

FLAG

This is issue #4 of FLAG, a frequent fanzine published by Andy Hooper, from 11032 30th Ave. NE Seattle, WA 98125, email to fanmailaph@aol.com. Member fwa. This is a Drag Bunt Press Production. First copies were mailed on April 19th, 2013. FLAG appears only in printed form, and is available. The next issue will appear in May, 2013. Congratulations to the fanzines BANANA WINGS, THE DRINK TANK, JOURNEY PLANET and longtime FLAG correspondents James Bacon, Brad Foster, Chris Garcia, Steven Silver and Steve Stiles on their Hugo Award nominations. Art Credits: Steve Stiles, page 1, Bill Rotsler, page 4.

“I didn’t steal it...I stole it...to save it from senseless worship.”

April Is The Cruellest Moth: An Editorial with Death and Typos

I had about two weeks to enjoy the afterglow of publishing FLAG #3, until the absurd and shattering story hit the world’s wires: Scottish science fiction writer Iain Banks announced that he has an incurable, late-stage cancer, and has less than a year to live. He has suspended work on the new novel only begun in January, and cancelled all personal appearances and commitments, including his much-anticipated turn as Guest of Honor at the 2014 Worldcon. A finished mainstream novel, *The Quarry*, will be published several months early, so Banks can be there (here?) for its reception. And Iain and his longtime partner Adele planned to get married as soon as possible; as the sly Banks puts it, she plans to “do him the honor of becoming his widow.” He apologized if that offended anyone, but observed that “dark humor” had proven helpful.



The news made me feel like I’d been punched in the head. I was still hundreds of pages from the end of *Surface Detail*, a Culture novel that Banks published in 2010. Kate Yule, you were right: I loved *Surface Detail* just as much as *Matter*. It seemed to illustrate the psychological geography of the galaxy, in the same way that *Matter* considered its political landscape. I would like very much to compose further reaction to it, but I have other ideas for this FLAG, so I’ll probably submit a piece of work to some other fanzine soon. Letters in response to my review in FLAG #3 began playfully, with readers sharing their own memories of interactions with Banks and appreciation of his work. But understandably, the tone changed as the news became known, and later responses are much more somber and withdrawn. I ended up emphasizing the earlier replies in the letter column of this issue, so if some correspondents seem insensitive in their remarks, remember that they probably had no inkling of Banks’ illness when they set out to poke fun at his accent.

It was startling to have such a sad event follow so closely on my attention to Iain’s work, but I rationalized it by observing that famous, beloved, creative people are dying all the time. And I am paying attention to one or more of them all the time, so the juxtaposition of my interest and calamity is actually inevitable, as opposed to the spooky scenarios the mind invents. Since the last FLAG was run up, we also lost columnist and film critic Roger Ebert, who was famously an SF fan and acquaintance of Bob Tucker as an undergraduate at the University of Illinois. I had only recently returned veteran fan Mike Deckinger to my mailing list, but his copy of CHUNGA #20 was returned with the notation that he had died. So did legendary comic artist Carmine Infantino, novelists Basil Copper and Nick Polotta, and a member of first fandom, Ray Beam.

[Continued on Page 2]

“You crazy monkey! All you criminals can do is stop elevators and break iron hearts.”

A Key to the linos published in FLAG #3

Page 1: “Susan,” said my Department Chair, raising a practiced sardonic eyebrow, “all fiction is speculative.” Quote from Susan Wood’s column “Tide Pool,” in **GENRE PLAT #1**, 1977.

Page 1: “See these eyes so green? I can stare for a thousand years.”

Lyric from the song “Putting Out Fire,” sung by David Bowie in the soundtrack of Paul Schrader’s *Cat People*. (1982)

Page 3: “That was the worst imitation of Harlan Ellison I’ve ever seen.”

From an anecdote about the late (and very tall) Andrew Brown in Kim Huett’s **FANZINE #0**.

Page 4: “Usually I don’t see my ex-girlfriends, unless their hard drives crash.”

A nebbishy observation by Dr. Leonard Hofstadter (Johnny Galecki) of *The Big Bang Theory*.

Page 5: “Remember kids, you’re never alone in the Fortress of solitude.”

Kevin Smith signs off for another episode of the podcast-turned-TV-show Comic *Book Men*.

Page 6: “So here I sit, painting my toenails in chocolate syrup, so that when I put my foot in my mouth it’ll taste good.” Introductory remarks by Art Widner in *Web #5*, an apazine from 1986.

Page 7: “She soon saw that I was previously unsullied by fanzines”

A line from Jim Mowatt’s fannish autobiography in *Tiny TAFFzine #1*

Page 8: “Nor has any con party I have been at ever put out candied fish heads or stuffed hamsters with onion dip.” Taral Wayne goes medieval on the institution of the convention report in **BROKEN TOYS #13**

Page 9: “Be sure to ask questions and attempt to join in conversations even if you are rebuffed the first 6 times.” Gary Farber’s advice for fans at their first convention, from **CURRENTLY RECOMMENDED** (1981)

April is the Cruellest Moth: Death, Taxes and Typos

[Continued from Page 1]

When Paul Williams, much beloved publisher of CRAWDADDY!, succumbed to the long-term effects of a terrible bicycling accident on March 27th, I found myself thinking about music, fanzines, Dylan, Lennon, Phil Dick and much more. The piece that follows this was inspired by an article Doug Bell wrote for CHUNGA, but Paul’s death has definitely catalyzed it into being. When Paul revived CRAWDADDY! in the 1990s, he generously traded it for titles like my SPENT BRASS and APPARATCHIK, and even favored me with several letters of comment. Paul and his wife Cindy Lee Berryhill played the lead roles in my play *Fannotchka* at the 1996 Worldcon, on one of the best evenings of my life. I wanted to take up the standard of the whole rock/fandom fusion that he personified so neatly, and write something that he would enjoy.

