

by
Thom Digby

This neighborhood has overhead phone lines and TV cables, some of which are visible from my window. And as I sit at my computer I now and then see a squirrel running along the wires. Do they have no fear of heights? Squirrels are fairly small, so falling from that height may not hurt them, for square-cube reasons. And they seem pretty secure up there, what with their claws and all.

In other places, I've seen rats walking along overhead phone wires. If a rat meets a squirrel on a wire, who gets the right of way? Does it go by species, or direction of travel, or what?

Now part of me is wondering if squirrels and rats and any other animals that travel along overhead wires might benefit from something like a railroad dispatcher to avoid right-of-way conflicts when two animals want to go in opposite directions on the same wire.

One problem is language: How does the dispatcher communicate with the traffic? Maybe play the relevant animal noises for "come here" or "stay back"? Or put nozzles around to spray pheromones to signal "Go" and "Don't Go"?

Another problem is when an animal is already on a wire and then changes its mind about which way it wants to go. That could really mess up traffic. Does it happen often? I think it does happen sometimes, such as when an animal sees a po-

tential mate going the other way on another wire. So we'll need some way to discourage that, or at least detect it and notify other traffic accordingly.

An even bigger question is why bother in the first place? The animals seem to be muddling through OK with the present non-system, at least with the rather low levels of traffic I see from my window.

Deciding not to bother also solves the problem of how to pay for it. The audio system for playing animal noises, along with that pheromone spray stuff, would probably cost a fair amount of money, not to mention operators' salaries and other expenses. So there's a lot to be said for just letting the animals handle it themselves.

But might there be reasons to do it, even with the problems? Perhaps it would be a way to create jobs to boost the economy out of its present slump. Nationwide there would be millions of openings for squirrel dispatchers, not to mention the business that could be generated building the equipment, so it could be a big economic boost.

And the jobs don't need much in the way of special qualifications. It's not like railroad dispatching or air traffic control, where a collision is Really Bad News. So what if a squirrel gets into a fight or falls off a phone wire now and then? It has a good chance of escaping uninjured, and even if it doesn't, what's one squirrel more or less? So it's the kind of job almost anybody could do, even if they're not very good at it.

Of course if the squirrel falls into the path of something like a Presidential motorcade, and the limo driver swerves to avoid it and ends up killing several bigwigs, that could be a problem. But they could always put in temporary special operators for that kind of thing, so it's not a reason not to proceed with the program.

So if you think this is a good idea to help the economy, write your Congressperson today.

ml

from
the
Silicon
Soapware
e-list

In NO AWARD #12 I reprinted from LASFAPA a contribution about the Babbage Difference Engine from Carrie Dougherty, "The Author Refuses To Turn The Crank." From a more recent LASFAPA disty we have the following item which takes off from early fanhistory.

by
Eric A. Schulteis

Once upon a time when fans were Slans, in that era that we commonly call Sixth Fandom, there arose a great scientific debate. I do not here refer to The Shaver Mystery, or to Hubbard's folly, but to something which more directly involved two cornerstones of American and UK fandom.

But first I must digress. Earlier in the '30s or '40s John W. Campbell, Jr. conducted surveys in *Astounding*, and astounded us with the discovery that his readers were composed in large part of scientists and engineers. This seemed to portend that fandom would soon be taking over the world with their wealth of scientific discoveries and leave those poor mundanes who counted only a handful of scientists among their ranks far behind. But in fact it would only be a matter of time before the legendary propensity for fandom to feud, and the great scientific egos that fueled many science feuds (Newton vs. Leibnitz to name but one) would create the ultimate fan-science feud.

Flash back with me, if you will, to a period known as early high Sixth Fandom, mundanely known as 1952, and to a bitter feud involving the simultaneous discovery of a hitherto unknown power source. A mere 7 years since the power of the atom had been demonstrated over New Mexico and Japan a disconcertingly simple discovery in a kitchen in London was to have international ramifications. Ken Bulmer was brewing tea at the Epicentre for visitor Walt Willis when they witnessed the partial levitation of the teapot's lid. Being the kind of sharp scientific observers that Campbell had referred to, they saw, in a staggering vision, that this Steam could be harnessed for many valuable human enterprises. Upon the publication by Bulmer of this discovery, one Lee Hoffman of Savannah, Georgia revealed that her venture, The Fort Mudge Steam Calliope Company, had already noticed the properties of this Steam, and had made several advances in its uses as related to the generation of music through the means of the calliope. She suggested a collaboration in the best spirit of science. There followed what quickly became a bitter exchange of letters involving discovery and patent of Steam, and it was this awkward morass that eventually resulted in neither of them

gaining the corner on steam, and the entry of Steam into the public domain. Furthermore, Hoffman believed that A. Vincent Clarke had a greater role in these machinations for Bulmer's company, The Aqueous Vapour Company, shared Clarke's initials. If Bulmer/Clarke's Company, and HoffmaNothing, Inc. had been able to work out their differences they could have shared joint ownership over virtually all uses of Steam. But this acrimonious dialog has left the field open for others, and for that I must be grateful.

I have made a startling discovery of my very own. One afternoon I was watching yet another Warner Brothers cartoon that I had already seen many times before, when I found myself fixating on the opening music. Each of their cartoons opens with the melody called, "The Merry-Go-Round Broke Down."

In too many instances of real life of merry-go-rounds breaking down, there is a concomitant disruption of the merry-co-round's accompanying music. Was there perhaps a way to keep the music playing ever as the merry-go-round was repaired?

I am now pleased to announce the founding of Experimentally Altered Steam. We have found a way to develop Seam with perfect pitch in and of itself. This Tuned Steam will then allow a broken steam calliope to continue playing with no discernable loss of tune.

Altered Steam has other uses as well. As our own Engineer Dougherty knows, the Babbage Analytical Engine was never brought into use because it was too impractical. You wouldn't want to waste a mathematician on the manual cranking of its gears, and yet somehow a steam powered Babbage Engine never got into public use. This was in large part due to the random nature of Steam interfering with the precise nature of the calculations. But Altered Steam doesn't have to be tuned to the musical scale. Mathematically altered Steam will allow for precise calculation in either your Analytical Engine or your Difference Engine. And there's more. Altered Steam can be specifically tuned for the number δ for geometrical uses, or the number e for logarithmic uses. It can also be tuned to the irrational numbers. Let no one say that mine is not the most irrational company around.

