

Whimsy 4

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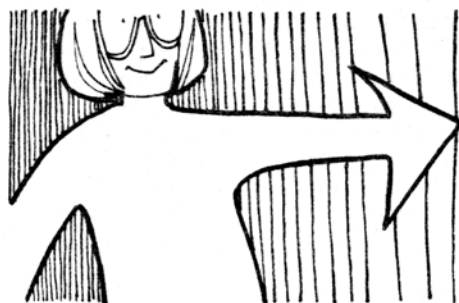


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To:

Hello there, and welcome to Whimsy #4, an Obsessive Press production (#73) published in cooperation with the New, Improved Days Corporation, and mailed from my new address, a change-proof post office box!! That's right. This is a Change-of-Address zine with delusions of grandeur, and long overdue at that. I kept delaying sending out proper coas, thinking that Whimsy was going to be finished and mailed out any day now. But I've learned my lesson and paid the price in the coin of a lot of lost mail. Sorry if it's cost you postage costs. This new address went into effect mid-August, 1985:



COA ALERT!

Jeanne Gomoll
Box 1443
Madison, WI
53701-1443
USA

Throw out those Brooks St. (or heaven forbid, Jenifer St.) listings!



If the box near your mailing label has been checked, that means that I'd like to hear from you. Tell me if you're reading Whimsy. Tell me if you want to continue receiving it. Otherwise, I'll assume you're not really, and prune your name from my mailing list.

All uncredited material is mine and copyrighted © 1985 by Jeanne Gomoll. Rights revert to authors and artists upon publication. Copies of Whimsy can be obtained for the usual and not so usual letters of comment. November, 1985. Proofreading by Spike. Thank you, Spike.

MY FIRST TIME

The first time I heard the word "fanzine" was after Jan Bogstad and I had published the second issue of Janus.

"What's a fanzine?" I asked, only vaguely curious because I didn't think movie star magazines on drug store racks had anything at all to do with the serious thing we published.

"Janus is a fanzine," said old-time fan Hank Luttrell, our SF group's early mentor. He grinned a sly grin as if he was amused at maybe having tricked us into doing something very silly when we had thought we were being sooo serious.

Gradually, I learned—through experience and osmosis—what fanzines were, and who fans were. Because of my backwards-and-blindfolded introduction to the fannish community, it's hard sometimes to figure out when and how I developed certain—dare I say it?—"standards" for fanzine publishing. The process was a scattershot one at best.

Here's a secret. Janus wasn't my first time. Actually, my first fanzine was something called Foma (referring to Kurt Vonnegut's "harmless lies" in Cat's Cradle). I edited and wrote most of six issues of Foma in 1974. Foma's print run was 5 xeroxed copies and the first issue was entirely hand-printed. It was a weird combination of fanzine and apazine. Well, I didn't know any better—it was Invent-The-Wheel-Time—since I had no contact with fandom at the time.

Foma existed because a small group of very good but geographically scattered friends and I wanted to stay in touch with one another. Using information garnered during rare visits, phone conversations and letters, I wrote exaggerated, humorous, mostly fictitious articles about members of our group. There was a gossip column, illustrations, and relevant, stolen cartoons from magazines and newspapers (in the manner of Lucas' Little Brother). I retyped whole letters in the letters-to-the-editor column. Obviously, we were on the brink of discovering the apazine, and if I'd actually thought of xeroxing the letters as I received them and collating them

into Foma (rather than retyping them), I might not have burnt out on its publication after only six issues.

FOMA

THE ERATIC, SEMI-COHERANT
OUTBURST OF THE "GROUP,"
(A SEXUAL-MOULTING POT OF
RANDOM GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION).

VOLUME 1	MADISON BRANCH
NUMBER 4	MADISON, WISC.

The most memorable article in Foma was the report on the Cross Alley Bowling Ball Tag Team Tournament. Its major effect was to make me eager to continue publishing, writing and drawing.

As connections among the Foma group grew weaker, I looked for another small publication. I helped start a feminist reading group, hoping that we'd publish something eventually. But it didn't turn out that way. The reading group was wonderfully stimulating: During its two-year life we read lots of great books and we talked lots of great discussions, but only I was ever interested in putting the discussions down onto paper.

Then, one day in 1975, The Daily Cardinal (a university student newspaper) printed a notice about the newly organized Madison SF Group's plans to publish a science fiction magazine. Interested persons were encouraged to attend the Wednesday night meeting. I showed up and met Jan Bogstad, Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell, John Bartelt, and others, and volunteered to do some artwork for the fledgling magazine, Janus.

"I'll help," were the fateful words, as I recall. Two issues later I'd somehow progressed from resident illustrator to co-editor of Janus, and that's when Hank told us about "fanzines." Much later, Hank informed me that Foma had been almost-an-apazine and congratulated me on having partially invented fanzines on my own.

Ever since then, it has always seemed to me that fanzines were natural extensions of the urge to

communicate, to write personal letters to engage in late-night, all-night conversations, and to write passionate school essays. Maybe that's why some fans react so suspiciously to publishing standards that are derived from other, unfamiliar role models like mainstream magazine layouts or professional writing. These apparently "outside" sources aren't really antagonistic to fannish expression, they just seem so because sometimes we fans are a little xenophobic about our traditions.

Foma, to me, was an elaborate letter. *Janus* was a way to continue sharing high-energy discussions about literature with others who shared my interest in feminism, and was, at first, a continuation of the most enjoyable aspects of college life. *Foma* succeeded if it kept my group of friends and myself in touch, and if everyone enjoyed reading it. *Janus* succeeded if it sparked the exchange of new ideas. Those were some of the first "standards" I might have admitted to having back then.

POLITICALLY CORRECT TO THE DEATH

Another standard that Jan and I consciously applied to the early issues of *Janus* was one that—largely out of style nowadays—was quite the thing back in the 1970's. We were trying to be "politically correct"—an ironic term that came into vogue only after the intensity of the 70's faded and we started to make fun of our earnest, too-serious attitudes. "Politically correct" pokes fun, not so much at our original ideals, as it does at the humorless style with which we sometimes promoted them.

And so, I look back at those issues of *Janus* and grin, and must admit that we were very into being "politically correct." Specifically, we were politically correct feminists. It was a popular thing to be in those days. *Janus* got inundated with writing, artwork, and mail from many of the active fans of the day. Simultaneously, *A Women's Apa*, devoted to feminist discussions, became one of the most fashionable apas to join. Feminist panels proliferated at cons all over the country, but especially at our local Madison convention, WisCon. Feminism was a focus of fannish writing then, just as anecdotal, humorous writing is a focus today. *Janus* was nominated for several Hugos. Jan and I won a FAAN award for best editorial team; I received a FAAN award and some Hugo nominations for best fan artist.

With hindsight, I think those awards and nominations had more to do with *Janus'* preeminent position vis à vis the current fannish fad rather than quality comparisons. Even then, disgruntled fans not involved in the feminist discussions bitterly accused *Janus* of having been nominated as a result of some inimical block voting plot. I ignored all that because I knew of no organized vote-getting campaign, and because I thought it was perfectly OK to vote on the basis of whether a fanzine was interesting or not, on whatever topic. I certainly would have agreed with those critics—minus the complaints—that it was our political focus that had grabbed the spotlight.

That was one of the really important parts of 70's fandom. Today, retrospectives of North American fandom in the 1970's rarely mention that intense fannish interest in feminism, and politics in general. Even fans who were involved at the time, now are apt to look back and comment only on the dearth of good anecdotal "fannish" writing. And indeed, in comparison with the eras that bracket it, the 70's

do seem less lively, and do seem characterized by plodding writing.

But that's a trick of perspective and memory, I think. There was a tremendous amount of enthusiasm, energy, good work, and yes, even wit produced by that decade of fannish writers and artists. Lots of new fans might never have joined fandom without the changed attitudes toward women as fans, as writers, and as fictional characters. I wouldn't have been attracted to fandom without those changes, and I wouldn't even have gone back to reading SF without them. And I wonder if we'd know Avedon Carol, Anne Laurie Logan, Denys Howard, Terry Garey, or most of the active members of the Madison SF Group had they not been lured to the conversations current in fandom at the time. I wonder how many fans might have felt too uncomfortable at the rather large gap between their growing political commitments and an apolitical fandom to remain.

But times change, and now feminism isn't as fashionable as it used to be. *Janus/Aurora* isn't as popular. The *Janus/Aurora* editors lost a lot of their enthusiasm. A *Women's Apa* is no longer the fashionable apa to join. Feminism may be more important in the lives of some of us who are still active fans, but the time for zealous writing passed with the 1970's. Now, those politics are woven into the assumptions which motivate our writing, and that writing is often better for it. I'd be the first to admit that there is much less universally appealing writing to be resurrected from the 70's than there will be from the current decade's output. But I'd also argue with those who feel that the effort was wasted, and that the fannish writing of the 70's is now intrinsically uninteresting.

Perhaps the 1970's fannish legacy is that political topics are no longer greeted with hostility. Politically conscious writing is often more sophisticated and certainly more integrated with good writing than used to be the case, and sometimes even includes humor. Take the one-shot published this year by Terry Garey and Rebecca Lesses, for example. Terry and Rebecca (or "'Butch Lesses' and 'Nelly Garey,' the famous Minneapolis-Boston Intercontinental Siamese Wimp Twins") published *Polite Lady Dog*, parodying the title of Avedon Carol's and Lucy Huntzinger's famous *Rude Bitch*. It was a short, punchy, witty zine that pointed out the absurdity of all the time and energy devoted to some of the recent fannish controversies when there are real, "cosmically important," life-threatening crises in the world—like starving Ethiopian children—that deserve more attention than we give them in our writing.

Corpus Collusum #1 (published by Susan Obermeir and Al Sirois) poked fun at Public Broadcasting fundraising techniques and included a pro-abortion editorial ("one man's view" and Susan's first-person history/anecdote). Issue #2's letter column was dominated by a lively discussion on abortion. Mog Decarnin's *Majoon* ("A Fanzine of Advanced Sexual Politics") printed a wonderful collection of quotations that sounded like fragments from tape transcripts rather than written responses to the question "What surprised You About Sex?" There was also some material on AIDS.

MAKE MINE A DOUBLE, BARTENDER

And then there's the amazing writing/publishing/traveling duo, the Nielsen Hadens. The strident tone of Patrick's writing used to put me off even back in

my own strident university days. Now I think he's one of fandom's best writers. Most recently, for example, there was *Flash Point* 7...

With a casual air of expertise, Patrick blended several shots of potent seriousness with a half-jigger—just the right touch—of comic mixer, and stirred the ingredients with his mimeo swizzle stick. It was a simple concoction in a plain, serviceable container: no osterizer, dairy products, or exotic illos. But he finished his consummate performance with a subdued flourish—adding a few sweet interlineating garnishes—and slid the product across the post office counter. The result was superb.

Flash Point began with a hilarious little bit about mouse-catching in the Nielsen Haden household and ended with another story about the same incident from Teresa's pen. The double feature was an exercise in—and a fine demonstration of—the art of exaggeration, the stretched truth of anecdote. Between the two stories, you're not sure of either account's truth, but it doesn't matter. Like Garrison Kiellor's "lies," one was left only with admiration and laughter for the story.

Part 2 of *Flash Point* contained a lovely bit of fannish mythmaking, starring Gary Farber and a combination shaggy dog story/lightbulb joke. It also contained this surreal fantasy scene:

...Sunday morning, Constellation, 1983:
all quiet on the Convention Center front, the peaceful 102° Baltimore morning disrupted only by the soft swish of hundred-dollar bills being tossed out a second-story window.

But the intoxicating kick of this little fanzine didn't flow from tasty mixers, but from the main ingredient—and that required some concentration to appreciate. The section, "Less than Human," was a remarkable P. K. Dick review and a call for more intellectual handling of theological speculation than is presently found in SF. In fact the call for more serious thought, discussion and writing—or at least an acknowledgement that serious discourse is valuable—continued in the next section of *Flash Point*, entitled "Fandom." There, Patrick made his point that American fanzine fandom has at times seemed to endorse anti-intellectualism in the course of its self-definition, perhaps catching the spore of the US neurosis about intellectualism in general. Says Patrick: "In the US, no matter how smart you think you are, you don't say so for godsakes; what makes you think you're so special?"

He compared the American convention, Corflu, with Britain's Mexican, where,

...the idea is to put on a science fiction convention, you know, about books, the kind you read. Program items were deliberately sophisticated: serious critical discussions by fans (not boring academics), a film program of avant-garde and stfnally borderline works, Guests of Honor of half-stfnal, half-mundane sort bound to be of interest only to those who sometimes read books without spaceships on the cover (Russell Hoban and Alasdair Gray). Most "fanzine fans" in Britain attended. So did all the other intelligent, stimulating folks who simply haven't time to get involved with fanzines, the pro writers and editors who enjoy fandom on its own terms rather than as a place to meet their adoring public, the dealers with real books and magazines to sell as supposed to hologram

jewelry and Dune plastic model kits. Yet despite its "literary" tone the con was classically "fannish" as all get-out, from the silly logo by Harry Bell to the drunken parties at night. (There were also program items about fanzine fandom, not as tokenism but because fanzines are an organic part of the real fannish gestalt.) Given a choice I'd rather attend a Mexican than a Corflu...

And to show us that it can be done, Patrick published *Flash Point*: a perfect mixture of fannish lightness and intellectual substance. Laughter and literacy.

This issue of *Whimsy* has frequently drawn my thoughts into the area of fanzine construction, to the question of how one makes a fanzine say more than what its words alone say, and the jig-saw puzzle of a fanzine's format building its own message. But now I'm feeling chastened: Patrick's deft demonstration of his ideal of fannishness reflected in the flavors of *Flash Point* 7 is a hard act to follow. He concludes his essay with encouragement to us:

We are smarter, more intelligent, more articulate. We're hungry for stimulation of a sort neither poolside "relaxacons" nor three-ring circuses provide. We want fanzines and books, intense intellectual conversation and drunken revels. We want desperate fun. Well, I do, anyway, and I wonder how many other people feel the same way.

I hope the fannish pendulum doesn't swing entirely to the opposite pole from the earnest extreme of 70's fanwriting. I agree with Patrick: it's the right mixture that's best.

The other part of the incredible team, Teresa Nielsen Hayden, knows about the importance of a good blend too. Her famous account of her excommunication from the Mormon Church proves that, and more recently—though last year's vintage—she wrote a brilliant essay in *Zed* on women's perception of themselves as fat. It climaxed with horrifyingly familiar lines, the epitome of black humor: women who react to possible disease, who say with sardonic irony: "Well, at least I'll lose weight." The echos of Teresa's article are still reverberating back and forth in Suzette Haden Elgin's *The Lonesome Node*. Suzette, a linguist, SF writer, and author of the women's language, Laáadan, is determined to create a word for the feeling Teresa says there is no word for, a women's sense that she can never be thin enough.

ARKANSAS RENNAISANCE WOMAN

The Lonesome Node is an eccentric combination: a goldmine of linguistic speculation, an amazing newsclipping service, and another fanzine not shy about enjoying intellectual discussion. Suzette's energy as reflected by the astonishing range and number of periodicals and books that she reads and reports upon in *Node* (not to mention her linguistic and SF professional writing, convention attendance, and staggering correspondence list) is truly mind-boggling. Amazingly enough, even with the high density of information crammed into each *Node*, it isn't stuffy at all. *Node* is one of those inventing-the-wheel-again productions, in that Suzette didn't learn about fanzines from fans. She designed *Node* to suit herself. As a result, its format is an unfamiliar one for US fans (straight typing from the top to the bottom of each page, typed headings,

no art, no cover), but it's wonderful nonetheless. I read it first line to last as soon as it's delivered every bi-month.

