

# BEN'ZINE

Number 1

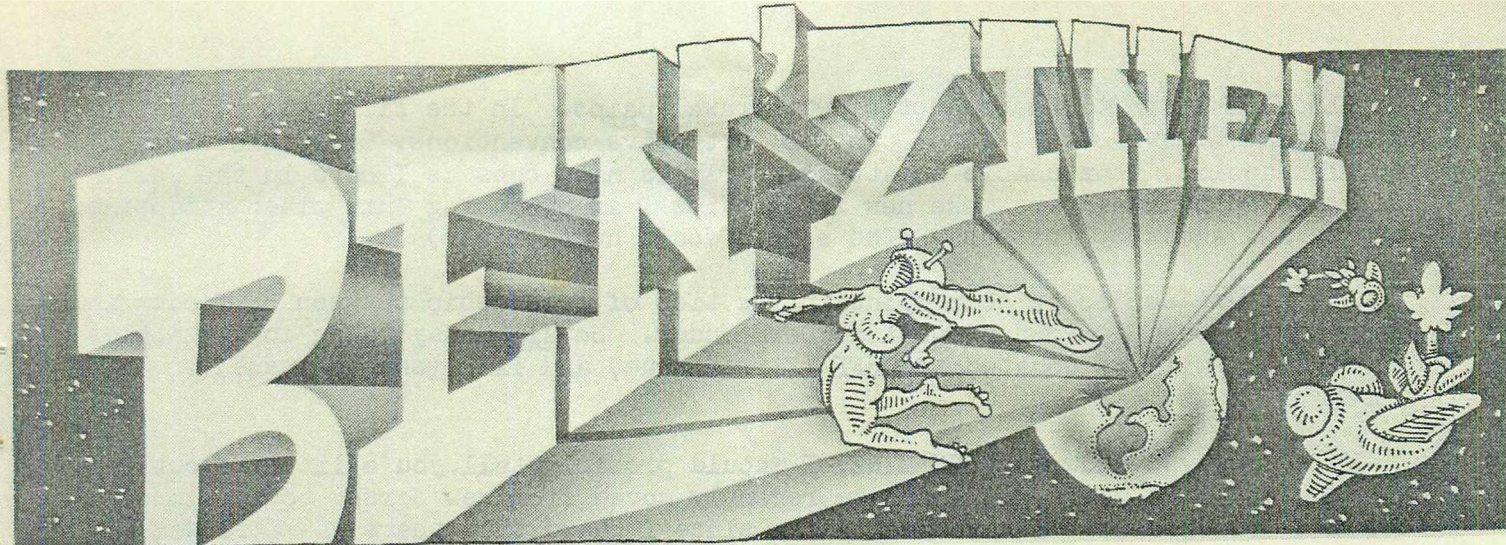






DEREK CARTER  
THE DUFF AUCTION / CONFUSION 1977





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BEN'ZINE is published by Ben Zuhl, 2646 15th Ave. S., Mpls., Mn. 55407  
BEN'ZINE will be available four times a year for 50¢ an issue (plus postage)  
and all money will be donated to DUFF AND TAFF. It is also available for contributions  
of art or articles, letters of comment or trade and whim.  
Lay-out, typing, coalating, stapling by Ben Zuhl's bumbling fingers.  
Copying and Lettering by Saazy Tiffany.

BEN'ZINE is partly a product of withdrawal pains. In the first two and a half years that I have been a fan I went to forty-five conventions. Now, since moving to Minneapolis, I am unable to attend nearly as many cons as I have in the past. In order to maintain and make new friendships I am producing this zine; a fanzine of, by and about my friends. (The egoboo don't hurt either)

Another reason is to help maintain the ties of friendship between US fandom and fans across the Big Pond as well as Down Under. So all money taken in from sales of BEN'ZINE will be donated to DUFF (first issue) and TAFF (second issue) on a rotating basis.

Well, now you know why BEN'ZINE, I should probably tell you a little about Ben. I am twenty-five years old and have recently moved from New Jersey to fabulously fannish Minneapolis. I have been a fan since I heard that there was a fandom in 1974. My first Con was Disclave of that year and Nocescon this year will be my third anniversary as a fan and my fiftieth convention. Jim Freund is responsible for this since it was his radio show (Hour of the Wolf) that informed me of the existence of fandom. So if you don't like me or this fanzine--get Freund. Thanx Jim.

