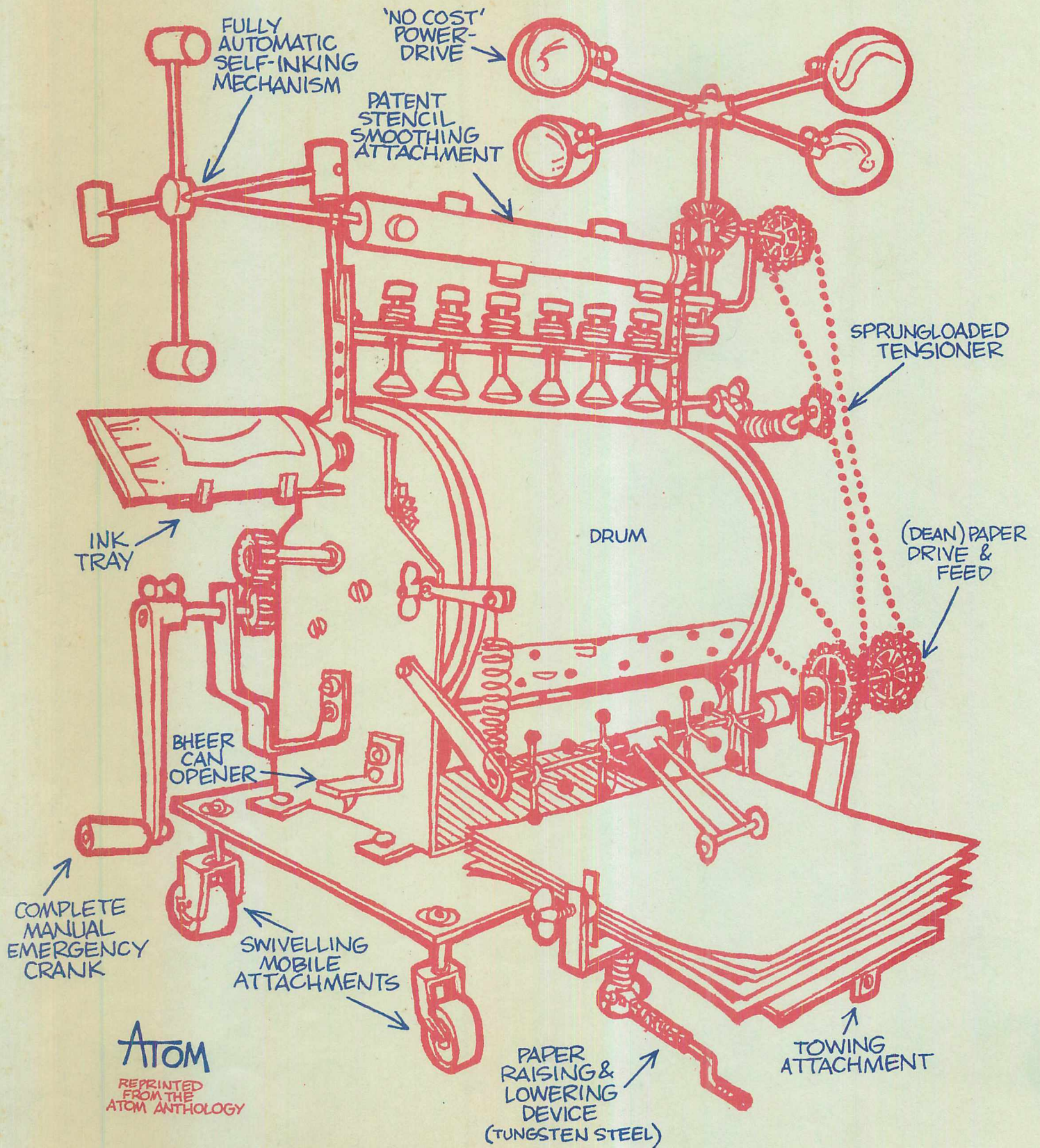
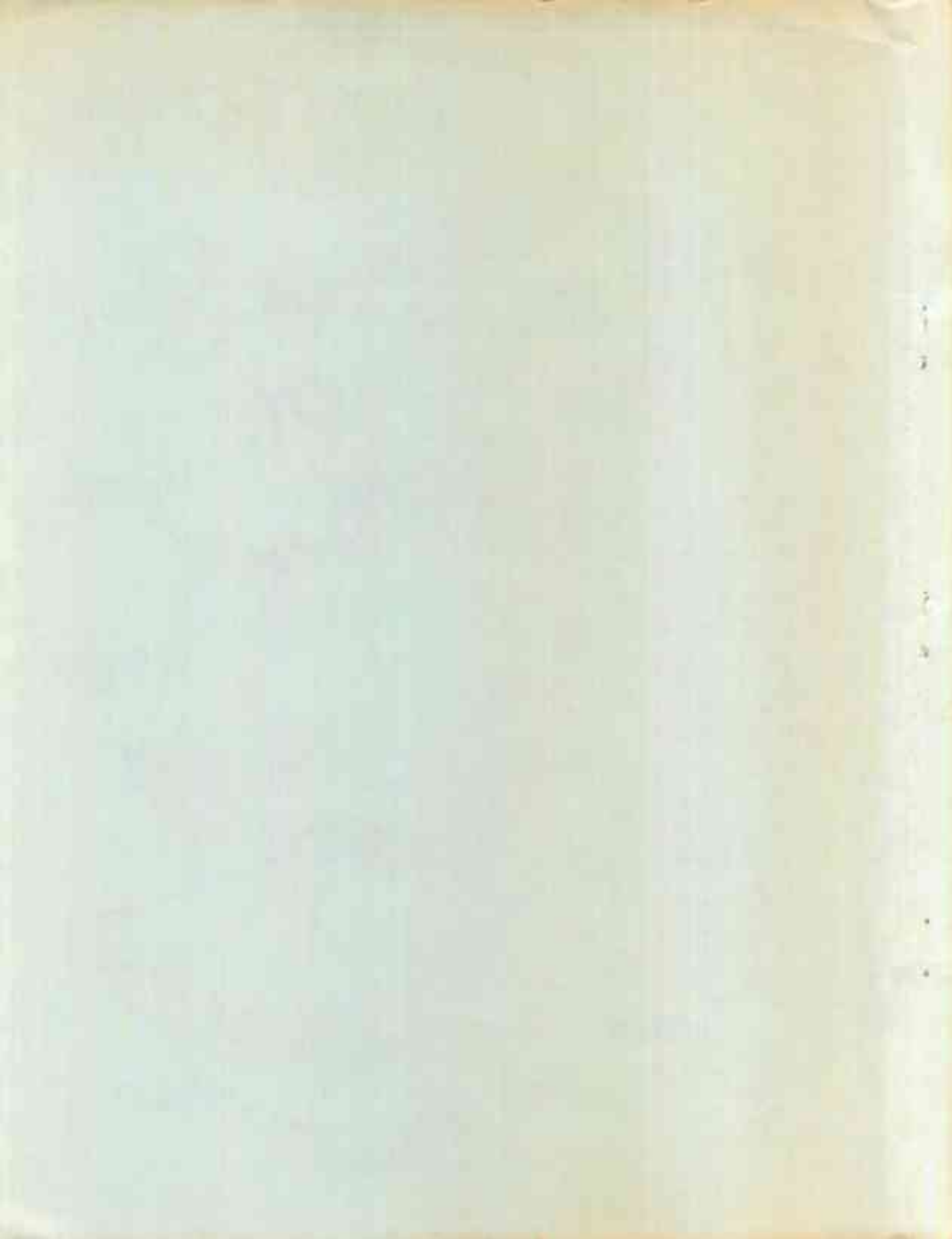


boonfark 4





Boonfark

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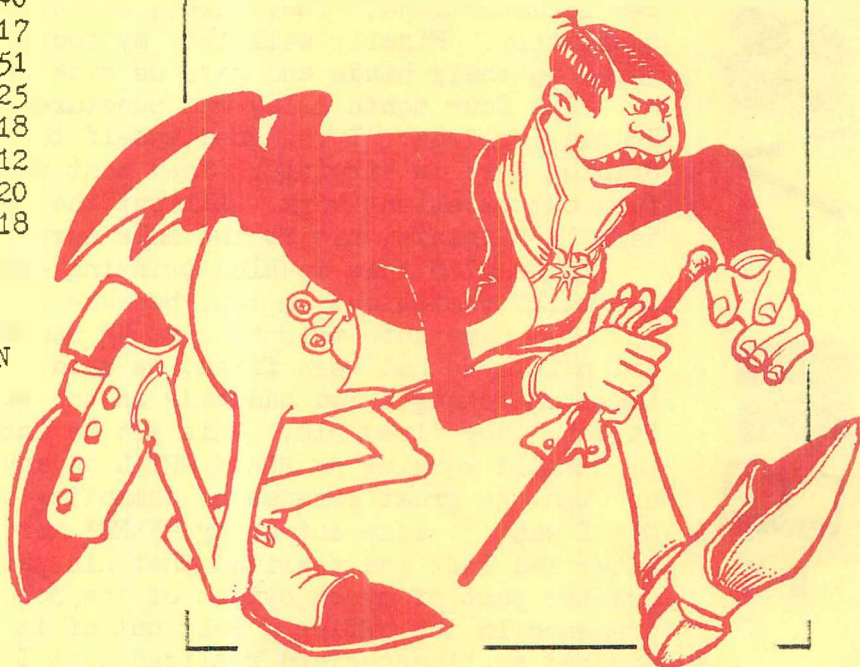
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BOONFARK (formerly ENEMA FUN!)
Volume 1, Number 4 is published
from time to time by DAN STEFFAN
823 N. Wakefield St.,Arlington,
Virginia 22203. It's available
for "the usual",*Old Fanzines*,
or an outrageous \$2 per copy.
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Dedicated to Jeff Schalles,
for his time and help. Thanks.



COPY COPY: Earlier this year, while working in New York, at HEAVY METAL with Ted White, we started to discuss the possibilities of utilizing the office xerox machine for the publication of fanzines. The HM xerox had many attractive features: chiefly the quality of reproduction (the machine gave good black) and the fact that it was *FREE*!

I visualized myself walking into the mailroom (where the xerox was located) and slipping a few pages of material through the machine every now and then. In no time I could have a fanzine. Of course there would have to be some changes made in how I perceived this fanzine. Could I tolerate putting out an issue of BOONFARK on white paper, using near-offset-quality repro? Could I stand the idea of producing an issue that looked more like LOCUS than say, LIGHTHOUSE? Would it look fannish enough? I'd seen a number of fanzines that had been done on xerox, they didn't seem to have much style or vitality. I wondered if I might end up with such a fanzine.

Instead I decided to see if I could overcome the handicaps of xeroxing, and make it fannish. Like offset, xerox has always struck me as a "cold" form of repro, while mimeoed pages seem to have a certain "warmth."

To increase the warmth of the xerox reproduction I decided to print on colored paper. Yellow in fact. I had to buy the paper, thereby adding a cost to this *FREE* publishing idea. But I realized it was necessary to achieve my desired effect.

The yellow paper alone could have neutralized the xerox process, but at the same time I was also knee-deep in a phenomenon known as WARHOON. I have nearly a complete collection of this fine fanzine, and as a result I've become a great admirer of Bergeron's style. I wanted to do something similar with this BNF. I was particularly taken by the color offset art in the three most recent issues. Especially the WASH. I felt that illustrations printed in colored inks combined with the paper would surely make BNF look a lot more fannish.

I went looking for an offset printer that could handle the job. As luck (or so I thought at the time) would have it, I found a cheap printer two blocks from my office that offered different colored inks on different days. This seemed perfect. I could take a couple of pieces of art to the printer each week, and in short order I'd have the issue ready to go. Even with this added expense I felt that my *FREE* xeroxed fanzine would still be produced for little money.

But it didn't work out that way. The cheapo printer lived up to his description and proved incompetent. It took them three months to produce two illustrations. They turned out bad work (faded colors) and hassled me constantly. Finally well into my fourth month of dealing with them, they threw up their hands and gave me back my material and most of my money.

The four month delay had punctured my plans to publish in time for the Boston Worldcon. I resigned myself to this fact and went to my regular printer here in Virginia. They cost twice as much as the NY cheapo, but turn out excellent work. All but the heading for Rich's column were done here in Virginia, his is the sole survivor of the New York fiasco.

Even with this doubled printing expense, and the cost of the paper, I was still coming out on top, because I had *FREE* xeroxing. Didn't I?

Ted came into my studio at HM one Monday in August, he looked shocked and pale. He had been fired, he said. The magazine's management hadn't liked the changes Ted had made in the magazine, so instead of trying to work it out, they fired him. This put me into a dilemma.

Would working on HEAVY METAL be any fun after Ted left? Could I put up with the great expense of commuting back and forth to New York any longer? Did I want to lose out on my *FREE* xeroxing? I worked at HM for a week after Ted left and realized that his participation in the magazine was a greater part of my enjoyment of the job than I'd expected. Without his presence in the office I felt out of it and knew I wouldn't be staying. I studied my finances and realized that I'd only been making \$70.00 a week

zEN vaudcVILLE

after expenses and knew I wouldn't be staying. I looked at my *FREE* xerox and whimpered, I knew... Two out of three ain't bad.

After returning to Virginia, (I never really moved to NYC but instead spent all my time up there on the couches of friends) I started looking around for other xerox use. Eventually Jeff Schalles offered to run this issue off at his job. And it turned out that Jeff's xerox is even better than the one in New Yawk.

Of course, being unemployed as I presently am means not having enough money to pay for offset printing and paper. As I type this there are still five pieces of art yet to be printed, including the cover. But through the good graces of my employed girlfriend, Lynn Collier, I think they will go to press relatively soon.

I have other excuses, too. That cover I mentioned above has yet to reach my eager hands. Richard Bergeron promised me a cover several months ago, it was going to be quite a coup for me. But if the cover isn't by Bergeron you'll know that Dick blew it.

So what you hold in your little paws is a fannish xeroxed fanzine. Warm and colorful, and a hell of a lot of trouble.

Next issue we return to mimeo, traditional and functional, always easy to deal with. Why--there's even one in Ted's basement.

"I'm not a collector. I'm an accumulator, with taste!" --Jay Kinney

OFF AND RUNNING The response to last issue has been very gratifying and I want to encourage all of my readers to respond to this issue if something strikes your fancy. The amazing thing to me about a lot of the letters I received was their length. Three and four pages. These wonderful letters are the reason the letter column is twenty pages this issue. Prolific mothers, aren't you?

I said last issue that I wanted to publish the type of fanzine that would make fans (new, old and gaffiated) feel comfortable. Something to give them a link with the type of fanzine they once considered good. This is a Sixth Fandom fanzine, twenty years after the fact. Those long letters I mentioned are proof that some of the people who saw the last issue were touched by my attempts.

Last issue's editorial was a loud proclamation that there weren't enough good old fannish fanzines around anymore. I suggested that I could make this fanzine into one of those disappearing fanzines. I put myself up for comparison with other fanzines and dared anyone to say I wasn't top notch.

This wasn't my intention. I was just saying that this is a fanzine that is closer to my ideal than, say, Janus. Not that Janus isn't a good fanzine, it's just that I have a basic difference of opinion with the "little magazine" approach to publishing. I thought I could offer up an alternative style of fanzine for those (like me) who wanted something that read like an old fashioned fanzine. Although I didn't express these ideas too clearly, the issue lived up to my expectations, and apparently others as well.

This issue is a refinement of what I started building last issue.

Retinal Flutter?

RAISON D'ETRE, Current Thots This issue contains the continuation of my INCOMPLEAT TOWNER HALL project. Greg Benford's article this time is in my opinion, a major fan memoir. In it Greg related his feelings about the Void Boys and Towner Hall, his thoughts on what they did to 'his' fanzine, and how all of this made him what he is today. ~~A twisted ~~del~~del~~

Unlike Terry Carr's delightful piece last issue, this is a full-blown article that integrates the reprinted works in the writing, rather than introducing them. By using the xerox I've been able to offer you photocopies of the actual fanzine pages along with the actual reprint.

Bhob Stewart's article was sent originally as a letter of comment. I decided that it fit better in the ITH series, and so I pulled it from the letter column. When I mentioned this idea to Bhob when I met him in Boston, he responded by saying there was a lot more he could write about Towner Hall. So next issue I'll present continued on pg. 29



byron

MINAC ted white

NOTES FOR A REVIEW "Ted," Dan said to me. "You've been stalling on your column for months. It's time to do it." This was directly after he told me that he planned to pub his ish this weekend.

I've never had a harder assignment. So far I've written four single-spaced pages, none of which met my current standards. This is my third go at it.

This afternoon, embarking upon a little necessary research, I descended into my basement. Since I presently live in the house in which I grew up, a lot of memories lurk in that basement. Some time around 1953, when I was fifteen years old, I set up my first 'fan environment' down there: a desk with an old L.C. Smith typer, a table with a postcard mimeo on it, and a set of file drawers. The file drawers are the kind that are called "storage files"--each unit independent of the others and stackable. They're made out of some sort of impregnated cardboard, painted gray. I bought them, at an employee discount, at the stationery store where I worked Saturdays and summers during my high school years. They've held up better than most metal file cabinets would have, surviving moves to Baltimore (two locations), New York City (three locations), and back again.

I was looking for a letter, one I'd received in 1955. I wasn't entirely sure of where it was; things have gotten moved around a good bit since 1955. I wasn't actually sure that I still had it.

The desk, still there, was no help. The drawers were all empty. I tried a wooden set of files which had not been moved out of the basement along with the others. The front pulled off one when I tugged at it; the wood was rotten. Inside were a jumble of books. One was Science Fiction for Teenagers, a Grosset & Dunlap book.

I moved on to the four gray storage files, neatly stacked atop each other near the furnace.

The top drawer was old FAPA mailings, circa 1956, each neatly filed in a folder. Ghod, I was organized in those days. I had a lot less to organize, then. Ten year old FAPA mailings might be found anywhere in this house, and rarely all in one bundle, either. I dropped out of FAPA in the mid-seventies; now I don't even recall the precise year.

The next drawer down was paydirt: File foulders full of material and art and correspondence from the early to mid-fifties. Early drafts of some of my stories of that period, one handwritten on notebook paper and graded a B-plus by an English teacher. Original manuscripts of the material I published in my early, neoish fan-zines, with names on them of people I can now barely recall anything about.

Then, file folders alphabetized, containing my correspondence. I rarely kept carbons of my letters, but I did keep all the letters I received. Not only that, I answered them compulsively. An unanswered letter would create a terrific guilt-load; I still recall the first letter I let go unanswered for three months--it was from Henry Moskowitz, who, under the professional name of Henry Morrison, would later become the first and last Vice President of the Scott Meredith Literary Agency and subsequently my agent for fifteen years, until he failed to answer my letters. You see how these things tie together?

I thumbed through them to the "W" file and pulled it out. It was filled with letters from Don Weggars, a prominent youngfan of the day, a peer and a friend of mine. We exchanged quite a few letters, it would seem. But sandwiched between several of Don's letters were two from Walt Willis. And they were what I was seeking.

WARHOON 28: "For your next column for BOONFARK," Dan said to me some months ago, "how would you like to review WARHOON 28? Bergeron specifically asked me to ask you...." I said yes, sure, why not? After all, Dick had sent me a copy of this mammoth volume without receiving \$20.00 from me, much less the current price of \$25.00, although it had been my vague intention to send him a check a year or so earlier. Typically, I'd never gotten around to it. If he wanted me to review it here that was fine with me; it was little enough to do in payment.

I hadn't realized then just what I was letting myself in for.

Recently a copy of Geis' SFR arrived with a review of WARHOON 28 in it by Terry Carr. It was a fine review, excellent in fact, and ideally suited for SFR's readership, who might not be too familiar with either WARHOON's history or Willis's. Terry handled the whole thing with wit, style and insight.

Which just made my own job that much harder.

I have been reading WARHOON 28, on and off, for the past six months or so. When I was working in New York City and spending my weekends in Virginia I would read it on the train, Friday nights and Monday mornings. I dipped into it occasionally in my office, when time allowed. More than one night I stayed up later than I intended, having dipped into the volume with the intention of reading a few pages and finding myself totally immersed in it hours later. I have yet to completely finish reading it. I skipped over both "Willis Discovers America" and "The Enchanted Duplicator," having reread each a number of times before, and being more interested in reading the obscure stuff. I had, after all, read at least 80% and probably over 90% of the material in WARHOON 28 before, in its original incarnations.

Rich Brown, who dates back as a fan to the mid-fifties and who has been a friend, neighbor and (currently) housemate of mine for nearly as long, read WARHOON 28 in what amounted to one sitting: an orgy of sustained reading during every spare moment he had over the period of a few days, perhaps a week.

WARHOON 28 has well over six hundred pages of single-spaced elite typer type, and contains between its covers what amounts to the life-work of the man who is unarguably the very best we've ever seen in fandom. But it is more than this. WARHOON 28 is an evocation of an era (Sixth Fandom) which was arguably the best moment fandom has ever known. On these blue sheets of nearly unadorned paper Bergeron has delivered up to us the very essence of what fandom once was and still is for those who remember it.

How in hell can I "review" something this monumental, this epochal, this essential?

WALTER A. WILLIS: To review WARHOON 28 is, inevitably, to review Willis. It says something very basic about Willis that a volume of this nature and length and comprehensiveness could be assembled almost solely of Willis's own works. ("Almost solely" because four other contributors are to be found in the volume--Harry Warner, Jr; Pete Graham; Tom Perry; and Bergeron himself.)