Each issue of *Node* is divided into seven sections—containing seven continuing *Node* topics (one of which is highlighted with in-depth coverage each issue). The seven topics are: (1) Women and Language (What's a word for women's perception that they are fat when they are not?); (2) Language and Health Care (How do doctors use language to maintain their status?); (3) Religious Language...

I continue to receive clippings on the subject of President Reagan and the belief he may or may not have in Armageddon. I do indeed understand that it might be a matter for grave alarm. If you happened to believe that all that stood between you (and all your Christian friends and family) and a life of eternal bliss in the Kingdom of God is one good whacking nuclear war which only the wicked will have to suffer from, you might feel a strong temptation to get that war underway and move on to the bliss part. On the other hand, I know what bewilderment Reagan must be experiencing when people take his religious statements seriously. He knows that is terrible bad manners; he knows nice people don't do it; and he knows that among the wellbred of America there is a set pious platitudes and related remarks that one trots out for suitable occasions, but you don't actually call people on them. It isn't done. For a man like Reagan, the separation of church and state means one thing: statements you make that have to do with business matters are statements that you have to stand behind and that should be attended to with deadly seriousness; statements you make that have to do with religious matters are just polite conversation, and to pay them any close attention is crude...

...It is crucial, in considering this matter, to make a distinction between BELIEVING something and ACTING on one's belief. If you were to poll Reagan and Falwell and the American public, you would find that they also believe Christ's commandments must be obeyed, and that Christ commanded everyone who is rich to give away all that they have to the poor. No one sits around worrying, or writing grave essays, based on their fear that Reagan and Falwell and other wealthy Christians in positions of power are going to give up all they have and divide it among the poor. That would be ridiculous. You don't give away your wealth, you put it in a blind trust. All wellbred persons of Reagan's class know this, and know that—just as you do not bring up the topic of your urinary and defecatory practices in public—you do not go around bringing that up, either. I'm sure the President must wish that people would be nice...

I have absolutely no intention of trivializing this issue when I say that IF you should read in the press that the President has taken all of his wealth and divided it among the poor, and ONLY if you should read that, it would be time to worry that he might act on Armageddon.

Other topics are: (4) Verbal Self-Defense (What's the best way to defuse an argument that begins with the phrase, "If you really loved me,

you'd...?"); (5) Ozark English (with examples plucked from print media and TV broadcasts to demonstrate that "bad" grammar sometimes points not to educational deficiencies but to regional, cultural differences and different ways of thinking); (6) Linguistics/SF Interface (conreports and notes on her Laadan Dictionary); and (7) Linguistics/Music Interface (or "fiksinging").

Her mailing list probably doesn't contain a very large percentage of fans, but that's just one more contributing element to *Node*'s main attraction: cross-over between different fields, people and ideas that don't usually talk to or about one another.

POPULAR CULTURE

For another example of "crossover" fanzines with a weird mixture of subject matter and a political consciousness, you can't ignore Candi Strecker's *Sydney Suppey's Quarterly & Confused Pet Monthly*. Volume 5, No. 1's title is "God Don't Like It Too" and is subtitled "Five new stars on the media fringe who combine the apoplectic with the apocalyptic." Candi writes about Gene Scott, (the San Francisco TV evangelist), Wally George (kook/talk show host), and my favorite fringe star, "Joe Bob Briggs" (satirist/movie critic):

At last somebody we don't have to take seriously! In fact, the whole point of reading 'Joe Bob at the Drive-In' is laughing at the people who DO take him seriously. Who'd have thought that the Serious and Tasteful San Francisco Chronicle would print a weekly column on drive-in movies? Out here where audiences hiss out loud at movies when male characters say chauvinistic things, it takes real nerve to print columns that contain the word 'bimbo' in almost every paragraph and that give a breast count at the end of every review.

SubGenious TV show recommendations and an article on shopping malls rounds out this fascinating issue on the unfashionable fringe of popular culture.

I enjoy fanzines that involve me in the fandoms of other fields (than SF) for the same reason that I appreciate a tasty mixture of literacy and silliness, or the mind-expanding properties of blending personal anecdote with political insight. Complexity, a wide range of subject matter, and varied points-of-view are simply more interesting than confining oneself to one subject and one style.

MY LIFE AS A STAND-UP COMEDIAN

I remember my earliest writing in *Janus* sometimes jangled with clumsy, tinny tones of academia. My first article in *Janus*, "The City as Idea," was in fact, a not-so-rewritten version of a college term paper on SF. It contained some good ideas about how SF envisions urban life, but now I cringe at the tone and the words in that essay. That was only a couple years after I graduated from the UW and I was still auditing classes; it was hard to ween myself from the school habit. Learning a new writing style, learning to write for an audience containing more than one professor—that was even harder. In fact, reading over the last *Aurora* editorial, it's obvious to me that I still need to flush out some arrogant writing habits and some silly rhetorical crutches. It continues to be important to me to

write about the world, to write about things that anger me, that need to be changed or saved, that are of more than passing interest. I've changed my mind, though, about the best way to say those things.

It seems to me that personal experience makes better references than footnotes and bibliographies. often, humor works better than earnest argument, and certainly is more sustainable than anger. Clarity is more important than showing off an obscure vocabulary.

Changing was and is a slow process. The fact that I had so much fun writing the light editorials for *Janus* should have tipped me off. The positive feedback I received for personal anecdotes in my apazines (*Obsessions for A Women's Apa*, and *Shorelines for Crapa*) provided some clues. The truth began to sink in for me when I realized that I had more fun writing, and felt more proud of some of the humorous articles I wrote for other fanzines than I was of *Aurora née Janus*.

But I didn't consciously admit to the shift from academic to a more whimsical writing style until my first experience as a stand-up comedian. It wasn't anything I'd planned, for do doubt if I had, I'd have prepared a serious and earnest Speech. But there it was: only two hours before the GoH reception at Aquacon (at which Jan Bogstad and I were fan GoHs) and they told us—surprise!—that they wanted us to do speeches after all! Well, that wasn't too awful, I told myself; after all, there were only a couple of hours of nervous anticipation to be endured this way. I could have worried for weeks had the committee been more organized. So, up in my room at the Disneyland Hotel, I scribbled notes (which I've lost entirely...) for "Growing up Catholic". It described an 8-foot tall guardian angel who relaxed on my bed during naptime in the space I left by squeezing over next to the wall. Scapulars and secret code prayers that operated heaven's gates like clockworks—slide, click, whirr—and you're sprung from Purgatory the first Friday after you die. Devils and levitating saints. Mysteries and Paradoxes and Invisible Spirits. Hooked on that sort of mythology as children, was it any wonder, I asked, that so many of we fallen Catholics substituted SF/F later in our lives?

It was fun to write—but really fun to deliver. It was rough in spots and the ending was non-existent, trailing into earnestness and unprepared text. But there were some good lines and the experience revealed new lessons in timing and word choice to me. I turned into an addict on the spot, having once heard the laughter. Having once gotten that response, I wanted more of the same.

One of the best fan writers, when it comes to side-splitting humor, is Steven Bryan Bieler. His story on the war between the TV stations in a little Washington town was wonderfully funny. I hope he eventually reprints it in the series of little chapbooks he's been publishing, because I lost my copy of that issue of *Totally Wired*. *Why Don't you Get a Real Job?*, his first chapbook, went out of print before I got smart and sent for a copy, but I did buy a copy of the second chapbook, *Prelude to Pulp*. Both of these collections contain essays originally published in fanzines, mostly his own *On Company Time*, which unfortunately saw its last issue in July (#5).

Bieler writes about baseball and automobiles a

lot, so it's definitely a measure of the quality of his writing that not only do I continue to read and enjoy this material, but that I collect it. He also writes about writing quite a lot, and in *Prelude to Pulp* each chapter was concerned with some aspect of science fiction or fantasy genre writing. He began with "The Wing-Nuts of Style" and covered such basics as style, nouns, verbs, adjectives, outlines and metaphors...

Metaphors are the artificial flavoring on the pre-sweetened sponge cake of fiction. Skilled metaphorticians beef up otherwise wimpy works by the adept inclusion of metaphor, which lets them describe things by actually describing other things. This is called controlled confusion and is especially useful when the original thing to be described is boring. Fruits and vegetables are not terribly exciting, but when presented in anatomical terms, they become very exciting indeed! And often require one of more exclamation points.

I've grown to love provoking people's laughter and I greatly admire Steve's ability to elicit mine. In *Prelude to Pulp*, Steve quotes Garrison Keillor, the host of National Public Radio's *Prairie Home Companion*, and another of my favorite writers. The sentiment of Keillor's statement goes to the core of my feelings about moving from what I've called an "academic" writing style to a more humorous, personal style:

It is more worthy in the eyes of God and better for us as a people if a writer makes three pages sharp and funny about the lives of geese than to make three hundred flat and flabby about God or the American people. (from the introduction to *Happy to Be Here* by Garrison Keillor)

MY CAREER GOES OOPS

An entertaining, but masochistic sub-category of the fannish amusing anecdote is the fannish "oops" or "Kerfluie" story. One of the common "oops" stories in the fannish tradition is the so-called con report of the "what-happened-on-our-way-to-the-con-and-how-we-almost-didn't-get-there" variety. Some writers don't do it as well as Suzle does, for instance, and it's hard to avoid the suspicion that the only reason the writer is focusing on their pre-convention experience is that it's the only part that they remember. It's the only time the writer was sober, awake, taking notes, or otherwise conscious. But fannish writing is full of wonderful, imaginative, and well-written examples of the Kerfluie genre focusing on all aspects of fannish and extra-fannish life. Names like Bob Shaw, Teresa and Patrick Nielsen Haden, and Dan Steffan spring to my mind when I think of writers with egos sturdy enough to encourage others to laugh at their faux pas (or fox paws, as we say in the Midwest).

All fans have a few Kerfluie stories to tell on themselves. But some fans live their entire lives with one "oops" touching of another, or at least it would seem so given the stream of Kerfluie stories of which their fannish writing is composed. Take the example of Rosemary Ulliot. Rosemary wrote a column called "Kumquat Wine" for Mike Glicksohn's and Susan Wood's *Energuman* in the 1960's, and each column was another Kerfluie story, an episode in

Rosemary's "oops"-prone life. I wasn't a fan when they were originally published, but several years ago, I got the chance to read the collected *Energuman* opus of "Kumquat Wine"'s when Joyce Scrivner asked me to illustrate them for a reprinting she was planning.* Joyce intended to print the columns in their original formats and to keep all the Alicia Austin illustrations that had accompanied them, but wanted me to do some pseudo-Austin drawings to fill in the spaces that Glicksohn and Wood had originally filled with illos by other fan artists. It was an enjoyable assignment because I like the Kerfluie genre of fannish anecdote so much and also admire Alicia Austin's drawing style. I felt like I was "studying" on a number of levels,

*and still does plan to publish it, as far as I know. Anyway, I hope so. But when, Joyce!??

both learning from Austin's early illustrating style, as well as picking up a few writing tips from Rosemary Ulliyot's classic anecdotes.

I certainly tend to live the Kerfluie anecdote. Actually I'm sure that everyone experiences them; it's just that some people do a better job forgetting them, or maybe just don't need to publicly confess them in order to exorcize them. But I will admit to telling more than my share of Kerfluie stories. I feel a sort of kinship with Dan Steffan, who used to say that he told funny stories about himself before others could tell them. Sometimes I worry a little, and rewrite when I think I'm beginning to sound like Joan Rivers, a comedian whose so-called humor relies too heavily on self-degradation for my taste. (There's a thin line between "oops" and "I'm so stupid that—") But laughing a little at oneself does seem to help keep everything else in perspective.



Ever since that disasterous night my quiche was run over and squished by the hit-and-run driver, my life has gone along pretty smoothly. It's as if somebody's been keeping a balance sheet and has issued instructions to ease up on me a little since then.

It's not as if there haven't been plenty of opportunities for things to fall apart. I mean, it would have been easy for things to have gone completely Kerfluie several times. I'd wake up on days that promised to be prime Kerfluie days and my only consolation would be a fleeting thought, "this'll probably make a great fanzine story." It's been weird. It's been unnatural, breaking Murphy's immutable law, "If something can go wrong, it will."

Take August 4, 1985, for example, the date of my move from a house I shared with Peter, to an apartment of my own. It went perfectly. Smoothly. No slip-ups, no catastrophes. I got plenty of sleep.

Not the story you expected, hmmm? Me either.

First of all, I found a two bedroom apartment I liked and could afford relatively easily. It has an extra room for my studio, lots of closets, and air-conditioning too, which was a boon this summer. It's only a 20-minute bike ride from my office along a bike path. Peter and I managed to divide our possessions and part as roommates with no arguments over belongings or recriminations about the situation. I completely finished packing early the

afternoon before my move—a miracle in itself—and we went out for a pleasant dinner that night.

The next day, the move went as planned. It was the easiest moving day I've ever had. I hired movers to handle furniture and friends helped load and unload the boxes. It was over so quickly, I can hardly remember enough to tell you, but if I could, it would be boring.

If there is some sort of balance sheet, and I did build up credits in the Kerfluie department during quiche-squish night, it must have been a lot of credits. Look at the evidence. Not only did my move proceed without anecdotal incident, but there was the plane-flight down to Texas in August...

Now, if you recall, by late August, there were five or six major airline disasters taking turns grabbing newspaper headlines. Everyone was jittery about plane travel, especially on Midwest Airlines, whose plane exploded after take-off from the Milwaukee airport. Their slogan, advertised on posters tacked up in all the Wisconsin travel agencies, was "We'll knock your socks off!" (I can just see some guy reluctantly edging into a travel agency to make reservations. His friends have only half convinced him that it's still safer to fly than to drive, and much more convenient. One look at that poster and he walks right back out of the agency. "No, I'll keep my socks anyway, thank you.") Anyway, that's when Scott and I flew down to Texas. I wasn't particularly worried about flying; I've always enjoyed it. My only travel-related neurosis

is the fear of missing a plane. But Scott's always hated the idea of plane flight, and the sensational news was only making things more unpleasant for him. But panic about a potential crash wasn't how the kerfluie manifested itself. I was distracting Scott reasonably well, I think, so well, that neither of us noticed the real thing until we'd already been engulfed by it.

It was on the bus going down to Chicago's O'Hare Field Sunday morning. We were sitting in the second row behind a very nice, but very weird man who twisted around in his seat to exchange pleasantries with us. It wouldn't surprise me to learn that he had been an acting student whose assignment had been to interact with total strangers while posing as a very stereotypical, flaming gay of the fifties' vintage. He told us about how his mother spoiled him despite his age (40+), and lisped and blushed as he talked. He inquired about our plans. We told him we were going down to the Padre Islands for a vacation and then on to a convention in Austin. He asked more questions: what flight, which airline, what time, and so on. Scott and I got confused as we tried to recall our connections. I remember getting a sort of sick feeling in my stomach as I tried to remember times and flight numbers. Maybe it was just the numbers, always a disquieting conversation topic for me, but probably it was the premonition that our plans were going Kerfluie.

Scott was uneasy too, as he took our plane tickets out of his jacket pocket and I found the bus schedule in my backpack. We compared the two and premonition turned into the sure thing. It was mostly my fault. Our travel agent had told us to get on the wrong bus, but I could have easily checked the connection on my own schedule and none of this would have happened. We were on a bus that would arrive at O'Hare at 11:45 am, and our flight was scheduled to take off at 11:16 am. An image occupied my imagination of the two of us spending several harrowing nights in airport terminals propped up against our luggage and paying outrageous penalty fees to the airline and of course loosing our hotel reservations because we were late. My only fear-of-flying neurosis—missing the flight—had materialized. All I could do was groan.

I was so nervous, I botched the attempt to telephone the airport on the first of the two stops our bus made before arriving at O'Hare. Scott succeeded the next time, and told them that our bus would be arriving late and that we were going to miss our flight. After that, all we could do was sit calmly and wait.

