

FLAG

This is issue #15 of FLAG, a frequent fanzine published by Andy Hooper, member fwa, at 11032 30th Ave. NE Seattle, WA 98125, email to fanmailaph@aol.com. This is a Drag Bunt Press Production. First copies delivered by hand on May 1st, 2014. FLAG appears primarily in printed form, and is available for trade, graphic artwork and cartoons or letters of comment. The next issue will be out in June, 2014. Art Credits: AToM, Page 12. Brad Foster: Page 4. Steve Stiles: Page 1, page 7. Bill Rotsler: Page 9, page 10. Heroic Publisher for the U.K.: Mark Plummer. Congratulations to Curt Phillips on his victory in the 2014 TAFF race!

I'm not being dramatic! I'm just worried that I'll throw up my heart and my head will fly away like a bird!

Counting Down to Corflu 31: Solstice of the Fannish Year

This issue of FLAG is one of the last things that I have to finish before Carrie and I depart for Virginia tomorrow afternoon. We're going to spend several days in DC with Carrie's son Harlan and his wife Rachel before the convention, which should give us time to get over our jet-lag and catch up on our sleep before the late nights at Corflu. He is quite the gastronome, so we're eager to see what kind of restaurants we will encounter under his guidance. We have several excursions planned, of course – Carrie wants to see Jefferson's gardens at Monticello, and we may go to a Nationals (baseball) game if the weather is any good. No guarantee there, of course, since the punishing winter has held on in the East well into April. But it will be good to get away from the keyboard for a few days, before what looks like a very busy convention begins.



There really isn't much of a "Permanent Floating Corflu Committee" – there's Bill Burns, who runs Corflu.org, and the members of the Corflu 50, a group dedicated to bringing deserving fans to the convention. Some people have performed similar functions for different versions of Corflu. But it has always been a rather casual set of traditions that make up the convention, with simple rules that everyone knows who has ever attended one. We've always rather hoped that convention could "run itself," once someone had done the really heavy lifting of securing a suitable venue willing to host our odd little company, and Corflu 31 may be the ultimate test of that theory. All the parts of the convention that are not repeated every year, such as the Sunday banquet and the fanzine auction, were put together in the past three weeks, and reflects a number of rather cavalier suggestion that Sandra Bond and I offered – well, Sandra may have been quite earnest, but I figured there would be rather a lot of suggestions and not many slots, and it seems like the situation was the reverse of what I'd thought. Pretty much all the things we mentioned are going to happen, including a conversation about the future of the FAAn awards, which will hopefully include the incoming administrator, Mike Meara.

Sandra wants me to be on a panel about Gender Parity, on the strength of a particularly raffish article that I wrote last year for BEAM. I'm interested in the subject, but it is an amazingly sercon subject to cover at Corflu, and I'm curious to see how many people are in the room. Also, what we'll talk about for an entire hour. I would hope that the policy of Gender Parity in programming at the British National SF convention would attract many more

[Continued on Page 2]

He suffered for a while under a bad teacher who barely knew Latin

A Key to the links published in FLAG #14

Page 1: “That’s nothing a little oil won’t make as smooth as a Bill Clinton apology.”

DEA Agent Miller (Eric Roberts) defends his use of the .357 revolver on the FX series *Justified*.

Page 1: “The sleazy Times Square he writes about was a large part of my young teenage years....”

Steve Stiles confesses his sordid past, in the letter column of Mine McInerney’s NUMBER ONE #22.

Page 3: “Help Stamp Out Black Market In Poultry, Duckwitz Urges.”

A 1943 feature deadline from the *Wisconsin State Journal*.

Page 4: “It was made from the pockets of the pocket fox, an animal that only existed for three weeks in the 16th Century.” Montgomery Burns resorts to a powerful aphrodisiac, in *The Simpsons* episode “A Hunka Hunka Burns in Love.”

Page 5: “Stengel of Dresden, Knackstedt & Nather of Nancy, and Reinicke & Rubin of Magdeburg.”

Continental printing firms used by The Rotograph Company of New York, an early postcard publisher.

Page 6: “This means that Belgium is actually the brightest country on Earth.”

Observation by Jeremy Clarkson on the BBC’s *op Gear*, based on the number of streetlights per capita in Belgium.

Page 7: “Now get in. We have good deeds to do in quirky small towns all across America.”

Johnny Mindquad (Randy Spears) advances a particularly obscure subplot on Seth MacFarlane’s *American Dad*.

Page 8: “He was built with an economy that was almost repellent.”

From Robert E. Howard’s final Conan the Barbarian story, “Red Nails.”

Page 9: “I admit there is far too much unquestioning friendliness going about on Facebook for my taste...”

Graham Charnock comments on social media in his fazine *Vibrator 2.0.1*.

Counting Down to Corflu 31: Solstice of the Fannish Year

[Continued from Page 1]

women to participate in the event; if not, what has it accomplished? Two Eastercons will have taken place by the time we begin the panel, so I’m interested in finding out what happened this year.

Murray Moore wanted me to be on his panel about Fanthologies, which would be wonderful if it were not scheduled for 9am. The fact that a man as likely to be brutally hung over on Saturday morning as Nic Farey has proposed this is perhaps the most remarkable thing about it. And I’m supposed to be organizing another panel that has something to do with the similarities between the role that Corflu plays in our fandom now to the role that the Worldcon played in the fandom of our youth. At least I think that’s what it is. If you are reading this on Friday night at Corflu and think you understand what I’m supposed to be about there, please feel free to offer your advice.

The reason that I’m so fuzzy on what we’re doing in some parts of the program is that I spent many hours writing a new play to perform at the convention. I think the last original play I wrote for Corflu was His Ghu Friday, a pastiche of Hecht and MacArthur’s *The Front Page* set at a future Worldcon, with a Julian Assange-like character taking the place of the murderer Earl Williams. He hid inside a giant replica of a mimeograph. It was politely received, but long and complicated. I wanted to do something with more

perceptible shifts in tone and setting to help people stay awake. The work that resulted is titled “**Treehouse of Fandom XIV**,” an homage to *The Simpsons*’ long-running series of Halloween anthology episodes. It includes three short tales of suspense and speculation – “Sock Puppets in Love,” a dystopian romance; “The Curious Correspondence of Benjamin Blogg,” the story of an editor longing for a more fannish time; and a chapter of that popular continuing drama “The Walking Fen,” in which fanzine fans desperately strive to publish in the face of the zombie apocalypse. I promise you’ll experience Mirth, Merriment and Murray Moore (pending approval of Murray Moore).

As I write this, I am still hoping that a UPS van will appear with a very late delivery; I am waiting for a set of wood and metal award plaques that I’ve had engraved by a national firm that specializes in fulfilling orders quickly, barring an act of Godzilla, the awards are supposed to be here today; and if they don’t appear by tomorrow at about 11:00 am, we will have to enlist some helpful Seattle fan in shipping them on to Virginia for us.

