

Four-Alarm FIRESIGNal

-- A newsletter of, about, and for The Firesign Theatre...and their loyal fans

Four-Alarm FIRESIGNal #26 (Electronic #4)

FAlaFal is published thrice yearly in fire sign months (April, August and December) as a public service for aficionados and dear friends of The Firesign Theatre by Elayne Wechsler-Chaput, "The Firehead Head," from the East Coast Derisational Hindquarters of the Natural Surrealist Party, mailing address 1747 65th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11204, Internet login ID firehead@panix.com, CompuServe ID 72672,2714, and Prodigy ID PPCD02B (please note, that last one may change if I get AOL at work). FAlaFal is free of charge (for now) and freely reproducible, and all letters, news clippings and articles, FT-related creativity and requests for materials may be sent to me c/o the above addresses (note to online folks: I would prefer hard copies of any news articles, etc. - please send those to my "snail mail" address). Thanks to the 4or5, Richard and MS, Michael, Frank, Jamie and Roger for their help. Copyright 1994 Pen-Elayne Enterprises; hard copy version printed and mailed by Roger Snyder at The Print Shop in NY; electronic distribution by Monrovia Communications, Monrovia, MD.

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[[1]] This Is Worker Speaking...

Wow - I can't believe the terrific responses we've gotten to our last editorial outlining our financial dilemma! So far we've received \$425 in donations from our wonderful readers, which almost exactly covers Roger Snyder's printing costs for this 8-pager, and I want to thank Ted Alvy, Frank Bland, Jan Edward Bridge, Niles Chandler, John Clark, Mike Dearen, Gayatri Devi, John Dryden, John Errett, Darius Firethorne, Sandy Hawkins, Patrick

Kavanagh, Danny Lieberman, James McKelvey, Marc Myers, Kate Naughton, Ronnie Sheeskin, Tom Somer, Marc Tucker and Doug Wakil for their generosity. Both mailing and paper costs have risen since our last issue - near as I can calculate, the bulk mail center wants around \$400 to send out almost 2000 issues, and that price will rise as we take on 500 additional readers from More Sugar's list for the August issue. We effectively need to double this donation rate to make publishing the hard copy version of FAlaFal cost-effective for me, especially since I'm trying to save my money in case I'm able to have a kid soon. These are the numbers, folks - if 2700 copies of an 8-page FAlaFal will cost me around \$900 per issue to print and send in hard copy form, and I take in

donations of at least \$750 per issue from various Fireheads, I'll have no problem swinging the rest. So far, if no angel comes through to sponsor us, I'm leaning heavily towards taking the newsletter mostly online, eliminating all the folks whose E-Mail addresses Jamie and I have (except for those who specifically request a hard copy version as well), and charging hard-copy recipients either \$5 a year or \$2 per issue to cover costs. Unfortunately, that means I'd have to start keeping track of subscriptions, and FAlaFal would no longer go out to non-paying readers, which I really don't like, but I don't see how I can afford to do otherwise. And your opinions expressed in our letters column are highly appreciated and will be mulled over carefully before I make my final decision on FAlaFal's fate next issue... I'd also like to thank those folks who submitted fund-raising ideas and items, all of which are being considered; thanks also to Bruce Smith for the fun food, and to Frank Bland, Mike Dearen and Mark Razor for the cassettes they sent!

I also appreciate the help Roger and I are getting in labeling and bundling FAlaFals for mailing - hope attendees to our second FAlaFal party on April 8 had a good time! As you can all see, we finally have a bulk mail permit indicia (#307) so things went MUCH faster without having to stamp! Our next party will probably be Saturday, August 12, so if you'd like to attend please contact me for directions and such! The hard copy version of this issue was mailed bulk rate on 4/10 but, as some copies of last issue (#25) didn't reach folks until three months later (and thank goodness only one or two folks at the Brooklyn/Parkville post office are aware of the rule of charging postage-due for returned bulk mail; I was able to resend many issues of #25 for only 32 cents, and get updated addresses to boot), I'm afraid I can't guarantee when they'll have arrived in your mailbox!

No, I didn't forget all you online readers, for whose patronage I'm exceedingly grateful (especially as Electronic FAlaFal costs me nothing but my time to produce!), EFAlaFal hit the 'nets and the Web on April 8, courtesy of our talented co-editor Jamie Schrupf, who now has his World Wide Web homepage together (more on WWW elsewhere this issue) and has been working on an electronic mailing list; E-Mail him at jamie@moncomm.clark.net for details on how to subscribe to EFAlaFal. Our online version is also posted in the alt.comedy.firesgn-thtre newsgroup, on the WELL, for those who can gopher there (the host is gopher.well.sf.ca.us and we're at path 0/Publications/online_zines/falafal), and on America Online, CompuServe and Prodigy (the last as soon as they acquire libraries). Please note that we *desperately* need online folks with both Internet and commercial online access - my CIS "send" functions badly, and I'm not on AOL yet, so Jamie could use volunteers to post EFAlaFal

in the appropriate places on these services. Please get in touch with him ASAP!

A note of relief - the situation with Jim Henry has been closed. ETC is no longer selling Firesign merchandise; stay tuned for more news on where to get these items as things settle. Meantime, the guys at More Sugar introduce themselves formally elsewhere this issue, and have also agreed to handle most of our News section henceforth; thanks guys! And a sad note - as expected, Gypsy Doctor's condition deteriorated quickly after the last FAlaFal, and his luck ran out on Friday the 13th of January; we had to put him to sleep the next morning. Thanks for all your kind words of condolence...

[[2]] Rumors Behind the News

(From the offices of MORE SUGAR <lodeston@bluemarble.net>)

* As this column is being written, on Tuesday, March 28, 1995, all Four or Five Crazy Guys are together, in L.A., in a recording studio, recording some new adventures of Nick Danger! These recordings are actually four :60-second radio commercials for Pizza Hut, to be aired in the Midwest. PBA&O are delighted and excited at the chance to have fun in the studio. Phil Proctor reports that John Goodman and Gary Owens both showed up for the sessions on Monday, and these are four commercials I can't wait to hear!

* JUNE, 1995 - the Interactive Media Festival in Los Angeles has asked TFT to perform the as-yet-not-completely-rediscovered triumph, Shakespeare's lost interactive version of Anythyng You Want To! ("Where the old Globe meets the Global Network"). They will be joined by The Blue Men, the Merce Cunningham Dancers, a wagon-lit full of onstage technology, and the audience will be wired with controllers to affect the action and the course of the play. Two performances are scheduled for June 7, 1995 only -- 4 pm and 7 pm - and Bob Ezrin of 7th Level, a big computer gaming company, will be helping with production. All this happens at the Variety Arts Center in L.A. The evening performance is only for those attending the Festival, but tickets for the 4 pm matinee ARE available to the public. For more info on attending any of this, call the IMF at (415) 357-0100. It's only a 900-seat house, so if you're thinking about going, remember what Ma York said: "Order now before it's too late!"

* MORE SUGAR is preparing two new releases: the Script to Anythyng You Want To, complete with brand

new and astoundingly comprehensible notes, footnotes, toenotes, and cornplasters; and the video Nick Danger in The Case Of The Missing Yolk, which is newly licensed and currently bobbing amidst the packaging works. We hope to include some additional video items on this release; more info later on.

* The New Album is in the works, but things are not yet fully crystallized. The working title is "The Illusion of Unity" -- but I'm not prepared to guarantee that title will make it through the process without change. Creative Juices are Flowing, and there are Business Things being Considered and Negotiations being Negoshed.