Now doesn't that sound like the introduction to a really high-quality kerfluie story? Think of all the things that could have gone wrong, domino-like, after that start!

This is what happened:

The ticket agent was a charming, helpful woman who made new reservations for us on a flight leaving Chicago in less than an hour after our arrival at O'Hare. There would be no extra charge, although this flight would not go directly to Austin as our original flight had. We would make a stop in Dallas and could only cross our fingers that the last Austin flight of the day was not really sold out as it appeared on the agent's computer screen. We flew to Austin, waited around for a half hour or so, at which time they called our names and we were

invited to take the last two available seats on the day's last Dallas-Austin flight.

The only "disaster" turned out to be a failure to get adjacent seats on the plane, which meant that Scott had to grip his seat armrests rather than my hand during take-off. I got to sit next to another acting student doing an exercise in stereotypes, this time a 10-year-old rich kid going home to the ranch in Dallas, who told me I was crazy for having rented an economy-sized car for our Texas vacation. He said that he would have reserved a limosine with a chauffer. I told him the idea hadn't occurred to me.

We picked up the non-chauffered rental car in Austin, then managed to find our way to Corpus Christi. This was in spite of the things Texans call maps, which ignore such irrelevant details as compass direction and scale. In fact, we located our hotel as easily as if we'd lived there for years. Luck was favoring us. We were only a couple hours behind schedule, and those hours were accounted for by the extra sleep time we'd gained by failing to get up early enough to catch the right bus.

I'm beginning to think I lead a charmed life. On the other hand, I've earned some good luck. I suppose you're getting impatient to know what exactly happened on the Night of the Quiche. First, some background...

For a long time, arranging to get together with Scott was difficult. Peter and I still lived together, waiting for our lease to run out, and so it wasn't practical for Scott to stay with me at the house when he drove in from Iowa. For a few months we booked motel rooms on the weekends he was in Madison. But then, in June, a friend was moved out of town for a year by her employer. She kept her Madison apartment, managing to sublet it for the school year but not during the summer. She gave us the keys to her place and we lived in the apartment on weekends. Scott got off work late Saturday night and drove up to Madison, arriving about midnight, and stayed through Tuesday morning. (His workweek began on Tuesday afternoon.) We were both sick of hotels and restaurants—the romance having worn off with necessity—so I'd often bake something at home and bring it along to the apartment with me.

That night, I baked a quiche—the classic Quiche Lorraine—with big chunks of ham and lots of freshly grated gruyere cheese. I remember thinking as I took it out of the oven that it was one of the best looking quiches I'd ever produced. But that's getting ahead of the story...

Earlier that same Saturday, you would have found me bicycling around town. It had been a dazzling, sunny day: the temperature hovered in the upper 90's and the humidity sloshed about as high as it could go without actually precipitating. All in all, it was a typically midwest summer day. I was out sprinkling the roads with my perspiration only because the clock was ticking on Peter's and my lease and I needed to find an apartment soon. And so I'd masochistically scheduled myself for 10 appointments that day at various offices, apartments, and houses all over the city. My itinerary was well choreographed; it started on the far east side and was plotted sequentially across to the far west side of town, requiring lots of hard, serious peddling. By the time I'd made it to my first mid-morning appointment, I was already drenched in

sweat with my tank-top shirt clinging to me in a manner appropriate to a wet T-shirt contest. There's no question that had there actually been a contest at the end of the afternoon, and had I been the only contestant, I would have lost. I was a pretty sad sight. No cheery smile brightened my face. Six hours on a narrow bicycle saddle, about 35 miles of biking, two no-shows and no apartment decision, had worn down my spirits. I badly needed a shower and my hair stuck to my face in sodden strands where it straggled from beneath my helmet.

But the worst result of the day's efforts showed up upon my back after I'd finally gotten that much-needed shower: sunburn. The back of my neck and upper shoulders, interrupted only by thin stripes of whitish skin preserved by the straps of my shirt, were the color of new Coke cans. My face, arms and legs were a few shades lighter but still nicely coordinated with the shoulder hues, which seemed to pulse even as I looked in the mirror. Toweling my back dry hurt too much and so I let it air dry as I tried to recall what kinds of weightless, frictionless clothing I owned. I finally found a gauze shirt which hurt less than others and liberally applied moisture lotion to the burnt areas.

The day was already a prime Kerflue day. I'd been stood up by two landlords who probably figured that nobody would be foolish enough to go apartment

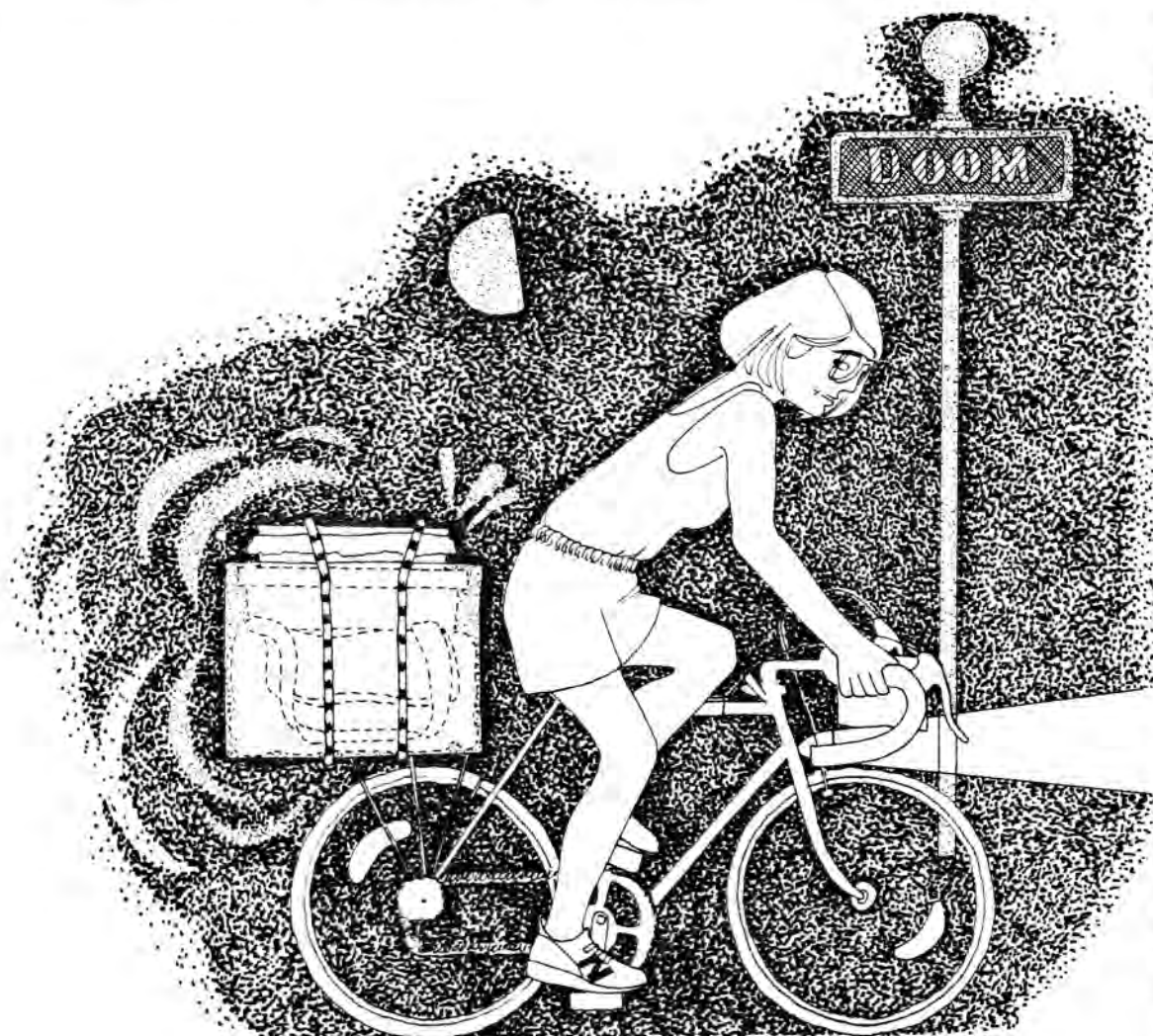
hunting in the terrible heat. And on a night that was scheduled to be something of a romantic tryst . . . I'd have to greet Scott by saying "Don't touch me, please." And so it was with some relief that I accepted a telephone invitation to go to an early movie with some friends. A chance to relax in an air-conditioned theater and watch a light, funny movie seemed like just the thing. The theater was cool, the movie (*Back to the Future*) was funny, and I did have a good time. It's just that, afterward, I was running a little short on time, which was a bit ironic considering the subject of the movie we'd just seen.

With only two hours until I had to bike over to my friend's apartment to meet Scott (getting there before him because I had the only key), I planned to bake a quiche and a cherry cobbler. My overnight bag had to be packed, and the mess in the kitchen would have to be cleaned up. And so, upon getting home, I turned into a sort of stiff whirlwind, rolling out the pastries, chopping and mixing the quiche ingredients, mixing the cobbler topping and pitting the cherries, and—while the quiche and cobbler were baking—cleaning and packing. The baked goods were still quite warm when I packed them into a box on top of my overnight bag, tied the whole assembly with bungie cords to the metal rack on the back of my bike, and started out to meet Scott.

Looks a little rickety, doesn't it? I discovered that almost immediately, but it occurred to me much too late to turn back and call a cab. Biking is so habitual for me. The whole thing practically fell off with the first corner I turned, at which point I dismounted and proceeded to walk my bike as quickly as possible to the apartment.

Here's where things got a bit tense. It was dark. The assembly of quiche and cobbler and overnight bag within box on bike rack wobbled precariously. Worse yet, none of the sidewalks between my house and the apartment seemed to have sloped curbs and every time I'd lower the bike down from curb to street the box tilted alarmingly. I'd make a grab for it with one arm, steady the bike with the other, and grit my teeth in pain at what felt like a knife being drawn slowly across my par-broiled shoulder blades.

The distance between house and apartment was only a mile, give or take a block or two. But it



seemed like ten miles that night.

My normal biking route wasn't really the shortest way to the apartment because of one way streets. Since I was walking, though, I could travel along the shorter route. But the thing about this so-called "short-cut" was that I wasn't as familiar with it. The streets are a little weird in this neighborhood, shifting from an east-west to a northeast-southwest orientation. (I was trying to travel in a generally northwest direction.)

And it was dark. Did I tell you that already?

Did I tell you how absorbed I was in making sure the box stayed upright on my bike rack?

Well, anyway, I took the wrong turn and got lost temporarily. At one point I found myself approaching a familiar campus building which was lit with floodlights, and as I pondered the surrealistic effect, I suddenly realized that I shouldn't have been able to see that building. I was not walking toward the street I wanted but parallel to it.

I panicked. I shot a glance at my watch. Almost midnight. I grabbed for the box as it began to slide off the rack, and in a contorted operation in which I peeled the map from my bike's front-wheel pack, I checked my current position and attempted to bend my back into a concave position, out of touch with the knife edges of my shirt. Then I was on my way again, back in the direction from which I'd just come. I finally turned right and saw the traffic lights of Monroe Street flashing ahead; and across Monroe, the lights of the apartment building, and safe haven.

I would be on time, just barely.

My back throbbed with pain. Despite the night's cooler temperatures, I needed another shower, but already I was sighing with relief, my muscles starting to relax. I carefully lifted the bike up off the curb and set it gently onto the asphalt.

I waited for a break in traffic. (There seemed to be a lot of it for the late hour.) And then I started to push my bike across the street, left hand on the handlebars, right hand steadying the box.

That's when the bungee cords went ****SPRONGG!****—snapping off the far side of the bike rack, and the whole box slid sideways.

(My memory plays this next sequence in slow motion...)

As the box started to fall, I turned the bike slightly, pulling it toward me, trying to offset the box's momentum, hoping to make it fall toward me instead of the pavement.

All I succeeded in doing was changing the direction of the box's fall, sending it and its contents toward the center line of the road.

The box hit the pavement on its side.

My overnight bag skittered across the street, nestling safely against the curb.

The cobbler hit the pavement with a bounce, but miraculously landed upright, only splashing my white gauze shirt with hot cherry juice.

The quiche, which was nestled inside a round tupperware pie container, popped its patented tupperware seal and bounced with the cobbler upon the pavement. The handmade stoneware dish in which it was baked didn't fare as well as the cobbler. It bounced out of the tupperware container and broke in half, opening like a Pac-Man face and liberated the quiche which slid intact a few feet

into the center of the lane.

The quiche's sides began to fall outward even as I watched, horrified. Peripheral vision told me that traffic was approaching from my left.

I don't know what it was that I hoped to do, even if there hadn't been cars rushing in for the kill—scrape up the pastry and custard mixture with a piece of cardboard and scoop it into the tupperware container? But there wasn't time to work up a strategy.

I just picked up my bike, spun around, and set it safely on the sidewalk behind me.

I turned toward the culinary catastrophe on the street and stepped forward, ready to rescue whatever I could...

...Just in time—
SPLEKCHSHPHTFSSSH!

—to see the blue, four-door car run over my quiche.

It's the sound I remember more than anything—the liquid, greasy, splattering sound of a quiche being squashed and spread in oily tracks down Monroe Street. And then the overpowering smell of ham and cheese and custard and pastry...

I stood by the side of the street watching the rest of the burst of traffic spread the awful greasy remains further down the road. No one stopped; no one returned to see what they'd killed. I wonder if the driver noticed the sound or the odor and was curious about what kind of animal smelled like freshly-baked quiche.

The cobbler survived unscathed.

That's when I thought about calling a taxi.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Scott arrived while I was in the process of getting undressed for a shower. When he knocked, I opened the door clutching a towel to my chest. There was a smear of cherry juice accenting my face which nicely picked up the dominant color scheme of my shoulders and chest. I didn't exactly present the image of romantic welcome, but I didn't say "Don't touch me," either. I was closer to breaking down in tears, actually.

There Scott stood, looking very tired, but quite stunned at the unusual reception, and I tried to explain it all in one sentence. He continued to look stunned.

But then he shook his head, pushed me back into the apartment and closed the door behind his suitcase and said, "Calm down, sit down...You tell me your story first." It was an interesting evening.

I figured someone owed me some good luck after that. And I've been collecting payments ever since.



FANZINES

We've been doing *Janus* and *Aurora* since 1975. At first and for a long time, it was my obsession in life. It wasn't unusual, during the weeks before printing, for me to spend 40+ hours a week on its production over and above the job with which I paid my rent. One morning the postman delivered a long, complimentary letter from Harlan Ellison and that same afternoon a Choles truck delivered my first long-stemmed roses. I would have been hard-pressed to tell you which thrilled me more. But it was a great day for sure.

The articles were reflections of my reading list at the beginning. The ideas were the substance of daily talks with friends. *Janus* was woven inextricably into the fabric of my life.

But Jan and I began to disagree more and more about the magazine and eventually we ended our co-editorship; she chose to edit *New Moon* alone and I worked with the Madison SF Group to produce *Aurora*. *Aurora* continued to be the genzine *Janus* had been, but more and more, it ceased to reflect or instigate important things in my life. Producing the magazine was still a high priority for me; I couldn't afford to publish anything on its scale on my own. It's only been recently that my job has involved me in publications with more technical challenge than *Janus/Aurora*.

Today, *Aurora*'s committee-chosen themes actually seem peripheral to my life. I catch myself thinking of my role in the Madison publishing co-operative as some sort of volunteer technician, churning out illos, layouts and printer instruction sheets for somebody else's fanzine. I really think that nobody's obsessive about the zine anymore, and that has led to a reflected dullness in the end product. And that takes its toll. There are fewer letters of comment and even less enthusiasm among the other people involved in the zine. Anyway, the last issue (#24, on underappreciated women SF/F writers) required a torturous year to publish. Something's gotta change...and probably will, as soon as we manage to get together and talk honestly about the situation. I don't know if there will be an *Aurora* 24. We'll see.