To stand in awe of Willis is to render him a profound disservice--and one which has been his lot many times--since this places him upon a pedestal, invites idolatry, and ignores him as a human being. But how can we not be at least a little in awe of this man? Willis is Jophan in a profound way. He is perhaps not the most talented writer ever to concentrate his prose almost exclusively on fandom, but no other fannish writer who was his equal ever so perfectly embodied the ideals of fandom, nor applied them better. Willis looked at fandom as it then existed and did what Burbee, Laney and Tucker had never done: he saw it not as something in the process of becoming, but as something complete and ideal. The metaphorical model can be found fully realised in THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR, but it underlies and informs virtually all of Willis's thinking and writing, from very early on.

Fandom was not, for Willis, just a bunch of ordinary guys working in an ordinary shop--it was extraordinary and unique, a place where people of good will banded together to enjoy an idealised way of life. In fandom crass profit motives were meaningless, and people gave generously of themselves for the pleasure of the act. Fandom was a utopia of creativity, available and accessible to anyone who was capable of recognizing it. Because fandom of the early fifties was far less social and face-to-face than it is now, and was conducted mostly on paper, through the mails, it was possible for each fan to become his or her ideal self in fandom: to project a paper version without blemishes (or, if there were blemishes, they were of mimeo ink...).

I took notes as I read WARHOON 28: passages I wanted to quote when it came time to write this.

I was going to structure this column somewhat the way Terry did his SFR review,

you see, punctuating my pithy observations with relevant quotes. But I am overwhelmed by the magnitude, not only of available quotes, but of points that can be made about Willis, and about fandom, and about virtually everything else as well, through those quotes. I might as well review an encyclopedia by quoting what each of its entries has to say.

So I'm going to remain subjective here.

Fandom, as I viewed it as a teenager in the fifties, was a wonderful place, a sort of land of Oz in which I could actually live. When I read THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR the first time it was as if I had been living in a black-and-white world and had just been given my first glimpse of color. The inchoate feelings which had been percolating in the back of my adolescent mind were given substance and reality--better, they were validated and in the best possible way. Let me say it right now: I believed. In THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR Willis and Shaw embodied the ideals and created the role model which I have followed, sometimes imperfectly, as a fan ever since.

When one meets such a perfect crystallisation of one's viewpoint the temptation is to rush up to the person or persons responsible and fling one's arms around them, crying out "Brother!" or something equally heartfelt. At the very least this can be embarrassing for the recipient(s). I have often wondered how Willis put up with this kind of thing, which can be at once flattering and distressing.

In 1955 I was, despite several years already as a fan, still a gawky neofan with few obvious talents except some skill as a mimeographer. It took me nearly a year after the publication of THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR to work up enough nerve to write Walt and ask him if he had any copies left; so little did I think of myself as a fanzine editor that I had never considered sending him trade copies of my ZIP. (I knew my own place; I'd sent a copy to Redd Boggs once and he'd written back to tell me that it wasn't worth trading SKYHOOK for, which had crushed me for months.)

Naturally Walt immediately responded with not only a copy (one of a few that were left) of THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR, but copies of HYPHEN as well.

I must have written back after receiving these zines, asking a few questions and explaining a few things about myself. Walt's reply, dated "30th April 1955", was on two small pieces of paper, one of which was the back of a portion of a map with his letterhead printed on it (by letterpress) in two colors. It is obvious to me now that had I wished to I might have continued corresponding with Walt, but it never occurred to me then. I couldn't imagine wasting his time. (I did, however, start sending him my fanzines, which gradually improved to the point that in 1959 he sent me an unsolicited contribution, for which I was very grateful. Of course, by then even Redd Boggs was trading SKYHOOK for my zines.)

I'm looking at that letter from Walt now. I just turned the sheet over and looked at the map for the first time in the twenty-five years I've possessed it. It's only a small section, but the names scattered over it are evocative: Loughtilub, Ballyrory, Moneyhoghan, Kilcreen, the Crooked Br., Glenamoyle Lodge, Knockanbane Mountains...I can imagine this easily as a map of Fandom as seen in THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR; when I visited Northern Ireland in 1965 Walt showed me the tower on which they'd based the Tower of the Enchanted Duplicator, and I can't help thinking that Ireland comes as close to the magical lands of Fandom as any real place I've been.

In my letter to him I had confessed that "Jacob Edwards" (who had put out one issue of his own fanzine after doing columns and art for mine) was my hoax, and that Rog Phillips, who was then doing a fanzine review column for Ray Palmer's UNIVERSE, was in on it. Walt said,

"I must admit you had me properly fooled with the Edwards gag. I noticed Phillips had in fact reviewed ZIP in his column though he said he wouldn't, but he usually writes so moronically in Clubhouse that it never occurred to me he was being cunning. I felt quite sympathetic towards poor little Edwards. Well well. I suppose next thing Wetzell and Raeburn will also turn out to be real figments of the imagination, not imaginary figments. Let's hope I don't wake up one morning and find I'm Bob Shaw --Madeleine would never recover from the shock."

I had told Walt that I intended changing the name of my fanzine to STELLAR and devoting it to fanfiction (which I did, for five issues, published in 1956 and 1957). But I hadn't defined my terms....

"Interested to read about your new policy, but I'm not quite sure when you say 'fanfiction' whether you mean amateur sf or what I call fannish fiction. They seem to me to be two entirely different things. If it's the first I don't envy you; I ran a fiction zine myself for years and I think what success it had was primarily due to the non-fiction in it and to the fact that at the time British fandom was so starved of sf that it was willing to read anything. Nowadays there's so much pro sf that 9 fans out of 10 just skip any amateur sf they find cluttering up fanzines. On the other hand if it's fannish fiction you mean--like The Enchanted Duplicator--then I'm willing to believe there's quite a future in it. Interest in it appears to be growing--the London fans are talking of producing an anthology of Trufan Tales." Needless to say, it was the second definition that I had in mind.

The rest of Walt's letter responded to other points or questions I'd raised: "The piece in the sideline ((of HYPHEN)) about NY in 57 wasn't meant to be a statement of fact, but a declaration of aim. We mean to capture the 1956 Con for London, in which case the US rotation will skip a year and the 57 Con will be in NY, or at least in the East. That will mean that South Gate will have a chance in 1958. This is high politics of course...we hope to get a lot of support from the old-timers in fandom who have followed the Outlanders' ten-year-old campaign. There are otherwheels within wheels too, and all in all I think London has a pretty fair chance." (As it turned out, NY beat London for the 56 Worldcon, but London won for 1957, which accomplished the same purpose perhaps even better, since there was less guarantee that the fans in attendance at NYCon 2 would have voted for the fannish dream of South Gate in 58, and the British fans did.)

"I think Atom uses commercial shading plates, but probably helps out with files, wiremesh and stuff. I've never seen him at work on a stencil, but he's quite handy at improvising. He makes aeroplanes for the Government during his spare time from fanac and when I was in London he gave me a beautiful set of burnishers, styli, etc which he'd created at the factory.

"Yes, I remember that 1948 Fantasy Annual. I was just coming into fandom at the time though and I didn't realise how wonderful it was. I wish someone would do things like that nowadays. Seems to me the trouble with presentday fandom is that it's too diffuse--too many fanzines, too many people slightly active, instead of a comparative few up to the eyes in it. It used to be you could write a column quite easily and happily by aiming at a known group of people who had all read the same things as you, but nowadays I suppose there are only two or three fans who still get most of the fmz. Ah well, no doubt everything will sort itself out in time."

This was a letter from fandom's biggest BNF to an undistinguished neofan, yet Walt took the time to explore topics which a more impatient fan would have passed over much more briefly.

In 1961 Les Gerber and I proposed a Tenth Anniversary Willis Fund to bring both Walt and Madeleine over to Chicago for the 1962 Worldcon--coincidentally being hosted by the same city in which Walt had attended the 1952 Worldcon. Our reasons were essentially selfish: Neither of us had met Walt and neither of us saw ourselves going to Ireland at any time in the near future, and we wanted to meet Willis. I strongly suspect that most of those who contributed money to the successful Fund had similar underlying motives.

For Walt it must have been a little like being a famous star whose audience wants to meet him. Each of us, in our experience of Walt, developed a sense of relationship with him--like countless millions of Americans lying in their beds watching Johnny Carson, each cherishing the illusion that he "knows" Johnny (after all, we all feel comfortable referring to this man whom we've never met by his first name, don't we?).

Willis in person was precisely like Willis in print--and all the clues were there in print: his shyness when confronted by large numbers of people, his preference for small groups in which genuinely interesting conversations can occur, his

cheerfulness in the face of occasional adversity, his politeness when faced with rudeness, his quick mind and delight in cleverness, his essential Irishness which reflects itself not only in his inflections but in his sense of what is right, just and proper; his basic gentlemaness as a civilized human being. And, yes, he was every bit as quick with a good pun in impromptu conversation.

I think we placed a terrible burdon on him with TAWF, and one we should have recognized as such in advance. I put it down to our youth and inexperience that we were so unperceptive then.

One has only to read THE HARP STATESIDE or his later pieces such as "The Ten Year Hitch" (in VOID 23) to realize what a tremendous sense of obligation the original WAW With The Crew in '52 campaign had placed on Walt. Willis never wanted to be venerated and placed head and shoulders above other fans--although he was human enough to enjoy the egoboo--for the simple reason that it changed fandom for him and made it less of the place he wanted it to be. Willis wanted simply to be Jophan--learning from his mistakes and fanning well in the company of his peers.

But the success of the 1952 Fund placed an enormous obligation on Willis to respond in kind to this overwhelmingly generous act on the part of fandom. Most of his fanac from 1952 until 1957 or so (and the publication in one volume of THE HARP STATESIDE) can be seen in this light. THE HARP STATESIDE itself was the most concrete result of this sense of obligation: the finest-written trip-and-con report fandom has yet seen, built with clever anecdotes and perceptive character studies into a piece at once insightful and entertaining. Another result was Willis's involvement in and dedication to TAFF--another way of passing on to fandom the special benefits he had already enjoyed. (I think that Willis was willing, if necessary, to do all that he could to elevate the rest of fandom to the status of ghodhood if there was no way he could abdicate his own.)

The obligation told on Willis. One could sense, in the late fifties, his fatigue. He confessed himself that much of the sparkle had gone out of fandom for him; he was increasingly distanced from it by his fatigue.

And then we came along with big smiles on our faces and handed Walt a brand new, bigger-than-ever obligation, and to seal the bargain we made it one he couldn't refuse: we included Madeleine.

We did so of course out of sheer adolescent idealism. We weren't sexist and we were prepared to believe that Madeleine was every bit as neat a person as Walt was and we thought it a shame that she had been forced by circumstances (young children to care for, fandom's more impecunious status then) to remain behind when Walt made his wonderous 1952 trip. It seemed only right to us that this time she should share the delights of such an epic journey. (It did not occur to us that we might instead be exposing herto rigors worse yet than Walt had endured ten years earlier, including the loss of all their luggage.)

I think that if we had made our offer solely to Walt, he would probably have gently turned it down. But how could he refuse Madeleine an opportunity to see the sights he had already seen? How could he deny her access to a world he had already sampled? I think Walt accepted TAWF knowing full well what it would more than likely do to him, largely for Madeleine's sake.

And thus we laid upon Walt's shoulders a burdon no person of sensitivity should ask another to carry.

THINGS YET TO BE COVERED: Some day the story will have to be told of the shameful way we treated the Willises on their arrival to the United States--the backbiting and bickering over them which took place. But I don't feel up to it. There is no way I can write this column as I feel it should be written; these notes will have to suffice for now.

A proper review of WARHOON 28 should include a lot more specific details, not excluding a cavail at all the typos which litter some pages almost to the point of incomprehensibility, but definitely including a Low Bow to Bergeron for the enormous amount of time and effort which went into organizing all this material so skilfully and well. He has contrived to give us what amounts to twenty-five years of a man's life, cleverly bookended by pieces which set his life in perspective (Warner's bio-

--continued on page 29--

THE INCOMPLEAT TOWNER HALL

TOWNER HALL, VOID, ADOLESCENCE
AND ALL THAT

It is an odd and strangely echoing thought: those days of the early 60s, when VOID jetted forth with almost frightening regularity and there seemed to be a distant and Ozlike place called Towner Hall.

I never saw it. For me the whole VOID experience was a matter of the printed word. Some history: my brother Jim and I edited and published VOID for issues 1 through 13, ending in Fall of 1958. Something came over us then. Our best friend in fandom was a burgeoning talent named Kent Moomaw. Kent came to stay with us in Summer 1958, when we were living in Dallas. I'd just finished my junior year in high school and my interest in mathematics and science was emerging strongly. I spent much of that summer reading the biography of Enrico Fermi, *ATOMS IN THE FAMILY*, and thinking about physics and the serene joys that field promised. This was a departure for me, because until then I had thought I would be a writer. But physics seemed to have more substance and weight in the world, and the Sputnik "crisis" underlined the importance of that exact, quantitative world.

While I was studying Newtonian mechanics and watching the space program slouch into existence, Kent Moomaw came. We went to the Souwestercon, "the con which killed Texas fandom", as Kent was later to label it. And Kent went home to write a devastating piece on the con, which we published in the last Benford issue of VOID (#13). Our careers as fanzine writers and editors had been successful, and we had a good place in the litany of top fanzines of the time. But increasingly mathematics interested me. I thought I would become an engineer. And then news came in Fall 1958, from Kent's mother, that he had gone to a draft board interview, and had been told that he would be drafted immediately (a false scare tactic, I knew), and then had left that place and gone down to a drugstore nearby and bought a straight razor, and gone into a city park, and cut his wrists--and then, impossibly, seeing the blood, had gone on to cut his own throat, most methodically--and been discovered by a passerby shortly later. Something happened to me then, and I never published a fanzine again. I did not think it through clearly, but for me a thing went



PART TWO
greg
benford

out of fandom at that moment, reading the letter from his mother, and it has never come back into that paper universe we all inhabit. Jim and I had shared the work of VOID, with me doing the typing and writing, Jim the mimeo. Somehow the incursion of the 1950s reality--Sputnik, draft, suicide at the thought of going into the Army, mathematics; an odd mixture, to be sure--silenced forever our urge to communicate, to publish a fanzine and announce ourselves to the world.

So in the winter, when Ted White wrote to suggest a coedited VOID, Jim immediately said no. And he has never appeared in fanzines again. I pondered the point, and agreed. It seemed a good way to keep in touch with the people I still loved and listened to, the voices who came through those mimeo'd pages with a mirth and insurgence that I, in my rather strict high school role, relished. So I agreed, and Ted became the principal momentum behind a new kind of VOID which quickly grew a personality of its own, one neither Ted nor I had ever manifested before. The chitterchatter embodies it: irrevrent, wry, affectionate in a warm but not fulsome way. It is a spirit I can still recapture by rereading those pages.

So VOID took off, making its monthly schedule for an astonishing time, and then Ted moved to NYC and things slowed. I contributed editorials and suggestions, but the momentum was clearly his, and you could see in his letters (alas, all now destroyed; I saved little then) a curious alchemy as he found an outlet for the natural mordant wit he has. His piece on Calvin Thomas Beck, his somewhat cynical asides--these were perfectly done, and fit the mood of fandom at the time remarkably well. He had never given of himself this way in STELLAR, his bigtime genzine. And then Pete Graham joined, and Terry Carr. By then I had taken a four year scholarship at the University of Oklahoma. (I based my decision on money rather than prestige, and the decision seems amazing to me now; I could have done much better at Caltech, or MIT, or Berkeley.) I wrote editorials and wondered what it was really like back there. And I think I got the voice right. Listen to this piece from a typical Benford editorial--by then called "Happy Benford Chatter" after someone's lettercol comment--in which I clearly try on the Towner Hall mannerisms:

WE ARE FOUR Some of you have commented on the vast editorial staff which VOID now supports, and I'm happy to say there has been general approval. I'm rather glad it happened myself. At least we might be able to get the zine out regularly now. Of course, we realize that we will be breaking a tradition in fandom if VOID comes out more often than every once in a while, but we are adamant. "On to punctuality!" is our cry.

I'm so pleased by this addition to the VOID staff that I've been considering doing more of the same. Why, we can make it an honor in fandom to become a VOID coeditor. There can be a regular little club, sort of like the N3F or Foreman Scotty's Space Patrol. We can have a special VOID Coeditor's handshake and secret signal ring (with a picture of one of the First Four inside which lights up in the dark so you can recognise one of us if you chance to meet us in a back alley somewhere--it's that sort of a club) and all sorts of other things to induce people to join. All you have to do is send in a regular little column about Dallas fandom or one of the other 3 coeditors. Ted White will run it off and put your name in the colophon (it's his fanzine and we're all just sort of columnists, you know) and you'll be in.

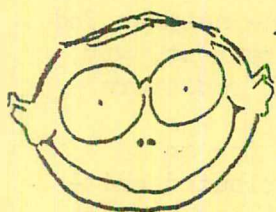
Does anyone

want to join?

It's a mistake to think of VOID as an arena for harmless jokes, chatter and empty mirth, though. We all took some remarkably savage digs at high-profile targets: LASFS, Seth Johnson (now dead), Cal Thos Beck, and certainly: Dallas.

Something strange had happened to me in fandom. I think the sense of isolation I had while living in Germany, where my father was commander of a field artillery batallion, contributed to it. I didn't like the Army kids and I felt a tug toward the verbal universe of fandom. It was all I had, nearly. So I adopted a mannerism which has become a character trait: a certain distance, an easy cynicism, a biting tongue. These are with me to this day and I don't regard them as welcome assets. I think I got crippled back there, in ways I don't understand even now. Perhaps fandom itself had something to do with this process. The hallowed Names in that era were the biting

humorists: Burbee, Laney, Redd Boggs, Boyd Raeburn. I liked them, I copied them. And so I put a lot of weight on the putdown, the cutting remark, the making of others a convenient butt of a sly joke. I'm not proud of this; I think it became a habit I cannot now cast off. I think, listening to my younger voice through these issues of VOID, that I hear the sound of thwarted idealism in these writings. Here was a boy on the way to becoming a man, and around him there seemed many highblown visions, many empty exhortations. He saw this as phony 50s rhetoric, and I think it made him forever cynical about the world. In some ways he was dead right. But there is a cost for such caution, for such noninvolvement, and I think it is rather a high cost. Anyway, listen to the piece which brings this out best from my VOID editorials:



HAPPY BENFORD CHATTER

GREG BENFORD

A PARTY FOR DALLAS "Come on over", Tom Reamy said, "we're having a party for Dallas." I thought about that for a minute. It does not do to say the obvious thing that pops immediately into your head when dealing with Dallas fans, for that is almost always the wrong thing to say. "Are you sure you can get them all in?" I replied. "Oh", he said, "I mean all the Dallas fans. We're going to have a little party for them."

And so it came to pass that I attended my only fannish party in Dallas. I asked Jim if he wanted to go, but he demurred, saying he wanted to do something constructive, like sleeping. Later he arranged a date, explaining that this was more constructive in the long run, so I was forced to go alone. I contemplated taking a date along, but I realized that taking a girl to a place full of science fiction fans would probably be frowned upon, if not by the girl at least by the fans.

The Dallas slum shack, where Reamy, Dale Hart and one or two others lived was a bit depressing as seen from the street, obscured as it was by an overgrowth of shrubs and weeds. The interior was crowded with people, though, all talking at a furious pace and running back and forth to the kitchen for drinks. I immediately spotted Richard Koogle (who has no middle name) holding forth in the center of a group of fine minds, and insinuated myself into the outer regions of the circle. I stood there for a while, letting the words wash over me and ripple into the surrounding people, until Koogle noticed me. "This certainly is a great party, isn't it, Greg?" he burred. "We don't have these often, but when we do they're good."

"Yes", I said, "standing here and listening to you talking and the hifi wafting music over our heads, it's almost possible to believe I'm among real people." He beamed at me and called over Reamy, who took me out to the kitchen to get a drink.

We went out on the back porch so Reamy could show me the surrounding undergrowth and get some fresh air. The porch was the starting line in a furious race for survival on the part of local weed-dom, for the back yard was one great mass of greenish growth. I broached the subject of yard upkeep (which I loath) to Reamy. "Have the neighbors gotten up a petition yet?" I asked. In the conversation which ensued, Reamy mentioned that the landlord didn't especially want the weeds rolled back because the remains of a stolen car of doubtful age were hidden somewhere in it.

Coming back in I noticed one woman there of largish proportions who was circulating around collecting signatures in favor of Dallas getting the worldcon. I signed. What the hell, I was getting free drinks. Actually, the only remarkable thing which occurred during the evening was my accidental discovery of a fan who had been fairly active in Dallas a few years back but had since dropped out of sight. I can't tell you his name because Rich Koogle was trying to sell me part of his fanzine collection (over 100 separate and distinct fanzines) and I couldn't hear over the general noise level. The oldtime fan seemed like a normal, intelligent person, though, unpolluted by his surroundings. He told me about



meetings of the Dallas Futurian Society at which Mosher would go out on the street and pull in passers-by in hopes of enlarging the membership. At the time the meetings were being held in a cafe, and whenever the club had a guest speaker Mosher would round up a number of panhandlers, promising them a cup of coffee, in order to present a large membership to the speaker. "Did he find many science fiction fans among the bums and loafers?" I asked, but since Mosher was not there at the moment, I could not find out. Considering recent issues of HABAUKUK, perhaps the answer would have been a little surprising.

