was to see the vote for Bodé; it deserved to be known to fandom at large. Your inferences are all dependable, except for the question of the Gepids. For an answer to that, read on.]

Paul Skelton
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Offerton, Stockport
Cheshire, SK2 5NW
England

You have certainly spent some brass sending me innumerable issues of your fanzine, despite my long and continued silence. Are you an Eternal Optimist, or what? I would long ago have given up on me. "Who the fuck does he think he is? Lousy Ingrate!" Back when I was publishing I would regularly drop people from my mailing list because the hadn't responded to the issue before the one when I first considered their names for inclusion. The last thing you need on your mailing list is deadwood, right?

The problem is your zine hasn't been making me feel 'involved', but that lack of involvement isn't too surprising as I have been going through an identity crisis. I thought I was Claude Degler. Actually thinking you're Claude Degler isn't in itself an identity crisis. Unfortunately everybody I met thought I was Claude Degler too, and when everybody else thinks you're Claude Degler then believe me - that's a crisis!

So I've been away, even if mostly only in my own mind. But I see from *Spent Brass 28* that it's true that Death does not release you, and I've been trying to work out from your published scoring system whether it was more likely that 5 people remembered me a little bit or that one person might have remembered me a lot. I think I'd bet on the latter, that option representing a smaller statistical 'blip'.

Paul Skelton, a small statistical blip. I guess that's about right. Did I tell you I was having this identity crisis? Oh, yeah, I see I did.

I guess what it boils down to is feeling comfortable with yourself in time and space. You can get the time right, but the place can be wrong ... which may be why I empathized so much with Elizabeth's 'A Letter from Houma'. I got a definite sense of 'Southern Comfort' from this, coupled with more than a hint of 'No Mercy'. You wonder why Americans ever bother traveling abroad when there are so many foreign countries within their own borders. We never got 'Down South' on our visits, denying us many cultural delights, but what I miss the most (having seen them mentioned since in several James Lee Burke novels, not to mention Elizabeth's piece) are the shrimp po-boy sandwiches. In England shrimp are expensive, so it's the juxtaposition of 'shrimp' and 'poor boy' that has the effect of setting one's mental teeth on edge. Over here, if they're half as interesting as they sound, I reckon I'd need to take out a mortgage to buy one. Kinda like the ice cream vendors, only instead of "Stop Me & Buy One" it would be "Stop Me & Take Out A Mortgage On One". Not as catchy, I guess. Probably why they never took off. "Can I have one of those Averagely-well-to-do Gentleman's Shrimp Sandwiches please?" Even a statistical blip like me can see there's no mileage in that. Hoping you are the same...

[APH: One of the consequences of having a lengthy and productive fannish career is that people will continue to send you zines long after you have done your best to enter the glades of gafia. You might want to get used to this, Skel. I don't know what to say about this Degler fixation; perhaps you should seek professional help.

As for the relative price of shrimp in Louisiana, it is indeed a Wonderful Thing. But while you imagine the plates and plates of fried shrimp, consider how much my poor sister must have to pay for things you and I take for granted. What do you suppose a bottle of Worcestershire sauce goes for in darkest Montegut? Smoked ptarmigan-flavored crisps? How about a copy of Musashi's *A Book of Five Rings*? There, it's not all French bread and cocktail sauce, is it? (Damn, that article made me hungry) . . .]

Jeanne Mealy
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St. Paul, MN 55104

Thanks for *Spent Brass* #28. It was great seeing John Bartelt's Corflu GoH speech. I appreciated Carrie's view of the sights during her Issaquah walk. It's far too easy to forget that people in other areas of the country don't see the same things we do. (As an aside: What do you suppose an Issaquah walk would look like? Maybe it would include little hops to avoid rain puddles, or swoops to the side to pick up a coffee mug, or..)

While I've never read *Dhalgren*, I was a fan of the belated "Northern Exposure" and GREATLY amused at Candi Strecker's comparison of the two.

Thanks for running your sister's letter about life in Louisiana. I've never lived in the south, so it's wonderful vicarious experience (better than me in many cases). I do know about how having kids can take over life. It happened to one of my sisters. John (my SO) and I can handle only so much of the baby-and-child stories and behavior. Attempting to change the subject is a challenge. (I love to make her glaze over by talking about our cats the way she talks about the kids. I'm quite capable of spinning cutesy stories for hours, but generally refrain.)