I do not believe that my patents as filed for Experimentally Altered Steam will infringe on any publicly established uses for Steam, but in the meantime would you all please refrain from blowing over a cup of overly hot tea or coffee? If you should accidentally whistle while blowing I should hate to have to sue to protect my patents.



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By
Joseph T Major

Covert Communications from Zeta Corvi;

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Available for the Usual (“that is, in exchange for a submission of text or artwork, a copy of your zine in trade, a letter of comment, or two dollars cash”)

Whatever happened to the fanzines with silly sfnal names? Nowadays it seems like the zines have obscure non-sf-related names. And they’re all full of the same old people going to the same old places with the same old bunch.

Well, maybe not. I had the pleasure of dining at WorldCon with a young fellow who was daring to actually put out this sort of thing. The youthful Andrew C. Murdoch, normally poised on the scenic Pacific Coast of Canada, had journeyed across the country to conclave with the elders of the community.

The issue at hand, Issue #11, is problem-burdened. The estimable Mr. Murdoch has wed, moved, and otherwise hampered himself with mundane matters. But, before we review the editorial, we must needs finish analyzing the colophon.

With the energy of youth, Andrew has dedicated himself to discussing manifestations and ramifications of Science Fiction. *Ghasp!* And normally, he does so with energy and enthusiasm; issues of this publication featuring (for example) Retro Reviews, commentary on like old-timey sci-fi as if it were like the latest hot new Star Trek tie-in.

This is an ambitious goal, and Andrew is striving for it in the face of mundane adversities. Also fannish ones, like no one having had the sense to notice him.

The editorial itself, “My Two Cents’ Worth, or A Wealth of Memories,” must needs touch on Fandom’s great loss of the year, the death of Harry Warner. “[If] Fandom had a favorite uncle, it would be Harry Warner, Jr.,” Andrew says, and proceeds to introduce to the jaded disconnected Fan all too common these days the legendary life and deeds of the departed Hermit of Hagerstown. It is a sad commentary on our

times that such an intro is needed. Andrew shows his grief at our common loss.

Another item Andrew touches is the proliferation of “Accolades,” or fannish awards anyhow. This is a reminder of how much we have to celebrate, and he lists here (a rather long list, having to cover a rather long period, due to the afore-mentioned mundane delays) the previous year’s awards from the Aurora Awards (for best Canadian SF prodom and Fandom) to the World Fantasy Awards, encountering along the way most noteworthy the Elron Awards, awarded to the least in the field. These deserve more notice:

The Elron Awards for most dubious “achievements” in Science Fiction are decided by a jury consisting solely of R. Graeme Cameron. To nominate a person, work or organization, contact the Graeme at rgraeme@shaw.ca or 86 Warrick Street, Coquitlam, B.C., V3K 5L4, Canada.

See Covert Communications from Zeta Corvi, Issue 11 (August 2003), Page 5

Because of said mundane matters, this issue is shrunken in material, and so we go directly to “Questions, Comments, Observations, Death Threats” also known as letters of comment. The loccers maintain a lively level of commentary, and while the usual suspects appear, there are loccers from both North and South of the border and the world. The editor keeps matters going without striving to drive off the contributors.

Usually present, as mentioned previously, are “Retro Reviews,” the principal qualification being that said work has to be from ten years back. This makes for a sad commentary in that it implies that nothing that is not now is of interest to the bulk of readership. (I felt that way at a Japan in 2007 party watching Dave Kyle and Fred Pohl chat on, ignored by all those around them.)

Oh yes, every issue is individually autographed! This isn’t quite the same as Mike Glicksohn having sent the scales of his late pet snake in the memorial fanzine for the dear departed ophidian, but as a regular thing it has a certain personal touch.

Covert Communications from Zeta Corvi deserves your attention, at least for that jolly title. It also deserves your contributions and interest.



ML

by
Phil Castora

part 3: Which Way To The Egress

Jack and Bruce were living in separate apartments in a building behind the Ambassador Hotel, and I'd occasionally visit - usually Jack, of course, since I'd known him ten years. Every once in a while (once when I was visiting), somebody in Vermont named Owen Hannifen would call him and talk for an hour or so. Finally, in an act of supreme lunacy, he moved out here. (I have the excuse I didn't know what I was **doing** getting myself into.) He stayed with Jack briefly, then moved into an apartment with Joanne Gegna, who came to club meetings about as long as she and Owen were together, but that didn't last long.

Now Jack and Owen moved into a quadruplex about a half-mile east at 3065½ Leeward, and let the rest of us know we were welcome much of the time, including Thursday nights after the LASFS meetings. The place was arranged rather simply, most of us thought, with living room, dining room, kitchen, and two bedrooms in that order from front to back, with a corridor down one side and bath on the other side of it - but it was too much for one sensitive fannish mind whose owner called it a labyrinth. So it became the Labyrinth. After a couple of months, unemployed and unhoused, I began renting their sofa, making a full-fledged slan shack.¹

We got along really well. The nearest thing to a problem we had was that - well, Owen was a Morning Person and I have never been. (I've never really understood the purpose of mornings, though in fact I wouldn't mind them if they just didn't come so early!) One day Owen passed my sofa on his way off to work and was just a little *too* bright and cheerful - I threw a shoe at him. Okay, not directly at him, but he took the hint and controlled his matutinal effervescence thereafter, and guess who's been reading my thesaurus again.

Mealtimes were interesting, even fascinating, if not in the way that things would later be so described by Mr. Spock. We all mostly fended for ourselves in the kitchen, but Jack's cuisine was unusual, and he occasionally asked my opinion on something and even fed me once in a while. I've described Jack's cooking as "part cosmopolitan and part

something else;" that's actually fairly close. It was a lot like what you'd expect of someone - yes, human - who'd been raised very elsewhere, then brought to Earth and was learning to make do with the foods available here. I'm not a gourmet, but he never offered me - even just a spoonful or forkful to taste - anything I didn't like. Or anything quite like anything else I've ever had. If there'd ever been a contest for best and most outré cuisine, he'd have won in a wok.

Anyway, now we had someplace to go after the meeting! Yes, we'd been going to Kal's, and many still did before showing up, but at the Lab (the name got shortened almost instantaneously) you didn't have to spend money. But if you wanted to, you could do things like play Brag.

