

"Ta tumpty-tum-tum, Blue Moon,  
Ta tumpty-tum-tum, in June,  
A rumby-dumby, high noon,  
A rumby-dumby, buffoon.

Ah yes, that old crooning serenade, I know it well -- I get all choked up when I hear it and then I'm left with tears for souvenirs... Be that as it may, I prefer singing Zippety-Do Dah (in harmony with actions) it has more bounce to it somehow and I commend it for fannish journeys to cons. I can also muster up a comprehensive selection of your favorite tunes from Oklahoma, which is a magnificent and inspiring film sadly underrated by people who hear me singing.

I'm also fond of whaling songs: Ta Tumpty-tum-tum, Blue Whale...."

The song you have just heard was sung by that legendary British home owner, Peter Roberts, upon receiving the first issue of BLUE MOON back in February 1975. That first issue was published by John D. Berry and me when we were working for a legal lobby that went by the initials, NLADA. Despite their name sounding like a hockey league, the NLADA did seem to achieve some positive actions, from time to time -- after all, the head honcho did have a picture of himself and Teddy Kennedy hanging over his desk, didn't he? -- including their hiring the two of us. It was the atmosphere in that office that produced our first B\*M. (Kind of makes you think of baby books, eh? You know, the little books moms keep of their infants achievements, like: Baby's first tooth, first step, first bm... )

BLUE MOON #1 came about after the demise of THE GAFIATE'S INTELLIGENCER. The momentum behind that greatly overlooked fanzine giant had petered out about the time I moved to Falls Church in 1974, and John and I did our ish in an attempt to fill the hole left behind by THE GUNNYSACK'S INTEROFFICEMEMO's passing. But, owing to my lack of writing ability and John's lack of inspiration (I'm no Calvin Demmon), it was a pretty weak first issue. We tried hard enough, but it just didn't come out well. (I often felt that John consented to do the fanzine just so I wouldn't feel bad about missing the golden days of Falls Church fandom. Good Ol' John.)

We did begin work on the second issue of BLUE MOON on the evening of June 1, 1975 (it says so right here on the colophon), but it was never finished. Looking at the surviving four pages I can see why -- it had very little actual content. John and I had written little bits of it here and there, but it was mostly all letters of response to the first issue. Our flimsy connecting material would have toppled at the first hint of a breeze; if it weren't for the letters and postcards from folks like Charles Burbee and the previously mentioned Mr. Roberts (You've Read His Fanzines! Now See His Movie!), I'd have been saving blank pages all these years.

However, we made no bones about our lack of zip. I had just returned to Washington after a couple of months at



# BLUE MOON

NUMBER TWO

BLUE MOON number two is yet another of those goddamned ensmallled fanzines that have been flooding fandom lately and diluting our precious fannish fluids. It is published once in a blue moon by that Hugo Award Nominated Fanartist and winner, for the second consecutive year, of the Number One Fanface category of the FONG Poll: DAN STEFFAN, 1010 N. Tuckahoe St. Falls Church, VA 22046. B\*M is available for trade, contributions of witty anecdotes, and letters of comment. For those of you poor in everything except money, the price is 500 cents per copy, in cash or stamps. This issue is printed on the Mighty QWERTYUIOPress and is also Editions DANTE #2. Write if you get work!

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This fanzine supports  
Rob Hansen for TAFF in '84



home with my folks, where I'd been working on a farm to earn some money. ("I spent 3 months on a cattle ranch doing all the interesting things that farm hands do... f'rinstance: shoveling shit, shoveling shit, and lastly, shoveling shit. Farming is what you call yer basic shitty business. I found that over the few months I was 'giving wing', my world seemed to turn an organic brown. And no matter what was set in front of me at meal time, it always seemed to have the aroma of -- well, er, you know -- shit. I mean, when Julia Child told me that 90% of all I ate was going to turn into shit, I never figured she meant on my plate." -- djs 1975) I didn't really earn very much, but it didn't matter very much to me -- I was just happy to be back in D.C. and my own man again.

John had been working in a rut at the aforementioned NLADA until shortly before we began working on the second B\*M and was preparing to blow town for the West Coast and then, Australia. Here's what John said: "What, you may ask, Is Happening here in the land of the BLUE MOON? How have our lives been Significant in the past four months, or however long it's been? Well, I'll tell ya now, kidz. (Ya Young Wip-persnappers!) While Dan was off in the upstate wilds of Cazenovia, shoveling shit in the snow and occasionally calling up long-distance to get a fix of sanity and to hear what new mail had come in from the fabulous readers of BLUE SHIT, I was leading a terribly ordinary workaday life in the wilds of the Nation's Capital. I worked as a secretary for seven months, which is pretty funny but doesn't dissolve down n into any distinct bits or stories, I'm afraid. I have laughed a lot, and done many things worth doing. But Dan is back, and this calls for madness! Yes!"