Participation was down a little this year; we ended up with exactly 50 ballots cast. Of the “new” categories, I think Best Fanzine Cover is the one best supported by the voters. “Best Single Issue” is less popular, but there

was closer race in the category this year. Likewise, Best Website, which featured a larger number of votes for a wider variety of sites. What I look forward to most in the future is being sufficiently removed from the actual tabulation of the votes to express real opinions about the fanzines and creators that I would like to see win, or at least receive attention. I agree with the writers, like Taral Wayne and Eric Mayer, that we have fallen into a pattern of recognizing a small group of titles, writers and artists, which play a central role in the very tight circle of fans that attend Corflu. Frankly, I'm looking forward to the day a web-based zine mogul tries to stuff the ballot box with a legion of reader/minions naming his site and his favorite contributors. It might take something like that to get people worked up about the FAAn awards in general. I think there is a lot of life left in fandom as a whole, and we still have plenty of people willing to write for free.

Maybe it's the word "Fanzine" that has fallen out of favor. Maybe it has a kind of reactionary musk around it, as does the word "trufan" in some circles. I think it will be very helpful to have a new administrator take over, as I think I have flogged all the votes I can out of the people on my own mailing list.

Finally, although the voting totals have not yet been posted, congratulations to Curt Phillips for winning the 2014 North America to Europe race of the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund. Commiseration to the other candidates, Randy Smith and Brad and Cindy Foster, the latter FLAG's official nominee. Brad just kept doing what he always does: creating cartoons and illustrations for almost any fan publisher who asks. If Brad and Cindy wanted to enter the race to attend Eastercon in some future year, I'd be proud to nominate them once again.

My Little League team was the Mittendorf Funeral Home Panthers. Our color was black.

Recognition and Resignation

A very tiny review of *Horse of a Different Color*
By Howard Waldrop (Small Beer Press, 2013)

Howard Waldrop is a FLAG correspondent and a personal friend – he was one of my Clarion West instructors back in 1992, and I was into his work years before that. One of the nicest things anyone ever said to me was Howard's comment on reading my Clarion Audition story: "I was so glad you can write!" Because he wasn't looking forward to telling me that I couldn't, had that been the case.

So I am quite prepared to accept the idea that I am unusually attuned to Howard's approach to fiction, which seems perpetually haunted by the aspirations and memories of historical curiosities and footnotes – someone said that Howard tends to write about losers, but in the modern era where everyone who plays the game wins a prize, it seems more charitable to say that they measure victory differently from most of us.

I'm not here to review this collection in detail, because I am still in the middle of reading it – I've completed six stories out of twelve, and I've stopped for the moment because I don't want to rush. Each story has a pretty pithy foreword and afterward, which explains a few things about the story, but by no means everything. He can tell us, for example, the real family story behind the heart-breaking and award-nominated "The King of Where-I-Go," but not why it inspires such a panicky, desperate desire to *change* the narrative, a sensation we share with the story's protagonist. I'm not thinking about his sister's polio and the careless whim that inflicts it on her;

I'm thinking about the family fights, lost dogs and broken treasures strewn in my own wake, and sharing a sense that all those mistakes might be redeemable, if we can find the right way back.

Something which is almost unique to Waldrop's work is the flash of recognition that rewards the reader with a similar interest in American Arcana. I realized that the narrator of the collection's first story, "Why Then Ile Fit You" was an ailing George Zucco, accomplished stage actor and master of the Mad Doctor character in dozens of pictures from Universal, Monogram and other "poverty row" studios. Zucco receives visits from director James Whale, and anyone who knows who Zucco was, also knows that Whale's own untimely death is crouching in the wings as the story starts. Yet, this predictability gives me nothing but pleasure, whereas one might typically abandon a writer whose tricks grew so familiar.

Perhaps the greatest pleasure that Howard's stories offer me is the sense of having shared much of the same research, but seeing the completely different interpretations that occur to him. In "The Horse of a Different Color (That You Rode In On)," one might naturally focus on the notion that a pantomime horse might somehow be the key to finding the Holy Grail. But I was thrilled to imagine I saw echoes of Richard J. Anobile's interviews with Groucho Marx, classic works of Hollywood history – and Anobile wrote extensively on Whale and Frankenstein as well. There's a lot of that world distilled into this fiction. I'm looking forward to continuing on through the rest of the stories in the collection, and learning more of what I didn't know about what I know.

These days, one of the functions I don't particularly need on my phone is the phone.

COLOR PARTY: Readers' Letters to FLAG

[We gonna let the dogs hunt this time, y'all. I've got more than 20 letters to share in this issue. As ever, your letters are presented in Georgia, like this, while my comments are expressed in Estrangelo Edessa, like this.]

Greg Benford
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I got busy and should comment now on LeGuin, *THE DISPOSSESSED*, etc, generally. One of the striking facets of fictional utopias is that nobody really wants to live there. Perhaps the author, or a few friends, will profess some eagerness. But seldom do utopian fictions awaken a real longing to take part.

I suspect this is because most visions of supposedly better societies have features which violate our innate sense of human progress--they don't look like the future; they resemble a warped, malignant form of the past.

Time and again, utopists envision worlds where one aspect of human character is enhanced, and much else is suppressed. Plato's Republic was the first and most easily understandable of these; he thought that artists and similar unreliable sorts should be expelled. Too disruptive, you know.

Should we be uncomfortable with this fact? If we value Western European ideals, yes.

Five Regressive Ideas

How can we codify this notion? Utopian fictions stress ideas, so we need a way to advance the background assumptions, while suppressing the foreground of plot and character.



Nearly all utopias have one or more characteristics which I shall term *reactionary*, in the sense that they recall the past, often in its worst aspects. Here, "reactionary" means an aesthetic analogy, no more. It may apply to works which are to the left in the usual political spectrum, though I feel this one-dimensional spectrum is so misleading that the customary use of reactionary means little. *Regressive* might be an alternate term, meaning that a utopia seeks to turn back the tide of Western thought. Looking at the range of utopian literature, I sense five dominant reactionary characteristics:

1. **Lack of diversity.** Culture is everywhere the same, with few ethnic or other diversities.
2. **Static in time.** Like diversity, change in time would imply that either the past or present of the utopia was less than perfect (i.e., not utopian).
3. **Nostalgic and technophobic.** Usually this takes the form of isolation in a rural environment, organization harkening back to the village or even the farm, and only the simplest technology. Many writers here reveal their fondness for medieval society. The few pieces of technology superior to today's usually exist only to speed the plot or to provide metaphorical substance; they seldom spring from the society itself. (Only those utopias which include some notion of scientific advancement qualify as sf. Otherwise they are usually simple rural fantasies. Also, this point calls in question classifying any utopia as sf if it is drastically technophobic. Simply setting it in the future isn't enough.)
4. **Presence of an all-wise authority figure.** In real utopian communities, frequently patriarchal, this is a present person. Historically, nearly all utopian experiments in the West have quickly molded themselves around patriarchal figures. In literary utopias, the authority is the prophet who set up the utopia. Often the prophet is invoked in conversations as a guide to proper, right-thinking behavior.
5. **Social regulation through guilt.** Social responsibility is exalted as *the* standard of behavior. Frequently the authority figure is the focus of guilt-inducing rules. Once the authority figure dies, he or she becomes a virtual saint-like figure. Guilt is used to the extreme of controlling people's actions *in detail*, serving as the constant standard and overseer of the citizen's actions.