Shortly after this one character came wandering through the rooms moodily staring into peoples' faces and mumbling a few greetings. I asked Reamy who he was. He was identified as Dale Hart, who was currently running the plans for the Souwestercon VI (the convention that killed southwestern fandom). "Say, would you like to join the committee to work on publicity for the con?" Reamy asked as Hart drew nearer. I looked over at Hart. I looked back at Reamy. I went out to get another drink.

"I'm not worried about a war at all," one of the regular members said a few minutes later. "I've got my plan all worked out."

"What?" I said, taken aback. "Well", he gestured, "if we have a war they'll be sure to drop a bomb on downtown Dallas and then my troubles will be over." I thought he was probably right, but I wouldn't have been so foolhardy about it.

"The draft board is right in the middle of town, and if they drop any bombs my records will be destroyed. Then if anyone comes around trying to get me in the Army I'll tell them I've already done my time." The group around him fell silent.

"Don't you think if we have a war they'll just draft everybody in sight and not worry about the records?" someone else asked. "No", the planner said, "I'll appeal to Congress and by the time that gets through the war will be over."

"Well then", I said, "we'll all do that and there won't be any more war and we won't have to fight." The fan who had his future all mapped out in his head thought a moment to himself. "I don't think that would work. Somebody has got to defend the country in times of peril." At this time I was relatively new to Dallas Fandom so I ignored the opportunity to say something nasty and true. But my infinite patience and understanding for people has withered somewhat since then, which is why you're reading this article.

I was walking into the stf room of the slan shack when Reamy, who is a little on the heavy side, turned to me and said, "What do you think of that?"

"I think you're wrong", I said automatically. Usually that works pretty well. "You're always talking about how science can give everybody a better way of doing something. Tell me how I can lose weight without dieting." He stood there waiting for my answer. "Close your mouth", I said.

Rich Koogle was there, looking through the Astounding collection. He was still enthusiastic about the party. "It's just like last summer", he said, waving an ASF at me, "when we had all our parties out at our swimming pool." I asked him what he meant. "One of the members of the club had a pool in his back yard and he invited the club over every week to have a meeting and talk by the pool."

"Why, that's fine", I said. "That's the best thing I've ever heard about Dallas fandom. It sounds like quite a change from just sitting around and reading old fanzines during meetings. I can hardly imagine a Dallas fan club meeting where you could lie around in the sun and swim."

"Oh", he said, "we didn't do that. None of us could swim."

In a little while the resources of the club began to evaporate and someone had to go out and replenish the food and drink. The oldtime fan whose name I never learned was driving, so I decided I'd go with him; as we were going out the front door Reamy, fearing that someone was leaving the party early, came over and told us to stay for the later festivities. "It's all right", I told him, "I just wanted to go out for a while and see some real people."

I can see that there are good bits in this, some all-too-true aspects of fandom carefully outlined. Indeed, this piece is absolutely factual. The party did occur, all these things happened, and I felt pretty much that way about them. I didn't write it up until years later, though (notice it occurs before the Souwestercon), and here's why: I felt myself rid of these people by then, and I felt a real disdain for the world of fandom. I wanted to keep it at a distance, and cutting humor is a fierce defense. That was the mechanism I had developed for many of life's encumbrances: wit. And fandom seemed to reward such writing well, so I did it. And I

felt the distant presense of Towner Hall through all this: older figures, better known, whom I wanted to resemble. So I wrote with a scalpel's edge, and the readers seemed to like it.

This piece about Dallas is the most savage I ever wrote. There's a lot in it that may not make much sense now: Bill Donaho's HABAKKUK had recently detailed the incredible piggish behavior of the NYC crowd. Dale Hart was a well known alcoholic, and in fact died of it. And Tom Reamy. It seems astonishing, now, to realise that such a major talent was hidden beneath that calm, reserved exterior. There was a lot of the good ole boy in Tom, and I took him to be the best figure in the Dallas crowd, deeper than the rest, but hard to reach. He was mostly interested in graphics then and seemed curiously taken by the art of Morris Scott Dollens. A lot of his overlay graphic work ran to brawny men set before background moonscapes or rocket ships. I assumed, without pondering the point much, that he was gay. He never seemed very interested in women--there were nearly none in Dallas fandom--and had the retiring lifestyle I had learned to associate with gays. I think now I was wrong and that Tom was simply a fairly common type in fandom, not highly sexual, but not interested in concealing this fact. I liked him but, as my interests in physics increased, I saw little of him. Once I left Dallas for Oklahoma, I didn't see him again, beyond a few evenings, until California in the early 1970s.

In the four years I spent in Oklahoma I wrote editorials and listened to the voices out of Towner Hall, but of course it was a paper universe. I met none of my coeditors until the long phase of VOID was finished. Ted and Terry I saw first at the 1964 worldcon; Pete I never met. So, as my in-person contact with fandom dwindled, I adopted a mannered voice and posture in fandom. The "We Are Four" piece above is a perfect example of aping the VOID voice. There are certain tics I picked up from Laney, and a deliberate lift from Willis, and overall a miasma of controlled style which I learned from my coeditors. I think I picked up my concern for compression of style in those years, too: fanzine editorials, and particularly those which seek to be witty, cannot drag on for long.

So in my VOID work you see the mannerisms of others cloaking my own concerns. It was my only hobby; I was a ferocious worker, living a life stuffed with physics and mathematics, reading little sf (for in truth I've never read much of it; my secret vice) and thinking much about that sf world without knowing much of what went on in distant places where sophisticates talked in witty, stylish ways. Terry and Ted and Pete were all older than me, and I tried to write up to their standard. But I didn't have the immediate material from life at hand, so I delved into my own past, and made much of the apparently smallest incident. Witness this piece which started the then-famous running joke about a hapless minor Dallas fan:

FABULOUS DALLAS FANDOM got quite a jolt late last August. Everyone had sort of mutually agreed that no expedition to Detroit would be planned, mostly because we were all going to be going to school or working or something. Then too, after last year's Souwestercon, we weren't too hot on conventions.

Actually, I had advance warning. Two days before, I had received a letter from Marion Zimmer Bradley in which she asked: "Do you happen to know a Texas fan named Marland Frenzel?" and went on to describe how Marland had written her, asking if she were going to drive to Detroit and could he go and if not, could she spread the word? I briefly skipped over the passage, and forgot about it. Two days later, at 12:30 AM, the telephone rang.

Now, I was getting up early for work. Working ten hours a day, I needed what sleep I could get, especially since it's a half hour drive to where I worked and I can't doze at the wheel. Therefore, people calling at odd hours of the night were most unwelcome. I picked up the phone.

"Hello, Greg. Remember, a fan in need is a fan indeed!" came a voice. Mighod, I thought. "I'm Marland Frenzel and I'm down here at the bus station. I just got in here and come on down and pick me up before the cops do." I must have made some sort of astonished noise, because he repeated the statement. I told him I didn't have room, and Jim was in the hospital (he was) so everything was a bit fouled up and it would be difficult to put him up for the night. What's more, it was late.

"Oh, I'm going to stay in Dallas for three or four days and visit all the fans," he said. I was suddenly immensely glad that we didn't have room. Perhaps, said Marland, I didn't know who he was. "I had an article published in CRY OF THE NAMELESS once," he said confidently. I reassured him that I did not know who he was. He hesitated for a moment and asked me for the names of some Dallas fans. I remarked on the impossibility of finding lodgings at this hour of the morning, but gave him the names, hung up, and went back to sleep. At 3:00 AM the phone rang.

"I couldn't get Albert Jackson or Jim Hitt," said Marland, and asked again if I could rush down and pick him up. I gave him Randy Brown's name, George Jennings' and Koogle's. I went back to sleep. At 6:30 AM, as I was preparing to leave for work, the phone rang.

"Jennings didn't answer," he said. (Jennings was vacationing in Colorado.) "I called Hitt and got no answer, and Koogle said he couldn't arrange to put me up for that long." (I later learned that Koogle had answered the phone, listened to the request, shouted something into the receiver, and hung up.) Marland mentioned that he couldn't afford to go to a hotel, and he really did want to see some fans. I told him the YMCA would be fairly cheap if he didn't mind living among the smells of disinfectant and old meals, but it brought no response. He talked a little about his plans of hitchhiking to Detroit, stopping over at fan centers on the way. "I'd hoped to get in with the fan caravan," he explained.

That afternoon, Randy Brown called, asking what the hell was going on. He said he'd been awakened at some ungodly hour of the morning, heard a sneaky voice at the other end talking about fandom, and hung up without a word. I detailed my own experiences and we laughed a little about it. Koogle called, as did Hitt and Jackson. We all wondered out loud what kind of fan would drop into a strange city late at night and expect people who had never heard of him to put him up for a few days.

Since then, every time a Dallas fan has called me, he has said, "Hello, Greg. Remember, a fan in need is a fan indeed!" in a high-pitched voice. Did Marland Frenzel really get to Detroit, Ted White?

I admit, I would use anyone as a butt of a cool, mannered piece of editorial. I don't think it ever harmed anyone--I remember Reamy telling me he rather liked seeing Dallas fandom made a more interesting place than it really was--but it did put a certain cast on my work. I continued with this point of view in my later fanzine writing for FRAP (which I coedited with the now-vanished Bob Lichtman) and then beyond.

Was there anything wrong with this approach? I could, after all, have taken the gentle humor of Willis as a model. But I doubt I could have written that way (though Tom Perry has managed to do quite well at it since). I saw the stylized VOID-boy way of writing as a form to adopt, and I worked what mirth I could from it. It was a useful exercise in assuming a voice when the roots of it are not in fact your own, and I think it helped in my later work in fiction. I now use whatever narrative approach seems warranted by the material, and this, too, is a skill that can be learned.

VOID in the coeditor phase became vastly successful. It did have a certain something, I can sense it even now as I page through it. Copies of the coedited VOID now command enormous prices among fmz collectors. (Even the strictly Benford VOIDS are worth a fair amount; they did have their moments.) I remember that era as a warm and happy one, despite the apparent cynicism of much of my work from that age. I hope that feeling comes through to the reader who chances upon an old copy, today, in some well-thumbed and fraying collection. It certainly was a wonderful thing, Meyer.

--Gregory Benford

"Remember, a fan in need is a fan indeed!" M. Frenzel

Psst! Hey Joe! You got old fanzines? Do you want to sell or trade? I am looking for WARHOON 12, LIGHTHOUSES 1,2,3,5,8,14 and VOIDS 16,17,18,21,22 (Pt. 2); to be specific. Also any issue of OOPSLA!, QUANDRY, HYPHEN, SLANT, INNUENDO, XERO and copies of THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR (1st), WILLIS DISCOVERS AMERICA, THE INCOMPLEAT BURBEE and issues of BEABOHEMA & SYNDROME (ahem, Frank!). ** I am also interested in purchasing obscure Vaughn Bode items and originals. If you have the Bode issues of PERHILION or GOSH WOW! please contact me. I will pay your price, probably.

NEON NOO- DLE

bruce
townley

"BORING THROUGH THE FLOOR" Maybe we should license police to assassinate bores. This would have a profound effect on after-dinner speakers who would be liable to wind up face down in the chicken a la king. Perhaps better for each diner to have a dial for registering his boredom, and when the average boredom reaches a certain threshold the speaker would disappear through a trapdoor. "Ladies and Gentlemen. Unaccustomed as I am to falling through trapdoors. Eeeee!"

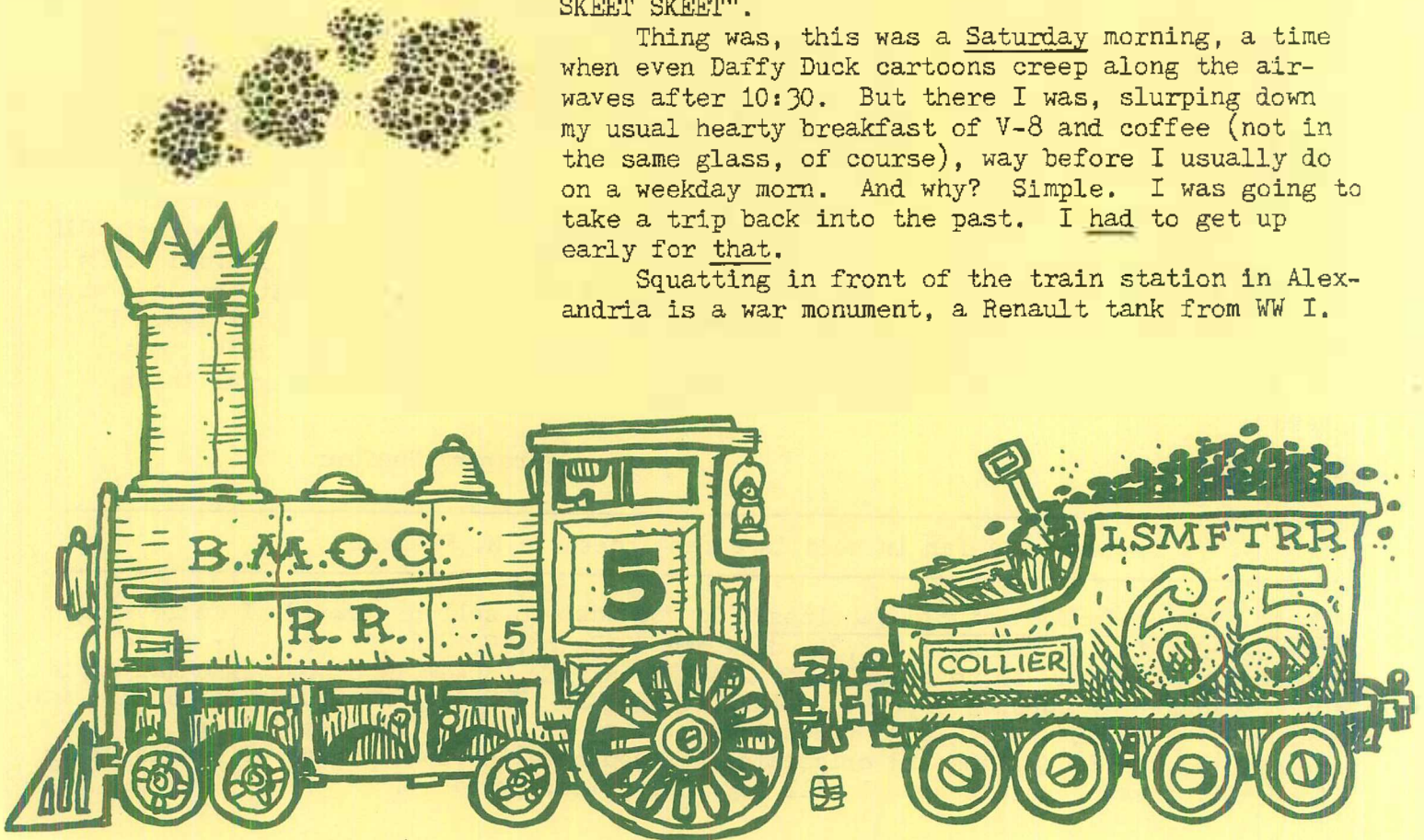
--I.J. Good & G. Serjak

The alarm clock voiced a tone as grating as a poorly tuned piece of chalk scribing on a blackboard. "SKEET SKEET SKEET", said the alarm clock. That meant it was 6:30 AM in the fucking morning. I switched off the alarm, flopped out of bed and trundled into the bathroom. The Good News blue plastic disposable double bladed razor transmitted a sound like "SKEET SKEET SKEET" as it waded along my face, hip-deep in Noxzema Medicated Shave Cream. The toothbrush that TV commercials had assured me had been years in the making, skidded along my teeth, which anthropologists had assured me had been millions of years in the making. "SKEET SKEET SKEET", went the toothbrush.

"Well, sure," you say, "But don't you go through this routine every morning like the good citizen-unit you are?" Just think of what you're saying! I will too as I hang suspended for a moment above the keyboard of this electric typewriter that goes "SKEET SKEET SKEET".

Thing was, this was a Saturday morning, a time when even Daffy Duck cartoons creep along the airwaves after 10:30. But there I was, slurping down my usual hearty breakfast of V-8 and coffee (not in the same glass, of course), way before I usually do on a weekday morn. And why? Simple. I was going to take a trip back into the past. I had to get up early for that.

Squatting in front of the train station in Alexandria is a war monument, a Renault tank from WW I.



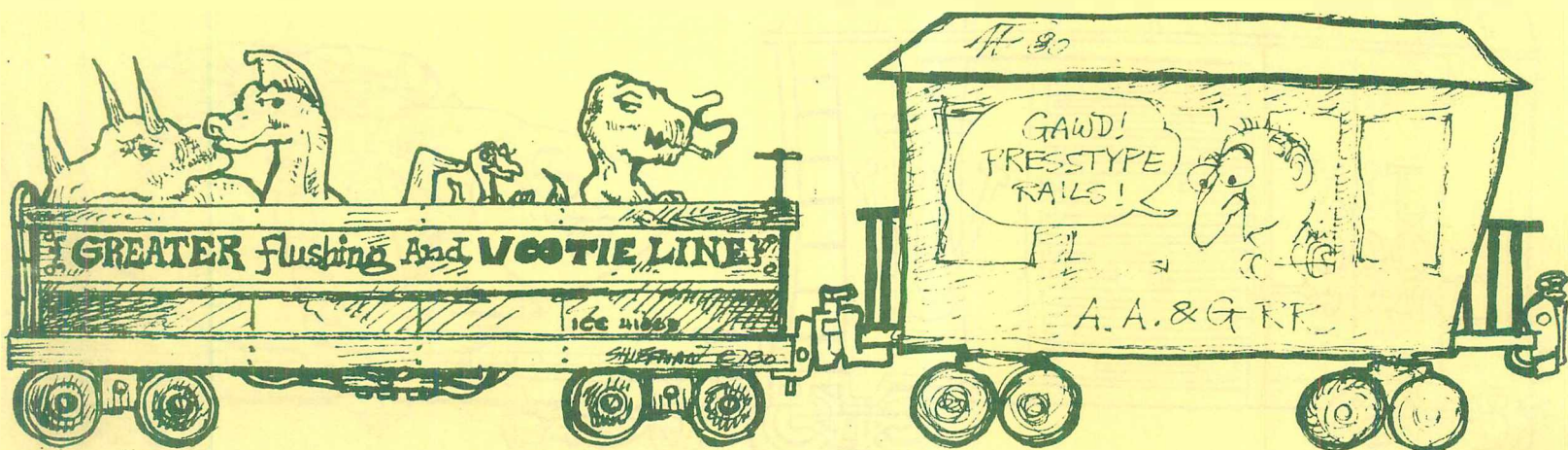
Just as you would guess, it is an undersized vehicle, looking more like a large toy, than an instrument of terror. I don't know if it made a noise like "SKEET SKEET SKEET" as it skipped into battle; the train I took out of the station that morning sure didn't.

"Southern Railway Locomotive No. 722 is a Consolidation type (2-8-0 wheel arrangement) built in 1904 by the Baldwin Locomotive Works ... Southern called this engine a Class K (later Ks-1), and being a 2-8-0 meant that it was one of the most common types in the United States for an eighty year period." says the fanzine that they handed out as we boarded our passenger car (#8, next to last.) This locomotive pulled our time machine, how common is that?

It was a cruise on steel wheels, a journey whose only destination was the mode of transport, the very travelling itself. When travelling on the ocean on a steamship the passengers are referred to as "souls". "The TITANIC went down with over 1200 souls on board." Just as a bus never falls over a cliff in a newspaper account, it always plunges; the breakdown between passengers and crew is humanistically occluded by this quaint term. (Of course, serfs in Tsarist Russia were also known as souls too.) The atmosphere aboard this special Steam excursion was similar, in a smaller way I suppose, to the great Atlantic Steam crossings before the mid 1950s when air traffic surpassed that on the surface of the ocean. For a brief period I contemplated famous trainwrecks, the assorted perils of the telescoped car (early, flimsily made wooden passenger cars had a tendency to collapse over each other, just like a telescope), the menacing snakehead of the obsolete "strap-rail" (tracks in the early days were sometimes only a metal strap stapled to a wooden base--the staples sometimes wore away causing the strap to fly wildly up through the floors of the cars passing above it, this sometimes resembled an angry snake, said survivors) and that old crowd-pleaser, boiler explosions.

The instant community that sprang up in car #8 withered any gloomy cares. This friendly feeling soon ranged up and down the whole train by the time the trip was over. When a voice over the PA system announced at the end of the trip "We will enter the Alexandria Station twelve minutes ahead of schedule, how's that for Southern efficiency?" the applause and cheers were as warm as they were spontaneous.

