
 THE FANZINE THAT TALKS ABOUT FANS

is written (on another batch of cruddy Tempo stencils with "Sateen Film" through which it is impossible to read what one has typed) and published monthly by Ted White, 1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, VA 22046, and can be had for The Usual or donations of 20¢ stamps, but is otherwise (of course) priceless\$. QWERTYUIOPress, December 9, 1983

FAREWELL TO AN(OTHER) ERA: "The house feels emptier now. The Green Room is once more only a library with a guest bed in it. Only the stale smell of cigarette smoke still lingers," I wrote in PONG #21, describing the departure of a house guest. "The phone will never ring again with a plaintive call from his mother, asking for 'Bonzo.' Rich brown has moved out."

Substitute for that last line the following: "The phone will ring far less often now. Lucy Huntzinger has returned to San Francisco."

What began as a one-week stopover here at World PONG Hq after ConStellation turned into a three-month stay. During her time here Lucy put out two fanzines (THE NEWFANGOLED EPICRITIC and, with Avedon Carol, RUDE BITCH) and in her role as Fannish Catalyst worked on or lent inspiration to several more, among them this one. More than that, she became a good friend, a smoking companion, and a participant in many intensely fannish conversations. My ghod, I haven't talked fandom that much with anyone since the early days of PONG, when Dan and I would stay up for much of the night, absorbed in fannish conversation (no doubt to Lynn's discomfort).

On Thursday, December first, I drove Lucy to the Baltimore-Washington International Airport, where she boarded a World Airways flight to Oakland. When I returned to the house the mail had arrived, and naturally there was a letter for her. I crossed out my address and wrote the new one on the envelope. Suddenly, I missed her very much.

See ya at Corflu, Lucy!

REACTIONS: Due to unforeseen complications (namely our decision to include both the PONG POLL RESULTS and Dan's BLUE MOON #2 in the mailing of the first issue of this zine), last issue was not mailed as promptly as I'd have liked, and very few letters have come in so far.

"You know," I pointed out to Dan, "the fact that we've mailed out our separate 'ensmalled' fanzines together is going to lead to joint letters of comment, don't you?"

"Oh ghod," Dan said: "You're right. We're going to get single letters addressed to both of us, aren't we?"

"Yes," I said, "and if we're lucky each paragraph will be directed to one of us about one of our zines. If we're unlucky...."

Dan smote his brow. "If we're unlucky, the whole letter will be addressed to both of us, with the comments all run together and jumbled up. I hadn't thought of that."

Today we received Mike Glicksohn's LOC. It was addressed to us both, and commented on both zines...in separate (thank ghod) paragraphs. I'd quote some of it here, but right now Dan has it. I am to have custody of it on evenly-numbered days of the month.

Richard Bergeron, to whom I'd sent an advance copy of this zine, says

that "the title doesn't quite work for me yet," but adds that "I'm finding it very hard to believe this is all first-draft stuff. I can't conceive of anyone writing such witty dialogue on the cuff (or even off it, for that matter)."

Dick goes on to explain that he finds WIZ very easy to do. "Hell, it's nothing for me to type up a few letters and the contributions of Langford, PNH, Gibson -- but for me to fill up ten pages of WIZ (writing on the level of those three -- which would be well nigh impossible anyway) would be the work of months. ... And the silk-screen looks like a lot of work, but it's really only the spare time of, say, three evenings -- well, yes, till two or three in the morning -- but I've got it down to a (mad) science and anyway it's pretty mindless work and while I'm doing that I'm really revising in my head and getting my copy the way I want it." Thus, it's really "not over-ambitious at all -- and much the easiest way for me to work. So the donkey-work with the silk screen works two ways for me and ends up with a fanzine with a totally unique format. Small price, I say."

All of which only goes to prove that we each have our own unique ways of producing fanzines, and what seems easiest to me is "over-ambitious" for Dick, and vice-versa. But what happened to the November WIZ, Dick?

