



#8, December 12, 1983, is the Special How Many Out-Right Lies Can You Detect In This Issue? issue. It is dedicated to Joseph Hanna and Judith Nicholas whose tribe, it seems, may be about to increase...if one can believe the audacious rumor monger Dave Langford. Special prizes to the winners and losers.

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How We (At Wiz) Carry On:

"Hello."

"Hello. Is this David Langford?"

Several seconds pass as DL considers his options and then finally confesses, "Yes, this is he."

"This is Richard Bergeron."

Expensive silence transmits from London Road to Puerto Rico. "Good Lord." Sounds of crashing teeth and compositor machines setting up/rearranging Ansible headlines at the Langford end of the trans-Atlantic cable as he fleetingly considers dropping the sporific Brunner/Harrison contretemps from lead position. Immense spaceship-like shapes evesdrop inches from the delicate strand of wire linking bizarre irreconcilable cultures.

Langford listens as the Imperial Chairman of the Bergeron Publishing Empire pledges undying love, lazily uncurls a limp cat-o-nine tails, and inquires in casual tones about the Langford column.

"Well, I've been thinking about doing something and was going to get to it this afternoon. But it probably won't be very long. Haven't got much to write about," he modestly disclaims not having sufficiently recovered from the shock to realize this call is coming from an alien civilization from which the voice of fan had (until this moment) never been heard. Langford visualizes an insect crawling across the empty vastness of his cosmic mind or, perhaps, exploring the mountain of financial solicitations concealing the typewriter.

"I'm thinking of doing 1000 words on woodlice. Would you like that?"

"Great. That's what we specialize in," blanched The Chairman, absentmindedly flicking at the little grey kitten curling about his ankle. He was relieved that his call, whose expense is only dwarfed by the amount he owes to Langford Express Forwarding, had driven The Deft One to a frenzy of inspiration. Bergeron stirred uneasily at this recollection of the Langford service -- recalling that he'd recently terminated the contract between parties after discovering an audacious (and secret) ploy the local post office is a sucker for. He thought about the cheque (as he deferentially spelled it) which he hadn't sent.

"Actually, what with all the novels and writing and things it's perhaps better I don't have the Wizz around here wondering why they're not in the mail. Mostly I've been handing them out at the One Tun when I manage to get over there." Sweating coldly in 98° heat The Chairman contemplated his life's work disappearing into a steaming press of fan flesh, intricate silk screen illuminations trampled underfoot by *blasé* Brits. "Oh, it's that thing from Puerto Rico again which Dave dashes off the odd scribble for. Pity Dick hasn't any good local talent to help out with it. Has to settle with Langford," an Ounsley condescension comes in loud and clear over the hub-bub at the Pub.

"Er, yes, most kind of you. Much appreciated and all that," The Chairman groveled, at last realizing why only direct copies sent to such as West and Hansen ever seemed to elicit response. The British have discovered, after all, that the perfect use for a social evening is the ignoring of fanzines.

The computer computes discretely. Sharks note the rising toll being debited against the Bergeron bank accounts. Langford must also be thinking that at these rates this is the most lucrative per word price ever credited to his copy. He considers being flattered. Returning to the reason for the call Bergeron concludes:

"Well, OK, I'll hold up the issue for you. I'm down to page 8½ and the woodlice bit would fit in perfectly right after Judith Hanna. We love you and don't want to go to press without you."

"Adios, Dave."

"Bye, Dick."

The Chairman dropped the phone into its cradle and settled back content that he'd just supplied himself with the Langford material needed for Wiz 7 (for this was, as you may have guessed, the piece that was crowded out of last issue by Judith Hanna's complaints about my "style"). He slithered from the chair, crawled back to the typewriter, and proceeded to write:

Platen Stories (by Dave Langford): Dear Dick: "Do we not already know more than we wish to know of Langford's domestic disarrangements?" I hear the vast Wiz readership grumble, with the general enthusiasm of D. West opening the fiftieth parcel of fishnet stockings sent him by admirers in Falls Church. "Where is the many-coloured motley of British fandom?" I imagine them continuing. "Enough of this mundane grot about meteorites devastating vast acreages of Langford roof in Tunguska-style explosions, pantechnicon loads of catshit being stuffed through the letter-box by irate neighbours from 96 London Road, and deaf fans living on woodlice because Pocket Books have had their hard-skiffy masterpiece in print for nine months without advance or contract," I envision them concluding. Right, let's get out onto the fabulously fannish British streets, find a convenient gutter, and drop some names:

D. West officially confirms his change of heart! (The transplant surgeon is said to be "as well as can be expected.") Overwhelmed by public opinion and the eager discourage-

2 ment of such as Mike Glycer ("One may inquire what motive West would have for visiting American fandom after writing so contemptuously about it..."), he is definitely absolutely probably standing for Taff. "Not being unreservedly enthusiastic about the idea I have framed my Official Platform accordingly. However, one can rely on nobody at all these days, and it is quite possible the perverse bastards will vote for me regardless. In fact, the Astral Prediction is that I win by about ten votes. (Or maybe it's lose by about ten votes. These entrails are so messy.) I think I shall just be slothfully enigmatic and let everyone else get on with it. This seems appropriate enough when I get nominated by some American I never even heard of before."

Faced with these golden words, this column's erstwhile support of Rob Hansen began to waver. "I will promise to vote for Rob Hansen," D. added as the clincher, or clencher, asking only that I publicize his newest Another Project in all the most inappropriate places...

Fanzines in Theory and Practice: Collected Articles 1976-1972 by D. West is hurtling down the timeline towards us with the hideous inevitability of Dick Geis's 97th Hugo, to impact reality with a sickening thud in February 1984, published by... ("R. Bergeron is going to have lots of fun going HO HO HO and being very satirical over selected quotes from my previous words. Still, he does that anyway. Unscrupulous bugger.") ...D. West.

The 180-page duplicated tome costs £3 until 31 January and £4 thereafter, dollar prices ("cash only") being \$10 and \$15 respectively, figures which have caused some scratching of heads in international banking circles. With engaging directness D. confesses: "You're being asked to put up your money now rather than later for the simple reason that with only five copies coming out of a ream I need cash in advance just to buy enough paper... there will be NO review copies, NO trade copies, NO complimentary copies -- in fact NO FREE COPIES at all... I'm doing this for my benefit. I like the work, I need the cash (not one penny of which will go to any damn Fan Fund) and I wouldn't mind being a little more famous." Cited testimonials on this Hard Sell flyer are: "So fucking good I feel like going up to Bingley and killing him" (Christopher Priest) and "An asshole" (Ted White).