Brag is a kind of British mini-poker where you get only three cards and there's no draw, and there's no equalizing of bets - each player puts in at least as much as the last player or folds - and you can't call if there are more than two of you still in!

This enables you (at our piddling stakes) to lose ten cents a minute instead of six dollars an hour. I have some talent at cards, but playing at my best for any considerable length of time is too much like work, and over all I figure if I don't lose too much I've come out ahead - well, I've had fun, and that's worth a lot. But I did well at Brag - in fact I'd usually start out borrowing a quarter from Ted and then paying him back after a while from my winnings. He always seemed surprised at this, but he was always willing to lend me the quarter.

I didn't do quite so well at Bourrée (pronounced BOO-ray), which is a mind-rotting cross between Whist and Five-Card Draw imported from Louisiana by Dave Hulan which, of course, became all the rage among the more enthusiastic card players, some of whom (like me) will never forgive him.

I recall the time that Lee Jacobs showed up for a Bourrée game showing the effects of just enough beer to show effects, bearing a six-pack, and promising to stay in every hand - a normally suicidal tactic. Supposedly God takes care of fools and drunks, and He must have that night, because Lee staggered away a winner. On the other hand, Milt Stevens attributed his pretty consistent ability to win to his

WHO KNOWS
WHAT ETHER
LURKS
IN THE MINDS
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praying to the Roman goddess Fortuna; when once he did badly, Jack guessed that he must have been praying that night to the goddess Forsardines.

With something fun to do afterwards, now, the attendance at the meetings continue to increase. And then Diplomacy™ reared its ugly head. Diplomacy is played on a map of Europe (and Turkey, though most of that is in Asia) about as it was at the outbreak of the First World War (a few of the smallest countries are ignored) by seven players, each of which assumes control of one of the seven Major Powers and tries to overpower all the others. This of course requires making temporary alliances with other players; and, while tactics and strategy are essential components of the game, the name of the game is Diplomacy, and you're not going to do well if you get a reputation for double-crossing your allies *too* often. The gimmick is that all players simultaneously submit orders for their armies and fleets, so it's *possible*, in theory, for them to commit dozens of double-crosses at once - though there were rarely as many as two on one move, and more often than not there weren't any.

The first game began with Ed Baker, Steve Cartier (who rarely attended a meeting,² Jack Harness, Ted Johnstone, Fred Patten, Bruce Pelz, and myself. I lucked out (pity it wasn't good luck - though I could have done slightly worse) being assigned, by lot, Austria-Hungary. I might have had a decent chance of winning if it hadn't been for a bad ruling in a situation not covered by the original version of the rules, leaving me in an untenable position. A few moves later, I gave up with four armies hopelessly outnumbered by surrounding forces. Instead of submitting my next set of orders for their movement, I merely handed in a press release from my Prime Minister Hornswoggle P. Schmidt-Nagy saying, "They say the weather in Transylvania is very pleasant this time of year . . ."

Four games were started, and three of them were played out to the bitter end, though in one case more privately. Each Thursday the board would be set up, the players would submit their orders, armies and fleets would be moved (except in the case of an occasional stalemate), and the players would then gather together in twos and sometimes threes to plot against the others for next week's move. Bruce even published a fanzine for each, giving the orders submitted the previous week, the results, and silly press releases from the Heads of State. The first one was called *WorldDip*, from the remark of someone rather earlier that the LASFS was a kind of half-world, hence half-**world Diplomacy** . . . The second was called *WitDip*. Encouraged by our reaction to that, he titles the third *AsDip*. But then he ran out of "half-" ideas, and called the fourth one *SheepDip*.

We thought it was a lot of fun, though we eventually tired of

it. But the early conclusion of the *WitDip* game had a different cause. At one point two of the players had prepared alternate sets of moves, and the discussion as to whether the second set had been submitted in time - or was even permitted - began to heat up uncomfortably. The matter was settled when Owen brought his fist down sharply on the table as he anachronistically yelled "Cobalt bomb!" and pieces bounced into new locations, one fleet ending up in Switzerland - in gross violation of the rules, which do not even permit an army there.

(The game has its interesting features, and several people have attempted to improve on it. Jerry Pournelle expanded it to include Asia and Africa as well as a few extra rules. Dan Alderson came up with a modification he called Calculus Diplomacy in which the fleets and armies didn't move instantaneously and portions of any one might be found in two or even more adjacent areas. Neither of these came near being commercially feasible, although Jerry's game was played on a home-made board more than once. Dan also came up with a game called Space War, unaware at the time that the name had been trademarked for a quite different game then being commercial sold. Dan's game was played on a four-by-four-by-four cube; while basically similar to Diplomacy, in many ways it was very different. I know - from personal experience - that Dan's Space War was played several times, he even developed three levels of complexity for it.) (*I am one of those who played Space War many times, even the move-a-week game run through APA-L.- ed.*)

Of course we did faaaanish things, too. In fact, Owen bought a mimeo from someone; I don't recall what he named it, but fanzines produced on it were credited to "Grishnakh House." I got back into SAPS and the Cult briefly,³ and it was about this time that Jack and Bruce made their briefly successful attempts to join all the fannish APAs then in existence. (That didn't last long, as someone organized APA 45 for the exclusive benefit - if that's the right word - of fans born no earlier than 1945). But other fanzines were produced at the Lab, too. Fred Patten started a one-shot "Hearts at Midnight," named for the card game, not the bodily organ. It was contributed to by fans dropping over Thursday nights and weekends - Fred let it go on for a couple of months before he (or Owen) finally ran off the stencils, collated, and stapled the copies.

But wait! There was more! Bruce had heard of an informal APA in New York called APA-F at, I presume from the final initial, the meetings of the Fanoclasts. The way it worked was that any member could bring some number of copies of a zine, and was then entitled to take one of each of any others that had been dumped off there that evening. Bruce decided to not just found but organize something similar at the LASFS to be called APA-L. His girl friend or

maybe already wife (they'd later divorce - very amicably) Dian Girard was the first Official Collator. The duties of the OC were to: 1) arrange for a cover; 2) make sure each contribution had the required number of copies; 3) produce a table of contents; 4) get all the copies properly collated; 5) staple all the copies; and, 6) distribute a copy to each contributor and, if there were enough, to each of last week's contributors who missed this week.

