

number **ONE**

Quit complaining
or No Gerbil
Wheel Today!



NUMBER ONE #12 is published for the Feb 2008 FAPA mailing by Mike McInerney, 83 Shakespeare St., Daly City Ca. 94014. Email is ELANDEM@ATT.NET. The cover is by STEVE STILES and so is the feature article and illo. Thank you so much STEVE!

The theme of this issue is Shopping Frenzy or Mayhem at the Mall. I'm talking about the foolish concept that "the customer is always right" which is obviously wrong. If the customer was really "King" all pricing, return policys, etc. would be made by them. I can see Joe Consumer walking into the store and offering \$10 for for \$1000 Plasma tv. Right! Or trying to return that used vacuum he bought 8 years ago. You bet!

I worked retail for more than 25 years starting at Matthew's TV and Stereo City, Top Of The Hill, Daly City, and wound up my retail career working for Montgomery Wards. Matthew's , where I worked for 5 years was one of those places that advertised nonstop on tv and radio. They had free popcorn, and free champagne (to loosen up the customers.) It operated a lot like a car lot. The greeter would stop the new arrivals at the rope and assign them to a salesman and give them a glass of bubbly. The salesman who was at the top of the "Up List" had to make the sale or turn over the customer to the Closer(who would then get half the commission). After the sale was agreed on, then the contract presenter would print out and present a long contract with the low monthly payments, including, of course, the most important item the Service Contract! By this point most of the customers had had a couple glasses and were mellow to the deal! Sometimes a person wouldn't want a salesman and just want to browse, but this was forbidden. Sometimes they only wanted to buy a couple of blank tapes or some hook up wires. The salesman would then lose his up and be placed on the bottom of the waiting list to get another chance for a sale. I got tired of the pressure and moved on to Montgomery Wards.

At Wards I spent 20 years selling electronics, tv, vcrs, stereo equip, satellite dishes, camcorders, etc. They didn't care too much how many I sold as long as I had good Service Contract Penetration! The manufacturers of the brandname products did care and rewarded the salesman with spiffs. Pioneer points earned me a free receiver, turntable, cd player, and laser disc player. JVC bucks earned me a free tape deck. Sony had \$\$\$ for certain items as did NEC. A very nice bonus especially as they made very good products!

The dept. I worked in was opposite the furniture section. Lounging chairs faced toward the big tvs. We had a regular duo we called The Gruesome Twosome who came into the store every weekend to watch tv and fall asleep on the Barcaloungers. It was like clockwork at 2:30 pm every Saturday. Another regular was The Creature (as in the Black Lagoon.) He came by every week, never spoke an intelligible word, but made an occasional grunt when the football teams scored. He always wore the same grey jacket and faded blue jeans and sneakers. My coworkers had names for at least a dozen of the "regulars." Sometimes they would give updates such as "I saw Creepface at Macys yesterday, perhaps he is abandoning us."

The only customers who made me mad were those who changed their minds. I have spent more than a hour selling a complete stereo system, only to have the person come back 10 minutes later to cancel because they didn't want to wait at the pickup desk. And then there were those who brought back the big stereo the day after the Big Party, or returned the big screen tv the day after the Super Bowl. Stuff like that made stores create Restocking Fees! Returns also put a dent on my commision. Everytime I took a week vacation I would come back and start off in deficit because of returns. It cost me money to take time off!

One customer that I call The Cheapskate really made me angry. El Cheapo came in and asked for a particular brand and model of vcr. He then proceeded to have me explain in excruciating detail every feature and function, including how to set the clock, how to set up the channels and how to use the timer. His questions about the machine were so detailed, I began to wonder what was going on. I asked him for the sale at which point he told me he had bought one yesterday from Costco where they didn't have any salesman to explain how to use it but were \$20 cheaper. I told him to get the hell out of my store!

Other fun stuff happened at Montgomery Wards including the time the comforters went on sale and two otherwise adult females each grabbed one end of a particular item and began shouting at each other, "I saw it first." They wouldn't let go and started a tugging match which ended with both of them falling onto the floor still yelling "It's mine." Thank god the manager arrived in time to separate them before blood started flowing.