The train had its own huckster room cum snackbar. They called it a souvenir stand but what it was was a huckster room. They didn't sell no foam rubber pointed ears there, in that former baggage car, it was a huckster room for railroad fans. You could buy buttons with the logo of any line that came to mind, past, present and even future, I suppose. Instead of old pulps they sold old railroad rulebooks, trip brochures and kids books about trains. Also rail antiques like old padlocks for baggage cars and the actual silverware from dinign cars, stamped with line logos. A fellow passenger walked right up to me and struck up a conversation, asking this total stranger here why this particular car swayed so much. I speculated that since it had been a baggage car, a carrier of frieght instead of passengers, perhaps it was sprung differently than the passenger cars, just like trucks are sprung to handle better when they are carrying a heavy load. Or maybe it was just because the car

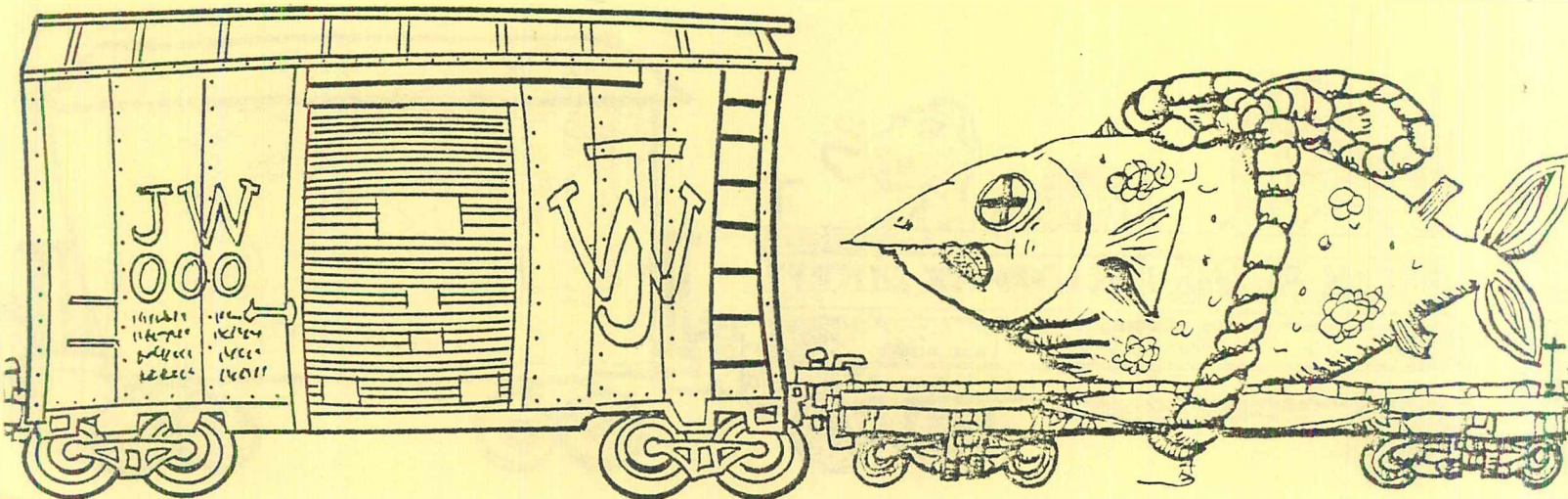


had less springs because trunks and suitcases are less likely to complain about a rough ride than people. I sounded like an old hand even though I was just a neo.

You could spot the long-time fans pretty simply though. They were the ones who brought their own goggles. See, even though our speed was never all that great (never over 45 MPH, tops, even on the downgrades) there was the danger of airborne debris lodging in one's eyes if you stuck your head outside, even for the briefest moment. You could buy goggles just like your older brother wore in shop class in the huckster car but I'd already spent all my cash on a spiffy blue and white pin-striped engineer's hat. The Secret Masters of Steam Engine Fandom had already filled up their spiffy blue and white pinstriped engineer's hats with buttons commemorating the special excursions they'd been on, like this one to Front Royal, Va., and the various lines they'd been on before they'd folded. Since the hats were already completely bedecked with pins and patches they'd began to creep down the backs of their jackets, like some colorful brand of detachable chicken-pox.

The literature that announced this Front Royal run (a sort of a fanzine I guess, along with the offset thing they handed out at the start of the trip that described the points of interest we'd be passing and the history of the engine) made note of the fact that space would be available on one of the forward cars for recording buffs to transcribe electronically train sounds (if you'd forgotten to bring your recorder, copies of a 40 minute cassette that had been recorded on a previous Front Royal run were available in the baggage car), engine noises were most prominent when the locomotive was struggling up a grade. Another feature of this trip was something called the "photo run-by". What this involved was all those folks who wanted to take photos of the train and its locomotive in action getting off the train and standing in the mud in somebody's backyard next to the track while the train backed up so it could steam by to the photographer's delight, billowing mounds of heavily textured coal smoke cut by the brilliancy of live steam as that lonesome whistle blew. Of course as the train backed off into the middle distance, mummings of "There she goes, back to Alexandria!" filtered through the crowd. It had been cloudy all morning but just before old 722 came wailing 'round the bend, the sun suddenly shone through a big hole in the clouds, abruptly spotlighting the green, yellow, and silver glory of the engine. I wonder how the club who sponsored this trip arranged this effect.

Not all of the fanatics were on the train as it turned out. Every so often, as we approached a crossing, there was a clot of cars, vans, and pickup trucks, all scurrying away from where they had been parked as though they had been discovered in some private act inadvertantly made public. As the train crossed more crossings and we became more practiced observers of the whirling scenery we could pick out individuals before they hopped into their autos. We could see what they were doing. Nearly all of them were pointing some complex bit of equipment at the train as it passed by, movie cameras, tumescent shot-gun mikes, pointy telephoto lenses; even a little kid, no more than ten years old, trained on the train his very own SLR.



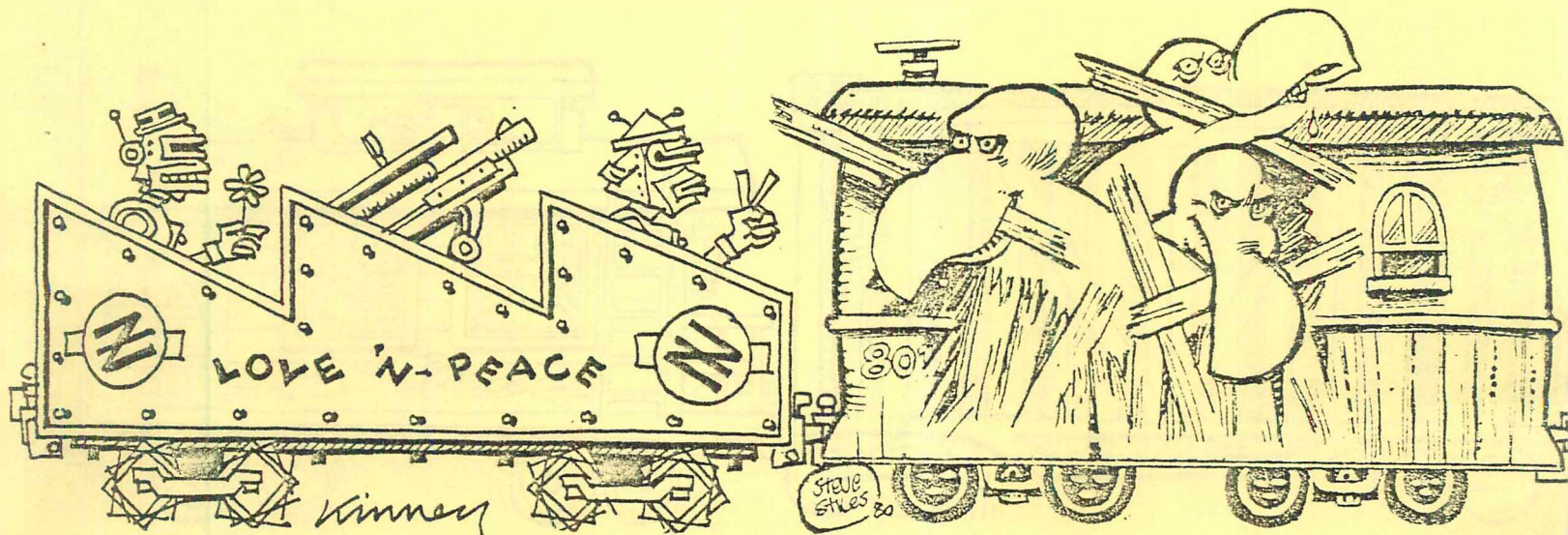
All morning they followed us. At every spot wide enough in the roads parallel to the train's route they stopped, recorded their observations, and sped on. See, see, there's the little did in his floppy blue parka and his expensive camera and his dad who was apparently there only to drive the pickup. Sometimes somebody'd be missing from the trackside line-up and we'd worry about them until they turned up later like the white Volvo whose driver was a dilettante, preferring only a few stops along the way. There are prozines as fancy as FIELD AND STREAM that cater to this crew, listing the routes of steam powered specials still extant along with the best photos snapped before steam vanishes altogether.

I was tempted to photograph them while their shutters clicked on us. Turned out that none of my photos would turn out -- even the leisurely gait of our train was too much for my camera to deal with.

About noon we arrived at our destination, actually only our mid-point, Front Royal. The biggest attraction in this town is a big hole in the ground, the Skyline Caverns. Not as gargantuan as, say, Carlsbad -- when the clouds of bats that inhabit Carlsbad, leave for the evening they blot out the sky with their vast number -- the Skyline Caverns are of a more intimate dimension. The chambers resembled a surrealist living room, a family sized space encrusted with organically grown stone outcrops. The tunnels connecting the wider areas were as personal as one's own intestine. My photographs of this place mostly neglected to include the figure of a fellow tourist to pin down the image, is this the ceiling or the floor we're looking at?

We switched places for the second half of our journey. The seats in the train could be reversed so a paired set faced each other so parties travelling together could sit together. My family had picked a pair of seats so situated for just this reason. Being accustomed to going by car as I am, this reversed my normal position while in motion. To keep my tummy and its contents from getting similarly reversed, I spent most of the time going back in the vestibule between cars. There were four half doors (two for each side of the car) that were for getting in and out when the train was stopped and when the train was in motion (and when the bottom half of the door was tightly closed) for leaning out of. When the guys with the goggles got tired of sticking their heads outside the neos got a chance too. A fella who was also making his first trip (who was also reading an Edgar Rice Burroughs novel -- a sci-fi fan?) spent three quarters of the six hour trip with his head stuck out that door, much to his delight. He had a good case of the sniffles by the end of the trip (don't worry, his nose was large enough to house it) but, it was "The only way to go!" he happily proclaimed. Since the vestibule was the most open part of the car, the sensations of train travel were the most intense there -- the click-click of the tracks had the immediacy of machine gun fire.

Not ten minutes before we pulled back into the Alexandria Station, just after I last glimpsed our pack of train watchers (the same group followed us back from Front Royal) I got a taste of what real cross continent train travel must be like. True, it was only a freight pulled by a ruthlessly technological deisel instead of

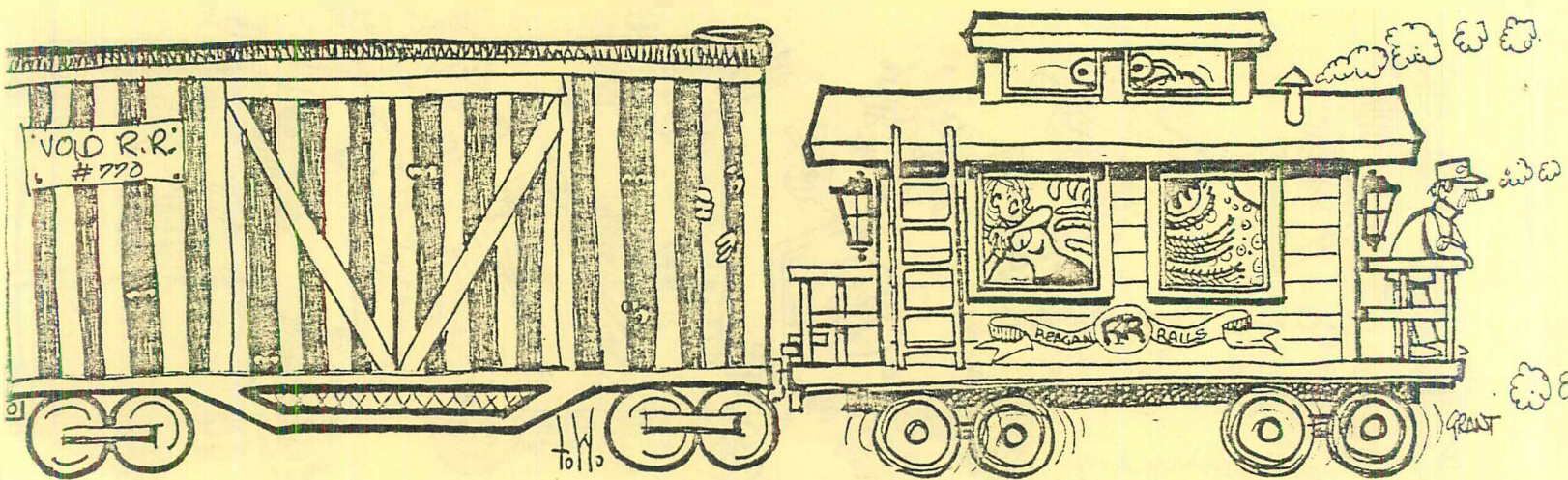



a steam behemoth/dragon pulling a passenger train with its own name. The thing was booming past us at top speed, at least 80 MPH. This number was multiplied by whatever our staid pas was. The freight came by only moments after I'd unthinkingly pulled my head in, on a track that was not more than two feet away from our own. Its passage made breathing difficult as it vacuumed air from the vestibule and dazzled the eyes and ears. The thing was going so fast that individual cars were almost physiologically impossible to discern. Their patterns danced on the edge of perception. Boxcar turned into flatcar by the presdidigitation of the rails. When the red smear of the caboose had zipped by I stuck my head out again to gaze at where it had been. The only evidence that it had been there was the gleam of the twinned rails which glowed like neon noodles, polished by the daily passage of such marvels.

Comparisons are odious, I know. But I couldn't help wondering if these guys didn't have at least as much as science fiction fans at their conventions, if not moreso. First convention I ever went to (Philcon, '70), I stayed up all night with complete strangers, that generated a similar feeling to what I felt when I heard that whistle wail. An exhilaration of being with strangers who were the closest thing to friends. Hell, who cares, these guys might play with bigger toys (a locomotive is a little bigger than a Gestetner), but the egoboo's there just the same!

I wanna go on a zepplin next.

-- Bruce Townley





TOTEM POLE

AN IRREGULAR COLUMN BY
rich brown

Terry Carr asked me to forgive him. "Mae culpa," he said in his letter to me. I think that means "forgive me", although the last time I used it myself my mental gears had slipped and what I had meant to say was "many thanks".

Anyway, Terry Carr asked me to forgive him for holding on to a mss. of mine for Quite a Long Time. In response, I said that I had had faith in hearing from him about it sooner or later. "Just," I added, "as I have faith that Richard Bergeron will eventually send me my copy of WARHOON 28."

I would not have you--or anyone--misunderstand me, so I should point out that this was another case of my trying to be funny, and failing miserably. What I had intended only to sound as a flip remark came out sounding peevish as well. That I was impatient to receive my copy of WARHOON 28 I will admit--that Bergeron was the first fan in history to need a shopping cart to prevent the taking of a mere 10 copies of his fanzine to the post office from becoming a staggering feat.

I also knew, of course, that the delay was more than a little my own fault--I knew Bergeron thought I might be reading Ted White's copy. Ted might well have allowed me to get eyetracks on his copy but for one thing--he was keeping it in New York. But I did not disabuse Bergeron of the notion--and so the fault for the delay was at all times, in my mind, my own.

Terry Carr's response to my peevish-sounding remark--in which he pointed out several other possible reasons why my copy may have been delayed--arrived on the same day as my W28.

I read Terry's letter first (it was shorter) and told myself that I should respond immediately to correct the misimpression that I was in any way blaming Bergeron for the delay. But I did not immediately do so because I had all this

Willis material to read. If this is a poor excuse, I am also certain that it is one that both Terry Carr and Richard Bergeron, as trufans, will understand.

There was something I didn't understand at the time--I thought it nothing more than a mildly amusing coincidence that Terry's letter arrived on the same day as W28. I mean, I certainly didn't suspect (as I have since come to) that there were other Forces at work--Forces which were quite beyond even my broad mental horizons to explain completely.

Anyway, the delay had provided me with something. It had given me time to consider just how I would go about reading the Willis collection. I'm certain that no gourmet has ever had a more delightful time anticipating just what meal he will eat at which three-star restaurant.

By use of my (I set aside false modesty) brilliant plan, I would transform the 500-plus pages of Willis into something more like 700 or 800 pages. For my appetizer, I intended to skim over the pages, stopping to read whenever anything--old or new--caught my fancy. The main meal would follow, consisting of all of the Willis material which would be new to me--which I assumed would include a lot of the early Willis as well as some of the relatively recent material which I'd never been able to lay my hands on. For this reading, though, I thought it safe to skip The Enchanted Duplicator (since I'd not only read it numerous times but had stencilled one edition myself), Willis Discovers America, and The Harp Stateside, to name just a few examples. Safe to do so, I hasten to add, because it was my intention, after reading all the new Willis, to return to the beginning and drink down the whole heady issue as though it were fine wine. And never mind that this "transformation" would not add anything to the volume of Willis to be read: As any number of fans will hasten to tell you, Willis is eminently rereadable.

Such was my plan. However, the actual arrival of W28 caused me to discover--or perhaps merely to rediscover--the meaning of that old Jerry Lapidus fmz review column title, "I Fell Into An Avalanche". I had no more free will than does a salmon swimming upstream; I could do naught but start at the beginning, proceed through the middle, go with the flow, etc. Or against the flow that I had intended, to keep to that salmon image.

The only thing I didn't reread was The Enchanted Duplicator; I credit the fact that I published one edition with only a little of this. The fact is, my daughter Alicia was visiting me the weekend W28 arrived, and we've been reading things out loud to each other since she was eight or nine years old. If truth be known, I was only able to skip rereading TED because I started reading it to her that weekend--we do not reread, in advance, the things we are reading out loud to each other.

But all the rest of W28 I read, from front to back, skipping nothing.

Thomas Wolfe (the Look Homeward, Angel one, not the Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test one) says you can't go home again. While that reminds me of something Dave Kyle once said, and I'm not sure I agree with either of them, I suppose as applied to my gourmet reading plan it's really true--I can't go back now and do it the way I planned.

I do most of my reading on subways and busses and at some of the more boring jobs I sometimes find myself assigned to as a temporary typist. However, the same thing that kept Bergeron from mailing all of the copies of W28 in one swell foop precluded me from reading it in my "usual" reading time; W28 is bulky. However, by virtue of rising early some mornings, going to bed late some evenings, and skipping or putting aside other relatively unimportant things that needed to be done such as correspondence or eating. I managed to get the entire issue read in a little less than a month.

The revelation which compels me to go on at such length and detail about this, however, was actually something that occurred fairly early on.

By the time I reached The Harp Stateside I had long since realized that I could not keep to even a semblance of my plan. So I plunged into the report with hardly a pause for breath, emerging somewhere out on the West Coast where Willis' shoes were floating out to sea. A rather disturbing fuzzy thought was beginning to permeate the golden glow I find myself in when reading fandom's finest writer.

You know how, in the movies and suchlike, people are always slapping themselves on the forehead when something suddenly occurs to them? No one in real life ever does this. I don't do it and I'm sure you don't do it.

I did it.

Great Foo! I thought as it all seemed to come together.

But before I would even put my suspicion into words I hastily turned back the pages, hoping I was mistaken, and very carefully read everything Walt had said about his activities at the convention.

Unfortunately, my suspicions were confirmed.

Bergeron had left something out!

How, I asked myself, could this have happened?

Understand, Bergeron's desire that W28 be as close to perfection as possible is legendary. I recall hearing, in the mid-70s, that he had thrown away hundreds of typed stencils merely because he did not like the way they reproduced. Not, mind you, that they reproduced badly--just not up to what he wanted. Later, reportedly, the same thing had happened with run-off pages--they were not good enough, so they went into file 13, and these stencils would also have to be retyped as the originals had not been saved.

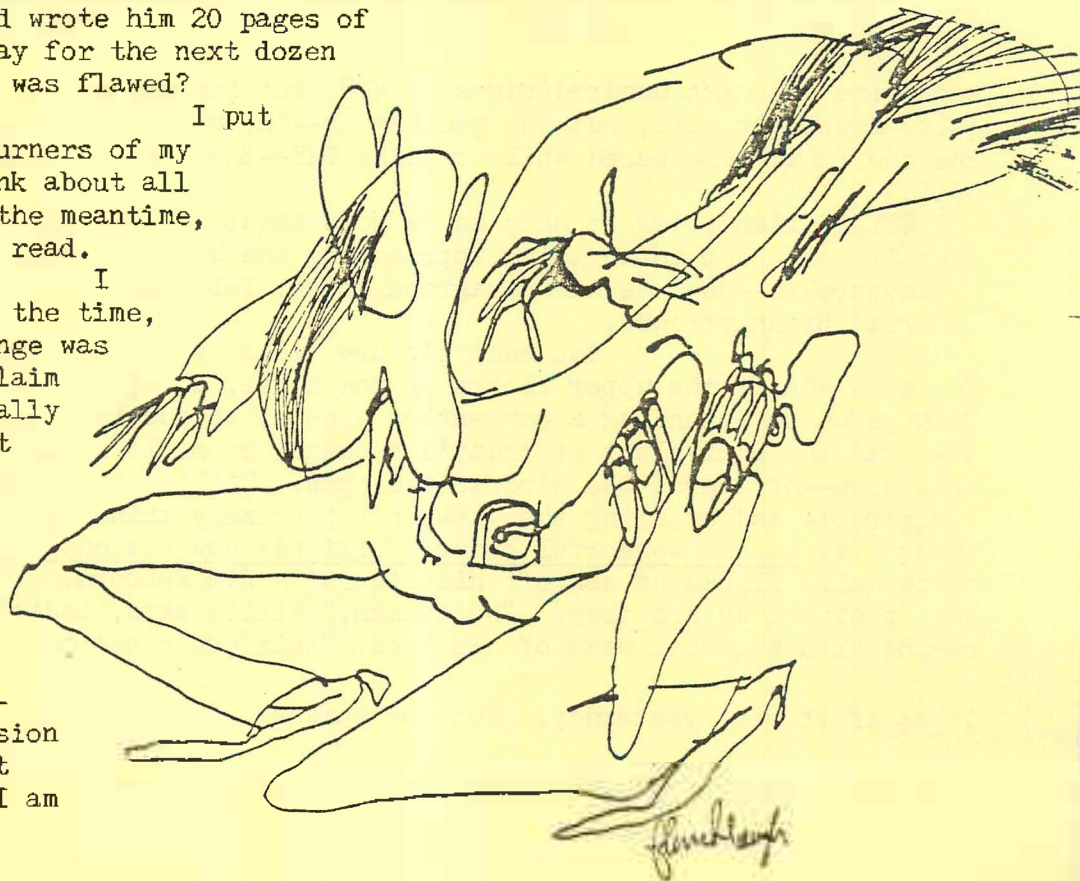
I could not bring myself to believe that Bergeron had made the mistake himself. The only alternative, I felt, was that he had worked from a faulty edition--not the original edition which Willis had published and which I had received one of the last copies of, back around 1958.