These five points outline a constellation of values which utopists often unconsciously assume.

Consider some utopias which *don't* share all or most of them. Samuel Delany's *Triton* seems to have none of these features; indeed, it proclaims itself a "heterotopia," stressing its disagreement with the first point. Often Delany depicts societies which express his delight in the freakish. Franz Werfel's *Star of the Unborn* (1946)

depicts a heavily technological future with many undesirable aspects, while accepting the inevitability of war, rebellion, and unsavory aspects. Advanced technology is carefully weighed for its moral implications in Norman Spinrad's *Songs from the Stars*.

Nonreactionary or genuinely progressive utopias often reject regulation through guilt. This divides utopias roughly along the axis of European versus American, with Europeans typically favoring social conscience, that is, guilt. Consider Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (the most prominent American utopia of the nineteenth century) and William Morris's reply to it, *News from Nowhere*. Both stabilize society more through gratification of individual needs than through guilt. Indeed, one of the keys to American politics is just this idea. Huxley's *Island* (written after his move to California) sides more with gratification, though his *Brave New World* (written in England) depicts the horrific side of a state devoted to gratification without "sentimental" humanistic principles.

In *sf*, *The Dispossessed* is probably the finest consideration of an anarchist/collective utopia, but it shares many of the weaknesses I numbered above.

[One certainly sees some Technophobia in the Anarreans, and they seem to embrace guilt with a particular enthusiasm. None of these principles was of much importance in Banks' *Culture* novels. However fantastic, they do present a Utopia that I wouldn't mind living in.]

Jerry Kaufman

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I read the Fanzine Countdown yesterday, and looking at the "Also Received or Released" section, I remembered that I, too, had received *Number One*. I dropped *Flag*, dug *Number One* out of the pile on the couch, and started reading Steve Stiles' letter. Halfway through it, I came upon some familiar words.

"The sleazy Times Square that he also writes about..."
Now, where did I just see that line? Could it have been in ...*Flag*? Good job, Andy, on keeping the fanzine intertextual conversation going.

The photographers of Madison don't engage me, but your grandfather story and the Weatherly Report started at interesting and rang the bell at fascinating. Gotta be a movie in that story.

I voted in the FAAN Awards for the first time in years. I hope you got my ballot, sent through the US Postal Service. I've been thinking about your point system, and wonder if assigning a specific number of diminishing points has contributed to having the same high scorers and winners for a number of years. I said as much to Taral in

response to his most recent *Broken Toys*. It's possible he was thinking about the FAAN Awards because he was mulling over another egoboo delivery system that doesn't seem to deliver much to him. I still thought it was worth thinking about.

Paul Skelton

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Your piece on Madison is doing my head in. The thing is I have it in writing, from our first US visit, that we passed through there with Jon & Joni Stopa on our way back to Wilmot from the Octocon in Cinsy. Now I know Jon didn't drive the direct route, but started out South and West, for reasons not relevant here, but even so Madison WI does not seem to be placed on any sensible route back to Wilmot. So, "Is it the same Madison?" I ask myself. The one we passed through had a circular pool with a fountain in the middle, that looked like it dated from the Civil War, but was actually to commemorate the Bicentenary. I'd scan it in but my scanning software is currently awol. Is there another, more likely Madison?

[Paul, it's possible that you stopped in Madison, Indiana, but once in Wilmot, your two choices for cities worth visiting are Madison and Milwaukee, but one has the Lake Michigan shoreline (too wide to see across), and the other has a huge capital dome in the middle of town. Ring any bells?]

Steve Bieler

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"Women have ruined science fiction?" Well of course they have. I thought we had all agreed on this point ages ago. I'm surprised to hear that the issue has been reopened when the factual evidence completely supports the ruination position. What have women brought to the genre, besides a world view that differs from the dominant white male perspective and is therefore naturally subversive? They haven't just ruined science fiction, either. Here are some other things that women have ruined: Fanzines. Music. News, sports, and weather. Battleships (have you seen any at sea lately?). The short-fiction market. Geometry. I could continue but I'm shagged out following a prolonged squawk.

I enjoyed reading about your swan dive into the history of Madison. Actually, it sounds more like a body slam. When I started collecting postcards, I turned of course to the place of my birth, Fall River, Massachusetts ("The Gateway to Taunton"). A fanatical collector I befriended and

There's nothing stupid about a teenaged rabbit teaching good hygiene.

You're on thin fucking ice my pedigree chums, and I shall be under it when it breaks.

eventually escaped from told me there are at least 10,000 Fall River cards. He had them all. He was combing eBay and postcard shows for better and better copies of each card, with the goal of someday owning 10,000 pristine postcards of Fall River. In his spare time he was a florist.

Fortunately, this gentleman also told me there were merely 75 cards of Somerset, the nearby town where I grew up. Even more fortunately, about 20 are either hideously expensive or hideous period. This, plus the fact that nothing has changed in Somerset since local gal Shirley May France attempted to swim the English Channel in 1949, has made my collecting chores easy-breezy lemon-squeezy.

Rich Coad

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Flag 14 showed up very quickly after Flag 13 but I'm still unmotivated to vote in the FAAn awards this year. I do think 8 categories is too many and winners in some categories are becoming all too predictable. Can't we all just agree that eFanzines is the best website and drop that category? The various sub-categories of fanzine seem both arbitrary and confusing. If I think *Banana Wings* is the best fanzine does that mean I should vote for a good issue of *Chunga* as best single issue? Mike Meara was irritated when I suggested that A Meara For Observers was not a personalzine due to its inclusion of articles by outside writers. Yet some people felt that *Raucous Caucus*, despite its many contributors besides Pat Charnock, was a personalzine. I get into the same dilemma with Best Artist and Best Cover as I do with Best Fanzine and Best Single Issue. For that matter, if we are having this convention of best in toto and best in particular, why no Best Single Article? It's all too much for me to think about when I basically think that fandom and fanzines have nothing to do with awards - the reward is in the response received, the artefact delivered. If we get back to three categories I might vote again. Or I may feel more motivated next year. Or not.

So when did fandom cease to have a reasonable respect for women? I guess it is true since it seems to be repeated everywhere, along with having an intolerant attitude towards the LGBT community. Back when I were a lad and would try each year to get to major conventions it seems, if fading memory is correct, that fans like Susan Wood, Jeanne Gomoll, Jessica Salmonson, Denys Howard, and so on, were well regarded and even well liked by the majority of their peers. Sadly it would appear that things have deteriorated so badly that the mere hint of a suspicion that a comedian might possibly say something that could be offensive to somebody brings up so many bad memories of taunts and slights of the past that all Twitter and Facebook alight in flames. Fortunately for me

this seems to be something that is occurring at major conventions, gatherings which I've felt ambivalent about attending for quite some time. Several years ago, when the first FoGCon was being organized in San Francisco, their newsletter made a strong point of letting it be known that the convention had a Code of Conduct that was written in much the same manner that corporate codes of conduct are written. Since this was emphasized so strongly I assume that either they expected a lot of jerks to attend or they were catering to the fears of the most easily offended. Either way, I didn't want to go. Now it's become standard, it appears, so I simply have to see if a convention publishes a code of conduct and I can save myself the expense of membership, travel, lodging, and meals

[Rich, please be sure to share your ideas about the FAAn awards with incoming administrator Mike Meara.]