Anyway, genzines are what I've been most familiar with over the past ten years, and possibly this zine, which is obviously a rather drastic reaction against that sort of publication, is an outlet for ideas and energy that just weren't finding form in *Aurora*.

THE GREAT GENZINE VS APAZINE SKIRMISH

I've received three issues of Pam Wells' *Nutz* since the last issue of *Whimsy* came out. I just wish fanzine editors like Pam would put a cork into these apologies for being late, not getting enough issues out, etc... I might have to start taking offense. What this world needs is more sad editorials in fanzines apologizing for being too early. "Sorry this zine is out so soon, folks. I don't know, I guess I've just been bored lately, nothing to do, just kicking around the house here, haven't moved in decades, otherwise I'd have waited a little longer to pub my ish...Next time, I promise, next time, I'll give you more time to read this issue before I foist another one off on you..."

Ahem. Anyway. As I was saying, I've got three issues of *Nutz*. #4 was the "education" issue, which was fun to compare to *Aurora*'s 23rd issue since it

also covered that theme. Though both *Nutz* and *Aurora* are genzines, publishing articles mostly by people other than the editor, *Nutz* is by far the more personal zine. *Nutz* had articles about eccentric teachers (or headmasters, as they seem to be called in England, sounding very Dickensian) as opposed to *Aurora*'s articles on syllabi. *Nutz* had stories about outrageous students and recess experiences, as opposed to *Aurora*'s article on the generic pronoun debate.

Although *Nutz* has attracted good contributors—Rob Hansen (with a TAFF chapter), Judith Hanna (a recess story about beetle bugs in the education issue), Anne Warren, and lots of others—editor Pam Wells is mostly inaudible, or at least, muffled. She's visible enough through the clean, pleasant layout of *Nutz*, but the editorials are rather short and make abbreviated arguments for TAFF justice and against labeling people. Is this what Avedon means when she says the British fans "sing, 'More editorial presence, Pam!' whenever she walks into a room..."? Rhetorical question. Must be.

Still Pam's fashioned each issue of *Nutz* into a good collection of current British fanwriting, something I certainly appreciate receiving in the mail, including some of that infamous "hidden" apa talent. She's certainly doing what she intends to do and very well, too. "*Nutz* will always be a genzine because that's the way I want it to be," says Pam. "I like editing and compiling other people's articles into a cohesive whole." *Whimsy* goes to the opposite extreme. Luckily Avedon isn't around here with her group of friends. They'd probably sing, "Less editorial presence, Jeanne!"

Nutz 5 includes a beautiful extended metaphor on memory by Anne Warren; an in-depth review of Joni Mitchell's music by Paul Kincaid which I liked quite a bit, having tied several favorite Joni Mitchell songs to episodes in my life as did Paul; and a funny story about a class picnic by Pam herself. Alex Stewart searches for "desperate fun," and makes me wonder if it's a code phrase imported by the Nielsen-Haydens or if they left it behind in England. The well-edited and lively LoColumn concludes with letters about the apa controversy.

Complaints about the talent drain into apas crop up in most British fanzines these days. Apas are fairly recent phenomenon in British fandom which coincides with a marked decrease in genzine production. British fandom seems to be going through an "on-the-one-hand-and-on-the-other-hand" discussion, unable to agree whether the apa phenomenon will eventually prove to be harmful or healthy to their community. On the one hand, regular fanzine writers have to some extent "disappeared" into the apas and on the other hand apas have fostered the emergence of new writers who were too shy or un-practiced to have begun in the genzines.

This being SF fandom, I feel comfortable adding, that on the other hand zines like *Nutz*, Anne Warren's *Some Days the Bear Eats You* and her *Pink* and *Blue* reprint zines, and Linda Pickersgill's *Tiger Tea* are providing a compromise solution to the problem by publishing bits of apazines which seem to exhibit generally interesting and high quality writing, bits that deserve to be read by more fans than just the particular apa membership.

I'm not familiar with many collections of North American apazine excerpts. Various members of A *Women's Apa* used to talk grandiosely about doing

The Best of AWA on and off, and Cheryl Cline actually put together a small selection with *Blue Moon* last year. I've got the feeling that there are several other famous "Best of—" collections that I should know about, but I can't think of them, other than the occasional reprinted single essay in genzines. Harlot published AWA stuff and Linda Pickersgill reprinted some TWP (*The Women's Periodical*) writing in *Tiger Tea*. Fans like Arthur Hlavaty distribute copies of their apazines to an enlarged mailing list. But for the most part, I think there are good reasons that apa members chant their minac in the seclusion of apa cloisters.

Context really is a stumbling block. It's the charm and often the *raison d'être* of apa writing that zines mimic diaries. But it seldom produces writing of lasting or general interest. I'd originally planned to include an excerpt from my apazine, *Obsessions*, here. But to my chagrin I found nothing that could really stand on its own without long-winded explanations. Out of context, my apa contributions read like overheard telephone conversations. This came as a bit of a shock to me because I recall campaigning regularly against unanchored comments. (You know, like: "CD — Good comment to AB, I agree totally," when two months after CD's comment and four months after AB's, it was difficult enough to remember even the general topics covered by CD's or AB's zines, much less specific interchanges.)

If there's one thing I thought I'd learned in AWA, it was the importance of providing clear references for a reply to another apa member, or background for an anecdote. Vagueness only guaranteed confusion. It was necessary to admit that people are not reading apazines for subtexts, hidden meanings, or stylistic continuity. Subtle remarks might be caught by my best friend, but they're a bad idea in an apa.

Out of context, an apazine often shares the characteristics of a fish out of water, flopping around unattractively and ineffectively in a milieu in which it cannot survive. If it's got too many unanchored comments, it might not even survive understood in its appearance in the next collated apazine. In fact, apas' worst feature is that sloppy writing is not discouraged by other members. In the interest of minac, sloppy writing is actually encouraged (being better than nothing at all), and some apa members never feel the need to put more energy than necessary into their contributions. "Apas encourage hasty writing," writes Simon Ounsley, in *Still Life*. "They encourage production for the sake of it. Those who have come into fandom through the apas seem to have applied apa criteria to their own generally available fanzines. To get the issue out is the thing—content is a secondary matter."

But sometimes high quality effort in an apa appears as a drawback when it is transplanted to a genzine. If the apazine is too caught up in the apa's conversations and if its contents tend mainly toward mailing comments, it will read like that confusing one-sided telephone conversation. Even if a zine's format includes a self-contained essay or two, its subject matter is often based upon previously provided personal information in earlier issues. Reading one of these essays out of context is sometimes like beginning a John Le Carre novel with the fifth chapter. The author assumes familiarity with so many names, references, and history, that the result is either a very confusing reading experience

or a very boring one; because we are never properly introduced to the characters, and we couldn't care less about their crises.

I think that these two kinds of fannish writing—for apas and general distribution—by definition resist interchange, and that the definition of quality for one is actually a deficit for the other. Night and day. A good piece of genzine writing in an apazine would be, in Anne Warren's words, merely using the apazine as a distribution system. A good apazine contribution would be too full of unexplained references to work well in a genzine. If this is true, it isn't surprising that there are two different kinds of fanzine writers as well, and that sometimes they don't make a graceful transition from one environment to the other.

Anne Warren is an exception. She's conjured a way to sidestep the whole problem of stranded apa writing with her *Pink* and *Blue Reprints*. I was really impressed with both her idea and its execution. Warren strung chronological excerpts from two apazines (*TWP* and *Frank's Apa*) together with connecting material, letting us know what happened in between, what changes occurred to bring about the different mood or scene-changes of the next excerpt. Cline's *Blue Moon* and Pickersgill's *Tiger Teas* have published some excellent material, but plucked out of context of their apazines, the essays lack the getting-to-know-a-person process that makes apas both so appealing but essentially limited. Warren's reprint zines manage to preserve quality writing and at the same time involve a larger audience in the acquaintanceship process in which apas excel.

Ella in Doris Lessing's *A Golden Notebook*, believes that when we look back at our past, we tend to see it all in terms of present realities.

As soon as one has lived through something, it falls into a pattern. And the pattern of an affair, even one that has lasted five years and has been as close as a marriage, is seen in terms of what ends it. ...Supposing I were to write it like this: two full days, in every detail, one at the beginning of the affair, and one towards the end? No, because I would still be instinctively isolating and emphasising the factors that destroyed the affair.

I kept journals for several years while I was in college, and re-reading them is always a shock. It's obvious that I've "edited" my memories to fit in better with my current ideas about myself, and relationships with others. There's so much in my past that I've forgotten or rearranged. Sometimes it's amusing: a well-told story based upon a real experience, slightly exaggerated for the sake of the story, becomes the memory. And only when I re-read the journal entry, do I remember (sometimes with difficulty) the "real" version, so completely has the fiction embedded itself in my memory. One story about a disastrous car trip from San Francisco back to Madison, Wisconsin, that I've told many times, is written up in my journal minus several...um..."embellishments." Although the emotional point of the stories is the same, the events as reported in the journal seem completely fictional to me now. I can't recall at all it happening as it is written up in my journal, and yet I've got complete visual, aural, and tactile memories of the story as I've told it and re-told it since then. It's a bizarre feeling to know that memory is so susceptible to editing.

And sometimes it's worrisome knowing that there are experiences in my life that I've probably lost entirely, because they're not written about in journals or apazines. So, a library of journals, correspondence copies or apazines have some virtue in that they preserve the real shifting perspectives of our lives and prevent us from completely homogenizing these memories.

Anne Warren's *Blue* and *Pink Reprint* zines do just that. By printing essays and stories as she wrote and felt about them at the time, each article conveys the sense of its having been written by a slightly different person. The period of time her zines cover was one of great changes for her—an ending of one relationship and the beginning of a new one, a move, a new job, new friends, etc.—and had she sat down after all those changes and simply wrote a straightforward account, the result would have been much less interesting and honest than the anthology she actually published. However, the connecting bits of narrative, written from a more current perspective, provide the continuity and context that make apazine excerpts so awkward outside of their natural habitat. (Doris Lessing says "Literature is analysis after the event.") The *Blue* and *Pink* zines are an ideal solution to the problem of good writers nurtured—but hidden—in apas, and allows for the best of both worlds, apas and genzines.

Reprinting material from an apa has its problems. On the one hand I don't want to start writing a mini-fanzine directed at fanzine fandom, and passing that off as an apa contribution—that smacks of using the apa as merely a distribution system, rather than trying to adapt and write to your readers. On the other hand, once stuff is written for the apa, there is a need to do a little judicious editing of references if it is not to irritate the audience with loose ends. (Anne Warren, *Blue Reprint*)

Of course, the transplanting of an apazine essay into a genzine ecology only succeeds if the writing is exceptionally strong in the first place. Anne's is. Take the first issue of her genzine, *Some Days You Eat the Bear and Some Days the Bear Eats You*: though not a shining example of a short punchy title, there's good stuff beyond it, hereafter referred to as *Bear*, if you don't mind. (The acronym reads like a Russian official's name. "Comrad Sdyetbasdtbey announced record-breaking wheat production for the year...")

Along with a funny article on the importance of washing machines and another fascinating one on nude calenders, her first issue of *Bear* included a "Whither, Whence Fandom" article entitled, "Being Different." By coincidence, I received it in the same batch of mail that brought Debbie Notkin's *Kith* 3, which contained another "Whither, Whence Fandom" article. Both essays functioned as personal searches for reasons why fandom is so satisfying to these two women, and why they feel they "belong" to this group rather than in any other. Debbie contrasted fandom to religious and other institutional groups that emphasize internal homogenousness. Fandom, she says, is a community with a "commitment to the exchange of ideas and emotions and experiences. A bond forged out of diversity, rather than similarity."

I wondered what Eric Hoffer would have to say about fandom. I guess I was having a cynical day.

I enjoyed the articles as I would enjoy having my palm read—with a certain egotism—even though I don't believe any fortune teller has an inside line on my future. It's fun to speculate about ourselves—as personality types or special social groups. But I don't usually believe that we as a group or as individual fans act much differently than the rest of the human race, beyond the fact that we read more and are therefore slightly more intelligent than the average person.

One of the points made in "Being Different" is that fannish conversation does not include small talk, which is one of the reasons that Anne feels so much more comfortable in fandom than in other groups. She says that ideas are the substance of fannish conversation and fanzine articles, and "small talk" is absent.

But I've heard—and read—lots of fannish small talk: Standing in the hallway before a convention program, one overhears plenty of it. Wandering through parties in search of better parties, you can't avoid small talk. Even Anne has engaged in that sort of mindless social blithering as described in her own Becon report.

But the real small talk is apa-hack, minac writing—in apazines and in genzines alike. Small talk is what Simon Ounsley called "production for the sake of production," a perfect analog to the mundane, cocktail party chatting for the sake of chatting. Polite, meaningless, idea-free vocalizing. I don't see much difference between talking to maintain appearances at a cocktail party and typing out minac to maintain an apa membership or a fanzine publication schedule. The solution in the so-called mundane life is the same as it is in fannish life, and that is to make an effort to resist small talk on all levels, to resist boredom and make use of one's time.

Jane Hawkins and I talked last year about this subject. She pointed out how the best fanwriters and the best conversationalists might seem to engage in fascinating conversations effortlessly and spin off easy fanzine articles on interesting subjects, but both these skills are actually hard work and cultivated talents. Fans are not born with the ability to engage in in-depth scintillating conversations, nor does the faculty mysteriously infuse fans' brains through their love of science fiction. They develop the art of conversation by writing and speaking, through practice.

Jane was really interested in the mechanics of pushing a conversation beyond small talk. She felt that one has to resist the temptation to wait for others to bring up important, interesting topics. She thought a good conversationalist develops a storehouse of ideas, topics, and stories to tell that helps turn the conversation beyond small talk. A good conversationalist wouldn't rehearse a discussion; that would be boring. Conversation is not a lecture. Instead they learn to use small talk beginnings and to see beyond them, to probe the conversational start for more depth than was initially intended.

For example, a writer meets a fan at a convention party, and the fan begins with the traditional clichéd opening: "I like your writing." Well, that's a nice thing to hear, and the writer can easily end the conversation with a short "Thank you." And maybe that's exactly what the writer

prefers. But we all get into these short-circuited conversations when someone comes up to us with a little bit of knowledge about us (our fanzine, our affiliation with a group, our jobs) to which they make a reference, hoping we'll carry on from that nudge. After all, they've read the funny fanzine articles we've written and they know we're capable of talking about it. But again, it's easy to end the conversation with a polite smile and a thank you. But if we want, something can be made of an off-hand remark and conversation really begun. Or an apazine writer can do more than say "Great response to AB," or "It was an interesting fanzine." They can carry on a real conversation.

A digression here about this notion of fans seen as a special, usually superior group... In Dave Bridges' *One-Of-A-Kind* 9, he agrees with letter-writer David Pringle who writes that fandom is made up primarily of "Petit Bourgeois." Pringle says that the lower middle class tend to be more "loyal to fandom" than the upper middle class. What struck me first about this was how British and a little alien it was to hold such a solid image of a socio-economic group. Not that these terms don't apply to US culture, but memberships seem to flex back and forth depending on the descriptive term and the date. My friend Spike says that everyone in the US thinks they belong to the middle class. And though this is, of course, an exaggeration (Anne Laurie Logan may be preparing a scathing rebuttal right now), the term Petit Bourgeois is largely meaningless to most people in the US. "Yuppie" became a briefly useful term, identifying a phenomenon that seemed temporarily and satisfyingly categorical. But even this term is diffusing as people try to hone its meaning: Yummies, Yubbies, Yuckies now appear in the newspapers. Marital status, education, political affiliation can change it all.