APA-F lasted quite a few months, I understand. APA-L started in 1964, ran 180 weeks, was suspended for five months, was restarted, and has been going ever since. And if that isn't unlikely enough, Fred Patten has had a zine in every distribution, with no exception. Oh, yeah, APA-L didn't do a thing to hold down the attendance at the meetings!

But I'd found work and gotten tired of sleeping on a living room sofa, and I found three other club members who needed a place to crash nightly: Ed Baker, Don Simpson, and Hank Stine. Okay, they found me. Anyway, we found this house about four blocks north of the Lab - Labyrinth Three it was called, being the second of the series. Well, many years earlier there'd been this short series of novels by Dr. Edward Elmer Smith, E.E. Smith, Ph.D. as he preferred to be billed, also known as "Doc" Smith, who did a truly dreadful job of writing really great stories. (He was the first writer to take his readers beyond the solar system; his style has to be undergone to be believed.) One of this series consisted of four stories. *The Skylark of Space*, *Sklark Three*, *Skylark of Valeron*, and *Skylark Duquesne*. (Skylark was the name of the hero's spaceships.) Then when Jack and Owen and I moved to a second location a few blocks away, Jack retroactively renamed the first Lab The Labyrinth of Space, and named the new one Labyrinth Three. After I moved out they moved again to The Labyrinth of Valeron and then to Labyrinth Duquesne, witch turned out the last one.

Sorry about that. As I was saying, the house we found about four blocks north of the Lab was actually half of a very old duplex - well, very old for Los Angeles; it must have predated the First World War, and was probably intended for guests or in-laws or whatever of the original family in the other, larger half. It had three upstairs bedrooms, a second, narrower stairwell to be used by a servant, and a servant's

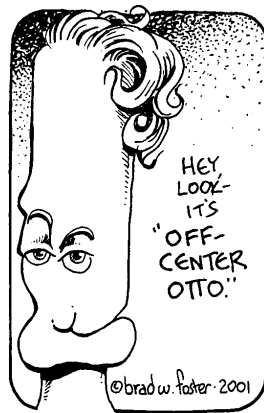
bedroom with tiny bath all but hidden behind the kitchen. I've lived in apartments that were smaller than the living room - which had a pair of sliding doors for privacy!

It had to be called "The Booby Hatch." A couple of decades earlier, Ayn Rand had written a novel called *The Fountainhead* about an architect who, among other things, had designed a home for a millionaire which had been given that nickname (no, not by the owner) because of its very unconventional appearance; more recently she'd expounded her philosophy in rather more detail and at greater length in *Atlas Shrugged* - and if I recall correctly, as I often do, all four of us were at least partially sympathetic with her ideas; but Ed and Hank were particular and occasionally vocal fans.

We were a rather odd assortment, even for fans. Bruce talked about getting up a pool betting on how many weeks we'd last, but this is one of the few times his judgment ever proved faulty. The Booby Hatch remained in operation for two years; it didn't help when Ed joined the National Guard to escape the draft and was then called up for six weeks of Basic Training and couldn't handle paying rent during that period. We replaced him with Jim Glass, but in any event we all got along the entire time.

It helped that we all drank different kinds of milk. I drank regular, Ed drank extra-rich (remember when stores sold extra-rich milk with 20% extra fat?), Hank drank low-fat, and Don drank skim or, as it's called today, non-fat. I asked Don about that once and he said it dated back to when he was a tad and, escaping his mother's eye, got into the fridge and attacked the butter one too many times and got sick of butterfat.

We moved in in 1965, and the following year I scraped together \$150 (worth several times that in today's money) and bought a '57 Olds, which ran real good after I started using the super-premium gas then being made for the high-compression motors also still being made. Premium was 96 octane; this was 102. Anyway, one evening I drove Hank, Don, and myself over to the home of recently-married Earl and Gail Thompson to watch the premier of the *Batman* TV series, at the end of which I couldn't make up my mind whether to laugh or throw up. When it was over, I took the other two home and drove downtown to the BIG magazine



store on Sixth St. between Broadway and Hill. I spent a good deal of cash, mostly on comic books.

Back home, I entered and started up the stairs to my room. Don and Hank were sitting on the living room sofa quietly discussing something. I thought that was odd; they got along well, but never seemed to have much to talk about to each other. I got almost to the top before I saw the neat little label with Don's eldritch lettering on the closet facing me across the narrow hall: "BAT CLOSET." I dropped the bag of magazines - and then it occurred to me that that might not be the end of it. I had no idea.

In my room I found my dresser had a bat-drawer, one window had a bat screen, and my un-emptied ash tray was now a bat-tray containing bat-butts. Finding myself in need of plumbing facilities, I passed the door to the servant's staircase - sorry; the bat-door to the bat-stairs. I entered the bat-room, walked past the bat-tub by which was hung a bat-towel, and approached the toilet. It was labeled "guano." (Look it up in your Funk & Wagnalls.)

After all that, I needed something stronger than water, so I went downstairs to the bat-fridge to get a bat-Coke. But I was astonished when I went over to the drawer and found the bottle opener unlabeled; I couldn't imagine either Don or Hank missing that! I went into the living room and said, "You forgot the bottle opener." Don explained, "You got home too soon."

Because we had so few active members and the Booby Hatch had a very large living room, we'd host the odd party now and then.⁴ They were open parties - all members were welcome (some more than others, of course). You had to be careful with open parties, as Bruce once found out, with so few members showing up at meetings in 1962, he offered his small one-bedroom apartment as a party location in lieu of a meeting on Thanksgiving Day. Thirty people showed up; we had to butter ourselves to move around. But the Booby Hatch was far larger.

We had a couple of scares there. The serious one happened on New Year's Eve. About midnight or thereabouts a couple of guys from a fraternity house at the other end of the block came by and tried to get in, unsuccessfully. An hour or two later they came by again - at higher speed, in a car, firing three shots from some sort of firearm. One person, Dian, I believe, got a couple of tiny splinters in her cheek from debris as the slug tore through the wall very close to her; no one else was touched. If the police ever found the perps, we didn't hear about it.

The other scare turned out much better. Our members included John and Bjo Trimble and Bill and Jane Ellern. All four were pretty generally considered good people, with lots of justification, but there was something about each of the

women, Bjo and Jane, that seriously bugged the other. Actually they did get along quite well - for a while, then something would happen . . . Anyway, at one of the first parties we hosted, both the Trimbles and the Ellerns showed up, and we all held our breaths. After a while, Bjo and Jane were found standing in the kitchen doorway exchanging recipes, and we started breathing again.