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I just finished reading *Some Kind of Fairy Tale* by Graham Joyce,. It's so good. I felt sort of guilty buying it for my Kindle instead of buying a copy for my shelf. But that's just silly....

Your last FLAG was a really fun one for us all. I loved to read about Grandpa Oakey and speculate about not being born if he got the job in Madison all those years ago. Gannon was intrigued to hear about Uncle Bob, and Dad said he had a few "corrections" to note. (I told him to write you a letter or email...wonder if he did? If not, you should ask him about Bob and where he was in the war.)

I don't think your postcard collecting is semi-closeted. It's pretty much out there for us to enjoy. I love getting email from Facebook telling me that you've posted a new picture. The card enclosed is just for fun...put it on your Fridge 'til Easter.

[You and Steve Bielder have sent me some great cards that I would love to reproduce as illustrations here, but experiments with black and white photocopy are disappointing. Perhaps I will do a color insert for a future issue.]

John Purcell

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Your commentary about Madison, Wisconsin, and all the postcards and photos you were weeding through reminded me not only of the city but of the early WisCons I attended back around 1980. Only went to a couple of them, but I enjoyed them a great deal. Jeanne Gomoll and cohorts always did such a wonderful job of putting them on. FYI, just a year or so ago Jeanne was the Fan Guest of Honor at ApolloCon down in Houston, Texas, and unfortunately Val and I were busy that weekend so we couldn't get there. It

would have been nice to see her again since it has been proverbial ages when last I saw Jeanne. So it goes.

I also remember Madison quite well; used to drive through the city on the way to Chicago or Milwaukee all the time. It is a beautiful city, too. Heck, Wisconsin is a beautiful state with all of its trees, rolling hills and fields, etcetera, etcetera. When you were there, did you ever go visit the House on the Rock outside of Spring Green, Wisconsin? Designed by Alex Jordan, Jr., it is one of the coolest places I have ever been inside. Awesome place. In fact, I think it's neater than Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin, which is also in Spring Green. I am a bit of an architecture nut - our older daughter's boyfriend of 11 years (wonder when he's ever going to ask her to marry him?) is an architect and works at a firm in Houston - and with Valerie being an artist, we're always on the lookout for cool old buildings and houses to visit, tour, and photograph.

You also remind me that we likewise have a huge batch of old photos and such in a couple large plastic storage totes, so one of these years we really should start digging through them again. About ten years ago we were sorting some of them, and found old black and whites of Val's grandparents and great-grandparents circa 1900-1920. Pretty interesting stuff, that needs to be properly identified and noted.

[Jim Mowatt has invited me to participate in a "Competitive Storytelling" program at LonCon that Jeanne is also participating in. Even if you can't properly sort all those photos, adding some kind of label indicating who is in the picture is a gesture future historians will thank you for.]

Hope Leibowitz

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As soon as I read the opening sentence of Flag 14 I wanted to send a LoC immediately - Miniver Cheevy is one of my favorite poems. I used to be able to recite the whole thing, though not necessarily with the stanzas in the correct order. And I always said "meh DEE chee", but there is a board game called Medici, and I was informed it was pronounced "MEH dee chee." Aaaargh! Impossible to change the habit of a lifetime.

I've always liked Edwin Arlington Robinson's poetry. Richard Cory! Have you heard Simon and Garfunkel's song of it? How could you not have. Though I was once in a restaurant with a friend and heard just about my favorite S&G song on the muzak while in the bathroom, but my lunch companion was from Taiwan so of course she'd never even heard of the group. And now the title isn't even on the tip of my tongue, ah, "The Sounds of Silence". Hello darkness my old friend. That is my life, lately. Had a nasty cold/cough for over six weeks, my doctor gave me some sample steroid inhaler and I'm much better. Those things are over \$100 if no insurance, so I stopped using

them years ago, and haven't needed them, luckily. But this time I coughed so hard I had pains in my side, arms, and once I thought I was going to pass out. No fun.



Yvonne Rousseau

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Thank you for FLAG 13 and for several other FLAGS -- fallen without comment here although (like this issue) they have still been enjoyed and received with gratitude.

This time, I'll make a much too minor comment (hoping it's better than nothing) about the aphorism that you report as 'frequently attributed to Randall Jarrell by Samuel R. Delany' and that Randy Byers mentions as being attributed to Jarrell when quoted in a letter from Delany to Randy.

Delany is quoting from Randall Jarrell's introduction to *The Man Who Loved Children* by the Australian-born novelist Christina Stead. What Jarrell writes is brilliant: 'There is no book you can lend people that all of them will like. But *The Man Who Loved Children* has been a queer exception. I have lent it to many writers and more readers, and all of them thought it good and original, a book different from any other. They could see that there were things wrong with it -- a novel is a prose narrative of some length that has something wrong with it -- but they felt that, somehow, the things didn't matter.'

[Thank you so much, Yvonne, I had been wondering at that quote's exact origin. Your letters are keenly anticipated here, as they usually contain information no one else shares with FLAG.]

Steve Jeffery

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I had barely finished reading *Flag 13* and thinking I really ought to respond when *Flag 14* dropped though the letter box in what seemed only days later.

Pitcher throws a duster, the batter don't duck. Well, hell, that's his tough luck.

I thought Hippie Joel was my friend, but he hunted me like a dang deer.

I wanted to say that your lead article in *Flag* 14, on researching old photographs and photographers based in Madison, WI was absolutely fascinating and engrossing, and a splendid piece of writing. My dad would probably find the history of various photographic pioneers in *The Chronicle of the Capital* equally fascinating. He's a photographer himself, and I remember the bathroom in our old house being taken over at various and often inconvenient times with developer tanks and fixing baths and the bathroom light replaced by a red bulb, at least till mum Had Words About It and the loft (attic) duly converted into more convenient, though less accessible, developing studio.

This was in the old days of black and white 128 film stock, and when you could play all sorts of interesting tricks during exposure and developing. Colour developing was a bit more involved (and expensive in those days) and tended to go off to one of local labs, one of which was just round the road from where I used to work. All that magic, and noxious chemicals, has gone now with digital photography, and while you can do a lot more post processing in Photoshop, it removes a lot of the skill of doing at the time of shooting. (I remember cutting out celluloid starburst and soft focus lens filter for SLR lenses; now you just need to choose the right plug-in.)

Oh, and can I say I found your article on Banks's *Surface Detail* in *Banana Wings* equally fascinating. If there is one rival to IMB in the obvious inventive joy of describing spaceships as personalities, it is probably M. John Harrison, in *Light* and its sequel *Nova Swing*, although Mike's ships always seem poised on the edge of actual psychosis rather than eccentric sociopaths. And in the same arena, we ought not to forget Justina Robson's ship-character Voyager Lonestar Isol in *Natural History*. Given the surgical and mental damage suffered by the 'pilot' to embed them into their ships, and survive the stresses of FTL travel it's not surprising that the result ends up more than slightly unhinged.