Still, Dave Bridge's general comments in response to Pringle's letter hold true for US culture too:

We all come to feel somehow different from those around us, yet at the same time we feel the need to "belong." So we spend our lives trying to find others who think similarly to ourselves in order to form ourselves into protective groups. We have a proliferation of such groups from the many and infinitely varied religious groups (some linked to the Church and others independent of it, but all, or nearly all, having such a Good Solid British Christian base) to the local Women's Group, Athletics Club, Community Workshop and so on. We have our friends, and our drinking companions. And we have fandom.

Fandom is little different from any other group. Anyone coming to it looking for an escape from the horrors of middle-class society will be disappointed for the simple reason that fandom is a PART of that horrible middle-class society. As with the Church Social or the Writers' Guild you come up against the fact that the people who form the core—those who devote their time and energies to running the show—are not the ones looking for an escape, but the ones who have found for themselves a cosy nook; an acceptable part of the middle-class world to which they can belong. These people are not rebels.

The fact that we do see ourselves as a distinct

group means by definition that there has to be something that sets us apart from other groups, but I tend to be a little cynical about theories that we are the rebels or that we are somehow so special that our strain of humanity is immune from such common ailments as racism, sexism (any of the "isms"), or even bad manners and boorishness.

To get back to Anne Warren's fanzine, now...

Bear #1 got so many good letters of comment that Anne had to publish a special issue of *Bear* to print them (#2, part 2). I especially liked Malcolm Edwards' LoC—an essay comparing fandom to a village that, with modern-day, fast communication, no longer requires geographical proximity. His urban analogy—which continues with a reference to American fandom as having turned into a huge, impersonal city, as compared to England's still, small village—is interesting in that we so often do refer to the SF fannish ghetto, or use the word community, another urban metaphor, to describe ourselves. (Edward's letter inspired an article by me in our local newszine, *Cube*, in which I compared the increasing beauocratization of SF groups and the huge convention-running con coms to the freeways that have caused urban sprawl. I think it's a really useful comparison.)

#2 (part one), is also crammed with good stuff: in the editorial, Anne muses to herself about the advantages of apazine publishing vs the attractions of genzine publishing, a dilemma with which I identify. I think one must eventually choose between them to do either well. Much of the rest of the issue builds on the "being different" theme from *Bear* #1. One of Margaret Welbank's contributions is titled "Being Peculiar," and in "Eccentricity" Anne describes Margaret as a "true eccentric" because she is "astonished to find out that other people consider [her] actions weird." Anne's theory is that the apt fannish metaphor is a certain type of person—rather than Edwards' village metaphor. Margaret returns at the end of *Bear* with an illustrated checklist of handy tips, "How to Spend the Night Alone in a 3-Story House, A Guide for the Single Person." Myself—I'll just settle for the ability to fall very soundly asleep and thus avoid all the creaks and groans and shadows against which Margaret so hilariously prescribes. Anne asks an interesting question about fanzine titles, one that has occurred to me before too: Why do most British "fanzine titles have a denigratory, cynical, of-course-I-don't-expect-you-to-take-this-seriously flavour"? and "Why do you call YOUR fanzine what you do?" Skel's article should provide the extra mailbag in the avalanche of LoC's that Anne will receive from this issue of *Bear* (which will surely require another special issue for LoCs). "Words of a Feather" observes the fact that the things we name with special fannish terms are, by definition, the things that are important in some special way to our group. Anne pointed out the term "gafia" in *Bear* #1. Skel points out the fannish misspelling of "fueds." ("It is a feud restricted to fandom, to fannish concerns. It is something important enough to be argued and fought over fiercely—but only within fandom. A feud is, by comparison, to the ends of the earth, but we put down our fued when we take off our beanies.") Skel's main point is that we do not have a fannish word for the kind of writing that deals neither with fandom nor science fiction, but which actually predominates in current fanzines. It's what fills most of *Bear* 2, in fact. There should be a word. How

about "extra-fannish writing" as in "extra-marital?"

PUBLIC EXPOSURE

Linda Blanchard's recent writing about her life fits neatly into this discussion of personal sorts of journalism found most frequently in apazines. Linda's account of the beginning of a relationship appeared in *Moving Paper Fantasy* and letters to various fanzines (*Whimsy*, for one). It wouldn't be surprising if she (like Lessing's character, Ella), now had a very different set of memories of those events than she might discover upon re-reading the fanzine articles and letters. But...

Linda Blanchard
605 Ballard Road
Seagoville, TX 75159

My letter seems to have stood the ravages of time better than I'd have expected, given the circumstances. I wouldn't take back a word,

not that my explanations will be any comfort to Debbie Notkin. But maybe she's seen copies of my *Scattershot* since she wrote that, and has realized that, no, I don't mind writing about the breakup including "details in the same cheerful, mildly euphemistic style." It doesn't bother me at all to have people say "And then what happened?" I have ninety-nine plus answers to that question anyway, and I'm not uncomfortable answering either casually or in depth, depending on my relationship with the asker. I consider that those who ask are either interested in me and my well-being or at the least caught up in my own story as I live it, and that's fine.

What should I tell you about her? What have I told you already? ...Probably more than I realize.

Garrison Keillor, 11/23/85
Prairie Home Companion

Debbie Notkin
680 66th Street
Oakland, CA 94609

Sorry to hear about you and Peter—at least I guess I'm sorry, but it depends on what it means to both of you. What you do owe all of us *Whimsy* readers,

of course, is a cheerful, euphemistic account of who's moving and how, since that's what you gave us to start out with. And Linda is right, of course, that relationships change—if she is in fact willing to make the whole course of the change public, then there is no reason not to burble about the beginning. Amazing lady!

Joseph Nicholas
22 Denbigh Street
Pimlico
London SW1V 2ER
England

I was slightly puzzled by all the demands people have made of you that you not write about them or their activities. Bizarre demands, I thought, since what else is a fannish fanzine for but for publishing stuff

about people and their activities. Then the light dawned; it's all down to cultural differences once again, and in particular the way in which people are written about. Over here, the tone is cool, sly, often sarcastic, any aggression tempered by wit, with the focus more on the person's intellect than personality; but in the States, what I customarily shorthand as "California crap" seems to predominate, with people's most intimate thoughts and feelings being picked over and analysed in the

greatest possible detail. Well, maybe "California crap" isn't quite the best way in which to describe it—the awful self-revelatory nonsense that appeared in the pages of such fanzines as Gil Gaier's *Phosphene* and Arthur Hlavaty's *Diagonal Relationship* is thankfully a thing of the past—but its legacy remains. (An example: where a British fan would simply have announced that they were moving in with someone (if they'd done that much; they'd more likely have sent a COA notification to *Ansible* and left it at that), you gave us the interior layout of your new house.)

Fascinated to read, anyway, about the tidiness problems that you were having with Peter. We have exactly the same problems here, although the other way around: I'm the tidy one, no doubt as a result of my suburban middle-class upbringing (with all the anal retentive training that implies), while Judith is untidy, no doubt as a result of her having spent her formative years living in the New Guinean jungle and then on a farm in Western Australia. Never mind the fact that Australia is so much bigger than Britain, thus offering so much more room in which to leave things lying around...but the same principle can hardly be said to apply to the two rooms we have here. . . I swear that if and when we ever move to a bigger place in which she can have a room of her own, I will not only refuse to step across its threshold for fear of the disgusting untidiness which I know will lie beyond but will also make up a sign for its door which reads "Judith's St(ud)y" and in which the letters in parentheses will be written very, very small indeed.

Judith Hanna
22 Denbigh Street
Pimlico
London SW1V 2ER
England

Joseph tells me I must write something about tidiness, or else you and other feminist fans will denounce him as a male oppressor. He also tells me I must Tidy Up before I can go to bed. His excuse this time

is that Nielsen Hayden's are coming around to dinner tomorrow and will be shocked if I have papers and books and a half-made skirt around the place. But really I know that the reason he jumps up and down and spends half an hour at a time telling me I should Put Things Away is that he enjoys being a Male Oppressor.

After all, Tidying Up and housekeeping and such is his job—I do the cooking and dropping. Fair does—except that instead of doing the tidying up, he keeps trying to make me.

He is not supposed to nag. Nagging is not in the contract.

Joseph Nicholas
same address,
only neater

(in a note appended to Judith's LoC:) I keep trying to make Judith do the tidying up? Well, how can I be expected to dust and sweep and scrub and vacuum

the place if I have to scabble through piles of paper and books and used envelopes and whatnot in order to do so? I mean, honestly! Never mind the ruckus Judith would raise if I tidied her stuff away—she'd probably claim that I'd ruined her filing system (spread all over the floor as it is), that everything had gone missing, etc. etc. I mean it's all too difficult.

There, there, Joseph. Calm down now. You've got to try to remember that this is not one of your California crap fanzines and that we don't do advice

to the lovelorn or marriage counseling. I must admit, though, that it seems terribly fannish to do one's household squabbles by letter and then to get a fanzine editor to publish them...

Norman Hollyn
93 Mercer tSt, 5E
New York, NY 10012

As to what you'll want to publish, I would think that one of the better criteria would be The Golden Rule. You know, "Don't fuck with your friends

any more than you'd want them to fuck with you." Indulging in gossip has always struck me as particularly sleazy, and you can usually tell when someone is doing it to make friends, or to be liked, or to win approval, or all of the above. So, I'd try not to gossip. As to embarrassing myself—that might be more difficult to determine since some of the more embarrassing things that I've done were things that needed to be done in order for me to grow a little more. And to worry about how I'll feel about them in "x" number of years seems way too paranoid to me. But it is always important for me to be more careful about what I say about others than what I say about myself. Jewish guilt maybe, but it's not something that I mind all that much. Other people are important (wow, sounds like something Bill Bowers would say!)

I would basically agree with the first part of Debbie's letter (about being able to be open about your love) but I think that she may protesteth too much about opening yourself up in print because "it opens people...[up] to 'I told you so' and/or 'What happened nest?'" Most people who respond to personal talk do so out of a sympathetic response (assuming that the revelation was done in a sympathetic way). I couldn't imagine wagging my finger at Linda Blanchard any more than I can imagine not responding to the very real emotions she talks about in her fanzine. They hit certain things in my past. When I respond to something like that it is as a sharing sort of response and that, I would hope, would be just as valuable to a person whether their relationships work or not. Maybe not as welcome, but hopefully still valuable.

So, to wrap this all up, keeping a low profile is one thing. If you're more comfortable with that, that is what you should keep on doing. Otherwise it just won't seem natural, will it? And then you'd stop working on *Whimsy* and then you'd drop out of fandom and then I'd never hear from you again (except maybe as an aside in a Linda Blanchard fanzine saying "Whatever happened to that Jeanne Gomoll, you know the one who was so revelatory in her fanzines?").

The one thing that I can guarantee, with the long lead time in fanzining, that almost any personal information you have in your fanzine is going to be a bit dated by the time it is published, sent out, read, and commented on. **Sigh** Why the hell are we fans anyway?

PERPETUAL MOVING, a column

We are fans because we move, of course.

Bill Wagner
19 Broadway Terrace, D
New York, NY 10040

...Your moving story reminded me of the times I helped Jim Frenkel and Joan Vinge move—especially from Brooklyn to Westchester

County. Jim called and stated that he wanted me to do him a special favor. When I got there he pointed to the refrigerator and then to the stairs. I got

to carry it down—with me on the bottom. Then there was the sofa bed that unfolded on me—first punch that ever knocked me down! I then rode in the truck out to their new house—Joan had arranged to be in England that weekend—and up the long hill (steep hill—very, very steep hill) to their carport. Halfway up, the entire load started to slide down the truck and thunked! against the back door. Luckily the door held and nothing broke.

Bruce Townley
2230 Huron Dr.
Concord, CA 94519

Here's a moving tip—when you are moving and taking your refrigerator along, remember to take the food out! Dan Steffan didn't one time. And they say

fans are smarter than other people.

When we don't have our own current moving story to tell, we've usually got stories from the times we helped other people move. And so, since my own most recent move proved to be such a boring, uneventful tale, I thoughtfully made sure I was involved in somebody else's less than perfect move...



On the last weekend of March, I helped Scott move from Cedar Rapids to McGregor, Iowa, a town which has the virtue of being 1½ hours closer to Madison. (Now the trip only takes him two hours.) McGregor also has a job-related advantage—but that's about it.



McGregor is a very, very small town, across the Mississippi from Prairie du Chien, which is a big, bustling metropolis in comparison. Prairie

du Chien (translated "prairie of the dogs" but pronounced "prairie du sheen") however, is not on Greyhound or any other kind of bus line. Greyhound apparently isn't impressed with the bustle of Prairie du Chien.

McGregor, though, is worse. It's enough to give a "city kid" like me culture shock. The first time we crossed the bridge over the Mississippi, I was impressed by the beautiful bluffs guarding the river. The town snuggles insignificantly between these wonderful, steep hills and the river valley cut through them by the Mississippi. Even in the desolate early Spring, before any green appears, when everything is still damp and muddy from the snow melt, and the desiduous trees still skeletal along those ridges—even then it's beautiful. As we crossed the river I eagerly anticipated the hiking and canoeing we could do in the summer and fall, undoubtedly breathtaking seasons in this area. With the panorama and these thoughts for the future in my mind, maybe you can understand why I was taken aback by the first sight that greeted us on the other side.

There, perched right in the middle of the nearly vertical bluff face was a gigantic, garish pink concrete building. And as we got closer, we soon saw, directly beneath the pink monstrosity, another pink abomination, a giant, pink, peeling, plaster elephant. Scott assured me that we'd probably get another chance to look at the place, since the Pink Elephant Restaurant is one of the better places to eat in McGregor.

I was alone for part of the day while Scott went to work and I walked around the town a bit. It didn't take very long. I stopped at the grocery store for some supplies and asked if they sold a newspaper.

"No, nothing but the 'Shopper.' But you might try the drug store down the street," the nice old woman suggested.

So I walked down the block to the drug store, and under a gigantic mortar and pestal sign jutting over the entrance.

"You're the one who wanted the newspaper?" asked the middle-aged pot-bellied clerk. I hadn't said a word. I'd just walked in. And he knew what I was looking for. The wonders of modern telecommunication had saved me the trouble of opening my mouth. Dumbfounded, I simply nodded. It's not the sort of thing that happens back in Madison when you walk into a K-Mart. ("Well hello there, we heard you needed a new shower curtain!")

"Well, we're out of 'em right now, but you just walk across the street here, and go to the newspaper box in front of the hotel. I just checked and there's plenty of Des Moines newspapers sitting in that box over there."

The next day, Sunday, Scott and I got back to town late. We were transporting the last of his belongings from Anamosa (I promised you a moving story, right?) and were carrying the stuff upstairs when a friendly, but total stranger yelled from across the street: "So—how d'you like the apartment?"

"Great," I said, after looking up and down the street to make sure that he was really talking to me. I thought maybe I should tell him that it wasn't my apartment, but after a second's reflection, I figured that he probably knew that already. God only knew what other information he'd acquired.

Word gets around fast in a small town.

But anyway, as I was saying about the getting there—

Next to the thrills and cardiac arrests of my move in 1983 (the one with the lost truck, lost sister, and lost sleep), Scott's move would hardly have provided a good adrenalin rush. Well, he didn't get enough boxes, but that's not unusual. The only awful and strange thing about his move happened on the furniture run from Anamosa to McGregor, and involved a little, bitty stretch of road, about two miles long, that took us an hour and a half to drive... (Insert strains of the *Twilight Zone* theme music here.)

Scott had already moved most of his stuff up to McGregor. Only his sofa, some chairs, a stereo and other bulky items remained, for which he borrowed his father's truck to transport. So, Sunday morning, right after a freak snow storm had dumped familiar white stuff all over the landscape, we drove to Anamosa for the truck and the rest of Scott's belongings. The country roads were still pretty icy and largely unplowed, but the state roads had been plowed and sanded adequately. Once at his father's house, where he had stored his furniture temporarily, Scott packed the stuff into the truck and covered it with a very old canvas tarp, securing it with some ropes.