Please understand, also my moral dilemma:

How could I bring myself to tell this paragon among fen and searcher-after-perfection --who could scarcely be repaid for what he's done for fandom if everyone in it sat down and wrote him 20 pages of unrestrained egoboo everyday for the next dozen years--that his masterwork was flawed?

I put the question on the back burners of my mind. I would have to think about all of its ramifications. In the meantime, I still had more Willis to read.

I think I may have known, at the time, that something rather strange was happening. I just can't claim that I realized what it really was. I thought it was just that "old" stuff which was supposed to be "new" to me wasn't, but a lot of "new" stuff which I had expected to be "old" wasn't either. (It is the writing of such phrases which gives me a second, more personal, reason for admiring the precision of Willis'.) Let me try it another way, then: While I am



certain that I have never actually owned more than a couple of issues of SLANT, I discovered that I had read most of what Walt had written in them at some time or other over the years. I had also been fortunate enough to read Shelby Vick's complete file of QUANDRY, where "The Harp That Once or Twice" was a featured column. Add to this the fact that a large number of the OOPSLA! Harps (most of which I had not read before) had been comprised largely of THS installments, and you get a better picture: For the most part it was not until I got into material that appeared in the 60s--when I had been rather active--that I started finding large chunks of Willis material which I had not read before. I mean, you would think it would be the other way around, wouldn't you?

One of the new things, for me, was "Twice Upon A Time", Willis' account of the 10th anniversary Willis fund, which brought Walt and Madelaine to the United States for the pleasure of their company. I was in the Air Force in Germany when this was being serialized, and I guess the reason I never read it was probably that I assumed that I would do so when it came out in one volume. To the best of my knowledge, W28 is its first complete publication.

It was in "Twice Upon A Time" that Willis wrote (from page 352, WARHOON 28) the following:

"...Terry Carr mentioned a joke about an ashtray I dimly remember to have made in Chicago in 1952. I asked him how he'd heard of it and he said it was part of the folk-lore of American fandom but he'd read it in 'The Harp Stateside.' I was awed at the first but denied the second. Not only had I first, second and thirddrafted the Harp Stateside, stencilled it, run it off and collated it, but I had actually read it just before leaving Ireland again. (I thought it wasn't bad, if you're interested.)..."

Willis then goes on to tell how Terry was so sure it was in THS that he offered to bet Walt \$1,784.66 (the amount that had been raised to bring Walt and Madelaine to Chicago in '62); Walt accepted and, after Terry checked a copy of THS without being able to find the anecdote, told Larry Shaw that he could announce to the readers of AXE that there would be refunds after all--but then let Terry off the hook by saying he would be glad to take it out in subs to LIGHTHOUSE, after which Terry told Pete Graham that the next LIGHTHOUSE must contain another baccover check square: "You are Walt Willis and the price of this copy is \$1,784.66."

Well, let me not summarize the next hundred pages of W28, but instead get to me point: This is all quite amusingly told, but the problem is--the problem is that the anecdote cited is the one I had remembered while reading THS--the one I'd thought Bergeron had left out!

Willis identifies it only as "a joke about an ash tray" but I can tell you exactly what it was. Not in anything approaching the Willis manner, alas, but in broad brush-strokes--just as the paragraph above, following the quotation, is also a summary in broad brush-strokes.

You must picture Willis at the Chicago convention in 1952. He is on one of the upper floors of the hotel, doing I no longer remember what: Perhaps he is attending a convention speech, an auction, or whatever they had in 1952 that was the equivalent of today's huckster room. It is Chicago on a hot summer afternoon--of course the windows are open. Willis stands in front of one, smoking a cigarette and enjoying the view, not precisely thinking but certainly feeling something like such a wonderful group of friends how fortunate to be together. And as he casually flicks an ash off his cigarette Jim Webbert, or someone very much like him, proffers an ash tray. "No thanks," Willis says, indicating the window and city beyond with a casual wave of his hand, "this one's not full yet."

I remember reading it as if it were yesterday. Not the phrases, but the sense.

I have written to Terry Carr but have not yet (as I write this) mailed the letter--but I would be very much

surprised if we do not remember the same anecdote. (Of course, if what Terry remembers is that Willis replied, "I had one once, but the wheels felloff," we are back at Square One.)

I engaged forthwith in a game of solitaire fourth dimensional mental crifanac--i.e., I racked my enfeebléd brains, searching for some logical explanation for all of this. Or just an explanation, period.

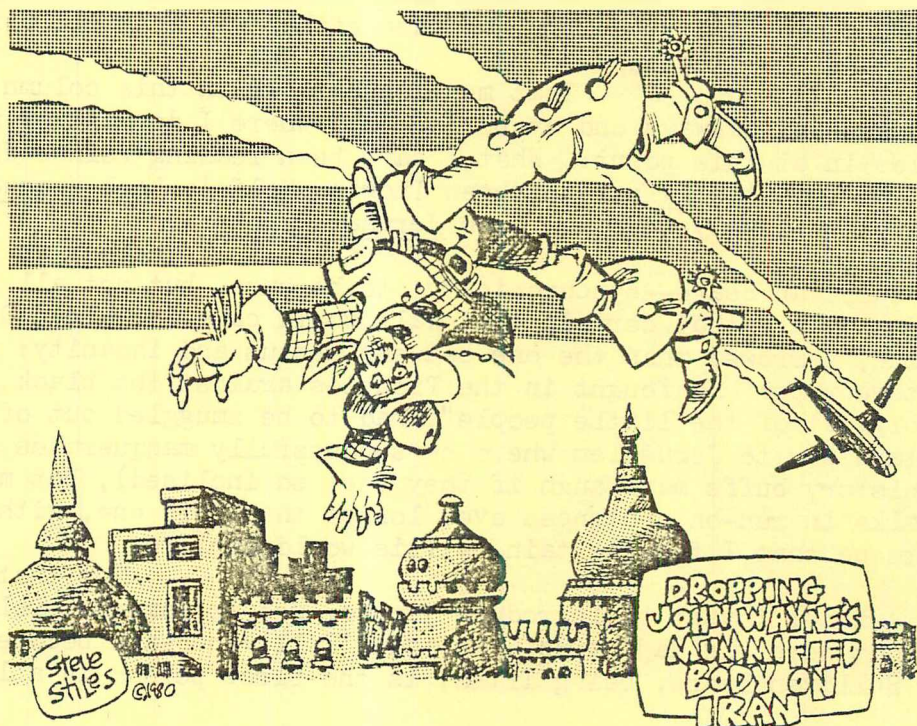
Had Terry Carr, perhaps, told it to me? This did not make a lot of sense--I met Terry maybe three or four times before he moved to New York, usually at large fan gatherings, and I was the veriest of crudzine-publishing neofen while he was publishing FANAC (the best fan news zine ever) and INNUENDO (one of the highest-quality fanzines ever published, right up there with QUANDRY), and while he talked to me without condescension I cannot imagine (much less remember) a context in which Amusing Well-Remembered Anecdotes From The Harp Stateside would have made up any portion of our conversation.

Well, what about after he moved to New York? That didn't make a lot of sense, either--I moved to New York, myself, quite a bit after the Willis trip had been completed. It was therefore a long time after Terry had been informed, through the bet he'd made with Willis, that his notion that this anecdote had appeared in THS was incorrect.

I could not accept, but did briefly hold, the belief that perhaps Terry had been SMOFing me --laying a foundation and then waiting patiently for years for it to bear fruit ("take metaphor, mix wildly..."). But there was no need for such inhuman patience--for one thing, there were any number of ways he could have contrived to have me receive the serialized version of "Twice Upon A Time." Furthermore, I could not conceive of any motive. So what if, down the road a few years, I stepped forward to say that I also remembered the anecdote? Willis would just point to THS and say, "Well, you're both wrong."

But wait a minute. What if Willis had been wrong? What if that anecdote had appeared in the original THS but had been left out of a subsequent edition? What if he hadn't noticed? What if he had come to think of that edition as correct? What if that edition had been the one he'd read before he left Ireland and what if it had been the same edition Terry checked?

There are too many "what ifs" in that paragraph to make up a believable science fiction story, much less a representation of reality. It also flies in the face of what Willis said--that he drafted it three times, published it, stapled it, etc., and read it again



just before leaving Ireland. I have an unshakeable belief in the precision of Willis' prose, easily borne out by page after page of W28; had he merely said that he had read it before leaving Ireland, I could believe it was somebody else's edition that he might have read, but not the way that he phrased it--the "it" that he had drafted, published, and stapled did not suddenly become an "it" that somebody else had published when he read it. Not without his say-so, it didn't.

Then I came up with a "what if" that made sense--even though it was science fictional.

What if there really are multiple timelines?

The idea's a stiff cliché that I'm sure you're familiar with: Every instant has the potential to go in any number of directions--and perhaps, in fact, it does. If these multiple timelines exist, it's possible that sometimes people end up in the "wrong" timeline--one in which some few, or a great many, of the items they remember are no longer what "in fact" happened. Do you have it so far?

If the difference is so great as to be really noticeable, these people might either be judged insane or go insane. But, on the other hand, little things might vary amongst and between individuals all the time. That might even explain why a New York fan I know thinks he bought (while I remember only that he borrowed) the supplement to the 100th FAPA mailing from me several years ago--although I doubt it.

It is possible--that we may sometimes go down what is the "wrong" timeline or perhaps switch to some timeline we've been on before but which has been changed so minutely..well, I shouldn't be going on like this, because I'm sure you've read as much of that crazy Buck Rogers stuff as I have, so I'm certain you see the possibilities.

The important thing which I think we have discovered is this: Terry Carr and I are both from the same timeline. (I got to talking about this possibility recently with Steve Stiles--and when I got to the part about the "missing" anecdote, before I could explain that it was missing only in Terry's and my memories, Steve said he remembered Les Gerber telling him about it. And when I mentioned it to Ted White in the course of writing this column, he said that he also remembered it.)

Obviously, in the timeline that the four of us come from--five, if you count Les Gerber--that anecdote did appear in THS. It might be argued just as convincingly that we are from different timelines that are only similar in this point of commonality--but it's a moot point, really, because either way it still points to the inevitability of multiple timelines.

That mention earlier in this column about not reading W28 on busses and subways and at boring jobs where I do most of my regular reading kind of ties in at this point: What I have been reading (since W28 is not the sort of thing I can read there) has not been Thomas Wolfe's Look Homeward Angel but Edward Whittemore's lovely tour de force Jerusalem Poker.

There's an Irishman in the book named O'Sullivan Beare--synchronicity, to be sure, but not all that remarkable because I'm not all that certain that Walt would care for him. O'Sullivan Beare walks the line, narrower than the one between genius and insanity; between archetype and stereotype: He fought in the Troubles against the black & tans, was known as the "biggest of the little people", had to be smuggled out of the country as a poor clare nun to Jerusalem where he successfully masquerades as a Crimean War hero (history buffs may laugh if they feel so inclined), but mostly he talks, and he talks in run-on sentences even longer than this one, with a Barry Sullivan-like brogue that I feel certain Willis would deplore.

Not that this matters, because the character I want to introduce you to, who is somewhat relevant to what I'm going on about here, is Haj Harun. He and O'Sullivan Beare become good friends because O'Sullivan Beare, being Irish, is the first person in a long time to believe Haj

Harun's tale that he has been defending Jerusalem for 3000 years (and, as you might expect from such an occupation, is always on the losing side). Haj Harun wears a Crusader's helmet tied with a piece of green ribbon, which he is forever straightening in a non-existent mirror and thereby getting rust in his eyes, and he is slightly mixed up about the time he is in (for example, he always calls O'Sullivan Beare "Prestor John")--or maybe not, since when he and O'Sullivan Beare go into the catacombs of Jerusalem (accessible through the bottom of a safe in Haj Harun's antique shop) they run across the Knights of Malta...

I'm doing the same injustice here that I did to Willis' anecdote--pardon, the anecdote about Willis--a while back, so let me stop.

Jerusalem Poker is a fine fun book--not Willis, but then, what is? I recommend it to anyone who hasn't read it, and I'm sure I haven't spoiled it for you as the above doesn't represent 1/100th of the plot.

My only reason for going on about it at such length is to provide the background needed for you to understand the following remark: I can easily imagine using these ideas in a Brandonization of Jerusalem Poker. In it, Haj Harun would have a golden beanie instead of a Crusader's helmet and he would have been "defending True Fandom for over 300 years" (and naturally, as you might expect from such an occupation, would be forever on the losing side). The catacombs, accessible under a file of Qs in the back of Haj Harun's fan den, would be exactly the same--a physical entryway to alternative timelines.

I'm sure you can see it--you have the imagination. I mean, If we know that there are alternative fan timelines--and I think we can now say, without equivocation or fear of contradiction, that given all of this stuff which has gone down here, as it were, that we do know (or at least have a pretty good suspicion) that there are alternative fan timelines, and further stipulate that these alternative fan timelines could easily be almost infinite in number, then isn't it at least vaguely within the realm of possibility that on some other fan timeline--perhaps even the one which Terry, Ted, Les, Steve and I have left behind--people such as Walt Willis, Lee Hoffman, Bob Shaw, James White, Chuck Harris, George A.T.W. Charters, Bob Block, Bob Tucker, Vinç Clarke, ShelvY Vick, Max Keasler, etc., &c., are still active?

Consider the myriad possibilities: A fandom in which Q never folded, the HYPHEN lighthouse still shines out in all its brilliance, all the people above are still active and at the top of their form, and fans are just too busy laughing and having a good time to know precisely how lucky they are. Or perhaps, if that's too much, there could just be some change in the mundane world that would affect a change on a handful of fans, or maybe only just one fan. Perhaps, in a better world, fandom's top humorist, best writer, finest and gentlest human being would not feel compelled to turn his considerable talents from fandom to pit them, with his humanity, against all the darkness, ugliness, and nightmarish terror that exist in Northern Ireland today.

It would certainly be nice to live in such a world. Taking comfort where we can, however, it must be acknowledged that the success of Willis' mundane commitment will move us much closer to such a world than all of these innane words and fanciful dreams of mine.

Early on I mentioned forces at work beyond even the ability of my broad mental horizons to understand. What I meant when I said that was merely that I have no explanation, or goofy theories, nor even flights of fancy that might explain the strange coincidence of getting that letter from Terry Carr with reasons why my copy of W28 might have been delayed on the same day that I received that WARHOON, in which was described something which happened to him 18 years ago that precisely matched up with something I had all but come to believe while reading THS earlier in that volume. Except to say that neither "strange coincidence" nor "synchronicity" are adequate enough to describe it.

While I know it's too much for synchroni-

city, I can't even begin to hazard a guess as to what it is or why it was. For the time being I'm just calling it sychronistic lagniappe--just for something to call it. But the map, of course, is not the territory.

If you have a guess--please keep it to yourself. It bothered me enough to make me write this column and drag all of you into it--but I realize, now that I have it down in cold print, that I'll never do anything about all of this, even if it's explained in perfectly logical terms that any six-year-old with a master's degree in comparative psychology could understand. I mean, what could I do? Nothing, is what. Except...

Surely, if I came across a golden beanie to protect my fannish headbone from unfannish thoughts, I might actually do something. I might tie it neatly under my chin (with a ribbon as green as the shamrock of Ireland--not to be confused with the realrock of Ireland) and, after checking it in a non-existent mirror, set off down into the catacombs of my mind...

And you, Meyer?

What about you?

I mean, are you, a trufan, going to believe that writer of mundane fiction, that Thomas Wolfe, when he said you can't go home again?

Are you?

If you are, why believe the nonfan? What the hell does he know?

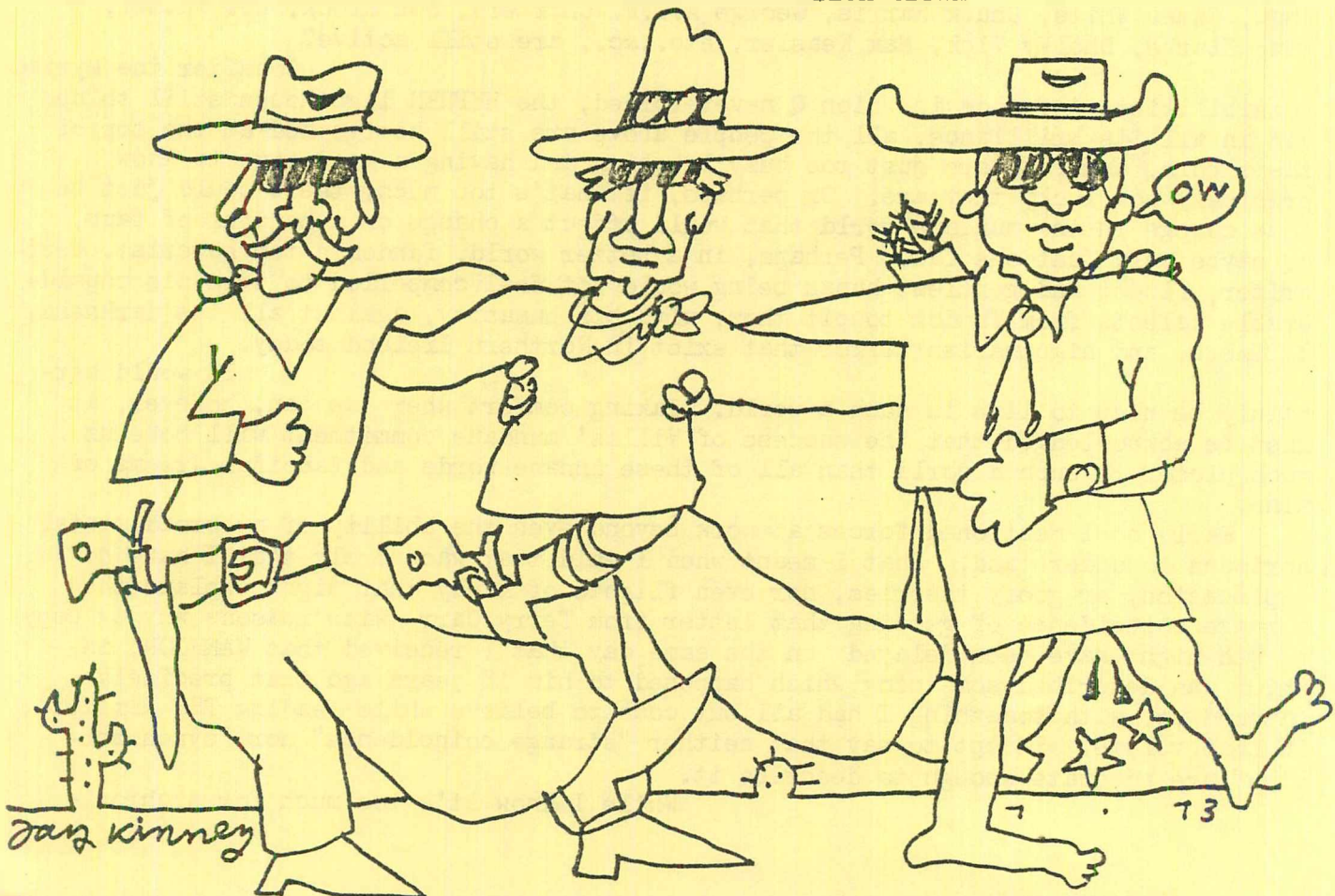
My suspicion is, however high he might rate in some people's belief that he was the Great American Novelist, this Wolfe guy didn't really know a Foo-damned lot of things. Because if he did, he would have never said anything so patently ridiculous and so obviously untrue.

I would say that if you start from somewhere, and go somewhere else, you can probably get back to where you started from again.

That's just logic.

It certainly would be a wonderful thing.

--rich brown



MINAC by Ted White, continued from page 9

graphy) and tell us how he is now (Perry's closing piece, detailing his 1977 visit with the Willises). If you want a better analysis of Willis's work than you've found here Pete Graham's piece (from VOID) will do that.

But most of all WARHOON 28 is a collection of fine fannish material, all of it rewarding to read, evocative of its era but surviving it and freshly interesting today. Willis, after all, never lectured us about what fandom was or should have been--he showed us by example. He fanned.

The only sensible thing one can do after one has read WARHOON 28 is to follow Willis's example, each of us in our own way. And this is starting to happen. People like Avedon Carol, who is a staunch feminist and a youngfan of the new era, are reading WARHOON 28 and discovering fannishness. "I like it, Ted," Avedon told me recently. "It's neat!"

Can you or I do less?

--Ted White

Toxic Sock Syndrome?

ZEN VAUDEVILLE, continued from page 3

another Stewart article on the same subject. Sort of like Deja Vu.