Eric Hoffman had begun showing up at the meetings, and started bringing movies to be shown now and then - I think it got up to every other Friday. The Booby Hatch's big living room was a good place to show films because of its size, and Eric could put on some shows better there - like an entire serial of twelve or fifteen episodes. Also, he could have a more appreciative audience, consisting of several of us club members and a few other people he knew that weren't interested in joining. I recall, in one episode of *The Masked Marvel*, Our Hero came upon a bomb maybe two feet square and at least a foot high with a pointer hurrying around a dial and a flashing red light (yes, it was a black and white film, but of course the light was red); without enough time to deal with it, he jumped out the first floor window and made it to shelter behind a tree with a very wide trunk an instant before the entire twenty-room mansion turned into flying toothpicks. One of Eric's friends, sitting next to me, sigh "I sure wish we'd had explosives like that in Korea!" Our biggest audience was for a showing of *Metropolis*, one of the better and more complete prints; 4SJ Ackerman showed up for that one! I think Forry said it was the 35th time he'd seen it. And I seem to recall Fred Patten turned up that particular print.

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Footnotes:

1. In the 1940s, some ass read A.E. van Vogt's short novel *Slan*, about super-human evolutes, and began proclaiming "Fans are slans!" At least one other fan seems to have taken him seriously. Several fans in Michigan, who didn't, thought it would be mildly humorous to call their shared domicile "The Slan Shack" - eventually this became a generic name for any abode housing at least three fans. (By the way, the story isn't bad, despite being dated.)
2. Also a pseudonym, though he didn't write any books. But he occasionally (and, I'm sure, unintentionally) dropped a hint that one or two could have been written about him.
3. About this time, The Cult rejoiced in the sobriquet "The Thirteen Nastiest Bastards in Fandom," bestowed I've been told by Bruce Pelz. When asked how Fred Patten had gotten in, other members would stop, shake their heads, shrug, and guess "He must have lied about something."
4. Cheap shots are left as an exercise for the reader - at least, when I can resist the temptation myself.

Peter has told me that this “fragment” is part of a larger work in progress. This part was posted on the Memory Hole e-list; and, as soon as I read it I sent off a posting to Peter asking if I could reprint it. He replied, “Migod, Marty, haven't you people anything better to do! I only posted it ten minutes ago and you're already coming back asking if you can reprint.” “The answer is of course, ‘Yes’.”

by
Peter Weston

Back in 1965 when the second Birmingham Sf Group was in its prime, I had the idea of taking over the BSFA's Fanzine Foundation. Now, this had originated as a typical worthy, but ill-thought-out idea, back when the BSFA was created in the late 1950s, to establish a repository which would preserve and lend-out fanzines to members of the Association. Various well-known fans had donated their collections, as had widows of other fans who'd passed on; certainly it contained material from 'Doc' Weir, Eric Jones, and quite a few others.

But when I, as a keen little neo, anxious to learn more about 'fandom', had tried to borrow a few items the reply I had from their custodian was something like, "Well, um, er, sorry mate, but.. they're all lying in my garage in a big pile where they were dropped" Said pile and said garage was on a housing estate in the outskirts of Liverpool, and I think their 'guardian' went by the name of Joe Navin, though I can't be sure.

I would have loved to have taken over the Foundation, but in our little council house there was barely room for me, so someone else had to be willing to take on the physical storage involved. Originally, Mike 'Beard' Turner was in line for the task, but having wisely had second thoughts the next volunteer was Charlie Winstone. Those who've read my piece in 'Contact' will recall that at the time the BSFG met in the front room of his mother's cavernous old house in Erdington, and Charlie reckoned he had room for the accumulation in a back bedroom. So fired by enthusiasm, just after I bought my first car, Charlie and I drove up to Liverpool one Saturday in August 1965, and collected the lot.

It was a huge pile all right, that we carried out of the garage

and stuffed into my little car. It filled the boot, back seats to the ceiling, and overflowed onto poor old Charlie's lap. And 'Joe' didn't even give us a cup of tea! We drove back, and for some reason I kept the material overnight. I remember sitting out there in the car until past midnight, pawing through fanzines by the light of a street lamp (no garage) and bringing choice items into the house to read snippets. There was a file of Hyphen, complete up to about 1963-64, lots of issues of Oopsla, Shaggy, Warhoon, all sorts of gems.

Next day I drove round to Charlie's, and with the help of his brothers we carried the material up the 20-odd steps, up the stairs, into a dark and scruffy back bedroom. There weren't any shelves or anything, and we just piled the fanzines on the floor, and I remember looking forward eagerly to the job of sorting it all out. I had visions of coming round frequently and working away with Charlie to get some order into the collection, so it could be administered properly (and so that I, for one, could get chance to read some of the good stuff).

However, to my surprise Charlie made it fairly clear that he, and only he, was going to look after the Fanzine Foundation. In fact, I was a bit annoyed about this, since he seemed to regard it as his private collection, which hadn't been my intention at all. Charlie wasn't a very organised person anyway, and his physical disability meant that he wasn't able to do any sustained labour, so nothing much was likely to happen. In fact, his idea for the collection was to reprint items that caught his fancy in his own fanzine, Nadir, though I don't think he ever actually got round to doing that.

The best I could manage was to get access to the collection when the group met in Charlie's front room; I used to leave the rest of the group and go upstairs to rummage around, invariably coming down, dust-covered, clutching some amazing item from the past. And, usually, I would take some fanzines home with me, to borrow until the next meeting. That's how I managed to read almost all of Hyphen, and Aporetta, in particular. I loved the tales of Inchmery fandom, so near and yet so far away in space and time; if only I'd been around a few years earlier!

I also found a set of Void, which was in my possession at the time of the great Blow-Up with Charlie's mom after the Yarmouth convention, following which all further visits

**NOTHING
CHANGES**

were forbidden, and I make no apology for holding on to them. I wish I'd kept a lot more in the light of subsequent events.