I like the idea of approaching their stay as an opportunity to be tourists. I'm amazed at how many people settle into a rut and appreciate only a fraction of what their area has to offer. Local sights and events can be divided into themes, such as humorous, historical, educational, *sensu wonder*, spontaneous, and so on. I wanna hear about the swamp tour! (Another example of the advantages of vicarious travel: I hate humidity and bugs, which love me.)

One thing Liz said touched a nerve: "I still find myself thinking about 'when we go home'." (I have no idea where those quotes are supposed to go.) That reminds me of the claustrophobic feeling I get after a move. It's not just the acres of boxes and furniture. It's that THIS isn't home yet and I can't go back because home isn't there anymore. I moved so much in college that I was reluctant to unpack, which certainly didn't make me feel very comfortable. There are many reasons why 'move' is a four-letter word.

Kim Huett
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Australia

I can see that Mike McNerny hit the nail on the head when he suggested in #26 that Habakkuk would feature in the next poll. The really interesting question is will it and Bill Donaho relive past glories by making it to the Hugo nominations once more. As I said to Bill it would certainly make for a very special record.

...I can tell you that the Gepids were those Italians who couldn't be bothered supporting either the Guelph or Ghibelline factions. Due to their apathy it's only natural they should be termed Gepid.

Well aren't we all at one time or another. Since I've been on holidays I haven't been any further than the local shops and am I going to pay for that when I get back to work. Apart for the not inconsiderable amount of walking and standing that my job requires I'm in the habit of catching a bus which only takes me part of the way home. I like to walk the last 6½ km (just over four miles) since it doesn't normally take more than an hour or so. The only draw-back to this is I think at some point somebody outlawed flat ground in this city and it can't be found for love nor money. Luckily my normal routes don't include anything especially steep or high. Damned if I know how I'm going to get into shape for walking around San Francisco. I can only hope the Seattle topography isn't too dissimilar to that of Canberra as I'm looking forward to covering as much of the city as possible while I'm over. Assuming I can come over that is and I can't be certain about that yet...

[C.R. : Sorry, Kim, but Seattle strongly resembles San Francisco in topography. In a recent interview with street engineers from both metropoli, it was determined that San Francisco has the steepest street (mostly because Seattle engineers refuse to build streets steeper than the average Japanese 4-cylinder car can negotiate), but that the average grade on the cities' streets is almost precisely the same. The Seattle bus system, tho not as picturesque as the cable cars, nor as fast as Bart, will get you everywhere you might want to go. But if you still plan to do a walking tour you may want to consider finding a couple of flights of stairs to get into shape.]

[APH: As for the Gepids, they were in fact a quasi-Italian people, but they date from several hundred years before the factional conflicts you mentioned. They seem to have lived in Lombardy, and some sources assert that the term is to some degree interchangeable with "Lombard." Who the Lombards knew in order to get Lombardy named after them, while the Gepids were chumped and got a one-way-ticket to the small type in the back of the reference books is still not entirely clear. There is certainly the possibility that block-voting was at work, but it will take much more research to determine if this is the case.]

Catherine Mintz
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Philadelphia, PA, 19103-5837

Thank you for sending *Spent Brass*. I enjoyed Andy's sister's letter, especially the part about Mardi Gras. Her description of "the good beads" reminded me of a short film on PBS about unusual cars. One car was completely covered in growing grass, and another had a cityscape on the roof, but the most elegantly

decorative was covered with thousands of Mardi Gras beads in swirling patterns. One question: are the beads supposed to bring good luck, or is the scramble for trinkets just normal acquisitiveness?

[APH: As far as I can tell, the process of getting all the beads is more fun than having them, and people often start giving the beads away as soon as they are sufficiently weighed down with them]

Ben Indick
428 Sagamore Avenue
Teaneck, N.J. 07666-2626

Thanks for SB, amiable and unprepossessing as ever, albeit quarterly when it used to be daily to weekly. Maybe it just seemed that way. Anyway, I am very flattered to have finished a mere 74 votes shy of beating out shy Ted White in the Essay poll. In fact, I was only 12 out of 4th place, so that's not so bad. Of course, it's a good thing so many FAPAns are on the responding list! I am, however, crushed that I failed even to place for cartooning, only because I didn't try. The voters failed to take in account my unexpressed ambitions. I request a recount.

David Haugh
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Woodburn, OR 97071

I ACTUALLY GOT MENTIONED
IN THE VOTE! IMAGINE
WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED
IF I'D PRODUCED SOME
WORK LAST YEAR.



ANDY & CARRIE THANKS
FOR "SPENT BRASS" DON

Pamela Boal
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Well my hands have improved enough to allow me to write a short note but who can keep up with you two with or without working hands! The *Spent Brass* Poll really shows that fanzines are alive and well, whatever fans may write about their demise. The lists are lengthy and still do not mention artists, writers, and zines whose work I know and enjoy. Had I been able I would have mentioned Shep Kirkbride as fan artist in both categories and *The Mentor* as one of my favorite zines. In the writer category there are fans receiving votes who to the best of my knowledge have not written an article for three or four years. Presumably those aforementioned fans are writing in zines that I do not receive. Put all those factors together and it would seem to indicate there is a very healthy amount of activity going on out there. Hooray for your Poll for highlighting the good news, even if its timing meant that some folks didn't get to vote.

I enjoyed your article on walking, Carrie. Personally I would make walking (at least once a week) part of every school curriculum, not just for the sake of health but as an exercise in seeing. When I was a child the journey to and from school was anything but a straight line twixt a and b, those journeys were a part of exploring the neighbourhood. Nowadays at least in Britain for reasons of safety children are accompanied to school. Those who are not bundled into cars are rushed along the straight route by busy mothers anxious to get to work. No chance to look at interesting buildings or gardens and certainly not allowed to explore the adventure possibilities of waste ground.

Even as a passenger and not needing to pay attention to the road ahead, a car moves too swiftly for me to really see the places we are passing through. That is the best part about being on our river cruiser, we travel at a slow walking pace. As our preferred end of the river is quiet if we see anything interesting on the bank we can turn back or even moor up and explore on foot (well unless it is within two or three yards it is on wheel for me) There is the opportunity to closely observe flora, fauna and even architecture. Recently we watched a crow trying to snatch a meal of gosling, true the crow was driven off by the geese but we were amazed at how lax they seemed to be in watching over their charges. There is a road passing over the river and alongside the grassy area where the gosling drama was enacted but I strongly suspect that we on our boat were the only ones to observe the event.

Elizabeth Hooper-Lane's letter is most interesting. If there are cultural differences in all the counties and cities of England (never mind Scotland, Wales and Ireland) how much greater can one expect those differences to be in the USA, where most States are bigger in area than the whole of Britain. Elizabeth's letter demonstrates that while the States may be united, one American can find another American totally baffling. Still not sure that the forgoing facts excuse the

ignorance of European geography demonstrated by fans in another zine, though I would excuse confusion over culture.

Gary Farber
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The problem with *Spent Brass*, this past year, is that, for this reader at least, it is easy to be displaced from mind by *Apparatchik*, the two zines are nearly identical, being distinguishable only by focusing on exceedingly subtle details -- the two most notable being *Spent Brass's* current lack of frequency, and the co-editorship of Carrie Root. So the seeming homogeneity of these two zines is increased greatly in this issue [#27] by the utter absence of Carrie, which otherwise would serve as the overwhelming distinction.

[C.R.: Even when I don't write in an issue, I try to exert some less tangible influence - on the number and subtlety of typos, for example. I hope my more obvious presence in #28 helped you make the distinction. I've moved to a different division at work, which I hope will leave me with a little more time for fanac as well as hiking.]

... Ignoring the substance of Jeanne Gomoll's typically delightful piece, the main thought I take away is to wonder if the "Scott Custis" she writes about is actually any closer to a real character than Dick Geis' "Alter Ego".

I thought for a moment as to how it was too bad I'm actually living by myself in my own apartment since it prevents me from utilizing this extremely useful dialogue-technique for exposition in fan-writing about my daily life, as Jeanne has so skillfully been utilizing this "Scott Custis".

Making a cortical-thalamic pause, I instantly realized that I need only create a hoax partner, just like Jeanne, and I too will be able to engage in clever exposition about my neighborhood, life, rug auctions, meetings with Senators, and so on, in dialogue form, avoiding those nasty Expository Lumps that every home owner tries to spray for to keep them from lurching upwards, surprising you in the garden. They're particularly undesirable in mashed potatoes.

[C.R.: Now, Gary, I know that you're a city boy born and bred, but surely even you know that the potatoes are mashed *after* they leave the garden - they don't grow that way.]

Therefore, when you hear about my upcoming wedding, have no doubts whatsoever, and be sure to send especially expensive gifts.

My new wife, Betty Jo Beolosky (a mail-order bride from Las Vegas fandom), and my new pal, Richard Newsome, are unable to travel easily to conventions due to their unfortunate disabilities, but that doesn't prevent them from engaging in simulating conversation with me.

You'll be hearing further.

Victor's account of his visit with Ted White was enlightening, and indeed eerily like reading a piece by Ted, which should not surprise me, but it also

engenders the thought of how well Victor has read up on *Masson vs. Maloom*.

Mark Manning's fanzine reviews are a pleasant enough read, and adequate, but otherwise mildly disappointing. He neither examines any single zine closely, nor takes any general theme or overall point about the fanzines he covers.

When one mounts the platform to issue judgments on other fanzines, you must be held to the standards you yourself have raised, and Mark's efforts here a bit minimal. Personally, I would have been a bit kinder to Tracy Benton's *Casbah* 1, as an example, who put more effort into her zine than Mark did to this column. (I also believe in cutting first-time fan publishers, particularly those who display obvious promise, a little slack; in this case Tracy didn't need it.)

Gordon Eklund
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Seattle WA 98188

Having been handed *Spent Brass* 28 and *Apparatchik* 31 at Corflu I want to be sure to offer a response here and now before the sands of time sweep over the waves of memory and I don't plumb forget and thus run the risk of getting sliced like a tree in a clear-cut forest off your mailing list once again. The time before I read every *Spent Brass* you sent me with religious relish (and delight) but never got around to letting you know this. I apologize for the omission. Among my April Fools Day resolutions this year is one that says I shall henceforth respond with regularity to all fanzines received in hopes of getting more. Another April Fools resolution is never to wear a false red nose in a crowd of strangers from foreign lands. The list goes on.

I've never quite figured out how I missed even knowing about the 1988 Corflu in Seattle. I think I was still living in Tacoma then, which would have made for a bit of a trip getting to the con and back. Nevertheless. I certainly wish I had. For nostalgia's sake if no other. It wasn't until 1989 or 1990 that I started writing stuff for apas again.

Carrie seems to have found a way to combine several of my own favorite activities with her trekking since sometimes I jog, sometimes I walk, sometimes I hike. It depends on who I'm with. When I'm alone I like to jog because it's fun and my mind roams free and I can think keen thoughts. When I'm with my son, Jeremy, we go up in the mountains after planning a day-long hike and end up somewhere up high where you can see a long long way off into the distance. Then back in the city often after work I have a good friend with whom I go for walks through parks and dales and we talk at as good a clip as we walk and sometimes when we're done we go off somewhere together and eat dinner and probably put on a lot of the pounds we just walked off. I have fun engaging in all three pursuits though for different reasons.

Jerry A. Kaufman
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Thanks for all the issues of *Spent Brass* and *Apparatchik* you've sent us over the years. I realize that I haven't sent the egoboo you have deserved, and Corflu has recharged my batteries to the point of sparking off this brief letter. Who knows how long this will last, eh?

As for those fanzines, let's see: I enjoy things like "Rainy Town Tattler" because I like news about people I know. Gossip, some would say. They'd be right. Dan's illo reminds me of Avocado Pit days when we'd sit thinking up Horrible New Flavors of the Month for Baskin-Robbins. Brass and Wool were among my favs.

I found my one walk with the Karrie/Carrie twins to be fun and full of soul searching. I enjoyed it, especially the end when we would up at the medieval festival (was it Canterbury Faire?). Carrie, I'm not planning any kayak trips soon, so give me a call.

Mainstream's not very high on the list of favorite fanzines, but at least it placed. We're a little more encouraged, and will probably continue to publish (why, we have some fine Steve Stiles cartoons and a fat envelope of Rotslers to use). We may finally abandon mimeo, though, for a bunch of reasons. Besides the

usual ones: price, work involved, etc., we don't seem to have the space needed to set up the mimeo. However, I still balk at the much higher cost of photocopying.

Does Candi Strecker read *Entertainment Weekly*, which does this sort of comparison frequently, or is it just the *Zeitgeist*? She does it more effectively than *ET*, but I don't think Chip can expect any compensation checks from Roslyn any time soon.

And thanks for pubbing your sister's letter, which is pretty entertaining and sometimes appalling (not your sister's opinions but the things she depicts). Actually, I find appalling things are often entertaining for just that reason: "Can you believe it?" When we started publishing *The Spanish Inquisition*, by the way, we got a lot of mileage out of Suzle's brother's old letters to her. So there's a precedent. (And I'm sure we're not the first.) Literate relatives are a blessing.

[WAHF: Sheryl Birkhead, Buck Coulson, Tommy Ferguson, Brad Foster, Teddy Harvia, Irwin Hirsh, Kim Huett, Lloyd Penney, John D. Rickett, Garth Spencer, Candi Strecker, Lauraine Tutihasi & Michael Waite. Thanks for all your mail; we'll be back in late October with some coverage on The Scottish Convention!]

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