

TWENTIETH CENTURY UNLIMITED

Fapa 175



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I NEVER LEARN: Here it is 11 years after I got into Fapa, and the deadline for getting this to Bruce Pelz is less than a week away. Just goes to show you, some forms of stupidity are deeply engrained into the fannish spirit.

I have been a busy fan, these last 21 months. I have been publishing a commercially disastrous venture named "Science Fiction Chronicle," in addition to what has lately been a money-losing proposition, "Starship: The Magazine About Skiffy." Many years ago, but just yesterday in the minds of some Fapa members, I used to publish SFWeekly (pause for change in style, from quotation marks to underlining for titles of publications. Jack Speer, I expect a comment from you on this next mailing!) from '66 to May of '68, at which time it died, and Dave Vanderwerf, Ed Meskys and Charlie Brown started a newszine name of Locus. Somewhere along the line, something happened to Locus. More than the change from fannish news and accident reports to a professional orientation, Locus became the first commercially successful semi-prozine, to use a word that didn't exist 20 years ago. At the same time, for the first time in many years a newszine dominated all other newszines through circulation and reliability of publication, and I think that the old adage about 'power corrupts' came into fandom, by the back door, sort of. Certainly by lack of competition Locus and Charlie Brown came into a position that had never before existed in SF.

To boil all this down, I'll tell you that for many years, since the mid-'70s, I've had a business card with the word "S.F. Chronicle" hovering far down just above the address (is a business card for one's fanzine a sign of professionalism? Probably not: Howard DeVore has had strange and esoteric cards for most of his ventures, including a couple of fanzines, for years...). The point being that the idea of a semi-prozine-ish newszine was generated many years ago, and became clearer and clearer in my sub- and conscious as the years went on. Until the summer of '79, when I began monthly publication of SFC, at the Nasfic in Louisville, by scooping Locus on the Hugo awards by using a rubber stamp to put the winners in the front page. I bet Harry Warner's boss never did that for the Mayor's Election...

SFC has continued to grow, and at the beginning of '81 started picking up advertising support that has been a major factor between losing lots of money or just a little. By which I mean losing \$700 an issue or only \$200. A copy of the most recent available issue should, hopefully, be in this mailing, if I've done things right. You be the judge on the content and style. At the recent SFWA Banquet, I gave a copy to old newshound Cliff Simak, and asked him what he thought, professionally speaking, and he liked it. Ah, egoboo, thou doth make light of work!

The question comes to mind, unbidden, how both SFC and Starship can lose money and still be published. The answer is that for now, I'm surviving, both 'zines are surviving, on the cash flow. That's using up future subscription monies, etc., in the hope that somewhere down the line things will get better, and issues will start making more money than they cost so I'll be able to continue publishing instead of going bankrupt. The Hugo nominations I got for both (a first in the fanzine category, I hasten to trumpet!) should help sales, though I almost certainly won't win anything.

Enough of this crass, commercial stuff, fannish though it may be. My plans, carefully stated through the years and the mailings, to leave New York City? On the backburner, simmering along, while I wait out the results of the recession. I shall triumph in the end, I certainly hope, and exchange the crash of garbage trucks for the crash of raccoons going through the garbage pails looking for choice morsels. But not this August, Meyer. Meanwhile, mailing comments commence at the top of next page on the 174th mailing.

OF MEMBERS AND 'ZINES: You've got a couple more issues of SFC going through Fapa than actually did, Peggy. It would have been impossible to put the November '80 issue through at that date, as it didn't appear until October. I'm pretty sure I put the August or September issue through, but not both. Then again, maybe I did put both through... Thanks again for this helpful 'zine, which made it easier to fill out the egoboo poll.

THE ALADÄB KALLE ANKA: Gee, this fabulously witty and clever fanzine may have tipped me visibly in the direction of supporting Australia for the '83 Worldcon. But then again, I never did like Italian suppositories.

AMBIGUOUS SYNTAX: Welcome to Fapa. I perfectly understand the large, impressively filled fanzine -- ghod knows I've committed enough of them on Fapa over the years. Alas, the comments are few and far between. As to why I've been putting my own Starship through, consider it an active act of masochism. Of course, if it really interests you, maybe you'll add it to your list of regular reading matter, so I'll come out ahead on the deal. You didn't mention that Shaver surfaced shortly before his death, claiming, once more, that slivers of rock showed pictures of machines from civilizations long gone.