We made apologies for our short visit and left as soon as we could, but it was late when we got away, about 5 o'clock. It was sleeting a bit and the wind was cold and strong.

About five miles north of Anamosa, the canvas tarp started to rip in the wind. Sitting side-ways in the cab keeping watch on the developments back in the open truck, I could watch the rip's progress. Scott drove nervously, looking back through his rear-view mirror and glancing over his shoulder every few moments.

"It's not too bad—only 12 inches or so—" I assured him about the rip in the canvas.

"That wind's going to rip the tarp to shreds," said Scott.

Right away we began practicing the roles we would adopt for the remainder of the trip: "good cop"/"bad cop," or maybe the split was more like Pollyana/Job.

"Oops, there it goes around the corner," I reported as the rip suddenly enlarged so that the tarp was almost entirely disconnected from the passenger side of the truck. Scott pulled into a driveway and we got out to examine the damage. We retied some of the ropes to keep what remained of the canvas tarp in place over the sofa, end tables and chairs.

"This won't last," Scott said, shaking his head, and rubbing his hands, trying to keep warm.

I tugged on one rope and tied a knot in another that threatened to drag beneath the wheel. "It will be OK..." I said optimistically.

Scott didn't think so and turned the truck around and headed south to Anamosa, but as we talked about what a waste the day would be—this four-hour round trip, for nothing—he reconsidered, made a U-turn and we were headed back toward McGregor again.

Within moments, (as soon as we started driving directly into the wind), the canvas flapped alarmingly. The ropes whipped free and we seemed in imminent danger of losing the whole tarp.

Once again we stopped, and rearranged the tarp so that it covered only half the truck's load. And

look (and draw) nothing alike!

Yet what else can be going through your mind? Because when I received *Whimsy* #3 the envelope was addressed to Brad Foster at my street number. Jeanne, we don't even live in the same time zone! I'm tempted to address your copy of *Corpus Colussum* #1 to Joan Hanke Woods.

I'm really sorry, Al. Yikes, the group used to carefully proofread all my stuff for *Janus*, but then they missed the huge typos I made in some hand-lettered headings. Now, I'm having *Whimsy* expertly proofread, and my mailing list is sprouting leaks. There doesn't seem to be any way to control my problem. Maybe there's a law of physics to cover this situation, like "Conservation of Spelling Errors," or something.

Dave Langford
94 London Rd.
Reading
Berks RG1 5AU
England

Last month I had a savage battle with a dictionary, crossing out all sorts of extraordinary words I felt shouldn't be here. No, I haven't become a highly paid consultant with the Oxford English Dictionary: I was obsessively trying

to clean up the spelling-check wordlist supplied on disk with the word processor. "Emperress" was at least explicable, and one felt one could almost supply the missing letter in "logitudinal," "usaid" and "moutaineer." "Saftey" and "innoculation" had a fannish feel. The entries which baffled me most were "strummy" and "undp;" the most charming was presumably a kind of Irish fruit—"londonberry." I ended up blue-pencilling four hundred of these blasted misprints...and the moral for your whimsical correspondents is, lay off the mote which is in Jeanne Gomoll's spelling and have a go at the beam which is in that of the Sorcim Corporation of San Jose, CA, purveyors of word processors and corruptors of youth with their pathetic, illiterate "spelling checker." So there.

Hear that, everybody?!

Rick Sneary
2962 Santa Ana St.
South Gate, CA 90280

*And hast thou thrice misspelled a single word upon a page?
Come to my arms, my beamish lass!
Atlast, some else of my class.*

Eric Mayer asked why I considered "whimsey" a misspelling, noting that there are two allowable spellings listed in Websters, and whimsey is simply the less common variant. Well, for Eric and other late-comers to this fanzine who may be wondering, the problem was that I spelled it "Whimsey" all the way through the first issue, but misspelled it on the logo, and so I went through all the copies after they'd been run off, with a rubber stamp and felt tip pen and stamped an "e" above the "Whimsy" logo and drew in a carrot between the "s" and the "y". It seemed easier than to go through and correct all the textual "Whimsey"s. And then Bob Tucker said that I had to keep it that way because it was a tradition.

MORE SILLY "ACROSS" LATIONS

■ "Many Japanese firms come a cropper when they use English-sounding names to add prestige to their products, says *Advertising Age*. The trouble is that they seldom bother to consult the dictionary, which

results in such brand names as Trim Pecker jeans, Green Piles lawn fertilizer, Shot Vision tv sets, Carap candy, and Pocket Wetty moistened hand towels." (newsclipping from Sue Barthel)

■ Himalaya Incense Sticks instructions: "Burning the incense and cones of Himalaya has been not only a part of religion in Far East countries. Nowadays, the calming and relaxing effect of burning sticks and cones is recognized more and more as being a sound means to obtain a while from the hasty modern life. A wide range of carefully selected perfumes do offer the possibility to choose your favourite insense and cones. Your favourite personal perfume choice is in concentrated form also available in handy spilling bottles. Please ask for it with your supplier. (from Joy Hibbert)

■ Steve Miller sent this, more a typo than a mis-translation, but if a typesetter can loose their job for it, I figure, I can bend a definition here and there:



■ A note to the Continuing Education Program, English Language Section from a foreign student: "Dear madam, Ref; CONTINUE EDUCATION—ENGLISH LANGUAGE—SATURDAY MORNING CLASS 1974. I sincerely apologise. I left class mid-way and went away. Thanking you, yours sincerely, etc... (from Bill Gibson who doesn't see a lot of humor in bizarre translations since his wife has been teaching English as a second language for years now and he sees lots of examples. "I mean, one must always remember that one's own efforts at explaining a steam iron in Mandarin would be equally grotty, and somehow it's only really funny if we assume that these poor benighted fellows really should know English, if only because we do...I do confess a weakness for those Tokyo fashion tees that say things like LONG YOUNG FUCK and ELVIS SANDWICH, but then I'm only human, aren't I?")

Maybe I like collecting these mis-translations because they make me look better by comparison...

LIONS AND TIGERS AND SNAKES, OH MY!!

F. M. Busby
2852 14th Avenue West
Seattle, WA 98119

Snakes: I guess I had the usual conditioned fear/loathing until our 7th-grade picnic. Some kid came back from a nearby barn

with a snake coiled around his forearm and was running around scaring people with it, but we got interested, instead. What he had was a kingsnake, about 3 feet long; it was dry and smooth-scaled, attractively colored, and was rubbing the side of its head quite lovingly against the guy's wrist. So we petted it somewhat; then he took it back to the barn and turned it loose. Some weeks later my friend Frank and I were walking along a wooden sidewalk and a snake crossed immediately in front of us;

Frank was up the bank—alongside in a flash, but I was trying to get a closer look at the snake.

At age nineteen, though, I was walking up a ravine with my trusty .22 rifle dangling in squirrel-hunter's position, and peripheral vision caught a slither directly under my feet. This was rattlesnake country; next I knew I had landed about 6-8 feet up the ravine, facing downward, and had fired from the hip and blown the snake's head off. (Given time to aim, I could have shot fifty times and missed every one of them. Embarrassing, though, to find that I had slaughtered a totally harmless critter. In fact, only once did I ever have to kill a rattler. I was on a narrow road, traversing a long, raised fill, and here was this convertible sitting slaunchwise across the road, blocking it quite effectively. The two young women in the car refused to move it because there was this rattlesnake—and, they said, it might bite a tire and poison whoever had to change it. There was no arguing with them, and it was a very hot day. So I got out a tire iron, approached the snake, and began circling its position, well out of striking range. Trying to turn to keep facing me, the rattler slowly lost ground. When it was lagging me by about 120°, I stepped in and bashed it in the head, then used the sharp end of the iron to salvage the rattles. I did not respond much to the gushing thanks of the two young women, because although they were in my age group and quite attractive, frankly I was purely disgusted with the both of them!

Eric Mayer
1771 Ridge Rd., E
Rochester, NY 14622

I would hate to be hiking
anyplace where you could encounter
three rattlers in the space of an afternoon. I must
admit I've never seen one in the

wild. I've spent most of my life avoiding tall grass and rocky places. My wife is even more fearful than I and won't even look at the things in the zoo. I have encountered morels, once. Years ago, my parents moved to a house in the country. There was a sort of overgrown hill behind the house, a few trees, mostly rotted, brush. I think it might have burned once. One spring, early, morels started to appear all over the hill. There were bushels of them. We picked them and ate them, canned them. My parents invited friends from far and wide and they picked them. The next year, not being familiar with the ways of the morel, we eagerly awaited their return. Of course, there were none the next year, or ever again. I wonder if there is some sort of moral here—a morel lesson? I also wonder why there isn't some way to predict where they will show up. I assume they must reproduce through spores, which must be scattered in the air to different locations. (Or am I wrong?) How far, after all, can the spores be broadcast? If there are morels in a spot one year must there not be morels the next year in some other spot, relatively nearby?

George Knudsen says that it's a mystery. The spores are, apparently, very long-lived. They can remain in a dormant stage indefinitely. Both biologists and mushroom entrepreneurs would be eager to know the secret of the morel, but there doesn't seem to be an easy answer, like "follow that spore!" George theorizes that it has something to do with the chemical changes in the soil brought about by the death of an elm tree which provide a catalyst to morel spore. That's one happy side-effect of the North American Dutch Elm Disease which has swept ac-

ross the continent: at its heels the most incredible crop of morels flourished and created a widespread appetite for the luscious mushrooms. Unfortunately, as on the hill at the back of your old house, the crop doesn't reappear and we're left with a lot of frustrated, hungry morel fanciers. Luckily, the biologists and mushroom entrepreneurs have discovered ways to commercially grow other sorts of specialty mushrooms with a similar meaty, rich taste and texture. Have you ever tasted oyster mushrooms? They are wonderful and I think I may even like them better than morels. (Don't expect anything from the canned variety you can get from Chinese grocery stores, though.) And just recently I bought some Shiitake mushrooms at the farmers' market. I'm hoping I can find them in the stores this winter.



It was a beautiful Fall day. Scott and I were hiking the steep path up the eastern bluff of Devil's Lake. Changing leaf colors created a brilliant patchwork of oranges, yellows, reds, greens, and browns on the opposite bluff across the lake, and reflected another brighter tapestry upon the lake's surface. Sun shown down through a yellow canopy, plunging trunks and branches into dramatic silhouetted relief. Tumbled quartzite boulders which glowed with wonderfully subtle hues of pinks and grayish pinks guarded our path, and built the steps over which we clambered. The air was crisp and cool.

Behind us hiked a family that was enjoying their climb with a raucous enthusiasm that could be heard from quite a distance.

"Mom, watch this! I'm flying!"

"Be careful, Billy!!"

"Where's Tom?!! Oh, my God, where's Tom? Did he fall?"

"Ed, will you please stop joking like that?"

Billy get away from that ledge! Be careful!"

"Hey Dad, can we lay down here and hang our heads over the crevasse and watch the rock climbers?"

"Be careful!"

"Be careful!"

"Wow, look at that rock bounce!"

The rock fell into a puddle below the kids and splashed mud all over Scott's jeans.

"Be careful! What if you had hit that man with the rock?"

"I'll race you to the next ledge!"

"Slow down and be careful!"

We slowed down our own pace at that point and drifted out of earshot as the family passed us and went on ahead. A bizarre, bureaucratic fantasy flickered through my mind...

THE UNIVERSITY PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT IS CONDUCTING

TING AN INTENSIVE STUDY INTO THE EFFICACY OF REMINDING PEOPLE TO "TAKE CARE." A SAMPLE OF 200 SUBJECTS WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY A GUARDIAN 24 HOURS A DAY FOR ONE MONTH AND REMINDED BY THEIR GUARDIANS TO "BE CAREFUL" AT EVERY APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY. A CONTROL GROUP WILL BE ALLOWED TO CONDUCT NORMAL LIVES FOR ONE MONTH WITHOUT ANY SPECIAL CAUTIONARY WARNINGS. AT THE END OF THE MONTH THESE SUBJECTS WILL BE SURVEYED TO DETERMINE WHETHER EITHER GROUP HAS SUSTAINED A HIGHER ACCIDENT RATE OR WHETHER EITHER GROUP HAS FORMED ANY MEASURABLY DIFFERENT ATTITUDE TOWARD THEIR PERSONAL SAFETY.

We've learned to ignore those parental "be careful's" too well...

It's amazing how most people behave when they visit government-owned parks and forests. Many people seem to think that federal or state maintenance implies an entirely tamed wilderness. As if a picnic bench means the park is like a dining room. As if a path implies that all the trees and plants along it are like their hallway walls back home—harmless and of little interest. As if the animals living in the parks are like pets and can be touched, fed or abused at will. As if the spectacular sights for which the park was created in the first place have been converted into government-inspected guaranteed-safe, public concessions: operating on schedule with all sharp corners, poisonous substances and exploding tendencies thoughtfully removed.

At Yellowstone National Forest, the signs that warn people to stay away from "Old Faithful" and the other hot steam vents are regularly ignored. Every season, tourists walk blithely across the hot springs' deposits (which are dangerously thin in spots), and peer down the holes, looking for the mechanism of the hot steam explosions. Every season, despite the signs, there are injuries and fatalities because people ignore the signs that warn of hellish steam temperatures.

Gardner Dozois has often told the story of his work as a safety officer in the Army. "Be careful!" wasn't enough. He resorted to the phrase, "You could diiiie!" in his memos (because people had).

"Do not touch or feed the buffalos," say the signs. Yet, every year at Yellowstone a dozen or so tourists are gored because the placidly grazing buffalos reminded them of the cows back on the farm.

At Devil's Lake State Park there is a sign that reads "Do not drag picnic benches into the lake."

Maybe it's just that people don't understand the philosophy of parks. Maybe the metaphor of amusement park has replaced the idea of conservancy in people's minds. They've forgotten the history and purposes of the park systems. National forests aren't considered by them and maybe not by the current administration) to be preserves of—often dangerous—wilderness areas. They are seen, instead, as some exotic sort of playground, with "rides" and exhibits and shows—with everything arranged primarily as tourist entertainment, safe and universally accessible.

Maybe there should be a psychological study done to discover the effect that signs and brochures published by forests and parks administrators have on tourists visiting these places. I wish it weren't so, but I rather suspect that reminders about the potential dangers in the wilderness are as effective as a chorus of parental "Be careful!'s".

FANZINES THAT TALK TO EACH OTHER

Fanzines that can do that have to come out often enough that the conversation doesn't flounder because nobody remembers—or cares—what is being talked about. But Virtuous Fanzines get rewarded. Not only do conversations flourish, but participants engage in fannish myth-building. People get talked about often enough and in sufficient detail that their paper characters become familiar, sometimes fictionalized fan-hold names. Places and events acquire familiarity to fans who will never see the place and have not participated in the event.

Ted White's and Dan Steffan's *Pong* epitomizes this moral lesson in my fannish memory. And in fact, most fanzines that Ted White's been associated with have quickly acquired mythological critical mass and spun off constellations of fannish legends. Meant kiddingly—but the term's weirdly accurate, too—the "Ted White Group Mind" participants have emerged through Ted's zines and Ted's friends' zines as a recognizable cast of regular characters. They are the unifying factors of a web of fanzines giving them a cohesiveness and value greater than any one individual fanzine.

One of the most recent fanzines from TWGM is Ted White's and Rob Hansen's trans-Atlanticly edited *Crank*. They take turns producing it, with one editor shipping mimeo stencils across the Atlantic so the other editor can print copies and distribute it on his side of the ocean. Frequent correspondence between Rob and Ted insures that they share the voice of each issue, somewhat in the way Ted and Dan shared *Pong*'s voice. (Envisioned in Malcolm Edward's metaphorical construct, a close-knit suburb of the US fannish "city" has been annexed to the British fannish "village.")