No more was heard from Charlie or the Fanzine Foundation; he dropped out completely. The fanzines themselves surfaced unexpectedly at a convention auction in the mid-1970s (Seacon?), when I was asked to auction-off a rather large pile of material that someone had brought along (was it John Hall?). I recognised the fanzines immediately, not only by their vintage, but by the postal addresses on them. In case there was any doubt, some of them even had the gummed label attached "BSFA Fanzine Foundation," but in spite of my making the situation clear to the relevant authorities, the auction was allowed to proceed, and the collection dispersed. Peter Roberts bought quite a lot, and there were several American fans at the auction who were amazed at the bargains they snapped-up.

At the time I thought this was a thoroughly bad show, but now I realise it was actually the best thing to have happened, since at least the important items can be presumed to have gone to good homes - better, certainly, than mouldering away in that back bedroom. So, like I say, nothing changes!

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THE LETTER COLUMN

LOC
'N
LOAD

Comments by ye ed will be in bold italics and will be in black in the paper version and blue in the PDF version. Smartassery in the responses is to be expected even though it is not required. Loccers are encouraged to respond in like manner even though they might be surprised . . . or maybe not . . . at how I respond to that.

JOHN TEEHAN: Two questions regarding Trantorcon.

1) Regarding the open discussion on the size of Worldcons, will earplugs and other sound-deadening accessories be supplied at the door? Or must we bring our own?

The concom believes that if you forget to bring your Sound Wick, 'twixt now and the con an alien life-form will be discovered which will be more than happy to attend the con nestled in your ear. The concom feels that either of the above will solve your problem; provided, of course, if you opt for the ear-dwelling life-form it pays for its membership. The concom holds no responsibility for what the ear-dwelling life-form might do in your ear in addition to absorbing sound.

2) Regarding the Masquerade, will costumes not visible in the third dimension still be considered costumes?

Only if the costume wearers, themselves, are not visible in the third dimension. Please be advised, though, that Masquerade attendees who live in the third dimension are able to view these entities not visible in the third dimension, they have to pay a surcharge. (If they are male, they have to pay a Sircharge.)

ALEXIS GILLILLAND: The Schirmeister cover is excellent, and strongly evocative of the scene in John Varley's *Demon* where Snitch, Gaea's spy planted in Sirocco Jones's skull, is removed by Rocky, the Titanide surgeon, Titanides being a centauroid race which Varley describes in loving detail.

I also enjoyed the Niven's allusions that I was able to catch. A reminder of all the reading I used to do. Alas, that age and inclination should have taken my interests elsewhere.

Several Rotslers, you say? By my count you have 19, which is several severals, or maybe several factorial, if not a bloody surfeit. In any event you printed rather more than a mere few.

Even though I have a box containing many hundreds (or even thousands) of Rotsler illos, it was not my original intent to put so many Rotsler illos into NA #13. However, with so many Rotsler illos appropriate for a memorial to Harry Warner, the number I used in the ish just kinda grew.

Ted White's commentary on the White-Eney feud is dated by Ted being a senior in high school. In reprising a young fan's argument circa 1956, from nearly half a century ago. To feature his letter as you do seems a lapse of editorial judgment.

The Ted White loc was a response to a mention of the White-Eney feud in the first installment of Phil Castora's biography. As it fit into the space remaining on the last page of Phil Castora's second installment of his biography, it seemed appropriate to place it there.

But there is something of which you are probably unaware - the White-Eney feud is not something which occurred fifty years ago, it is ongoing. Both Ted White and Dick Eney have had at it on-line in recent years. So, even though I pubbed Ted's letter as a clarification of the his-

torical record mentioned in Phil's first chapter, the feud continues to this day.

Congratulations on your non-election to the Neighborhood Council post you stood for. The honour of election is more than offset by the aggravation of having to do the job.

Well, um . . . yeah. Except. The Neighborhood Council has formed various committees, with said committees accepting non-Council members. So, I joined the Elections and Rules Committee - and am its chairman. (I have also gotten involved with the local people who are supporting General Wesley Clark in his bid for the Presidency of the USA. What with running several APAs (and contributing to three of them) and the other fan-stuff I do, one of these days I just have to find a store which sells time.)

E.B. FROHVET: An era has ended. It used to be said, and not entirely as a joke, that no new fanzine could claim to be a "real" fanzine until it had received and published a letter from Harry Warner. Future faneds will have to forego that distinction.

Indeed. My first genzine was HOLIER THAN THOU. I sent Harry a copy of the first ish; and, when, in return, I received a loc on it from him, I considered it a validation of what I was doing. (Before HTT #1, all of my printed fanac was APAzines.)

Mike Glycer: It should have been, ". . . every one of them an infinitely better copyeditor than I." That's a grammatical error, not a typo. One assumes the use of "imbecies" in Steve Stiles' lead illo for this piece was intentional; sort of like "Find the hidden typo." Steve is so much brighter than the rest of us imbecies, he wouldn't make that error by mistake, he would only make that error deliberately.

The imbecies want to know, "What error?"

Personally, I have not observed much attempt by media fans to take over our fandom. Those few that show up in our fandom have generally found that it's not what they're interested in, and quickly departed to form their own fandom.

Would that this was the case. "Our" fandom includes an interest in many things, including movies, television, books, magazines, zines, filking, cons, and so forth. Primarily though, it has been books, fanzines, and cons. The media fans came into our fandom in such large numbers

that they have basically disregarded zines and books in favour of their own media interests; and, in effect, taken over "our" fandom. There is such a large body of them infesting our hobby that fanzine fans have been marginalized. Indeed, not only are most of these media fans not only not aware that we even exist, what they consider to be fanzines are the fiction-filled Trek and similar zines which are available only for money.

LEN MOFFATT: Here's LOCing at you, kid. First of all, many thanks for publishing another great cover by Schirm, who is indeed a Master of the Merry Macabre, and for all of the other art and cartoons from some of fandom's finest. And yes, Rotsler Forever!

Rotsler Forever, indeed. Especially, as in arm's length from me there sits a box with hundreds [or even thousands] of unpubbed Rotsler illos.

Now, if only Schirm could get nominated (and then win) a Best Fanartist Hugo . . .

I always had the impression that Harry was a few years older than I, so I was surprised to learn that he was only eighty. Come this November I will turn eighty.

After you turn it, will you be heading back to seventy-nine? Anyway, Harry always wrote older than he was. Indeed, back when I received his first loc for HTT, I thought then that he was eighty. I think that Harry was born eighty-years-old.