Picking up from several comments in *Flag* 14, I personally don't believe that prediction is the job of science fiction. Science fiction, in my minority view, is best seen as a technological subset of fantasy, whose first and over-riding concern is to entertain (or we'd all be reading physics textbooks) but with significant secondary aspirations to satirise, carry out speculative thought experiments and (much lower on the list since the passing of Gernsback) to inform. Some of these latter are, apart from the furniture and setting, what distinguishes sf from fantasy. Conversely, when sf has none of these secondary goals, it is - to paraphrase one eminent practitioner of the art - pretty indistinguishable from magic and the cheaper forms of fantasy. (There are good, logical and internally consistent forms of fantasy, from writers like John Crowley, Elizabeth Hand and Graham Joyce, every bit as well written as the best sf; I'm not knocking as a genre. As ever, Sturgeon's Law applies to all forms and genres.)

Prediction should be the job of political and economic think tanks, futurologists, market analysts, weather forecasters and horoscope readers, who are all paid ridiculous sums of money to get things consistently and spectacularly wrong. Against these, where sf does venture to predict a future trend or technology, we don't come out so badly.

[I appreciate knowing that the rather obsessive pieces as I included in FLAG #14 did appeal to some readers. I'm sure I'm just trying to keep this letter column under control by leaving a section of readers a bit bored with it all. And why I try to do something a bit different each time. I wonder, can one absolve oneself from all questions of predictive accuracy merely by calling something fantasy rather than science fiction? Seems like a sneaky and useful trick.]

David B. Williams

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I am astonished. My greeps are thoroughly crogged. You are such a rebel. Two consecutive issues of *Flag* featuring serious discussions of SF! I know this sort of thing happens in distant (and possibly imaginary) places like Australia, but it's not the sort of thing one expects in post-modern fandom. Keep it up. You have a cheering section of at least one.

I am one of those readers who could not finish the two big Delany novels. I guess they had too much of something, or not enough of the other. I did manage to finish the Le Guin novels; I suspect she has more story value in her works.

But both Delany and Le Guin seemed to be trying to turn SF into respectable literature. I am dubious about this goal. SF is essentially a literature of external values. Yes, character development and interaction can improve a story. But when you consider *Who Goes There?* or *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, is character really driving these stories? The real attraction is the alien invasion angle, not the characters. In SF, Sense of Wonder rules, not character.

R-Laurraine Tutihasi

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I enjoyed your article about Madison. My intersection with the place was brief. I was there for a day on a trip to or from upstate New York to/from Carleton College in Northfield, MN. I think my parents had a friend who taught at the U. Mike did graduate studies there and has fond memories of the place. The Green Bay Packers are still his favorite team.

William Breiding

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Perhaps you have been taking your cue from Dale Speirs these last few issues. While fascinating, your main theses have done little to inspire comment. Hence these postcards. I agree with Brad Foster and John Purcell: The Lizard overlords have certainly risen and the 21st Century has certainly been a grave disappointment and will likely become far more grave. SF has certainly suggested our current global darkening., so I agree with your comment to Bob Jennings,

Who is this Marlin Frenzel? From under what rock has this sudden Secret Master of Fandom come crawling? It amuses me greatly to imagine Marlin and I attending the same **No Alternative** gigs, whose idiot frontman, Johnny Genocide, used to encourage vigorous beer bottle throwing by calling the audience hippies and homos. The closest I ever came to brushing up against greatness when I collated R. Crumb's ZAP comics as a thirteen year old.

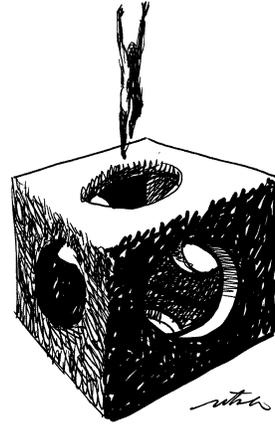
[Marlin wrote to some fanzine that published his address, and I send him several issues of CHUNGA. He responded by immediately sending a FAAn award ballot for 2012, and has been on my mailing list ever since.]

Jason Burnett

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Rupert the Bear. That was the first big comment hook that grabbed me in this issue. Specifically, the relationship between Rubert the Bear and your Dad's status as an immigrant, especially after reading an account in *Interlac*, one of the *Legion of Super-Heroes* APAs, of a fan's trip to Poland to visit the towns that his grandparents came from, and where the Polish branch of his family still lives, which reminded me of Bob Sabella's account of his trip to Italy and his exploration of his Italian heritage. Have you ever seen *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*? That's me and my wife. My in-laws, are between 3 and 5 generations from immigration and have maintained clear ties to the old countries (France, Germany, Russia, and Italy). My family, on the other hand, are undifferentiated "white people." The most recent immigrants I've found in my family is a branch that came over from Germany in the early 1700s. I don't (so far as I've been able to find) have any ancestors who came over on the Mayflower, but I do have an ancestor who had 2 nephews on the Mayflower, and whose son (my umpteenth-greats grandfather) had come to Massachusetts by the 1640s. It makes for an interesting story, but it means we've pretty much lost all of our ties to the old country. (As far as I can tell, based on where we came from, I should be cheering for Norwich City Football Club. Umm... go Canaries?!?)

Your conversation with Mark Plummer reminded me very



much of my experiences in wargaming. I loved playing in large-scale battles, but hated the experience of painting hundreds upon hundreds of line infantry. This generally led me to skirmish gaming - I could paint whatever I wanted and could find some sort of scenario that would let me use it. After reading your recent accounts of your experiences with DBA, though, I may search out some of the period variants for DBA that I remember seeing previously, as this would enable me to play army-style games with skirmish-size armies.

[Jason, if you have some Dark Age skirmish figures, you probably have enough troops to make a pair of DBA armies. But learning to play by reading the rules is a challenge...maybe we can do an introductory game through SKYPE some time.]

Lloyd Penney

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penneys@bell.net

I have found that somewhere in my life, I stopped looking forward to the future with optimism and wonder, and started looking back to the past with nostalgia and fondness. I am not sure when that happened, possibly when Yvonne and I retired from conrunning, and we shortly after saw a Steampunk display, and as old-time costumers, I think it hooked us. As fun as fandom can be, sometimes we need to go in a different direction. We have, and it was just what we needed.

Yvonne and I sent in our FAAn Awards ballots, and that's the only awards we've taken part in this year. As far as the Hugos and Auroras go, I think SF has carried on and left us behind, as I always expected it would do. I am not informed enough to make competent nominations, let alone competent votes.

As I write, Yvonne's coming home from an interview, and there is a fannish pubnight tonight at one of our locals, and I've been looking forward to it all month. Thanks for this and I hope issue 15 is on the way.

The dream of the 90s is alive in Portland!

I'd like to apologize to my fans for getting into a fight with Nicki Minaj in the VIP Room.

Taral Wayne

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taral@bell.net

Interest in Isaac Asimov does indeed seem to have enjoyed a small resurgence of late, including in its own modest way the piece on collecting Asimov I wrote a few issues back. Despite often being derided for wooden prose and sentences like, "Alten sat pensive by the telecaster, waiting for the penultimate summons to the High Science Council," the fact is that Asimov was hugely influential in a quieter way than Heinlein or Clarke. Or perhaps it's just that his fiction seemed more demure than the raucous character of the Good Doctor himself.