That madness included taking up folk dancing, drinking exotic imported beers, and trying to pub our ish. We were especially good at drinking those exotic beers, but when you came right down to it, as John said, we weren't doing anything worth writing about. I think this bit of enlightenment is what kept us from ever publishing our second issue -- that and the fact that John left town before we could finish it.

Anyway, that brings us up to now, and the whys and wherefores of this resurrection. Why this particular fanzine? And why now?

I chose to revive BLUE MOON because I think it is a great title for a fanzine -- which is exactly what I was looking for. I had considered reviving the title of my first personalzine from 1971, WIZARD, but thought better of it, since I didn't want to be confused with either WIZ or IZZARD. So I decided to go with BLUE MOON -- it is a kind of corny name that has always struck me as tongue-in-cheek, which is precisely what I wanted. Of course, it also helped that it is a name that conjours up many graphic and design ideas, too. I also thought it would be a good idea to give John a chance to see that I have learned to write a wee bit better since the last time I worked on BLUE MOON #2. I wanted to prove that John's heart was in the right place in 1975, even if his timing did stink.

I'm starting this fanzine now for a number of reasons: First, I've finally come to terms with the sort of fanzine BOONFARK has become, and realized that it isn't a fanzine that allows me much chance for chit-chat and amusing asides. It is a formal, pretentious, and out of control sort of fanzine that seems to have a will of its own. I don't have to work very hard on it. It attracts the material that appears in its pages -- and the letters in the lettercolumn -- and I just manage it. In this capacity I am not unhappy, but I am definitely not fulfilled.

I've always had a hard time finding a suitable voice in BOONFARK, a fact that was really brought to my attention by my own participation in PONG during 1981-82. I have never been comfortable writing zippy fanzine copy for that big, fat fanzine except maybe in the lettercolumn -- and it has always bothered me. But when we stopped doing PONG I really noticed it. I tried in BNF #7 to write a piece for my editorial that would be like my PONG bits and produced, "How To Get Fanzines After The Bomb Drops," but it just seemed out of place to me. So after I'd recovered from



my post-PONG and Chicon burnout, I began planning this small, zippy little fzn as a place for my more frivolous and silly writing.

Second, I'm also using this fanzine as a catch all for the odds and ends that have and will come my way, but never fit into BOONFARK. I have amassed a file of stuff that dates back over ten years and deserves to see the light of day, this fanzine is where those things will appear.

Which brings us to our first remnant. This one is by \*gasp\* this fanzine's own co-founder, John D. "Heself" Berry. It comes from two pages of typing intended for the 68th and never-published issue of THE FLATULENT'S INTERIORDECORATOR, and was written by John on May 27, 1974. Or, as we say here at the World PONG Oldfan's Home, "The Good Old Days."

# DOWN WHERE THE MOLE MEN LIVE

Some time last night, or maybe this afternoon, the 1974 Disclave finally ran down and fell right over. Very seldom is a regional convention worth writing a conreport about, but that's okay because this isn't a conreport. The Disclave possesses a certain distinctive aura, based partly on the fact that it is held virtually in False Crutch Fandom's own "Back Yard," right up the hill off Connecticut Avenue in D.C., which means that we all get to careen down Rock Creek Parkway, across the Key Bridge, and right on home every night at a ridiculous hour, rather than staying in the hotel. The hotel, however, occupies a great deal of our attention during the Disclaves, especially in those ridiculous hours when our attention spans have become very short. The Sheraton Park, however, is unlike any other hotel that I have ever set foot in. (It even surpasses the tiny, back-street hotel I once stayed in in Paris, where there was not a right angle in the whole place and you had to flush the toilet to make the shower run.)

The Sheraton sprawls all over a hillside, first of all, with wings sticking out in all directions and various different addenda such as the Motel Hotel and the Residential section. No man has plumbed the depths of the Sheraton Park. It has catacombs. You can take elevators nine floors below the level of the main lobby and still find yourself in corridors with numbered doors, or you can walk into the walls and penetrate the realm of unreality Behind the Scenes, known only to a handful of aged members of the hotel staff and perhaps a troll or two. "Each year I tell myself that this hotel is unbelievable," Ted White said the other night, "and each year I discover something new about it."

Last year, Colleen Brown and I explored far down in the basement, below the end of the silent escalators where you slide down the metal surface between the "Up" side and the "Down" side, and we found ourselves in a dank underground world of mounded dirt floors and massive brick pillars upholding the underside of the hotel. The dimly lit path ran back among the pillars until the floor and ceiling became so close together that I would have had to crawl, and there the light gave out entirely and I turned back. Along the walls I saw great switches and dials and things that I was afraid to touch; I had the feeling that if I pushed the wrong switch the whole hotel might drop down a floor. Unfortunately this year, that section was walled up, and we had to seek adventure elsewhere.