As I said, West with his usual arrogance demands that I give him oodles of free publicity, adding "you could even review the bloody thing, since you must have read all the intended contents." Sod this. I've read the 13 pieces, from his first massive blood-bath fanzine critique (True Rat 1976) through to "Performance", but not the key 13 pages of Introduction and Postscript which give sense and rhythm to the entire epic. Not a square nanometre of advertising space will I devote to you, D. West of 48 Norman Street, Bingley, West Yorks, England BD16 4JT.

More names. Stu Shiffman is moving amongst us as I write, necessitating that normally cold, draughty British houses be artificially heated to unheard-of degrees lest Stu, sensitive tropical plant that he is, should wither away. Much the same problem afflicted Avedon Carol here in Spring: she complained that the home of Malcolm Edwards and Chris Atkinson was the only warm place in Britain, and that the coldest dwelling of all was that of the Silicon poll's Best Looking Male Britfan Rob Hansen, where I know not how Avedon contrived to keep warm for so many days. Nevertheless she's been wildly threatening to return, perhaps even this winter, urged on by closet Anglophile Lucy Huntzinger, whose enthusiasm for UK fandom was unsullied even by meeting Martin Tudor, and who to escape the lavish hospitality of Ted White (he starts charging her rent on 1 December) wishes to move here real soon now and study opera and/or us, being weirdly afflicted with a desire to visit the hellish Belsen One Tun fanmeetings, a longing nearly as inexplicable as that of deranged Britifans to embrace true socialism by becoming one of 6500 statistics at the Worldcon. Meanwhile, back at the 22 Denbigh St. People's Revolutionary Collective, Joseph Nicholas and Judith Hanna have saved the world for democracy at incredibly hugely vast (or negligibly invisibly tiny, depending on the politics of your newspaper) D.N.D. anti-cruise-missile demonstrations, thus finding true love at last: they should be married by the time you read this, either refuting Dick Bergeron's momentary fear that Judith is a Josephoid hoax or showing that fandom is even more incestuous than Dick thinks...

Arnold Akien and Jim Barker have won advance disapproval from certain of our more austere and tasteful fans, comprising Colin Fine, for their convention plans to divide a picture of absconding Seacon 84 GoH Isaac Asimov into numbered squares and flog correspondingly numbered tickets in a 'Help Isaac Find His Wallet' raffle, first prize an Asimov novel, second prize... oh dear, these old jokes, you're ahead of me already. Marjorie Brunner has said bitter words to Chris Priest concerning Chris's recent broadcast plugging every promising British SF author except hubby John (plus some detritus like Langford, but who cares about him?): in an aggrieved letter she complains that not content with this villainy, evil Priest had suggested the vile Matrix 48 cover to be... witty. Meanwhile the committee of the May 1984 Mexicon is plotting to encourage hordes of authors to perform (if not Perform) at this 'con devoted to written sf', by offering travel expenses etc: the word is that while most authors requested the odd bus-fare, the expenses estimate of one Peter Nicholls was such as to imply a gold-plated Cadillac from the landing-pad of his rented helicopter. 'Gosh,' said my Mexicon informant, studying the Encouragable Authors list, 'you've forgotten Langford.' 'Oh no,' said the rest of the committee, 'he'll come anyway so there's no need to encourage him.' Grr.

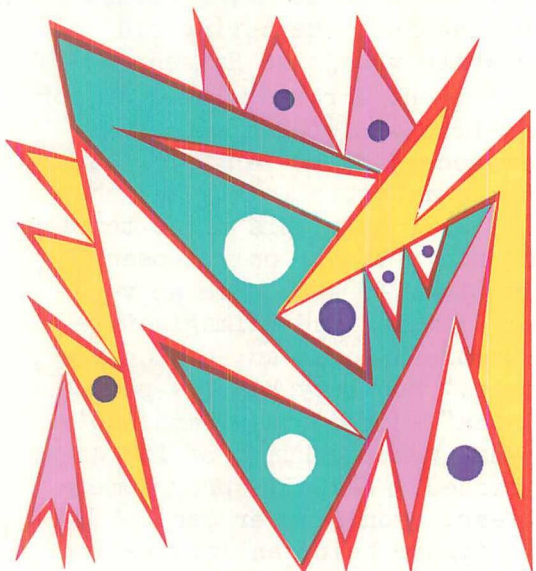
Tailpiece: I was flipping through the Nebula Awards report (following Ian Watson's grovelling request to add the Cavorite-like weight of my recommendation to his 'Slow Birds', currently leading the novelette pack) and for the umpteenth time felt a grating crash of metal gears on sight of the novel title 'Where the Ni-Lach'. The first few times I'd thought it must be a misprint. If it weren't for the hyphen Lach might be a



3 verb and the book would be about where the Ni did it (filthy beasts). No question mark to make it part of a monosyllabic exchange: 'Where the Ni-Lach?' "Tarzan not know. Piss off." Not enough of it to be a detached subordinate clause; it falls flat as aposiopesis; it's about as scientifically evocative as sandpaper drawn across one's fillings; and there's a hideous and no doubt intended temptation to buy the blasted book and see if context can possibly make sense of that title. Rage, spleen, bile.

Exits in general direction of the nearest pub, to diminuendo mumble of "The hero (ine) surely couldn't be a member of the noted Ni-Lach cult of telephone cleaners who just happens to be called Where...?"

Bergeron Unscrambles His Mind: from the effects of that convoluted Langford 'Tail-piece' and shares information with the aghast reader that DL's mss for the above has a penned in "Fact!" beside the item about the bloodcurdling nuptials -- thus throwing into momentary doubt the even more unlikely news about the manipulative and indecisive D. West. Now that Wiz has a 6 month lead over File 770, which to deal with first? Portents of the Nicholas/Hanna combination have been rife for some time as those of us realized who noticed that Halley's Comet has turned around on the other side of the sun and is headed back towards earth and as was deduced by faneditors who receive envelopes from them stuffed with totally interchangeable missives (thus, mercifully, obviating the necessity of printing both) or from one of them usually ending with a PS from the other saying "How perfect! I couldn't have said it better -- so there's no need to this time." We privy to this insight have been exchanging remarks about peas-in-pods and expecting births of two headed calfs for some time now. Seriously, I'm sure they'll be very happy with one another and can't imagine two people who deserve each other more -- which sounds vaguely like I'm practicing snide British humour (to be deferential again) but I'm not really. Really not.