It seems true that the most unexpected change between Asimov's youth and today is the attitude we have toward science. It has brought relatively little that is new in a big way to life since the 1960s, the home computer and Internet being the big exceptions. Almost everything else is a logical extension of those two innovations – smart phones, tablets, e-books, video games, DVDs, GPS, cyber-war, Bitcoins, Google-glasses and all the rest. Just how much those additions to our lifestyle will fundamentally change the way we live has yet to be determined. Will they be as important as radio, electric light, home refrigerators, the automobile or heavier-than-air flight? Our children or grandchildren will say.

But it seems a truism that people believe that science has nothing really new to add – just more iGizmos or Gameboxes. The public looks askance at fracking, GMOs and nuclear power. Even old, well-proven advances in science such as vaccines are under suspicion, while the confusion around vitamins and dieting baffle even the levelheaded. Science Fiction itself leads us to expect a

global environmental collapse as a result of our scientific progress, so can the general, abysmally-educated public be expected to be more optimistic about the future?

That's what I believe would have surprised the Isaac Asimov of 1950 *most* about 2014. But, as you wrote, the 30-year-old writer was near the end of a period of an unprecedented leap of understanding of the physical world, and a manifold increase in the standard of living because of it. Even then, the pace of change in 1950 was nowhere as rapid as it had been during the period 1890 to 1920. Those 30 years inaugurated what we think of as the modern world, with television, cinema, flight, the electrification of the cities and countryside, the construction of a continent-wide highway system for accommodate the geometrical proliferation of automobiles, the switch from sail and steam to diesel, skyscrapers in the modern sense, effective surgery, "miracle" drugs, and on and on and on. By comparison, 1950 was pokey. But 1920 was precisely when Isaac Asimov was born.

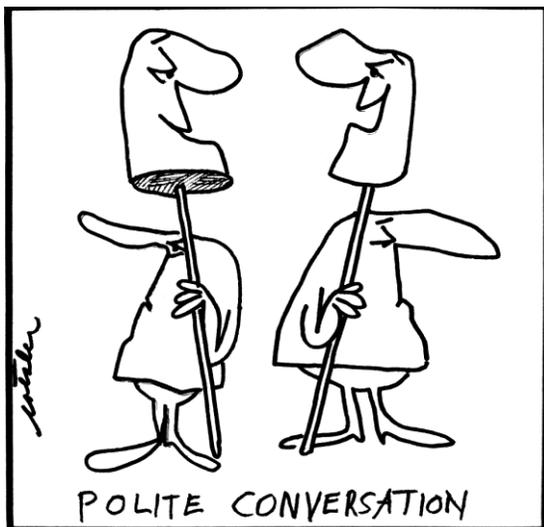
It might be said that modern SF was born about that time as well. Admittedly, it had its antecedents before Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, but it is with those two late 19th century writers we see the birth of SF, as we know it, not as philosophical-romanticism or pseud-oriental fantasy. SF was born in the era of the most rapid technological change the world has probably known. And perhaps it will fade from memory along with our air conditioners, wide-screen flat TVs and e-books when the oil runs dry, the crops fail and the lights go out... I don't think that a disappointing end to technical civilization would be surprising to the Asimov of 1980, at all.

[It does occur to me that the timing of Asimov's original predictions were rather like Clarke's 2001 sequels featuring further rivalry with the Soviet Union – 1964's Fair was one of the last to truly trumpet unfettered technical progress. By the time the 1967 Expo opened in Montreal, attitudes had changed, and Asimov would have gained a different impression from it.]

David Redd

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Thanks for these, received via Fishlifter Fan Services Inc/Ltd/Pty. (Must send Mark some stamps. Again.) Anyway, traditional fannish good looks and traditional fannish good reading, what more can I say? Your thoughts on Asimov and our present future v. interesting, and ditto on *Triton* - I was at the Milford SF Writer's Conference where Mr Delany brought along the first chapter, a highly



impressive clear-the-decks-I-mean-business kind of opening. At least to me. When seated the Delany legs and knees kept vibrating so much that certain attendees (not me) designed various motion-capture devices which would have solved the world's energy problems if actually built. He met Naomi Mitchison at the after-conference party - wonder what they discussed after *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*? She smiled and looked like royalty. I missed the rest.

Must read *Among Others*, but at 350-odd pages it's just sitting there. Right beside my bed, willing me to dip into it rather than try a 10-pager in F&SF. One night soon...

Milt Stevens

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Reading Asimov's predictions for the year 2014 in Flag #13 made me think of Peter Drucker. Drucker wasn't a science fiction writer, but did a lot of writing on futurism and economics. He generally had a better notion of the future than any of the science fiction writers. When I read *The Age of Discontinuity* in 1966 I didn't believe that production was no longer central to the economy. I didn't believe that information was going to become the most important commodity in the world, and I certainly didn't believe that "The wealth of nations shall be calculated in gigabytes." Obviously, he was pretty much on target.

Drucker also wrote a 1942 book titled *The Future of Industrial Man*. In that book, he said "Temporary wartime solutions will be permanent" and "The new proletariat will not be the workers but the permanently unemployed. By now most people have forgotten income tax was ever supposed to be temporary. People have also forgotten that encouraging everybody to go to college wasn't originally because of any particular interest in education. At the end of WWII we had millions of men who might have no other job skills than making war. If they weren't given something to do, they might become a Big Problem. Also, millions of wartime jobs had gone away, but Rosie the Riveter wasn't going to go away with them. The country needed to get rid of millions of years of labor in a hurry. This led to the GI bill.

Labor and education should be considered as the same entity. It is an entity that badly needs reorganization. We need to spread work around. The work week has been 40 hours for about 80 years. Reducing the work week to 32 hours a week (with no decrease in pay or benefits) would save one day of commuting. Overtime should be increased to double pay. Companies that claim they can't afford such a thing may be excused from doing it if they pay their executives no more than \$500,000 a year. Maybe we should take another look at Milton Friedman's idea of the guaranteed minimum income.

Higher education is the most archaic and least innovative aspect of our economy. If it was good enough for the 12th century, it's good enough for the colleges today. Some people need a large chunk of education at the beginning of their careers. Most do not. It is quite likely that people will need to learn more things throughout their working careers. The process could be split up into trimester sized chunks and distributed through a working lifetime. After working a bit, you probably would have a better notion of what you needed to know.

Speaking of old photos, I once came across a bizarre collection of old photos in the sub-basement of Parker Center (the police headquarters building in Los Angeles). The collection was of mug books from the early 20th century. For those of you who have never seen any mug books, they are family albums for people you wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley. You probably wouldn't want to meet them at a busy intersection at high noon either. In fact, you wouldn't want to meet them at all.

The books contained photos and other data. In the early 20th century, there was a pre-fingerprint identification system called antropometry. It consisted of recording various measurements of the body. The system died when two men with the same name also had the same stats. However, I bet someone could get a PhD dissertation in physical anthropology out of all those measurements.