Both Ted and Rich tackle the subject of WARHOON 28 this issue, each in his own inimitable style. WARHOON 28 is without question the single most significant fan publication in years. Richard Bergeron has outdone himself with this 'issue' of his fanzine. The format (hard cover book) and graphics in the volume are exceptional. Bergeron is one of fandom's most important creators; his command of images and packaging (sharpened, no doubt, by his years as an art director) has made this WARHOON an enormous success.

For my money, Dick is one of fandom's best artists, as well as a faneditor, and the WASH is loaded with his art. Several full-pagers of Dick's are nothing short of stunning, and his use of art by Lee Hoffman and Atom is tasty indeed. His art, though, is what really turns me on about this book. It is highly stylized and refined, seemingly made of bits of Atom, Rotsler and Picasso, it is quintessentially fannish.

For a total fan experience, this issue of WARHOON is unparralelled. Oh yes, it is also full of the writings of a guy named Willis. (\$25.00 from Richard Bergeron 1 W 72nd St. New York, NY 10023)

Next issue should offer other interesting things. Promised is an article by Bill Rotsler about the late forties and his early association with Burbee and perhaps a piece about fannish guilt by Dick Lupoff. Also in the works is an issue featuring TAFF reports by Terry Hughes, Dave Langford and Peter Roberts. (Hmmm... I wonder if I can get Terry Carr and Steve Stiles too?)

PLUGS & WAHFS: Keep your eyes out for these interesting fanzines: FAST & LOOSE, PONG, TELOS, MAINSTREAM, SPACE JUNK, PONG, WASTE PAPER, NABU, RAFFLES, ONE DEAD HEDGEHOG, HOT SHOTS, PONG, TWLL-DDU, GENRE FLAT, SMALL FRIENDLY DOG and of course, good ol' MOTA. And be on the look out for these forthcoming fanzines, due out 'real soon now': WARHOON, INNUENDO, VOID and ENERGUMEN.

Delight your ears with the following records: XTC-BLACK SEA, THE CURE-SEVENTEEN SECONDS, ULTRAVOX-VIENNA, SCARY MONSTERS-DAVID BOWIE, TALKING HEADS-REMAIN IN LIGHT, THE RESIDENTS-COMMERCIAL ALBUM and the new ORCHESTRAL MANOEUVERS IN THE DARK.

We also heard from, but too late to make the letter column: Gary Hubbard, Jim Meadows III, Ray Nelson and Brian Earl Brown.

Write if you get work.

--dan steffan 11/30/80

"I learned to read from comics. (I was able to breeze through "Run,Tip,Run" in school; none of the words even came close to "invulnerable".)" --Jan Strnad

GRANT CANFIELD FOR TAFF IN 1983!

THE INCOMPLEAT TOWNER HALL



PART THREE
bhob
stewart

I can almost remember how it began. I walked into Ted's Christopher Street apartment, and, after I'd been there a few minutes, he said, "I've rented another place." I looked around at the piles of records, paper, clothing, giant Pepsi pyramids and reams of mimeo paper. It's certainly a wonderful thing, I thought. "Where is it?" I asked. His eyes gleamed a typical Ted White eyegleam. "West 10th Street." Since I was living on West 10th Street, this began to sound more interesting. Ted: "We'll support the place with mimeo work. You will be the salesman." Suddenly it sounded less interesting. In fact, since I did not have the least bit of interest in sales work, it sounded somewhat foolish. I did make one sale though...to some restaurant on Sixth Avenue. I noticed that their menu was hastily thrown together, and, after I showed them how it could be redesigned, they went for it.

Other times I usually found myself agreeing with the shopowners about how unnecessary mimeography was to what they were doing. Lots of smiles. No Sales. There was a place on Christopher called the Master Drawing Gallery. Here I had a long conversation about master drawings with the gallery owner, completely forgetting that Ted was counting on me to keep his venture in the black. One day I realized I hadn't made rounds in days. "I've run out of places, Ted." Actually, I had hardly scratched the surface. Ted pulled on his beard, mentioned he was getting mimeo work through his cigar store contact. He turned back to the typer. Towner Hall was in full swing. The idea of my being a salesman was never brought up again.

The place was a former restaurant. One long basement room with a john in the rear. To the right was the entrance to another room, completely windowless. To my amazement, Walter Breen, and then later Andy Main, actually lived in this room. I could never spend more than a couple of hours in there without getting so completely claustrophobic that I would flee to the Waverly Theatre or the Cube Steak House (right next to the Waverly, as I recall). This windowless room, I think, was the former kitchen. Occasionally, people who had once been to the restaurant would come down the street-level stairs, and, if the door was open, would stand in the doorway,

looking at all the scattered papers on the desks, the mimeo, and then they would say, with an oddly plaintive note, "What happened to the restaurant?"

There were two outside entrances. The stairs led down from the street into a sort of concrete pit. Sometimes you could hear people knocking on the wrong door. The second door in the pit was not usually used by the regulars. This led down a long narrow, tunnel-like passageway (unlit in my memory) taking you to the tiny, windowless room and the middle entrance to the main room. The reason this hallway wasn't used is because it was filled with dozens of cardboard boxes--which were cracking open because of people stumbling into them into the dark. And, as time passed, their contents were beginning to slide out. Each box contained several hundred motorcycle luggage carrier straps.

Terry says there were "two smaller rooms" at Towner Hall--so he must be including this hallway, because I don't remember any other smaller room. The splitting boxes were there because Ted was renting out this space, as Terry describes, to Robert Bashlow, the coin dealer. Bashlow, who was never or rarely ever seen at Towner Hall, called me up one day. He wanted me to draw a cartoon for some coin newspaper or similar. The premise was a Believe It Or Not format about coins. Could I come over to his apartment at Washington Square Village to discuss this? I did. Here, in a small, near-windowless room it became evident why Bashlow had to rent space for his thousands of motorcycle luggage carrier straps: the entire room was filled with coins. All were laid out at random, but each coin occupied its own three-inch square of space. There were coins on the bureau, on the floor, on the chairs, on top of clothing, on the bed. To walk across the room it was necessary to step between the coins. "If I need to find a coin, this makes it much simpler," explained Bashlow.

The cardboard cartons continued to split. Each time one split a strap would come slithering out. Each strap had a hook on the end. So if one came out it would hook onto another and begin to pull that one out. Soon no one ventured into the hallway because these straps with hooks were all slithering around in there, like some horror movie scene, and they would hook onto you as you passed. If this happened, the carton would split more, and then more straps would start sliding out.

"Another carton split today, Ted," I would say. And he would scowl, raising his fist and cursing Bashlow for not paying the rent.

I forget how it happened, but ultimately there was a solution of sorts. I was completely broke. So Bashlow told me he would pay me a nickel for each luggage carrier I assembled. And then, once assembled, the unit could be removed. I agreed. The procedure was to join two straps together in the middle, knotting them together. This sounds simple enough, but, because of the rough surface and the fact that they didn't bend easily, it actually was difficult to sustain for longer than a thirty minute session. Plus, because of the piecework rate and time needed for completing each assemblage, just picking up two of the straps had a built-in frustration, a sense of ultimate futility and doom. Ted, however, was happy to see that something was finally being done about the Motorcycle Luggage Carrier Strap Problem.

And so it went. Everyone would happily work on fanzines. I would sit in the corner manipulating the straps as my fingers got progressively sore. "This is certainly not a wonderful thing," I said one day. Someone looked up and asked, "What do you mean, Bhub?" "Here I am assembling motorcycle luggage carrier straps," I said. "I should be sitting in Sardi's East." Everyone laughed. It's the only thing I ever remember saying at Towner Hall that everyone laughed at.

One day, salvation. Mike McInerney walked in. "I need some drawings for my fanzine, Bhub," he said. A gleam came into my eye very much like a Ted White eyegleam. "You're in luck, Mike," I said. "As long as you sit there putting together these straps, I will sit over here turning out drawings for you fanzine." So I began drawing, and Mike began assembling. After ten minutes I was just getting warmed up, whipping out one drawing after another. Mike, however, was beginning to

protest. "This hurts my fingers," he said. "I know, Mike, of course it hurts, but it's worth it, eh? After all, I only get a nickel a strap, but look what you're getting!" I held up the drawing. "It's not finished," he said. "Of course it isn't finished, Mike. That's why you've got to keep putting those straps together." Mike's output began to slow. After twenty minutes he stopped entirely. "Bhob, I don't think I need any more drawings."

One problem, for the people who lived in Towner Hall's back windowless room, was that there was no shower. Since I never lived in this room, I never thought too much about this. One day there was a knock at my door, four flights up at 337 West Tenth Street. I opened the door. There was Andy Main. "Can I use your shower?" he asked with a note of desperation. "Sure, come on in," I said. Within 60 seconds he was happily taking a shower. He came out of the bathroom. "Thank you," he said and left. Three weeks later he was back again. More time would pass, and then there he would be on the landing once again. To this day I do not know if Andy Main was also taking showers someplace else or only once every three weeks when he would knock on my door.

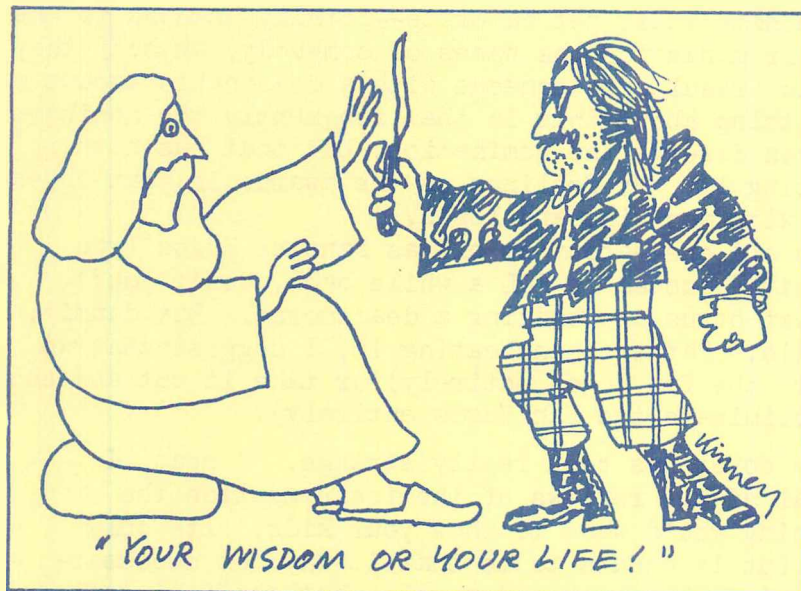
Sometimes I wonder about this.

But not often.

--Bhob Stewart

(Bhob's installment of TITH was actually sent to me as a letter of comment. I thought it was too good to stick back there with all the other letters, so there you have it--another of the universes mysteries solved. Thanks Bhob. --djs)





GROUP SAINTHOOD letters

Alan Bostick Brokedown Palace 5022 9th Ave. NE Seattle, WA 98105

The cover was, ahh, interesting. I must admit that it takes a good deal of talent to produce effects like the quintessentially lustful expression on the robot's face. And the duck is a near-perfect Carl Barks Duckburg duck. And the cover's theme reminds me of something that Jane Hawkins mentioned the other night when she and Ole Kvern were here for dinner... but BOONFARK is a family fanzine, or at least this is a family letter of comment. In any case, the cover illustration was well-executed, but I must confess that I also found it to be in less than the best of taste. You won't catch me reading it in public, nossir!

Artistically, I am pleased with the rest of the issue. Except for one thing: the paper you used. There isn't enough contrast, I think, between the black of the ink and the dark green of the paper to show off the art well. I think that your next issue would look better if you were to use a lighter-colored paper. Also, I notice that you have a few problems with set-off (surprising, since you are using a fibretint paper). On the plus side, I like the way you hand-stencilled much of the artwork, especially the Rotslers on pages 13 and 26. (I also liked your column heading for Ted White's "Minac", but I get the impression that the problems of tracing someone else's work onto a stencil are a somewhat different order from those of drawing on stencil on one's own. I like your efforts towards the latter, but I think you should be particularly encouraged to do the former. The hand-stencilling of art is something of a lost art in fandom, and I sort-of wish that it would come back to a small measure.) I'd like to be able to do it myself, simply because it would mean that I wouldn't need so much of a border between typed text and illo. In a small fanzine like FAST & LOOSE, those empty borders can add up to a lot of space that could have been put to good use.

Grant Canfield's back cover is nifty and rather reminiscent of Bill Rotsler's "serious" work. I can't help noticing, though, that the figure's right shoulder seems to be lower and broader than its left. Folds of cloth are tricky that way.

I tend to think that all the talk in this issue about Phil Foglio is a bit much. Foglio did not deserve either of his Hugos, and he does deserve a good deal of serious criticism of his work (or else he will be unable to improve much). But I can't help thinking that too much animosity is being directed towards him, and not enough towards the real problem: the fan Hugos as a whole.

The more time passes, the more I come to agree with Ted White and others about the impact of awards on fandom. They do place some encouragement upon Competition With Others, and neglect the mutual participation that makes fandom and fanzines so much fun for me. Moreover, in the case of the fan Hugos in particular, the voting base is just too big. Too few of the voters, or even the nominators, are in a position to know enough about the field to make sensible decisions in voting and nominating. And at the same time the voting base is still small enough that a person can

-34-

get nominated by a small number of people. Since this small number of people can come out of left field they can nominate their pet favorite--totally unknown to the rest of us--or, they can dredge their minds for the names of somebody, anybody they can remember, who is eligible. This results in someone with a reasonable amount of exposure being nominated. The sad thing about this is that frequently the nominated person might indeed be good, and even deserve the nomination, but that has nothing to do with his or her actually getting it. My feelings on the awards is that objective quality has very little to do with who wins and loses.

Of course the discussion is an old one--about as old as fanzine Hugos (you remember that paragraph of Ted's that I quoted in F&L a while back, don't you?), and it might seem that I and the rest of us are beating a dead horse. But dammit, this is one horse that refuses to die. Rather than beating it, I suggest that we either set it out to pasture (ignore the fan Hugos entirely) or take it out and shoot it, quickly and cleanly (that is, eliminate the fan Hugos entirely).

((The response to last issue's cover has been really strange. I mean, I am a fan of bad taste. Several of the reviews of the issue mention the cover and how it wasn't something you'd want to show your kids. Its only a goddamn cartoon after all. But it occurs to me that it may not necessarily be the contents of the drawing that bothered people, but the fact that it was so well done. That's a left-handed compliment, for sure. Because this issue is xeroxed there is, of course, no hand stencilling. But also I'm not doing much of this because of the poor quality of most stencils. No matter how careful I am, I end up ripping the stencil, it is very frustrating. As much as I like the form, I think the medium for producing it is very much to blame for its demise. Yes, let's shoot the horse. Right between the eyes.))

Allyn Cadogan 251 Ashbury St. #4 San Francisco, Calif. 94117

So far, all I've had time to read is your editorial, but that was enough to make me feel like trotting right into my office and dumping GENRE PLAT 4 into the trash. I won't do it, of course; I've already invested close to \$150 in the thing and besides there is some good material in this issue.

So just what hope is there for neos like me (I really only have been in fandom since 1976!) who would like to know about our Fannish Roots and who are bored to tears with the likes of JANUS and PSFQ and RUNE and FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE and right now even GENRE PLAT. A lot of the stuff that comes in the mail is produced by friends and I wouldn't hurt their feelings for the world because, like me, they're doing the best they can with what they've got, and sometimes we do get gems, but...

Right now my favourite North American zines are THE WRETCH TAKES TO WRITING from Cheryl Cline, and SPACE JUNK, which is produced by Rich Coad right here in my very own apartment, and recently the Nielson-Haydens sent out TELOS, which had some very delightful stuff in it. That's three zines out of a three-foot stack I considered worth keeping when I cleaned out my office recently.

Where does one go to find the good old stuff of which you speak when one doesn't already have boxes of it lying about the house somewhere, or a neighbor who's been in fandom since 1947 and has religiously saved all copies of all fanzines ever received?

When we first started to do GENRE PLAT, we asked Susan Wood to refer us to good fanzines and she gave us copies of MAYA and of assorted British and Australian zines. Not much in the stack from North America. I asked Susan if she'd pretty-please-with-sugar-on-it tell me who did saw Courtney's boat and for god's sake, why? But Susan had already been through all that and she was tired of it and I still don't even have the slightest idea who Courtney was. So, tell me: Where do us neos who have the best intentions in the world do our research? Maybe we'd like to know our roots, but we don't even know where to start digging. How do we get the "old timers"(the following named will forgive me for that, I hope.) -or, better, how do we get them to write for us? We do get promises, but no delivery. I get the feeling that, like Susan, they're all a bit tired of it all. I personally have had promises in years past from Ted White and Jim Benford and Charles Burbee but somehow none of them have ever got around to sending anything my way.

Where do we find the talented, satirical, funny, inventive new writers? All the people I know who can do that sort of thing are busy doing it for themselves; they haven't time to do it for me. It seems, from what glimpses I've had of it, that the fun and energy of the past derived from closely-knit communities of fans. Highly incestuous, but they knew each other well enough and had enough respect for each other to be able to get away with the things they did. Oh, okay, I do know vaguely about all those horrid feuds that "split fandom" down the middle and which in some cases left lasting scars on various egos. I've even talked to some of the people personally involved. It is great fun to sit around with Frank Robinson and Alva Rogers and such like and hear stories about the good old days, but those days are past and Alva and Frank and all the others are busy now with their careers. They haven't time or energy or interest to invest in some johnny-come-lately fanzine.

There does seem to be a revival of interest in fannish history. Back at GENRE PLAT's inception we decided to run a regular fannish reprint column. Susan agreed that she would have time for that and managed to dig up two very nice bits of historica before leaving the editorial cooperative. The fannish reprint in the upcoming GP was referred to me by Michael Kurland and after this I'm on my own & simply don't know where to look. I've noticed in a number of fanzines received recently that there are reprints from old fanzines. Funny entertaining stuff, much livelier than the bulk of current fare. If I look hard, I think I might see a trend developing: Here is fandom which, as a whole, prides itself on its forward-looking mythos, which is in fact turning in on itself, or apparently trying to, harking to the glorious past, attempting to revive the corpses of the 40's, 50's-and maybe even the 60's?

I have a feeling that a lot of early fandom's vitality may have been derived from an easily accessable sense of wonder. There's plenty to worry about nowadays, but not much to wonder at.

I think, though, that most of the vitality that comes across so loud and clear in those old fanzines derived from the previously mentioned sense of community. Fandom was smaller then. You could, and in many cases apparently did, know everyone in fandom. Imagine! Worldcons of 300 attendees! These days, a local con that only pulls in 300 people is a social and economic flop. Tell me--how do you derive a sense of community from 6,000 mostly obnoxious strangers?

You've had a head start, quite a big one, on me in knowing your audience. I frankly haven't the slightest idea who my audience is. Names in the top left-hand corner of envelopes. "Saw yer fmz revw'd in BLOATED CARP 3. Encl. is \$1 for current ish." So I stick my little "fmz." in an envelope with a handwritten note hoping they like my current ish and mail it off into the void. And I really do hope they like it. I like it. I get a great deal of personal pleasure out of putting it together. I like badgering people to write me articles and enjoy getting their offerings in the mail, even those I may have to send back because it doesn't fit my "standards" or requirements. I enjoy sifting through my art file looking for the right illustrations to go with a particular article. I enjoy typing the stencils and glueing in the electrostencils. I enjoy spending hours over the mimeo, frequently hand-cranking and slip-sheeting in an attempt to achieve the desired repro effects. I enjoy pouring over my mailing list to see who's going to receive the latest offering. About the only thing I don't enjoy is stapling the collated copies together. And of course I especially enjoy getting letters back in the mail telling me how they liked or didn't like my ish. But what I enjoy most is the feeling of accomplishment I get from holding the last collated and stapled copy of my own "little magazine" in my hands.

There is a community here, and I do manage occasionally to sit on the fringes of it. I think that everyone in this little nameless community publishes in one form or another, be it apas or personal zines or genzines or "merely" in the form of contributing to these zines, artwork and articles. The people in this community, for the sake of history, are: Cheryl Cline, Lynn Kuehl, Bill Breiding, Gary Mattingly, Patty Peters, Jay & Dixie Kinney, Rich Coad and Larry Rehse. Actually, they aren't all the community but they are the core of it. There are others like myself who hang about the fringes occasionally taking part in the group activities and

occasionally helping out with the production of the others' fanzines. For instance, we share a pretty much common interest in things like punk culture and, recently, professional wrestling, and then I sometimes help Rich slipsheet SPACE JUNK and he uses my mimeo to run it off. We trade off ink and stencils and sometimes artwork. This is maybe a hint of what fandom was like in the 40's and 50's. It's a close, compact, comfortable little circle that isn't even closed off to newcomers. I only wish the rest of fandom, all those people out there, weren't such a vague blurry mass...

((I think you answered most of your questions yourself. You mention not knowing where to go to find out about fanhistory, yet you talk about being able to reminisce with Frank Robinson & Alva Rogers. I can think of no better way to find out than that. If you want to know about fanwriting, you go talk to some of the locals who've "been in fandom since 1947 and have religiously saved all copies of all fanzines ever received", like Alva, Frank, Terry Carr or Bob Silverberg. They can certainly tell you what to read, and where to find it. And of course, there is always WARHOON 28.

And as far as recruiting material for GENRE FLAT goes, I'd say you have figured out a pretty effective means of getting material right in your own letter. You praise the people you like and you publicly embarrass the "old timers" into fulfilling their commitments. Very shrewd. That should bring you lots of good stuff. But then, having seen the new GP, I don't really think you have anything to worry about. I thought it was a very good fanzine, certainly not the work of a rank neo.))