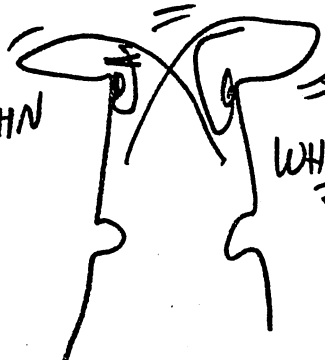
My thanks also to everyone who believed that BEN'ZINE would become reality and especially those who contributed their time and effort in the form of art and writing. Also, a big Thank you to the three ~~available~~ people who paid in advance for BEN'ZINE (Rusty has the money already).

I am well satisfied with this issue, it was fun to put together and I hope fun to read. For the next ish (should be ready by Midwestcon) I hope to have a better typer and thus cleaner print. I want to have a lively lettercol next issue so all you letterhacks brush off your typers and get on down to it. In other words, your reactions are welcome and eagerly awaited.

This issue would still be sitting in my briefcase in Minneapolis if it were not for the efforts of Suzy Tiffany. She has spent quite a bit of her time helping me put this together and especially copying it for me.

Oh yes, a special thanks to Jodie Offutt whose perserverence in sending me her article went above and beyond the call of duty.

MIKE  
GLICKSON  
?  
HERE?  
IN THIS  
FANZINE?



WHERE  
?



WE SAY ASSHOLE AND THEY SAY ARSEHOLE  
AND THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT



FANUS N. AMERICANUS



FANUS BRITANICUS

by Mike Glicksohn

A few months ago, while I was on an expedition to track down the seldom-seen Spayed Gerbil in the depths of darkest Illinois, Ben Zuhl asked me to write for his fanzine. Naturally I agreed instantly, promised to get right down to it and thanked him effusively for his flattering request. Then I went home, sobered up and immediately forgot all about it.

But Benjamin, although Israeli, is neither Disraeli nor Dissuaded and a couple of weeks ago he phoned me up, ostensibly to warn me that a mad poisoner was loose in Ann Arbor hotels dropping cyanide into glasses of Scotch. When he mentioned Confusion, the convention coming up in Ann Arbor in two weeks, and reminded me about the article I'd promised with such bravado, I began to catch his drift.

For a neofan whose taste in friends runs to Maddog Riley, Ben isn't a bad sort and it was difficult for me to think back to that initial supplication without being moved by the memory. Getting a plea from Ben, with his black, curly hair and big soft eyes, is like being eyed by a slightly rabid cocker spaniel. One tends to agree to whatever he asks, and quickly. Besides, I'm no dummy: I know the grass is always freer on the good side of the faned.

However, there was a bit of a problem. In the eight and a half years I've been active in fanzines I haven't exactly set any records for prolificity. One year I had a good crack at the "Most Articles By A Drunken Hairy Canadian" Award but Derek Carter wrote a second conreport and beat me out. And the great majority of the articles I have written have been on the topic of not having any topic to write articles for fanzines about. (One more and I'll set a record for articles on that theme: I plan to write an article about it when it happens.) So complying with Ben's request was somewhat of a dilemma for me.

Ben, though, is a resourceful and capable man. He can do most anything: except possibly mail a letter, he said somewhat acidly. He'd already considered my usual excuse for non-performance and suggested a topic I might treat for him: English fandom. Surrerrrrre, Ben! Like "Define 'fan' in five words or less."!

I suppose that somewhere there's a fan less qualified than I to handle such a comprehensive assignment. Probably frozen stiff in a snowbank somewhere in Minnesota. But the editor of a fanzine is all-powerful. He has the last word; he can butcher your grammar, ruin your punctuation, destroy your syntax, even misspell your name in the title of your article! And Ben does all those things when he isn't feeling vindictive! So I'll give it a try...

Actually, though, apart from an inherent aversion to research, rewriting and reasoned rhetoric, I suppose I'm as well qualified to write about English fandom as most North American fen. I'm English by birth, have been active in the lettercolumns of quite a few English fanzines for several years and once bearded the English fen in their own convention, the 1975 Seacon in Coventry. Only the fact that I was drunk all during those years mitigates against this being a useful piece of writing. But don't worry: what I don't know, I'll just make up.

Fans everywhere are essentially the same, of course, and the English fans are no exception. Like us, they fanac, fight, feud, feed and fuck, not necessarily in that order. But as the title of this piece suggests, certain differences do exist, stemming from the nature of England and the English. And in keeping with the true nature of the universe this makes one English fan worth as much as three Americans or half a Canadian.

There are fan groups in England, naturally, just as there are fan groups everywhere. And although I've no way of knowing this from personal knowledge I expect that many of their meetings are just as boringly tedious as some of the club meetings I've attended in Canada and the US. On the other hand, being English, at least some of them know how to do it right: they meet in pubs!

Now anyone who's never been to England can have no idea of the atmosphere of an English pub. There's just no comparison with a typical North American beer parlour, where guzzling down the maximum amount of totally tasteless pisswater in the minimum amount of time is usually the sole raison d'etre of the establishment. The English pub is the social center of the community, is often several centuries old and steeped in history and tradition, and usually is frequented by "regulars" who know each other well and enjoy each other's company. While drinking is definitely of primary importance, it is not the only activity in the place, and someone who wants to sit with a single pint of beer all night won't be bothered by some fat-gutted waiter trying to get him to re-order every ten minutes. In fact, unless you fight your way to the bar and place an order, you won't drink all night! To me the English pub life is one of the most enjoyable aspects of modern Western Civilization and I can't recommend it too highly.

The English have always been known as a nation of pet lovers so it isn't surprising that their fan groups reflect this characteristic. One section of London fandom, consisting of many of the most famous fans in England, goes by the name of Ratfandom, and this group is usually much in evidence at the London area meeting, held the first Thursday of each month in the One Tun, a London pub.

London SF fans have met in a pub for years. For a long time it was "The Globe" (the inspiration for Clarke's "Tales From The White Hart", I believe) but they've

recently moved. If you happen to find yourself in London on the first Thursday of the month sometime, track them down at "The One Tun": you'll meet London fandom and English pub life all at once and if that doesn't convert you to an Anglophile in a single evening then you probably died last year.

In the north of England, around Newcastle, they call themselves The Gannets and I believe they too still meet in pubs. And there are active groups in many other English cities as well, often adopting some small furry rodent as a group symbol and usually gathering together in the friendly atmosphere of a favorite drinking spot. Compared to the fannish apartments most North Americans tend to congregate in (or the church basements, clubrooms, backrooms of stores, etc.) I'd have to say the English fans have a certain style and panache we could all learn from.

There is, of course, one major reason other than the simple style of pub life that draws English fans to places like the One Tun and makes a Rat or a Gannet both superior and luckier than a Fanoclast or a LASFAN. I refer, naturally, to the sheer unadulterated unquestionable superiority of English beer! The sun may have set on the British Empire and the English economy may be sinking giggling into the sea but English beer is still ambrosia, is still lightyears ahead of anything indigenous to North America. Comparing English brewery products to the insipid and tasteless feeble brews sold to Americans would be like comparing lobster thermidor to a pile of camel dung, or a key of fine Columbian to a pile of banana skins. There is simply no comparison.

With the chances of a 1979 Worldcon in Brighton, England extremely high, many North Americans are going to need a little education into the subtleties of English beer and ale. One does not simply enter a pub and order "a beer." One orders either "mild", or "bitter", which are draft beers of completely different taste, or possibly any of half a dozen quite dissimilar bottled beers or ales, or any combination of the above ("half and half", "black and tan", "brown and mild" etc.) or, if one is truly one of the cognoscenti, a pint of draft Guinness.

AHHHHHHHHH!!!!!! Draft Guinness!!! The supreme drink among brewed products. A glass of liquid black velvet, smooth, rich, creamy with a rich, malty taste that has to be acquired, but once acquired will spoil you for any other pub potable. The elixir of trufen all across Britain and possibly one of the very best reasons for visiting Great Britain, which remains Great as long as there is Guinness to quaff!

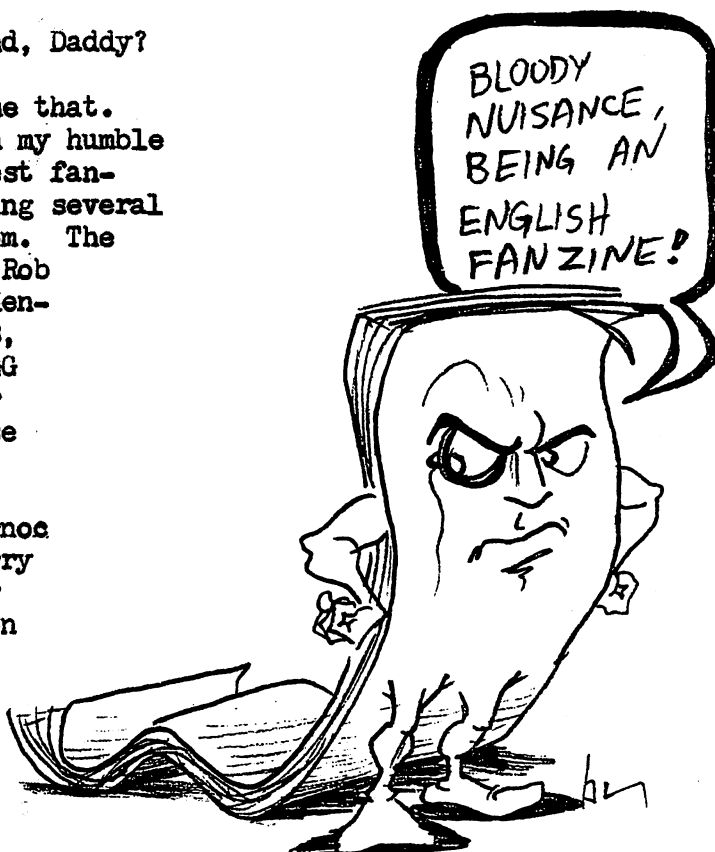
And there is yet another reason for hard-drinking North American fans to envy their British cousins and look forward to emulating them in Brington. Economics! For a mere forty cents you can buy a full twenty ounces of some of the best beer in the world in any pub in England. Compare that to laying out a buck and a quarter for twelve ounces of mediocre blandness in America and it's easy to understand why beer and the pub are so central to fannish life in England.

This brings up another difference between fandom Over There and fandom At Home. Firstly, England is positively lacking in the frenetic convention tradition we enjoy here. There used to be just two English conventions a year, one in November and another over Easter. Compared to our Con-Of-The-Week Club, that's sparse indeed. And also a little difficult to understand. It probably stems from primarily economic reasons: most English fen simply haven't the money to spend on fanac that North Americans do. And possibly the fact that many English fans live very close to their friends and hence see them regularly in non-conventional settings means there is less need to set up formal gatherings for friends to see each other. Whatever the reason, even now there are only three cons in England, a relaxacon having been added a couple of years ago (another is in the planning stage but is not yet well-enough established to be counted) and they differ in certain basic ways from cons over here.

The bar, for example, is far more of a central meeting place than it is here, owing to the relative cheapness of the drinks. And as an offshoot of that fact, there are usually fewer room parties than one typically finds at a US or Canadian con. Not to suggest that they are unknown, just less prevalent than we are used to. The growth of fannish relaxacons will probably result in a stronger tradition of private parties, though, so by the 1979 worldcon Anglofandom should be well-trained for the invasion of hundreds of ravenous, drunken, boorish fans from North America, as well as Ben, Maddog and myself, of course.

And do they have fanzines in England, Daddy?

Why, yes, son, I'm glad you asked me that. They do indeed. As a matter of fact, in my humble opinion they have several of the very best fanzines currently being published, featuring several of the very best writers active in fandom. The odd thing is that with the exception of Rob Jackson's MAYA they are unknown here. Mention names like WRINKLED SHREW, BIG SCAB, VIBRATOR, STOP BREAKING DOWN and even EGG and only the afficianados will nod their heads in knowing appreciation. Yet these small personalzines are among the finest of their kind. Names like Leroy Kettle, John Brosnan, Peter Roberts, Graham Charnoc should be every bit as well known as Terry Hughes, Arnie Katz, Eric Mayer but their writings are seen by perhaps only a dozen North Americans. The only consolation I have is that there are hundreds of fanzine fans who will some day have the delightful experience of discovering some of the finest writing now available. I almost envy them!



For a long time English fanzine writers and editors have, at least in their own eyes, dwelt in the shadow of their richer American counterparts. This has resulted in a grossly-undeserved national fannish inferiority complex which is only now being cast aside. Until recently it was common to find English fans bemoaning the fact that American fanzines were slicker, neater, more attractive, with better art and better writing, etc, etc, etc. There was a certain truth to these remarks. Because most American fans were more affluent than English fans, there were a lot of fancily offset fanzines in the US, and scarcely any in Britain. (At one time it seemed there was only a single mimeo in all of England, with fans from every corner of the country sending in their stencils to the publishing magnate who owned it!)

What most British fans failed to realize was that for every glossy semi-prozine that found its way across the Atlantic there were fifty crappy crudzines they were lucky enough never to see, and thus they got a distorted view of the "high" quality of American fan publishing and their own inferior position. Happily this situation seems to be rectifying itself and British fans are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that a lot of the best faneds, fanwriters and fanartists are residents of that tight little island.

Apart from the simple physical differences between our fanzines (English zines are usually printed on either 8" x 10" or 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 11  $\frac{11}{16}$ " paper instead of the paper God designed, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11"), the basic English character adds an unusual quality to their



publications. English personal writing tends to be very personal! It's almost impossible even for an expatriot englishman such as myself to read an English personalzine and know whether or not the insults, the rudeness and the vitriole are real or merely a reflection of the rather sarcastic and distinctively unusual English sense of humour. But even allowing for the natural tendency of a nation raised on the Goon Show, the Beatles and Monty Python to indulge in exaggeration for comic effect, there still remains a remarkable amount of really vicious writing in British personalzines. Certainly far more than we see over here. That and a tendency to indulge quite brilliantly in surrealistic humour are the only real differences between paper fanac on either side of the Big Pond.

There are other unusual if minor differences, of course. Brits tend to pronounce initials as letters, for example, rather than slurring them into words. BSFA is pronounce "Bee Ess Eff Eh", rather than "Bisfa", as we lazy colonials would say it. And then there's the matter of distance, and the different way we look at it. A great many North American fans think nothing of driving five or six hundred miles each way to attend a weekend con in another city, but to English fans a trip of a couple of hundred miles is a major undertaking, enough to discourage many of them from attempting it. I was surprised to find out how many London fen had never made the relatively short trip north to Newcastle until the national convention was there in 1974. It'd be like living in Toronto and never going to Buffalo. (On the other hand, who the hell would want to go to Buffalo from here?)

So there you have it. A lot of similarities, a few differences, and more than you ever wanted to know about English fandom but were too bored to ask. I've got a lot of friends who are active in English fandom, and I think they'll have a lot more friends over here when more North Americans get a chance to meet them, either in their fanzines or at the 1979 worldcon. Some of them can outwrite us, most of them can outdrink us, and several of them are more fuggheaded than we are. They have their silly feuds over fannish awards just like we do and they're just as infuriating, intelligent, inquisitive, provocative, interesting, amusing, boring, talented and silly. Often at the same time!

In fact, I'm so impressed by what I've just read about English fandom I think I'll move back to England! If nothing else it'll keep me out of the clutches of pushy faneds like Ben Zuhl.

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#### A rough DUFF decision.


By: Just Plain Ole Ben Zuhl

I am supporting Bill Rotsler for DUFF. While Fred Haskell as a friend, fan, editor, filksinger and photographer is hard to beat, Bill Rotsler by the sheer quality and quantity of his fanac has to be put in a class by himself. So let's send Rotsler to Australia this year and keep Fred in mind for the future.

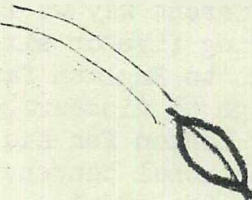


SAUCER OF LONELINESS  
By Kittredge Cary

1. I live all alone in a cold distant place  
On a dark empty star in a corner of space  
My world is too small and my life is too long  
And when you think you're lonely remember my song



CH. Saucer of Loneliness, where can you be?  
I'm floating alone on a wide empty sea  
I send out my saucers by twos and by threes  
and the currents of space send them floating back to me.




2. Well, I launched seven saucers out into the void  
And in front of my eyes all but one was destroyed  
It sailed out of sight, destination unknown  
But it might sail to you if you're feeling alone

CH. Saucer of Loneliness, where can you be?  
I'm floating alone on a wide empty sea  
I send out my saucers by twos and by threes  
And the currents of space send them floating back  
to me.

3. Now all lonely people wherever you are  
May my saucer fly to you no matter how far  
It carries this message to help you get through:  
That there's somebody out here more lonely than you

CH. Saucer of Loneliness, where can you be?  
I'm floating alone on a wide empty sea  
I send out my saucers by twos and by threes  
And the currents of space send them floating back to me.



For those unfortunates of you out there who haven't read it, this song is based on a story by Theodore Sturgeon. Coincidentally the title of the song and the story are the same. I am told that Sturgeon liked the song so much that he requested and received a tape of the author singing the song and he now plays it when he lectures.

I first heard it when I was still suffering from one of the worst maladies that can affect anyone--feeling alone in a crowd, especially at a con. Well, I haven't had that problem lately but I still like the song and I hope you do too.



THE PENDULUM SWINGS  
BY JODIE OFFUTT

When they asked me how I wanted to be listed in the BYOBCon flyers, ads and program booklet, I said, "Toastmaster."

A few people have asked me why.

Well...

In the first place, I object to the current trend that attempts to neutralize us all by denying our individual sex. I'm a person, yes. But I'm a special kind of person. I'm a female person. Nearly half the people in this country cannot make that statement!

I think it is...unfortunate that some men and women have been so intimidated by the more militant feminists that they refer to themselves as toastpersons, chairpersons, and spokespersons.

I think it is demeaning.

It is also ignorant...illiterate non-English.

In our rush to equalize and neutralize--and neuterize--we have forgotten that the first definition of the word "man" is a human being, a member of the human race, male and female alike.

According to Webster's Dictionary:

A chairman is a person who presides over a meeting or committee.

A toastmaster is a person who presides at a banquet

These are not sexist words.

Toastmistress and Mistress of Ceremonies are sexist since they designate a specific sex.

Chairperson, toastperson--are bastard constructs. Creations of illiterate minds.

Although it is fast becoming an accepted form, I don't particularly like Ms. For one thing, I was taught that ms. stood for manuscript. For another thing, where I come from we call everybody Miz anyhow.

If we don't need or want to indicate a woman's marital status, why use anything?

I predict that Muz will eventually be used to indicate a divorced (or single) woman.

Right now it brings a piece of mail to our house addressed to Mr. and Ms. Andrew J. Offutt.

It strikes me as odd that the same atmosphere and momentum that have made us so uptight and self-conscious about using words like girl and toastmaster, has at the same time created such a down-loose attitude that it is quite acceptable to use the ultimate four-letter word from a podium.

You tell me if there isn't a contradiction in an atmosphere that would put us all in unisex blue jeans, and that the most feminine clothing in many stores this side of Frederick's of Hollywood are tailored pantsuits, all the while insisting that all females be called women.

I certainly don't want to start my own knee jerking for the opposite reasons, but I just think the pendulum has swung far enough in one direction and it's time to bring it back the other way. With a little luck, it will settle down somewhere in the sensible middle.

Right now we have a crazy situation that is making us all look ridiculous. We're so caught up in semantics, so busy splitting hairs, that we've lost sight of the real issues.

I don't believe our sexuality, our femininity, need be denied for the sake of woman's rights.

We burn our bras--then cover up the interesting results with floppy sweatshirts and denim work shirts--MEN's shirts!

Calling a girl a woman don't make her one.

However, if we're going to split hairs, I insist that we split them all.

For instance: Joe Haldeman's name.

For it not to be sexist, it should be Haldeperson. But...if you are astute, you will notice that the last syllable of Haldeperson is also sexist. Haldedaughter, of course, is just as sexist, so it obviously should be Joe Haldechilid.

I, of course, am you Toastperchilid....

Jodie Offutt  
May, 1976  
Remarks at BYOBCon





## BRIAN'S SONG (OF PROTEST)

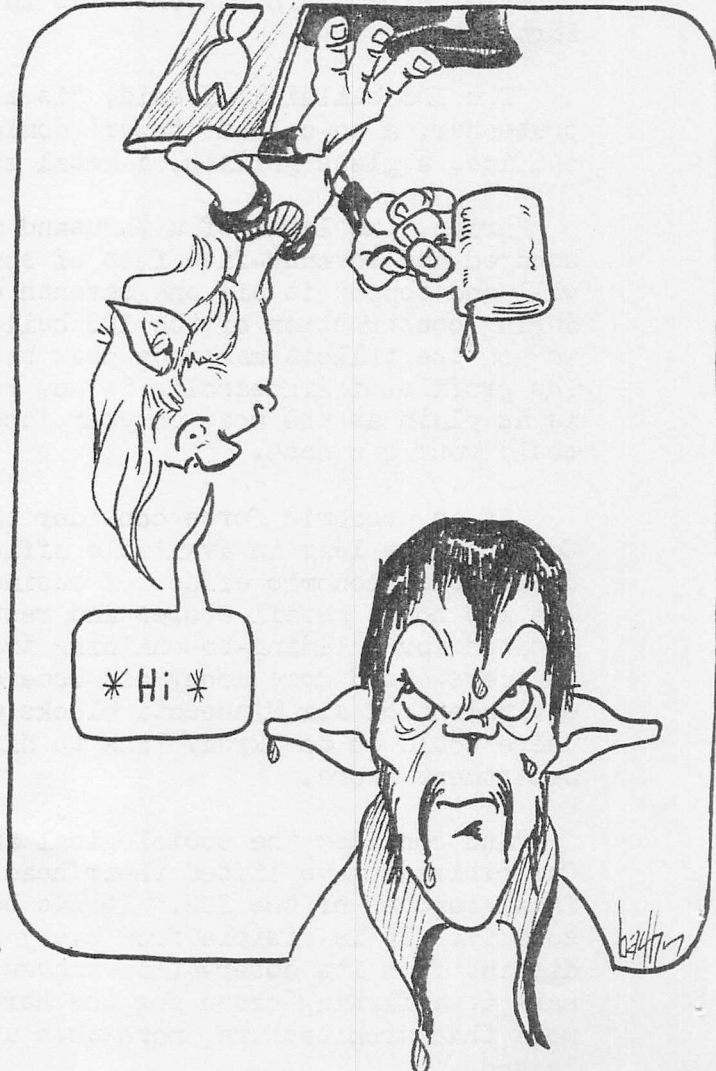
BY MADMAN RILEY

My friend Brian and I rarely adjourn our meeting of the minds. We do call for recess, however, when the occasion arises that he is more interested in his own point of view than the truth. One such issue is appreciation of Minneapolis' one and only bona fide skyscraper, the Investors Diversified Services building, or simply, the IDS building.

I shall assume you've never seen it and let our words speak for themselves as to the importance of this structure. In fact it is not as important to physically perceive the building as it is to diduce the philosophical ramifications of those ramparts. I shall be fair, and in magnanimity present the two opposing perspectives: the objective perspective (mine) and the twisted, distorted, biased and irrelevant perspective (Brian's).

First some background on the matter. In the year nineteen hundred and sixty-nine, construction of Minnesota's tallest building began. In that same calendar year Brian and I dropped out of the University of Minnesota. As an indication of how his perspective was to become warped let me relate our consequent actions after leaving the University's hallowed walls--I entered the normal workday world via civil service, and Brian left civilization for the stultifying state of military service. While I spent the ensuing three years within the state of Minnesota, and travelled through the Midwest, Brian bounced from California to Florida to Alaska to Japan. Yes, I watched the IDS building rise from naked beams and scaffolding to become a skyscraper. Meanwhile Brian began (finally!) wearing bell bottom pants, and I thought, gaining sophistication in the ways of the world.

Thus it was in the fall of nineteen seventy-two that Brian, home on leave, saw the completed building for the first time.



"To raise one's head" I said to him, "isn't it grand! Isn't it inspiring! Isn't it magnificent?"

"Isn't it the obelisk from the movie 2001: A Space Odyssey?"

I've always been one to appreciate wit, and chuckled modestly in response. "Truly though, Brian, the building is a monument to the mind of man."

"If the mind of man is seen as a block head, then this slab is indeed its just representation."

Frankly, I was appalled and indignant at that, and realizing he was serious, responded compassionately, "Three years in the military has dulled your sensitivities, my friend."

"Perhaps. One can't afford nerve-endings in the Navy, nonetheless my sensibilities remain intact."

"Then, sensible one, consider the significance of this architectural masterpiece."

"It looks more like a pineapple-salad centerpiece."

"Enough, peon!" I cried. At this point I launched into the meaningful diatribe printed below. His response was in many ways small, and it will follow my own words. Forthwith:

"The IDS building, I said, "is a genuine skyscraper. No longer will a mere pretender, a so-called 'tower' dominate our city's skyline. Instead an elegant edifice, a glass goliath, a metal monument, overlooks our citizenry.

"Brian, the labor of a thousand men was required to reach and grasp those seven hundred and seventy-five feet of space. Those men molded that space to an architect's will and topped it off one seventh of a mile in the air. Not a single fatality occurred during construction of the IDS building which is notably rare for skyscrapers. It is now the tallest man made peak between the great cities of Chicago and San Francisco. The profile of Minneapolis is now recognizable and distinctive. The IDS building is as plain as the nose on your face and you could no more overlook it than you could your own nose.

"As an economic force consider the union scale wages paid those thousand laborers. Consider the leap in available office space in downtown Minneapolis and what the disastrous economic effect of business migration to suburbia would have been. The IDS holds retail stores and restaurants, bars and barbers and is centrally located for building-to-building traffic within Minneapolis' unique Skyway system. Shoppers spend more money and come downtown more often when they can travel the equivalent of six Minnesota blocks without stepping out of doors. Without the IDS there would be no Skyway link to Minnesota's largest retail facility, Dayton's Department Store.

"And consider the sociological and psychological effect of the IDS building. Our citizens have lifted their heads, raised their focus, mainly to perceive the final reaches of the IDS. It has become a rule by which we can measure man in his society. It is visible from every part of the city and one can see thirty miles distant from its observation window. It's dramatic impact and imperious majesty make it a fitting crown for the North Star State. A building of this stature becomes more than architecture, more than utilitarian and more than symbol. It becomes legend.



"In short, the IDS building is," here I paused to inflect my total meaning precisely, "is almost ridiculously significant."

Brian replied:

"If a bone was propelled from the center of this blank rectangle I would know it to be the same flat block that appeared in the film 2001. A glass goliath? I understand Goliath had a glass jaw. A metal monument? Do you mean a space age tombstone.

"Economic impact? Financing that obscenity will keep some accountant juggling ink from now until the twenty first century. As a recognizable skyline, the IDS is nought but an obscene gesture. It is the middle finger, replete with fingernail, raised above the knuckles of Minneapolis.



"As a facial feature it could only be a Jewish nose, and I might point out that one who does not overlook his own nose has a displaced physiognomy.

"Impact? It has all the impact of a high-speed, head-on automobile collision--and is equally desirable. It indeed has sociological force. It fucked-up television reception all over the south side of town. Significance, it has not. A measure for man in his society? How appropriate...it has all the character of a yardstick.

"And as for its legend, though no fatalities occurred during construction that unhappy state was only avoided by chance. When the six-by-four foot window panel fell from the fifty-third floor it struck a Scandinavian--on the head--or someone might have been hurt.

"Yes, the legend builds, and our people lift their heads. Meanwhile tiny-bladed window washers uninate on those uplifted heads from six hundred feet in the sky.

"In short, the IDS building is almost significantly ridiculous."

I shall here leave meaning to the poet, and demeaning to the peasant. When you finally see this super structure search the cloth of your own soul for understanding. Be you fine velvet or coarse wool, the building itself will make you feel large and important or small and picky. Be not afraid of bigness and remember only that Brian stands five feet, five inches, and I am six-one, but the IDS is seven hundred and seventy-five feet tall.

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Brian is in the process of writing an article for me on Madman Riley. It will appear in the next issue of BEN' ZINE. I try to give short people the last word--right, Glicksohn. BZ



# The Weird Tail of SPAYED GERBIL Fandom

Ken Fletcher



"And we decided that the 'spayed gerbil' is the mascot of Skiffy." With those words andy offutt was to set in motion a series of events that could affect all of fandom. In the near future, fans being what they are, we may soon see Spayed Gerbil costumes at masquerades (probably consisting of a female wearing only whiskers and a scar--making it very easy to spot her tail), new SF clubs with Spayed Gerbil names, Spayed Gerbil pendants with LED eyes and Spayed Gerbil Apa's. How did it all begin, you ask?

At the last Nebula Awards Dinner a group of Dirty Pros decided to change the pronunciation of Sci-Fi to Skiffy. Mike Glicksohn is not enamored over American beer. Mix these two bits of information together, add a time and place--Sunday afternoon in the Cambanacon bar--add liberal doses of Joe Haldeman and the result is Spayed Gerbil Fandom.

The bar at Chambanacon was a cold, dim place brightened only by the fen I was sitting with and the scantily clad barmaids. At the table with me were Joe, Mike, andy, Bill Bowers and a handful of other fen. I was drinking Scotch and watching Glicksohn stir his beer with an icicle picked out of his beard (a result of an earlier sojourn to a bar twelve blocks away in subzero weather). He was building up a foam head on his beer and muttering, "at least it looks like the real thing." Downing his last beer of the day with a grimace, Mike looked around the table and asked, "anyone want a Spayed Gerbil?" I replied in the affirmative but only after first checking his hair and beard for concealed rodents (but all I found was a mass of melting icicles). Joe then proved that he was able to take part in two different





conversations and mentally rid our delightfully underdressed waitress of what little she had on by adding, "make that three." He then picked up the sentence he had left dangling and returned to the conversation with Andy. Mike, not at all fazed by being taken up on his offer, stood up on his chair (to be sure that the waitress saw him), and accompanied by the pitter-patter of melting icicle hitting the table, called our barmaid over.



I must say that she didn't seem suprised to have a large, hairy icicle order three altered female rodents, but after three fan-filled days in the bar she must have been ready for anything. She undulated her way over to the bar, repeated our order twice, pointed at our table and finally undulated her way back to our table (causing Mike to melt faster) to ask how to make a Spayed Gerbil. When no reply was forthcoming she looked at me, I looked at Mike and Mike looked at Joe. Without batting an eyelash Joe said, "it's 1/3 Campari, 2/3 Gin, stirred not mixed over ice and served straight up." Within minutes three blood-red drinks were clashing with our tablecloth. Soon our entire table, as well as the rest of the fen in the bar were consuming large quantities of Spayed Gerbils. The bartender, flabbergasted by the number of sudden Campari imbibers, vowed to lay in a case of it for next year's Chabanacon.

As we were leaving the bar Joe suddenly turned to the exhausted bartender and told him that he was really using a substitute recipe--to make a real Spayed Gerbil one takes a blender and a gerbil... At this point the bartender interrupted him, pointed to the door and croaked "OUT".

Well thats the story of how Spayed Gerbil Fandom got its start. By now Spayed Gerbils are infesting Champaign, Ann Arbor, Minneapolis, Toronto, Iowa City and probably Australia. In the near future Fandom is in danger of being deluged under Spayed Gerbil this and Spayed Gerbil that, but, at least future masquerades will certainly be interesting.

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PETER ROBERTS FOR TAFF

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Lee H,  
 Hope you enjoy Ben'zine.  
 QUANDRY WAS ONE OF THE  
 ZINES THAT INSPIRED ME TO PUB &  
 ACTED AS A MODEL. THANK FOR THE FINE READING.  
 I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR REACTION TO B'Z.  
 Best,  
 Ben

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