Mike Glycer on Typos was very good Glycer indeed but I'm not sure that Rick Sneary's unique spelling should be included in the typo category. He tended to spell some words the way they sounded to him. They were mistakes in spelling, not typos. Thus "whole" becomes "hole" which is why when writing about an early visit to LASFS he referred to "the club as a hole."

Not necessarily. As a person who currently attends all LASFS meetings, it is quite possible that he really meant "hole." Evidence? Well, the club has elected me to its Board of Directors.

JOSEPH T. MAJOR: Editorial Natter: The decline of APAs. Back when I first got into fandom, in the seventies, someone mentioned that the waitlist for FAPA had an APA. It had a waitlist. Nowadays I have been solicited to join FAPA, when back then the FAPAns wouldn't even have

bothered to spit on me. Such is life.

Back then, I think that FAPAns were saving their spit for more, er, worthy targets. Besides, back in the seventies you were too young to be considered a prospective member of what has often been called "The Elephant's Graveyard of Fandom." Of course, one could gain the requisite age by resting in the waitlist - and that was the case of many APAs. The waitlist was much shorter in 1981 when I joined FAPA for my first stint in that APA. (I think that I was on the waitlist for only about a year.) Today, most APAs will take just about any warm body. In fact, I am not certain that body warmth is even a requirement for some APAs.

Typos: I will always remember "petrodactyl." A rather oily sort of flying creature.

I respect Arthur Hlavaty no end, but J.K. Rowling won the Hugo by dint of writing the least bad of the books nominated. I cannot understand, for example, why people who execrate and vilify Jar Jar Binks would like a novel written the way the character speaks.

Maybe, because, that is the way the voters speak . . .

You had clay for bricks to inscribe locs in? Whippersnapper! We had to carve our locs into blocks of stone using flint knives, wrap them in bear skins (and let me tell you, killing the bear was a task in itself), and then load them onto the passing mail dinosaur."

Sir! You are exaggerating your age! Whom do you think you are, Harry Warner?

EARL KEMP: I got down to Len Moffatt's *Califania Tales*; and, as usual, he sent me off down Memory Lane again. This time he reminded me of Ella Parker. When she played through the States for that ChiCon III I knew I had found a valuable friend. She was a pleasure any way you looked at her. That event began a long run of visiting with Ella in London, either where she worked or at her apartment. She introduced me to much of what is worthwhile in London and I'll always thank her for that.

Len Moffatt reminds you of Ella Parker? Earl, do you have gender-identity issues?

BRAD W. FOSTER: Nice to see you use that little bit of abstract-like art I sent a ways back. Though I think you must

be chiding me a bit for complaining about having artwork enlarged by shrinking this one down so small. Still, as long as I have some sort of contribution in the issue, it keeps me from feeling guilty about getting it!

I always try to "treat my artists right." However, as an editor, I sometimes have to adjust the size of illos to fit the available space. I always attempt to keep the proportions correct.

Sorry to hear that you didn't get a seat on the Board. On the other hand, I hope you make a run at it again in the future. I was really looking forward to your reports of the meetings there, and how your natural-born smartass attitude would have gone over... or if you would have had that under control. One way or the other, good tales would probably result. (Yes, that's right, forget helping your community or giving back to society, we're only interested if this results in entertaining fanzine reading for us!)



I will have to disappoint, here. Not only is working with the Neighborhood Council difficult (as I attempt to reign in my smartassery), but I do not expect anything "interesting" to happen here. (I describe "interesting" as something worth reporting in a fanzine.) Except, maybe, that the NC has set up various committees which also have non-NC members. So I joined the Rules and Elections Committee, and I am its chairman. I have some changes I intend to try to implement. Of course, as the NC is the lowest branch of government in the City of Los Angeles, any NC bylaws changes my committee recommends (and is passed by the NC) has to be approved by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. This is all boring, technical stuff which will have no place in NO AWARD . . . which is already boring enough.

RANDY BYERS: Hi, Marty. Thanks for the latest *NO AWARD*. I look forward to *MARTY'S SMARTASSERY* -- a collection of the wit, wisdom, and one-liners of Marty Cantor. I'm not sure I want to meet the person who puts it together, however. Especially *after* they put it together.

Not to hold your breath, Randy. There is nobody chomping at the bit to put together this, er, thing. Indeed, I am not certain that I would want to meet anybody who would put together such a collection. One of me is more than enough

in fandom.

Jerry Kaufman wonders in the lettercol whether a zine on efanazines.com (all hail Bill Burns!) should include corrections to the paper zine. We certainly try to correct typos and the like in the PDF before we send it to Bill. I suppose that even that much change makes it a second edition. We're also talking about adding an illo to the PDF of our latest issue -- a tribute to Harry Warner Jr. that we wanted to run with our obituary but left out by mistake. One thing that makes me uneasy about making too many changes is that far fewer people are likely to read the PDF than the paper version, as far as I can tell. If it's something we want our actual (as opposed to ideal) readership to see, it's probably better to run it in the next issue. Don't see much problem with correcting information, such as a dropped zipcode, for instance. However, fannish anality might drive one to put a note of some sort in the masthead of at least the PDF. Which I guess means we at CHUNGA are not that anal. Yet. What would Freud think?

A bit of a conundrum, here. Personally, I prefer as little change as possible 'twixt the paper and the .PDF versions of my zine. Considering the existence of spambots harvesting edresses, the .PDF version of NO AWARD has the address/edress section has the specific information deleted and replaced with a notice to contact the editor if specifics are needed. (Plus I mung my edress in the colophon so that it cannot be read by a spambot.)

Given the 300 dpi limitation of the Gestetner mimeograph I use, I delete all colour fills in the paper version, adding line-borders if necessary. Plus, of course, the paper version is in black-and-white instead of the colour of the .PDF version.

In other words, I believe that the on-line version of the zine should be as close as possible to the paper version, and I am averse to putting in even corrections. Indeed, as I usually run the black-and-white master (for copying) through my ink-jet printer as soon as I have sent off the colour version of my zine to www.efanzines.com , there really is no time for correcting in one version what errors are found in the other version.

*Of course, I never make any errors. *Ahem**

Got many larfs from the Nivens' old far future convention

bid. It's fannish and stefnal at the same time, which is a pretty neat trick to pull off.

Wonderful material like this deserves reprinting every now and then, showing a younger audience the good material from our past.