The escalators themselves provided hours of innocent fun for simple fannish folk, and we'd like you to keep in mind that this will surely be the center of all worthwhile activity at the worldcon this summer. This bottom set of escalators is never running



so you don't have to cope with railings on either side of you moving in opposite directions. The space between the two stairways is just wide enough to provide an excellent slide, and we all played upon it like children. The outstanding highlight of this aspect of the fannish adventure was the time late Saturday night when we were all crowded around the head of the escalator and a hotel employee in white uniform and official breast-pocket patch rounded the corner and started down the stairs. I was sitting on the slide, and it was already too late. As he was walking down the unmoving escalator, I whizzed on by him and waved as I passed. I shot off the end, landing on my feet, and he finished the descent and strolled out unconcernedly beside me.

"You got change for a quarter, man?" he asked.

I fished in my pocket and came up with the change, and he gave me a quarter and wandered off into the bowels of the hotel.

Down in the vaults and passageways of the lower hotel, we came upon caverns measureless to man, but perhaps I should leave certain mysteries for the Discon. In one darkened ballroom, we found a contraption that can be cranked and raises a tiny platform on a three-stage extension all the way to the ceiling, doubtless to change the lightbulbs. We raised several fans to the limits of their reality, and they say it's a real rush coming down. But then, isn't it always? --John D. Berry

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The endless catacombs underneath the old Sheraton Park -- since torn down and replaced with an expensive super-hotel -- were always the most interesting part of mid-70s Disclaves. In the years following this report we discovered a passageway that eventually emptied out into a vast concrete cavern that was mostly empty except for maybe a hundred 55 gallon drums marked with stencilling that said "Civil Defense." They were all empty. I always thought that was really funny -- I mean, suppose the bomb drops and all these in-the-know hotel executives headed to this cavern to wait out the firestorm, secure in the knowledge that they have the provisions to wait out the worse of it. It would be like an old EC-type ending. They get to the shelter, but all the supplies are gone!! Haha!

Oh well. Next up is a piece I wrote after seeing Jerry Lewis and Robert De Niro in the movie, "The King Of Comedy." It is a wonderful film, and it would probably help a lot if you've seen it before reading this, but not essential. I still think it gets the point across. (Any resemblance between any real persons, living or semi-living, is simply amazing!)

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# THE KING OF SCIFI

Alec Pupshin had always been a devoted fan. He had begun to read the works when he was still a boy, and always felt that they had helped him through difficult times. Alec drew strength of character from them, but more importantly, he drew inspiration from them. They gave him the feeling that he could be somebody; that he could be a science fiction writer like his hero, Randolph A. Hamlamb.

Alec began thinking like a writer, and became concerned with style, pacing, and all of the other important components of good writing. He worked long and hard trying to learn his craft. Eventually he decided it would be a useful exercise for him to take a closer look at the works of his hero, Randolph A. Hamlamb. He felt that if he reread all the works, and studied them, he could come to some definite conclusions about what he liked and disliked about The Great Man's work. Then, with his critique as a guide, Alec would attempt writing fiction that would be successful in the ways his hero was successful, but at the same time avoiding his mistakes.



At the same time Alec went about this labor of love and education, he got more involved with fandom, where he encountered large numbers of fellow Hamlamb devotees. In the midst of this fandom full of scholarly devotees Alec also met a group of scruffy looking individuals who called themselves Fanzine Fans, which meant they published scruffy looking little magazines that were devoted to other things than The Great Man. Despite this, these Fanzine Fans inspired Alec, and he began formulating a grand new plan.

He would write his critiques of The Great Man's works in article form and get them published in some of those scruffy fanzines. The writing of the articles would be a challenge for him, allowing them to be published in those fanzines would be good for their editors (who obviously weren't able to get good writing about The Great Man anywhere else), and finally, the published fanzines were a way for him to reach all those other devotees. It was the best of all possible worlds.

The articles began appearing and, as expected, they created quite a stir. The better they were received the harder Alec worked on them; he researched all facets of his subject and even began corresponding with those around The Great Man. Then problems began to arise. It started getting harder and harder to get any clear answers to his correspondence. They became suddenly vague and non-committal. All attempts to communicate directly with Hamlamb were returned unopened -- even the one without a return address -- which particularly upset Alec. Some word had gotten back to Alec that The Great Man had taken exception to his articles, and this is how he was getting even. Obviously Hamlamb seemed to feel that if he gave no quarter, Pupshin, a bothersome flea, would go away. If he could not complete his work, then he would be rendered harmless. Actually, it just made Alec even more determined than before.

Alec knew that he had made the wrong impression on The Great Man. He hadn't written a frivolous piece of fluff that said nothing but wonderful things about Hamlamb's writings, no, he had paid The Great Man the highest compliment he could think of -- he was honest about how he felt about those stories. Alec knew he could have kissed ass, and made brownie points, but he had felt that The Great Man was, well, greater than that. He thought the truth would be a compliment -- but that turned out to be a bad miscalculation. Hamlamb was determined to be of no help, but that didn't seem to bother Alec too much, he knew he would finish his critique whether he got help or not. After all, what could The Great Man do?

Pupshin's series of articles soon became a book of criticism published for the devotees. It created an even bigger stir than the fanzine articles had. Alec was pleased -- Hamlamb was not. In anger Hamlamb wrote a letter to the publisher of Alec's book expressing disapproval of the entire project and its author. These actions were intimidating, but hardly troublesome. Alec would have liked The Great Man to realize his true devotion and the real aim of his critical work, but realized that it wasn't very likely, and went about furthering his career.

He wrote several novels and short stories that met with critical praise, but little monetary reward. His critique of The Great Man had taught him a lot about the process of writing, but he always felt badly that Hamlamb didn't recognize the debt of inspiration that Alec owed him. The animosity between them was considerable, and had taken much of the joy out of Alec's love of The Great Man's works. He could live with it though, and did, until the day the famous author began trying to get even.

Alec's notoriety had gotten him an offer from the field's highest paying market -- QUASAR Magazine, a slick but unadventurous fiction publication -- to review the upcoming novel release by his hero, Randolph A. Hamlamb. Naturally he accepted, and turned in a manuscript that revealed the novel's considerable foibles for all to see. The editor loved it and promised that it was being rushed into type for the next issue; so it came as quite a surprise when Alec's manuscript arrived back from the

magazine, with an apologetic cover-letter. "Mister Hamlamb," it read, "was so upset with your review that he has threatened us with libel if it is printed. While we know he doesn't have a leg to stand on in this regard, he also swore never to submit to our magazine again if we went ahead with the review. Please try to understand that we cannot afford to lose the patronage of the greatest writer in the field, while we can, alas, afford to lose you. Accept the enclosed check for your trouble."

Alec could scarcely believe his eyes. The Great Man had succeeded in manipulating Alec's life to suite his own petty and vindictive reasons. This was too much. It had to stop. He was a reasonable person, and knew that it would have to be him who made the first move. Hopefully, Hamlamb, when approached like an adult, would respond in kind.

The very next week The Great Man was scheduled to give a lecture in New York City about the advantages of nuclear war, and the profits to be made by those who were prepared for it. Alec and his wife, Colleen, decided to attend, and afterwards, attempt to straighten things out.

The speech, which was strenuously militaristic and at odds with Alec's own political worldview, ended abruptly when the timer The Great Man had set for an hour went off. "He said the same damned things when I saw him speak fifteen years ago," Alec told his wife. "Not only is he vindictive, he's repetitive..." Alec said, until shushed by several old women in the row behind him. "I hope we haven't made a mistake coming here," he whispered. Colleen smiled and patted his hand reassuringly.

Alec hung back from the crowd of devotees and autograph seekers that overran The Great Man until it had thinned down enough that he could easily approach his adversary. He approached the podium slowly and extended his hand toward The Great Man. "Mr. Hamlamb?" he said.

"Yes?" answered Hamlamb, smiling and extending his hand to meet Alec's.

"I'm Alec Pupshin, and I think..." was all he could say before the old man could react. Disgust flashed across Hamlamb's face and the previously extended hand was withdrawn and thrust into a coat pocket. As Alec watched, Hamlamb spun on his four inch heels and stormed off the stage, all the while muttering under his breath. He may or may not have spit on the floor. Alec was stunned. How could things have come to this? "Close your mouth," Colleen said.

They walked to the car in silence. Once inside though, Alec opened up and began talking about what had just happened -- trying to make some sense of it. As they talked, a figure exited the auditorium and began crossing the street in front of their car. It wasn't until the figure stepped into their headlights that Alec and Colleen realized who it was. The Great Man himself. "Now's our chance," Alec screamed. "I've got to talk to him. I've got to make him understand. Pull out in front of him."

The car lurched away from the curb and shot across the street, effectively blocking Hamlamb's path. Alec jumped out of the car brandishing a broken Pepsi bottle. "Okay, Great Man," Alec shouted. "Get your keester in the car." For a moment the famous author didn't comprehend what was happening, but Alec waved the broken bottle at him until he did, and reluctantly got into the backseat.

They drove him to their hotel and, after sneaking him through the lobby, took him up to their room. Alec forced Hamlamb into a chair and bound his hands behind it, and his feet to it's legs. "I've got to talk to you," Alec said desperately.

"I have nothing to say to you, you swine," said Hamlamb.

"Well, then you can at least listen," said Alec, reaching for a roll of tape to gag The Great Man. After wrapping several lengths of tape around Hamlamb's lower head, Alec spoke again. "Now, Big Shot, we are going to sit here and go through my book of criticism page by page until you understand my reasons for saying what I've



said." The Great Man, naturally, said nothing, and Alec began to read. And read.

Around ten o'clock the next morning Alec finally finished reading and explaining his way through his book. The Great Man had a glazed expression on his face and had long since stopped struggling against his bonds. Alec stared at him for a time and then picked up the telephone and walked over to sit next to his inspiration. "In a little while," Alec said, setting the phone in front of Hamlamb. "You are going to make a phone call to your friend the editor of QUASAR magazine. You'll explain to him how you have been all wrong about Alec Pupshin, and how much you'd like the magazine to print your apology to him." It felt weird to speak of himself in the third person, Alec thought.

After the phone call Alec would deliver to the magazine a copy of his latest short story and a 50,000 word apology and appreciation by The Great Man himself (thoughtfully written for him by Alec), which the magazine was to set in type and put into the very next issue. Upon the publication of the apology and story Alec would release his prisoner, and not a moment before. When asked if he understood his instructions, Hamlamb nodded affirmatively. Alec removed the tape and the call was made.

Everything seemed to be going like clock-work. Colleen was going to stay and guard The Great Man while Alec went to the magazine. QUASAR had cooperated completely, and Alec actually felt he had made headway during the night's marathon reading. Soon everything would be hunky-dory. Alec checked Hamlamb's bonds before he left and gave his trusty, broken Pepsi bottle to his wife. "Guard the fort, babe," Alec said as he went out the door; his future assured.

The door had barely shut when Colleen threw herself at the tied-up writer. "Oh, Mister Hamlamb," she cooed. "I've been reading your books since I was a young girl and I've always loved the way your heroes handle their women. Oh Randolph, show me how a real man handles a woman."

Hamlamb looked at her for a minute while he considered his options. This was an opportunity for escape, for sure, but could he pay the price? Did he still have it? "Sure, baby," The Great Man said to her. "Loosen these ropes and I'll show you how a real true-blue American he-man does it." Colleen's body shook with excitement, and she began untying her charge. Once free, Hamlamb grabbed Colleen by the arm. "I'll handle you like a real man," he said to her, and smacked her across the face, knocking her to the floor.

Running into the street, Hamlamb flagged down the first cab he could find and gave the cabbie the address of the offices of QUASAR magazine. If he was lucky he'd catch Pupshin there and end this mess once and for all. Hitting that woman had gotten him all fired up.

The cab pulled up outside QUASAR's Manhattan office building; Hamlamb hopped out of the back door before it had even stopped, and ran for the building. Along his way he appropriated two cops from the lobby to accompany him to the Seventh Floor. Together they burst into the office of the editor, Norm Nova, and caught him in a conference with Alec. Pointing at his kidnapper, The Great Man instructed the police officers to arrest him for abduction and assault. "Take him out and have him shot," was the way he put it.

Alec was very upset about being arrested. "This isn't how it's supposed to go," he kept saying. "It isn't supposed to end like this," Alec yelled, but nobody seemed to be listening. Finally as he was being led to a cell he got a response, "You don't understand," Alec told the cop. "It didn't happen like this in the movie! According to the movie I'm not supposed to get arrested until after my story is published..."

"Movie?" one of the cops cut him off. "What movie?"

"The movie that gave me the idea for this stunt -- Martin Scorsese's THE KING OF COMEDY."

Alec said. "According to the movie, my story should have been published, and then I'd go to jail, and then I'd be famous. What's the matter with you guys, don't you ever go the the movies?"

Just then Randolph A. Hamblamb walked up to Alec, and, standing on his tippy-toes, looked him straight in the eye. "Buddy boy," he said. This ain't no movie, this is real life. You went after the wrong fella, fella; I'm strong, and in the real world only the strong survive. Got that?" Alec nodded sadly, and the police officers led him out the door and down to his cell. Hamblamb stood alone in the hallway for a moment, his hands resting on his hips and his head held high. Once again he had made the universe safe for mankind. His blood pulsed proudly through his veins. He felt good.

And Alec? Well, according to the rumor, he was taken out and shot at sunrise, just as The Great Man had ordered. So let this be a lesson to you all. --djs

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A couple of days ago I got a fanzine in the mail that distressed me a great deal. It came from Cheryl Cline, and features reprints of writing originally published in A WOMAN'S APA -- like Linda Pickersgill did with her delightful TIGER TEA in the UK. That in itself wasn't distressing, but the fact that the fanzine is called BLUE MOON really threw me into a tizzy. I have agonized since receiving it about whether I should change this fanzine's name; only really deciding as I type this. My decision is a simple, Naaawwww. There's room for two zines with this name, especially ones that look so different. I seriously doubt that there will be any confusion between us so I'm going to press on making my own B\*Ms whenever the urge strikes me. And besides, I thought of the name first....

What follows next is a letter I recently wrote to Brian Earl Brown in response to the seventh issue of STICKY QUARTERS. Said issue contained a lengthy column by Taral about the fanzine that I co-edited with Ted White, PONG. It claimed to be an overview of the 40 issues of PONG, but was really just more repetition of the same old nonsense about our preoccupation with the past. While it did make some comments of an affirmative nature (I'm beginning to sound like Sgt. Phil Esterhaus...) towards the end of the column, it was very hard to accept when compared with the rest of the article. Giving him the benefit of the doubt, I'll say here that Taral may have meant well, but his writing and research was so sloppy that the overall reaction can only be negative.

I found reading this article to be extremely painful because of the many errors and the overall tone -- Taral seems to have an axe to grind -- and initially responded in kind. But, thankfully, I waited for some time before actually writing my second draft, which I present here, so that I could approach this problem in a more civilized fashion. I think now that this is the way to handle these guys, and plan to use this letter as my guide in the future. I recommend that all those fans who read STICKY QUARTERS #7 take its editor and Taral's column with the proverbial grain of salt.

My letter is presented here -- because of space problems I removed a page of tedious corrections which were included in the copies sent to Taral and BEB, otherwise it is unedited -- because of Brian's notorious reputation for chopping letters down to nothingness and extracting comments out of context. I doubt that he will publish the entirety of my letter -- though lets hope he makes a liar out of me -- and present it to you in lieu of a fannish fairness doctrine:

**DEAR MR. BROWN:** (November 3, 1983): I received your diminutive fanzine, STICKY QUARTERS, in the mail last week and found it to be the most interesting (in the Chinese sense) issue you have produced to date. As I thumbed through the issue in search of something readable I was quite pleased



to find Taral's column. I have often thought that PONG was worth a glance back, and am flattered that the two of you thought enough of our simple little fanzine to invest so much time and space on it. Frankly, I was thrilled at the prospect that Taral might be able to "puncture whatever myths..." and "explode any misconceptions..." that had grown up around our humble "forty issue wonder."

At first, I will admit, I was worried that Taral might not do his very best work when he said, "...I really didn't want to reread all 40 issues of PONG again." But now that I have read the entire column and had some time to reflect upon it, I can see that he definitely lived up to his reputation on this one, and you, Brian, should be commended as well for opening up the pages of your fanzine to such an "objective overview." Especially when you remember how little you have thought of PONG in the past. It is a sign of a great man who can offer up his fanzine to an article that is written with this kind of fair-mindedness and accuracy. I doubt any other faned would have gone to such lengths in seeking out the truth behind our "snappy little fmz."

I am very happy that Taral didn't follow his first inclinations about this column. I think it must have been a sign from god that Taral was in a position to "tune in" on Ted and Stu's conversation at the Disclave, even though he had been "talking on the other side of the bed" when the conversation had started. I was there at the aforementioned party and had listened to Ted and Stu's conversation all the way through, but had somehow gotten an entirely different impression of what had been said, and really appreciate Taral being able to straighten me out on this matter. And to think that I had been under the impression all this time that Ted liked the Nielsen Hayden's (note correct spelling) fanzine and was one of its columnists because of that. Stupid me.

Surely, if Ted hadn't said all those things about IZZARD that contradicted every thing he had previously expressed to me and Patrick and Teresa on the subject, Taral might never have written this "overview" and we'd never have known what a two-faced liar Ted turned out to be. If Taral hadn't been motivated by this incident at Disclave to write his PONG piece, instead of following his initial feelings, I would never have found out so many things about my fanzine that had previously escaped me.

Some fans may have thought that Taral wrote his column not to discuss PONG, but to air his gripes with my co-editor, but they would be mistaken. As Taral clearly states, "I'm not attacking Ted (or Dan) as self-styled arbiters of fandom, or as a movement to remake fans in the image of the glorious past," which is a good thing, because if he had, it might be interpreted as a petty personal attack based on misconceptions and poor research. But since Taral never lies, I am secure in my knowledge that this review of PONG is free of malice and venom. How delightful it is to encounter a fan-nish retrospective that has no secret axes to grind, and is so well written and organized that it could be a lesson for future fans to come.

I commend Taral for noticing that "PONG acknowledged a select portion of fandom," which is very true. With a peak mailing list of 160 people, we'd have to, wouldn't we? Still, as Taral points out "PONG was openly available," which was our big mistake. As anybody can tell you, you can't gather a small incestuous group of brown-nosers around you if you are constantly sending you fanzine to anybody who asks for it. We tried Charging \$5 a copy for it, but the fools sent the money in anyway. In fact, we often would withhold copies from those who had subscribed because we thought it was so funny, and when fans that we'd never heard of wrote to us we often sent them the worst crud-sheets we could find, and once, I even spit into a copy that went to some anonymous asshole called Boobee or Berbey, or something like that. Boy, what a kick.

I'm just glad that I have known Taral for some years now, or I might have not spent the money and time sending him copies of PONG -- who knows, if he had been some dumb ninny I'd never heard of before I might of wiped my ass with his copy. Hell, it cracks me up just thinking about it...

But for me, the point that makes this article is Taral's acknowledgement of our hard



work and "labour" (I just love those cute english spellings in american fanzines) at making PONG a focal point. I'm so glad all those tongue-in-cheek bits of conversation in the early issues of PONG didn't escape Taral's sharp eyes. Taral knows that all that running-the-focal-point-idea-into-the-ground stuff was just a ruse. Under the guise of humor that knocked the idea of our fanzine being great, Taral finally reveals the truth for all fandom -- we were pulling a double reverse. We said things in those early PONGs that made it appear that we were dubious about the concept of focal points, when in reality, we were dead serious. We were trying to dominate fandom and change it into something out of the Eisenhower era. We were thirsting for power and knew that fandom was the place to find it. We knew that some fans might balk at the notion of Ted and me running their lives, but figured we could just bluff our way around them and continue on that climb to greatness.

We knew that we were slick enough to make any fan who got in our way look like a fool, and we used Martin Morse Wooster as a warning. Get in the way of the PONG Boys and you'll never be able to show your face in fandom again. Of course, what Taral didn't know was that Marty and Ted and I had hashed this thing our first and agreed on how to do it. In fact, Marty is probably one of my closest friends and someone I hold in the highest esteem, so you can imagine how much fun we had with those articles about him. To this day I can remember him jumping up and down in my living room shouting, "Don't forget to mention my shirt-tail! Don't forget to mention my shirt-tail!" God-damn, it was funny. In fact, I guess it can finally be told: E. Knowles Elkhart is Martin Morse Wooster. So any supposition about his lack of existence is sheer silliness.

And between you and me, Ted isn't arrogant. He's obsessed. He is probably the world's most insane person when it comes to fandom. On the occasions that we have shared rooms at cons it has not been unusual for me to overhear him saying things in his sleep like: "Willis loves me, Willis loves me, Willis loves me..." or worse yet: "I'm the king of fandom! I'm the king of fandom!" Frankly, it is very scary to witness and I've since stopped sharing rooms with Ted, or "His Highness" as he insists upon being called around the house. I'm glad that Taral's column has allowed me to unburden myself of this great secret. Thank you.

At one point Taral says, "For many fans PONG was the unchallenged focal point of fandom. As they saw fandom. For many, however, PONG was an entertaining fanzine that was nowhere near the center of their fannish experience. In simplest terms, PONG could've been a focal point fanzine for those who were on its mailing list and few others," which came as a revelation to me. I hadn't ever thought of it like that before and again thank Taral for enlightening me. This explains, at long last, why we never got any letters from people that didn't get the fanzine. I, for one, always wondered why we never heard from Buckminster Fuller or Richard Nixon.

Taral was correct in his assumption that we pandered to an older fan audience in PONG, but his percentages of the mailing list were way off. Certainly at least 80% of our mailing list was in fandom before Ted became active in the early 50s. The fact that most of our mailing listers were in their infancy they, has nothing to do with it... I, myself, was active in fandom even before my birth. How well I remember my mother's complaints that my favorite drawing stylus had seriously damaged her birth canal during my delivery. As I recall, I was busy hand-stencilling a Ray Nelson illo when she went into labor, and didn't want to leave until I had finished with the shading plates... Boy, those were the good old days.

Taral also mentions that "I have to agree with (Ted's) right to select his own cast." Wow, I hadn't even known that Ted had broken his leg!

The revelations in this column just go on and on and on... But I won't continue listing them, as I don't want to be the cause of too much embarrassment and egoboo for Taral. I mean, if I say too much about his fine writing and research here, he may not believe me. But surely this piece alone will win Taral a fanwriting Hugo -- and if not, well, its a crime. Instead though, I would like to correct a few of the more



obvious mistaken facts in the article. I know how much the author values the exactness of his research, so I offer these corrections as help for the next edition of the column. That is to say, when his column is reprinted in next year's 'best of' anthology, it can be more on the money and less open to misinterpretation.

For example: "The balloony letters of the title and Dan's inch square margine illustrations..." The logo was never balloony, it was, especially in the first few issues, rather hardlined, with sharp angles wherever there was a 90° turn of the letter -- except, of course, for the 'O'. And the margin illustrations were 1½ inches square.

Or: "The idea (of a distinctive logo) isn't a new one for Ted. Ted's zines were always distinctive for their graphic sensibility. VOID in particular..." For what its worth, I designed the PONG logo and Bbob Stewart designed the VOID logo. But I agree that Ted's zines have always been graphically zippy.

Or: "Editorial policy (in the first issue) were expounded to the effect that things looked bad for fandom without a biweekly focal point and PONG would be it." Interesting, except the words 'focal point' never appeared in the issue. In reference to this goal of ours we did say that the lack of fanzines was "enough to make (us) want to publish a bi-weekly fanzine." Which is close enough for fandom.

Or: "Ted's bound volumes of CRY..." These, as stated in the article, belonged to rich brown. And the thrust of the piece was that these old fanzines were not what they were cracked up to be. Now that's what I call shamelessly praising the past.

Or: "(WARHOON 28) was some of the finest reading I've encountered in fandom in years." Taral quotes Ted saying, which is actually not praise for the past, except when taken, as it is, out of context with the rest of the piece. What Ted said was, "I'm looking forward to WRHN 29 more than I did 28. WARHOON 28 was monumental, and some of the finest reading I've encountered in fandom in years, but it is not really, except by courtesy, an issue of a fanzine. Rather, it was a volume of collected works and as such excellent. But I miss WARHOON the fanzine. WRHN 27 remains the best single issue of any fanzine published in the last ten years. And that's why I faunch so much for 29." To me this says a collection of old Willis is all well and good, but let's get on with making current modern fanzines. Of course this runs contrary to the whole idea of us perpetuating old things over new, so I can see why Taral quoted out of context. What the hell, as long as he makes his point.

Or: "In PONG 5 there appeared an imitation Derogation of the sort written by Boyd Raeburn in the 50s." Actually this was an imitation of the little playlets that went out at Christmas time (which is when PONG 5 appeared) from Willis and Irish fandom. They were like a Christmas party on paper, wishing a happy new year to all their friends and mentioning some of the past year's interesting happenings. As such, it succeeded; as an imitation of Boyd's derogations it was a horrible failure, but since that's not what we were doing, we didn't mind.

Or: "Wooster was a drip ... snotty nosed and shairt tails hanging out<sup>1</sup> was more or less the phrase used." Never. We never used those words (underlined above) to describe MMW, though I wish I had said something about his "shairt tails." That would have really put him down. I assume this is Taral's mistake, as I know that you, Brian, never make typos in your fanzines.

Or: "Then Ted and Dan lost access to the HEAVY METAL office xerox and switched to mimeo." Er, nope. Ted and I had both left HM more than two months before the first issue of PONG appeared, in fact, before we ever decided to do PONG. Again, Taral must have been weary from his fact finding and confused BOONFARK and PONG, as BNF 4 was scheduled to be run off on the HM xerox, but never was. BNF was probably laying open nearby when he wrote that. Anybody could make that mistake.

And Taral goes on and on and on...

I could go on in this vein for some time, but I've decided not to. I know that if I do it will look like I'm nitpicking with what is otherwise a brilliant look into the



fannish microcosm.

I could list the rest of the strictly factual errors in this column (there were, including the ones I've already listed, approximately 33 strictly factual errors) but I won't because if I did, it would only make Taral look better when the piece is reprinted in the year's 'best of', because as we all know, it doesn't pay to be too much of a perfectionist in the eyes of your peers. You, of all people, Brian, should know this. So let's just let the rest slide for the sake of Taral looking more human and less like the fannish ghod we know him to be.

Others may think that this was a hatchet job on PONG and others yet will think of it as I do: One of the most incredible bits of fanwriting I've ever seen. I'm very glad to have been at least partially responsible for it.

As to the opinions and such held by Mr. Taral in his column, I shall not comment. I'll leave that to those who are not so blinded by the glare from Taral's golden prose or as closely identified with the subject as I am.

I can only hope that some day STICKY QUARTERS gets this sort of treatment in a great fanzine overview as Ted and I have here. We couldn't have hoped for more from you and Taral, and words elude us that really express our feelings. God bless you.

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BRIAN EARL BROWN SPEAKS: As I was beginning to stencil this page the mail came, and among the items addressed to resident was a postcard from the above mentioned Mr. Brown in which he offers some small response to the above letter. It had a return address that said "Boogey Monsters from Hell"; "Your letter arrived yesterday and I've read part of it. Sarcasm ill becomes you. By now Ted should have received a letter from me which offers him reply space in SQ. The offer is to xerox his letter reduced to half-legal size, so that there would be no question of my editing changing the thrust of his loc. I would hope that Ted would respond since he is the principle person criticized in the article but if not, then I'll print your letter in that format. I am, you can be sure -- maybe you can't be sure, but I really am disappointed by the number of errors in Taral's article."

Actually, Brian, I would hope you'd feel bad about all the errors in the column. Any good faned would. But as you said in your letter to Ted, you hadn't gotten those early PONGs, so you aren't responsible. Well, I say that you never considered that there might be errors because you agree hook, line and sinker with Taral's twisted vision of what actually went on in the fanzine. You bought the line of rhetoric, so you figured the "facts" were correct too. Tsk,tsk. Clean up your act, Brian. --djs

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That brings us to the close of the 2nd BLUE MOON in ten years. I don't think it will be that long before the next one. But you never know...

BLUE MOON  
dan steffan  
1010 n. tuckahoe  
falls church, va.  
22046

This issue was going to be very different than it turned out. But I felt the urge to publish the letter to Brian, which knocked out the material originally done for that space. Next issue will be more sweetness and light and other things that make one think of the glorious past. All letters will be appreciated and some even printed. So write, ya bums!

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Thanks to all of you who voted for me in the Hugo Awards -- it did my little heart good. See ya next time. -- dan steffan  
November 17, 1983