* Sony/Columbia Legacy has told us they want to re-release How Can You Be In Two Places At Once..., but we don't have a firm date yet.

* Tour Plans -- are not yet firm enough for any general announcement. There is a lot of moving and shaking going on, but the kaleidoscope has not settled into a definite pattern yet. Everybody wants a tour, and hopefully a run or two in smaller theatres in larger cities. Scheduling people and venues and money and promotion and all that kinda stufflikethatthere has been affected more than once by other plans and possibilities coming up. Recent feedback from fans on tour venues was very welcome and useful! The info is in the hopper. We want to sincerely thank all who emailed.

* Movies: Peter Bergman and John Goodman have been shooting a theatrical PSA film to make people aware of the new Ultra Violet (UV) Index. This will show up on 1500 screens around the country this year.

* Books: David Ossman reports finishing the manuscript of a new full-length novel, The Ronald Reagan Murder Case, which is part of the George Tirebiter saga. Phil Austin is also working on a book of which more to come... Phil Proctor spoke wistfully of finding time to assemble his legendary photos-of-American-weirdness collection into what would surely be an amazing book. Looking for publishers... publishers... publishers, anyone?

* Everything You Know Is Wrong is now becoming available on Pay-TV. As this goes to press the movie is actually on in Hartford, Connecticut, and negotiations are happening for other circuits as well.

* Other Firesign Theatre projects are on the table. Proposals are being worked up, and financial backing is being sought for projects like a CD-ROM version of Anythin'ge You Want To, a Laserdisc boxed-set of the best of The Firesign Theatre on film and video, a special limited-edition commemorative set of Dwarf, and reprinting the Big Book of Plays and the Big Mystery

Joke Book. TFT needs and wants help and support from Fireheads -- we here at More Sugar are the living proof of that! Right now the immediate needs are mostly capitalization for various individual projects in four, five, and the low six-figures; publishers for books; and creative help in Spreading The Word. Anybody who can be realistic but imaginative, enterprising but cool and common sense, could help in one way or another.

* Lastly, TFT has a new manager, Eric Gardner of Panacea - welcome! Thanks, Richard! Now, for Elayne's news section...

* Phil Proctor called me towards the end of March when Dave Ossman was over at his place in 90210-land, and I chatted with both guys on happenings in their individual careers. Phil is doing ADR voice work for the upcoming movies "Village of the Damned," "Free Willy 2" and "Die Hard 3," and lots of work on "Carmen San Diego" cartoon, playing characters who speak foreign languages (so far Russian, Latin, Arabic, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Danish and Dutch) and thugs, as well as translating some languages for other actors, whom he then coaches. David mentioned his novel, of course, as well as progress on post-production for "Goldfish" (Ned Shaw is finishing the artwork and Janie Cribbs the music), and the major news that he and Judith will be online soon - more info to come! Although they were not funded for the American Comedy series by CPB, Judith's NPR Playhouse pieces are set to air this month - check local stations!

* As many of you have pointed out to me online and through postal mail, the former Soviet republic of Abkhazia has issued "(Groucho) Marx/(John) Lennon" stamps - as featured on the cover of Firesign's second album How Can You Be...! Once again the 4or5 prove prescient. FAlaFal readers have already expressed an interest in purchasing these sets, and we're investigating bulk-ordering them (for a lot less than advertised in places like TV Guide), possibly as a FAlaFal fund raiser.

* I was honored to be on WBAI-FM this past January 21 with "Hour of the Wolf" host Jim Freund for a special 4-hour Firesign special, which included a lengthy phone conversation with Dave Ossman and Jim playing about half of "the canon," the continuing story which runs through the first four albums. Only one technical glitch - it seemed to be the 38th of Cunegonde forever - but we had lots of fun. I read from The Big Book of Plays and was able to plug FAlaFal, Sparks and More Sugar. Jim wants to do a longer special later this year, to which he has also invited me back; thanks for all your expertise and hospitality, Jim! One correction and clarification from last issue: Chuck Lavazzi, aka The Doge of St. Louis (E-Mail address clavazzi@nyx.cs.du.edu), has two Firesign

interviews available from his "One Step Beyond" show last year - one with Phil Proctor and Dave Ossman from July 17 ("the interviews are interspersed with some familiar and not-so-familiar FT material (including stuff from the "Dear Friends" shows that didn't make it on to the record album) as well as calls from listeners"), and the second from October 16 with PP and Phil Austin - "separately," says Chuck, "in relatively short interviews; the rest of the show consists of FT musical material (including a 12-minute "Firesign Musical Montage" that I'm rather proud of) and pledge breaks (which can be entertaining all by themselves, if you're in the right frame of mind). Both shows are produced by me and hosted by me and Otis Woodard," and both are available for two blank 60-minute cassettes plus \$3 (for return postage) per interview; Chuck's correct address is One Step Beyond c/o FM88, 3504 Magnolia, St. Louis, MO 63110.)

[[3]] MORE SUGAR From The Firesign Theatre: Who Am Us (Out Here), Anyway?

MORE SUGAR From The Firesign Theatre is, formally, a division of our Indiana corporation, Creative Audio Enterprises, Inc. CAE has an agreement actually signed by all Four or Five which allows us to market any products they authorize; and in return, More Sugar gives them a more generous slice of the income than anybody has ever done. We're all major Fireheads, and it's cheaper to operate here in the heartland -- so when people buy Firesigniana from us, the boys themselves pocket more money directly than from any other outlet.

WHO DO YOU TALK TO WHEN YOU CALL US
AND SOMEBODY ANSWERS, "Hello, studio!?"

RICHARD FISH - Our Flounder. Actor, writer, engineer, producer. Victim of epiphanic experience upon hearing Waiting For The Electrician in college, causing an immediate career decision to go into radio theatre. Started a recording studio in 1975 for music, advertising and radio theatre. Midwest Radio Theatre Workshop staff since 1986; partner with David Ossman and Judith Walcutt in radio productions. Producer of Back From The Shadows.

TOM DUKEMAN - The Sales Department. Musician, actor, composer, writer, salesman, artist. AKA "The Ultimate" in his band, The Knievels. Large Swedish type, mild-mannered despite Wagnerian horned headgear worn on stage. Designer of artwork for Anythyng and

Everything. Specializes in graphic design, rock 'n' roll party songs, and astute negotiations. New father in 1994, new office in 1995.

TONY BREWER - The Office Himself. Actor, writer, director, producer. Improv theatre refugee who despises the term "Slacker," because nobody cuts him any. Wins prize for having the longest hair, and for achieving more in radio at an earlier age than anybody we know since young George Tirebiter. Actor in, and producer of, Hayward Sanitarium, ongoing radio horror/mystery serial, 8 weeks of NPR Playhouse in 1994.

Keeps track of all the little pieces of paper with numbers on them. We're working hard to get out on the Internet and the World Wide Web. Hopefully you'll be able to get a More Sugar homepage within a week or three; it will of course link to Niles Ritter's TFT homepage, to Elayne, and all around the place. We do have an email address (lodeston@bluemarble.net) and yes, the snailmail order address (611 Empire Mill Road, Bloomington, IN 47401) is our place up on top o' th' hill here. It's a 1902 farmhouse full of studios, offices, archives, and living quarters for Richard and two tenants.

MORE SUGAR has been maintaining an 800 number since 1993 and we can never remember what it is. Now we've started a comprehensive audio-theatre catalog called The LodesTone Catalog, and got an even better 800 number for that. So we're going to drop the non-mnemonic MORE SUGAR number at the end of April, and from now on you'll be able to order any MS merchandise by calling 1-800-414-MIND (that's 800-414-6463). Just remember, "For one four Mind."