Through *Crank*'s eye and several other fanzines, we've now read several versions of Dave Langford's receipt of the news of his Hugo, and the event has gradually entered into the fannish mythology. Ted's London trip, and Avedon Carol's and Rob Hansen's wedding were described by Ted, Avedon, Rob and others. Aussicon is becoming familiar—in parts—even to the vast majority of us who couldn't get to Melbourne.

If *Whimsy* came out more often, my stories about Spike and other Madison denizens and events might likewise make people and places here more familiar to you. *Whimsy*'s mythological critical mass might seem to have actually been reached by a few people reading it who were already on intimate terms with the territory...namely to Spike herself and Julie/Crash, neither of whom has read a great many fanzines other than *Whimsy* to give them perspective.

What follows is the story of the zine based on their assumptions, the story of *Whoopsey*...



...One of those people you wish was a fan, just so you could see what sort of fanzine he'd produce.

Paul Vincent

THE STORY OF "WHOOPEY" OR, THE "WAHF" COLUMN YOU DON'T WANT TO FIND YOUR NAME IN

"Would you do a favor for me, Jeanne?" Spike asked me one day. A member of her basketball team was leaving town and Spike wanted a drawing of the woman for a going-away T-Shirt. The basketball teammate had been their "star" and they would miss her badly, Spike said. She wanted a drawing that would show that the team was crippled without her.

I said, sure, I'd do it. Why didn't she get me a photo of the woman, I suggested, and I would include her caricature in a drawing of a woman basketball player in a cast. Spike's response should have made me a little suspicious, but it didn't.

"No, I don't have one. Just do one of your generic 'Jeanne Gomoll characters,'" she said. I accepted the instructions with no further comment, although it took me a while before I got around to actually drawing the picture.

A month after I'd finally handed Spike the drawing, I received a peculiar fanzine in the mail—a fanzine that was both familiar and outrageously strange at the same time. Its cover was the drawing I'd done for Spike's teammate, but it had been altered, eliminating the name of the team and a couple basketball references. The *Whoopsey* logo ran along side it.



I sat down and began reading; and then after only a paragraph, laughed to the point of hiccups. Before I'd even started the second paragraph, the phone rang. It was my sister Julie, who—when she heard me laughing—breathed a sigh of relief, and admitted that she'd been worried that I might not entirely appreciate *Whoopsey*, which she and Spike had published as a parody (and a compliment to) my fanzine, *Whimsy*.

I'm still flattered by the idea. It's sort of a fannish equivalent to throwing a surprise party for a friend, I think.

But at times, I've occasionally wished that they'd been a tad more obvious about who was really responsible for *Whoopsey*. They thought they were providing enormous, impossible-to-miss clues (or as Lee Carson said—with hindsight, "the shrieking giveaway of the lettercol"). But most people who received *Whoopsey* saw the publication credit ("JG and company"), my drawing, familiar material, and failed to connect Julie's address in the lettercol with the colophone address or hints in the "Jeanne-ology."

As a result, I've had trouble getting fannish mail ever since.

After all, when *Whoopsey* made its debut, it had been almost a year since *Whimsy* 2 had come out. References to subjects and people of previous issues, (specifically to Julie) might have tipped off more people had *Whimsy*'s publication frequency been greater. In any case not too many of you figured out the joke.

Gil Gaier sent me (not Julie or Spike) a card thanking me for more of my "offbeat humor. Bet you thought no one would notice that you left out of your two Cat Food Recipes the line 'catch and kill' right before 'peel and cube' and 'wash and clean,'" said Gil. Well, actually, Mike Glicksohn did. He inquired (of me, again) "in the recipe for Rotisserie Chinese Cat, is the five pound cat which we are to wash, clean, sprinkle and truss before inserting the rod through its cavity alive or dead? Those of us who are regular cooks need these specific sort of instructions, you know."

It was amusing at first, realizing that so few people were getting the other joke. But as Jeanne Gomoll's fannish mail started piling up at Spike and Julie's house, and as Julie began to get a little depressed at the idea of Spike's and her (written) fannish debut ending up credited to me... well, we all started getting a little anxious about whether anyone would see through the hoax.

Anne Laurie Logan wrote thanking me for *Whoopsey* and assured me that she'd send my coa through A Women's Apa. Lois Wickstrom, Sarah Prince, Terry Garey, and Jennifer Bankier wrote thanking me for *Whoopsey*, casting a shadow of doubt on the theory of the innate superiority of fannish women.

I started writing notes to LoCers who threatened to change my address on their mailing lists. I began to envision a need for "Stay-of-Address" cards. Lee Carson wrote ("Dear Jeanne...") and offered John Bartelt—who wrote the *Whoopsey* article on my spelling difficulties—his "30 old Boowats (in case he's misplaced his) for spelling analysis." In a later letter, Lee admitted a prior offense. He said he'd once reviewed *Venus on the Half-Shell*, proclaiming it the best Vonnegut had written in some time... Stever wrote to me: he didn't have a clue. At Minicon, Spike and I kidded him quite a bit about his inattention to the obvious clues

(since Stever is one of the few fans who've actually visited Spike and Julie's apartment). We thought then that he'd learned his lesson about hoaxzines...

X-Madison resident, Georgie Schnobrich didn't even figure it out. Oh, it was sad.

Two weeks after *Whoopsey* was mailed, I sent out the bulk mailing of *Whimsy* 3. We hoped that the "real thing" would cause people to take another look at *Whoopsey*. It didn't help Frank Denton, though. I handed him a copy of *Whimsy* 3 at Norwescon and he received *Whoopsey* in the mail only a couple days later. All Frank had to say was that he admired my amazing productivity. I'll forgive him though. He was one of the few people that got *Whimsy* at Norwescon who responded. The infamous convention zine-killer syndrome struck *Whimsy* 3 hard.

A fanzine from Terry Garey and Rebecca Lesses, addressed to Jeanne Gomoll arrived at Julie and Spike's apartment. This was the first of many fanzines which demonstrated that my address had been changed on a great many faned's mailing list. (I'm hoping that this fanzine will straighten things out once and for all.)

Then finally, there was a breakthrough.

The first enlightened LoC arrived, and not only that, but it came from heretofore darkest wimpy zone (which was also not doing very well in the innate superiority department). Brian Earl Brown started his letter off in a standard way, telling me what he'd been doing lately, and thanking me for *Whoopsey*. But then, in the midst of a joking reference to his meeting with Julie Gomoll at Confusion, it suddenly occurred to him that the initials "JG" might not necessarily be mine...

Brian Earl Brown
20101 W. Chicago #201
Detroit, MI 48228

I'm sorry you didn't come to Confusion with the rest of the SF³ people for the WisCon party, it would have made it all the more

Confusing because there was this woman there who looked a lot like you—give or take a bicep or two. Perhaps this is this mysterious sister of your's that has kept so carefully hidden from fandom all these years. Or maybe not. It wouldn't be the first time that I've mistaken complete strangers for identical twins...So Maybe this person with the "Julie Gomoll" namebadge is really somebody else—like Cesar, or Carl Brandon.

Or maybe the mistake is my thinking that the "JG and Company" that produced this issue of *Whoopsey* was Jeanne Gomoll. It could just as easily mean Julie Gomoll. That would explain why this isn't a *Whimsy* or why it's available for the unusual. This could be serious—what have you done Jeanne Gomoll!

The "Jeanneology" serves a wonderful purpose for those of us who don't travel much. However while there is a wealth of information here, it's rather like having a library of Linear B cuniform—completely unintelligible for want of a directory. How did "Crash," the sister of the Old Jeanne Gomoll and the roommate of the new, end up in Ted White's Group mind? She wasn't even born during 6th fandom! Besides she's never once feuded with me, a sure sign of being part of TWGM. And if the old JG lives in the very fine house, who is it that lives at 909 Jenifer and is it fashionable or politically correct? Let's face it, you've got a

lot of things to answer for.

Congratulations Brian. You were the first to figure it out, however tentatively. Or at least you were the first to put your suspicions down in writing. As for your questions, well, I don't understand why any of us Madisonians have been absorbed into the TWGM either. You'll have to ask Spike or Julie. And maybe you'll find an update on the chart and some explanations elsewhere in the issue if I have the space.

Stu Shiffman called Julie and Spike soon after we received Brian's letter and congratulated her on a well-done spoofzine, but we think his call's purpose was to feret out the truth, not primarily to congratulate. Steve Miller wrote a combination *Whoopsey/Whimsy* LoC to me in which he inquired what effect cooking cats had on their whiskers, which he collects.

But then Mog Decarnin's letter arrived and revived the innate female-fan superiority theory. For without having even seen a copy of *Whoopsey* she deduced the truth: "In my shrewd way I have deduced that it must be a hoax-zine by someone who doesn't know me and doesn't have access to your mailing list, because I didn't get one. I just heard about it."

Terry Hughes and Avedon Carol's letters spotlighted the superior intelligence-gathering network of the Ted White Group Mind. "Dear Spike," wrote Terry, which was a salutary breakthrough in itself. A second letter began, "Dear Crash," which cheered Julie up quite a bit.

Terry Hughes
6205 Wilson Blvd. #102
Falls Church, VA 22044

Dear Crash, Even though I've never met you, you've got me all confused. Usually I have to meet a woman at least twice before

she leaves me this bewildered. The reason for my confusion (at least with regard to you) is that *Whoopsey* reached me several days before *Whimsy* #3. After reading both, it is clear that *Whoopsey* is a clever example of sisterly revenge and I must commend you for the wit and skill with which you carried off the project. All that kept it from being perfect was that you mailed your response off before Jeanne got around to mailing out her copies. Clearly some sisters cannot be trusted.

The recipes you included were mouth-watering indeed and simply cry out for testing...I have included two of my favorite recipes (culled from *Eat the Rich Cookbook* out of Cleveland) which I am sure will prove to be favorites in Madison.

Rocky Mountain Oysters Rockefeller

A delicious appetizer originally made with a member of the billionaire banking family, but just as good when prepared with any banking executive or financier.

Using an extremely sharp razor, carefully sever the testicles from the carcass. Like all organ meats, they are highly perishable and should be prepared immediately. First soak them at least one hour in a large quantity of cold water to release any blood. Next, bring them slowly to a boil and simmer uncovered from two to five minutes depending on their size. When they have cooled, drain, and trim them by removing cartilage, tubes, connective tissue and tougher membrane.

Poach for about 25 minutes:

1 pair Prepared Financier Testicles

Roll in seasoned flour and wrap in:

strips of bacon

Fry. When bacon is brown, place appetizer on a bed of lettuce and serve before dinner.

Hearst Patties

A current favorite. Try it in your home!

Wash thoroughly, to remove all artificial coloring and preservatives:

1 Wealthy Female Heiress

Cut the meat from the bone. Pick over the carcass for all edible bits of meat — there won't be much. Put the meat through a grinder. Save the juices, if any. Combine the juices and ground meat with:

1 1/2 cups soft breadcrumbs

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon dried basil

a grating of lemon rind

Shape the mixture into ten patties. Broil until loose strands of hair return to their normal color. Serve with:

Bernaise sauce

Everyone can enjoy his or her own little Patty.

Avedon's letter proved that she took note of minor collaborators: "That fanzine your other selves did with the notoriously collaborative Ms. Lucinda Humdinger had us rolling on the floor." Joseph Nicholas figured it out too. Is he in the TWGM? I've lost track. (Hey, maybe you guys could publish a directory.) Anyway, Joseph complained about Julie and I having the same "damn initials," but offered his grudging congratulations to her, mind, for having taken [him] in. And to Ms. Huntzinger, who I shall doubtless reprimand when next I write to her..."

Jessica Amanda Salmonson wasn't fooled either, but then she had a clue about what was up when Spike telephoned her and asked permission to forge a letter in her name for *Whoopsey*.

Jessica Amanda Salmonson
PO Box 20610
Seattle, WA 98102

This morning
I was wondering what
happened to my copy of
Whimsy that Spike sent.
I wanted to write and

tell her how well she spoofed my letterhacking style, except for having me call you honey, or something, it's not my style to call anyone honey or baby or anything like that in a patronizing way, but it wouldn't be beyond my capacity to say the rest of those things. Wanting to write Spike and praise her for spoofing you and me and all of fandom, I dug around, found it, and began reading the letter from Joseph Nicholas, thinking to myself, "Wow, this one is even better, she perfectly captures Nicholas' tedious pointless rambling style, this is really a riot! Then I realized I was reading *Whimsy* and that Joseph wrote the letter himself. Owell.

These aware and/or tipped-off fans were not typical however. Pauline Palmer sent a party invitation to me at Julie and Spike's address. Too bad, Pauline, if I'd gotten it on time, maybe I'd have run over to Bellingham, Washington for your Spring wine-tasting party. Even Harry Warner, Jr. was taken in. Oh, Harry doubted one thing. He doubted that the *Time* reprint was genuine: "It sounds so much like an article from one of the more literate Australian or British fanzines," he wrote. (Well it's genuine all right, Harry. Give or take a few names to make fun of the famous, it's a completely accurate plagerism.) But he never doubted that I was responsible for the zine. Neither did Bruce Townley or Randy Byers, both of whom wrote thanking me for *Whimsy* 3 and *Whoopsey*. Even Walt Willis was at least partially taken in, saying that parts of *Whoopsey* had "horrifying plausibility." But Walt avoided the whole address problem and sent his LoC off to me via Box 1624 in Madison, which is

the SF³ address here in town that both *Whimsy* and *Whoopsey* used in order to benefit from the SF club's bulk mailing permit.

David Vereschagin's letter came in—suggesting the need for a new theory regarding the innate superiority of Canadian fans—and David described the involved deductive reasoning process that led him to discover the Truth about *Whoopsey*. Sherlock Holmes would have been proud of David. Initially, confused only by the name changes (*Whoopsey* from *Whimsy*, and then into *Whimpey*) and John Bartelt's histograms which were not histograms because there were no rectangles, David checked addresses and was the only fan to notice the correspondence of Julie's LoColumn address and the colophone address...

Perhaps this was a turn for the better. Fans would begin to see the light now. My mail would start turning up in my own mailbox again. Dream on.

A note from Pam Wells arrived. She thought she'd seen my coa printed in *Ansible*...

That shouldn't have worried me too much. After all, Dave Langford had been the only one to take stock of my cryptic warning about coa-tricksters at the end of *Whimsy* 3. He wouldn't have taken that phoney coa seriously.

Dave Langford

I hope you'll tell me when to start believing in your coa's. Not that I've had any problem yet, but

your last page conjures up pictures of disinformation spreaders, very probably sponsored by the CIA, deluding fan after fan with spurious address changes like "Jeanne Gomoll, 9 Patchin Place, New York" or "Jeanne Gomoll, 48 Norman Street, Bingley." Why are they doing this? What seasonal changes will make them stop doing it "later this summer" (at which nebulous time you instruct us to believe whatever we hear, even "Jeanne Gomoll, 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown")? These are deep waters...

Spike
Box 535
Madison, WI 53701

At the outset I want to remind you that you were the first (and most insistent) person to suggest I publish a fanzine: Spike, a woman who

has yet to even write a letter of comment! Well, you got it—*Whoopsey*!

Julie had felt the same pressure, and tried to dismiss it as more of that (ugh) sisterly advice. She was a longtime fan with no need to prove anything; and myself, I'm pretty overconfident for a neo. But somehow the topic continued to crop up in our homely conversations. We gradually started to accumulate excuses—as though your expectation might have validity.

The first catalyst was the cool unconscious way Steve finished perusing the second fanzine he'd ever read, picked up pen and paper, and fired off his first loc. You remember Steve, our third and occasional roommate; he's hardly more than an mundane. Julie and I watched with surprise—and guilt. Fiercely I chanted my mantra, "I'm a reader not a writer," each time a fanzine arrived in the mail. But one fateful day Julie came through the door, breathless (I'd like to say "wild with excitement," but you might get the wrong idea about us) and gasped catalyst #2.