We Also Heard From: Alexis Gilliland, who found most of the first issue of this high-class zine "a bit simple-minded and cutesy." None of the other recipients of advance copies wrote. And so it goes....

CONSTELLATION NOTES: No conreport here. For months I've been describing ConStellation as "a scandal waiting to be exposed," but I'll leave the expose to FILE 770 -- which, in #44, has revealed that currently the con is \$35,000 to \$40,000 in the hole, despite record attendance of over 6,400, although some outstanding debts (principally from advertisers) have yet to be collected and may reduce the debit by as much as \$10,000. Who knows? Maybe the ConCom will have to sell the xerox machine and the computer they'd bought. But I doubt we'll see any refunds from members of the Steering Committee for trips to Westercon, or the year's office rent. Basically, ConStellation is what happens when you put together a fusion bid composed largely of fans of limited experience and talent, headed up by a figurehead Chairman with no real authority over "his" con.

On the other hand, who cares? Who cares that the ConCom was so inept that it failed to sign contracts with the local hotels until half a year before the con and allowed them to raise their room rates by more than 50% over that orally agreed upon after one of the key hotels (the Lord Baltimore) was closed by the city? I mean, did you mind paying \$65 to \$75 a night for a room which, for the regional Balticon in March, went for only \$40 to \$45? Of course you didn't mind -- because, no matter how badly things were fucked up, you (like me) had a swell time anyway. And so what if that Diamond Vision video screen cost the con "about \$15,000" in rent? From where I sat the bungling of the photos, film-clips, etc., during the Hugo Awards ceremony didn't matter, since the only thing I could see clearly on the damned screen was Jack Chalker's jowls, which I can see better at any WSFA meeting anyway.

And so what if I was asked at the last minute to replace Paul Williams on a Phil Dick panel (Paul had to skip the con for personal reasons) after being ignored by the programmer of the Pro Programming until then -- only to be told of a change in scheduling which made it impossible for me to attend the panel, ~~at~~ the night before and almost by accident? At least Avedon Carol put together a good fan program, which was all I ended up attending (and appearing on) anyway. In fact, ConStellation was for me a more fan-ish than usual con. The fanzine-fans' lounge and the nextdoor fanroom under Marty Cantor's direction made good hangouts and were right across the

hall from the room in which the fan programming occurred. It made a self-contained unit, along with the fan mimeo room (run by Jeff Schalles, who filled in at the last minute for Ed Bennett).

So I enjoyed myself. I hung out with my friends, both old and new, and I had a good time -- as I'd expected I would. Once going, a Worldcon has a momentum of its own and not even the most egregious ConCom errors can stall it.

It was reasonably close -- one hour -- to World PONG Hq, too. This allowed me to pick up my daughter Saturday morning and bring her to the con for the weekend (school had started a week earlier for her). Arielle, or Kit (as she is better known), is thirteen, and reads more science fiction than I do. (She's a big fan of, *sigh*, Piers Anthony. I've yet to tell her about How I Shut My Door In Piers Anthony's Face once long ago.) So I gave her a key to our room, more money than I'd expected to, and a badge, and turned her loose. She had a swell time and quickly made friends with people like Linda Blanchard and Susan Palermo, demonstrating her unerring good taste. (At one point she described encountering a large and dorky male fan who wanted to hug her for reasons never explained. "I was polite to him," she told me. "I told him I only hug my friends.")

Damned weird, having a thirteen-year-old daughter running around a Worldcon when I remember that I was thirteen myself the year I got into fandom.

The consite selection for 1985 was done at ConStellation, but it was really just a formality, since only Melbourne was bidding.