**Elayne's Addendum: Use the above number to request a LodesTone catalog of your very own, or to order the following (add \$4.00 s&h to each order):

AUDIO: Anythyng You Want To (Shakespeare's Lost Comedie) - Four goodly Yanks on ye Bearde of ye Bard. Classickal Comick prerequisite for all Ye Majors of ye Olde English Litte and Ye Minors of Ye New American Trippe; once lost and now restored to us as it was. Like unto that performed in excerpts during last summer's Toure de Farce. NOTE: This is the restored, uncut, letterbox version, as originally produced for broadcast, including material and performances never before released on recordings.
\$10.95 per cassette

VIDEO: Everything You Know Is Wrong - Hello, Seekers! There are 8 million stories in the Naked Trailer Park, and here are Four or Five of them. Delight in watching this sharp, clean print as Happy Harry Cox goes to the Inter-Galactic Alien Friendship Convention, meets

Art Wholeflaffer, and finds Reebus Caneebus on the brink of a Nude Age landmark that could become the Earth Hole Catalog. Remember, There's a Seeker Born Every Minute!
\$19.95 per VHS video

**[[4]] Firesignia Available Exclusively
From SPARKS MEDIA
P.O. Box 3540
Grand Rapids, MI 49501
616-363-8231**

AUDIO

DOWN UNDER DANGER: A Nick Danger Adventure (Written by and Starring Phil Austin; 1994) - Nick tackles a case involving the disappearance of the continent of Australia, a boxing kangaroo named Jojo and more Danger than you can shake a fist at.
1 Cassette \$ 9.50 ppd

THE GEORGE TIREBITER STORY, Chapter 1 aka Another Christmas Carol (Written by and Starring David Ossman; 1989)
1 Cassette \$ 8.95 ppd

RADIODAZE, featuring "The New Adventures of Mark Time," "Max Morgan: Crime Cabby" and "Young Tom Edison" (Written by and Starring David Ossman; 1989)
1 Cassette \$ 8.95 ppd

VIDEO

AN AUTOBOZOGRAPHICAL EVENING - A one-man show including Firesign video bits and a special prepared version of "Poems for Two Voices" (Starring David Ossman; 1986)
1 VHS Video \$15.95 ppd

RADIOPLAY - A documentary on the making of a David Ossman radio show (Starring David Ossman; 1989)
1 VHS Video \$15.95 ppd

All programs produced by SPARKS MEDIA
Please make all checks payable to "Sparks"
Michigan residents add 6% sales tax

**[[5]] Taken Apart, Stacked Up and
Labeled**

In its first incarnation, FAlaFal served largely as an archival repository. With all the new activity in Firesign World, we haven't highlighted this aspect of our collective endeavor as much as we probably should have. I hope to remedy that situation with this irregular column.

* Audio - Just to remind y'all, Michael Packer (see address in SPARKS MEDIA ad elsewhere this issue) is our official Audio Archivist - for a list of his (our) Firesign audio cassette collection, please send him a 55-cent SASE. I am currently retyping Michael's list for online uploading; stay tuned.

* Records - I'm thinking of starting an LP album exchange service, sort of an open-market classified section, for folks who can't find or have extra copies of Firesign works - any suggestions on how we might work this?

* CDs - Frank Bland (coolzip@nyc.pipeline.com) reports, "The Compact Disc Connection offers several FT CDs. You can access this online catalog via telnet to 199.35.15.2. I haven't ordered from this service, so I don't know how reliable their catalog information is. I have connected to them, and their search capabilities are *very* good. They list several CDs in their catalog that I've been trying to find for quite a while. Of course you need a credit card to order. Your card isn't charged until your order ships, and if it cannot be shipped within 10 days, your order is cancelled (no back orders). Shipping is \$3.50 for all orders under \$100, free above \$100. Here are the FT CDs listed in their catalog:

MoB747 - BACK FROM THE SHADOWS - \$31.96
SoN52736 - SHOES FOR INDUSTRY! - \$19.29
MoB758 - DEAR FRIENDS - \$24.78
MoB748 - FIGHTING CLOWNS - \$12.88
MoB834 - HOW CAN YOU BE IN TWO PLACES... - \$12.33
MoB785 - I THINK WE'RE ALL BOZOS... - \$12.35
MoB762 - WAITING FOR THE ELECTRICIAN... - \$12.35

* Video - For those many people among you who have asked about Firesign video, I must confess to having put this archiving project on the back burner for the time being due to lack of time and of course our money situation. As you see elsewhere, More Sugar is working on this, and we'll try to have more concrete news on this front for our next issue.

* Press/Print - A list of my press and miscellaneous print archives are available for a 55-cent SASE (please specify "archives") or by E-Mailing me, for anyone who wants to see if they'd like copies of any articles written about TFT, collectively and individually, which I've amassed so far.

If you have stuff you think I might not have, please get in touch; I'm still missing quite a bit!

[[6]] Dear Friends...

It was inevitable, I suppose, that I would have left out plugging some worthy publications put out by FAlaFal readers in my "one-time" zine reviews last issue. As I said then, I do not plan to make this a regular column, but I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that Michael Shores sent me a copy of one of his collage zines, *Death and the Maiden*, and says there are more where that came from. This one was \$4 and is available from Michael at American Living Press, P.O. Box 901, Allston, MA 02134...

Also neglected was *Camera Obscura*, a large one-sheet-folded-thrice-over music review/critzine from Marc Tucker (see this issue's letters column), available for 75 from him at 1508 Faymont, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266...

Lastly, *Moxie* is a new Discordian publication, available for "the usual" (SASE, a buck, whatever) from James Archer, P.O. Box 4230, Chandler, AZ 95244-2430...

Another lapse of mine came from the fact that I'm still not used to the idea of online-only publications, so I forgot to tell you all about the monthly *Mini-Annals of Improbable Research* (Mini-AIR) from Marc Abraham and friends. The regular edition of AIR can be gotten from The MIT Museum, 265 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139, but Marc didn't mention how much it cost. E-Mail subscriptions can be ordered from mitshop@mit.edu (please include your Internet address in all printed correspondence), and the World Wide Web (WWW) Universal Resource Locator (URL) for the "Hot AIR" home page is <http://web.mit.edu/afs/athena/org/i/improb/www/home.html> ...

Chances are fairly good that many Fireheads are also fans of British comedy, and the excellent monthly online publication *Britcomedy Digest* is the best resource I've found on this subject so far, thanks to editor Melinda Casino. If you want to subscribe, E-Mail her at casino@pobox.upenn.edu or check out the WWW URL at <http://cathouse.org:8000/BritishComedy/> (there are tons of other places you can catch this pub, but why not ask Melinda about them?)...

For the latest news on our friends at the Duck's Breath Mystery Theatre, including Ian Shoales, Dr. Science, Randee of the Redwoods and everyone else, you can E-Mail DB manager Steve Baker at DUCKSB@aol.com.

The troupe is working on getting WWW home pages together, as well as mounting a 20th anniversary show this summer at San Francisco's Great American Music Hall (call 800/989-DUCK or the GAMH at 415/885-0750 for more info). And ask Steve about Ian Shoales' new publication *Pundit Pending* while you're at it...

Lastly, our friend Ivan Stang (aka Doug Smith) has finally, like me, taken the leap of publishing online; you can get the first *SubGenius Stark Fist of Removal Online* by writing to him at i.stang@metronet.com, by tuning in to the alt.slack newsgroup, or by checking out Bill Benzel's or Jamie Schruppf's home pages (see WWW article elsewhere this issue)!