ERIC LINDSAY: I was interested in your comments about the merits of e-lists for fandom. While I noted some excellent material on Memory Hole, various annoyances with Yahoo Groups persuaded me not to re-subscribe after enforced absences during trips. RASFF on the other hand appeared mainly noise. An annoying email from Gary Farber, complaining vigorously about my anti-spam email address and saying how horrible it was to mung addresses (it wasn't munged - it was a valid address that said something like spamtrap) was the last straw. I haven't been back to the fannish newsgroups, nor to Yahoo groups. I do however encourage the collection of highlites and summaries of material from elists. Perhaps I'll read them in a fanzine. Oh, I did!

Not all fans are on-line, let alone being on e-lists, so reprinting "juicy bits" from these lists widens the distribution of them. Plus there is the fact that there

are so many e-lists that even fans who are on-line do not belong to all of them. So, when I print something from one of the lists there is a good chance that many on-line fans have not seen the posting from which I got the material (which is always reprinted with permission of the author). I am on about a dozen e-lists . . . most of them faanish . . . and get about a thousand e-mail postings from them each week. There is much interesting conversations and chit-chat to be found in these postings; sometimes, though, I find some "gems" there. Both Thom Digby's and Peter Weston's contributions thish were gleaned from these e-list postings.

Mike Glycer does a fine article on typos. Since I've always felt spelling should be pretty much optional, and that Dr Johnson was just a troublemaker, I rarely notice a typo. Neither my email client nor my text editor include a spelling checker. While I have a spelling checker macro and word list for my text editor, I've never bothered looking for a spelling checker for email, or for newsgroups. Perhaps I should. However I also believe the best sort of spelling checker would be the one with the fewest words. If you have 200,000 words in your spelling checker, then most of your typos turn out to be real, albeit misplaced, words.

WAHF

RODNEY LEIGHTON: *Complains about typos in an article about typos. That makes as much sense as complaining about Rodney Leighton writing like Rodney Leighton in a loc by Rodney Leighton. Or me making sense.*

The spelling checker ignores them. Another reason for not having a spelling checker is that most I see call themselves a spell checker. For twenty years I've been convinced a spell checker is something to do with witchcraft and sorcery, not something to do with dictionaries.

Not noticing typos, eh? That is just grist for my smartass mill. Please keep up the not-noticing. As for not using a spell checker . . . mayhap you would prefer a spell chess?

Regarding Alexis Gilliland's cartoon on page 24, "First fandom is moribund, second fandom was still-born, what's next", and the reply "Pi fandom! Irrationality is riley big!", surely the next irrational fandom would be e rather than pi?

The next irrational fandom? Is not the fandom we currently inhabit irrational enough for you?

LLOYD PENNEY: Another great Schirm cover...why this guy isn't on an award ballot some where, I don't know. I did my bit...

At one time, the 1970s, Schirm was having his art pubbed throughout fandom. A goodly portion of his output, though, was as covers for APA-L. Naturally, these covers did not get seen by many outside of the APA. I do not know why Schirm was overlooked by Hugo nominators back then, but there was a large gap in his production of fanart 'twixt then and now. For the past few years Schirm has gotten back to fanart production and his covers have been seen here and there on fanzines. Unfortunately, there now seems to be much less "buzz" about the traditional zines (in which Schirm's work appears) in Hugo nominating circles than there was in earlier days, so many of the nominators probably do not see his art. Which is a shame. I really do think that Schirm deserves a Best Fanartist Hugo nomination.

My loc, and your comments...I freely admit that my beginnings in fandom were in Star Trek fandom. I collected the Blish novelizations of selected episodes, the Foster novelizations of the animated, and other associated books, and also watched the episodes in their first run, and in endless reruns. In books by David Gerrold and Gene Roddenberry himself, I found out about this loose world-wise association called fandom, and some of its associated interests. When I moved to the west coast, by chance there was a Trek club starting up, and I joined up to see if the Gerrold and Roddenberry books were telling me true. Sure, we talked about

various things, and worked on various projects, but because we were on Vancouver Island, there was no chance of going anywhere to meet the stars. So, we hung out with each other, and I still remember those times fondly, 26 years later. This is where I found that the greatest part of fandom are not the actors you could meet, or even the authors you could schmooze with, but the fellow fans, and friendships that can last a lifetime. I am still in contact with some of those friends I made all those years ago; one now lives in Toronto. I know many of the local mediafans here, and have known them long enough to know that they are also avid readers, but they watch more than they read. Only a few of them are manic about collecting all the action figures, or all the autographs of the original series cast, or buying the prime seats at the Creation convention next weekend.

The rest do not merit our scorn, but invite us to realize that SF is full of various interests in various media (meaning plural of medium). As always, the few Trekkies colour media fandom for the rest of us.

WAHF

SHERYL BIRKHEAD: *Who, in the proper frame of mind, congratulated me for having NO AWARD again make every category on the Hugo ballot. I expected nothing less.*

I found fandom just before my fortieth birthday, roughly about thirty years after I started reading SF. Aside from finding the people I really preferred as friends (over most of the people I had previously known) and the change in how I ordered my life after I found fandom, one of the major revelations for me was that so many authors were fans. Robert Silverberg has been a member of FAPA for 55 years. Larry Niven not only produced the Trantorcon material years ago, he was amenable to its reprinting in a fanzine. I remember going to breakfast . . . early . . . every day (at the Atlanta Worldcon in 1986) with Hal Clement (Harry Stubbs). Jerry Pournelle was one of the major workers when LASFS bought its second clubhouse, buildings which needed major remodeling to be useable. Anecdotes? Sure. However, when I first found fandom, it was eye-opening to me that so many major authors were fans like the rest of us. Many of them go to cons without expecting anything other than the chance to contribute and participate like the rest of the fans.

*Not at all like the actors who show up at media cons only if they are paid to do so . . . and expect to be placed on a pedestal to be admired. Media fans are different from traditional sf fans. We buy memberships and participate in our cons - they buy admission to their cons and want to be entertained. *fooeey* Media fans are alien to us.*

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FOR DOMESTIC POLICY
WE DRAW ON OUR JUDEO-
CHRISTIAN HERITAGE;
FOR FOREIGN POLICY, ON
OUR GRECO-ROMAN
HERITAGE; AND FOR
DEALING WITH TERRORISTS,
WE HAVE OTHER HERITAGES
TO DRAW ON!