Roughly a year ago John Foyster dropped a bomb on me by asking if I'd accept the Fan Guest of Honor at Melbourne, if they won their bid. I went frantically thumbing through my Chicon IV Program Book, looking for ads for the 1985 bidders, and was delighted to discover that Melbourne seemed to have the field to itself. Needless to say, I was really bowled over by John's offer and I gratefully accepted it. (One of the ConStellation skuttlebutt rumors was that Terry Carr and I had both been considered -- along with Charles Burbee! -- for the ConStellation Fan GoH. The ConCom rejected Terry, the rumor had it, because they felt it would be "insulting" to him as a Big Name Pro. When I passed this story along to Terry he was really insulted. I don't know their reasons for rejecting me, but I'm grateful to them because I'd much rather have the opportunity -- otherwise financially impossible for me -- to go to Australia, and because I think being Melbourne's Fan GoH will be a lot more meaningful for me anyway.)

Oddly, at about the same time John Foyster offered me the opportunity to go to Australia in 1985, Irwin Hirsh offered me the chance to make my name mud in Australia. He asked me to do a review/overview of current Aussie fanzines for SIKANDER -- and sent along a batch of fanzines I'd not seen before. So I reviewed them. It took only nine months or so, and 20,000 words. I've heard a few snickers, mostly from Britain, about that. "What could you find to say about Australian fanzines for twenty-thousand words?" was the way one fan who shall be unnamed (but whose initials spell out "editor of TAPPEN") put it to me.

My problem, you see, was that I felt that if I was going to write the review -- which I thought I should; what better way to involve myself in the fandom of my forthcoming host country? -- I had to state my real feelings, which, to put it as kindly as possible, were less than enthusiastic about most Aussie zines. So I tried to explain the reasons for those feelings...at length. I tried to anticipate the criticisms my piece would generate in Australia, and defuse them in advance. Roger Weddall's THYME reports the result:

"Whatever the merits of Ted's article, it has certainly been the topic for discussion when discussing fanzines, these days. Some have taken great

exception to what he has written, claiming that he's anything from the devil's spawn to merely foolish, and some people have even gone so far as to suggest he should not have been asked to be Fan GoH at Aussiecon Two. Thankfully enough, these people are but a tiny minority; most who have read what he has to say concede that most of what he has to say is valid. Ted has very obviously gone to great pains to explain the underlying reasons for his comments on the zines he has reviewed; it is certainly the most thoughtful review of fanzines -- Australian fanzines as a whole -- to appear in many a long day." (--#29)

Actually, I think Leigh Edmonds has offered equally thoughtful, if less lengthy, reviews in his RATAPLAN. But all of this leaves us a long way away from ConStellation, of which the foregoing was definitely not a conreport.

MY FACE IS RED, DEPT: "Ted," Lucy Huntzinger asked me as I came into the room, "how do you spell 'rowdy'?" I saw at a glance that she was reading the first issue (or last issue, depending on how you look at it) of this nifty 'ensmalled' fanzine.

"I dunno," I said, remembering in a flash where I'd used the word -- as more or less the punchline of a section. "How did I spell it?"

"Wrong," Lucy said. "You spelled it r-o-u-d-y. Is that pronounced 'rudey'?"

"*Sigh*," I said. "I always get words like that wrong -- 'cloudy' with a W, things like that." Lucy, on the other hand, is well-known for having no typos or misspellings in her fanzines, an Ideal toward which I've struggled for years without real success.

"I kinda like it," Lucy said, and quoted: "'Yep, this is where I can Talk About Fans and get rudey.'" She broke up, laughing.

"Go on," I said. "Twist the knife. I can take it."

HE'S GOT A LITTLE LIST: In GROGGY #21, Donn Brazier describes the secrets of his fanzine TITLE's success. They are, he says, these three things: "1. Regularity at frequent intervals." (TITLE was monthly.) "2. Filled with short variety (even bad art work!)" (He amplifies: "This is the READERS DIGEST idea. Have many brief pieces interspersed with horribly concise articles, thus giving an opportunity of using up to 100 readers' names every issue." And that leads us to...) "3. And mentioning names galore." ("At one time, early on, I even kept a tally of readers' names mentioned to make sure I hadn't forgotten anyone.")