[[7]] "There's Bees and Spiders in There!"

The World Wide Web (WWW) is often touted as the "Next Big Thing" on the Internet, and can be rather daunting to those, like me, used to only E-Mail and newsgroup/Forum/BBS activity. WWW sites and "homepages" use a combination of text, graphics and even sound to present information, familiarize you with their hosts (be they individuals or corporations, which are churning out web sites more and more lately) and lead you to other WWW sites via hypertext, a phenomena that lets you tab (if you only have a text-based Web "browser" like me) or click (if you have Windows or a Mac and one of the more advanced browser programs) on highlighted words or phrases within a WWW page's text to connect to other files, places of interest and even, if your browser supports it, MUSHes, E-Mail and newsgroups. Very much like a spider with tendrils and tentacles that reach into the strangest places sometimes...

Web page URLs (Universal Resource Locators) all start with the designation "http://" (Hypertext Transfer Protocol), then the person's domain (address) - usually interminably long and separated into computer-digestible language by periods, tildes and (forward) slash marks and ending with the name of the "html" (Hypertext Markup Language) or text file itself. For instance, I've advertised Electronic Four-Alarm FIRESIGNal's availability via WWW before - you can get it from Jamie Schruppf's homepage, which can be found at the URL: <http://www.clark.net/pub/moncomm> by clicking/tabbing to "EFAlaFal", or by typing the whole Web address above and adding the file name `/fala_26.txt` (for this issue) at the end. Jamie also archives EFAlaFal back issues, and can link or "point" you to other Firesign-

related Web pages, some of the more interesting and comprehensive of which are:

<http://mtritter.jpl.nasa.gov/firesign.html> This one's Niles Ritter's Firesign homepage, and contains the voluminous and highly educational (and fun!) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) files Niles uploads monthly to the Firesign Theatre newsgroup `alt.comedy.firesgn-thtre`, which he established on Usenet - including a Hypertext Lexicon!! You can also view Niles' scanned pictures of the group, as well as connect to Jamie's homepage (and EFAlaFal), as you can from some of the other WWW pages mentioned below.

<http://www.voicenet.com/voicenet/homepages/SirWill1/index.html>

This text-only page belongs to Bill Benzel, who runs the Firesign MUSH (Multiple User Shared Hallucination, a combined chat area and online text adventure game) The Old Same Place, filled with rooms and objects right off the records. You can get there from here!

<http://www.clark.net/pub/rarnold/homepage.html>

This is Richard Arnold's fun and varied homepage, which will soon contain his complete Firesign quiz, questions and answers, after it finishes its run in the next few FAAlaFals.

<http://www.mtn.org/~jstearns/Firesign.html>

This is the new homepage of Jerry Stearns (note the capital "F" - that's the thing about Web pages, you have to type the URL *exactly*), who wrote last issue's Midwest Radio Theatre Workshop review, and contains a great picture of him with David and (a bearded!) Phil P from that workshop, as well as links to almost all the other Web pages mentioned above.

That's the great thing about WWW - you can link your page to everyone else's! Tune in to the `alt.comedy.firesgn-thtre` newsgroup for news on more Web pages in progress coming from More Sugar, Roger Snyder, even me (sooner or later)!

[[8]] Everything You Know is Wrong: The Firesign Theatre Trivia Quiz

by Richard Arnold

This quiz is the beginning of a four-part feature. Remaining quizzes will cover the other three albums of "The Canon." Individual awards will be given to the winner of each individual contest. Combined scores of all

four quizzes will be tallied, and a grand prize will be awarded to the highest total score. Scoring is based on the relative difficulty of the question. Questions that can be determined from one or two listenings of the album are scored "easy" (1 point). Questions that require repeated listenings, or at least a concentrated listening with headphones are scored "moderately easy" (2 points). Questions that require knowledge of hidden meanings, inside jokes, knowledge of other Firesign Theatre albums, etc., are scored "moderately difficult" (3 points). Questions that require general knowledge/trivia, and non-album information about the Firesign Theatre beyond their actual recordings, or refer to a popular culture/historic/psychological/literature/music/art or other outside reference, are scored "very difficult" (4 points). All judgements as to scoring of individual answers are made by Richard Arnold, and are final. Before the publication of the quiz, he made a list of possible alternate answers to questions that he would accept; all other alternate answers will not be accepted once the quiz is published. Exact wording or spelling of answers is not necessary unless specified in the question. Individual requests for clarification of specific questions will not be honored, as it might give unfair advantage to the person making the request. Questions about these rules (not individual questions) can be addressed to Richard Arnold by emailing him at `rarnold@clark.net` or by writing to: Richard Arnold, 1303 R Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009 (no phone calls, please). The deadline for submitting answers to these questions is July 1, 1995. Entries received after that date will be ignored. Entries can be sent to Richard Arnold at `rarnold@clark.net` or to Elayne c/o this publication. This and subsequent quizzes appearing in FAAlaFal are excerpted from a quiz Richard is developing for his World Wide Web page. The quiz in its entirety will be posted in installments after the publication of these excerpts. Prizes will be determined by Richard, Elayne and the 4or5 at the end of the four-part quiz(zes).

Part One: Questions from the album WAITING FOR THE ELECTRICIAN OR SOMEONE LIKE HIM "Temporarily Humboldt County" (13 points total)

1. Who were the first "White Brothers" that the Indians encountered? (1)
 2. What did the Indians discover on their reservation in the desert? (1)
 3. Where in America did the settlers first encounter the Indians? (2)
 4. Three of the first "White Brothers" the Indians encountered had a name: what were they? (3)
 5. What did one of the American settlers invent after receiving corn? (3)
 6. Who dedicated the reservation as a national monument? (3)
- "W.C. Fields Forever" (20 points total)

7. Complete this phrase: "Om, Om, _____" (1)
8. What happens to the horse that Dr. Tim feeds sugar cubes? (1)
9. What was the name of the Ranger's companion? (2)
10. What was the cheer the members of the commune gave at sunrise? (2)
11. What was the name of the ROOM where the beginners assumed the full Lotus position? (3)
12. What was the name of the Ranger's horse? (3)
13. The name of the town in Gaby's story is based on a character in a Charles Dickens novel. What was the name of the town, the Dickens character, and the novel? (1 point each for the town and character, 2 points for the novel - 4 total)
14. What famous song does the cheerleader quote, who performed the original, and on what album does it appear? (1 point each for the song and performer, 2 points for the album - 4 total)
"Le Trente-Huit Cunegonde" (21 points total)
15. What term(s) was used by the police to describe the woman and black man they observed? (1)
16. What was the name of Dr. Benway's son? (1)
17. What was the style of the old lady's body paint? (2)
18. What was dropped on the resistance forces? (2)
19. The Senator was also referred to by another title: what was it? (3)
20. The name of the character Dr. Benway was taken from what work of literature (title and artist)? (4)
21. The song the "President" sings is a parody of what song, and by what artist? (2 points for the song, 2 for the artist - 4 total)
22. The name of the bomber plane is based on what two pop culture references? (2 points for each reference - 4 total)
"Waiting For the Electrician or Someone Like Him" (30 points total)
23. How many people were in the elevator? (1)
24. What was the name of the game show? (1)
25. Name all "words in Turkish." (1)
26. Other than English, what two other languages were spoken in the elevator? (2)
27. To what organization did the volunteers who assisted in the disease outbreak belong? (2)
28. What symptom number was Jaundice? (2)
29. What technique did the man in the elevator refer to when, in mentioning the Palace, he said that they were "cleaning it?" (3)
30. What other diseases did the protagonist ("P") guess? (3)
31. What was the name of the topless nurse? (3)
32. The title "Waiting for the Electrician or Someone Like Him" was a reference to what play (title and artist)? (2 points for title, 2 points for artist - 4 total)
33. What historical event also inspired the title? (4)

34. Lord Kitchner was based on what real-life political figure, and what was his claim to fame? (4)

[[9]] Postmark: Deep Space

(As expected we got a lot of feedback in response to last issue's editorial, much of which is printed below. Some online readers wrote immediately to have their names dropped from the hard copy mailing list; if you're one of those, wait until the August issue comes out and I've made my final decision, then remind me one more time!)