Then there's this D. West farce. Which one, you ask? Well, the idea that I'll be quoting his remarks back at him is laughable in this context. After stealing my idea to anthologize and entomb him in a daintily colored pyramid with all his work engraved in hieroglyphics on the inside passages he has the nerve to think there'll be any need to continue to quote his contradictions. He's going to do it for me! Bugger that! I mean can you imagine a West collection containing that screed against the dead past which reprints represent and that crack about "The best place to read old fan articles..." I suppose it finally occurred to him (after I drummed it into his head a half dozen times)

that it's damned difficult to find copies of True Rat from 1976 and he may even have figured out why it was necessary to present a 600 page fanzine of forgotten essays just because they were pretty good. And I've already started the ad campaign based on the quote: "What I said or did 10 years ago..." which alone will guarantee half a dozen copies sold to Mark Ortlieb. Anyway, I'm delighted he's saving me the trouble of going ahead (without permission) with the volume so I can begin the Moskowitz compendium I've held back on for 30 years. (Odd thought: do you suppose he thinks I made money with Wrhn 28?) Perhaps I should mention that I stand by most of my earlier remarks about West in these pages -- including the one about D. being one of the most interesting stylists around both in or out of fandom. Good show. Can't wait to see the book.

The other farce is this possible capitulation to fate in the form of a Taff candidacy loosely patterned on Adali Stevenson's flirtations for the presidency of the US. Charming. Coincidentally, just a week before Dave's bit arrived I'd sent a note to K. Smith nominating DW for Taff (following the lead of the NHs) on the off chance that he might need a few more US names -- the intricacies of Taff requirements elude me. Also, I advised Smith "This, of course, does not mean that I will campaign for West. That decision is reserved for later -- if it seems he needs the boost which would follow from an all out attack by myself. After all, I've already done my bit: don't see how he can lose with all the interest I've generated in US fandom by those references to fish-net stockings, etc. What a letdown it's going to be..." HOT LINE: Another Rumor has reached me that the LAConCom is planning to ban attendance by any male fan under 18 if West wins. Be a change from PacifiCon.

David (as opposed to Dave) Langford takes a break from his column to send in the following: Further to my letter yesterday -- and if you haven't had my letter yesterday, it's the one with the column in it, ho ho -- I thought I'd send you a copy of the famous Matrix 48 cover to adorn your toilet wall. Enclosed. (Not your toilet wall, the cover.)

I'm all for bizarre displays of erudition and rococo allusiveness; indeed the very first outbreak of West fanzine reviews put the boot into me for just such traits. But as the years advance and I peer at the cobwebbed typewriter with dim spectacled eyes, I become more uneasy and obsessively concerned to Get Things Right. I bogged down only yesterday, trying to develop an analogy based on the Alexander Horned Sphere, a topological model whose horns (representing, say, the viewpoints of R. Bergeron and J. Hanna) branch and entwine in literally infinite ramifications, neither ever quite encircling and encompassing the other, the two never actually making contact...Well, you can see why I abandoned that somewhere in the mathematical thickets. And now here's Patrick Nielsen Hayden going on about the "Schrödingerian eisenstadt" and repeating the phrase



4 to boot, and I have a niggling worry that something's wrong here. Like, I assume the word he's after is what in English we call an eigenstate, the first disyllable coming straight from the German, leading to the reflection that (a) the eisen bit surely can't be right (and I have my doubts about the stadt... staat? Any Germanophones out there?); (b) it's pretty bloody silly to use German for a technical term which has an exact equivalent in English; (c) in quantum mechanics an eigenstate is a particular state, a particular solution into which the indeterminate Schrödinger wave function can be made to "collapse": Patrick appears to be using the term to describe the indeterminate probability wave describing D. West before his collapse, as opposed to the eigenstates "standing for Taff" and "not standing for Taff, into the former of which D. -- influenced as always by strong liquors -- has at last collapsed.

Oh well, this is where millions of Wiz-reading physics professors who happen to speak fluent German all get together and piss on me.

STOP PRESS! PNH VINDICATED! Have just discovered the existence of an Israeli sociologists called Shmuel N. Eisenstadt! Obviously Patrick's subtly disguised reference has fooled me utterly: "Ha ha," I already imagine him saying, "you have fallen into my trap..."

The wxy my letr~~y~~es are typped ~~ix/ix~~<sup>is</sup> NOT an eXcuse fr laxneas; carelessnesss and cnotmept. All bxst, Dave.

Contemplations On The Latest Acquisition For My Toilet Wall (presumably for when I get a toilet and a wall -- yes, I've moved into that unrestored property mentioned in previous issues): Appreciate Langford keeping me up to date on cultural developments in the UK, but begin to wonder if it isn't me and Chris Priest against the boring old farts. An interesting twist. A letter is on hand from Ted White who joins Hansen in looking down his nose at that infamous Matrix cover by Pete Lyon. I rather liked it for its technical flair even if I wouldn't go quite so far as Chris who (perhaps sardonically) described it as witty according to Marjorie Brunner according to Langford. Ted isn't so kind. He thought it not "very well done, on a purely artistic level, and that the man looked more like he was pissing on the woman. Well, obviously this scene totally violates the Political Correctness of New Feminist Fandom, since it not only demeans the female but implies that she enjoys it, the masochistic slut. It struck me as very adolescent -- a deliberate attempt to be shocking in a very literal and unimaginative way. There was no subtlety." He goes on to compare Dan's Boonfark cover as, by contrast, having "wit, subtlety (nothing was actually shown) and style." Subtlety has its place, I suppose, but so does raw power (one wouldn't call "Guernica" subtle), say, and Dan's robot/duck is so subtle that I suspect it was pointless. What was the humor of it? Are women being equated with goofy ducks and men with single minded sexually programmed robots? All a bit metaphysical for the Steffan I know, I fear. Lyon's cover can't be accused of subtlety but does have its levels -- the female figure being an interesting spoof on certain characters in Al Capp and the male barbarian rendered with as much gusto as was lavished on "The Road Warrior". Then there's those fetching skulls on his back harness and the hide-and-seek plethora of phallic symbols (much like Al Hirschfield's hidden "Ninas" -- how many pricks can you find on this page? -- which, come to think of it, qualifies as subtlety of a sort) and what about that "I ♥ SF" patch on the back of his short-shorts? Maybe not witty, but hardly banal (which can't be said about 80% of fanart) and probably worthy of consideration for the Fanthology 1983.