While reading this issue, I found myself thinking about Harry Warner's series "Hagerstown Journal." At his newspaper job, Harry did a column involving fifty and a hundred years ago in Hagerstown. He gleaned old newspaper files for stories and reprinted some of the more interesting stories in FAPA. At the time, I thought the series might make an interesting TV series. You find the darndest things in fanzines.

Dale Speirs

Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2E7

Today Canada Post raised postage rates massively, so OPUNTIA is no longer a print zine. It will henceforth be published as a pdf on www.efanzines.com and elsewhere.

In FLAG #14, I was interested to read about your postcard collecting. I am currently writing the postal history of Alberta and publishing installments in various postal history magazines. Many small towns had views or buildings that exist today only on real-photo postcards, which I like to use as illustrations. Many local events are only known because of souvenir postcards.

I wonder if the Internet will be as good in preserving local news. One suspects that future documentation will only be cellphone selfies or one-paragraph reports about how we had a great time at the convention.

[Dale, I know that abandoning the Papernet is a bitter pill, but I

In my defense, I thought she was a robot from the future sent to terminate me.

The modern objective consciousness will go to any lengths to prove it is not unique in the Cosmos.

look forward to reading OPUNTIA at 200% magnification.

Howard Waldrop

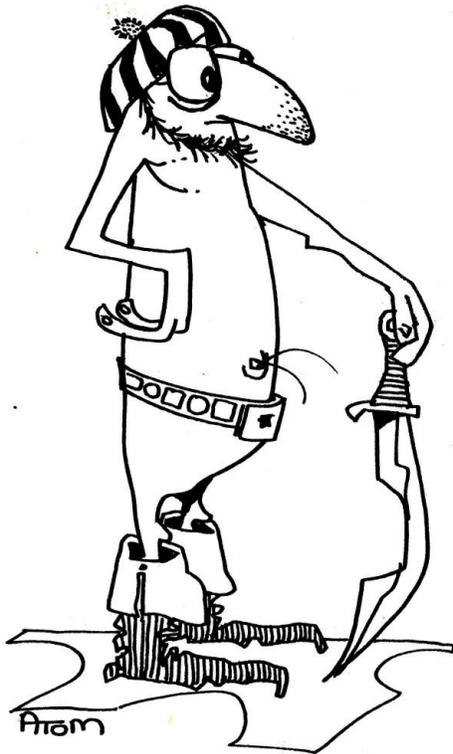
5106 N. Lamarr #146 Austin, TX 78751 – 2306

Sorry about Lucius: seems like good writers keep dying, and the ones who produce A Lot Of Work go on forever.

Thanks for the FLAG #14. A hint: If you want LoCs from me, don't send a FLAG (like #13) within 3 days of sending me a CHUNGA – I will have used my fanzine LoC weekly stamp allotment already.

Nothing new here: Eye (I tell myself) MAYBE slowly getting better (still doesn't focus, etc.) Will have to move end of April; new mgt., rent on this place going from \$800 to \$950. Austin becoming another Telluride with no snow. Doug Potter leaving for Albuquerque when his Social Security kicks in.

[Lucius Shepard (1947-2014) was both a fine writer and an accomplished hell-raiser; he is particularly missed around the old APPARATCHIK Centre for Freedom and Party Journalism.]



John Nielsen Hall

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I remember thinking when I read *Among Others* that I ought to re read some Delany. I was quite enthusiastic about him back in the day, but haven't read anything of his for years and years and I find the only book of his that I can recall much about was *Dhalgren*, and that largely for its formlessness- though I didn't think that a handicap - at least, not then. Compare and contrast *The Dispossessed* which like most things by Le Guin I have re read with pleasure down the years. I have not read Delany's essay on that book that you refer to, in which I understand you to say he found some areas unsatisfactory, but others excellent. If my experience is in any way typical, and of course it may not be, then the whole idea of Delany subjecting Le Guin to critical analysis is shown by the passage of time to have been a monstrous impertinence.

I will observe though that the return to BIG space opera a la Banks , Alastair Reynolds et al has meant that the oeuvre of both Delany and LeGuin seem dated now. This wouldn't be true of Lafferty, I dont think, but then again, I haven't read him in years either, and in his case, I cant say I was exactly bowled over at the time.

Your memoir of family history in FLAG #14 was a really good read. In fact it inspired me to revise something I wrote for an APA back in 2008, and I attach it in case you might like to read it- or even publish it- don't worry, only a select few fans in Vegas and California probably saw it the first time. It's not as full of incident and detail as your piece though.

But besides that, thanks for the ish. Keep it up.

[John I enjoyed reading your family history narrative very much, but it's too big even for this colossal letter column. With your permission, I would like to publish it in FLAG #16 as my first submission from another writer. I think most readers will enjoy it as much as I.]

Other Correspondence Received From:

Paul Di Filippo (I want to write a Mimetic novel about the postcard industry in the 1930s, so your latest ish was right up my alley! Well done!); **Brad Foster** (Sometimes the comment hooks just fly off the page, and sometimes they don't.); **Bob Jennings** (I did find your comments about your grandfather's career to be the most intriguing part of the issue.); and **Robert Lichtman** (I read and enjoyed both FLAG #13 and #14 -- the highlight of them both being your Asimov article in the former.) And with that, this ten-page letter-column is over. Thanks to everyone who took the time to read and reply, fanzines are dead without you.

The furies all seem to be universally, almost unbearably, nice...

FANZINE COUNTDOWN: March 18th to April 23rd, 2014

1.) **JIAN T #1**, Sandra Bond, 40 Cleveland Park Ave. London E17 7BS United Kingdom email to jjiant@ho-street.demon.co.uk. FLAG itself rather leapt up and down excitedly at the advent of this 8-page personal fanzine, at the mere prospect of having a dog of the same general size move into the neighborhood. Sandra says that she has lost some of the pleasure she used to take in writing, which is a shame because her work is still just as entertaining for me. She discusses her own massive writer's block, and pits Arthur C. Clarke's memory of London fandom against the historic record. More editorial support for Curt Phillips for TAFF – quite a syndicate at work there. She thinks fandom ought to have enough self-esteem to resist the temptation to court respectability through celebrities like Jonathan Ross. Certainly didn't work out this time. Alan Dorey makes a guest appearance, discussing one of the perils of working in radio. Good all around, However, the best thing about it is that Sandra finished and mailed the issue out, making infinitely superior to a nominally more "perfect" fanzine that no one ever gets to read.

2.) **SCIENCE FICTION COMMENTARY #87**, available from eFanzines.com, mail to Bruce Gillespie, 5 Howard Street, Greensborough, Victoria 3088 Australia, email to gandc@pacific.net.au: This issue comes very close to eclipsing the amazing design of Pete Young's BIG SKY #2, but Bruce's publication is actually capable of living on paper, a point he has proved by sending me another gorgeous paper copy. It's so attractive that I find myself wishing that I could eat it. Wonderful cover art by Steve Stiles. Highlights in this issue include Michael Bishop's appreciation of the late Steven Utley, alongside several essays on work by Michael Bishop. One of fandom's truly epic letter columns, with almost every piece of correspondence treated as well as an original article would be handled by most fanzines. And Bruce really grokked what I was trying to do with the fictionalized letter columns in FLAG #7 and #10, which completely made my day.