Dear Ms. Chaput, 30 December 1994

Just my luck. The first (and only) fan club I've ever joined (in my 44 years) and now it looks like bad times ahead. Unfortunately, I'm one of those modemless people and, until one of my kids really get into computers, it's just not worth it for me to junk my old Amiga 1000 and get a new computer.

I can't help but admire someone who likes sharing their hobbies with other like-minded people. You try hard. You must be feeling a bit like a fireplug instead of a firehead these days... It looks like your survival depends on you going electronic. Then us "hard copy" people will need to send you at least a couple bucks a year (no problem on anybody's finances). This will weed out the "I'll join anything that's free" folks, whom you really don't need anyway. If you're starting a family, then the less outside hassles the better. Go electronic, and don't worry. Us hard copy people will gladly pay for the paper, otherwise we wouldn't be fans.

MIKE DEAREN
Wewoka, OK

(Some good points raised, Mike, which I'll try to address in order. First of all, it's "Ms. Wechsler-Chaput" - more folks know me by the "Wechsler" name anyway - but I prefer "Elayne." Also, just to clarify, we're not a "fan club." Apparently reader Greg Lauscher's publication GOLDMINE listed FAlaFal as a fan club rather than a newsletter/info service and, while I'm grateful for the free publicity and the new readers it brought, I've also had to go to great lengths to explain they won't get membership cards and other goodies. As Groucho said, I wouldn't belong to any club that would have me as a member...)

Dear Elayne, January 5, 1994

I've just received my third issue of FAlaFal and am saddened to hear of the financial woes. I'd really hate to lose such a great publication. I've been into Firesign since before they changed the water but my Firesign roots had

been dormant, buried deep beneath the ground for many years. Partly because all my Firefriends from the old days all seemed to move away and the 4or5 hadn't put out anything in recent years.

So imagine my surprise when I opened my local paper last year and saw they were coming to town. I had second row seats and the best time I'd had in years. Then a few long or short months later my first FAlaFal, unexpected but much welcomed, arrived in the mail. So Freedom was not dead but much alive and in cyber-space no less. But as you said, not everyone can afford to get on the information super highway and that shouldn't exclude them from receiving hard copy versions of FAlaFal. I for one would be willing to pay a subscription to keep receiving Firenews. I don't have all the answers (and not many of the questions) but I would think that Fireheads that have the means and want to keep FAlaFal going would more than gladly give what they can to help. I know I'd do anything to help you... lick stamps, send stamps, write articles, sign up new Fireheads or anything - just ask. Like Tweeny said to Mark Time in How Time Flies "I'm only here to help you." The way I see it is, if enough people are receiving FAlaFal and talking about the 4or5 on the 'net, that should let the boys know that there is still enough interest out here and maybe inspire them to do a new album and tour more often.

I'm glad there are still a lot of us out here, and get a warm feeling in my heart to hear from the new generation of fireheads on the 'net. After hanging around in alt.comedy.firesgn-thtre and reading issues 23, 24 and 25 I've begun to realize that there is much more to the 4or5 than I ever dreamed of. I'm interested in getting as much information on the group as possible and also getting as many recordings that were not offered in the record stores. I'm sending away to More Sugar for EYKIW and am staying close contact (as close as I can) with Michael at Sparks to get some of the recordings he has to offer. I wouldn't have knowledge of either source of Firesign material if it wasn't for FAlaFal - thanks!

More sugar to you,
RONNIE SHEESKIN
Rockville, MD

Dear Elayne, January 6, 1994

Got the FAlaFal #25 this week, and glad of it, too. Can't wait to see if the 4 or 5 will be visiting this Great Heartland of ours, and not just sticking to the left coast for their next tour. For what it's worth, I'd be pleased to send you some dead presidents to keep my name on your hard copy list. I can get into some of the Internet areas for the electronic version, but it's not easy...

Ran into what must be the source for another Firesign (actually, Proctor & Bergman) reference the other day whilst visiting my wife at the hospital. I was looking down at the pedals at the foot of the bed. The one on the left said "Trendelenberg", the middle one said "Up/Down" and the one on the right indicated it was for a reverse Trendelenberg, abbreviated as "Rev. Trendelenberg." Could this indeed be the inspiration for the name of our beloved Rear Reverend (Rev.) Sport Trendleberg?

Keep up the great work as the Firehead Head, et al!

WAYNE DAVIS

Winterset, IA

Dear Elayne, January 7, 1995

[written on a postcard from Lulu & Vernon's Restaurant, "Home of Home-Baked Pies"]

With or without Lulu & Vernon's pie, there can be no free lunch: I vote for paid subscriptions to FAlaFal, it's that good. Conversely, be advised I don't read what a snail don't carry. (Mine is a have-not household.)

I await your decision and hope all concerned receive their just dessert.

Check, please, GLENN GUSTAFSON

Dedham, MA

Hi There, January 8, 1995

I am interested in adding my 2 pesos worth to the funding discussion...

As a fan, I'd see no troubles in kicking in a few kopecks a year to keep updated on the boys. Perhaps some expansion would be in order, sort of to help in funding if you will - such as items available only from FAlaFal. For all I care they could be vastly overpriced, for I'd pick up an item or two knowing it was keeping the organization in the black. Things such as "fan club only" posters, t-shirts and - be still my beating heart - even a few CDs. For there is a TON of unavailable items to be had, desired, and dreamed of, let alone coveted!

And now, let me delve into that territory, that of unavailable material. First up, it is CRIMINAL that most of the Boys output is not available on CD... myself, it would tickle me to see more from their radio series. Plus, I'm aware that the boys have done a few commercials and PSAs in their illustrious career... most output is available only on old vinyl, which is to say it is unavailable to the vast majority of folks out there. And as vinyl disappeared in about 1988, that means it's been 7 years now. And some of those releases went out of print far sooner than that, so some of this stuff has been unavailable for ages...

And lastly, I want to cast my vote for more video... Well, I guess I've rambled on long enough, but I wanted to share a few thoughts with someone close to the Boys and no doubt VERY influential as well! Thanks for taking the time to wade through this and, should you feel inclined, I'd love to hear from you!

Cheers,

RICH J. KUNKEL

Wadsworth, OH

(Well Rich, the main problem with offering to dupe albums and videos, as we've noted in previous issues, is the question of copyrights and permissions, as well as our acknowledgement that we'd like to see much of this stuff re-released commercially. So would Sony and More Sugar, by the way, and your suggestions [as well as those of others] on what should be re-released will be seriously considered! "Influential," me? Heck no, I just run a voluntary newsletter...)

January 9, 1995

In the wake of price increases, etc. please change my subscription to an electronic one. I will keep all your "addresses" on file in case I need to make changes. By all means, meet your expenses - it is totally reasonable for you to charge for printed US Mail material. This information is too important to we fans who love Firesign - it must get out to all of us! And the record companies have shown that they can't be trusted to reach us with all the info we crave, certainly not like we can reach each other. Where else could I have found out about the other Austin and Ossman material except for the ad in Issue 25? Good luck in all your endeavors.