CELEPHAIS: I was gonna go down to Atlanta this month by train -- there's a round trip fare of \$138 -- but the coming death of Amtrak, plus the length of the trip, and a new airfare of \$188 by Eastern, did my intentions in. One of the reasons I'd go by train is to see the scenery, but by dark I'll only be down to Richmond, and I've already seen this Northeastern slice of the US many times. So once again a cheap airfare does in another train trip. On the other hand, let's hear a big cheer for all those airlines who've built their own airports and their individual air traffic control systems...

CLOUD CHAMBER SIX: In case I didn't tell you in person -- and I'm pretty sure I didn't -- I really appreciated having you stay with me last year, even if I can't understand your accent, and all Hazel wanted to eat was curry... seriously, it was really good meeting you, and I want to say I'll testify at your libel trial (I say that after the latest issue of Ansible: gee whiz, I could never write stuff like that and get away with it without half a dozen lawsuits, from Sagan on down). British libel laws sure must be weird.

CURMUDGEON 5: Yes, a nice feeling to finance equipment for the business knowing you can subvert it to fannish pursuits. I really don't own much equipment -- typesetting, printing is farmed out. Letraset for headlines is here in abundance (it was used on this issue), and the camera I bought to take pictures for SFC is seldom used for other pursuits with the high present-day cost of film and processing (cost of which last year came to over \$1500, argh). I looked into a computer for mailing list maintenance, but it's lots cheaper to have someone else do it, and pay a small sum monthly rather than the high rates of a lease/use plan.

FAPAMMENTARY #1: I always thought a Geek was a guy who bit the heads off chickens in a carnival midway, not a freaked-out musician murderer...

FROM SUNDAY TO SATURDAY: Re: comments about the rebuilding (and overbuilding) of America, I recently acquired San Francisco As It Is, As It Was by Paul Johnson and Richard Reinhardt (D'Day, 1979) and find the comparison of the skyline of 1955 and 1975 one of incredibly swift transformation, from warehouse/skid row/lowrise to office tower/how-high-is-up/Wall Street West profile. An incredible transformation, and one not especially welcome by this confirmed city watcher. I can remember, too, the Washington DC of post-Korean War, versus the modern-day city of vast blocks of federal and private offices. By coincidence, I have at hand the May 3rd NYTimes Magazine Section, which features an article, "The Capital Becomes A Boom Town," and offers the information that more office space has gone up in DC in the last 10 years than in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Chicago and New York City combined. Of course, DC's height limit, like Philadelphia's, means a lot of squat, boxy buildings. Efforts to repeal the laws -- LA's 15 storey limit was repealed in 1958 -- would just mean tall boxy buildings, some say. Meanwhile, back here in the Big

Apple, the current building boom threatens something like 20 new, major office buildings in the Wall Street area over the next 10 years, and a like number in midtown.

GRANDFATHER STORIES: The next issue of Starship has a review of the Hugo/Nebula book, Howard, and since that's two glowing reviews for it, in two different places, I was wondering if you'd send me a copy of the updated volume. Please? After having missed two or three midwestcons -- I'm poorer now than when I was working for someone else -- I've been decided into going to the '81 version. People's Express, a new airline is offering a \$35 one way fare to Columbus, which is pretty near Cincinnati. United has matched the fare, happily, and even flies out of easier to get to LaGuardia Airport (People's flies from Newark). So I've made reservations, will see you at another Midwestcon.

HAWAII: Gee whiz, I can walk over the Brooklyn Bridge into Chinatown, passing 4 or 5 Chinese restaurants in the 4 block walk to the Bridge, here on the Brooklyn side. I also pass several middle eastern eateries, a Pakistani-Indian establishment, a bagel bakery, a health food store, fancy butcher places and cetera. Of late I've been eating a various outlets of Dosanko, a Japanese quick food chain in midtown which offers good food and saki for under \$4.50. What's particularly interesting for me is that each and every city with a Chinese ghetto in North America -- San Francisco, Vancouver, Boston, Toronto, New York -- claims to have the largest Chinese population outside of Hong Kong. We've got something like 300,000 Chinese, another 200,000 more orientals -- Koreans, Vietnamese, Philippines, Japanese, etc. -- which provides a wonderfully broad base for those into esoteric foods, of which I sometimes like to partake.