In an odd sort of way, and despite the vast differences between this zine and TITLE, those three things could be used to describe what I'm doing here. Monthly publication, a variety of short pieces, and, of course this is The Fanzine That Talks About Fans.

But I'm afraid I'll never be as organized about it as Donn was. The names which get mentioned here will not be checked against a list to ensure that I fit in as many of you as possible. They will arise from the context of the various topics which occur to me at the odd moments (some of them very odd) in which I write these pages. Almost at random, you might say.

This is the way Dan and I did it with PONG, too; and I note that in his otherwise perfect review of PONG in STICKY QUARTERS, Taral seems to feel that we "clubbed against much of authentic fanzine fandom, both contemporary and historical," including "historically influential people such as Tucker (and LeZ)." By "clubbed against," I gather Taral means that we failed to mention lots of fans in PONG. And that's true. Some of those very same fans may find their names absent from issues of this zine as well. I apologize to those of you who are (or will be) Unnamed. It's just that I don't keep tidy lists, you see. Call it an oversight on my part, but don't take offense. I don't even "club against" snakes. Speaking of which..

WIMPS & WORMBOYS, PT.2: "Well," Wally ("the Snake") Mind said to me, "I finally got my copy of RUDE BITCH, and now I know who the 'wormboy' is around here!"

"Huh?" I riposted wittily.

"Sheesh, Ted," Wally said, shaking his head with disgust. "Wotta wimp you are!"

"No doubt," I suggested, "you want to amplify on that statement."

"You bet!" Wally said. "Boy, you men! All it takes is a couple of bimbos to shake you outa your trees! If Avedon Carol told you to crawl, I bet you'd crawl!"

"Just what is it you're trying to tell me?" I asked.

"I'm trying to tell ya that it's time you men stood up to these castrating females!"

"Ummm, Wally," I pointed out, "in RUDE BITCH they make a point of the fact that 'castration' is not the same as a penectomy. How are you using the word?"

"White, you got no balls!" Wally snarled, "And that's how I mean it! How can you sit there and tell me you liked a fanzine put out by two unattractive women describing all the men in fandom they've fucked, or want to fuck, or for that matter don't want to fuck? If two men had put out a fanzine about the various women in fandom they'd had sex with, discussing how good they looked and how good in bed they were, there'd be screams from all over, and you know it!"

"Yes, but RUDE BITCH was satirical," I said.

"Satirical, hell!" Wally screamed at me. "Where's the 'satire' in 'A Few Words About Castration,' the piece you were just referring to? Where's the 'satire' in 'A Few Words About Tits'? Where's the 'satire' in 80% of that zine? You been pussy-whipped, boy! These floozies brag up their promiscuity at the same time they're giving the backs of their hands to every man they've made it with. And you let them! Wotta wormboy you are! This is what comes of giving women the vote! This is what happens when you upset the Natural Order of Things and let yourself be dominated by a pair of tarts!" By now Wally was frothing at the mouth. I hadn't realized a ~~worm~~ snake could do that.

"Umm, Wally?" I said, waiting a moment for him to calm down and unwrap himself from my finger. "Wally, I think you're taking this whole thing much too seriously. It was just something Avedon and Lucy did as a lark. They were sitting around imagining the worst things that an insecure male fan might think they were up to, and then they did exactly that -- but satirically. Hell, I know for a fact that Avedon wouldn't send a copy to a male fan in England until she'd written him a personal letter first, she was so afraid he'd take it the wrong way. As a matter of fact, they both had second thoughts about doing the zine. But what's it to you, anyway? You're not human. Whatever the Battle of the Sexes is, it isn't your battle."

"No," Wally admitted. "But maybe the fact that I'm not surrounded by trees makes it easier for me to see the whole forest, you know what I mean?"