SCOTT STEELE

Portland, OR

January 10, 1995

My \$.02 on the fate of the newsletter-->

As one who enjoys receiving it in print (so I can read it while enjoying my favorite breakfast cereal), I would hate to see it go all electric. HOWEVER, I also would hate to see it die, or for you to go bankrupt.

I work in the software industry, and we have a similar problem: how to get needed bug fixes to customers without going broke. Our solution (and many other companies') -- if you order the upgrade from us, you pay shipping/handling costs (less than \$10), or you can download it from all major bulletin boards and internet services for free. This gives everyone a fair choice.

If I want a hardcopy newsletter, then I have no problem paying for it. (However, being cheap, I might go ahead and download it...)

I hope this helps.

MARK MORGAN

San Francisco, CA

Dear Elayne: January 11, 1995

Thank you, thank you, thank you! for all of the back issues you've sent me. I've been a fan since the early seventies and I've been looking for something like this for years... FT information was just not available for consumption and I was getting famished. When I found your address in Goldmine, the issue with Frank Zappa on the cover, I wasted no time getting in touch with you and I'm happy I did. Wow, did I miss a lot! Only in the last six months did I find out about the Mobile Fidelity CD's...

(The CD rights have since reverted back to Sony/Columbia, as we mention in the news, but More Sugar will be getting in touch with them to see about reprint rights now that MoFi's rights have run out.)

But I feel most compelled to write about this moniker "Fireheads." I feel this should be changed, not only because I don't like it, I think a lot of readers are offended by it, but because it trivializes us. We are audiophiles, we listen intently and we should be called something that reflects this... save the "head" for the Dittos and the Dead...

SAVE YOUR SALIVA!

RON MAUDER

Pittsburgh, PA

(As most readers know, Phil Austin mentioned a couple issues ago that he was the one who came up with the term "Firehead" as a sort of parody of Deadheads. It was never meant to be an actual identifier at first, but somehow it just stuck - besides, it's convenient for me to use as my Internet logon name!)

Dear Elayne: 1/11/95

Just finished Four Alarm FIRESIGNAL #25. I can't say I was too surprised at the news regarding the future of FAlaFal. I was rather amazed with the quality and professionalism of FAlaFal over the past few years. Free, no less. Which is why I never had a problem sending a few bucks and stamps along from time to time.

The bottom line has to be what's in your best interest. And for me, unfortunately, it sounds like the electronic route. I don't have a computer and I'm not likely to have one for a long, long time. Of course I am more than willing to send money and stamps or an SASE to get a "hard copy." If that's what it takes to keep this going, so be it.

Newsletters or fanzines are labors of love that few people really understand or sometimes appreciate. Thanks for your efforts! Do what makes the best sense for you!

Sincerely,
DAVID SANTOS
S. Dartmouth, MA

Elayne -- January 13, 1995

(This part is a tacked-on "form letter" type of thing, used to save time [much the same reason that Janor Hypercleats leaves his fly open a lot]):

Sorry if I'm responding kind of late to your request/query/mail-bomb. I've been doing battle with fax machines, answer machines, RUDE CLERKS IN STORES, America Online, and getting better hook-up to the Net in general. I've also been fighting a really nasty cold of some foreign nature that... well, let's just say that there are SOME ANIMALS that you shouldn't do SOME THINGS with.

To put it bluntly, I've got a real bad case of Preacher's Lip. It's healing now. But it was embarrassing, going through that most recent book signing/rant looking like Darkman unmasked. The pressures of finishing REVELATION X, and simultaneously moving the vast SubGenius archives to a new huge office building/mansion with an ocean view -- a tricky move, in Dallas -- actually did some damage to my health, which normally is pretty good... CONSIDERING... [various computer-buying talk deleted for space] At least you're not one of my SNAIL MAIL correspondents!! There's a stack of unanswered PERSONAL mail here that breaks all previous SubGenius Foundation records.

But I'll make up for it to 'em... the next mailing they all get from here will be the ultimate exhortation and easy how-to for hooking up on the digital racetrack. But GOD do I feel sorry for the poor bastards who can't even afford a computer. My heart aches for them. I feel their pain even if they are PERFECTLY HAPPY to stay out of this NIGHTMARISHLY HEAD-ACHE-INDUCING REALM!! (And the funny thing is, here I am busting my very forebrain learning computerese all over again, and in 3 years it'll all be NEGATED by MWOWM TECHNOLOGY FROM OUTER SPACE!! Oh well, gotta kill the meantime somehow.)

So that's my deal, and thanks to all who have been helping out so mightily, especially with advice. Wait, what am I saying?? Especially with MONEY!!

I'm finally in the '90s. Wanted to let you know I'm doing the email miracle, so you can send the newsletter to me that way if it's easier.

I'm working on doing a similar thing with the Stark Fist... "build" it on alt.slack and then turn it into hard copy. Dunno what to tell you, re: charging or not charging for FAlaFal. I know just how you feel... you got into this for many reasons, but small business administration wasn't one of 'em. I say, make 'em all pay if they want the printed version.

The SubGenius Foundation has almost gone out of business MANY times because we weren't charging enough, giving too much away, etc.

I'm still doing THE HOUR OF SLACK -- 15 cities (though not Dallas).

Found an incredible improv radio crew at WCSB in Cleveland, Brain Rot Radio Theater/Einstein's Secret Orchestra, and whenever I'm in Cleveland we do several hours of radio improv together which I'm very proud of. In fact, I think the 4 or 5 guys would be very proud of us.

Then there's alt.slack, which is worth checking out these days. A lot of us old-timers are up to speed on Internet now. Philo, Nenslo, Hellswami Satelite Weavers, it's a regular party. SirWill1 (I see his name in your newsletter) is also very active on it.

Hey, I PLAYED NICK DANGER ON STAGE! Every summer I preach at a big Pagan festival in western NY, called Starwood, sponsored by a group called A.C.E. in Cleveland. Robert Anton Wilson and Tim Leary are other frequent guests. I got to know Bob Shea a bit at these gatherings before he died (a real shame, he was a great guy). Anyway, at last year's Starwood we did a full-out "radio play" performance of the first Nick Danger mystery. That is, we stood at microphones and performed as if for radio, with taped and physical sound effects, though we had a live audience. (The only props we really needed were a paper bag and a pickle.) I was cast as Nick mainly because I LOOK sort of like Nick Danger these days, with real long hair. Jeff Rosenbaum of A.C.E. played Bradshaw and various narrators, I forget the name of the guy who did Rocky Rococco, but he was really good, and my SubGenius radio pal Rev. Bleepo Abernathy (Bill Kates of K-rock there in NYC) did Catherwood. The guy who runs Llewellyn Press did the organ music. "Nancy" was played by Lisa Lefkort of A.C.E. and/or Princess Wei R. Doe of the Church of the SubGenius -- she did a GREAT job even though she'd hardly ever heard the original album. I can't say as how I make a particularly good Nick Danger, because I am apparently utterly unable to lose my Texas accent completely. One thing was astonishing, though. I was fooling with the tape of our version, and tried running a tape of the original Firesign performance along with it through my mixer, switching back and forth.

THE TIMINGS WERE ALMOST IDENTICAL. For long stretches they were in almost perfect sync. A weird effect... I ran a little of that mix tape on HOUR OF SLACK to confuse everybody. After the actual performance, one woman came up to us and said she really loved all our old albums. She thought we WERE TFT!! What was more rewarding was that quite a few young folks who had never heard of TFT were blown away by the play, so hopefully we turned on a few people to the phenomenon. (Hey, wasn't I the one who originally told you to check out this great comedy group called Firesign Theatre?)