And Now For Something Completely Different: Time to pull ourselves up out of the morass of British fandom into which this issue seems to be slowly disappearing. There's only so much space allotted in this ensmallled continuum and PNH is due to show up any moment and I see that Bill Gibson wants to go home again. So we're at the point where we have to get out of the way and let him make like Thomas Wolfel983:

Hi-Tech Redneck, or My Trip Home, A Report From Main Street (by Wm. Gibson):

"Low Shiner told me that he and a buncha Texans were going to kidnap you and take you down to a mysterious town on the Virginia-Tennessee border. Did this take place? Did you survive?" --Steve Brown in correspondence.

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It sneaks up on you. It always does, but you'd forgotten. Four hours and a roadside beer beyond Rudy Rucker's Lynchburg living room, a good thirty hours out of what PNH has called the Brutal Phantasmagoria of Constellation, it jumps you. You aren't ready for it. You never are. Lulled by the hospitality of the author of, yes, "The Sex Sphere", and the company of Austinite sf writers and their foxy wives, you are unprepared. Rucker had explained one of his many plans for inciting the sick rage of the Moral Majority, a little literary magazine called Homo Poetry From The Hills. Sterling, fresh from his double Hugo loss, winces each time his Casio reeeps the passage of another hour; still another Hugoleess hour... Business-as-usual, postworldcon-style, while your autonomic nervous system telegraphs messages of mild protest to your body, berating it for the weekend's excesses (*Slow down, asshole, it seems to be saying*).

And then you're there. And the place is so small, the Texans' rented Olds is half-way past it before it registers. Main Street. The center of the human universe. And you do remember when it did seem to be that.

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He's out there and you can almost *smell* him. Horror. The shambler. He's fourteen years old and a card-carrying member of the N3F. He owns every paperback sf novel he's ever been able to find and keeps two years of Amazing and Fantastic lined up in rigid serial order on a special shelf. He thinks Theodore Sturgeon is the best writer in the world. *He wants to be an sf writer*. He's hideously lonely and has spots and thick glasses and you've driven ritual stakes through his heart for over twenty years. He *refuses to*

5<sup>die...</sup>  
lived.

And this is his stronghold, his country, where he *lives and has always*  
He's *out there*.

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But it's not like that. You've always imagined it would be like that, coming back here, but it isn't. You stand on the curb at the corner of Main and Church, nine at night, and a huge mantis lands on your shoe. It's taller than a Bic pen and its abdomen is thicker than your thumb. Nothing like that in Canada. In fact you can't remember ever having seen one that big when you lived here. And it was never this hot, either. Greenhouse effect?

Now look around. Main Street is carless, deserted, half the stores vacant. Weird. But what's the vibe, the literary connotation scratching at the back of your mind? You came expecting a kind of Lovecraft-Faulknerian decay, with touches of Bradbury, but this is 1983... What is it?

"On Wings of Song."

Yow. It actually makes you shiver. Start walking.

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The Texans left, forging on toward New Orleans and gumbo. I checked out my roots. Such as they are. My mother brought me here to live when I was six, after my father died. They'd both grown up here. Families that came up the James on flatboats, et eternal cetera, and history over everything like some oppressive invisible mist. Dig anywhere and you'd turn up the elegant gray flints of extinct indians and the ugly lead bullets called Minnie balls, hi-tech Civil War dumdums with a little conical plate in the base. My mother died when I was eighteen and I managed to not go back...

Now I walk around, thirty-five and counting, fresh from the worldcon. And it's weird. For starts, the subculture that produced me is gone, finito, moved on. Nothing here to keep my middleclass peers, not if they had any sense. They've gone to the Carolinas, to Atlanta, to the new urban South. Their parents are dying off, too old to stay in the old white houses that were already a little run-down when I was a boy. Houses too huge and drafty to heat with Arab oil. The brick sidewalks are unused, settling in to the ground. Be gone in a couple of years, to await the trowels of archeologists. Iron fences rusting, spearpoint trim crumbling, paper thin. You don't see anyone.

But that, somehow, is appropriate. Fitting. Poetically correct. I wander around taking pictures and soaking up a Ballardian strangeness. Trees *grow* a lot, in twenty years. Green trees ballooning vampiric above the fading houses, sucking something from them. Wow. Hot stuff. Cognitive dissonance to the *max*, man.

But Main Street, that worries me.

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Dead. The Soda Shoppe gone, where I bought the first issue of Famous Monsters on a third-grade lunch break. 4SJ! Yowie! Men's clothing store gone, the one that catered to that Southern prepoid taste for Gant buttondowns with widetrack oxford stripes, cordovan belts with padded madras trim... Drugstore where I'd later go after highschool classes, gone. Shit. Remembering the amazingly deep texture of the overlay of initials carved in the booth-tables; sidelong covert study of the breasts of unobtainable cheerleaders, divine mysteries concealed by taut layer of pastel shetland; buying a copy of "Rogue Moon" from the wire rack.. All gone.

Thinking: what happened here? The recession. Recession and a crackerbox shopping mall at either end of town. Burger King. Etc. In another place, in the course of things, the old businesses could have survived. But here, in isolation, the result is a kind of petrie-culture of Urban Blight. The Inner City, all five blocks of it, dead.

Standing there, full of obscure loss, picking the last of the armadillo-glue from my glasses...

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Malcolm Edwards stuck these glittery Austin bidding-party mascots to the lenses of my glasses, sadistic prick. All because I confused his wife-person with Chris Evans. I saw all this strange Southern smalltown rot through the sticky, dust-grimed outlines of a pair of armadillos.

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Nobody takes credit cards, here. VISA suspect, some kind of New York Jew Plot, a Commie virus undermining the American Dollar.

I begin to notice kids, teenagers. All boys. Girls out of sight. Uniform is t-shirt, the nylon baseball caps Texans call gimme hats. ("Gimme one them hats, hoss...") Seems essential to have at least one article in camo pattern. Hair shoulder-length. (Short hair for fags. Full circle.) All these guys look like they work out. The primitive wire-muscled underfed redneck is gone, replaced by an aerobic model...

There are at least nine karate schools in a town of 6,000.