And then Allyn Cadogan died. She shared the news of her liver cancer with the world on Monday, through her great friend Lucy Huntzinger, and passed away on Tuesday. And this punched me in the other side of the head. Allyn was one of the founders of Corflu, now our most prized gathering-place. Her writing was cool, clever, sharp; her fanzines playful but secretly brilliant. And I just wrote a little profile of one of them, **GENRE PLAT #1**, in which she collaborated with Bill Gibson, Doug Park and Susan Wood in the spring of 1977. This was part of another “Archeofanac” column for **FANSTUFF #33**, in which I looked at several good fanzines published in the same year. But **GENRE PLAT** was my favorite – it had a beguiling mix of academic legitimacy and freaked-out West Coast collage-culture cred that I found irresistible. I didn’t get to read it until five years after it was published, but when I did, I thought it was close to the perfect fanzine. Much of what we’ve tried to do in CHUNGA is in some way inspired by GP.

So I was wondering if Allyn had seen my remarks, and if she would correct some elements of my chronology, and if I might even get to see her in Portland next month. Instead, I just had to cut her address out of my mailing list. How many names have I removed in this way over the past 35 years? It feels as if it is more names than are on the list today, although there are still plenty who have been there from the beginning. Old Contemptibles.

Again, the coincidence of death with my fannish affections is almost certainly no more than the consequence of a long life. Even so, I am reluctant to write about anyone I care about right now. If my work does contain an icy surprise, then perhaps I need to apply it more judiciously. Clearly, I should be writing of my deep affection for the visionary work and sensitive personality of Orson Scott Card, the Franciscan generosity of Mike Resnick, and the startling originality of Stephenie Meyer.

Department of Corrections

The prospect of death holds none of the anxiety that I feel at the inevitable advent of typographical errors. FLAG #3 had a few disturbing clinkers that claw at my soul like a vengeful pangolin. In about half the copies mailed, I dropped the last line of the third paragraph of Robert Lichtman's letter at the bottom of page 7. Robert meant to end it with the line: "...the only ones that could be said to match his disparaging description are mine and yours." Apologies are also in order to Rob Imes, whose correct addresses appear in Color Party and The Fanzine Countdown this time.

Publishing on a frequent schedule often involves compromises on both content and presentation. Given how little time I devoted to proofreading the last issue, it is surprising how well it turned out. Using a current generation of word processing software helps. I can generally trust its automatic corrections, although the fact that it just tried to switch "Leno" for "Lennon" worries me slightly.

Singer says Hi!

I pass on a Change of Address announcement from one Jon Singer, still happy to hear from Fandom after all these yarns. Send paper mail to him at 11701 Goodloe Road, Silver Spring, MD 20906-4843, Email to jon@jonsinger.com

One more weekend of lights and evening faces.

Table Manners:

DJs Mix the Post-Pop World

In CHUNGA #20, Doug Bell presented our readers with a kind of musical autobiography, under the title "Space-Age Bachelor-Pad Music." As a survey of "science fiction music" it was both commendably inclusive and inevitably incomplete, but served admirably to illustrate the point that fiction is far from the only form of art to take a speculative point of view. Music is integral to science fiction story-telling on film and television, and there is a wide spectrum of sounds that seem "science fictional" to our ears. But as Doug points out, some composers have used sound itself in a speculative manner, completely erasing the lines between what we think of as music and what we call noise. Those guys always fascinated me too, and my record collection used to include experimentalists like Edgar Varese (and Spike Jones), early electronic virtuosos like Isao Tomita, and lots and lots of music by Frank Zappa. With a fannish sympathy for prog rock and albums with wizards and longships on the cover, I followed the evolution of electronic music from the Theremin and "Switched-On Bach" eras to New Age Tinklers and 1980s synth-pop opera by names like New Order and This Mortal Coil. Speculating on what the future might hold became a popular postwar archetype, and it made its way into popular music much more readily than it was accepted in the literary world. Technical innovations like overdubbing, multi-tracking, synthesizers and eventually digital sampling all gave the music itself futuristic qualities that went well beyond a "space-age" title like "Telstar" or "Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun."

What Doug only begins to consider in his article is the fundamental change in attitudes toward the creation, sale and possession of music since digital storage became a practical reality. In some ways, I feel we've walked back to the beginning of a great circle, where everyone plays or creates the music they most want to hear, only instead of picking out the tune on a piano or a guitar or violin, they select tracks and cuts and beats and samples from a digital library, and shuffle them together in the way that puts their backfield in motion.

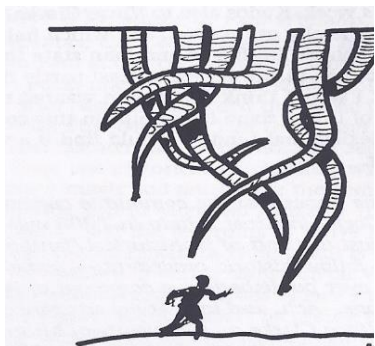
Listening to music is itself now an excursion into the future for a child of the mid-20th Century. There are a number of ways to tap into the musical digiverse, with varying degrees of contractual legitimacy and inter-device portability. I tend to just sit at my PC and browse Youtube for whatever music may cross my mind, and follow the suggestions associated with the songs I have asked for. For more than 30 years, I doggedly acquired my favorite music on vinyl record albums, tape cassettes, and compact discs, paying what the market required, and considering it a fair trade for the privilege of summoning the sound I wanted to hear when I wanted to hear it. We reasoned that the money helped support the artists who created it, conveniently ignoring that fact that 98% of it went to support the industry that produced and distributed the record. Now I no longer even own a "stereo"; the disc drive on my computer can still play my library of CDs, but I have no way of playing the collection of vinyl records that I still cannot part with. The jackets, after all, can make for such interesting reading....

[Continued on Page 4]

The day she was born the front page of the New York Post showed John Lennon dead on a mortuary slab.

Table Manners: Be Your Own Post-Pop DJ!

[Continued from page 3]



I feel as if we began our journey along this road sometime in the 1970s, when we first began to congregate around sound systems, not for the purpose of listening to a band or a solo artist perform live music, but to watch someone else play records on a series of turntables, and address the crowd with any message they felt like sharing. The practice began in Jamaica, where disc jockeys performed extemporized verse in a style known as “toasting;” by the time it spread north to the boroughs of New York, it was called “Rap” and DJs polymorphed into MC’s, creating the last great pop music idiom of the 20th Century.

Now, the artists with gold teeth and a gift for rhyme got the lion’s share of the money and virtually all the cultural credit, and sadly, most of the bullets meted out when their rhetoric spilled over into reality. But behind the poet warriors was a small army of anonymous technophiles hunched over their record crates, harvesting beats, grooves and riffs from the whole history of recorded music, repackaging them into cocktails irresistible to both the foot and the ear. And unlike many electronic musicians, who could never reproduce their complex compositions in real time, DJs have traditionally created their mixes in front of a live audience, using as many as 8 turntables at once to create a complex, original sound, reacting to and interacting with the crowd gathered to hear the mix. It is a performing art, as well as a compositional discipline, and with all due respect to Henry Rollins, they have as legitimate a claim to the term “musician” as anyone who performs with a banjo or a saxophone.

The Only Shadow That Matters

I freely admit that I’m not in the target demographic for contemporary DJ culture. I don’t go to clubs, don’t subscribe to a music service, and don’t even own an iPod. The drugs that I take have absolutely no application for staying up all night dancing, and I am particularly deficient in my consumption of designer hair and skin care products. I have no legitimate claim to any opinion about this genre of music, yet I have been assiduously listening to it for about two decades now, enough to feel like it’s more than a mere musical fad. There have definitely *been* fads within the broader world of hip-hop and remixed music: Descriptors like “House,” “Acid,” “Jungle” and “Trance-Hop” have all been applied to clusters of songs and artists, but these are mostly marketing terms used to artificially segment a naturally seamless evolution of sampled and repackaged beats. Every classic dance cut from Motown to Disco received a remix revival, such that young fans might easily be forgiven for believing that Phil Collins and Diana Ross recorded “You Can’t Hurry Love” together, or that Aerosmith and Run-DMC were the joint authors of “Walk This Way.”

While these high-profile remixes were getting attention on MTV, other DJs assembled exciting sounds from seemingly anonymous components, vocals and bass lines and horn parts plucked from every kind of recording ever committed to vinyl, jazz records, and gospel songs, recordings of live news broadcasts of famous events, spoken word performances by statesmen, artists and authors, sports events, sound effects records, and every kind of local, regional and international music that you can imagine.

I became aware of this world by purchasing a single album on CD in the winter of 1996-1997. The album was “Endtroducing,” created by an artist who works under the name “DJ Shadow.” Shadow as born Joshua Davis in San Jose, California in 1972. After experimenting with 4-track recordings in high school, and working on radio at UC-Davis, he released his first remixes as DJ Shadow in 1991 and 1992, on the BASIC subsidiary of Hollywood Records. He remixed a wide selection of West Coast hip-hop artists, but also mined sources that few DJs were investigating, like high school jazz ensemble records and Kung Fu film soundtrack compilations. When he released “Endtroducing,” his first major label recording, he had created a repertoire of sampled and original beats, themes and melodies that sounded like the whole history of rock, pop, soul and rap music from 1955 to 1995, all telescoped into 63 minutes. It is a masterpiece, its grooves and hooks so striking that other acts including the Beastie Boys have incorporated them into

their own live shows, and his compositions included in the video game “DJ Hero.” No wonder it took Davis well over two years to compose and record the album.

“Endtroducing” was an immediate success in the United Kingdom, where it eventually peaked at #17 on the pop album chart. David Bennun of *The Guardian* gave it a five-star review, calling it “Not only one of the most daring albums in recent years, but also one of the loveliest.” Critical reception was highly positive in most quarters. Robert Christgau gave it an A+, and called it “Music and chaos and satire and self-mockery and music all at once.” It made an appearance on the Dutch pop chart, and had good sales in much of Europe and Japan. But after returning from promoting the record to enthusiastic crowds in England, Davis found that he had made almost no impact in his hometown of Davis (there is something surreal about this story), and found himself battling the same depression and low self-esteem that pervaded many of the plaintive compositions on the record.

Then “Endtroducing” continued to gather good reviews, and sales gradually grew until Davis was receiving several phone calls a day asking to interview the genius DJ Shadow. Before long, he had to hire his first real manager, and his reputation has steadily increased over the subsequent 15 years. His subsequent albums like “The Private Press,” “The Outsider” and “The Less You Know” have all had moments, individual compositions and mash-ups that were as perfect as every track on “Endtroducing,” but it is inevitable that nothing has quite matched the passion and sheer distillation of sonic history that Shadow put into what he assumed might be the only long form work of his career. Each sonic component was selected with elaborate care and meant something to Davis, from the excerpts of John Carpenter’s apocalyptic horror film *Prince of Darkness* (1987) to the looped piano chords sampled from a composition by Finnish progressive rock composer and bass player Pekka Pohjola that forms that backbone of the track “Midnight in a Perfect World.” He documents every sample used in his recordings, and one suspects that being able to point to the obscure origins of each component is at least half of the fun. His process was recorded in the 2002 feature film *Scratch*, which depicted his daily search for new vinyl in the racks at Rare Records in Sacramento.

Fighting Foo For the Future

DJ Shadow has also been an advocate for continuing the use of traditional turntable technology rather than converting entirely to digital sources. A recording of a 2007 live show with Cut Chemist at the Hollywood Bowl, titled “The Hard Sell,” employed eight turntables, four mixers, two effects pedals, and two crates full of 7-inch vinyl records, featuring artists from Melvin Holman and the Larks to the Foo Fighters. Now in his 40s, Shadow shows no signs of slowing down; just last December, he was asked to abandon the tables at The Mansion in Miami, with the explanation that his set was “too future” for the club’s taste. I’m not sure what “too future” might mean, but it sounds like our kind of show.

In the 15 years since I began listening to him, Shadow’s list of colleagues has steadily grown, and I find many of them a dependable source entertainment in their own right. In addition to Cut Chemist (Lucas MacFadden), Shadow has worked closely with Kid Koala (Eric San) and collaborated with DJ Krush (Hideaki Ishii), one of Japan’s most prolific hip-hop producers and ambient music composers, noted for the use of natural sounds in his recordings.

I’m not ashamed to say that I get many musical suggestions from the interstitial “Bumps” that accompany commercial breaks on Cartoon Network’s late night “Adult Swim” program block. They seem to balance a strong affection for traditional hip-hop with a curiosity about trancy, “haunted” remixes and semi-digital compositions assembled with iPhone applications. That’s where I first discovered the much-missed Nujabes (Jun Seba) another Japanese composer and Turntablist who tragically died in a car accident in 2010. My favorite among his compositions is “The Final View,” which remixes Yusef Lateef’s 1961 interpretation of Alex North’s “Love Theme” from Stanley Kubrick’s *Spartacus*.

European entries in this field tend toward even more trance-like tempos. One French DJ and performer to receive exposure in America is Jean Christophe Le Saoût, better known as “Wax Tailor.” His remix of Doris Day’s iconic “Que Sera” appeared in the 2008 feature film *Paris*, and then a number of high-end commercials for American television. His songs make frequent use of dialogue sampled from classic films and legendary speakers like President John F. Kennedy. And nimble Theremin passages, *certainement*. Even a cliché can be refreshing if reinvented in an artful way.

You cry for progress, I scream for ice cream!

“I’m in the middle of pitching 17 innings, and that’s after a breakfast of chipped beef and Scotch.”

COLOR PARTY:

Readers’ Letters to FLAG

[This may be the best letter column I’ve ever published. Your letters are presented in Georgia, like this, while my comments, alas, are executed in Poor Richard, like this. I’ll begin with two letters mailed in time for #3, but misplaced:]

Dave Langford

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In #1, I was tickled by your chart suggesting that ANSIBLE had long ago had fifteen minutes of that legendary status which made D. West ponder doing a fanzine called (because everyone seemed to want one) FUCK-ALLPOINT.

The ANSIBLE plug in *Among Others* (see me struggling to follow your arcane house style of caps for fanzine titles and bold italic for real books) wasn't wholly a surprise -- someone had told me there was a mention -- but I was expecting something like a fleeting appearance in a list of fanzines discovered by our heroine. The actuality of a love-letter from a fictional character, or a factual Jo Walton, was mildly disconcerting; but I'm happy to take egoboo wherever I find it, and thanked Jo rather less fulsomely at the 2012 Eastercon. I still have fond memories of gaping at Greg Egan's "Langford Mind-Erasing Fractal Basilisk" in *Permutation City*, followed by similar sf namechecks from Ken MacLeod and Charlie Stross.

And now I'm a fictional character in your dramatic sequel to *Among Others* ("Beyond the Enchanted Karass ... To the Enchanted Convention"). Gosh wow. If only I'd been there to not hear the dialogue! Will the script be coming soon to a CHUNGA near us? I have a certain curiosity about what my Potlatch avatar said....

Good discussion of Banks. I don't think of the chap with the odd style in *Feersum Endjinn* as particularly Glaswegian: just dyslexic and inclined to spell phonetically. The full Glasgow ambience appears in an earlier book, *The Bridge*, intermittently featuring a barbarian warrior with a truly terrible accent.

[You are correct that I conflated two incomprehensible Banksian characters; I'd completely forgotten about that narrative thread in *The Bridge*. I had planned re-reading all of his SF before Loncon 3, while my sister Margaret wanted to cover all the no-M books. I'm not sure where we are there, but at least the first reading of *The Hydrogen Sonata* still lies before me. It's as good a cult as any to belong to.]

Ned Brooks

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I had heard of *Among Others* but had not seen a copy. I may be too old for it – in 1979 I was already past 40.... On the other hand, Daniel Pinkwater's characters are often teenagers, and I have enjoyed most of his books.

The magic in Tolkien's Middle Earth is never easy, but requires dedication and willpower – that makes it a lot more interesting than the Harry Potter stuff and many other fantasies where spells and wands are all too easy.

The old Underwoods – the Models 1-6 that Steve Stiles mentions – were quite similar and popular because they were durable and worked well. The Model 5 alone was made continuously for 30 years – there were millions of them, and Harry Warner need not have mourned the loss of his. They are not rare even now. But the Olympia large portable, the SM series, was of course much better – that's progress. I typed NASA progress reports on one of them from a thrift store from 1966 until they gave us all PCs – and never required any service other than a new ribbon.

[I believe that you will find *Among Others* entertaining for its overall depiction of bibliophilia, regardless of how closely you identify with the narrator's particular circumstances. Now, as to the once-more Hugo-nominated Mr. Stiles:]

Steve Stiles

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Interesting that you should bring up Arnie's reflections on Insurgentism and Trufannishness, something that I've given very little thought about until recently--like today--when I read your opening paragraph and then checked current issues of *Fanstuff* where I see that Arnie has placed me mostly in the latter camp since I am a sweet-natured guy. I was nonplussed by that because, although it is true that I am a loveable mother fucker in person; it is our fanac which should largely determine which flag we should display in our fannish windows. My main expression of fanac is obviously my fan art: now I ask you, when was the last time you ever saw sweetness, like a unicorn, an elf under a toadstool, or winged kitten, in my art? Never! In fact Peter Weston once rejected a gag of mine implying boiled kittens and the only time I drew an elf with a unicorn a chainsaw was involved. In other words, my fan art is cynical and sardonic. I am not a cute cartoonist (on paper!).

Which is why I'll never win the god damned Hugo.

[Winged Kitties no longer seem anywhere near as expedient a path to a Fan Artist Hugo as attaching your star to the

celestial chariot of Chris Garcia and/or James Bacon. Which is probably another reason why you'll never, etc.]

Greg Benford

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A good deep look at Iain Banks' work. I've found it hard to stay interested in, because it's so far removed from our time, place and attitudes. I don't believe the economics, either. Though certainly humans will find much to fight over even when everyone's wealthy-- probably fame or prestige.

In his *Paris Review* interview Bill Gibson said "But I'd also read novels where the future-weirdness quotient overwhelmed me and simply became boring, so I tried to make sure my early fiction worked as relatively solid genre pieces." I have some of the same problem with far future space opera; it resembles the long Wagner operas I saw at age 15 in Germany. All spectacle and grandiosity.

Same for the "4 dimensions" in those novels. What are they, really? Spatial? I'd be more interested if there was another time dimension. Imagine a universe with 2 time axes! Discuss.

Larry Niven & I are just finishing the sequel to our *Bowl of Heaven*, and it's interesting to see this Big Smart Object novel in light of Banks' series. (Sequel is *Shipstar*.) Mostly I prefer to use constraints of science we sort of know now, just to get some sense that there are limitations on the characters after all.

[So do you leave the "spectacle and grandiosity" to Larry then? His "science" and Iain M's would seem to have some notable similarities. I'm hard pressed to define what sort of "science" I see predominating in the Culture novels, unless it is something like psychohistory. I mean no particular insult in saying that your assessment of Banks seems based more on reputation than actual reading. How many 600-page epics do you get through in a year? You are perfectly correct in saying that Banks' technology is more or less magical. But to characterize his work as no more than Wagnerian Spectacle seems ungenerous.]

Margaret Hooper-Lofton

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I remember when Iain Banks was at WISCON...I was fairly star struck I think. At the time, the only book I had read was *The Bridge* and I recall that everyone said I should not have started with that one. I'm having lots of fun re-reading his books now. I've decided to start with all of the "fiction" and then dive back into the "science fiction". (My son) Gannon picked up *The Wasp Factory* and burned through it -- now he's reading *The Crow Road*. I think they made a TV show of that one, didn't they? I thought it might be fun to try to get it

somehow so we can watch it together when he's done reading it. I have a VHS of *Complicity* somewhere, so we can watch that too (after reading it, of course!). Fun.

The most interesting thing about re-reading these books is finding out what I remembered about them and what I had completely forgotten. In *The Wasp Factory*, all that I could recall was a creepy scene with a spoon and maggots on a head. Really, that's it -- nothing else stuck with me. I feel sort of guilty about not remembering the punch line even, that he was a she...but then again I read it maybe 21 years ago so that might be an excuse.

It was nice to read your review of *Matter*. It makes me realize that I am pretty overwhelmed by his science fiction books -- I gathered most of what you explained about the shell world and certainly the action that happened with Djan and Ferbin but the setting descriptions and the background information he gives are so dense that I think I only picked up 3/4 of it. For example, I took in the waterfall and the city beneath it, but not that it was a draining sea, or that the city was made of glass. Huh. I think I will enjoy the re-reading...I'm older now and maybe more patient?

[But in retrospect, don't you feel as if *The Bridge* was a perfect introduction to Iain's work? I think it is a perfectly speculative piece of fiction, but it simply wasn't marketed to fans of genre literature. *The Crow Road* was made into a 4-part, 4-hour mini-series in 1996, starring Jonathan McFadden as Prentice McHoan. The same writer and director, Bryan Elsley and Gavin Millar, collaborated on the feature film of *Complicity*. The former is available on DVD at a discount in the UK, so it should be possible to get copies. Certainly not all of Banks' settings stay with me; the gassy cloudscapes of *The Algebraist* were hard to visualize even while reading the book. But the ominous falls and the ancient city underneath it is the very center of *Matter*, so I think I visualized it with particular intensity.]

Howard Waldrop

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I was on a panel with Banks at Mexicon in 1991 (he wore his kilt for the 2nd or 3rd time in his life.) I could tell he was brilliant, and said so, but also said "I didn't understand a goddam word you said for the last hour." He is as English-deprived (being a Scot) as I am (only originally from Mississippi). We got along fine.

Just back from the soiree at Texas A & M for an exhibition of GRR's stuff there. I missed the sold out \$350 a plate dinner Thursday (to raise money for the library's special collections) but was at the (also sold out) 3000 seat auditorium for George's speech on Friday, but had to leave before the Season 3 Premiere of *Game of Thrones* on the big theater screen following. (Had to get back to Austin to my hum-drum life.)

[I can imagine how picayune little old Austin must seem after

"With that triple by Eric Young Jr., we've got tacos!"

the bright lights of College Station. Clarion West was the beneficiary of equally haute culture in honor of GRR Martin last summer, and we attended a reading at a similarly packed hall in downtown Seattle. This rising tide lifts all boats, as they say. That Mexican lineup – including you, Banks, and Alasdair Gray – was some kind of genius jamboree. Another reason why Greg Pickersgill was still a Very Important Fan in the 1980s, eh?]

John Hertz

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So far as I'm concerned there's always room at the party for more people who choose to publish paper fanzines, who choose to discuss science fiction, who choose to blame Arnie Katz – oops, that's not my party.

In 1953 when we first gave Hugos and first-class postage was 3 cents, the minimum hourly wage was 75 cents, a gallon of gasoline 20 cents, a teacher's average salary \$4,200. Postage was 15% of gas then, is 10% now, besides photocopy shops and Roscoe knows what. Jack Speer at Noreascon IV said "We were rugged then."

You also probably know I have a soft spot in my heart for Edessa (the one in Macedonia, south of the great border; Slavs call it Voden). My folklore teacher first brought those dances to North America. Just last Saturday, I found myself reading Petrunino at Pomona College. The brass band Rakia had taken a fancy to the music. Abgar, whom Eusebius said he saw a letter from Jesus to, was King at the other Edessa, now in Turkey and called Urfa.

[The "other Edessa" is the one I think of first; the capitol of the Seljuq Turkish Sultanate inherited by Kiliq Arslan I in 1092 CE. Taken briefly by Frederick Barbarossa on his march to join the Third Crusade, it is an essentially Armenian city with a thick frosting of religious historicity.]

Paul Skelton

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Oh Andy, Andy, how could you? I am all for simplicity but your attempt to cleave fandom down the middle and redefine it as either 'sercon' or interested in "squid-free ego scanning" seems a tad over simplistic to me. Generally speaking I guess you could lump me in the 'squid-free' area of fanac, although when there I am more interested in what other fans are doing than in "ego scanning". I don't read a lot of SF anymore. I've turned into 'Series Man', and most of the series I like are crime and thrillers. But there are three SF series that I still follow and one of these is Iain M. Banks' Culture novels. These are indeed 'Space Opera' based upon what 'Space Opera' might have one day dreamed it could become if it ate all its crusts. How could you not fantasize about being a part of this culture? I mean, there are two places to be, right? You can be part of The Culture, or you can

you to the Culture Dreadnought *This May Hurt a Bit* and its companion from the Diplomatic Section *Sit Down and Shut the Fuck Up!*

"Hi *This May Hurt a Bit*, have you read the latest 'Pogo'?"

"No, have you obliterated any entire species recently?"

...So yeah, maybe there is a culture clash.

One of the other SF series I follow is C J Cherryh's 'Foreigner' series. It seems to me that CJC has written two series that superbly embody the difficulties with alien communication (basically because none of the characters seem able to trust that the other characters really mean what they say, so insist on operating as if they weren't saying anything at all), and this one is the longest. Maybe one day Chanur will come back and challenge for this title.

The third series is the embarrassing one. I'm a sucker for Lois McMaster Bujold's 'Vorkosigan' books and have been ever since reading a paperback of *Shards of Honor* whilst staying with the Stopas back during our 1990 USA/Canada trip.

[That's actually quite a lot of SF for someone who doesn't read SF. Surely some eccentric in the Culture has had the impulse to recapitulate sixth fandom on some distant orbital, a gesture which sixth fandom is, sadly, in no position to return.]

John Purcell

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Excellent review of *Matter* by Iain M. Banks. He is one of those writers who makes people run up, grab my coat by the lapels, and scream into my face, "Ya gotta read this guy! He's so freaking good!" Well, eventually I will. Based on not only your comments, Andy, but those of others, Banks is an author I do want to read someday. Been busy recently, don'tcha know. Now with his recent medical status made public, I may have to check the local public library and see what they have by Banks on the shelves. Your next issue, I am positive, will have more thoughts on him and his work.

I agree with your assessment of Taral Wayne being an "entertaining curmudgeon". He is also talented. I enjoy reading *Broken Toys*, too.

Steve Jeffery

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I'm another Banks fan, so I'm looking forward to reading your review of *Matter*. I'm fairly sure I've read this (memory like a ... wossname. I forget characters, whole plots, even the author, sometimes only a week after finishing a book. Which is partly why I don't understand

people who discard books immediately after they've read them. I have a whole retirement hoard for re-reading here. If I ever get to retire.)

And I enjoy fanzines whose editors and contributors still regard sf as a useful topic for discussion rather than treating it as an embarrassing phase best not talked about. So I'm not sure how I read your interpretation (I've not read issue of *Fanstuff* yet) of Arnie's definition of a "Fan" as someone who no longer reads SF. Unless by "mere science fiction readers" he means just that: people for whom the books are their only involvement: people who have no interest in the history, culture, fanzines, criticism or indeed of the interests, opinions or activities other readers....if he is saying that being a Fan is only about the social interaction within fandom, I can't see what makes fandom special or different (and I'm sure Arnie thinks it must be) from any other social group.

[I would hope that everyone who has read FLAG would take a few moments to read an issue or two of FANSTUFF for themselves. I've used Arnie as something of a straw man for editorial purposes, but I'm not comfortable summarizing his ideas any further. It's well worth reading his opinions for yourself, and you'd also enjoy the articles by Dick Lupoff.]

Rob Imes

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As a newcomer to SF fandom, I have to admit that I found many of the references to past events in your lead articles unfamiliar, but that means that your writing serves an educational purpose to readers like me.

The attempt to define different eras of fandom -- to recognize patterns or trends that would characterize those moments in time -- reminded me of the classifications of Ages (Golden, Silver, etc.) in comics fandom. Normally these ages aren't named until they are over with and gone. For example, when I was reading comics in the late 1970s and early 1980s, I didn't know that I was living in the "Bronze Age" (a term not applied to comics until the 1990s). I was surprised a couple years ago on eBay seeing a category for a so-called "Copper Age" (late 1980s comics), while the unimaginatively-named "Modern Age" covered 1992-on. An exception to after-the-fact naming of an age would seem to be the universally-acknowledged "digital age" that we are now inhabiting. Assuming that digitization remains the norm for the rest of the century, future historians may need to rename our current age to something more specific, emphasizing a particular aspect of the early 21st Century that looks normal to our eyes but dated to theirs.

[It is interesting to correspond with someone as profoundly familiar with fandom as a concept, and with a successor subculture with many similar folkways, but without a grounding in the specific lore which informs FLAG. I imagine much of our humor or allusion can be interpreted from context, but you should always feel free to ask for clarification. Also, sorry for misprinting your address in previous issues; hopefully I have it right now.]

Other Correspondence Received From:

William Breiding (There has always been the theory that you grow up and leave the genre behind, that sf has a childish nature. As if that were a bad thing.); **Jack Calvert** (I also had an impulse to re-read *The Armageddon Rag* earlier in the year. And I found it just as good as I remembered.); **R. Graeme Cameron** (Traditional fandom is mostly self-referential and self-reverential, that which inspired it into existence in the first place now being tangential at best to its purpose); **Paul DiFilippo**; **Nic Farey** (I share your high regard of Iain Banks, also having bent the elbow with him on several occasions (and been archly upbraided by him for mentioning his name in a long-ago letter to *Private Eye* magazine)); **Brad Foster**; **Marlin Frenzel**; **Sumner Hunnewell** (I have never seen any sort of reminiscence of the radio shows *Dimension X* or *X-1*); **Bob Jennings** (I am again astonished at the enormous influence Arnie Katz seems to exert on the core of science fiction fandom these days.); **Jerry Kaufman** (I recognize two of your interlineations this time - the very first one is from a Susan Wood article and the one at the bottom of page 3 is from Kim Huett's *Fanzine*.); **Hope Leibowitz** (I just want to say that I LOVE SF, that is why I became a fan and I will never stop reading it!!); **Fred Lerner** (Like most of the fans I know, I have catholic reading tastes.); **Robert Lichtman** (In pricing my auctions I tend to think in terms of what I would pay if I didn't have the fanzine in question and was looking to bid and hoping to win.); **Murray Moore** (Your sense of wonder is intact, Andy. But you're just a kid.); **Joseph Nicholas** (References... to forthcoming Corflus remind me that it's 23 years since we went to one in the US, and one would rather like to go to one again.); **Lloyd Penney** (I checked my own bookshelves, and I have nothing by Iain Banks... and, that's my loss.); **Yvonne Rowse**; **Ron Saloman** (And speaking of quality, you sure have got a great set of LoCers, Andy.); **Marc Schirmeister**; **Bruce Townley**; **Shelvy Vick** (I fear that 500 pages is beyond me.); **Taral Wayne** (That imitation Ellison interlino ... I've read the entire story somewhere, recently, in some fanzine, but bugged if I can remember where.); **David B. Williams** (I hope I am not drummed out of fandom if I admit that I still read the stuff and occasionally even enjoy it.); and **Kate Yule** (So is there a word for well-said, internally consistent, meaningful and without filler?) [35 letters in less than 30 days! The modern-day frequent fanzine refuses to die!]

“Lynn Steffan likes Decaying Hollywood Mansions’ photo.”

1.) BIG SKY #1, Peter Young, 136/200 Emerald Hill Village, Soi 6, Hua Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan 77110 Thailand, email to peteyoung.uk@gmail.com. Pete returns to fanzine publishing after a seven-year hiatus, and his new title is possibly even more beautiful than the much admired ZOO NATION was. The material in this fanzine is quite unique, including: A critical overview of science fiction in Hindi, a survey of early Japanese sf, Antony “Dop” Shepard on anime, and an incredible pictorial of “Chinese Space Children.” Gorgeous photo cover, resplendent with Gravitas, also serves as a shout-out to the much-loved Iain M. Banks.

2.) RELAPSE #21, Peter Weston, 53 Wyvern Road, Sutton Coldfield, B74 2PS UNITED KINGDOM email to pr.weston@btinternet.com. It’s the photographs that make me most envious of Peter’s accomplishments in RELAPSE. Another editor might easily collect a similar set of histories and memoirs, but no one else takes the time to support their texts with so many photos of fans of bygone days. And it makes a huge difference. Rob Hansen’s history of pre-war Leeds fandom is studded with rare pictures of the fans he describes, and the effect on his narrative is akin to switching on a bright light in a candle-lit room. All those slender, earnest young men, posing in jackets and ties. The images inspire a certain tenderness, if perhaps only the slightest flicker of recognition. There are more recognizable characters in Bruce Burn’s account of travels around the U.K. in the early 1960s – his composite photo of George Charters, Bob and Sadie Shaw, James White, Ian McAuley, Ann Wood and Walt Willis made my mouth fall open. Peter even asks his correspondents to send a recent picture to illustrate their letters. All these photos make me ask: When did fans stop wearing suits and ties and become dirty hippies in T-shirts and jeans?

3.) JOURNEY PLANET #15, edited by Chris Garcia, James Bacon & Lynda Rucker, c/o efanzines.com, email to Journeyplanet@gmail.com. Although hobbled by design that makes it almost impossible to read certain parts, JP #15 contains some of the best writing published in a fanzine this year. It is arguably two 40-page zines bolted together. The first half is largely concerned with censorship, and appears to be selected by Garcia. The second half is full of passionate essays on writing and the writer’s life, likely commissioned and collected by guest editor and SF Pro Lynda E. Rucker. Pieces by Zanaib Akhtar, Mike Glycer, Maureen McHugh, and Lynn Radford are all excellent.

4.) BEAM #6, edited by Nic Farey (3345 Cape Cod Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89122) & Jim Mowatt (273 The Rowans, Milton, Cambridge CB24 6ZA United Kingdom), c/o efanzines.com. My impression of BEAM #6 is nearly unique; I am apparently one of two North

American contributors who were sent a full-color copy on paper. Another photo feature, showing fans at Novacon 42 last fall. Mowatt has some nice fanzine reviews, bylined as “Jim Trash,” the pseudonym he uses to confuse people. I’m not sure if “Locky,” a character created by Brad Foster as a mascot for the lettercol, really works for me, but it’s a lavish gesture. Smooth!

5.) FADEAWAY #34, Robert Jennings, 29 Whiting Rd. Oxford, MA 01540-2035 Email to fabficbks@aol.com. A particularly good issue of Bob’s frequent genzine, with coverage of Boskone 50 by Murray Moore, Jeffery Redmond on Rod Serling, and Bob’s appreciation of the “Hildegard Withers” series of mystery pictures that began with *The Penguin Pool Murders*. And letters – with addresses – from names new to me. These days, that may be the most welcome feature of all.

Also Received or Released:

BCSFA ZINE #478 & 479, edited by Felicity Walker for the BCSFA, c/o efanzines.com, email to Felicity4711@gmail.com

BROKEN TOYS #15, Taral Wayne, 243 Dunn Ave. Apt. 211, Toronto, Ontario M6K 1S6 CANADA, email to taral@teksavvy.com.

CHALLENGER #36, Guy & Rose-Marie Lillian, 5915 River Road, Shreveport, LA 71105, email to GHLIII@Yahoo.com.

THE DRINK TANK #339, Chris Garcia, c/o efanzines.com, email to Garcia@computerhistory.org

FANSTUFF #33, 34 Arnie Katz, 909 Eugene Cernan, Las Vegas, NV 89145, available at efanzines.com, email to Crossfire4@cox.net.

THE FFIX #29, Steve Green, 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull B92 7LQ UK, email to stevegreen@livejournal.com

GEEK GIRL CRAFTS PODZINE #3, edited by Jade Falcon & España Sherrif, c/o eFanzines.com.

LOFGEORNOST #110, for FAPA by Fred Lerner, 81 Worcester Ave., White River Junction, VT 05001, email to fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu

THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN Vol. 72, #3, David Speakman, c/o eFanzines.com, email to cabal@n3fmail.com

THE NEW PORT NEWS #268, for SFPA by Ned Brooks, 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA 30047-4720, email to nedbrooks@sprynet.com

ORPHEUM #2, Alan White, c/o smellthefandom.com, email to podmogul@cox.net.

PRIME MATERIAL #1, Rogers Cadenhead, 135 Jenkins St., Suite 105B, @224, St. Augustine, FL 32086, email to Cadenhead@gmail.com

SCIENCE FICTION SAN FRANCISCO #139, Jean Martin, et al, c/o efanzines.com, email to SFinSF@gmail.com

TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS #227, Rob Imes, 13510 Cambridge #307, Southgate, MI 48195, email to robimes@yahoo.com (Note corrected address)

TINY TAFFZINE #4, Jim Mowatt, c/o efanzines.com, email to jim@umor.co.uk

VANAMONDE #1028, John Hertz, 236 Coronado St. #409, Los Angeles, CA 90057