(ED. NOTE: Actually, that may have been my friend Jill, but you were the one who first put me in direct contact with them!)

But the best part of all was when my daughter discovered the book of TFT radio plays I had sitting around the house while preparing for the show. Tevis is 13 and had never seen a radio script. She was enthralled by the whole concept. While I was out of town, she and one friend took a tape recorder and did the entire Nick Danger piece themselves, reading all the parts. They had NEVER heard the original album. (I learned a long time ago not to try to get my kids to listen to stuff -- it "takes" much better if I act like I don't WANT them to hear something; THEN they HAVE to hear it!) These two little girls did a hell of a performance, considering they'd never heard the album, although there were some odd interpretations -- such as Catherwood being played as an old Texas redneck. By a 13 year old girl.

Incidentally, you might mention to your readers that the Canadian CD going around called BOB'S MEDIA ECOLOGY is a total rip-off and unauthorized by us in any way. I don't want Firesign fans to mistake that idiot for any real SubGenius radio thing.

See ya on the flip-flop!

Rev. IVAN STANG
(aka Doug Smith)
Dallas, TX

Hey Elayne,

Thanks for mentioning "Joe Hampton's Mosquito Magazine" in FAlaFal #25. I've been plugging along with my newsletter for over eleven years and, after a recent 7-month hiatus, I am back for the long haul. As you know, it can be frustrating, time-consuming and expensive putting out a newsletter (though mine is not as extensive as yours), so I really appreciate your efforts.

I was a big Firesign fan when I was in high school and they were in their prime. My friends and I used to recite

passages from Bozos and Don't Crush That Dwarf on a daily basis. I only saw TFT once and that was at Carnegie Hall in 1974 after the release of The Giant Rat of Sumatra. I attended the concert with a friend of mine, Chris Wilde, who has since passed on. Chris was Phil Proctor's godson and he had a lot of Firesign and Proctor & Bergman posters and rare memorabilia. Having been a fan for years and owning all of their albums, it's good to see them having a resurgence in the '90s.

Keep up the good work, Elayne.

Thanks,
DAVID WELLEN
Calverton, NY

Hello from the SW corner of the US of Hay! January 13, 1995

I've been a Firesign Theatre fan since the early '70's, have bought most of their albums and a couple of the CD's. After not hearing much about them for a couple of years, I was delighted to be able to attend their performance in San Diego several months ago on the 25th Anniversary tour. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening, especially with the extent of audience participation that occurred.

Your newsletter arrived yesterday, and I was very happy to get it.

Please don't throw in the towel yet--this is the first I ever heard that there IS such a thing as a newsletter and any kind of fan association.

It's wonderful! I'll send in a contribution for the newsletter shortly.

Cheers, and keep up the good work!

BOB VAN KEUREN
San Diego, CA

Elayne, January 17, 1995

I just received Four-Alarm FIRESIGNal #25 in the post. In answer to your plea for opinions on the future of FAlaFal, I have this to say: Fiscally-wise speaking, It is obvious that all-electronic is the way to go. One thing I should mention, however, is that I tried to get #25 from the alt.comedy.firesgn-thtre newsgroup and, as I access it through AOL which has message-length limits, I lost about the last fourth of it. If I were to be able to access it in this way, each issue would have to be presented in two parts. I would be more interested in a "plus" on my final grade....

Anyway...thanks for letting me share your memories, and I hope to be a worthy torchbearer for the future... or is that Tirebiter?

TODD WACHTEL

Marlboro, NJ

Dear Elayne, 1/23/95

Verbally urinating for money all over issue #25 was a cheap and childish trick. And it worked perfectly. I was moved to tears, as I'm sure many readers were, but mostly I was moved to another room. A room wherein perhaps lay the future of FAlaFal. It was... the kitchen!

That's where I'd left the checkbook the last time I'd used it. It was time to use it again, and I have. Enclosed is a modest check which I hope is the seed for future "luv" gifts. By the way, everyone sending in a "luv" gift will receive at some additional charge an assortment of extra straws from Three Finger Micky's.

Thanks for all your efforts over the years to keep the Fire burning. It has helped to keep youth alive in one '60s survivor Boomer.

Just let us, we, they know what it is you need and you'll have it in a flash. Keep up the very good work!

Sincerely and with my very best wishes,
PATRICK KAVANAGH
Spokane, WA

Elayne, January 27, 1995

Issue #25 has the most delicious incense smell. What gives? What kind of stamping and mailing party were you having. I remember you making a request for smokables in one of your early newsletters.

Remember it makes you weak and silly. All in all not a bad thing.

(=gasp= Found out! I must confess, unlike our President, I never admitted to not inhaling...)

My personal preference is to hold reading material in my hands. I can survive with e-mail but if I had my druthers... I confess to a fondness for collectables also. I still have all my back issues and what memorabilia I did not send to you or Michael Packer I hold dear. I want you to know that I will support you in this, whichever way you decide (or are forced) to go. Subscription, donation, E-mail, whatever.

Shoes for Industry!! Forward into the Past!! Not to be Torturing Me!!

BUT PLEASE!!!! DO NOT PARK AND LOCK IT!!!!

RICK MOORE

Los Angeles, CA

Dear Elayne,

For years my friend John has been telling me about his friend Alex in Maine who is a fellow Firesign fan. In fact, Alex tipped us off about the tour. He called to say they were playing Boston, I called Ticketmaster and found out about NYC. Last week at John's wedding, I met Alex and his wife and we spent a lot of time talking FT. As it turned out, he hadn't heard much of the post-CBS albums. So, over the past couple of days I made him some copies. It's funny that meeting an old FT fan caused me to go through all those later albums: Fighting Clowns, Eat or Be Eaten, Lawyer's Hospital and Three Faces of Al. Like most others, I generally stay with "the classics." Three Faces is my fave of the bunch, and now I'm mad that I bought it on CD for my brother-in-law when it came out but on vinyl for me, as I had no CD then. It's long been deleted. It was also fun listening to the live side of Lawyers and flashing back to Town Hall. The 4or5 seem to bum on that tour but at least in NYC it was a good theatre. They did an interesting first set of mostly new stuff - "Hot Tub," "Presidents," "Joey Demographico" - better than expected. I thought it might be more short sketches a la P&B shows.

The second set was beyond wonderful, as "Ben Bland's All-Day Midday Matinee" rolled through new and mostly "classic" material and left me with my brain no longer the boss.

On FAlaFal - do whatever you find necessary to keep it going. I'm sure all of us Bozos trust you to do the right thing. It's always a pleasure getting a new FAlaFal, so please persevere...

Shoes for Industry, PAUL ANTONUCCI
Long Branch, NJ

Elayne, March 7, 1995

Sorry I have been so long in getting back to you. I've finally finished reading the three EFAlaFals. I must say, they left me with a warm, fuzzy feeling inside. I am now really kicking myself for not being able to see them when they were at the Beacon last time they were here - I was OFFERED tickets, but I had a job I couldn't get out of.

Now, if I may add my .02 about the newsletter and how to continue it: I really admire your conviction to distribute it gratis for whoever wants it. But the reality of it is, one could go broke quickly doing it that way. The e-mail version is great - if you've got the equipment. I really think that if you elect to continue the newsletter that you should charge for it. There is no reason you should shoulder the financial responsibility for materials and postage, not to mention the time, effort and talent you put into it. I don't doubt that we fireheads have the cash and the desire. How else could we afford merchandise, tickets

and CD re-releases? BTW, I've never seen the non-electronic version, but just from the text, I'd still subscribe.