"Did you get up on the wrong side of your bed this morning?" I asked.

Wally eyed his tail nervously, and I remembered what he'd said about worms being both male and female and the way he'd been looking at his own tail the last time I'd seen him, a month earlier.

"Nah," he said. "Nothing like that. I just been having a few problems of my own. You know how it is." As I watched he tied a knot in his tail.

"Sorry I blew up at you, Ted," he said. "Forget I ever said anything."

"So I'm not a wormboy after all?" I said, pressing my advantage a little.

"Nah, of course not."

"And I'm not a wimp?"

"Yer not a wimp," Wally agreed. "You're just too easy-going."

LET A THOUSAND POLLS BLOOM: It was a great relief to get the results of the 1983 PONG Poll published and out of the way. (Most of you got a copy with the last issue of this snazzy magazine.) And I look forward to doing next year's a lot more promptly (copies of the ballots will be going out with the next issue of this monthly fanzine). But there seem to be a few problems in the way people have understood the PONG Poll, and one of them is the way we arrived at the winner of the #1 Fan Face category.

"#1 Fan Face" is a term which dates back to the forties and the egoboo polls conducted in those days. I liked it because it struck me as a delightfully irreverent way to refer to the Top Fan, as determined by any poll, a somewhat tongue-in-cheek phrase that would deflate the pompous even as it elevated the most popular. The first year we conducted the PONG Poll we included #1 Fan Face as a category to be voted upon. But starting with the second year (establishing a tradition that dates back now to, when was it? -- the late fifties, anyway) we decided that rather than make that another category like Best Editor, etc., we'd use it to sum up all the votes in all the other categories, sort of the way they do it in the FAPA Egoboo Poll, in which FAPAnS are ranked overall by the votes they've gotten in all the other specific categories. (I remember the year I finally made it into FAPA's Top Ten -- only to find myself tied with Gertrude M. Carr.)

It was also obvious to us that while the Best Editor, Best Writer, Best Artist, and Best New Fan categories each rewarded different talents and characteristics, the Best Single Publication category had considerable overlap with the Best Editor category. That is, if you were one of the best editors of the year, it was very likely that your zine would be one of the major contenders for the Best Single Issue category, the votes in each category being in most cases for the same thing. This would give a fan who is predominantly known as an editor a real advantage over fans who primarily contributed to others' zines, when it came time to add up all the votes from the other categories to determine the #1 Fan Face. For that reason -- the redundancy of the Best Single Publication votes -- we decided to weight those votes by counting them only as half-votes when tallying them up for #1 Fan Face. And at the same time, we decided to give each half of an editorial team (like the Nielsen Haydens) full votes rather than half-votes when tallying up the Best Editor votes for consideration in the #1 Fan Face category. These were separate decisions, but they apparently confused a number of people, some of whom have spoken to me about it. I dunno, it seemed so obvious to me originally, but every time I explain it it gets more confusing. Are you confused?

In IZZARD #7 Eric Mayer says of the PONG Poll, "As always I'm delighted to see an egoboo poll and apalled to have to vote for one person in each category." He thinks this forces him "to compare things that aren't comparable and, worse, doesn't give me the chance to dole out the egoboo where I think it's due." He then brings up the fact that, several years ago, I had agreed with his suggestion to "make the FAAn awards more like an egoboo poll by running a long ranking of names." Whatever became of the FAAn awards, Gary? "The PONG Poll does list a lot of names, true, but I think there would be more, and more varied names, if everyone had, say, five votes. They wouldn't even have to be ranked."

And right there it completely breaks down. The simple fact is that we have published every single name of everyone who received a single vote in every category, and until this year, when some of the lists of people who received one vote got too long, we even alphabetized the names. An average of 24 people were voted for in each category, each of whom was mentioned by name. It's hard to be sure how many fans overall were recipients of votes in all the different categories (I haven't weeded out the redundancies