INTERJECTION 2/81: I just inserted another 16 conventions into SFC (the June issue) and the damned things spilled off the back page onto page 23. And that's after I single-spaced them effective with the March issue. And after I decided not to list gaming conventions, as being completely boring to the general SF reader. (I've decided that game freaks who go to conventions just to play D&D or anything else are just plain weird: like an SF fan who goes to a worldcon and sits in the corner all day, reading SF. A convention is to attend programming, or see artwork, or spend your money, or meet fellow travellers. It's to exchange ideas, or drink, or see/talk to authors. Not to go into a corner and do what the convention is about, if you get me: even comicbook fans don't spend their time actually reading comicbooks at their conventions. But gaming fans... At least, the ones who come to SF conventions, seem to do just that.) Gee, Jack, remember the old days when you had to be home the day the Worldcon was ending?

LE MOINDRE #39: You try to walk away after your dog shits on the street here in New York nowadays, and it'll cost you \$100. People here discovered that picking up after their dogs meant they could look at the tops of neat looking buildings, and the clouds and sun, and overall not have smelly brown stuff on their shoes all the time. It's even got people like me berating people who don't pick up after their dogs. And I will again next month, after they take the cast off my arm where the guy with the saint bernard bit me...

SHADOW OF A FAN: Gee, Joe, I get all these strange fanzines, and now that you're not around who do I have to ~~foist them off~~ give them to? Actually, I usually make a pile and bring them to a Fanoclast meeting, then make the eager recipients -- usually Moshe Feder and Stu Shiffman -- promise not to return the crudzines after they glean the best zines from the pile. Once or twice, having been stuck with a whole pile of Taff ballots, flyers for defunct conventions and the like, I've put them down the incinerator chute. They scream all the way down...

THE SPEED OF DARK: Actually, Janus is one of those high circulation semi-prozines you're always railing against. Without their backing by the University of Wisconsin and the use of their non-profit mailing status, the circulation would have to be clipped back substantially. Your problem is, you wanna win a Hugo real bad. So do I, but it usually doesn't show as much in public. (Fapa really isn't public, and besides, I know when to be witty

and clever in public. Sometimes, as in a recent letter distributed worldwide to the supposed vast readership of BNF's and fanzine fans who got SFC [except they didn't] in which you called me unnice things, you don't.) Interestingly, the list which you write "...only 10 zines got 18 or more nominating votes" included both Starship and SFC, and obviously came from the list I published in SFC. The final name on the list, that of Starship with 18 votes, didn't appear on the official publicity release from George Flynn. He put it on my copy, in ink, and I chose to publish it. I understand there may be other nominees with 18 votes -- George, in a later letter, mentioned a personal list of everything nominated which is dozens of pages long. My diagnosis of this stuff about the Hugos means that you're nervous about the possibility that with the rise of SFC as well as my official 'demotion' of Starship from prozine to fanzine status, you're thinking there's a possibility the top five nominees for Best Fanzine could be SFR, Locus, SFC, Starship and Thrust for the foreseeable future. It's possible, yes indeed. On the other hand, what's to prevent Mike Glyer from publishing a widely circulated, frequently published genzine or newszine -- you've done both -- that would appear on the ballot every year as well? Absolutely nothing, except the committment to do so, from which you've shied each time it was within your grasp.

Incidentally, Mike, by stating "To drop the three zines which consistently win [the fanzine Hugo] puts the Worldcon committee in the position of turning a deaf ear to the voting majority" once again perpetuates the idea that I'm one of the villains in this annual Hugo dance. I won exactly once, and that was a tie with SFR. You've got a full-time job, which gives you the money, and the knowledge to publish that multi-award winning fanzine, if you really want to. Let's see you do something more than trying to tear other people's publications down.

STARSHIP: Of course, the next zine in the mailing is my own Starship: nicely placed, Bruce Pelz! Reminds me of the positioning in my own lettercolumn in Starship: the good next to the bad, the witty reflecting off the banal, etc.