Norm "I'm in movies" Hollyn 178 Spring St. New York, N.Y. 10012

Somehow, the word is out (or, at least, slowly leaking) that I'm loocing fanzines again. After 5 or so years of nearly complete gafiation I am on some mailing lists again. The other day, when I got BNF 3 there were 2 or 3 other pieces of fannish mimeography slid in with it in my tiny mailbox.

To put it sweetly: I agree with your appraisal of fanzine writing today--drivel. Now, as I've not been very conversant (or interested) in things fannish recently, I don't have a really clear idea of the topics of discussion that have been circulating for the past 5 years. From the few zines I've received, it seems that the main topics have been women and Phil Foglio.

I've had my say about both topics elsewhere but something in the letter column struck my fancy. It involves why fans can't talk about art in fanzines. Possibly all of this has changed in the last few years, I tend to doubt it though. Harry Warner hits it on the head when he admits to being word oriented. Like it or not Dan, fandom is word-crazy. Back in the old Jerry Lapidus/Alpajpuri days of "serious fanzine layout" the largest single outcry against such myopia was not that it was myopic but that it was not word-oriented. Somehow it was fannish to say that all you really cared about was the writing ("It could be scratched out in crayon and I wouldn't care" was the cry). It was a source of disappointment to me then, it is a source of disappointment to me now.

I think Marc Schirmeister is wrong when he attributes fannish reluctance to discuss art to fear of looking ignorant. Simply put, I think its because most fans prefer talking about ideas rather than style and most non-cartoon fan art isn't overtly full of ideas (if at all). Fannish writing which is heavily stylized usually gets few responses to its style (unless the loc-writer didn't like the style); it's mainly discussed for its ideas. God knows there are enough assholes in the real world who have no hesitation about discussing art. They are more concerned with their voices than with looking stupid.

Or with ideas.

But ideas concern the average fan ("faverage"?) more than those yo-yos. All to the good, I'd say. But there has been no real education in the U.S. as to the ideas in art. Artistry has been put into a semi-convenient box labelled "slightly

crazy" and dismissed as being for the others to bother with. Especially for those of the scientific bent--like fans. As for me--it has taken me five years of working in movies to begin to think that I might be talented enough to be able to make it in an artistic profession (never mind all of the questions about movies and art, that is another kettle of boiling water). Art was not me, numbers and scientific ideas were. Now--5 years later--I am beginning to see that I just might have both.

As to the other topic--fannish writing--if Terry's Towner Hall reprints are an indication of the good writing from the early sixties, then you can have it. Another example of what I used to call, in my neoish enthusiasm, The Arnie Katz School of Faaanish Writing. That is, take any boring everyday incident (no matter how boring or how everyday) and, through dint of fast repartee and dramatics, disguise it as a momentous event. Since you've then written about it, and it's been made to seem like a momentous event, no one will catch on that it's really just about collating and addressing fanzines.

I didn't like it in 1971, I don't like it now.

rich brown's and Ted White's pieces, as well as your editorial, are more my cup of white wine. rich's piece was both historically informative and touching. Ted's piece...well, I can read almost anything he writes. He is fluid and lucid at the same time, thought-provoking, and lively. Overt comparisons, like the Art Show of Hugo Winners he mentions, are always good for pointing up both deficiencies and proficiencies.

But, you know, so much of what appears in fanzines is and has been for as long as I've been around (over 10 years), badly executed. And that goes for writing and artwork and layout and choice of material, etc.etc. There are too many fanzines around, and fandom is just too much of a goddamned hobby, to culture really fine work. Everything takes on a different perspective in the light of reality. Most fan projects are rushed--it may take years to get it all done, but it's done in spurts.

Honestly now, Dan. How much of the art in BNF 3 would you have published if it wasn't sent to you by friends who were doing it for free because they liked you or wanted a copy of BNF or wanted to see it in print or whatever? There are 17 pieces in this issue. I'd have printed 12 or 13. Now that's an extraordinarily high percentage and I attribute that to you. But if that's high for a typical fanzine...

((You say that you can read almost anything that Ted writes, yet you didn't like the Towner Hall reprints. I don't understand. I do, however, understand what you are saying about the Arnie Katz school. Arnie was a sincere admirer of the Towner Hall people, and he tried to mimic their style and make it his own. Mostly what he did though, was butcher it. But not liking what Arnie and others of his fan generation were writing



is no reason to dislike the writings that inspired them. Ted, Terry and Pete Graham were able to convey time, place and personality in their writing, and still remain amusing. Arnie saw the amusing, but had a distorted view of time and place.))

Gary Deindorfer 447 Bellevue Ave. #9-B Trenton, N.J. 08618

It was good to see another issue after all these months, years, decades. The cover is funny and weird in that the duck, a nonmammal, has tits, a mammalian feature. The expression on the face of the robot is hilarious. He looks so...satisfied.

Your editorial reminds me what a good writer you are. You express yourself very well, very clearly and to the point. It may be that you are as good a writer as you are an artist, which makes you one of the best. I'm sure I'm not the only person who wishes you'd do more writing, for other people's magazines as well as your own.

It is true that most faanish fanzines we have today demonstrate little awareness of the fannish past. Fortunately MOTA and BOONFARK do, and that's a ghodsends. But I don't think the American fanzine scene is as bleak as you make it out to be. It is a wonderful thing when a faanish fanzine shows real awareness of fannish traditions. But I think it is possible to be faanish and work with the material of the present, if it is done with real wit. Examples that are around today would be, I think, Rich Coad's SPACE JUNK. Here is a faanish fanzine, and a brilliant one, working with its own material. Another is Mark Digre's QUINAPALUS. The faanish traditions are entirely contemporary Minneapolis lore, but the writing and art are very well done, often pretty damned funny. There is MOTA, of course, with its awareness of past lore, without slavish overreliance on it. And FARK. But there is also the very promising Kaufman/Tompkins MAINSTREAM, which seems to be carving out a few legends of its own. I exclude the Bostick FAST AND LOOSE and the Hayden's TELOS, because I think they are examples of faanishness that tries too hard and is rather grim in its attempts to be "light and faanish". Then there is Brian Earl Brown's MAD SCIENTIST'S DIGEST. It is not sercon or faanish, but borrows something from both worlds. Brown has a powerful editorial prescence and an open, catholic (small "c") mind and gives MSD a fresh, exploratory feeling. I agree that WoFAN is probably not so hot, but Brown really shines in MSD. So with some of these American fanzines, I feel a slight resurgence of faanishness in fanzines might be underway.

You have certainly done us all a service with these reprints of Towner Hall lore. This is the kind of thing that, returned to print, helps revitalize the traditions of our weird microcosm. I read all this material when it came out but I don't have any fanzines any more prior to 1974 (alas) and it was good to read it again.

Ted's piece is workmanlike but, I think, nothing extraordinary. Terry Carr's piece reminds me what a master he was at lightness and wryness. It is true that he is just as light and wry in conversation as he is on paper, and that is a rare thing.

I think Pete Graham's article is the real masterpiece here. He has taken the idea of nostalgia and turned it around 180° to make it THE anti-nostalgia piece. It's as though he is saying "You know how we talk about the fabulous good old days when all was wonder and joy? Well, here I'll show you that in the living reality of those days, maybe it's not all wonder and joy." He has also caught some of the essence of what Towner Hall was probably like in the day-to-day reality.

The Stiles cartoon is hilarious. Did somebody really leave 24 bottles of urine at Towner Hall? ((Yes, Steve did.)) I believe it, I believe it. With some degree of trepidation, I ask, "Whose?" Not to mention, "Why?"

The first time I visited real live fans on a trip away from home was in, I think, December 1961. It was my first and last visit to Towner Hall. By the next time I visited NYC fandom, it was to freeload and make myself a nuisance at Ted's then new place in Brooklyn.

Just to add to the legend, here is some of what I remember about that visit to Towner Hall.

I'd been corresponding with Walter Breen but had never met him. I envisioned him as having very sharp, clean-cut, lean features and beardless, too. I walked into Towner Hall and seated with a typewriter in his lap was a heavy man with a huge beard. It was Walter Breen. For some time he sat there typing and I began to wonder if he was sitting because he couldn't walk. He finally got out of the chair and I realized he could walk after all. Andy Main had his quarters in the little side room. I remember it was damp and drafty, probably a good place to catch pneumonia.

Terry Carr and Pete Graham took to patronizing me on my 3 or 4 day visit. They played the role of the great BNFs, casting me as a Fawning Acolyte, a role they also cast for Andy Main, Steve Stiles, Les Gerber and even Walter Breen. They had me hopping, running errands for them, going across the street to get them steak sandwiches and Pepsi's. I almost felt as though I should say, "Yes, Massa!" But bore it with good humor, because I was their Fawning Acolyte and wanted to Get Ahead in fandom, and I knew that Carr and Graham could Make or Break me.

Then there were Ted and Sylvia White who were surprisingly nice to me on that visit, considering I was fannishly almost unknown.

I ended up being asked to write for Ted and Terry's FAPazines. I went home and in no time at all sent Terry and Pete the first installment of my column for LIGHTHOUSE, "Big Dorf's Special", a column that saw only two installments en toto. I also wrote a maudlin, serious piece of faan fiction for Ted's FAPazine, "A Son of Two Fans", and Ted even sent me home with his FAPA mailing which I wrote mailing comments for, returning the mailing with the comments.

In their introductory remarks on my material, Ted and Terry seemed to be giving me star treatment. They had apparently gotten it into their heads that I was going to be a faanish prodigy ala Jeff Wanshel or Joel Nydahl or Kent Moomaw. They really played me up, pointing out that I was only 18, which I was, oddly enough, then. The amusing thing is how I failed to live up to this bright promise. Now I'm 36, twice 18, and what have I done since? To quote a line from a loc of mine in MOTA, "Not a hell of a lot".

The trip to Towner Hall was fun and opened the way to friendships with my contemporaries and fellow Fawning Acolytes, Stiles, Main and Gerber, of who Les Gerber became one of my best friends and remains so to this day, praise de Lawd.

What strikes me as odd in retrospect was I didn't observe any grass smoking. It seems likely that the big boys in the Towner Hall days used grass but perhaps they were too cool to use it in the presence of minors such as Stiles, Gerber, Main and Deindorfer, for which they could have gotten busted.

Well, those are some memories of my one and only Towner Hall visit, for what they are worth.



Oh, one more thing. Terry Carr was working on a novel which was later published by Ace. Each time he came to the end of a line and the bell rang, he announced what he'd earned: ring! "\$16.70", ring! "\$17.90" and so on. It shows how natural his faanishness was. Even in his attempts to become a Dirty Pro, in the actual nuts and bolts work involved, he was able to add this light and wry touch. Truly the man was and is one of our Great Wits and dat ain't no shit!

The comments from your loyal readers on this invaluable notalgic material ought to be "illuminating" in the extreme.

God, rich's article is a beautiful piece of writing. It is not only a loving tribute to Ted Johnstone, but the writing is so subtly inflected. You know what I mean? His transitions from one sentence to another, one paragraph to another, are done so smoothly and deftly, it shows what superb stylistic control he has over his material. Also, his knowledge and feel of and for faanish legend and trivia is probably second to no one else's, not even Terry Carr's or Harry Warner's. I think rich brown would be regarded as one of fandom's best writers, if only his output weren't so sporadic. This Totem Pole is a magnificent piece of writing, something that I will reread a few more times over the years to savor once again. One other thing the article shows: basically what a wise man rich brown is. I, who am not particularly wise, find this virtue admirable on the rare occasions I encounter it.

I met Ted Johnstone once, in 1963, before and during the Worldcon that year in Washington, D.C. He was a nice guy. He also regaled us with some clever filksongs of his own creation, one of them was very long and wonderfully bawdy.

If I'm not mistaken, Ted had already written about the Foglio flap in MAYA and SCIENTIFRICTION. I think he's running it into the ground somewhat by writing about it still one more time in FARK. I think he has already made his point more than abundantly. True that Foglio probably did not deserve a Hugo, but he got one and there's nothing anybody can do now to change that, or take it away from him. The funny thing to me is that I get a lot of fanzines (too many, maybe) and in the last five years I've seen maybe two or three Foglio cartoons, and didn't think much of them.

Good to see a letter from Rotsler. He writes so few of them. Stiles is of course one of the greats. But it is also good to see Kinney mentioned as an artist of great merit. Apparently Jay's been gafia for some time, but lately I've seen a few of his cartoons, in FARK, Bartlett's DIGRESSIONS and maybe a couple of other places. I hope this is not backlog but is new work from the Great Man and that he is returning to the febrile



fold once more. The sunshine cartoon with the half blind mole or whatever is funny as hell. I don't know what it means, really, but it tickled my funnybone, and that's my main criterion.

Schirm writes a good letter. It is odd how articulate artists are capable of being with words, from you, Rotsler and Schirm up to van Gogh, Gaughin, Picasso and Klee. ((What fanzine do those last guys work for?)) Some artists are completely inarticulate, but when an artist is adept with words he gives the rest of us an angle of vision on reality which is rarely found in the writing of a non-visual artist.

I think Harry Warner has put his finger on the main reason artists are insufficiently mentioned in locs. To cover the art in a fanzine thoroughly would double the length of the loc. I think this is even more basic a reason than Schirm's reason that non artists think there is a great mystique about visuals which prevents them saying anything even marginally meaningful about them.

Norm Clarke doesn't write enough for the "fan press" (pompous phrase) any more. Good to see a letter from him, however short.

That covers it, and of course I haven't said enough about the cartoons, but I think you publish some of the best cartoons around which should effectively prevent you from publishing any of my crude efforts. Ah well, I've decided not to spread myself too thin any more, not to be a Jack of All Trades, Master of None. Thus nowadays I am concentrating all my efforts on my chosen skill: engraving the complete text of Hitler's Mein Kampf on the heads of pins. (Wanna buy one? Only \$12!)

((What a great letter, Gary. You've stated so many good thoughts here that it is tough to pull one out to comment on.

You mention a lot of fanzines early in your letter that you feel exhibit the tru-fannish ideals. Some I agree on, others have always struck me as bland and lacking in personality. However, Alan Bostick's FAST AND LOOSE is definitely better than you give it credit for. Sure it is fannish in an old fashioned, and sort of cliched manner, but it has done the job that all good fannish fanzines should do: generate responses from the right people. That virtue alone can make a good fanzine if the people who contribute and write to it are of an interesting nature. In FAST AND LOOSE, they are. Give it another look.

As far as I know, none of the TH "Void Boys" smoked grass at the time they were running Ted's shop. According to Steve Stiles, he and rich brown were the ones that introduced pot to NY fans. They turned on the fabled "Mike, Mac and Ernie", and it all sort of rolled along from there. Ted didn't smoke until the late Sixties, but I have no idea about Terry.

Ted's comments about the Foglio affair may have been stated in other fanzines, but he wrote it up here first. The others, I suspect, were sent out later, in frustration with my publishing schedule.))

Ed Cagle Star Rt. South Box 80 Locust Grove, OK 74352

Thanks for BOOFNARK...pardon...BOONFARK #3.

It was my honest intention to merely write a short note of thanks, but after typoing your zine's title, and writing the third worst sentence ever written, it may be interesting to carry this a bit further. Or maybe not. ((Huh?))

What's your best guess as to the original fannish use of "BOONFARK"? My experience is limited, but I first ran across it in Donn Brazier's TITLE in the early 70s. Brazier used it as a term denoting (vaguely) a lot of screwing around, and finally used it as a title, in slightly different form, for Mike Glycer's fanzine review column. "BOONFARKINGS", or somesuch. Memory seems to indicate that Brazier, a member of fandom pre-1940s, mentioned having seen it long, long ago (for want of a more precise definition).

Amusingly arresting cover. Clean, evocative, and just off the wall enough to get an immediate chuckle. (How'm I doing with the specific comment?) ((Just fine.)) The co-author bit is an added interest factor, to me, in that I speculate who drew which part, and who drew first. In this case I presume you did Miss Dolly Duck, and

drew it first, and that Grant added the horny tin can man later. It is difficult to imagine Grant having drawn a robot kneeling on a bed, in that position, with that expression on his face, without prior inspiration or existing material. In any event, it is my kind of cover, and I got a kick out of it.

Isn't it unrealistic to expect a rational result from a group as large and uninformed as the one that votes for the Hugos? Isn't it also unrealistic to expect to change it to a degree that would make the award meaningful?

Thanks again for BOONFARK. Like you, it is the type of fanzine I have received more pleasure from in the past, and see too little of today. Maybe the present cycle of boring zines has about run its course, and we are due for yet another rebirth of goodole fannish fanzine fandom.

((Hmm, the original fannish use of BOONFARK? I'm glad you asked that question. As far as I know I thought up the word in late 1969 or '70 as the name for a comic strip character. I was very much into Vaughn Bode at the time, and was working hard to assimilate his style (which I admired a great deal), and was creating new Bodeesqe characters to inhabit my comics, and BOONFARK was the most successful of these. I was talking about the character in an apa I was in a few years later (Slan-apa). I drew him for my apazine, and people seemed to like him, but they really seemed to like his name. It was used in conversation by nearly all the members, but particularly by Mike Wood (yes, he of madras bermuda shorts fame). Before I knew it, Wood had circulated the word through all his other apas and started using a variation on it for the name of one of his apazines. The word spread through Minneapolis Fandom and then out into the realm of general fandom. My claim on it was almost totally erased. So by 1973 when I was planning this fanzine, I decided to resurrect the name, as I had never used the character (he's too Bodeesqe) and reclaim my rightful ownership of the word. After the first issue came out, I got a letter from some slob out there who said he thought it was dirty pool on my part for stealing Mike Wood's word. And I've wanted to tell this story ever since.

As far as Donn Brazier is concerned, I know nothing. To my knowledge, Brazier has never sent me any of his fanzines. Not even the issue of TITLE that had a review of BNF 2 in it. Neither have I gotten but a few of Mike Glycer's publications, so I really don't know what claim Brazier might have to the word. As for the word being used fannishly "long, long ago"-- it is news to me. Does anyone out there have any idea? Tucker? Harry Warner?

The way the cover was done is very simple: Grant drew the entire picture in pencil, and I inked it. The companion to last issue's cover (both done in the summer of '77) can be found on the back cover of the new issue of GENRE FLAT, only the process was reversed. I penciled, Grant inked. I'm glad it was your kind of cover, Ed. But aren't such activities illegal in Oklahoma?))

Lee Hoffman 350 NW Harbor Blvd. Port Charlotte, FL. 33952



Yes. But those fanzine editors who "lack tast and conviction" are bound to end up ragged and domed.

((Always nice to receive a poctsarcd from Leeh. It is obvious from Leeh's sentence that she was put in a quandry by my ability to spel. You can rest easy now, Leeh, starting with this issue I am acquiring poorfeader. And you wouldn't believe how long it took me to find out how to spell poctsarcd.))

Harry Warner Jr. 423 Summit Ave. Hagerstown, MD 21740

BOONFARK is welcome on any occasion. But it is particularly entitled to the absolute in hospitality when it appears during a time of famine for faanish fanzines. That old spiritual keeps running through my head, "Sometimes I Feel like a MOTAless Child". All this ties in with your editorial, as you may already have guessed. While I was reading your jeremiad, I felt just a trifle scared, the way youngsters used to feel when they first read an essay by Robert Ingersoll after a fundamentalist upbringing. I wouldn't go as far as you do in your distress with the subject matter of most of today's fanzines, and yet I feel almost as if I wanted to parrot you in a very conspicuous circumstance, just to see what would happen and to hope that maybe the shock might galvanize others into imitating the good fanzines of the past.

But in FAPA I once tried to explain how I'm an Odd Couple all by myself. In that instance, I was referring to the way I am partly compulsively neat and partly a model of sloppiness, just like the stage, screen and television pair. But this distressing contradictoriness plagues me in other ways. Faced with a lot of good fanzines of varying editorial policies and subject matter, I would grab first one in the HYPHEN tradition every time. And yet I get moods when I want to read sercon material which isn't written pedantically and I can find myself devouring every word in a fanzine devoted to horror movies' plots and cast members. I think my preference for the faanish type of fanzine might have something to do with the fact that it's the type with the most potential for infinite variety: no matter how much work the writers and editors put into fanzines that emphasize reviews and interviews, the more reviews and interviews involving the same book and creators, the less is the likelihood of finding novel insights in the latest ones. Since faanish fanzines have unlimited subject matter expressed in untrammelled ways of putting words together, they are more likely to seem new and different, no matter how many you read. It would be nice if there were many to read.

I like the idea of resurrecting as much material as possible about Towner Hall. Memory failed me so completely when I tried to guess at what was coming in these reprints (all of which I must have read as they first appeared) that they represented to all appearances entirely new fannish writing. In fact, I don't even remember wishing, as I must have wished back in the late 1960s, that I'd visited Towner Hall while it existed. I was in New York City in the spring of 1961, and remember making a doomed attempt to find Lee Hoffman's place of residence, and I was in the Village to see a production of "Under Milk Wood", but for some reason it didn't occur to me to make this particular excursion. I suppose it wasn't grown as yet to the status of a fannish legend.

And with all respect to the high level of writing that faanish writing possessed a couple of decades ago, I do believe that this installment of Totem Pole is the finest sustained writing that rich brown has ever pub-



lished in a fanzine. The informational content is ~~xxx~~ lavish, but the new insights that it gives about Coventry is just a bonus to the manner in which rich makes Ted Johnstone and the other fans he writes about leap off the mimeographed page to assume a 3-D, living color semblance of reality as actual characters of fandom past.