I agree with your premise that information should be free - it's just its presentation and transmission that cost. The people who have computers aren't exactly getting it for free either - there's hookup time, access time, and download time - not to mention the cost of having all the equipment.

I know what you are going through. For the past year, I was the editor/writer of my brewclub newsletter. Every month, I would try to cajole articles out of people, write up the rest, compose it, print, staple, label, stamp, stuff and mail 175 newsletters. And then wait a month to get reimbursed. I really didn't mind the work - I would have done it forever were it not for club politics. Currently, I do a newsletter for a beer distributor. For my efforts, I get free beer. It has a circulation of 1200 - and I don't have to mail it.

What's the point? The point is, it's not the work. I love putting out a monthly publication. But I don't love it enough to do it at a deficit (financial or chronological) when I can't afford to...

Thanks for everything!

MIKE MAIMONE

Long Island, NY

Dear Elayne, March 7, 1995

So many of the Magic Mushroom plays from 1967 involved quests. Did the members of the Firesign Theatre think of themselves as on a quest at the time? I don't mean the quest to be the "Beatles of comedy," or the general "we can change the world" charge that was part of that era, 'cuz Everyone was on that one.

Ever-curious,

CAT SIMRIL ISHIKAWA

Vancouver, B.C.

(I'm looking forward to one, or more, of the 4or5 tackling the answer[s] to this one in our next issue! Boys?)

Elayne:

Thanx for the latest FAAlaFal, an always welcome addition to my mailbox. Money troubles again, eh? Well, that's the lot of doing stuff from the heart; believe me, after reviewing music in the independent/alternative press for the last ten years (which started with my own crit-zine, Camera Obscura, now past its 40th issue, and has extended to numerous rags - none of which pay a dime), I'm more than familiar with the situation... I'd hate to see

FAAlaFal go under. Like you, and like a lot of people involved in the arts and in the small press, I do what I do because: 1) I love doing it, 2) I like the hookup with like-minded people, 3) I like the communication and 4) I'm going to do what I goddamn well feel like doing, so fuck the rest of it, basically. Hopefully, you have enough people out there who can likewise afford a few bucks to help out - although, things are indeed getting rougher and rougher (blame it all on the assholes who sat around eating jello and watching Geraldo while their politicians were voting in NAFTA and GATT to cut everyone's throats - lovely concept, citizenship; too bad hardly anyone takes the reins of its responsibilities and lets these vampires, so rightly the butt of Firesign satire, drag us back to divine-rights sovereignty).

The "Dear Friends" column continues to be a great "Utne Reader" for us FAAlaFal purveyors, sort of a creme de la creme overview. I find the new Factsheet Five such a dim echo of the Gunderloy days (and I have to say I wasn't all that fond of Gunderloy - I think it was his odd idea that there is such a thing as anarchy that affected him - but his FS5 sure had a lot more heart and exactly the right spirit; yeah, the present incarnation is okay, and I'll probably avail myself of it again one day, one way or the other, but I've yet to justify putting down the shekels for it whenever I happen across an issue - it just doesn't read like the old zine), but it's still pretty much, as you say, indispensable.

(As both Mike Gunderloy and current F5 publisher Seth Friedman are FAAlaFal readers, I'm keeping neutral on this one...)

Oh yeah, I thought I'd put my two cents on the FT tour, which Don Fields and I caught here in L.A. In a phrase, both it and the audience were a bit disappointing. Half the audience was irritatingly eager to show the other half just how much the fan they were and damn near made the thing into a Rocky Horror midnight revival, incessantly memory-parroting the entire show. Bozos indeed. And the group was pretty good, although Austin seemed jaded, tired and not altogether into it (perhaps because our show was the last stop of the tour, if what I was told is correct). Proctor and Bergman were passable to good, but Ossman was consummate. Watching and listening to him, you really couldn't miss the contrast between the true professional and the talented others. His mannerisms, phrasings, vocal affectations and everything else were those small works of art that a connoisseur of comedy always hopes to find (and does find in the persons of people like Ossman, the Greaseman, Jeff Dunham, Margaret Smith and so on). To be honest, I was hoping for some new material. In fact, I was hoping for a lot of new material but, alas, such as not to be.

This too was a tad disappointing, as the comedian who is still doing the same shtick 25 years later is usually doing it in the low-rent borscht belt and not often well-received. Yes, it was nice to see and hear the "hits," but one couldn't help but get the impression that the FT may just not be as creative as they used to be, or as motivated. I guess perhaps we're all feeling the effect of a lot of the dispiriting state of affairs lately. Who knows? But I certainly don't regret that I was able to see them (even at the outrageous prices: once Ticketron gets through reaming you, EVERY event is grossly expensive!).

Perhaps, should they decide to do this sort of thing again, the next tour will have less the feel of greed and more of art...

Yours,
MARC S. TUCKER
Manhattan Beach, CA

(Well, speaking as a fan who had never seen FT live before '93, I was delighted to be treated to an updated rendering of the "hits," and it seems as though that's what the majority of show goers preferred, from all accounts. However, stay tuned to our news section; the boys will certainly be writing and performing new material in addition to the well-loved "oldies" in the future!)

**[[10]] BONUS FOR ONLINE
SUBSCRIBERS:
"MY FIRST TIME"**

(I thought it would be cool to start a discussion on alt.comedy.firesgn-thtre about the first time various folks remembered listening to Firesign. Here's a sampling of the responses I got - I'll start 'em off...)

It was '81 or '82 and I was at my friend Jill Zimmerman's house, smoking marijuana for about the fourth or fifth time in my life. For whatever reason, pot had never affected me previously - maybe my body just hadn't built up any sort of "recognition" or whatever. Anyway, Jill had been bugging me for awhile to listen to Firesign, and she'd put on Side 1 of "How Can You Be..." when suddenly I realized what the hell that Beatles lyric in "Day in the Life" meant by "somebody spoke and I went into a dream."

Pretty cool - my first actual high and my first taste of Firesign, at precisely the same moment. I remember thinking, quite clearly, "My god, there's people out there who THINK LIKE I DO!"

I've never stopped being amazed by this since then.

From: jeff@internetx.com (Jeff Markel)
Gee, Elayne, you are VERY youthful!!! [Ed. Note: I'm 37, really!]

My circumstances were almost identical, 'cept for the year, which was probably 1970, right after Dwarf came out. I even remember the ads for Zachariah - The First Electric Western_ though of course it never played anywhere that was accessible to me...

From: rarnold@clark.net (Richard Arnold)
Sophomore year, University of Maryland, 1978. (Alright, now you know: I'm not one of the "oldies.") I was touring Europe with the UM Chorale, singing our way through several countries on the Continent.

Another member of the group - Steve Crane (not the author) - and I became friends on this trip, and he was trying to tell me about this group that did really wild comedy. He threw out a few lines ("Ever since the sun took LSD, it's been a fundamentally BETTER sun;" "Faded San Francisco Art Nouveau, must be an oldie"), and describing the wind at the end of "Temporarily Humboldt County" turning into a long toke on a joint.

Upon hearing these descriptions, I thought Steve was crazy as a loon, but somehow we became friends anyway. Later that summer, he came over to my apartment with "HCYBITPAO," two fat joints, and a six pack, and said "Are you ready for something completely different?"

I remember being completely confused by Side One of HCYB, until Ralph smokes the Yucatan Blue and transmogrifies into Mollie from James Joyce's "Ulysses." I was hooked! When the Beatles references on Nick Danger came up on Side Two, it only reinforced it for me: I had to have EVERYTHING this group put on record.