STATIC ELECTRICITY #1: Actually, you've contributed letters to Algol/Starship, not articles, as you seem to imply. Ah, yes: Degler's destruction: I remember it well. I was there when the second wave of assault troops went into his refuge in the Ozarks, and I can well remember the fierce fighting as we smashed his screen of battle-hardened slans. I've still got a scar on the back of my neck from when the ammo dump went up after E.E. Evans bravely and fearlessly lobbed an incendiary into the inner chancery. And, of course, I've still got the piece of melted mimeograph that I pulled from the ruins. But I've got to repeat it: those were spoils of war; we never looted nothing!!

Actually, I have grave doubts about your theory of fandom. The mad dogs of fandom were the ones who killed 37th fandom, make no mistake about it. Ask Harry Warner: he wrote it all down in his diary, and he keeps it around his neck to this day, like an albatross. On a saner note, how can you write about the life and death of fannish fanzines, never having been a part of fannish fandom? And, obviously, never getting the 'zines in the mail that put the lie to your writing about the demise of fannish fanzines and all that goes with a concept. Sure, some of the big, widely circulated fannish fanzines have died: but lots of others are still around, and even now as we speak someone is publishing a fanzine which in later years will be seen to have been a rallying point for some circle of fannish history.

It is Monday, May 4th, at 5:34am, and I call those denizens of Fapa to answer you in sharper and more incisive terms than my muddled brain can at this time, in the next mailing. Siclari? Warner? Pelz?

TEKELI-LI #5: When I started to read this, I took it as gospel. After finishing it, I'm not too sure. Fascinating, nonetheless. As a collector, however modest, I too know the joy of going somewhere long mined out and finding that one book I've long searched for.

VAINOMOINEN #1: Welcome to Fapa! Never fear, dumb things done at the dawn of time are frequently done by those in fandom before the dawn of time. I too in my callow youth (last week) called people on the phone, invited myself over to talk to the greats, was duly introduced to club meetings and fandom by kindly old pros (Don Wollheim), learned the ropes, went to conventions, grew up, grew ~~old~~ ~~died~~ wiser, joined apa's, published fanzines, and at last found myself here in Fapa, at the end of all things, here in this last fortress against the ravages of time.

Some of us never learn, as I stated at the beginning of this fanzine... (Aside: my publication of this zine will entitle me to vote in the Faan Awards, will earn me another year's grace in the hallowed rolls of Fapa, will entitle the bearer to one free drink or ride on the electric trolley system, whichever costs less...) I too have been in SFPA, did in fact receive your flyer about being in the 100th mailing, but never got around to doing anything about it. I guess that makes me a truefan, huh? Anyway, welcome home. Remember, even if you die, you have to will Fapa 8 pages a year.

520 07 0328 #15: I really didn't want to say anything, but when I visited you at work in May of 1979, you didn't look in the best shape. I'm glad to see you've faced your own particular devils and faced them down. Being collectors and fanzine publishers, we all end up with vast collections of prized possessions which anyone else would label junk. I remember my stepfather kindly offering to throw out my SF when I lived under his roof... Not having an attic, I've got several closets with shelves I pile high with momentos. Ever few years, though, I go through and throw out the ridiculous, give away fanzines outside of my basic collection (which still totals something like 40+ feet of twilltone) and in general try to lessen the accumulations of a lifetime. I've recently come into a sizeable collection of photos and papers of my father -- my mother, too, is weeding out her closets -- and for now they're stacked on the table in my bedroom, awaiting a permanent position in a drawer somewhere. Unlike a lot of New York fans, though, I consider myself cluttered but neat, with real furniture and some sense of esthetic values. Why do so many fans live with milk cartons or boards and bricks holding their collections, unruly piles of books and papers cluttering up every inch of their apartments, the patter of little nonhuman and noncat feet making a din in the kitchen? If I had an answer, I'd know something vital about fans and fandom, I strongly suspect.

Boyohboy, another scintillating issue of TCU. It's possible I'll come to regret some of the words I've committed here to print, but then again, that fine old fannish phrase comes to mind: Or Maybe Not. Yes, words to live by, and maybe even die by. But I certainly hope not.

There were many things I planned to do here, including reviews of lotsa books I've been reading. Well, those will have to wait for Starship, whose editorial still needs doing. One word of caution: skip Cujo by Stephen King. It's a dog. If Viking really does print 200,000 copies as they claim they will, you'll be able to pick it up remaindered for \$2. I now close this issue with a drawing which not once has a pointy spaceship in it. Obviously, this guy Porter is completely untrustworthy.