Camo kids don't smile. Not at me, not at each other. They stay in their trucks and jeeps, drive Main at forty, not even cruising. Mall-to-mall. Bumperstickers: KILL 'EM ALL & LET GOD SORT 'EM OUT; INSURED BY SMITH & WESSON.

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Talking with one of two remaining friends. Guy's in his early forties, has a son fifteen. "Well, it's funny," he says, smiling weakly, "but all the kids at the high school are into this survivalist thing. My boy, now, he wants to get into the Green Berets. It's not like he's" --sidelong glance at me-- "militaristic. But he says he wants to be able to take care of himself *no matter what*..."

I suggest that this, along with the symbol-system of the camo kids, may represent



6 a frightening breakdown in the glue of things.

He shrugs. Polite. I'm an outsider now. It's too difficult to explain it to me.

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But I figure it out later, when I visit the one business on Main that has thrived, grown. The surplus store.

The surplus store was magic, when I was thirteen. It smelled of World War II khakis, fishgrease on the barrels of Czech air-rifles, on Jap hunting-knives. Dark and quiet, and, I later understood, the natural meeting place for the local Klan...

Now I find a well-lit emporium, expanded into the stores on either side. Guns, knives, ammunition, and the kit to be a camo kid. Two deputies are looking at a .44 Ruger, classic Southern cops with that strange mesotype, pear-shaped bodies supported by long thin legs. Smokey hats and crewcuts.

I wander past cases of Gerber combat knives, a magazine rack stuffed with back-issues of Soldier of Fortune. Lordy lordy.

Gettin' time to go, Billy. Westward-ho for Canada, boy.

On my way out of that store, I saw a garment from hell. A one-piece coverall printed in standard camo-pattern, but black on dayglo red. I stopped, stared, trying to imagine the landscape where that would hide you... Dawned on me that it was for deer-hunting. Deer don't know dayglo from shit. So your drinking buddies can see your ass before they let go with the Ruger.

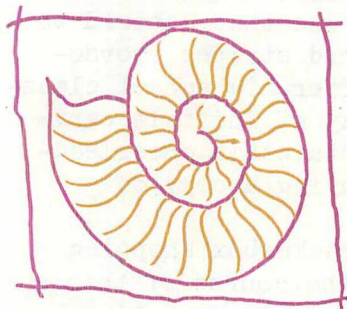
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Trains don't stop there. Buses don't either, anymore. I got my other friend to drive me seventy miles to the nearest airport, caught a local to National. Sat in the lounge about eight feet from Harry Reasoner. Looked just like Harry Reasoner. The bargirl had him figured for a jerk.

I didn't care. I was going home.

Art Rapp pulls us from urban squalor into thoughts of the bucolic: Nancy is making grapevine wreaths in preparation for the holiday season. As a result I spent part of the afternoon, under a gray sky with occasional isolated snowflakes drifting down, at the edge of the woods assaulting wild grapevine stems with pruning shears and attempting to tug them out of the tangles of underbrush to which they clung with frantic tendrils and utter stubbornness. It takes 50 yards of grapevine to make a wreath. At that rate we've got material for a gross or so of them, tho either she or I will abandon the project before we get anywhere near that number made. What this has to do with loc'ing Wiz 6 is problematical, unless life-and-death struggles with tendril-equipped entities qualifies as fannish. At least next summer I may be able to pick blackberries without tripping over a grapevine and falling on my face, a consequence, particularly in a blackberry patch, not to be taken lightly.

Gibson scintillated, like spangles on a hula dancer's skirt.



In a spirit of agreement with rich brown and his invention of the wheel, I might point out that someone -- Poul Anderson, I believe -- had a story in Analog some years back, set in a culture where circular objects were taboo and consequently they used vehicles with triangular wheels, or rather a shape formed by starting with a triangle (equilateral, of course) and using each vertex in turn as center, inscribing an arc thru the other two vertices. This gives a figure with constant diameter, around which a set of tracks could be run in the manner of bogie wheels on a Caterpillar tractor. In the even dimmer past I recall seeing

a proposed swamp-buggy in Popular Science Magazine which sported elliptical wheels, in pairs connected by a cross-piece at the end of each axle and arranged so they rotated 90° out of phase so that the axle maintained a constant distance above ground level. The theory, I believe, was that this would provide greater traction in muddy waters. Hmmm, how about a variable-diameter wheel? The vehicle's engine would run at a constant optimum speed, and the wheels would expand to increase vehicle velocity and contract to slow it. Now there's a good project for a class in mechanical engineering to tackle!

John D. Berry's mention of "Leghorn" as an anglicization of "Livorno" obsesses me. I've been unable to track down any relevant data to prove or disprove this, but it seems inherently unlikely. It may be folk-etymology but I'd speculate that "Leghorn" derives instead from the Italian province of Liguria. Perhaps Livorno was referred to by medieval British seamen as "The Ligurian port" which would be much more easily slurred into "Leghorn". (282 Grovania Drive, Bloomsburg, Penn. 17815)

Paul Williams takes time to attempt a, er, courageous (if bemused) analysis of what he finds in Wiz. I'll quote this for future reference before I lose it. After all, you can't hardly buy egoboo like this anymore: Wiz 7 delights me and satisfies me in some way that transcends content, I like the continuity, the whole riff comes together this time and strikes just the right note of self-consciousness, self-awareness, it's beautiful. The best part, I suppose, or what stands out most for me, is how you spared us the "three pages of fatuity on the art of the fanzine" (while, it seems, making reference or even recycling bits of what must have been the content of same here and there through the rest of the issue). PNH is a delight, particularly since I very much missed his voice in the latest Izzard. His explanation of "Schrödingerian eisenstadt" made me laugh out loud, like I haven't laughed since I read the first half or so of Greg Benford's piece in the previous issue.

Something I very much like in your best work, such as much of Wiz, is what I call "being awkward until you get comfortable with it," that is, allowing self-consciousness

7 to find its voice and become mutual (reader and writer) consciousness. This thought arises from my own discomfort with my reluctance to write an awkward, clumsy letter of comment -- one that won't be quotable and all that -- in turn suggesting that I'm playing for the crowd even as I'm writing, as who isn't, but see the result of that is I'm like dancing with my own standards (or, mostly, sitting back writing nothing) rather than actually sharing my comments, so because of my self-consciousness you never get to find out that I enjoy Wiz, the essay several issues back about driving across island was quite evocative and gave me much pleasure, etc. Instead I sit here with my vanity and say, aw, I'm not in the mood to write a good loc right now, whatever that would be. Always on stage. Partly because I'm not involved enough in fanac to just plunge into it, nor do I want to be, except that when I am plunging in I'd like to be plunging in and not just sticking my toe in the water.

One more try: it's the format, I really felt it this time, columnists and letters emerging from the flow of editorial matter, RB still present sitting to the side on the stage as they speak. Winking at me. Multicolor threads off LeeH's top barbell, color thunderstorm added to the little peepul 'chutist, I like it a lot. Format as worthy as the Talk of the Town concept plus fillos, and fifty years fresher. And perfectly suited to D. West's dictum: ultimately meaningless to those not on the mailing list, or their fannish cousins (and perhaps descendants). Precisely as good as the finest publication made for broader readership, and better than all but the best, yet suitable for and digestible by only the few related by incest, speaking our arbitrary language. Nor do we even know exactly who each other are. And certainly we argue tediously about inanities, viz you & Judith Hanna. Wiz, a fmz about DW/the lettercol of Tappen: Patrick mentions reading P (let's just call it P) aloud to a cataplectic Teresa (she can read, see, but something like that it's safer to be on the floor already). I read P out loud to a nonfan friend as we drove through the night from LA to northern Calif., yes all 36 pages, she loved it -- understood most of it, or anyway fully appreciated, which ironically proves D. wrong but also puts the lie to those who claim there are chunks that are indigestible. Some of us have sections of digestive tract that have been waiting for years for something so worthy of their specialized attention. Wiz also satisfies some part of my metabolism not often called upon. Gets the juices flowing.

Now you can revert to putting out some more horribly convoluted, lost-your-sense-of-humor, awkward/immodest/excessive-N. Yorker-envy issues, or maybe gafiate for a few months again, just to keep your mailing list down and your ego in line and the rest of us from getting too envious. (Box 611, Glen Ellen, Calif. 95442)

**RB:** I'm envious of this master of the left-handed compliment. Williams seems to be saying the best thing I ever wrote for Wiz is something I declined to publish. Modesty isn't all it's cracked up to be. Oddly enough, Walt Willis thought the bit about 'paper worlds' right on or something -- which I forebare quoting but will instead point out that it was probably just an elaboration/extension of something he wrote in "The Subcutaneous Fan" in 1952. :: Anyway, I leave the screed mercifully interred: it being more fun to demonstrate my theories of good fanzine practice rather than ploddingly tell you how I think it should be done. Surely the former implies the latter. After years of publishing fanzines which have always featured the writers I most admire in fandom you'd think I must have figured out how it's done: especially when the majority of fanzines are filled with editorial despair on how to get good authors to write for them. Maybe when I figure out how I figured it out, I'll let you know. But don't hold your breath. Evidently, though, my remarks are going to haunt you for a while longer:

**Mike Glicksahn** confides: I find myself having to write an article on fandom for a book on the same topic which Joe Sanders is putting together. Other contributors include Ted White, Harry Warner, Dick Geis, Bob Tucker, the Coulsons, Glycer, Pelz, Dick Lupoff, etc, etc, etc. Your comment on the joys of fanzines is a perfect quotation for my thesis, and with your okay I'll include it in the article.

Fandom is a fascinating place. Only last night Patrick was telling me all this stuff about the Westian Taff candidacy and here it is already in print in a fanzine from Puerto Rico. I'd love to see D inflicted on LaCon but somehow I don't see it in the cards. Unless all of English fandom gets behind him (probably the safest place to be for many of them) in a desperate effort to be rid of him for a few weeks. If nothing else, though, it should make for a livelier race and perhaps some of us can drum up some support amongst fans who don't normally participate in fan fund races. After all, don't you agree that Los Angeles deserves D. West? And imagine his Taff report! "Fear And Loathing In Disneyland's Parking Lot." The mind croggles! :: Langford, of course, is Brilliant. (508 Windermere Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6S 3L6)

**Thoughts While Waiting For "Cum Grano Salis":** PNH still seems to be lurking around that corner but kindly sends Cheap Truth which I can't recommend too highly (but will). Mail a dollar to Vincent Omniaveritas (809-C West 12th Street, Austin, Texas, 78701) and he'll send you some copies (three have already been published). It contains a level of sf criticism which doubtless out classes by far most of the fiction he's commenting on. At first I suspected Vincent might be Bill Gibson but even Bill wouldn't go on like this about Terry Carr's "The Best SF Of The Year":

"But the best comes last: William Gibson's incredible 'Burning Chrome'. This is the shape for science fiction in the 1980's: fast-moving, sharply extrapolated, technologically literate, and as brilliant and coherent as a laser. Gibson's focussed and powerful attack is our best chance yet to awaken a genre that has been half-asleep since the early 1970's.

"And until SF does reform itself, re-think itself, and re-establish itself as a



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moving cultural force rather than a backwater anachronism, even the cleverest editors will find their efforts useless. They cannot produce meritorious fiction after the fact; nor can they stitch silk purses from the ears of sows, no matter how fat the sows are or how long they have been munching the same acorns under the same tree. SF must stop recycling the same half-baked traditions about the nature of the human future. And its most formally gifted authors must escape their servant's mentality and learn to stop aping their former masters in the literary mainstream. Until that happens, SF will continue sliding through obsolence toward outright necrophilia."

**Fan Art As Seen By Fan Artists:** The fan artist's fan artist must be Dan Steffan. After all, he won the Pong Poll in that category for three consecutive years. Dan and I exchanged thoughts in the letter column of Wrhn 30 on the subject of fan art and, interestingly, those paragraphs proved one of the best recieved parts of that tumultuous issue. I was surprised because the discussion was mostly about my work and it hasn't been particularly highly thought of in fandom. This is an inference I draw from my consistent low standing in three decades of fan polls and the general silent bafflement a Bergeron cover inspires. You'd have to go a long way to find a more iconoclastic example than the one on the cover of the PNH Fanthology: totally unhinged and totally unconnected to any of the traditions one usually finds in fanart and an example which, as Taral would correctly point out, places me squarely in the cubist camp. And what did fandom make of so bizarre a statement? Who can guess. Perhaps fandom still hasn't figured out how to react to my work. I could probably quote most of the comment it has drawn in thirty years in the space of half a page of Wiz. However, things may finally be looking up. Eric Mayer confounds me in the course of remarking on the serigraphic spots in this magazine: "You are perhaps our only 'fine artist' in the conventional sense of the term."



I suppose he means that I'm one of the few of us crazy enough to be preoccupied with the mechanics of artistic expression for themselves rather than as tools in the expression of emotion. I see that this leads back to my comments on style vs content but I'll argue that in this case style is the subject and often a drawing by myself has no other subject beyond pure composition, design, and now color rather than some angst about life I feel a desperate need to communicate on paper. Art isn't really a way of speaking, for me, but is more a way of organizing -- a sort of self hypnotized exploration of the endless possibilities in which space can be arranged. The subject is really what makes a picture work rather than the incidental idea that might be depicted. It's art about art. Stark stuff, I'll grant, compared to 99% of fan art which devotes its handling of design problems to the literal depiction of genre cliché: unicorns, spaceships, slavegirls and the like. What the typical viewer sees in the Frazetta is the slavegirl and the typical viewer has little idea just what artful manipulations the artist went through to create an image of near obscene impact. Frazetta creates fetishistic fantasy for the amusement of people thrilled by Conan-esque savages riding out of deathdreams menacing defenseless or invincible amazons. And pretty solidly constructed on epic foundations used by such as Titian and David to mention two who took the whole academic approach to a higher plane. But this can become as boring as space opera when you're accustomed to reading the bones of a painting and see what's underneath the (sometimes trite) flesh. Headed in this direction you end up with Matisse and an artwork isn't about what it's about but about what it's made up of (entirely separable from its subject matter) and we're on our way into that baffling world the uncritical viewer is completely lost in and from which those utterly meaningless artworks by Bergeron come reeling. The world of abstract art.

In the face of all this we have a comment by Dan Steffan (certainly one of our most technically accomplished cartoonists) which I intend to quote because I'd be amused to see how you react to what the fan artist you've voted #1 these past years sees in the work of another who ranks very near the bottom of the pile. Dan writes: "the silk-screened illos are nothing short of wonderful. The art in Wiz is so beautiful to look at and to study that I am in awe. Like I said about those big prints you sent earlier: they are world class work. Fuck fandom, there isn't another person within fandom that can touch you, your ideas, your color sense, your pictorial content -- awesome. There is no doubt in my mind that you are the best fine artist I know." Well. (You'll see that this issue I've devised a feast of 'pictorial content' for Dan.)

Does this mean, I wonder, I can look forward to being famous after I'm dead?

Happy with opening a bottomless snake pit of discussion on how fine art relates to fan art I'll end with a few comments on similarly unsung artists. A glance at the current Pong Poll tells me none of you have noticed the splendid work Eric Mayer has been doing in Groggy. His silkscreen cover of last year was a beautiful tour de force and his hectographic prints on the same magazine are among the finest lyrical fan art I've seen. They slip right past us, I guess, because they are so gently unassuming but behind that unpretentious flair is a formidable (and probably instinctive) sense of organization. I can't figure out why he isn't making money doing work which is obviously play. Eric already has a very good portfolio in just these covers and it's a shame he's not trying to take advantage of it.

Turning from Mayer to a fanzine he sent me a couple years ago we find a few pages I can easily visualize in The Metropolitan Museum Of Fan Art. I refer to an untitled phamplet of 20 pages measuring 5"x7" by Mae and Tony Strelkov dated November, 1979, and executed in hectograph and mimeo. The media are not mixed and the hectographed pages stand by themselves as vivid prints with all the delicate charm of masterful watercolor paintings. There are pages here Renoir would have been proud of and a bucolic rendering of a wooded glade worthy of Cezanne himself. Lovely work.



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Robert Pasarella, who runs a small gallery in Old San Juan, came by a moment ago to see how I'm doing among the rubble (the facade of this ruin still has an "Air Raid Shelter" sign on it and a glance around the premise would convince you that the bombs are possibly still falling). Robert was quite impressed by the Strelkov prints. And would probably be interested in selling them -- though I didn't bring up the possibility.

"The French Impressionists still live -- in Argentina, apparently," Robert said.

**Eric Mayer** sets the stage for Joseph Nicholas: Let's stop talking about "Performance". I enjoyed it, although in much the same way as I enjoyed reading General Guderian's account of the Blitzkreig. I think I'd rather read about the art of the fanzine, even if it is fatuous. I admit to a similar practice in that I constantly compose critical articles for Groggy and then cut them down to two sentences. Just the opposite, I presume, from Joseph Nicholas. I just quit trying to communicate with Joseph. It was partly that I felt in his last couple review columns in Nabu he'd gone beyond the bounds of fannish invention and had just out and out lied to us. And I think fandom depends on writers being honest. More than that I couldn't contend with Joseph's schizoid "I'm really a nice guy, except I enjoy knifing people in print" routine. What is interesting about fandom is that we do interact via paper personalities and one hopes those personalities have something in common with the way we really are. Joseph seemed to think this unnecessary. I can understand the temptation to create a fictional print personality. Bill Gibson says it all when he complains that fanwriting, by confining you to being yourself, is artistically limiting. It gripes me that I simply don't have a very fascinating life to write about, nor a particularly scintillating psyche to expose. But, even though I simply don't exist, in fannish terms, except on paper, it would seem to me to be dishonest to hold myself out as someone other than who I am. How Joseph hoped to do so, while carrying on in-person fanac is beyond me. (1771 Ridge Road East, Rochester, New York, 14622)

**Joseph Nicholas** writes: Since, as I understand it, Dave Langford is about to clobber Patrick Nielsen Hayden for his imperfect grasp of physics I think, just to add to the fun, that I should clobber Patrick Nielsen Hayden for his imperfect grasp of irony, which he obviously recognises enough to pinch for his own use when he sees it but refuses to recognise it when I use it. Specifically, how does he propose to reconcile his charge that I'm just whining pitifully about everyone getting at me (and consequent suggestion that I should adopt the D. West style of response) with his subsequent, and contradictory, blatant theft and reuse of one of my lines ("Yawn yawn, it do get tedious, etc.")? He's a right little bugger, that's what he is. Am I somehow not allowed to use irony, or have my ironical constructions identified for what they are, because I'm supposedly famed for something else? Bloody hell. In which case, it wouldn't matter how long I kept on doing something new (as Patrick Nielsen Hayden wishes me to) because people would still react with the same boring old knee-jerk Joseph Nicholas routines (yawn yawn, it really do get tedious, etc.). (What is it with You Damn Americans, that you just go through the motions without really thinking about what you're doing? Have you all had your brains reamed out by lackeys of the CIA running dog bandits, or what?) Perhaps I should just retire from the US scene for a year or so -- throw away unread all US fanzines so that I won't be tempted to respond to them and write nothing for any British fanzine with a US circulation, say. But probably not, since it's far too drastic a step. Have to think of something else, obviously. Heigh-ho...

But back to you, and what verges on your intellectual dishonesty. You state that you didn't print Judith's response in Wiz 6 because it didn't fit in with the other contents of that issue, then go on to say that you've only printed it here because you knew she'd get annoyed if you didn't -- making it clear, as far as we're concerned, that you were only pushed into printing it as a result of our sending you a copy to remind you of it. Such behaviour is really rather astonishing. Do you genuinely not understand what is meant by the term "right of reply", the idea that if you attack someone in print then you must allow them to reply to and attempt to refute what you say? Perhaps you do; but you don't seem to apply it very well, and that makes you not an editor but a censor. (And how much, if any, of this paragraph will you print, eh?) (22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER, England)

**RB:** PNH didn't suggest you should "adopt" the D. West style of response. He wrote "Compare and contrast". Something about "those who can't read, can't write, and can't think" comes to mind. Frankly, I doubt Patrick thinks you have the sense of humor to carry off that kind of act. Your penchant for responding to what isn't on the page is even less amusing than your sense of irony which (you should have noticed by now) seems to ascend to heights about as rapidly as an elevator with a broken cable. ∴ I could charitably find your charge of "intellectual dishonesty" amusing, but I won't. In my 30 years in fandom this is the first time anyone has accused me of that but it's not terribly surprising that it comes from one so accurately assessed by Eric Mayer. Joseph, this doesn't leave us much common ground. My interest in you as a stylist is negligible and your content seems compounded of one pose or another mostly designed for effect with (apparently) small regard for credibility. And if you don't care; why should anyone else? After one digests such ploys as the one laid bare on page 29 of Wrhn 30 where with one mouth you feign indifference to West's criticisms of you and with the other acknowledge his deadly accuracy what's





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the point of even bothering to try to figure out your latest game? That's called lying, isn't it? Or are you now going to pretend it was irony? Pardon me while I laugh. Or yawn. :: I was reluctant to publish Judith's letter because I agreed with her that "all this retracking over the same old ground /is/ dreadfully boring". I could very easily have dismissed her letter as unresponsive: I posed a question which she chose not to address and instead launched into a typical Nicholasian series of digressions and claimed I would challenge her judgement of what she'd consider a significant reference to the past. Presumptuous nonsense. I might have agreed with her. But at this point I'm quite past caring and would much prefer no further explanations. Yah, I know what "right of reply" means and I also know when I'm not being replied to and feel no obligation to publish unresponsive circumlocutions. But I did. More the fool I. You characterize my question to Judith as an "attack". I'll overlook this in view of your fame for reading what isn't on the page or for outright lying. I haven't the least interest in figuring out which it is. :: And this "how much, if any, of this paragraph will you print" gambit is even more infantile than all your previous games. I don't suppose you've noticed I've been willing to publish all the denunciations by D. West in these pages. It should be clear by now that it's the quality of thought and style of argument that interests me -- not whether someone is improperly dressing me down. That I can deal with. Dull witted gamesmanship doesn't hold my attention: so I don't find it a bad idea for you to act on your impulse to skip reading this US fanzine. I returned the compliment long ago when I noticed I've rarely got past the first four or five lines of anything you've written since your review of British fandom in the 70s.

Judith Hanna apologizes for not responding to my question and finally reveals how she found 104 references to the past in Pong: "I read them." Then for nine lines she tells how she read them and how she took notes. She wonders how heavy I am (an oblique allusion to my "sitting in judgement" on her) and speculates that I "really do think /I/ have some sort of monopoly on Truth and Justice." She wonders why I side-step her questions: I'm the editor. I set the agenda. I respond to what I think is interesting. And see no need to respond to what I think isn't. She assumes that "As a regular columnist, you were part of Pong, and naturally you identify with it, so when Pong is criticised, you feel that you are included in the criticism." She's entitled. She goes on to discribe the "focii" of her fannish involvement but asserts "I don't go on to assume that what is a focus for my activities must therefore be...the focus of fandom in general. But its editors, and you, have advanced that claim for Pong." I don't recall ever citing Pong as the focus of fandom and unless Judith can quote me to that effect I am prepared to say that she has now descended from baiting me to lying about me. She disagrees with me about the worth of the Pong fanzine reviews, but I don't mind. She asks "Where, I wonder, did you pick up the impression that I regard fanzine reviews as a device for entrapment?" and goes on interminably about that. I'd said "But I forget. You live in a nest where fanzine reviews have other uses: among them entrapment." This is an accusation that she...? Sure. About as much as it is an accusation that she writes them. You'll note a Nicholasian ability to reply to what isn't on the page -- which leads me to suspect that Joseph probably wrote this letter inspite of its different typeface. :: I'll be happy to send anyone who feels the need a copy of this letter so they can savor it's full flavor. Want to guess how many copies I'll have to make?

"What Happened To The November Wiz?" Ted White asks in egoscan #2...as I thought he might while I was standing in a cold shower for 16 hours on a scaffolding wearing nothing but a bathing suit and sneakers and wielding the nozzle of a high pressure water pump against layers of old white paint flaking from the antique bricks on the ceiling of this house. 24 hours later I was thinking the same thing as I sat attired in tuxedo drinking champaign at a corner table in the Rainbow Room in Rockefeller Center with the lovely Sandra Espada by my side while Jean Whitney's sparkling wedding reception swirled about us. That sentence passed through my mind again as I directed the evacuation of my first San Juan residence and inventoried some 400 boxes of books, fanzines, dishes, graphics, cans of silk screen ink, tools, plants, frames, pots, paintings, statues, bronzes, crystal, and stereo components through about 25 individual trips for 2 blocks through these winding old streets and into this dust filled, plumb- ingless, extension cord draped, cavern I must now think of as home. I could blame Wiz's November non-appearance on Patrick Nielsen Hayden, but I was much too busy to even think about holding up the issue for his column or even to think about Wiz.

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TO:

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WIZ

RICHARD BERGERON: BOX 5989  
SAN JUAN PUERTO RICO 00905

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