"I've got an idea for a fanzine. If we want to do one."



"Oh, really?" I foamed as I edged back toward the bathroom to spit, toothbrush in mouth. Through the door, she said it.

"We could do a parody of Jeanne's zine, really exaggerate her style. It would be poking fun at her, getting even on behalf of all her friends she fictionalizes in *Whimsy*. But we'd also be dishing up a big serving of egoboo. We could misspell the title, call it *Whoopsey*." Julie paused. The answer was a loud peal (gurgle?) of laughter spitting behind the bathroom door.

I hope you caught the spirit of that heady (toothy!) moment when you brought in your mail and read *Whoopsey*."

Later I called John Bartelt, and he took a break from exciting atoms long enough to bestow his blessing upon the project. The rest is history, or about to be.

I'm counting on you to forgive any cheap shots, unnecessary tackiness or untruths you see. We're really sorry we had to break into your office and steal your mailing list, but we're sorrier we did such a lousy job copying the labels and won't reach your entire mailing list. I hope you can hold up under the incredible embarrassment of having someone publish a sort of fan fanzine about you. What else can I say? We just picked what we knew best to write about. We copied—and then congratulated ourselves for our fannish cleverness! And John and Lucy helped!

Can you maybe just think of *Whoopsey* as a bizarre, ridiculously long LoC—our first?

Those of you who don't know what this *Whoopsey* thing is might be the victims of the out-of-date and xerox-mangled *Whimsy* mailing list that Spike and Julie stole from my office one dark and stormy night. Anyway, if you want a copy of *Whoopsey*, a hoaxzine published by Julie Gomoll and Spike, sent \$1 to Spike, PO Box 535, Madison, WI 53701. Julie has escaped sisterly pressure to become a faned by moving away to Austin, Texas, but Spike might still have some copies left.

A SPIKE BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD HURT AS MUCH

Well, we've had lots of entries in the How-Did-Spike-Really-Get-Her-Name Contest. One of the guessers actually got pretty close to the real answer.

Brad Foster Why does the woman in the 4109 Pleasant Run photo at the bottom of page 7 Irving, TX 75038 have a billiard ball growing out of her left ear? No, wait I've got it! That's not a billiard ball—it's the ball-head on a massive spike which was driven accidentally through one ear when she was young, narrowly bypassing any major sections of the brain (aside from the part that controls the tongue, resulting in its rather awkward placement in her mouth as evidenced by the photo), and, thus, the origin of the name "Spike."

David Bratman The first thing the Box 662 name "Spike" suggests to me Los Altos, CA 94023 is a multi-spice seasoning of that name, jars of which are prominently displayed at

every table in the outlets of the local ethnic restaurant, The Good Earth (the local ethnicity of northern California being, of course, health food). It would take ingenuity on the Barteltian level to explain any connection between this and a woman in Wisconsin, because it's beyond me.

Brian Earl Brown You mean Spike isn't known for her spiked dog collar... (Sorry, guess I was thinking of Deb Stopa.) It sounds to me that Spike's been reading too much Chip Delany, especially *Triton*, which has a character named Spike, an artist into performance theater. Is it real or is it art? That sounds like your Spike who delights in keeping people confused.

Debbie Notkin I always assumed/guessed that Spike took her name from Delany's *Triton*, which has a character named Spike, and that gave me an image of her that wasn't too far from the reality, insofar as I've seen it. (I've met her, but I certainly don't know her.) She could certainly use that as a story, and a fannish one at that.

But isn't everyone known as different people by various special interest groups? In fact, isn't everybody known as different people by various individuals? If this is the source of what you and Spike have in common, I'd say we're all the same entity.

F. M. Busby I think Spike got her nickname because classmates thought she was Hispanic but they couldn't pronounce "spic."

Joy Hibbert Depending on Spike's age, 11 Rutland St. I'd say she either got her name Stoke-on-Trent from a hairstyle or from a form of her name. When I was 12 I Staffordshire knew a girl who had spikey hair, ST1 5JG England the style affected by girls who wished they were involved with the skinheads but didn't want to alienate their parents...too much. If Spike is within shouting distance of 26, I offer that as my theory, boring though it is.

Steve Miller I've not met Spike 56 Lowergate Ct. from Madison, though I Owings Mills, MD 21117 have met a woman named Spike out here in the wilds of the East. Her name came from the cartoon dog known as Spike who was always being led somewhere or another by friends, and who always ended up saving the day. The phrase, "c'mon Spike" was the immediate source, I was told. I've also met and worked with a woman known as "Space;" she was a writer and yearbook editor in highschool who always demanded a little more whitespace for balance and such. As a college newspaper editor she did lots of artsy layouts, frequently while trying to "find me some room for some space." Then there was "Slick" Pearson, a woman I met while taking a transcontinental bus some years ago. We had a bit of a busboard romance, comparing poems and stories that we'd written and sharing meals in bus stations in Fargo, North Dakota and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho (not to mention Butte and Billings, Montana). Slick's brothers and father were automobile mechanics and racers on some of the so-called outlaw

tracks: Slick had also been known as "Miss Montana Race Track, 1972" or something like that. Her name came from her driving, which is why she had to go by bus ...at least so the story went at the time. Madison Spike may have worked on the railroad, after all. A question: are women taking up the habit of using nicknames at a time that men are abandoning it?

Maia Cowan
55 Valley Way
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013

I have two guesses about how Spike got her name. One, her parents saddled her with an appalling and

probably entirely inappropriate name like Sophronia Evangelique, and as soon as she was old enough to understand the consequences of that she selected "Spike" as the best antidote and refused ever to answer to anything else. Two, in her younger days she bore a noticeable resemblance to Spike in the "Sugar 'n' Spike" cartoons. Or perhaps some combination of the two.

Or maybe a third: One parent got the other drunk close enough to nine months before her birth (or it was reciprocal) that they named her "Spike" to commemorate her conception. (This may not be as unlikely as it ought to be. I have a nephew whose middle name is Benson because my sister and her husband got rained out of a campsite and spent a fateful evening in a Benson, Arizona hotel instead.)

Spike sez: I dunno about the contest—maybe I should just tell the truth about being born on the 100th anniversary of the driving of The Golden Spike (a bit of US history Stu Shiffman ought to be alluding to in the next Potsherd). Or maybe just a simple "Spike is short for Storm Over the Open Prairie." Nya Nya you all lose. Not really the fannish spirit is it? Maybe no one can "win" but John Bartelt should get something (maybe crabs) for writing a story that actually offended me. What a guy! And Maia Cowan should be commended for guessing the reason I was forced to re-name myself ("Patty, indeed!") I could just send the (legendary) black nightie to the winner—after you and I tally the voting, done of course, by Australian ballot...

TO CRASH PERCHANCE TO WAKE

My sister Julie—or "Crash" as she's trying rather half-heartedly to go by—writes from Austin that she wants to correct a glaring error in the last issue of *Whimsy*. There was, she says, a horrendous under-exaggeration in the story about her problem with waking up in the morning. She maintains that she destroyed not two clock radios, but five, before financial considerations finally dictated a smaller, less expensive, disposable timepiece. Sorry about that, Crash.

She didn't say whether she's experiencing any difficulties waking up in the southern latitudes. She's probably shocked her chrono-system all to hell, though, what with having to work a graveyard shift (midnight to 8 a.m.) at the graphics firm that employs her now.

Debbie Notkin

Jon Singer was here overnight
last week (on his way to trainer

training—I love that phrase) and he picked *Whimsy* up off the kitchen counter. I relay his comment because I doubt he'll get around to it. He said that reading the piece about waking up Julie made him wonder about a society where people would rather destroy small machines than face the day. (Or words to that effect.) I did have a friend in college who was legendary for sound sleeping—one day we put a portable electric typewriter on his head while he was asleep and it didn't wake him. We did forbear from turning it on, however...

God, I wonder what your friend dreamed about that night.

F. M. Busby

The Kappa Sig pledges had to do wakeup duty, and one spring I kept missing classes and raising hell with the wakeup guy. Apparently, without really waking up I was talking them out of it: "The test's been postponed," "No, that class is tomorrow," "The prof's out of town," etc. My subconscious, averse to rising, was outsmarting the lot of us. Finally they began working in pairs and dragging me out anyway.

David Vereschagin
97 Walnut Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M5V 2S1

Luckily I have no such problems, being one of those normal people who can get up at the right time without the aid of a mechanical, electric or electronic device. I'm completely self-adjusting and am not thrown off by daylight saving time. But I have developed a small problem recently. When I wake up I like to turn on the radio and listen to some nice classical music and hear the news and weather before I have to arise. The weather is especially important to me. I used to get dressed last thing in the morning before I went to work. However, I've now switched to getting dressed right after shaving. Somehow, it saves me time doing it that way. In the spring and fall especially, it helps to know what the weather is going to be like that day before getting dressed. My problem is that I get to hear the tunes and the depressing news, but I nod off for a minute or two during the weather forecast. I wake back up having missed the Toronto weather, but in time to hear the weather for everywhere else in the province. This is not a proper anecdote, I'm afraid, as I have yet to resolve the situation. I hope this doesn't develop into a problem as severe as my WNS (Wiscon Non-attendance Syndrome).

Terry Hughes

All in all, *Whoopsey* is an excellent response to a very embarrassing story Jeanne told about [Crash] to the whole world in *Whimsy*. Personally I can sympathize with both [Julie] and [her] nickname, Crash. I too have had some interesting experiences in the morning hours. Many years ago I was working as a dishwasher in a hospital and on weekends I had to be at work by 4:30 a.m. (I was the first one in the kitchen weekend mornings due to my reliability and gullibility.) Frequently I did this by simply not going to sleep Friday or Saturday nights which proved to be the most effective method to ensure my timely arrival at work. On those mornings, however, when I did rest my head on the pillow for two or three hours, I had to rely on an alarm clock to get me up. For this purpose I chose one of the loudest, most irritating

alarm clocks ever sold in the United States. I had to set the alarm clock a good distance from my bed so that I would actually have to walk (or crawl) over to it in order to shut it off. If it was within arm's reach, so was sleep. One evening I had inadvertently left a box of Bacon Thins (made from Wisconsin cats) resting behind the alarm clock. The next morning I spent a great deal of time bashing the back of the box in an attempt to shut off the alarm but only succeeding in creating cracker crumbs. It wasn't until I turned on the light that I was able to figure out why the alarm kept ringing. This experience left me a humbler but wiser man: I no longer buy Bacon Thins.

COMMENT HOOK, or, THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH

When I think of the word, "influences" I remember a conversation with, or maybe it was an article by Dan Steffan, in which he confidently listed a slew of artists whose work could be disassembled into elements finding obvious reflections in his drawing style. I marvelled that Dan remembered all their names and then thought for a while about my influences, artistic or otherwise.

The only person that came to mind at the time was a woman that I once saw walking across the street on the block of my family's old house in Milwaukee. I was seven or eight years old at the time; she was probably in her late twenties. In 1959 she was quite an unusual sight.

She was wearing a dark suit, a shoulder bag and walked briskly on low, conservative pumps. It's her gate that I remember most clearly. She walked with a sense of assurance and purpose. I imagined that she was a businesswoman, and I ran down the steps of our front porch and stood in the middle of the sidewalk to better watch her as she strode further down the street.

I thought about her for days, creating stories about her, imagining confident personalities and independent lives. I pretended that I was her. And I decided that I would grow up to be like that woman—for real, one day.

Oh, through the years, I made up lots of answers to the frequent adult question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"—I still do, but people ask less frequently now—but when I thought of my future, it was the image of that assertive, confident, energetic woman that I envisioned.

The other day I was hurrying down State Street with an artist's portfolio under my arm, on my way to an art supply store to pick up some papers I needed to complete a project at work, and I happened to see myself reflected in a store window.

I bet you've guessed the ending to this little story already.

But it was amazing at the time. I certainly wasn't expecting it.

There was my image dressed in a denim skirt and a cordoroy blazer, maybe not as conservatively dressed as that woman on 39th Street had been, but my first thought was that I'd turned into my childhood idol. I'd finally grown up into that energetic confident woman.

It made my day.

So, this is the hook: Who or what did you aspire to be when you grew (grow) up? How far from or how close are you to those high expectations today?

I ALSO HEARD FROM—

"It's certainly yellow," said several Madison SF Group members. Cathy Gilligan stopped by to say that she'd enjoyed it. I think that the Madison SF Group still subscribes to that free and easy, Good Old Days brand of fannishness which didn't require fans to work so hard for free copies, and I guess I'll have to forgive them if I want to keep on using their bulk mailing permit. But Jeff Frane should know better. Jeff had to be reminded that LoCs must be mailed as well as written before they can be printed in a fanzine. (This is the New, Improved variety of fannishness.) Good, Old Fan himself Tuerry Hughes, seeking to redeem himself by sending both a quotable letter and an IAHF postcard, wrote from Australia complaining about the lack of Madison fans at worldcon and sent along a "Newsnote: Ted and the Cantors did not speak to each other for the entire con. You read it here first. No fireworks at all." D. M. Sherwood partly blamed *Whimsy* for his having taken up weight training. (It's not that heavy a zine to pick up from the mat beneath your letter slot, is it?) I also heard from Brad Foster, whose mailing label apparently caused him no undue distress, Ulf Bennet-ter, Eric Lindsay, Jean Weber, Doug Barbour, Bill Gibson, Jeanne Mealy, Mog Decarnin, Darroll Pardoe, Hal Davis, Big George Knudsen, Harold B. Bob, Robert "Bob" Lichtman, Gil Gaier, Daniel Farr, Pascal Thomas, Candi Strecker, Buck Coulson, Georgie Schnobrich, Frank Denton, and Avedon Carol.

FANZINES MENTIONED, in order mentioned

Foma, no longer available from Jeanne Gomoll, Box 1443, Madison, WI 53701-1443.
Janus and *Aurora*, backissues, SF³, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624.
Polite Lady Dog, Terry Garey (2528 15th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404) and Rebecca Lesses (74 Josephine Ave., Somerville, MA 02144).
Corpus Collosum, Susan Obermeier (77 Belmont Ave., N. Plainfield, NJ 06511) and Al Sirois.
Majoon, Mog Decarnin, PO Box 590293, San Francisco, CA 94159-0293.
Flashpoint, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, 75 Fairview #2B, New York, NY 10040.
Zed, Teresa Nielsen Hayden, 75 Fairview #2B, New York, NY 10040.
The Lonesome Node, Suzette Haden Elgin, Ozark Center for Language Studies, R4, Box 192-E, Huntsville, AR 72740.
Sydney Suppey's Quarterly & Confused Pet Monthly, Candi Strecker, 710 Diamond, San Francisco, CA 94114.
Why Don't You Get a Real Job?, *Prelude to Pulp*, and *On Company Time*, Steven Bryan Bieler, PO Box 1870, Seattle, WA 98111.
Nutz, Pam Wells, 24A Beech Rd., Bowes Park, London N11 2DA, England.
One-Off, Dave Bridges, 130 Valley Rd., Sheffield S8 9GA, England.
Kith, Debbie Notkin, 680 66th St., Oakland, CA 94609.
Blue Reprint, *Pink Reprint*, and *Some Days You Eat the Bear & Some Days the Bear Eats You*, Anne Warren, 62 North End Rd., Golders Green, London NW11 7SY, ENGLAND.
Tiger Tea, Linda Pickersgill, 7a Lawrence Rd., S. Ealing, London W5 4SJ, England.
Crank, alternatively by Ted White (1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, VA 22046 USA) and Rob Hansen (9A Greenleaf Rd., East Ham, London E6 1DX England).
Whoopsey, Spike Parsons, PO Box 535, Madison, WI 53701-0535.