Another strange incident happened while I was on my break. The appliances were near where I worked and I was quite surprised when I returned to see a pickup truck had driven through the glass and metal doors 20 feet right into the store only stopping after hitting a couple of stoves and a refrigerator. The gas pedal got stuck by accident. A few days later the store placed large concrete plant holders in front of each door to prevent any chance of that happening again!

One personal weird moment that I won't soon forget was the day that I was trying to sell a tv set and one of the customers told me to turn on the local news broadcast. On the news they were announcing that Montgomery Wards was closing all its stores in 3 months time! Too bad the store management couldn't communicate this to the employees before it hit the tv news! So I learned of my impending layoff on the noon news. It didn't shock me, but a little more class would have been nice.

I'm glad to be out of retail after 25 years. I don't miss it. The customers for the most part were very nice and sometimes one of them still to this day come up to me to say "I bought a tv from you 10 years ago., you remember me don't you?" I always say yes, and wish I could.



WHY RETAIL CLERKS AREN'T ALLOWED TO CARRY FIREARMS

by STEVE STILES

Well, today is the day after Thanksgiving and, despite a vigorous morning workout on the rowing machine, I seem to be a bit more bulgy than usual.

Today is also Black Friday in the retail biz, and I give thanks that it's the start of my weekend off : my fellow workers will be besieged by a far greater load of customers than usual as well as having to simultaneously deal with a greater than normal influx of new books to shelve and arrange in displays.

I needn't feel too smug as the start of my workweek, Sunday, will likely be as busy. That pace will continue to build until by the time Dec. 24th rolls around I will definitely be in an Ebenezer Scrooge-like frame of mind. Only Leonard & Coleen Stockmann's holiday festivities, with good food and good friends, will take the edge off my foul mood.

Anyway, I often extol the virtues of our customers, but there are a few exceptions to the rule. There is The Smelly Old Man, The Giggly Idiot, and the AfroCentric Feminist (a local eccentric celebrity whose name I've forgotten), for example: Euro-American, did you know that slavery was wrong? You say you do, but the AfroCentrist Feminist knows you are lying and will spend a great deal of your time explaining just why this is so.

This past Wednesday we had a classic case, somewhat like The Giggly Idiot.

(I have to explain that our register computer systems are strange & limited. One of the drawbacks is that once a sale is finalized, once we've hit that final "Enter," there's *no* going back for revisions.)

A customer came to my register with about 30 books. I rang them up. She asked if she could wrap them. I directed her to where our paper was. Then, seeing that there were enough clerks in the store, I headed into the warehouse for more books for the photography section.

Back with my load, I noticed that she was back at the register, telling one of our newer clerks, Dan, that she would *now* like the books mailed. This has to be done in the *initial* sale process where the mailing cost--\$5.95--is added to the sales total. Then an itemized list plus the recipient's address is printed out for the shipping clerk.

So -- the previous sale had to be voided, a credit card refund given, and the whole process started again--only this time all the books had already been wrapped up, the labels removed, so that each item's five digit SKU number couldn't be scanned but rather entered by hand.

(Jeez, I'm getting steamed up again just recounting this...)

Our store manager was closer, so she took over for Dan. Ten long minutes later the whole process was laborously repeated, with the customer's address, etc. Denise, the manager then entered the total and the receipt was printed out.

Then the moron customer said:"Oh, didn't I tell you? I want these books shipped to *five different people*.

BADDA-BOOM!

The Giggly Idiot has a variation of this game. He buys about four shopping bags of books. You ring it up. Then he says, "Oh, didn't I tell you? I'm a dealer: I get a 10% discount. Hyuk, Hyuk, Hyuk!"

You void it, scan again the four bags of books, ring it up again with the discount.

Then he says: "Oh didn't I tell you? I want these shipped. Hyuk, Hyuk, Hyuk!"

He's gotten me twice with this before I wised up. He's gotten all the clerks with this bit. I still haven't decided if he's truly an idiot or a sadistic s.o.b.

Anyway, this Monday I saw him enter the store. I went to each of the new clerks and tipped them off to his evil ploys.

Later I saw that April, a sweet Radar O'Reilly type of person was waiting on him. He had four bags worth of books. I went over and helped her pack. She entered his dealer's discount and his shipping address. Then she entered the total.

Then G.I. said: "Oooo Nooo! I forgot--I left *another* bag of books over there in the corner. Gee, I hope I haven't put you to any trouble. Hyuk, Hyuk, Hyuk!"

BADDA-BOOM!

By the way, the Giggly Idiot was back in the store a few days ago. This time his routine was to wait until I totaled up about 20 books and then suddenly remember that he wanted them shipped to another address. After finally closing the sale, he chose to pay in the most inconvenient and tedious way possible, partly by gift card and partly with a credit card, which takes more time to do and makes the closeout paperwork more difficult.

I do not know what makes this guy tick, but I think sadism is in there somewhere.

--Steve Stiles--

* * * *

RANDOM THOUGHTS

This fanzine is being done as a series of emails, cut up and pasted together to make a fanzine like object. I feel about the "send" button the way Steve Stiles feels about the total button. Once you hit it there is no going back to correct typos or change a word or two. And of course I proofread before I hit send, and of course there are always more typos that I just didn't see somehow until it arrives in my inbox. It is very frustrating.

"Why don't I buy a new computer, you may ask?" I have to admit I am a cheapskate myself. My first computer a Macintosh Performa CD I won from Walgreens Back To School Sweepstakes. My second computer an Apple IMAC orange color I bought used for \$250 thanks to Billy Pettit. I outgrew the first one, and the second one died about a year ago. I like Macs and just can't force myself to spend \$1500 to buy a brand new one, no matter how good they are! I also don't feel like buying a \$500 pc because I really like the Macs! I don't want a pc but may someday have to cave in and get one... *MINE M*



STEFFAN-dango #1 by DAN STEFFAN was a wonderful first issue FAPAZine. I enjoyed it from cover to cover. I see that the secret to getting first place in the mailing is to miss the previous one. The stories and memories of Bob Tucker were delightful to me. I like hearing about how people discovered fandom. Like Dan, YANDRO was one of the very first fanzines that I received . CRY OF THE NAMELESS was also right up there at the start of my fannish career, so I did get that some fans had a sense of humor. I look forward to future issues with anticipation.

BEN'S BEAT #90 by BEN INDICK is a nice meaty addition to Fapa. My favorite thing in it is the color drawing of Sam Moskowitz by Kelly Freas. It does idealize SaM a bit since I remember him looking less relaxed and happy most of the time. Reading Ben's Beat is a good way to keep up with what's happening from the insider view of Broadway. The last play I saw was The Color Purple in SF, Ca, and while it was good, it wasn't up to the level of the film in my opinion. I guess I saw it 3 months ago and don't remember any lyrics or music of the songs. The dancing was quite good though!

MAILING COMMENTS

SF-or FAIRY TALES? by BO STENFORS is very well illustrated by Bo. The cover reminds me of Virgil Finlay, while the color illo on page 5 has muted pastels like ditto or hecto, but is printed. That reminded me a little bit of some of Hannes Bok color schemes. The text reinforces one of my themes, namely that science fiction will rapidly become fantasy once we learn more about the subject. In the 1930's it was possibly science fiction to have populations on Mars, or Venus. Now it is more like a fairy tale. I like your article especially the quotes from a 1926 encyclopedia. It does make one wonder why some fans say they only read science fiction, and won't read fantasy since if you get right down to it, it's ALL fantasy!

VISIONS OF PARADISE#120 by ROBERT MICHAEL SABELLA generates a few

random thoughts from me. Since you say Clifford D Simak was your first favorite sf writer I assume you enjoyed reading his story that I printed in my last issue of NUMBER ONE./ You say that you were in college during the Viet Nam protests, and the Summer Of Love and hardly even noticed either of them. I thought college was a central boiling point for both of those issues and wonder how it was possible to miss them there? Maybe you were studying too hard./ Rock and Roll derived from many types of music, not just the blues, but also gospel, country, honkey tonk, jazz , zydeco and especially what used to be called "race music" ie. rhythm and blues. Folk music had an influence but actually I consider most of the forms of music I just mentioned to be forms of "folk music." As Leadbelly is said to have opined it is all folk music you don't hear no cows singing do ya?/ How about some mailing comments next time?

MORE MAILING COMMENTS

KING BISCUIT TIME #51 by ROBERT LICHTMAN is all mailing comments. Nice Rotsler cover./ I don't have a paypal account, but a couple weeks ago I ordered the dvd "Bound To Lose" about The Holy Modal Rounders career and their ups and downs in life. I paid by using my Visa online and when the transaction was finished I was informed that I had paid by Paypal, and did I want them to save my data? I tried to say yes, but some glitch happened. Anyway I got the disc and maybe I have Paypal without ever applying for it I'm not sure how that works./ You mentioned blueberries in my back yard, but just to be clear it is the Amazing Unstoppable Blackberry bush that is taking over. I wish I had blueberries again as I did when I lived in Connecticut back in the 1960's. No thorns, no seeds, and very tasty indeed. I have a trace of diverticulitis and they tell me to avoid seeds./ I was very sorry to hear of Calvin Demmon's death. I don't deal very well with death and did not respond right away. I hope you liked the photo I pubbed of him in the last issue./ Yes I know that I could help global warming by replacing a few light bulbs at home, and consolidating trips and chores and actually I do my best not to be a conspicuous consumer. I do recycle paper, plastics, and turn off lights when I leave the room and put on an extra shirt or blanket when the house gets too cold. It all amounts to very little I think, kind of like spitting in the ocean to try to raise sea level..

FELINE MEWSINGS #30 by R-LAURRAINE TUTIHASI starts with a lovely Frank Wu cover showing a cat dreaming of the ancient Egyptian Cat Gods and their palace. Being a cat person myself I really could believe in that concept./ I guess I am lucky to have a job that lets me do puzzles or fanac when it isn't busy. But how lucky am I to still be working at all at 64 years of age? Lots of people retire sooner than that. I keep working mostly to have a decent health plan. However they keep changing the plan I have every year. Higher weekly deductions from my pay (\$57 a week), bigger deductables, larger copays, etc. If this keeps up I may have to retire and pay Kaiser \$9,000 a year instead!/ I heard a news item on the radio a day or two ago about a person with an auto navigation system. His computer told him to turn right, he did, and got killed by a speeding train as he crossed the train tracks! Sometimes it helps to look around for yourself first before you follow orders from a machine./ John Purcell was sent a sample mailing of FAPA by me. He responded favorably and said he would "probably join in Oct after he got his next check" but alas he did not join. I felt very disappointed since I know he would have been a great new member. I hope he does decide to join up sometime soon...

SWEET JANE #53 by GORDON EKLUND once again has some Damn Fine Writing. I also have a Laser Disc player and a lot of discs, maybe 70 or so. I don't really consider dvd's as an upgrade as the picture is excellent on both formats. I think studios hated laserdiscs because they weren't copy guarded and one could make excellent copies from the discs. Of course I still have 500 LP record albums and they are the same size as Laser Discs. People seem to like smaller better nowadays. Case in point ipods and the like where the sound quality isn't as good as vinyl or cd but you can put 1000 songs into this little portable player./ As for volunteering for film festivals being work, well, you can choose what you want to volunteer for. Taking tickets at the door is easy, or stuffing envelopes and sending out publicity mailings should seem like familiar duties to any faned. I used to like serving beer and wine at the parties (and yes I did occasionally sample some just to be sure it was good enough to serve.) Lots of retired folks do some kind of volunteer work, but I do it while I'm still employed. The other aspect is that you get to meet a lot of other people who love films, and you get to feel like a "part" of the event and sometimes even meet some of the directors, stars, screen writers, etc. The free films are a good perk too.

FORGOTTEN HORROR ICONS by RANDAL EVERTS is devoted to stories of Rondo Hatton and his brief film career. He was truly one of the scariest actors because he really looked like that. It didn't take much makeup as he had aomegaly which distorted his facial features. His most famous role was The Creeper and Famous Monsters Magazine helped keep him unforgotten to us in the 1960's!

EDGAR'S JOURNAL by VICKI and STEVE OGDEN is an elegant, beautiful zine, almost a work of art itself. The black cover has a perfectly round cutout showing the next page as a colorful butterfly and a full moon./ I'm very sorry to hear of the loss of your sister Connie. It is very hard to lose a loved one. Over the years I have lost my father and mother and my sister Susan. Just my sister Diana and I remain of my immediate family. / The illos by David Silverman are very good , I like surreal./ Is The Bread Of Life deli in San Francisco or Texas? Were you one of the employees there? If so I guess you were orof the staff of the bread of life? Ha.Ha.

A PROPOS DE RIEN by JIM CAUGHRAN mentions a Scrabble Club. Here in San Francisco there is a weekly Tuesday night club meeting which for many years met at the Carl's Jr hamburger restaurant at the Embarcadero Center near where my wife works. One night she decided to go back and play after a long hiatus. As she sat playing she overheard a security guard muse aloud about where would they play next week since Carl's was going out of business the next day! The club members were all amazed to hear this as none of them knew. They'd been going there for more than 10 years! Now they've moved to the YMCA not too far away. Yes she knows all the 2 and 3 letter words, but I don't, so it takes some of the fun away when we play at home. I bought her the official list of authorized words. No definitions, just a list of every possible, approved word or variation of such that is allowable.

NUMBER ONE #11 by me had some production glitches. I have decided to switch to smaller type, now that I find it is still legible. I hope this time the results are better. I tried very hard last time, even retyped parts of the zine 3 times and made at least 4 attempts to make the thing print all the words including the right side of the page. Not sure what caused it, but so far this time I'm not having that problem./ Like I said last time there are a lot more baseball players who took steroids so why only beat up on Barry?

TRIAL AND AIR #17 by MICHAEL W WAITE is lavishly illustrated with covers of magazines and books featuring stories by Tom Godwin. These illos are better reproduced than the original publishers were able to do through some miracle. They look gorgeous. There are about 35 of these covers and a checklist of almost everything that Godwin ever published. I know I must have read some of these stories, but I have no memory of them at all. Maybe I'll track down The Cold Equations and find out what caused the controversy with that tale from Astounding SF. Overall reaction to TRIAL AND AIR is WOW!

ALPHABET SOUP #56 by MILT STEVENS announces that after 5 years as FAPA OE he wants to retire and pass the job on to someone else. I regret that I can not volunteer to do this job. I do want to say a hearty THANK YOU to Milt for a job well done. Thanks also for the two complete lists of members of FAPA from the beginning up to present day. I see that I am #759 having joined in Nov of 2003. So now I have 4 years membership, working on #5. It has been fun. I also see from your list that recruiting has been slow these last 2 years with only one new member in 2006 & 2007. respectively. I keep trying to recruit, but no luck yet. I keep hoping./ One again THANK YOU MILT !

My sincere thanks go out to Bill Burns for graciously agreeing to post this issue at efanzines.com .I'm sending to him a copy of the paperzine and he will scan it and post it. Bill Burns deserves a Hugo in my opinion. THANKS BILL!

To those of you reading this on efanzines, I'd like to invite you all to consider joining FAPA. I am still a rookie there, only in my fifth year of membership. Many of you used to belong, and I hope you will consider rejoining. Activity is still only 8 pages a year. You only need to submit 40 copies. You still get some of the best fanwriters around. Where else can you get to hobnob with Gordon Eklund, Robert Silverberg, Michael W. Waite, Art Widner or A Langley Searles to name just 5 of the 35 current members? If you have any questions you could contact me and I'll do my best to answer them, or if you want to join or see if there are any sample mailings available please contact Robert Lichtman. I'm sure he would be thrilled to hear from you!

I guess I need to mention the dues are \$25 a year. About the cost of 7 gallons of gas here in San Francisco, or maybe a nice meal at a decent restaurant. For that measley, insignificant sum you will receive 4 quarterly mailings totalling more than 1000 pages of choice fanzines! Step right up, ladies and gentlemen and the first to respond will be awarded lucky FAPA membership #796. This will make you one number higher than Dan Steffan who joined last year at #795! Be the first new member of 2008!

This is a limited time offer, subject to participation and availability and may be withdrawn at any time. So call NOW or act right away. Don't miss the boat. This is too good to pass up!