3.) **CURT PHILLIPS FOR TAFF**, edited by Randy Byers and Claire Brialey on behalf of Curt Phillips, 19310 Pleasant View Drive, Abingdon, VA 24211, email at Absarka_prime@comcat.net: It is always interesting to collect a selection of articles by a single fan. The results are not always that flattering, frankly, but it can also make one appreciate just how really good and consistent a writer has been. This collection is in the latter category, underlining just how readable and intelligent Curt's work is, and what an unnaturally helpful and positive asset he is to fandom. He is completely free of the typical fannish weakness of trying to tell you how to feel about what you are reading – he simply tells you what happened, and maybe what he thought about it. His accounts of working as an EMT and a nurse in the surgery section of a busy hospital really impress me – popular medical

writing is usual suffused with sarcasm, but Curt always retains a laudable measure of respect for the subjects of his stories, even when they do things that are painfully foolish. Fandom has relatively few gentlemen working in its ranks today, and Curt is unquestionably one of them. Nicely handled by the editorial team, with the unmistakable design contributions of carl juarez.

4.) **BANANA WINGS#55**, Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer, 59 Shirley Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 7ES United Kingdom, email to fishlifter@gmail.com: Here's that man Curt Phillips again, talking about his hopes and expectations for his proposed trip to Britain as a TAFF delegate. I ought to apologize to Brad and Cindy Foster, as Curt's nominators have worked far more diligently on Curt's behalf than I did for them. John Hertz contributes a short piece, while I went on at some length in my review of *Surface Detail* by Iain M. Banks. The letter column is the best in any current fanzine originating in the Northern hemisphere. The black saloon rolls on.

5.) **INCA#10**, Rob Jackson, Chinthay, Nightingale Lane, Hambrook, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 8UH United Kingdom, email to jacksonshambrook@uwclub.net OR robjackson60@gmail.com. Rob's persistent passion for travel is well-represented here, with an A to Zed of Corflu XXX in Portland last year, and Dave Hicks' account of his trip to San Jose for E Corflu Vitus in 2011. The Corflu 50 have surreptitiously created another fan fund which its recipients can partly pay back with the publication of a memorable trip report, and Dave's is an excellent example. Bruce Townley's recollection of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake is reprinted from a 1997 issue of OBLONG, but made more vivid by the inclusion of color photos. The cover, by Steve Stiles, is also full color, and seems to summon the shades of both Jack Kirby and Wally Wood.

6.) **VIBRATOR 2.0.2**, Graham Charnock, 45 Kimberly Gardens, London N4 1LD United Kingdom email to graham#cartiledgeworld.co.uk. What was there to like about choosing Jonathan Ross as the Worldcon's toastmaster? Graham is in the camp of those who feel that Ross would have been acceptable in the role. But he doesn't really make much of a case for that – he's busy calling those who objected "overly anal" and states that the notion that Ross was "not one of us" is "patently stupid and mistaken." One easy way to prove that, of course – but a ticket and show up on his own hook. And heckle whoever gets to do his job. The man whom Graham seems to admire here wouldn't hesitate. Elsewhere, he laments the inability of contemporary humanity to argue coherently, and suggests strategies for holding one's temper in the face of egregious provocation. By the way, if *Graham Charnock* is able to publish a frequent fanzine, we are truly living in an outlandish Borgesian fantasy world.

7.) ASKEW #8, John Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845, Email to j_purcell54@yahoo.com. John's recommendations in the wake of Rossgate require eight numbered points to fully elucidate. Safe to call him a Splitter rather than a Lumper. A lot of time is spent apologizing for calling issue #7 ASKANCE by mistake, clearly, a cheap trick to stimulate people into writing. Best part is John's obituary of Louis Fallert, also known as "Blue Petal," a fixture in Minneapolis fandom for more than 40 years. Minneapolis Fandom may have more truly memorable characters among its members than any other American fan club – we can debate the point – and they were the reason its "crazy" reputation has endured across several generations.

8.) BROKEN TOYS #27, Taral Wayne, 243 Dunn Ave. Apt. 211, Toronto, Ontario M6K 1S6 CANADA, email to Taral@bell.net: With #27, Fandom's Curmudgeon King has returned after several rather cheerful issues. The rest of Canada has a grudge against Toronto, and a client has failed to pay Taral for artwork, prompting Taral to question the usefulness of work as a human endeavor. Plus he really doesn't like H.P. Lovecraft. No one in my experience has ever resembled a fictional character as much as Taral resembles Sheridan Whiteside, the demanding and egomaniacal antagonist of Kaufman and Hart's *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. Whiteside was a caricature of writer Alexander Woolcot, but Taral may outdo both in his ability to create an atmosphere of aggrieved imposition through the medium of the fanzine.

9.) CHALLENGER #37, Guy Lillian III, 1390 Holly Ave. Merritt Island, FL 32952. Email GHLIII@yahoo.com: Eighty-three generously-illustrated pages. Once again, Curt Phillips is among the most noted contributors, reprinting his memorial to the late Lynn Hickman which is also one of the pieces in CURT PHILLIPS FOR TAFF. Guy has a well-developed sense of whimsy; here, he presents a photo feature that details the peripatetic travels of a tiny stuffed panda bear named Mib, who has been some amazing places, and met a wide selection of fans. Guy's fanzines usually feature a middle-aged white male complaining about his persecution by the modern world, and he lets Taral Wayne take over that duty here – allowing the events of single 24-hour cycle inspire a series of personal essays. No matter what subject one purports to be concerned with, one is always writing about oneself to some degree. But I just get bored analyzing my own experience at too great a length, and I doubt that anyone will find it more interesting than I do. This is one of the paradoxes forever facing fan writers and editors: We value the personal anecdote above all other forms, but only a few fans are nearly as interesting as Mark Twain or Will Rogers. Meanwhile, Guy has somehow agreed to supervise various publications for the Spokane Worldcon next year. From his home in Florida. He needs plenty of help, so if you are interested, be sure to let him know.

10.) eCube Vol. 38, #6, edited by Jeanne Gomoll for SF3, email to appdev@aol.com. I have to confess that I am just

awful at reading and acknowledging fanzines that arrive in the form of email. Zines attached to email are different – I typically open and read those. But zines that arrive as a simple strip of text often fail to grab my attention. What I've belatedly realized is that eCube is basically the clubzine for the Madison, Wisconsin fan group where I began my life in fandom. Edited by Jeanne Gomoll, the zine is essential for fans who enjoy Wiscon; and this issue mentions the excitement around the movie adaptation of Seattle author Vonda McIntyre's historical fantasy *The Moon & The Sun*. Scenes were shot on location at Versailles, starring Pierce Brosnan as King Louis XIV. Wow!

Also Received or Released:

ANSIBLE #321, Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU United Kingdom, ansible.co.uk

AURORAN LIGHTS #9, R. Graeme Cameron, 13315 104th Ave. Surrey, British Columbia V3T 1V5 Canada, email to rgraeme@shaw.ca

BCSFAZINE #490, 491 edited by Felicity Walker for the BCSFA, c/o efanzines.com, email to Felicity4711@gmail.com

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