I'll have to sit out the debate over Phil Foglio's quality as a fan artist: I don't remember having seen enough of his work to make a proper judgment. If I've seen more Foglio art than I remember, that might be an indirect commentary on its quality, but it might also reflect mainly on my inability to give the proper attention to fanzine art which I fully admitted on previous occasions.

A couple of added notes to Ted's column: he fails to mention one inadvertent aspect of his Pongs proposal which helped to abort the awards. Ted apparently didn't know when he announced his idea that pong is a word with unpleasant connotations in the United Kingdom. British and Irish fandom was quite influential at the time. Without that accident, maybe overseas acceptance of the idea would have caused its fate to be different. And I was among those early winners of the fan writing Hugo who asked for their names to be taken out of consideration in the balloting the year after victory. I'm positive I did it as soon as I won the year after Ted received his Hugo at the St. Louis Worldcon; at least, I remember having done so and my uncertainty stems only from the fact that I wasn't writing very much for fanzines at that time, the second Hugo obviously was a reward for ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, and I really wouldn't have needed to withdraw from competition again that time.

I don't know which of the totem poles I admire more in the illustrations to rich's column. The Minac heading (or is it a siding?) catches the spirit of the Ted White I remember from meetings, but am I to infer from it that the beard has disappeared into hyperspace or somewhere? The Rotsler fillos surprised me by seeming a trifle old fashioned in the sense that they typify the way he was sketching quite a few years ago; only the one on page 13 seems to share his recent trend toward more complex and representational drawing. I refuse to believe that I am unable to find Steve Stiles' name on a page 5 illustration this issue, but it's nice to find it as prominent as that of John Handcock on the page 9 drawing which reminds me somehow of the old VOID covers. Ah, how well I remember the day I was reading an issue of VOID during a hospital stay and a nurse's aide thought from its title that it was a trade journal for those who wielded bedpans.

((Your comments about Foglio seem to follow the general opinions of a lot of people. Namely, most of them can't honestly say whether they have seen enough of his work to form an opinion. It's odd how a two time Hugo winner's work isn't well known by general fanzine fandom, don't you think?

I asked Ted about the word "Pong" having bad connotations in the U.K. and he replied, "If it does, this is the first time I've heard of it. I received no hint of this from British fans at the time." So it seems to me that this is the perfect time for a C*O*N*T*E*S*T*. All you British-type fans out there, this is your chance! Send me all the disgusting details about the word "Pong" and I'll send you all my back issues of RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY. That seems fair.

The reason you couldn't find Steve's name on the illo that appeared on page five, is because there isn't any illo on page five. I think it is time for your yearly trip to the eye doctor, Harry...))

Steve "I'm in Heavy Metal" Stiles Somewhere in Arlington, Va.

I...You know, I typed that "I" fifteen minutes ago as I sat down to my Olympia portable typewriter. In fact, I've been staring at that "I", trance-like, for several moments now; gads, blocked! "I think I know why it's been so long since I last attempted to write a loc" is, in fact, what I started to write. After all, the rude truth is that I have never been one for letters of comment; I have never rode the coat tails of fandom in the letter columns. Aside from a brief fling as

a CRY letterhack, writing comments on fanzines intimidated me. Maybe it was the prospect of slipping an unkind word to some suffering, sensitive fannish editor, someone who had labored for long hours just to give me a few moments of cheap pleasure. Or perhaps it was the prospect of having a viewpoint, of making an opinion, that slipped the meat to my delicate personality--I don't know... Don't ask me...

A very fine issue. Back in the days when I did write letters of comment, the first item was to remark on the overall look of the art direction: BOONFARK looks fine. From that fine collaboration cover by you and Grant, to the assorted heading illos, to the two "theme" sets of cartoons that run through the issue. A swell idea, group themes; we must all do this again sometime. There are a number of different items to explore, now that lightning bolts and totem poles have been used up; book cases, couch-sized paintings, hose-clamps, Esther Williams, hose-nipples, Clorets, Science Fiction... And let's not forget Jesus.

The thing that makes BOONFARK nice to get is that, in a sense, it is very much a "sixties" fanzine. Oh, not to mean that any trace of some counter-culture runs through your fanzine... No, no, not at all; yes, (sigh!) I'm afraid that BOONFARK is very much on the Consciousness II level. Tsk. Nor do I mean that any of the contents might be drug influenced. But you really put your finger on it when you explain the appeal of fanzines like *HONQUE*; the Clarkes knew who their audiences were. When I was publishing SAM and SKIFFLE, the usual print run was 175 copies, but I was actually writing for about twenty-five people.

As for the Hugo controversy, I remain pretty passive. I'm semi-active in limited circles of fandom, at best. I only get a handful of fanzines per year; BEAM DOWN, PHASER'S BLAST, DUM-DUM BULLETIN, and the like. I remember seeing Phil Foglio's cartoons somewhere, but I don't remember when (they are Bjo-like). I think the idea of actively campaigning for a Hugo is vulgar and low-class (although, come to think of it... Denis Kitchen probably has thousands of those unsold "Steve Stiles, ...Famous Cartoonist" buttons going to waste...)

I really last deserved a Hugo nomination in 1969, when I was at my activity peak. I appreciate Rotsler including me on his list, and the nice things you've said in the previous BOONFARK, but I haven't done much over the last ten years--just a handful of covers and spots, usually for friends and art shows, per year. Once upon a time I might have lusted after a Hugo (say, in 1969), but from my Consciousness III worldview all that seems shallow, trivial. How fleeting fame, how passe glory! This was brought home to me at a recent WSFA meeting. I hadn't been to a WSFA meeting for quite some time, and, after looking around for John Magnus and Bob Pavlat, I would amble over to various groups of people. "Say," I would announce to break the conversational ice, "you are now looking at the new coeditor of VOID!" I would say this proudly, because even Consciousness III will only stretch so far. I would say it like, "the *New* *Coeditor* of *VOID*!" They would look at me blankly. "You know; VOID --the fanzine, get it?" I would say. "Pete Graham was once a coeditor, too!" I would add. I said this to several clumps of people that evening. Sometimes they would continue on talking and I'd go off "for some coffee".

Towner Hall was an interesting time for me as a neo. I had an after school job of collecting urine in that area, so there was a weekly opportunity to drop by and watch the whirlwind bouts of fannish activity, read recent FAPA mailings, and perhaps make long distance phonecalls on the free phone in the back. Once I called Utah to talk to some Mormons... what a laugh; you know-- "Do you have Pall Mall in a carton?", that kind of thing... Les Gerber and Andy Main were some of the younger fans to visit, or live there, and Terry, Ted, and Pete would go out of their way to make us feel at home by thrusting Pepsis into our hands, with the words "Making a Neo feel Happy!"

((How does one go about collecting urine? Did you ask for it, or did you just reach in and take it?))

Jay Kinney 1786 Fell St. San Francisco, CA 94117

Well, it is indeed a rare pleasure to lie in bed in the morning and read a vintage fannish zine before breakfast...indeed, before getting out of bed...nay, before I awake even. Of course these days I cannot lie around in bed for very long in the morning. Not only am I far too busy doing a hundred and one little things (which I'll not bore you with detailing, luckily,) but once the sun is up the nuts next door start cracking.

Yes, I live next door to a mental institution, or didn't you know? True, it's not a giant facility--merely a "big ol' house" with 15 or so strange inhabitants who a) walk the neighborhood streets at all hours in drugged stupors, panhandling the residents or b) hang out in the back yard next door, mere feet from this very typewriter, and verbally chew each other to bits as well as sing popular ditties such as "Jesus Loves Me" at top volume now and then.

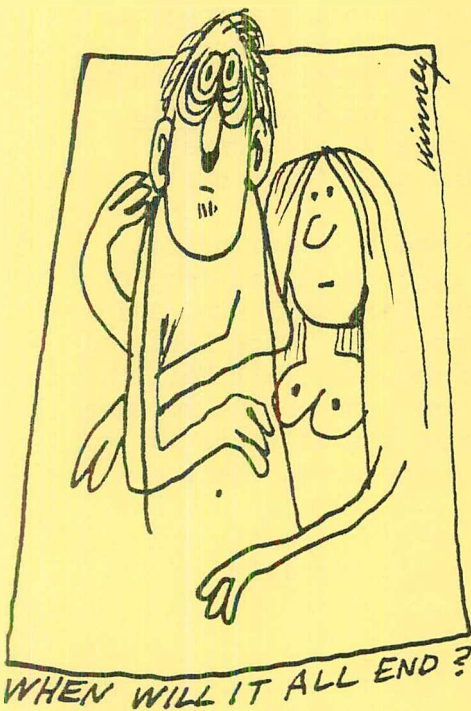
Rumor has it that the place is a "V.A. nursing home" or "half-way house". Possibly. Though it is a mystery to me as to where these poor souls are half-way to or from. All I know is that it's co-ed (wacky WACs?) and distracting as all get out when trying to lie in bed feeling fannish in the morning.

Which of course brings us to BOONFARK #3 from November 1979 (haha). Just kidding. Actually it seems to be from 1977, which was certainly a top fannish year, as I recall, with the Sex Pistols and all. Whatever the case, it was a quite enjoyable read-thru, full of wonder, bristling outrage, and surprise egoboo.

To speak of the latter first, I was genuinely staggered (but not stupored) to read the Hon. Wm. Rotsler's 3 year old letter wherein he slotted me for the 1980 fan artist Hugo. Say, that's this year! Too bad I gafiated soon after he wrote the letter! And now I'm only finding out about it 3 years later. Arrgh. Why, Dan, if I had known of this at the time I might have felt encouraged enough to keep on cranking out illos at full tilt for a couple more years. It wouldn't have done a bit of good, of course, for the Hugos would have still gone to artists who were not "you or me"--but what the heck, who needs awards anyway, right? The only fannish award I ever won was "Best New Fan of 1969" (or whenever it was) and look where that got me!

Which reminds me of the time at the 1979 Minicon when Ken Fletcher (damn that boy) inadvertantly introduced me to Phil Foglio, mumbling his name in the process so that I found myself warmly shaking his hand before I realized what was afoot. Slightly taken aback, I said to Phil, "Say, I know you. Aren't you the guy who's won an award or two?" To which he reposted, "Jay Kinney. Aren't you the guy who hasn't won any awards?"

And that was before BOONFARK #3 had come out. Now the wrongs have been righted. The upstarts upbraided (in scathing manner by Ted no less. Remind me to never get on Ted's shit list!!) and the score has been settled. Grant remains without a Hugo; an old and embittered man, he's just moved into the house next door. Why, I can



hear him in the backyard now, crooning the "Towner Hall Blues" to no one in particular.

Speaking of which, though this "Incompleat Towner Hall" may be an admirable project (perhaps Bergeron can lend a hand?) I must say that I found the first selections a tad, shall we say, "precious"? (And who are these "I"s and "we"s who "must" and "shall" "say" these things, anyway? Beats me.) Where was I?? Yes, in short, those first reprints may give us all a first-hand look at the wry and convoluted social relations of those early Fanoclasts, but all things considered, they seem minor slices of fan-writing compared to the reams of good stuff which remains buried in old twill-tone.

Amongst all this, rich's column (which I had already read in an apa which will remain unnamed) shown forth with genuine, heartfelt sentiment. A very nice piece.

Which finally, brings us to the art in the issue. After the Warner and Schirm letters I can hardly get away without commenting. Good, all of it. I had forgotten all about that jam-cartoon we did, as seems to be the case with most all jam-cartoons I'm involved with. They always take years to be published, for some reason.

And so may this loc. I hope not, but judging from BOONFARK's past schedule I won't bet on it. You know, Dan, you have a good provocative fanzine there, and if only you got it out more often, why then you'd have less time to do professional work! Which is why the world hasn't seen a NOPE since 1973. Funny how that works.

Richard Bergeron 1 West 72nd St. New York, N.Y. 10023

I got BOONFARK and enjoyed it tremendously even though it is hopelessly mired in nostalgia (look who's talking!). But it's so well done: Like XERO's comix material when something is brilliantly done, the subject matter really doesn't. And BOONFARK is doing a service in filling in some details for the great unknowing mass of fandom we are confronted with.

But the real challenge to a contemporary fanzine is to be contemporary: what the fandom of the 80s will need is a fanzine that both timebinds and illuminates the era -- this should come about by finding excellent writers who are relevant to the era and who are ready to build on the traditions and fold memory that is fandom. Impossible? I don't think so... but part of the problem is the daily convention that everyone seems to think it mandatory to attend (or just plain wants to) and the endless round of small invitational apas new fans are swept into, and burn themselves out in, before they even have a chance to see a copy of GRUE, say, or THE VINEGAR WORM. I hope to talk about some of these problems in future WARHOON editorial.

Meanwhile, fandom needs a handful of Basic Books that encapsulate what is best about it. The WASH was conceived as such a document and I have ideas for others that could be more important -- perhaps Victoria Vayne and I will join forces on these someday...

Terry Carr's writing just keeps right on getting more refined, doesn't it? And rich brown was excellent -- and Ted White trenchant as usual. I used to think Ted was the logical successor to FTLaney and the years have done nothing to change that opinion. You're a good editor Dan, but too infrequent!

((I agree that the apas are responsible for a good deal of the drop in promising new writers for genzines. They get into an apa or two and learn to write for that audience, in a style that is more personal and less acceptable for wider circulation. I agree with everything that Alan Bostick said in a recent issue of F&L on the subject.

I also think the idea of fannish source books is an excellent one. Definitely your WARHOON 28 is one of these. I hope to turn the Towner Hall anthology into one, but ghu knows that there is room for a lot more material than is currently available. What do you think of the idea of someone publishing facsimile editions of complete runs of "classic" fanzines? I think complete sets of QUANDRY or OOPSLA! could be done in this format, with less work than was put into the WASH.))

Brad Balfour Somewhere in Paris, France

I'm inclined to launch into my classic diatribe/complaint about fandom as an emotionally adolescent wasteland where so many socially inept people languish in the backwaters for the rest of their lives. But thank ghod for fandom. Because, just during this period where I am reassessing the values I hold dear to me in my life, I think now I came through teenage angst by being in fandom. There was a world created by those with similar socially inept behavior which allows them a place to function unhampered until they're ready to make the step beyond it. But I don't know if your nostalgic wish for the ghod ol' days of fandom are all that appropriate. I wonder whether those good old days weren't reflections of an emotional inversion so convoluted that the little artificial sub-culture it created misappropriated the forms of society at large, preventing some clever people from leaping into the mainstream with full-force.

In some ways the fandom we liked was too easy. Too easy to get lost in, too easy to immerse one's self in. I'm glad fandom today has evolved the hierarchy it has, being the elitist I am, for it forces one to make a significant leap into ranks of prodrom with some real force and capability.

Now wait a minute, I'll step away from that and re-examine it. The new fandom --the huge unweildly monster it is--has bred a large enough subculture to support enough ridiculously inept writers who, as long as they can type "spaceship" and "phaser", get published in Asimov Sci-fi. What a tribute to fandom's success! So really, what I'm saying (to qualify the previous paragraph) is: as the hierarchy has evolved, it has forced the best sf writers to do their best, and make their impact felt not only within fandom or among sf readers but with readers at large.

You see, I'm much more interested in sf than fandom. And even as I write this I realize, I'm not so much interested in the conventions of sf, but in its ambience, and the sheer weight of imagination behind the best sf writing. Its point of view is anthropological encompassing man as a whole. No wonder its writers have in a certain way become heir apparents to many of the legacies of the 60s, where wholistic and intergrated were significant buzz words.

So now, that kicks off a thought which brings me back to the *raison d'etre* for this long-winded reaction: your nostalgic longing for a fandom obviously shunted aside by the present constituency of fandom. So be it. The fandom we knew served the times as we knew them. We had our sub-culture, a sort of distorted mirror of real society set up to reflect back to us meaning when it was hard to find meaning among the Richies and Fonzes of those days. And when the 60s hit, we were able to raise our sub-culture of outsiders to some exalted fools paradise, somehow more understanding and purer than that of the mundane world. We got a taste of planet building in fandom as one would in reading or writing sf. But that, I hope, was something that served the times so that those of us who can, will, take such experience and use it in pursuit of things meaningful. Whatever those may be. Ted doing HEAVY METAL and producing records; Brad trying his hand at novels and the entertainment/glamor world at large; Eileen in writing her plays; Chris Couch in art history;etc. Whatever, fandom was no mere idle pursuit but a pagadigm which fixed itself in our consciousness. Not something to hang onto but to make us as old Mr. Fripp might say: functioning complete small mobile intelligent units. We have it inside us. I can't relate to the nostalgia. And I even can't relate to the things that make me desire setting up a world in which I can collapse.

The fandom I knew was fun, but it also was about walls, not bridges. My outlook now has to be about bridges--bridging the gap between myself and other people's way of understanding the world. The fandom we once knew limited that--but it also gave me a view of the light at the end of the tunnel. I guess I'm still looking for that light.

((I'm not sure that what I'm searching for is nostalgia. My whole approach to fandom of the 80s is one of seeking entertainment. Whereas, fandom in the late 60s (when we discovered it) was a place to feel accepted in our awkward adolescence, fandom of the 80s is a place to pursue marginal interests.

I view this fanzine, and my current participation in fandom, as a means to accomplish certain "artworks". This fanzine is just another piece of my art, (good or bad, I won't say. Hopefully good). But in order to make my fanzine fulfill my criteria of good, I have had to dip into the past a little. Until recently, the state of fandom and fanzines has been something of less value than I would want it. So I figured that the solution to the problem of publishing a 'good' fanzine, is to recruit the 'good' writers from past fannish periods. I let them generate the interest, and I keep my eyes peeled for the newer fans who might be able to fill the shoes of a Terry Carr or a Greg Benford. It isn't worth it to me to publish a fanzine that doesn't meet my personal requirements, and since I want to publish a fanzine, I'll dig up these old gaffs and resurrect their participation; if for no other reason than to please myself. I'll be damned if I'm going to be nostalgic for my pimples and virginity.))

Ted White 1014 N. Tuckahoe St. Falls Church, VA 22047

I'm moderately fantisted by the idea of an "Incompleat Towner Hall"--although I have very fond memories of the old place, it strikes me as a little odd that someone who was never there should think so highly of it as to immortalize (or mummify) it in this fashion. But I'm not complaining!

Terry Carr's introduction makes good reading but the nearly twenty years that have elapsed has erased some details from his memory, and consequently there are a few errors in his account.

Towner Hall (originally Metropolitan Mimeo) was at 163-A W. 10th St., in the Village, just north-east of Seventh Avenue and a little uptown (by a block) of Sheridan Square. The space--a basement--had previously been used by a restaurant which had some pretty strange clientele, if those who dropped by looking for it were anything to go by. (Now a Chinese restaurant occupies the same space...) This basement extended back under about two-thirds of the building above (the remainder, I assume, was given over to a furnace and the usual things one finds in the basement of a building), and was divided down the middle by a hallway that terminated in a front door (under the steps to the front door above at street level), and which led at the other end to the rest of the basement (the part we had nothing to do with).

On the left side of the hallway was the main part of the mimeo shop, and what had been the customer-seating-area of the restaurant. This was a long room which went all the way back to a small bathroom. It had its own front door, which is what we customarily used as the entrance. Originally I rented this room by itself. On the other side of the hall--the right side--was an equal space divided into two rooms, front and back, each with its own door onto the hallway. The door to the rear room faced another door across the hallway which opened into the main room, making it easy to go from that room to the rear room. The rear room had last been used as the kitchen of the restaurant and was covered with a thick coating of grease, all over the floors, walls and ceiling. All the stoves, etc., had been removed. The front room was in a worse state of disrepair, having apparently not been used for anything for many years. I subsequently rented both these rooms for a moderate increase in the total rent.

I originally set up the rear room as a room to socialize in, with a sofa, chairs, a bed or two, a TV set, etc. When people stayed at Towner Hall on a live-in basis, they used that room. People who lived there included Walter Breen (when he was in NYC), Andy Main, Richard Wingate, and perhaps others. No one ever lived in the front room.

It was the front room that I originally rented out. But not to Robert Bashlow--who had been instrumental in helping me find the place and financing it--here Terry is in error. The room was rented to another individual whose name I no longer remember. This fellow was a mutual friend of Bashlow's and mine, a former coin dealer who was then engaged in importing elastic straps (the kind used to hold things onto the backs of bikes and motorscooters) from Italy. He needed a place to store his

merchandise, and it was for that purpose that I rented him the front room, which I had to clean up a lot first. Alas, he not only failed to pay his rent, he also used my phone (instead of his own, which he had installed) and ultimately he broke in during the dead of night to sneak his stock out after I'd changed the locks on him (after he'd become several months in arrears on the rent). Good riddance. Later I let Walter Breen store a lot of his stuff in that room.

I want to emphasize that this miscreant was not Robert Bashlow, with whom I continued to have a friendly relationship, becoming his personal secretary in 1962 for a period of several months.

Terry misremembers the fanzines we published there, too. It may have been that we put out only three VOIDS after Terry's arrival in NYC--I don't recall the exact number now--but they weren't all that "big", since I kept them under (or at) the 2 oz. weight limit for postage reasons. Originally this meant around twenty pages, but I discovered I could use 14-pound second sheets (then selling for around 75¢-90¢ a ream) and increase the number of pages to around thirty. We decided to do V28 on white 20# stock and go over the 2 oz. limit, however, making use of color (mimeographed) for that issue. That was the issue with the five-page cover by Bob Stewart, