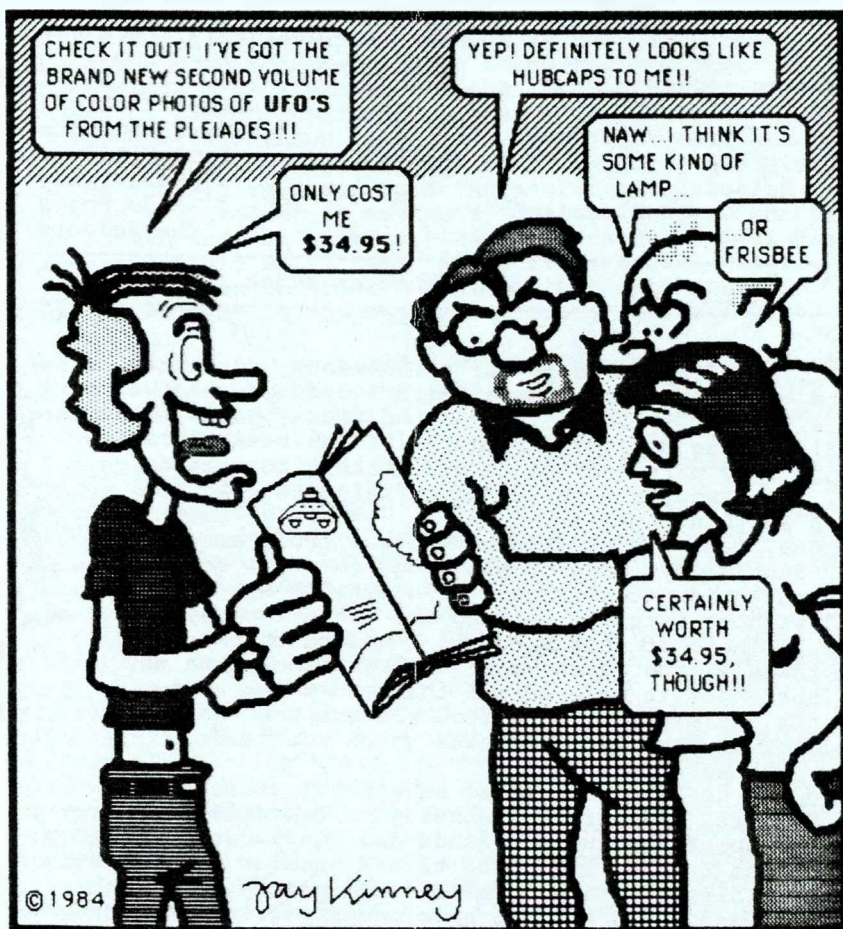


IS IT THE FIFTH? IS IT THE FOURTH? NO, IT'S THE THIRD

TRAP DOOR

THE FANZINE FAVORED BY RURAL EH-HIPPIES,
EST GRADUATES, AND THE BURNED-OUT HUSK OF PUNK FANDOM





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I still have a piece of chicken stuck in my teeth!

IN HIS OTHERWISE WAHfEd letter of comment, Ted White wrote: "The one item in the issue which I did not read was Eric Mayer's piece. It looks like a good piece, but since he has begun slandering me and, subsequently, has resisted all efforts on both my part and the part of others to reason with him, I have adopted a policy of refusing to read or comment upon anything by him."

Well, gee, Ted, I must say that it was truly amazing (this is my subtle way, Ted, of plugging you as a "former pro") that you could detect that Eric's article was "a good piece" without actually reading it. When I paused to realize the fullness of this concept, I had to chuckle: "Now, that takes a true journeyman fan," was about the way I put it. But, too, it made me sad that you'd let something as minor and everyday as a feud prevent you from enjoying all of an issue of a fanzine which you said in your letter "was worth the wait."

This is not to be construed as a personal attack on Ted or anyone else. Rather than wanting to Take Sides or have actual "opinions" in print about the current feuds and controversies raging through our corner of fanzine fandom, I want to take a broader look, think of the ebb and flow of fan history, view it all in the proper perspective. So often in the fannish past, good periods have occurred, sustained themselves for a time, and then either concluded naturally or (as often as not) gone down in flames over someone(s) taking things too seriously in some abrasive fashion. Even this far down the line from the worldcon, it is still seemingly impossible for two fans to get together--even Glen Ellen fans--without having to converse about Ted, Patrick, Richard, Eric and the rest.



DOORWAY

Speaking of the worldcon, when I arrived there Thursday evening, having driven from Glen Ellen to Anaheim the scenic way all day long, I soon found myself gravitating to Ted White's room where, already in progress, Topic A was raging away at a room gathering studded with the many facets of Ted's group mind. Like Terry Carr in WIZ #12, I will have to plead DNR (for Do Not Remember) to the specifics of what was discussed, but it was a most sercon conversation.

Preparing some hours later, finally exhausted, to leave, Ted asked me what I had thought of the evening's events. In my tired state, I said I had felt both involved and somehow also detached while discussion was going on and it had taken on a surreal tone something like a fantasy world in which everyone was immersed. Only instead of being Coventry or even Freddy-the-Pig Land, it was fanzine fandom itself!

It should be restated here that I'm not partisan in this matter. I've known Ted since 1959 when he responded to my first fanzine, PSI-PHI, with trades, comments and contributions. We enjoyed being "expansive" and "non-goal oriented" in small secret apas together in the early '60s. More recently, as the above might indicate, I've found his presence at all of the West Coast conventions I've attended and the room gatherings he's hosted to be high points of those cons for me. I've known Bergeron's work since he first reappeared with WARHOON (its first reappearance) in SAPS mailings in the early '60s and have a high regard for his writing and his editorial work. I consider the Willis issue to be an incredible labor of love for fandom and an essential volume in anyone's fannish library. Patrick I know from TELOS and IZZARD and his writing elsewhere (especially in WIZ) and have a high regard for his work, too. Eric, like Patrick, is new to me in that he (they) entered fandom after I left it, but in the several years I've seen his work I've enjoyed it and he is developing into a regular contributor here.

I've seen everyone's presentations of their own version of what is going on here in the field at this time, and I can find both points of agreement and disagreement with everyone's sides of this as expressed in their fanzines and DNQ letter files. But I shudder when I see so many currently active fans losing their senses of humor and infusing their fan writing with such a large dose of negativity. My wish at this point is that all this somehow can be resolved peacefully and that, hopefully, some friendship and unity can be preserved or created anew. And that this slowly-building bubble of fannishness which has appeared and been nurtured in fandom since around 1980 can maintain and continue to flourish.

Ted's remarks in egoscan ("...fandom will be sadly diminished for me") and Eric's in the latest and last GROGGY ("I'm going to sit back now and do some thinking, decide whether given the resources available to me and the current state of fandom, it is possible here to accomplish something creative, to have any fun") are indicative of the effect this is having on fanzine fandom. It's been since 1964 that we've seen the spectacle of well-regarded fans totally blowing their fannish goodwill. What followed then was that many fans withdrew from active fan activity and either gafiated or retreated into apas, and fandom entered a doldrums. I like to think that we have a special responsibility, as heirs to the "original" fandom (the one from whence the huge splintered fandom of today sprang), the fandom that remembers all the way back to its beginnings, to avoid controversy of this debilitating sort and keep the tradition of tolerance and good humor alive.

Towards the end of the worldcon, Ted said we should all write up our thoughts about Topic A and present them in our own fanzine or by arrangement in someone else's. And then, he said, we should be done with it and get back to everyday fanning. To which I can only say, I have and I will.

(continued on page 11)

LIFE IN THE FREE FIRE ZONE



San Francisco

Isn't it amazing?

Sixteen years ago, the Democrats staged their usual love feast in Chicago. It turned out, among other things, that relatively few of us street types lived there, so tens of thousands of us trekked from anywhere to Chi, most naively expecting to enjoy Act Two of the Summer of Love, and possibly to end the Vietnam War.

The results were edifying. First was the most spectacular copshow since the General Strike of 1934, showing decisively what happens when you pit thousands of pacifist love-freaks against a well-armed military force.

The second effect was to send Richard Nixon to the White House. Hippies did that! As for the War, Nixon campaigned in '68 on a promise to end it, and four years later ran for re-election on the same promise. He finally did end it--which he could have done at any time--in hopes of defusing Watergate. So much for that.

The third effect was to severely compromise the serenity of the Democratic National Convention. Not even delegates or elected officials proved immune to the copshow.

As a fourth effect, the Demos thereafter limited their orgies to easily defensible sites.

But now here they are, not just in our front yard--which would be Oakland and might make sense--but in our very livingroom. Have the Demos forgotten Chicago? (Politicians have notoriously short and flexible memories.) Do they think we've all died? Is this a gesture of contempt for us semi-left folks, implying that we're no longer worth worrying about? Have the Democrats lost their minds?

Whatever, the San Francisco Police Department has not forgotten Chicago. The security arrangements for this political gangbang are equalled, if at all, only by the arrangements for the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. You can't even sneeze without dampening a cop.

The Moscone Center parking lot has been declared an Official Demonstration Area. There are gun emplacements at all four corners. Really. It's what, in 'Nam, they used to call a Free Fire Zone.

I'm beginning this report on Monday, six hours before the show is due to open, and so far the security arrangements haven't been especially taxed. Last Thursday the SFPD gave us a free sample of what it can do when anti-Falwell demonstrators at Union Square hurled invisible objects at the helpless TAC Squad, but otherwise nothing much has happened.

I saw that event on the 10 o'clock news. The coverage opened with detailed videotapes of cops swinging their billies left and right like baseball bats, clouting people over the head with them, choking people with them, jabbing people in the belly, in a display of clubbing virtuosity that would have moved any Neanderthaler to gaping admiration. (Of course, many of the demonstrators were women and children, and some of them might even have been gay, so desperate measures were clearly necessary.)

This was followed by a filmclip of Police Chief Con Murphy explaining that his officers are all highly trained and would never use their billy clubs in the way we had just seen.

(This didn't bother me; I've finally learned that everything a cop says must be true. My parents tried to tell me that, and all of my teachers at school, but it took years of dedicated cop-watching to make me understand that anything a cop says MUST be true. It's where you put the accent that makes the difference. And since all judges, prosecutors, juries, reporters, elected officials and cops believe it, who am I to argue?)

So. As of 8 am, July 16th, the 39th birthday of the atom bomb, the convention's been pretty dull. There was a possibility of action yesterday, when a giant labor march and rally and the National March for Gay and Lesbian Rights seemed likely to overlap, but nothing came of it. The sky was full of helicopters, but that was all.

(Whatever else it may be doing, by the way--San Francisco being what it is--this convention is already making an interesting assortment of strange bedfellows.)

The absence of surprise seems to be the theme of the Democratic National Convention, as it is of the Republican shindig later on in Dallas. In each case, the peak excitement, officially, will come during those scrotum-tightening hours of tension waiting to learn who'll be nominated.

But SF's a congerie of confrontation freaks, street theater madmen and bored cops who haven't had a decent riot since the White Night, and the surest way to guarantee surprises is to try to prevent them.

My main job during this convention is setting type--there's some strange Karmic indebtedness involved there--but I intend to take off Tuesday at noon, when the Ku Klux Klan will stage an anti-gay demonstration and the John Brown Anti-Klan Coalition will mount a Stop-the-Klan rally in the Free Fire Zone--simultaneously.

If that doesn't generate some entertaining copy, I'll skulk back to my typesetting machine and make up the rest of the damned convention out of whole cloth and pique.

No one will ever know the difference.

A Ticket To Ride

And Monday, this 39th day of Trinity, I actually attended the convention. Though I wouldn't've missed it for the world, I'll never do that again.

My press passes eased me through a cordon of terribly polite cops, another cordon of anonymous security persons of some sort, between two pretty women with frozen eyes, through a metal detector, down a ramp and on to the floor. Suddenly I was a cat in a kennel.

I was the only long-haired male in the entire auditorium!

This was only a startling impression at first, but with the hours it expanded into an observation, and then a certainty. Democrats--official ones--of no matter what age, no longer wear their hair long. This has to be significant--all sudden changes are--but of what I can't imagine.

The shock is still upon me. I haven't been the only longhair in a crowd of any size since 1958. For 26 years, as for scattered generations

before then, long hair has been a sign of freedom, even if only from the barber. Slaves have always worn short hair, free men long.

Moscone Center's built like a huge soup bowl--underground. (I don't know how you-all feel, but I've been in Northern California long enough that being underground for any time at all tends to interfere with most of my intestinal functions.) On the far rim are three podia--rostra?--two short ones flanking a tall one: very phallic. These are decorated in red, white and blue, like everything else in the hall that can't move, and most of the things that can.

Flanking the rostra are two enormous TV screens, which give the first clue to the monumental scale of this place. Cued by the screens, you can eventually locate the current speaker--always, while I was there, on the middle rostrum--but you can't determine identity or gender without a telescope. You can tell what color clothes the speaker is wearing (except red and/or white and/or blue) because the area is lit for TV cameras.

As is the world at large, it seems.

At the near rim of the soup bowl are a concourse and the ramps. No matter what's going on, the concourse is always filled just past capacity with political people in motion and media people trying to stand still. It blends the worst properties of a BART station at rush hour, a high school hall at class break, and a Shriners' parade. If you're the least bit claustrophobic, or even a little goosey, this is destructive testing.

A man from NBC who's been through all of this before told me Democratic conventions are always thus, no matter how the hall is designed. Democrats like to touch each other. The only deviation he could recall was at the Chicago convention of '68. There were pickpockets there, he said, which isn't usual.

And so again. In the bowl between these rims are the 5200+ delegates, with their families and friends. Democrat soup, so to speak.

And so much for setting the scene.

The Chron claims there are, all told, 28,000 people at this convention. The Chron is obviously not counting dependent minors, whereof there is a horde, nor harlots, free-form journalists, third-world observers, givers-away of food and booze and expensively-printed paper, and me, but I'll go along with 28,000. But the Center's air-conditioning, he advised, is 95% rumor, the weather's been atypical, and the Hall on Monday was deep in the scent of 56,000 armpits: essence of Democrat.

The NBC man told me this is standard--in fact, he bitched that they should hold these expletive-deleted things in the winter--and within five minutes I'd ceased to notice it. One set of armpits smells like rank armpits, 28,000 pair smell like yourself.

But I guess they'll have to fumigate the Hall before they rent it out again.

Or exorcise it.

I spent most of my time observing the people in the bowl--the soup--who are supposed to be determining the shape of the next four years of my life. I've had trouble sleeping since.

There were back-to-back speeches from the rostrum all the time I was there. I was just in time for Dianne Feinstein's welcoming address, in fact, which I'd heard first in 1936. All the speakers stressed how wonderful it is to be a Democrat, what terrible things the Republicans have done to the country, and how great things will be when WE are back in office. No one seemed to disagree, no one seemed to listen, and I couldn't see why any of them should've. When the speaker paused, the delegates cheered. When the lights went up, they delivered standing ovations. So little was said, the speeches could as well have been in German.

(That's a thought I've just regretted having.)

What interested me was the delegates themselves. They all looked vaguely similar, somehow--not quite clones--which was not what I'd expected from the party I grew up in. They are their spouses and kids--it's still a family-oriented party--were all expensively dressed like guests at a backyard cookout in Cleveland.

That bothered me more and more as I moved around the hall, eavesdropping, sniffing vibes, taking notes. This is the party in which I was born and reared, for whose ticket I've generally voted (and will this fall). This is the party that celebrates the diversity of American life, the nobility of the worker. And these were the highest members, the elite, of that party, and they had, by God, achieved uniformity. They'd all become Republicans.

And I could tell that their interests were no longer the same as mine, which was why they could so easily ignore the words of the speeches that have grown so hollow from long use. These people's interests were power and money--Big power and Big money--and God help me if I got in the way. And everything they did or said for four enormous days just bore that out.

(But on the other hand, there's Ronald Reagan, who, if he wins this time, won't have to worry about re-election anymore, and won't have to restrain himself anymore. Sometimes the world is not the sweetest place to live.)

The delegates' kids were equally uniform: pretty, healthy, with a somewhat vacuous expression caused by holding the mouth slightly open, as though about to say "duh." Short-haired boys, girls in crinolines: I haven't seen their like since Truman's second term, when I dressed and looked that way myself.

The time machine is working overtime.

Not exactly clones, and I knew the politics would match. I was in danger of becoming depressed. "The future was yesterday" is great as tag line, but as a maybe fact I hate it. Yesterday was bad enough.

When I finally realized I could get more that I needed of this by ignoring the tube in the privacy of anywhere else, I started to beat my way back to the surface.

I'd lasted not quite four hours.

The real action, of course, was out in the Free Fire Zone. There were all the longhairs anyone could want, a soul-easing abundance of shagginess. (The new Democrats are definitely not shaggy.) There were even beads.

A rally was in progress. I don't know what it was about--Mario Obledo was one of the speakers--but I'd been to it a hundred times before, and it felt good. "Rally" is a specific art form; the words change from time to time, but the form does not. This one, if I didn't speak the language, was indistinguishable from the classic Vietnam and Free-the-Zanesville-1437 rallies.

Alas, I shortly noticed that. I began to wonder what the difference was between the present looking like the past, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the past looking like the present. It was boring either way.

"To hell with it," I decided. I went home and got drunk.

Be Advised

On opening day--the A-bomb's birthday--a 10-minute film celebrating Harry Truman's centennial was featured. The sound track was such that everything the narrator said was understandable, and nothing that Truman said was. However, the bomb was never mentioned.

Come to think of it, neither was "honor," except as a verb. Perhaps we abandoned honor when we abolished its opposite, shame.

Hope Amidst The Blather

Against all odds, I had a human experience at the convention. While I was standing, paralyzed, listening to our very own mayor deliver a speech I'd heard first when I was four, one of the delegates' kids came up to me. He was 16 or such, slightly taller than I, clear of skin and eye, with that look of vacuous good health that all the Democrats are wearing this year. He could have been from Ohio or San Pedro--you've seen the kid.

I ignored him. Diane was coming on like John Kennedy, and I wasn't about to get involved with a political puppy 12 miles from my house. Pretty enough he was, but who is not?

It is not easy to ignore a teenage boy who is staring you dead in the eye.

"Ahem," he said, clearing his throat into one of Dianne's more eloquent pauses. All of these kids seemed supernaturally polite.

He'd apparently noticed that I was the only long-haired man in the hall, because he said, "Do you live here?"

"Yeah," I told him, only half a lie.

He was either shy or embarrassed. After working on it a bit, he said, "Can I ask you a question, sir?"

"Sure," I said: no lie at all.

After beating around several bushes for awhile, he allowed as how he wanted to know about gay life in San Francisco: where it happens, what it's like, how it feels, how you can tell...questions I would never have been able to ask a stranger.

When I'd established that he wasn't doing research for a term paper, I was in trouble. I wasn't going to send this corn-fed Democratling out to a corner on Castro Street--he wouldn't've needed to go that far--but God had clearly assigned me to lead the kid from a darkness to a light. You don't decline that sort of gig.

So I told him everything I know about homosexuality--in a rather condensed form--as noncommittally and nonjudgementally as I could. (Information I will give; other peoples' choices I won't make.)

I outlined the moral and social aspects of it all. As far as I was able, I gave the lad to understand that value judgements only apply to results--not even knowing his vocabulary--and, first, gay is neither bad nor good, just gay; and, second, everyone goes through every phase, and no one thing is necessarily forever.

(I bridle at having to promote Constitutionally guaranteed freedoms in terms of sexual behavior--a limited approach--but I recognize the word-rules of the end of the world I inhabit. To be free, one must first want to be free; to want to be free, one must know what freedom is. One always speaks the language people hear.)

It was the damndest conversation I've ever had. I was sweating like a stevedore, and Dianne was mouthing garbage all the while.

Then the dirty old man who rents the back room in my head took over. I told the boy there are doubtless places in his town where it's claimed the gays hang out, and people in his town and school who're suspected of being That Way, and that visiting such with an open mind and a bit of caution could be informative.

I told him, in fact, how to be a Jew in Germany in 1938. It did not make me proud to do this. It never would have.

Dianne had long ago quit bubbling, Selah, and now some arse was slurping out the praises of some governor. The truth in such conventions is invariably mute. The truth is seldom noisy anyhow.

"Thank you, sir," the puppy said. "You've really helped a lot."

"Just remember to love yourself," I told him. Then I went away from there. I knew exactly that I'd taught a boy to lie, but somehow I felt better about the whole convention.

Be advised: the truth can only make you free when the truth is free; don't bet such odds.

Patrons Of The Arts

Oddly enough, I enjoyed Tuesday's action thoroughly. This was mainly because I observed it in the company of a young Washington Post reporter, and we were free and able to discuss it as theater, as art. (The trouble with political events is that people tend to think they are political.)

The event was the touted confrontation between the K.K.K. and Stop the Klan, an entirely spurious event scripted by the SFPD, who, in print, said they "suspect the Klan will hold an anti-gay rally in the vicinity of Moscone Center."

The timid Klan didn't fall for this, but something called the John Brown Anti-Klan Coalition--can you believe that?--did, and scheduled a "Stop the Klan" response for noon. The Post man and I immediately agreed that this was almost certainly science-fiction, with the same author for both fantasies.

Around 11:30 the Browns--a peculiar blend of gays, anti-white-supremacists, etc.--gathered at the northwest corner of Fourth and Mission, totally obstructing the sidewalk, while Post and I looked on in disbelief. (A few days before, 84 people--Punks for Peace--had been arrested for conspiring to do just that.) In the half hour before it moved, the group grew to possibly 80 bodies, half of them media.

At roughly noon, the Browns crossed to the south sidewalk of Mission and began to demonstrate. When we could stop laughing, Post and I agreed we'd never seen a more incompetent display, and that it was most likely just a clumsy copshow.

The demonstrators were almost exclusively white, all rather more fit than you might expect, not as young on the average as we've learned is normal, oddly mature, but otherwise hetero(homo?)geneous. They bore placards and banners promoting a bewildering array of causes, and walked--now augmented to maybe 300 troops--a long circle between Fourth and Third Streets, chanting slogans.

The slogans, printed and chanted, equated the K.K.K. with the SFPD, the FBI and the CIA; called for an end to White Supremacy and American Imperialism, as well as sexism--sometimes all on a single placard.

Post asked, "Do you think this is real? Do you?"

I said, "The world is full of amateurs, but no, I really don't."

Then the TAC Squad arrived, only five minutes later. They fell into formation, stood thus two minutes--I timed this whole ballet with my digital wristwatch, and we know who really won World War II--and then about-faced and vanished.

Post and I immediately concluded that the TACs'd been called off on more urgent business--probably the Livermore Action Group or the Punks for Peace--and cast about downtown to find the action.

Since the SFPD isn't using sirens for the duration, I had to go by traffic patterns and instinct, and Post had to go by me. But the traffic patterns were perfectly normal, as such things go, and my instincts were wholly uninspired.

"We've been hoaxed," I announced. Back to Fourth and Mission.

We got there at 12:53--San Francisco is a very big town if you're in a hurry. We found the Browns still walking in circles, and the TACs, two platoons in baby-blue helmets and a bunch in baseball caps, falling into

formation in the Free Fire Zone. An amazing concentration of police brass had also materialized somehow.

Post: "Do you think they'll really do it?"

Me: "Thinking isn't worth much in this town. Just watch."

As an echo from the past--several pasts--the sight of those TAC boys and all that brass in the same place was sending chills through me, but I wasn't about to mention this to Post.

At 1:00, the TACs marched west to Minna Street and into the parking garage there. The brass remained. The Browns kept circling. Aha.

There is, by the way, absolutely no shade in the immediate Moscone Center area: no trees, no shelters, no conveniently-placed buildings--and surely no accident. Nor is there drinking water or any place to sit, and the nearest visible phone is up on Market Street. The designers did this on purpose, of course, and it will pay us to keep it in mind.

The JBs did not keep it in mind. They kept walking their stupid Socialist circles in the midday sun and chanting incongruous slogans from desert throats, while the TAC boys lolled in the shady coolth of the parking garage, joking, drinking unidentified liquids, insulting passing women and otherwise horseing around.

The situation had become so altogether stupid, I was almost ready to believe the Browns were real.

Now it was 1:13. A young cop, in uniform, came sauntering up to Post and me. In the course of an unsolicited and ostentatiously casual conversation, he told us what to do if we saw any violence developing--run to either side, of course. He suggested that the Browns were actually Revolutionary Communist Party people and were planning to instigate something. Then he sauntered off to someone else.

Enough of that particular nonsense. "Come on," I ordered, and Post and I crossed to the parking garage, unsheathed our notebooks, and took to observing the TAC men. (This put us in the shade, by the way.)

The TACs soon noticed what we were doing, but apparently didn't feel up for correcting us. A brass headed toward us, thought better of it and turned back. Yay! It's safer to play with snakes than with the TAC Squad.

At 1:40, after roasting for two hours, the Browns gave it up and split. So, promptly, did the TACs.

"You know," Post said, "I don't think this could happen in Washington."

"It shouldn't be able to happen here," I said, instead of explaining. I don't mind the cops never learning, but if the Browns were really on our side and couldn't do any better than that, I was prepared to be annoyed. "I think I'm gonna write a book," I finished.

And I am: a street theater handbook. At least something good can come from this convention.

I am bored with being bored.

End Zone

And that's just about it. I don't intend to bore you with what the pro media did better. I don't intend to degale you with the endlessly dull speeches, nor with Jesse Jackson's wimping out, nor Gary Hart's promising to deliver what he's never intended to. Nor even to compare this con with every science-fiction con I've seen--the comparisons are so obvious you can make them up yourself. I don't even mean to complain about the snowblindness I contracted from the timeless sea of flashbulbs.

The point is plain: we vote against Reagan. We vote Mondale/Ferraro and hope he dies. The point is beside the point.

I've gone into so much details here in part because I'll never see anything like this again, and you probably won't bother, but mainly to

point out that these people are not like you and me. They have entered electoral politics for money and for power, not to further the goals of the Constitution and Thos. Jefferson et al., and certainly neither to protect nor to represent us. We are the source of their money, they exercise their power upon us, round and round. They are not our friends. They think of us as natural resources, livestock, things.

And not because they're at all evil--I suppose most of them are quite kindly--but because that attitude has been written into the rules of the game, and the only way to escape from it is to become a player instead of a pawn. I'm sure if you elected me senator, I'd always act on your behalf, and become ever richer and more powerful as a result.

Because they can't escape it either. It's just the nature of that game. Call it a system if you like.

We might all escape if we changed the game, but nobody's succeeded in doing that yet. Changing the words is the best that's been accomplished, and that's only made things worse.

The rules are built into the game, but the game may be built into us. I hate to think like that.

--Chester Anderson

DOORWAY (continued from page 3)

TO SOME OF YOU receiving this, the notation in the colophon, "Founding members: fwa," might have an unfamiliar ring. Let us go back in time, then, you and I, to the final night of the recent worldcon, to the last in a memorable parties in Ted White's room. At some rather advanced hour of the evening, this party was raging full tilt, all participants knowing full well that this was it, the last night of the convention, and everyone would be dispersing anon. Since I live only in the moment, a product of my long years on The Farm, no doubt, my personal fan-history erasing itself even as it imprints in brain cells dwelling in the more sercon reaches of my mind, I took no notes and remember few names. But suddenly, out of some no doubt cosmic agreement, we were all of a mind to collectively birth the Fan Writers of America, or "fwa" as it was instantly dubbed (pronounced 'fwah'), and give it the initial breath of life. (Please excuse my language; all this writing about childbirth in these first three TRAP DOORs has affected my style.)



We all left the convention vowing to write about the origins and purposes of fwa in our respective fanzines and invite membership. Others will have to write of these matters for now, but our contribution in this issue of TRAP DOOR is to present the fwa logo as designed by Glen Ellen fandom collectively and rendered above by Jeanne.

Your comments are invited and it should be noted that the creation of one logo does not preclude others also springing into being. Let a thousand logos bloom!

WE ARE STILL adjusting our mailing list. Beginning this issue there's a simple code on your mailing label. No mark means you're somehow hooked up. A "c" means we'd like you to consider making an appearance in these pages. But an "x" means you haven't responded in sufficiently detectable fashion to the first two issues and you may or may not be cut if we don't hear from you depending on the availability of new names to displace you.

So much for business. Next issue will be out sooner, rather than later, and will feature the work of Eric Mayer, Gary Hubbard, Jeanne Bowman and Redd Boggs. And of course, your letters...

--Robert "Bob" Lichtman

WE
NEVER
SLEEP

by PAUL WILLIAMS



CONVENTION GIRLS' DIGEST is very good. Those of you who were not at LACon for even a little bit (I was sorta kinda there for a while, I think) will want to know what fwa is, of which many of the rest of us are founding members. It's very simple. fwa is Fan Writers of America, pronounced phwah. United we stand, divided we fall. Which brings me to Topic A. I'm beginning to wonder if Topic A is shifting from r to p. Can't be far behind?

P (don't quote me) is Losing It. He tells me on the phone he's obsessed, and proceeds, unfortunately, to demonstrate. He writes to J about what L said J said (about P of course) and virtually simultaneously writes to L taking umbrage at how J misunderstood him. (I have this strictly third-hand.) And so what, you ask? But the thing is P, like R and T, is one of the cream of our crop, and when he starts frothing and getting serious (not sercon) and generally losing his marbles what hope is there for the rest of us to keep ours? And besides, behind my veil of humor and total mystification, I love P very much (even if he's not my "closest friend in fandom") and regret to see him being so, um, inappropriate. Hey listen guys, time out. Cool it. Hey in there...

What's so bloody sacred about TAPF anyway? Thirty years from now they'll be on like this about fwa, I'm not kidding you.

I did meet Rob Hansen. In Rich & Stacy's living room. He played us a tape of Leroy Kettle talking. It certainly is a wonderful thing.

A lot is being written about the significance of attending or not attending conventions. This is a misunderstanding. The whole point is that everyone attends conventions, whether they're there or not. (This accounts for strange feelings you may have had at times even when you weren't reading the latest SPACE JUNK.) Most trufanac takes place on the astral plane.

("Tonight I'm all/Alone in my room/I'll go insane/If you won't/Sleep with me/I'll still/Be with you/Tonight I'm going to meet you on the astral plane..." --Jonathan Richman)

So this explains why some people act intimate when they've never even loded each other. I mean, you may think some people don't give you a fair shake in their fanzines because you haven't been palsy-walsy with them at a con, but buddy, you don't know what you've been with them at a con! And we're not going to tell you.

You'll never read it in TRAP DOOR.

I have one line to go before the top of the next page. This is a

very orderly fanzine. Its editor is a Virgo. You know what they say about Virgoes.

This is a very slow fanzine. It is not, however, the fanzine of which Brian Aldiss once said, "vaster than empires and more slow." It's not vast. I don't think this issue is even green.

(Readers who can explain the previous paragraph will receive free subscriptions to my N'apa zine VEGETABLE LOVE.) (And speaking of Napa, Corflu comes up sooner than we think--January--be there or be square. Jitneys will run regularly to and from Glen Ellen. This is your chance to see a fan metropolis in the making. I mean listen, Steve Stiles has been here.) (If Ted White gets here, there goes the neighborhood.)

Doesn't it get you that there's all this talk about Ted White's Group Mind when it's widely known (but never acknowledged in print) that for the last dozen years or so Ted has been little more than a mouthpiece for Frank Lunney? Lunney writes all of Ted's stuff, and Ted runs it off on his aging Asdfghjkl Press mimeograph; at parties Frank can usually be seen lounging peacefully on a bed halfway across the room from Ted, practicing his masterful ventriloquy. The gleeful grin and leering eyes are achieved by modern computer technology, and controlled by radio waves.

What really made me laugh recently is D. West's letter about Terry Hill in EPSILON 16. Now how come I think that's funny whereas the current bloodletting in American fandom leaves me sore distressed? Maybe because I feel personally close to several of the Americans who are currently cutting each other to shreds in their fanzines and in circulated correspondence. But mostly I suspect because D. West's letter is funny and however nasty it gets one experiences it as entertainment, performance (I do; dunno how Terry Hill feels about it); whereas what I've read by Bergeron, White and Nielsen Hayden is sadly lacking in humor. (That is, their contributions to the current discussion--not their other writings. You have to watch what you say in this current environment. It's very likely to be quoted back at you.) There's a lot of wringing of hands and a tremendous amount of self-importance. No one among the Yanks has yet accused anyone of anything quite so grave as poodle-fucking (which is a reprehensible act, if the poodles aren't consenting adults), but somehow the American material is far more stomach-turning. It's bitter. It's intended to hurt. It isn't funny at all.

"So what?" "Well, I see enough of people (specifically including me) being defensive and paranoid and shitty to each other in the real world, I don't need to experience this in fandom." "Aha, you think fandom isn't real." "Now look, don't ruin 22 years of carefully-built-up illusion..."

What really bothers me is the gravitational pull of obsession. I remember Watergate caused me to read the newspapers and buy a TV. I threw oceans of attention down that useless hole. Obsession is a disease, it's contagious, and it's very seductive. "We've got to get to the bottom of this." Count me out. I mean, I hope I can keep looking away. Well, I'll read these new fanzines from the principals, I mean how can I resist finding out what they're saying about each other now, but you know I'm not hooked on this stuff, I can quit any time...

This is the I-am-so-fannish installment of We Never Sleep. It certainly lives up to its title, anyway. It's 3:30 in the morning and I have to get up to go to a soccer game at 7 am. As a spectator, not a participant. Aliens vs. Assassins. My son's an Alien.

Getting back to the current crop of fanzines, I've been receiving some excellent ones. I realize that the way my particular obsession tropism works is I expect all fandom to grind to a halt holding its nose or plunging into war or fighting valiantly to avoid all f plunging into w or something, like it's hard for me, just as it is for "the principals," to appreciate that all this stuff isn't that important. And if Richard and Patrick and Ted want to rave endlessly, maybe this is my opportunity to notice that there are some other interesting and attractive people out there in fandom, I don't have to focus my attention so narrowly. A propos of which, I recently received Simon Ounsley's likeable STILL LIFE, wherein it is demonstrated that one actually can be funny about WIZ ll etc etc: "It was Graham James who finally got to the root of the problem. 'As far as I can see,' he said, 'the only thing that Avedon Carol's done wrong is not to sleep with West as well as Hansen.' The rest of us nodded sagely. This seemed to have a ring of truth about it and, indeed, to present a possible solution to the crisis. Rather than resign in ignominy, Avedon could satisfy everyone by having it away with West. ...So we are launching the 'Have a Don' fan fund... This will satisfy West, but will it satisfy Bergeron?"

The fact that I receive all these excellent zines and hardly ever do anything to merit it except the occasional column for TRAP DOOR is an indication of how astral fandom (not to be confused with the League of the same name) functions. I mean you might wonder how I could have done so precious little, and rather poorly at that, throughout my whole fannish career, and still be such a legendary figure as they say in the lettercolumn. It's simple, really: I'm hyperactive on the astral plane. I project letters of comment that are three times as witty and full of satisfying egoboo as anything that ever came in an envelope, and I can do this even though most of my fanzine reading is also confined to the astral level. It's a matter of having the right mental attitude. I've also learned how to kick ass on the astral plane, which relieves all my pent-up aggressive sexual energy, as a result of which I hardly ever get in arguments with Ted White in person or even in print any more. It's true that Ted did send a 12-page letter to IZZARD ripping to shreds my little cutesy piece about the Boondoggle, but you haven't seen IZZARD around lately, have you? There are theories that the Hugo ballot and/or New York City are the kiss of death, but I'm telling you the astral fix is in. Now if only I could get D. West to send me my copy of FANZINES IN THEORY AND PRACTICE I'd have it all handled.

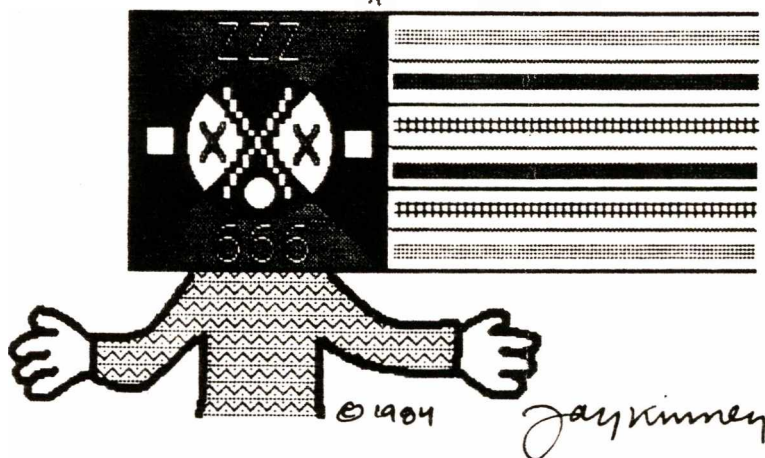
"RB sounds like an ace in the hole for a Fouler-type reincarnation in US fandom. Just wait...the bitchiness has barely begun."

--Joyce Scrivener, in DEAR RUDE BITCH

So again, the trouble with this heavy obsessive shit is it makes all other gossip seem pale in comparison. The revelation, for example, that Cesar Ramos actually exists and has put out a solid fanzine almost gets lost in the shuffle. (Some still argue that it's an extremely clever put-on, but the obsessive are seldom so subtle. They're much too busy mailing out duplicates of all their latest correspondence to spend time executing clear prose written in a distinctly different style and from an influenced but quite separate worldview.) The fact that there's another TAFF race on is downright depressing. I urged Patrick & Teresa to run, jointly, some 17 months ago, and now I'll vote for Coad if only he'll promise not to talk about what I keep talking about. Ouch! Does gafia release you?

--Paul Williams

KACHINA-MAN



(For all those who may've wondered over the years, Whatever Happened to Andrew Main?:)

WHEN I LEFT Tassajara Zen monastery in 1977, and it seemed that zen was not going to be my life after all, I thought what else? And remembered that years before, in 1965, I had passed briefly through New Mexico on my way to California from New York, and was much taken by the look and feel of the country. That was, of course, Before Acid, and before all the other adventures that followed, heavens and hells, wonders and terrors, you know. Looking from now, it all seems mostly like Old Business, inherited karma you might say, stuff I had to work my way through before I could get on to my own life. I mean, the adventures were adventures, but how I felt was driven, controlled mostly by forces outside (or inside) myself that weren't so much voluntary and independent.

Anyway, since 1977 the thread running through my life has been a dream of getting out of the City, going someplace new, that I'd never lived in before, starting a new life. I've still had a lot of Old Business to get through, and inertia to overcome, but finally, on June 22, having shipped most of my belongings to Santa Barbara, I loaded the last into my car (not an inch to spare) and hit the southward road.

At first it was a land of euphoria, driving south on 101--I did it! I really did it! There were times in recent years I'd despaired of ever getting out of SF; it felt like I was mired in quicksand. I did manage to make a quick trip to Arizona/New Mexico in 1981, briefly visiting the Grand Canyon, Hopi and Navajo country, Santa Fe, Taos, and back by way of Tucson and the southern desert (stopping a night with Don Fitch in Covina) and returned convinced that was where I wanted to go, but still it took three more years and a couple of personal and health crises before I finally got moving.

I have thought a lot about where to go in that country, and decided to start at one extreme, as it were, in southern Arizona--Tucson area--to get a real strong hit of the real desert country. I expect to spend maybe the next couple of years looking around Arizona and New Mexico to figure out where I'll want to make my home. I expect I'll probably end up around Albuquerque or Santa Fe, but first off I'd like to avoid winter

(continued on page 17)

LOST IN THE
GANCH DIMENSION

by REDD BOGGS



I AM A science fiction fan. Or am I? For more than 40 years, going on 50, I have thought of myself as a fan, but in To The Stars, a fancy fanzine published, I think, by the Trimbles, I read an ad headed "Become a visible fan!" and began to wonder a good deal. Am I really a fan? Do I want to become visible? The ad included a "data form" to fill out in order to get listed in a Fandom Directory issued by an outfit called Fandom Computer Services. Using a Radio Shack personal computer they compile and then sell mailing lists to groups and individuals.

Skimming down the "Status" list in the "data form" I scratched my head a lot, like the girl in the shampoo commercial, but not for the same reason. The Directory offered me the choice of being listed as a dealer, writer, publisher, store, or manufacturer, among other categories. Well, I suppose you can run a store or sell Star Trek T-shirts by mail order and still be a fan. Over the years, and in the long run, I haven't made a nickel out of fandom. But then, it's mostly my own fault. I have stayed an amateur (if not a fan) by choice and bent.

It was the other list in the coupon that really startled and sobered me. The list was headed "Interests," and contained four columns of categories, 58 choices in all, in addition to "Other (specify)." I'm supposed to check such "interests" I have as a fan. In filling out the form (which I haven't sent in, by the way) I dubiously checked off half a dozen categories, wondering at the same time what they had to do with fandom: Westerns, Old Time Radio, Gum Cards, for instance. Why not stamp collecting, beer cans, and tatting? Some categories I couldn't even figure out: Good Girl Art, Silver Age, Golden Age, D & D, Plastic Bags, and others. I have no idea what these "interests" are. Is it the girl or the art that's good? Is D & D anything like S & M? Am I a Plastic Bag fan? I use plastic bags, but I am not wild about them, so presumably I am not. I am a Jiffy Bag fan, a category not listed.

I suspect that what's wrong with fandom these days (there is always something wrong with fandom) is that it has melded with these other hobby groups and failed to retain an identity of its own. I am not against other hobbies. I remember that, in a way, science fiction fandom itself grew out of radio- and electrical-experimenter fandom in the Gernsback magazines of the 1920s. Whatever its origin, sf fandom is unique, and in this universe of intermingling hobbies we ought to put fresh emphasis on the traditions that are peculiar to our own fandom. I enjoyed a letter from Jack Speer last summer in which he used scientific-combinations and Ackermanese. Hardly anybody uses them anymore. Nobody worships FooFoo, or hardly even Roscoe. Nobody debates learnedly the arthropodal existence of Yngvi.

I think I'm a science fiction fan, but probably I am not. After all, I have never seen "Star Trek," not a single episode, let alone the movie version. I have never seen "Star Wars" or its sequels, or even "E.T." I did see "Raiders of the Lost Ark," canned by the same factory, and was so bored and appalled by such malignant cinema art that I have no desire to see the sf films.

Except by sheer chance I haven't read any of the Hugo or Nebula winners of the past 20 years. The current science fiction I did read during those two decades was often wearisome and sometimes repellent. I started reading sf because I was interested in the future of the human race. (It seemed to have a future in those days.) I am not much interested in stories about imaginary alien worlds somewhere out in the galaxy. There are a few exceptions (The Legion of Space, Skylark III, Mission of Gravity, The Triumph of Time, even some of the Darkover stories), but generally I want to read about the future of Earth or at least of the solar system. I prefer stories where imagination has to be shaped and disciplined by the inconveniences of reality. The other stuff is fairy tales. I outgrew fairy tales, except for a few nostalgic backward glances, when I was ten years old. My fannish enthusiasm for sf has cooled to a lukewarm velleity.

But I am happy in my ignorance. Please don't force upon me a copy of Battlefield Earth. Don't offer to pay my way to see "The Ice Pirates" or "Android." Above all, don't send me any plastic bags, although Jiffy Bags are welcome. I suppose I am not a science fiction fan. If I am, I prefer to be invisible.

--Redd Boggs

(Originally appeared in PENSEROSO #3, published for SAPS, April 1984.)

Ted White says it was hornets.

KACHINA MAIN (continued from page 15)

for a year, and Tucson is good for that.

So that's the plan. Now that I'm getting a little energy back, I'm starting to get some idea of what to do next: here in Santa Barbara for another couple of weeks, then back to the Bay Area for unfinished business probably in early August, then back here and prepare for next move, probably September sometime.

The biggest part of this move is really psychological or spiritual. Not only getting out of San Francisco after fifteen years (!) but also a deep need I feel to change my life in some fundamental way. I've already gone through some big changes in the last couple of years, which have given me a new feeling of freedom and independence, and now I'm beginning to live in that feeling, to set out and make my own life in the wide world.

So that's "what's happening," briefly. Perhaps later, when I'm settled somewhere, I'll write some more about it. Although I haven't had much to do with fandom in recent years (decades), I treasure the experiences I had earlier on, especially the rare kind of friendship and camaraderie and communication. In a sense, I see my life as a series of fandoms: "sf" fandom (though the "sf" was never really the point), psychedelic/new age fandom, zen fandom, coevolution fandom, macrobiotic fandom. It was our first fandom that led to all the rest (through that crucial meeting with William Meyers at the 1968 con in Berkeley), and for me the great treasure of all of it has been the lasting friendships and warm memories.

--Andrew Main

(Since the above was written mid-summer, Andrew made a one-day appearance at the world-con, where he provided his new address: 712 N. 7th Avenue, Tucson AZ 85705.)



HERE'S THE EVER-POPULAR
(AND CLEVERLY TITLED...)

Letter-COLUMN

ERIC MAYER When I read Terry Carr's comments on personal writing I found myself agreeing with him, while at the same time hoping he was wrong. After all, E.B. White is probably my favorite writer and I would hate to think that his sort of writing is a dying species. Perhaps the lack of personal journalism of the sort written by White and Thurber (and Robert Benchley--there was someone who took you aside and spoke personally, if in a more jocular vein) is simply due to the fact that there are no Whites and Thurbers writing today. Or maybe it's not due to cultural changes as Terry says. Maybe it's not the millions of potential readers who don't want to read anything like that but a few hundred editors who don't want to buy it. On the other hand, if no one had ever heard of White or Thurber and they came along today with their essays, wouldn't they get published on the spot? Would they really have to write for fanzines, the last bastion for their sort of writing? I find that hard to believe. Certainly no one writing in fandom is anywhere near to White and Thurber (nor do I think Willis was in the same league--a good Triple A essayist perhaps) and I suspect if anyone was they would quickly progress to professional markets. Russell Baker often writes personal essays for the New York Times, of all places. Of course, the question is probably not whether White and Thurber would be published but whether lesser essayists would. But, how many essayists were there? I don't know. Was it ever a popular genre or did it always require a very high degree of proficiency?

Having said that, I can also look on the dark side. Taste is unaccountable. I recently read that White had to convince Harold Ross to print Thurber's cartoons in the New Yorker, after rejecting them for years. So perhaps what strikes me as excellent writing would, in fact, not make it today. The New Yorker itself, in the few recent issues I've read, does not seem that it would be receptive to the sort of material it grew famous for.

If personal writing is no longer of interest to most readers it might be because mass media have devalued people's opinions of their own lives. TV and magazines constantly bring people into pseudo-intimate contact with the rich, famous and powerful. People don't seem to value their own experiences so much. I rather think the self-improvement rage has less to do with people feeling good about themselves than it has to do with people trying, futilely, to live up to the impossible (and unreal) images they are constantly bombarded with in the media. TV viewers would surely rather listen to some famous actor prattle to Johnny Carson than read an insightful essay about everyday experiences, which isn't surprising but there should be some room for the latter. Writers also don't seem to have opinions anymore either. You never read an article, or even a purported essay, without being referred by the author to experts, professor so and so, this or that psychiatrist.

Seems I've covered both sides of the question. I'm afraid I'd put my money on the pessimistic view. The written word simply has a hard time competing with TV, for one thing. People don't want to listen to some anonymous essayist. They have to know someone's reputation before they find his opinion worth listening to, find his day-to-day experiences of any interest. The same is true of fandom. Terry Carr sees fandom as a place where art can flourish. Well, that may be, but I suggest that if art flourishes here it is only incidental. The real basis of fandom today seems to be social interaction with publishing merely a sidelight. As someone who doesn't go to conventions I can testify that showing up at one con is worth two dozen articles. That is to say, someone whom fans regard as a true fan because of a large amount of socializing, someone with a reputation, will be listened to, and applauded, if he or she does a mediocre job of writing. The reputation, the interest that other fans have in someone they know, or think is important, more than makes up for lack of creativity, etc. This is not necessarily bad, but it doesn't bode well for art. (1771 Ridge Rd E, Rochester NY 14622)

GREG BENFORD Terry Carr is right, of course, about fanwriting being a form for a small community of similar interests. But I'd say everything original transpires in a small interest-group. Athens at the time of Pericles had fewer than 30,000 inhabitants. Most people know only a few thousand, tops, and a few hundred to really interact with. So increased communication has re-sorted our groups, and Eric Mayer's baseball fandom is as integrated a community as Socrates knew.

Redd Boggs' piece muchly deserves wider circulation. Yhas, sf crit is indeed pompous and windy. Actually, though, I hold out some hope for it--the field has to go through its adolescence, just as sf did. The critics have fastened onto obvious points and explicated the authors who are easy to handle that way (Heinlein) or who caught the tide of ideas at their full flood (LeGuin), though these may not be the best or most lasting writers in the genre. (I'd take Walter Miller's A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ over anything by Heinlein or LeGuin, for example; those two expressed the notions of their time and have already begun to appear dated. Miller lasts.)

So indeed we may eventually return to our private reserve, like mystery fiction, and settle down into a dignified middle age--our best writers occasionally breaking out to a larger audience, our good points grudgingly acknowledged. I'd prefer that to the visions of sf rising to cultural dominance. Especially if it meant more Star Wars. (Physics Dept, Univ of Calif, Irvine CA 92717)

CY CHAUVIN I liked Terry Carr's letter a lot; I think 'knowing your audience' is one quintessential ingredient of fan writing. But it's getting harder to know your audience. I enjoy writing faanish stories, particularly taking fans I know and exaggerating their traits; but the recognition humor that makes this sort of thing worthwhile isn't there if most of the audience doesn't know who you're writing about. You can't depend on fanzine readers having your same 'common experiences,' unless you write for a really small audience, such as an apa or local club newsletter. I could of course stick to writing about Really Well Known Fans--such as Terry Carr or Ted White--but, well, I guess that seems somewhat limiting, and it seems to deny recognition (in a way) to the several generations of newer fans who have come along. You also become tired of twists on what are basically the same sort of jokes, such as those about Harlan Ellison's height or Mike Glicksohn's hair. Irwin Hirsch once asked me to write an imaginary DUFF trip report. After 3½ pages I ran out of steam because I didn't know enough Australian fans well enough to twist their personalities into silly parodies of themselves. Maybe I'll actually have to go to Melbourne in '85 just so I can finish Irwin's article. Since it's purely for research, maybe I can declare the expense on my income tax form. (14248 Wilfred, Detroit MI 48213)

CHESTER ANDERSON This business of being a writer is most complicated. You have to determine your audience.. Terry Carr respectfully to the contrary notwithstanding, I've finally realized my audience is not the tiny village of Mendocino, nor the slightly larger village of science fiction. No, my audience is me, a small enough

village for most purposes. If it doesn't please me, I won't let anyone else see it.

I'm sure this must be true of all writers. Who else do you think is entitled to judge? It is upon the writer's taste, upon his harmony with the rest of humankind, that his works must be judged, and upon these same things that he must write. Every writer has an audience of one.

There may well be many ones. There damned well better be, or all of us would starve. But still, the first and only critic is oneself.

Hard words--I apologize--but true--and I do not.

TRAP DOOR is a pleasure. I generally dislike fanzines, but this is a grown-up publication done by and aimed at grown-ups, and it does not offend me. Being a grown-up, however, offends the hell out of me. I'm seventeen, for Christ's sake! What am I doing wandering around with a gray beard, taking care of a family that includes a sixteen-year-old boy, and being bored with kids? What are all of my friends doing being adults, having families, paying off mortgages, worrying about their hairlines and their middles? The world is not at all what I was promised it would be.

Still, we do seem to improve a bit with age. (Oakland CA)

TERRY CARR Eric Mayer's "My Immense Brain" is quite properly given pride-of-place in this issue; it's a delightful piece. Eric's reminiscences about his love affair with his IQ during adolescence will surely strike some chords with most any fan; though I have my doubts about Speer's Handicap Theory of Fandom, I do think it's true that a lot of us were social outcasts during adolescence because we were just smarter than most of our contemporaries. I managed to avoid much of that because I was also pretty decent at various sports, thus gaining entry into some school cliques that would otherwise have been closed to me, but I was smarter than most too, and took pride in it, and also had my disappointments in that area. In junior high school I was a finalist in a spelling contest, and probably would have won if they hadn't thrown a curve at me with the word "equilateral," which I spelled with an "a" instead of an "i." When I got eliminated, I kicked myself six ways from Sunday for not having read George O. Smith's Venus Equilateral series. Another case of literary taste working against one, alas.

Redd Boggs' piece, while extremely well done, falls a bit short for me because it incorporates the attitude of oldtime sf fans--those who haven't kept up with the evolving sf field--in its blindness toward the very real achievements of modern sf: there really are a good number of recent sf novels and short stories that can stand up to rigorous literary analysis. Redd's right in thinking that much of the literit written about the field, mainly that about sf before 1960, is nonsense; but the genre's undergone many changes since then, and critiques written about more recent sf often are justified by the quality of the writing. No doubt the same is true of recent mystery fiction, for that matter; certainly the novels of P.D. James display a good level of insight into character, etc.

I liked Paul's writing about est, too: he tells of that school's qualities, and how they balance with the sf field, quite well. As it happened, I was the point-of-contact with est for many of the East Bay sf people ten years ago, though I never took the training myself. I met someone who was very much into est at the time (she's since left the fold), and as is my wont I queried her on a subject, est, that was unfamiliar to me. I found it very interesting. Somewhat later, Carol and I attended an est seminar--one of those things where Werner Erhardt gives a talk and his disciples try to sign up as many people as they can for the training; from the moment we walked in, I was treated as an est graduate, was given a lapel button designating me as such, etc. My est contact slightly later told me she wasn't surprised: "You already know all that est can teach you," she said (I'd picked it up and extrapolated it from her). But after that seminar, half of the people I knew signed up for the est training, and every one of them got a lot out of it, were much happier in their lives, etc. I've mostly kept my mouth shut whenever people in sf either praised or attacked est; the one exception was at a con when Diane Duane, a recent est graduate, started trying to sell me on est. "Look, Terry, you're terrific just as you are, but do you want to take the responsibility of not being even more wonderful?" I know est-talk and its psychology, so I simply said, "Yes." She did a quick take (est graduates are faster than most people) and said, "I hear you. Maybe you're right, and in any case I promise not to bring up the subject again." She didn't either.

Est graduates are good at fulfilling their commitments.

Donna's semiconreport on Corflu is nicely done, and doubly welcome because oddly enough it's the only writeup of that con I've seen that ran to more than a paragraph or two. Very strange, when you consider that the con was full of fanzine fans and that all of them seemed to be very much turned on by the convention; I really expected to be inundated by conreports for months thereafter, but as it happened I didn't even get many fanzines from those who had attended. Not like the Good Ole Days--for instance, after the SuperManCon in England in 1954, there were about two dozen conreports (some people, like Mal Ashworth, even wrote two); and that year's Midwescon led to at least a dozen reports. I suspect that the con-report as a form of fanwriting has faded in popularity in these latter years because there are now so many cons that fans aren't as interested in hearing what happened at the ones they missed. Well, thank Ghod for neofans, especially those like Donna who can instantly pick up a properly ironic and humorous style in which to write such things. (11037 Broadway Terrace, Oakland CA 94611)

HARRY WARNER JR Some fans may think Eric Mayer is exaggerating a squidge about his passion for baseball statistics. But I believe. Some years ago the local newspapers hired a Baltimore area youth who worked for a short time as a general news reporter. He had the ability to rattle off the starting lineups and most frequently used pitchers for any team that had ever participated in any world series. All you needed to do was give him a year like 1915 and designate either the American or National League participant and he would recite the names and positions played and places in the batting order more reliably than a computer today gives forth such information. Unfortunately, he wasn't quite as skillful at remembering what he had heard at a meeting or read on the police blotter long enough to write an accurate story about it an hour later. *Did he drink beer, too?*

Life must be simple for Paul Williams. When he finds too much dust amid his clutter, all he needs to do is decide to use the vacuum cleaner on it. Things are much worse for me. I've managed to keep the downstairs of this house and my bedroom in reasonably uncluttered condition, and I have a cleaning woman who comes regularly for sanitary purposes. But this restraint with clutter has imposed an awful burden on three upstairs rooms intended for bedroom purposes. They suffer the full impact of all the stuff I accumulate and by now, there isn't room to get a vacuum cleaner more than a few feet beyond the door of them. Just the other night, I squeezed into one of these rooms thinking I remembered an empty space into which I might squeeze two more books up near the ceiling. I thought I felt the movement of air and suspected a window might be broken. Then I realized I couldn't get close enough to the windows to pull up the blinds and look. Moreover, if a window should be broken in that room, I estimated a four-hour job moving enough stuff out into the hall to permit someone to make his way to replace the glass, and it was a tossup whether this procedure would cause the hall to clog up too badly to reach the door of the room. Eventually I found the windows were unbroken from an exterior examination, so it must have been just a ghost trapped up there.

Terry Carr is basically correct about the difficulty of finding fannish-type writing anywhere except in fanzines. There is one other cause for its decline in newspapers which he doesn't mention. Journalists have become as mobile as radio announcers, rarely staying on one job longer than the few years required for a better opening to turn up somewhere else. Most newspapers no longer practice the old custom of hiring local residents to fill writing jobs, but routinely advertise job vacancies in Editor and Publisher or ask around at newspaper conventions and meetings of regional press associations. So there aren't many journalists active today who know the community in which they work well enough to do the locally-oriented type of writing. Besides, the editors and subeditors and copy desk workers are also apt to be just passing through town until they find better jobs and they don't encourage community-centered writing, simply because they don't know the town and they don't particularly care about it. There are still exceptions. Recently I bought a dreadfully expensive book, a collection of the columns written by a just-deceased newspaperman in a nearby Pennsylvania town. They aren't exactly fannish but they couldn't possibly be written by anyone other than a lifelong resident of the community who knew its people and its background and they are the last of their kind: that town's newspaper has

gone the way of most other dailies, and this columnist was the only one left who could have cared enough and known enough to write in that manner.

I disagree with rich brown on science fiction's failure to seem to be coming true. I started reading science fiction in 1932 or thereabouts. I can look around this house and see so many things in it that were wild science fiction imaginings in that year: television, a VCR, pens that don't need refilling for weeks or months, a watch that is also a timer and calendar and several other things, a calculator no bigger than my hand that can do far more than the enormous adding machine I used to play with at my father's bookkeeping office, a newspaper printed without material type whose AP news comes from a satellite, a camera that can take color pictures and has a built-in flash which never needs replacing, a static-free radio whose programs I can record at the press of a button, robots that will tell me if the house catches fire, a telephone that can reach any other telephone in most parts of the world without human assistance, and I don't even own a computer or a microwave oven.
(423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown MD 21740)

DEBBIE NOTKIN ...Paul Williams--the man is so goddamn open-minded that it's disgusting. Come on, Paul, 'fess up--there must be something you can't see the other side of. But what I really want to know is, not what EST training meant to Paul--who after all is, as I just said, disgustingly open-minded--but what it means to someone who goes to it searching for An Answer. My main objection to EST (and Christianity, Scientology, Marxism, etc.) is that they offer two fallacies to their eager clientele: A) There is such a thing as An Answer; B) We can give it to you. I agree entirely that I don't want the whole world talking fanspeak or Est-talk. But I don't think most fans want the whole world talking fanspeak (if anything, we err on the side of wanting the whole world not to understand us or share in our dreams), and I do think, from a base of great ignorance, that the EST bureaucracy does want the whole world talking EST-talk. Paul just doesn't approach the question of what the EST "sense of community" might be for someone who previously had none. Something different, that's for sure. Something dangerous? If so, to whom--the person taking the training, or the rest of us? Paul stresses just how many communities he's a part of, so maybe he can't speak to the experience for someone who comes there out of desperation. Nonetheless, I still think the difference is great enough to make Paul's piece incomplete for me.

I hope Harry Warner will someday describe how he's managed to get more naive and inexperienced as the years pass. A delightful conceit.

Norm Hollyn would have enjoyed the way the kids were treated at the recent Glen Ellen Bastille Day party. I certainly did. There was a period of at least an hour in the evening when the kids took over the living room for completely unrestrained mayhem. Adults that weren't prepared to join the frenzy were forced onto the porches out of harm's way and somewhat sheltered from the noise. Adults who stuck around got climbed on, danced over, showed off to and ignored (sometimes all at once). So many of the kids I see are being told, "No. Don't. Not now. Not here" and so forth (including fairly regularly by me) and it was nice to see them having center stage at their own circus.

Rudeness (she said, jumping in to answer Loren's letter) is probably bluntness with sharp edges. Honesty can take any tone at all. Rudeness serves to make for entertainment, which I think is what Ted wants his fanzines to provide. If you want what I do, which is to make connections, then the trick is to learn how to be honest gently, how to respond to your friends (in fanzines, in person, in public) in a way which doesn't hurt their feelings



and yet truly speaks to how you feel about what they're doing/saying. However, Ted's way is both easier and more immediately satisfying.

And Jeanne's piece is not only thoroughly Jeanne, but it satisfies, for a moment, the place in me that wants to have a piece of every birth experience, every mothering moment that I don't seem to be providing for myself. So thanks. (680 66th St, Oakland CA 94609)

CHUCH HARRIS A couple of weeks ago I was boasting of my intimate knowledge of things Stateside; how I could...and will...navigate mapless from Times Square to Port Charlotte, Florida, and how the whole life-story of Lucille Ball flashes across the screen once you master the sequence in which to turn the dial. So then Eric Mayer throws me right away with "...he's already hitless in four at-bats. If he makes another out he'll be batting under .230." Wow! Baseball and American football are the last two Mysteries around here. The only baseball I've ever seen was in Damn Yankees! and I don't recollect Pete Rose in the chorus.

I relate though. When they chose the cricket teams in the school playground I was always the final choice after Peppermint Patty. Hopeless Harris way out in the boondocks as silly mid-off retrieving any well-hit balls that evaded the star fielders in the slips; his only solace the girls in the adjoining tennis court bouncing up and down. Outdoor sports have never appealed to me. I can never understand the Hooray Henrys who travel hundreds of miles to a convention and then pick teams and spend priceless hours playing football in the park. In Sixth Fandom things were far better organized.

Jeanne Bowman would never have managed home delivery in England. When Sue was pregnant we wanted to have the birth at home, but no way could we arrange it. The minute the doc confirms the pregnancy he books a hospital bed and shunts you onto the assembly line. He wants no responsibility for funny ladies who think they know better than he does. He's not interested in talented husbands with nursing experience. He's got 15,000 patients and no time to be pissed about. You either conform or you're right out there on your own with no support team if things get tricky. We're chicken; we conformed. Sue went to the classes, the antenatal clinic and the monthly check-up with the doc. In the seventh month he found two heart beats, told her to buy another layette, and transferred her bed to the big county hospital along with all the other multiple freaks.

The twins were premature and very small...between 3 and 4 pounds apiece. They went straight into incubators in the intensive care ward. They had jaundice and respiratory trouble. Sue couldn't feed them and had to rely on the hospital Milk Bank and...no, I believe it's a natural function and I believe it's an almost mystical experience to be shared between wife, baby and husband...but I know that if things stand a chance of going wrong a consultant obstetrician is a damn sight more use than a know-it-all husband with some "nursing experience."

Great! But the thing I don't like about the National Health Scheme Maternity Service is that far too many births are induced rather than left for the full natural term. This is only a matter of hours, not days or weeks, so that the birth occurs during daytime when all the hospital services are fully manned rather than during the night when there may be only a skeleton service running.

This sort of thing could well drive a horoscope buff round the twist. There you are, everything worked out to the minute, surrounded by charts, tetragrams and pentacles, with the old lady all set to produce a bouncing Capricorn. In goes the needle two hours earlier than the estimated ETA and lo! you're lumbered with a puling Libran or even a Virgo with Venus in the ascendant (altho' this is quite 'armless') and counting yourself bloody fortunate if Uranus is in the right place.

And how come Dan Steffan never asked permission to use me as a model for his Sixth Fandom Fan Face? Sure, my cowed beanie has a much bigger propellor, and there are notches in my scythe blade, but everybody will recognize me by the accompanying carrion flies. (32 Lake Crescent, Daventry, Northants NN11 5EB, UK)

WILLIAM ROTSLER I find Paul Williams a kind of strange and wonderful person...part alien-observer, part child, part grump, part fairy, part pragmatic person. Do more by him.

Didn't read any of the stuff about Britzines. Since I didn't see them, who cares? And if I did, who remembers? How fannish of you. ♪Ahahahaha♪

I liked Donna Ansell's article starting out with "I'd heard sex was best at cons." Good narrative hook, but she didn't pay off. Personally, I rarely have sex at cons--that is with anyone I didn't bring myself. There simply are not that many women in fandom I find attractive (for sexual purposes) and the ones I have, with a couple of exceptions, I've been to bed with. (17909 Lull Street, Reseda CA 91335)

GARY HUBBARD Eric Mayer's article seems to describe an experience that is archtypically fannish. I, too, was a skinny kid who was never picked for baseball, but could take some solace in the knowledge that I was smarter than all my Neanderthal schoolmates. Unlike Eric, however, even tho' I took all those tests I never found out if I was in the 99th percentile or not. In fact, to this day I still do not know what my IQ is. I once went with a girl who belonged to Mensa, and her assessment of my intelligence was not flattering. Eric's conclusion that his brain was just another computer that he couldn't use shows that he has gained wisdom, a far more valuable commodity than mere intelligence.

Still, if you're just a kid without experience, intelligence can be a pretty comforting thing to fall back on. So can science fiction. All of Eric's allusions to slans and Edmund Hamilton stories and Martian landscapes reminded me how large the SF terrain looms in the mind of the proto-fan. Back in those days science fiction was not just a bunch of stories, but actual experiences. They gave me access to a larger world than the one available to me on Markese Street. The empty sandlot behind our subdivision was a Martian desert, the woods behind the school a Venusian jungle. It was great fun for awhile. And then one discovers pornography and SF can never have quite the same effect as before. Wisdom can be a double-edged sword sometimes.

It's unfortunate that Paul Williams #in TD#19 didn't get around to his brilliant observations on Dungeons & Dragons as a socially educational experience. However, since I have some professional interest in this area, I feel qualified to fill in the gaps. I run a dungeon at the hobby shop where I work every Saturday afternoon for the local morphodites. In fact, I got my job because I was the only one around who understood the game (alas, this is no longer the case). Basically, I get three types of reactions from adults whose kids play D&D: grandparents say, "Oh, that's the game that drives people crazy;" mothers say, "Well, I don't understand it, but if he keeps his grades up, and at least he's reading;" and fathers want to know how you tell who wins. To all of these people, I try to stress the positive aspects of the game: that it teaches kids to use their imagination, how to cooperate with others to accomplish a goal, and like that. All this is, of course, BS. At my weekly games I most often see the situation described by Paul with his kids; they treat each other too miserably and take things too seriously to have any fun. I've seen entire parties wipe themselves out arguing over who is to possess some imaginary bauble. And it's impossible to instill in these little turkeys even the rudiments of fair play and chivalry which should be cornerstones for a game like D&D. To them, a paladin is a guy on a white horse who can beat up everyone else in the game.

The problem is simply the difference between what the game is supposedly teaching and what the kids are really learning. There is always a big difference between what the teacher teaches and the pupil learns. Now, D&D was created by college students, mostly engineering and math majors, who simply took the artifacts of their studies (ie, charts, tables, and time-and-motion studies) and used them for their own amusement. The game should have stayed an esoteric amusement for a small group of fantasy fans, but we live in dangerous times. The game caught on with the kids, and now it's predominantly a twelve-year-old's game. And what these twelve-year-olds are learning from the game is how to read charts, how to manipulate the odds in your favor, how to avoid the consequences of one's actions by appealing to some obscure aspect of the rules, and that it pays to be incredibly mercenary. These are all skills that will serve them well in the hi-comp, hi-tech modern world. Which should make mom, dad, and granny very proud of their little fifth level character assassin. Excuse me, but I'm bitter. D&D used to be fun. (4622 Green Acre, Kalamazoo MI 49009)

TERRY FLOYD I was intrigued first off by your description of life on The Farm. Three years ago, I drove to Hohenwald, Tennessee, with my then-roommate, Scott Bobo, to see his state, meet his family, and marry his sister. Although only two of those objectives were achieved, the trip was a pleasant way to spend Spring Break. One of the highlights of the journey was a visit to and tour of The Farm.

Jim Bodie has spoken fondly of the few months he spent on The Farm one summer while hitchhiking across the country, so I was interested in seeing first hand what I had heard so much about. Even though The Farm was a good thirty miles or so from Hohenwald, Scott's mother had a sort of "there goes the neighborhood" attitude toward the gentle people of Stephen's colony and nothing we saw on the tour, no matter how impressive, was going to change her mind. She'd lived in the region for quite a few years and remembered what it was like "before the hippies took over."

Upon our arrival, we waited in a small house near the entrance for our guide to arrive. While there, I browsed through the bookshelf which displayed a varied collection of The Farm's publications. Books of all sorts were available for perusal, on subjects ranging from natural childbirth and contraception to natural cookbooks and home gardening. They were also selling cassette tapes of Stephen's lectures.

None of this, of course, impressed Scott's mother. Nor did it help matters that our guide had long hair and a beard and was sweating--but then, he'd been working in the fields all afternoon, so of course he was sweating. Regardless of Mrs. Bobo's reaction, I was pretty damned impressed by what I saw. The people were clean and healthy, the kids were happy, the soybean fields were green with a bumper crop. Our guide told us of the ongoing projects of the community and recent developments among the citizens--a new doctor, new printing press, etc.

I was intrigued by the man's description of what The Farm hoped to demonstrate--that a well-managed cooperative community could grow and prosper and that intelligent use of the land could substantially ease the world's hunger problem. "If the Farm land were utilized the way it had been by the previous owners," he explained, "it would feed fewer than half the population it presently sustains. Cattle grazing on a range of equivalent size would not merely ravage the soil, the beef produced in such a manner would provide only a fraction of the protein derived from our soybeans and other crops."

This was well after the "disastrous growing season" of 1976 which you described. I don't know what the population might have been then, but it looked to me as if there were plenty of hands to do plenty of work. I had only a brief glimpse at the surface of what appeared to be a well-organized and thriving socio-economic experiment. Was I deceived? Well, not exactly, but as you say this was only a "brief glimpse." The tours given to casual visitors--those who don't spend more than an hour or so, at most, visiting The Farm--are very superficial, and in best public-relations form, show you what they want you to see. Assuming this was around 1980-81, the population was around 1,500 and there was plenty brewing behind the scenes and beneath the surfaces of those smiling faces that was soon to lead to the rapid depopulation to come. "Well-managed"? No.♦

I was downstairs with the estians Saturday night at Corflu, keeping watch over the fanzine room, since the Claremont wasn't equipped with lockable doors. Knowing quite a few folks who've taken the training (without a doubt some of the least brainwashable people I can imagine) and having myself attended a guest seminar some months previously, I may have felt a sort of cosmic kinship with them, much as Paul compared fanzine fandom with est. I wondered how we might have appeared to them. I'm sure they would have had far less trouble figuring us out if Corflu had been more like a regular skiffy convention.

Feeling rather purple at the time, I may not have been exactly in tune with the est experience, but I tried not to disturb their vibrations. I remember taking a pee break around 4 am and passing a group of them discussing deep and meaningful things in the lobby. They were engrossed in their conversation, and took little notice of me, except for one young woman, who seemed able to measure by sight the diameter of my pupils. She flashed a warm smile at me, and I decided that if they were indeed being brainwashed, I wouldn't mind being in on it, if only for the spin cycle. (2739 Folsom, San Francisco CA 94110)

WILLIAM GIBSON I suppose it's odd, considering my tastes in general, but The Farm is something I know vaguely about. Mainly by virtue of knowing George Metzger, who was a kind of Farm-fan in the old days and showed me various Farm publications at one time or another. I also knew a CBC Radio producer who actually went down there and checked the place out as potential fodder for a series of radio documentaries on post-hippy communal activities. The books Metzger showed me left me the impression that a diet with too high an emphasis on soya products probably results in swollen wimp-glands, but the straight guy from CBC came home convinced that they were all Hiding Something. "Like what?" I asked. "Group sex and telepathy," he said uneasily, and never mentioned the place again. ~~Half right.~~

Est makes me uneasy—or rather, knowing that someone is into est does. Basically I'm kind of allergic to anything that's simultaneously modern, has some sort of formal religious-philosophical basis, and is either copyrighted or TM Registered.

Oh, here's an odd bit for you, which I just happen to have on hand: "The actual title of est is reputed to come from a science-fiction novel, est: The Steersman Handbook, by a now untraceable author named L. Clark Stevens. Stevens' est stood for electronic social transformation." That's from Snapping: America's Epidemic of Sudden Personality Changes by Conway and Siegelman, a bullshit work in its own right, but isn't that a bizarre note? Instinct suggests the Scientologists spreading this one to bring Mr. Erhard down to their founder's level, ~~hmm~~? Well, not really, but I'll bet you that "L. Clark Stevens" is pretty damn untraceable... (2630 W 7th Ave, Vancouver, BC V6K 1Z1, Canada)

PAUL SKELTON I seem to have forgotten so much, and I do not have Eric Mayer's excuse of using all my memory banks to store baseball statistics. Of course, I'm not quite sure what baseball is. Isn't it one of those pale substitute games invented by all the countries that do not play the one true sport? A harmless pastime indulged in by the natives of some foreign country, tediously far away across the other side of some boring old ocean or other? A strange little folly unique to themselves, considered to be of great importance by denizens of that country but laughed at and ridiculed by civilised people everywhere? Ah yes, I think I do remember hearing something about it once. What was it now? Ahhh—it must be a very simple game if a girl named Ruth could get famous whilst playing it, and still a babe at that. It must be a soppy game if girls can play it. Oh, I remember now, I once saw a picture of a man playing it. He looked soppy too. He was wearing some silly striped pyjamas and holding a Rounders bat. Girls play Rounders in this country and it is a very soppy game. But at least they don't play it wearing pyjamas! It must be a very silly game if you can play it in bed.

Cas tried to get me to play baseball once. It was just after we got married. She thought she could fool me but she didn't realise how sophisticated and worldly-wise I really was. She whispered to me that she knew a game we could play in bed, but I am nobody's fool. Since then I have slept every night locked alone in the bathroom. Wife or no wife, I am not wearing those silly striped pyjamas for anybody.

Of course, sleeping alone does give me plenty of time to read all these spiffy fanzines uninterrupted, without Cas constantly sharing her reading experiences with me. Cas finds fascination and joy in everything she reads and like the truly warm and giving person she is, she insists in sharing this joy and fascination. I can't see it myself. After all, when you've heard about one cat sitting on a mat, you've heard all there is to hear on the subject.

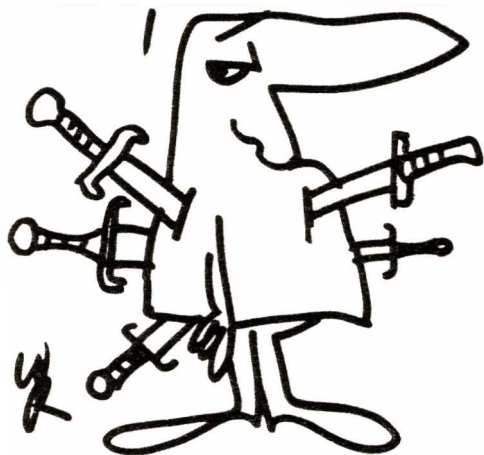
The other day, though, in an apparent attempt to recapture some fond childhood memory, she picked up and started to re-read 'Heidi's Children.' I cannot do this sort of thing. I cannot go back like that. I have moved on. Mind you, I am still keeping a sneaky eye open for 'Heidi Sucks Cock.' But I digress...as Jay Kinney so superbly put it.

There I am in the bath, prior to going snuggly-wuggly-peep-eyes, reading some ace fanzine or other whilst the cold tap drips onto my right foot. Mind you, the fanzines that really get me going aren't the ones that Lucy Huntzinger seems to go for. I get far more British fanzines than I used to and many of them strike me as providing marginally less enjoyment than listening to a ferret fart. Why, even the ones that she reviewed are what I'd classify as your basic OK, averagely-entertaining-but-nothing-to-write-home-about fanzines (with the exception of EPSILON, which is never less than pretty-damn-good). Oddly, when

you actually read what Lucy has to say about the individual fanzines, as distinct from her introductory remarks in general, she seems to feel pretty much the same way. She promises us 'excitement' but delivers a pint down the pub and fish and chips on the way home. Either she's over-selling the product or many of the US fanzines she gets must be pretty dire.

Still and all, it's good to see somebody different trying their hand at fanzine reviews. As a fellow member of the 'Igor like' school I can sympathise with her stated feelings of inadequacy with the medium/subject. The thing is, if we just sit back all we get is the same old opinions, the same old viewpoints from the same old reviewers/critics. This is not to criticise any of the existing critics/reviewers, merely to point out that there are other views, and it's nice to see them for a change. (25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 5NN, UK)

WELL, NO ONE MADE ME
PUBLISH A FANZINE -



JOSEPH NICHOLAS I enjoyed Lucy Huntzinger's fanzine reviews, though I have a suspicion that from the US point of view they may not have been entirely adequate. As a Briton, and one who's seen and read the fanzines she was talking about, I was able to generate an extra-textual mental context for her remarks; but American fans, for the most part (perhaps) unable to do the same, I think her reviews would seem extremely sketchy. Her enthusiasm for the fanzines comes through; but there is little clear idea of what the fanzines are like as fanzines, where and why they succeed or fail, or even (except for isolated comments here and there) what they are about. Come to that, there's no clear idea of why she feels as enthusiastic as she does (other than a generalised feeling that Here Is Something Different From American Fanzines) or, perhaps even more importantly, why she has the particular opinions about these particular fanzines that she does. Maybe I shouldn't complain, seeing as how I don't review fanzines anymore and wasn't particularly good at it when I was reviewing them, but even so I at least made an effort to explain why I held the opinions I did--

and so, I believe, should everyone else who reviews fanzines, otherwise we end up with nothing more than a set of quasi-mailing comments, evoking nothing than an "Oh yes, but so what?" response before we pass on to the next article. If your sole purpose is to advise people what's available, then fine, no more is needed; but the moment you start reviewing you enter the field of criticism, in which case something considerably more detailed is required. In other words: a review must be as full, as thorough, and as detailed as possible, otherwise there's no point in writing it in the first place.

Anyway, bloody hell, my letter in Waste Of A Tree #2 "reasonably sincere"? Fuck it, I thought it was wholly sincere--after all, I was only writing about unilateral British nuclear disarmament, to which I am completely committed. Just ask Lucy! (22 Denbigh St, Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER, UK)

MICHAEL ASHLEY Loren MacGregor tells only half the story. Rudeness is often mistaken for bluntness and honesty, but then bluntness and honesty are often mistaken for rudeness. (In Britain at the moment if you happen to use the odd swear word while mildly criticising a fan or their work then, in some quarters, you're automatically regarded as being rude regardless of the relevance of your criticism.) A lot depends on the prevailing critical tone of fandom at the specific time. When I started reading fanzines a few years ago, Alan Dorey and Joseph Nicholas were the big shots of fanzine reviews, stomping mercilessly on all the cretinous neofans and their dreadful efforts. From what I can gather, the two were merely a watered down version of the real useless-fucker killer Greg Pickers-

gill. What's happened recently is that Britain has become a haven of sweetness and light: Dorey's silent, Nicholas only mumbles noncommittally now and again. There's been the rise of the (yawn) born-again Fifties fans who are very polite and very dull, and various regional groups who spend much time congratulating each other and generally crawling as far as they can up each other's arseholes (I'm thinking of the Birmingham group here, in particular). Possibly because Nicholas and Dorey were such ineffective writers, it's now the current mode of thought that killing the fuckers is somehow no longer valid. I'm not quite sure, on the other hand, what is allowable--perhaps some vague criticism wrapped up in tones so chummy as to give the impression that even if your fanzine is terrible it doesn't really matter that much, we're still mates and I'll see you at the next con and maybe if you buy me a drink I'll lick your arse for you a bit more.

Lucy Huntzinger is so absorbed by British fanzines she even writes like one. I'm not sure what she'd say if she ever came across a reasonably good fanzine (probably explode due to lack of superlatives). The bunch she chooses are hardly devastating. Jarrold has the right idea but rarely carries it off, EPSILON maintains a standard of dull consistency, ABDUMP might be good in the future (issue 5 will carry a piece by me so it's getting better already). The rest are hopeless, particularly EMPTIES--an apt name since it consists of virtually nothing but poorly written filler. But then here's Lucy: "Martin seems to have gotten the hang of publishing and his choice of material consistently reflects high standards." There's not even the basis for an argument here. Ah well, it's all a matter of taste; just a pity Lucy hasn't got any. (Is that rude enough for you?)
(86 St James Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 2DB, UK)

DEAN GRENNELL The horn-rimmed glasses and pipe hanging in midair on the cover of TRAP DOOR #1 remind me, of course, of Harlan Ellison and that Harlan called the home number here within the fairly adjacent past to inquire if I would care to vet out the ballistic technicalities of a mss. he was completing. I said sure, Y-Knot? There are uncountable fields in which my incompetence is truly formidable but in the area of what makes bullets do their unfriendly thing, I bow to hardly any equals at all. I am not only a life member of the BDSA, but a FACEB, as well. Everyone knows what BDSA stands for, but the latter is the acronym of Fellow of the American College of Experimental Ballisticians. There are not too many of them around. Rotsler whipped me up a handsome certificate and I have been awarding those around in accordance with my notoriously persnickety whimsies.

Meanwhile, I am becoming concerned that Harlan Ellison's white buck shoes may have manifested a will of their own and led him, haplessly whimpering but inexorably down toward the bank of the Olentangy River. I am on the thin verge of making an enquiry to the only one apt to be in possession of the fact, one Max Runnerbean. I doubt if anyone but HE and Max would recognize those veiled illusions but, when it comes to ancient and prehistoric fannish esoterica, my taproots do go down a long way and, like the fairly late Jamshyd, drink deep. So it go. (Dana Point CA)

ALAN BOSTICK I read with interest Robert's brief reminiscence about The Farm and how he got involved. There is one unexplained facet that leaped out at me as I read: that some of the people mentioned as being involved (Robert Lichtman, Andrew Main and William Meyers) had been previously active in fandom under diminutive versions of their names (Bob, Andy and Bill). According to rumor, the other two seem to be as insistent about the use of their full first name as Robert is. If this is a coincidence, it is an unusual one, and I suspect there is a reason for it. Am I right? That is, was there something about The Farm that encouraged residents to live under their full names, not diminutives and nicknames? (Well, Alan, it just seemed the Farmish thing to do...)

Having been an associate of people like Gary Farber and the Nielsen Haydens, it is no surprise that I, too, have memories of events and eras that I have had no experience of. Paul's editorial brought some of them out in me. Not all recollections of this sort are fannish, and a case in point are the ones that Paul inspired. The image of Paul smoking a joint in the back of a pickup truck on the way to meet Chester Anderson in San Francisco in 1967 is the stuff of legend. I was born at least ten years too late for the Haight-Ashbury scene to be anything except history and myth, but the (no doubt erroneous) im-

pressions I have of that era are as moving as my equally synthetic vision of Walt Willis and Lee Hoffman at the 1952 Chicon. Several years ago, at a convention in Santa Rosa, I found myself sharing a joint with Chester Anderson at a party. I was very impressed by this--it was like sharing a joint with History. The fannish connection is indeed wonderful.
(Div of Physics, Mathematics, & Astronomy, 103-33, Calif Inst of Technology, Pasadena CA91125)

DARRELL PARDOE Donna Ansell is right about how fans spend a lot of time talking about how much better cons used to be. I'm sure it's not true, except in the rosy glow of memory, although I agree regarding the Claremont in 1968. Cons are just as much fun now as they were twenty years ago or more. Probably more fun. It's ridiculous to harp on the supposed virtues of the past unless they can help you to enjoy the present more fully. Comparing now unfavourably to then isn't very productive in a set-up like fandom which has to be experienced in the present, in an active way, or not experienced at all. (11B Cote Lea Square, Southgate, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2SA, UK)

JERRY KAUFMAN I have to write to correct Donna Ansell and her Corflu report. As ego-boosting as it may be to have a new fannish term ascribed to me, I still have to admit that I was only passing on the term "ghosting." I got it from Debbie Tatarik, a Seattle fan who is likely never to know that her term was mentioned in TRAP DOOR, or that I was given her glory. Unless I tell her, of course. I'm not sure if she is the originator, but certainly she is closer to the source.

Jeanne Bowman's article is perhaps the fourth I've seen in the last year or so on the subject of birth. (Others by Mary Long and Steve Leigh spring to mind.) Is this a trend, or is it just another form of standard fannish chatter about duplication equipment and fanzine labor pains? (4326 Winslow Place N, Seattle WA 98103)

BRUCE ARTHURS Re a comment in Donna Ansell's piece: Is sex best at cons? Enjoyable, probably. Even good, occasionally. But I don't think it can compare with the scrape-'em-off-the-wall experiences one can have in the comfort of one's own bed, in the arms of a long-term, live-in lover. (I realize, though, there's a sizeable percentage of fans who seem to have sex only at cons. If I'd stayed unmarried, I suspect I might be in that category also.) (3421 W Poinsettia, Phoenix AZ 85029-3227)

JANE HAWKINS My Mom checked out The Farm a few years ago, but said they felt a bit rigid. I was kind of disappointed that she decided not to apply. It would have been such a cute role reversal to have Mom living at a commune while Daughter works for the Big Corporation. (I've been with Pacific Northwest Bell since '76.)

Paul's musings over Est and the sense of community made me wonder if I lack flexibility. Last month my company sent me to a week-long management training seminar in Oregon. It was obvious to me that most of the people in class were having an experience akin to what I feel at a good con. I felt like an alien. I would not join. Maybe I could have gotten more out of it, at least some fun, if I had relaxed into it a bit more. (Of course, since this letter, Jane has quit the phone company, made an appearance at the worldcon, and is now traveling around the country on a one-year sabbatical while she Thinks About It.) (4121 Interlake N, Seattle WA 98103)

BILL HARRIS JR Paul Williams' article was interesting. I'm glad he got something out of Est. Like most people I get visions of Dr. Moon and brainwashing when I hear of these 'self-improvement' seminars. Just last May, while I was visiting my family and friends in Garden Grove, California, I discovered that two of my closest friends had gotten involved in one of those things (not Est) and had a whole new circle of 'friends' (at least they kissed each other a lot). The group kept remarking on how their lives had changed and how happy they were. Of course you would have thought I was a 7-foot high school basketball phenom the way I was recruited, but I've always been leary of being too happy, it just ain't natural, so I resisted. I mean, my closest friend came up to me the night before I left and told me how happy he was to be able to tell me he loved me. He seemed to say that to just about everyone within hugging distance though, so I'm not sure

if it's much of a breakthrough. I kinda loved him when he was just an asshole like me.
(Box 7288, Spokane WA 99207)

MAL ASHWORTH Interesting indeed on The Farm and I, for one, hoot "More, more" (albeit in a quietish sort of way, this being a sedate suburban Sunday afternoon). Got me to demolishing a huge pile of books in the study and sitting amidst mountains of Jerry Rubin, Abbie Hoffman, Eldridge Cleaver et al way after midnight to see if either Reich's The Greening of America or Houriet's Getting Back Together specifically mention The Farm. Can't say as they do without reading the whole of 'em. But it made for an interesting nostalgia trip. What became of Abbie? Last I heard he was very much underground and on the run from the FBI, while Rubin was rich and successful. While I'm asking these kind of questions, what became of Sonny Barger and the California Hells Angels, last heard of as under investigation suspected of carrying out contract killings possibly for The Mob? Much as I want to I daren't ask about Charles Burbee and Dean Grennell right now; I mean, swearing by association and all that...!) *DAG as you have seen on a previous page is involved in ballistic activities in the coastal foothills of Southern California, while Burbee stalked the halls of the recent worldcon. I saw him quite a bit after he completely derailed TCarr's roundtable discussion of fanzine standards and went to dinner with him, Ed Cox, Peggy Rae Pavlat and Rob Peterson one night. Moshe Feder must tell the tale of his three or more hours with Burb which apparently included the telling of the Watermelon Story.*

Let me say from where I sit I'd be prepared to believe Eric Mayer may be the finest fan-writer in the U.S. at present and certainly one of a tiny handful of the best anywhere. And "My Immense Brain" is one of his best, a brilliant idea, beautifully carried out, full of memorable, quotable lines. And what's more I believe it, every word of it! Hell, I have to believe it! I guess I've killed off so many of my own brain cells with beer I'm not even in credit any longer unless I had a massive untapped pool to go at in the first place (of brain cells, that is, not of beer. I usually try to have a massive untapped pool of that to go at). Salud, maestro, and thanks.

Good lettercol too: just occasionally reading such I get this immediate real sense of all these people spread out around the globe living their own varied lives, all of which intersect for a brief moment only in that one spot--the letter column--and then diverge again. A trite truism as an observation, I know, but as an experience it can have a quite poignant intensity. *Unhindered, no doubt, by frequent imbibing in the above-mentioned massive untapped pool...* (16 Rockville Dr, Embury, Skipton, N Yorks, UK)

GARY DEINDORFER I have been completely inactive in fanzine fandom for nearly two years now until a few days ago when I began writing locs again. I haven't had any contact with you for decades, but it is good to be back in touch again, and also with Paul Williams, who seems to have acquired a certain fame in various circles since I last encountered him in the late 60s in New York. I knew that boy would make good eventually! I am pleased that ROLLING STONE has seen fit to credit Paul with what has come to be the very useful term "magazine," to differentiate a regularly published collection of fiction, articles, etc. from that term that Harry Warner introduced to the world years ago, known as the "book." What would the general population do without ingenious fans to make up words for them? And of course I am proud of the term I thought up at the turn of the century for those four round things automobiles are carried on, the "wheel." It is just beginning to enter general as opposed to strictly fannish use and I hope someday MOTOR TRENDS magazine will give me rightful credit.

Actually I know so little about cars (though much about "wheels") that I am not sure if there is such a magazine as MOTOR TRENDS. I kind of hope so, at least for the sake of the previous paragraph.

You will notice I have not lost my strange sense of humor. And I would like to say right now, without waiting, that Harry Warner in the lettercolumn is right on target about a person's (not only a fan's) intangible style showing little change over the years. Your personality in your writing has the same "feeling tone" for me as it did in the early 60s, and so does Paul's. To both of you, so does mine, I am sure. This discourages me a little.

I like to think I have grown, but I realize Harry is right; I can't change my "feeling tone." It is as ineradicable as my fingerprints. Well, even if we have grown, our essence remains unchangeable--that unique "Robert Lichtmanness," "Paul Williamsness," and "Gary Deindorferness."

Eric Mayer's writing often reminds me of Harry Warner's in feeling tone. There is a certain homely in-touchness with the real world and a very relaxed, rather meandering anecdotal approach. And a certain chagrined, wry irony. What I like about Eric and Harry as writers is that they are not doctrinaire and deal with the reality of their lives rather than tenuous ideals. And they don't have their minds made up about what they think ahead of time, as Ted White and Richard Bergeron so often seem to. They discover what they think and feel as they write even as we the readers discover what they think and feel as we read their work.

I have fond memories of when I was in second grade and was called to the guidance counselor's office and informed that I had tested out in the 1st percentile, meaning I was part of the dumbest 1% of the population. I am proud that I have achieved the level of writing ability I now manifest through sheer hard work, and certainly not with the aid of intelligence. I used to push puny classmates to the asphalt schoolyard in second grade, proud of my immensely strong body in spite of the tiny brain it housed. I still am.

The previous paragraph is an example of Gary Deindorfer obvious irony laid on with the usual trowel. As subtle as an earthquake, my sense of humor, eh?

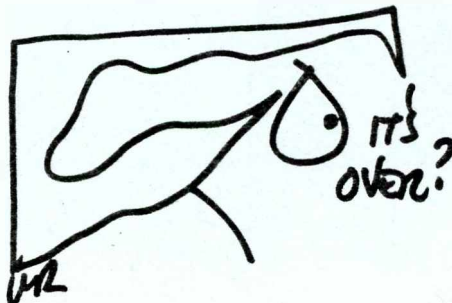
Paul Williams writes so clearly, lightly, capaciously, sanely, warmly, wittily. And he is awash in so many social circles of diverse sorts that it makes him a human relay station and something of a Master. I speak as something of a Master myself, someone who is much less reclusive than I used to be, and much more socially active than I used to be. I just wish I could write as well as Paul Williams, that old Living Legend. (But let's face it, folks, I am a Living Legend too, which I suspect you know without me going into details, some of which I assure you would curl your hair and send chills rolling up and down your spines. But that's in the past now that I am retired and left to reap the whirlwind in my writing and music.)

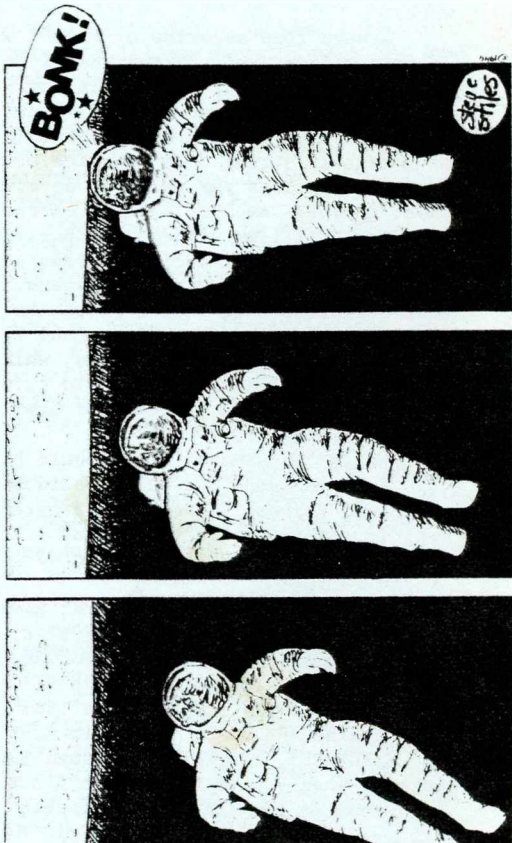
Wally "The Snake" Mind should be a Muppet. He'd fit in well with those folks.

I think Wanda and Wally would make a cute couple. But what do I know, I thought Kate Smith and Herbert Hoover made a cute couple.

To get to the lettercolumn, I think of fanwriting as wordage between consenting adults. (447 Bellevue Ave #9-B, Trenton NJ 08618)

AND "WE ALSO HEARD FROM": HARRY ANDRUSCHAK, HARRY BELL, RICHARD BERGERON, SID BIRCHBY, REDD BOGGS, F.M. BUSBY, BRAD FOSTER, DON FRANSON, CRAIG GLASSNER, MIKE GLICKSOHN, TERRY HUGHES, TERRY JEEVES, DAVE LANGFORD, SHARON LEE, ETHEL LINDSAY, JIM MEADOWS, STEVE MILLER, MARK ORTLEIB, RICK SNEARY, BOB STEWART, JOYCE SCRIVNER, ALEX STEWART, ARTHUR THOMSON ("That's a lovely little piece from Jeanne Bowman. The bit where her Dad brings in the 'rip up' machine and wants to use it 'cos it's on hourly hire is masterly humorous writing."), BRUCE TOWNLEY, TED WHITE ("Norman Hollyn reminds me of raising my daughter; it's a lot more intense when you're the parent & not just a visitor;" ~~amen~~ to that!), and a pocktared (homemade in the traditional fashion with a picture of his home above Donaghadee Harbour) from WALTER WILLIS (who says Eric Mayer's work reminds him of BoSh in "-"). Fifty letters, that's not too many...





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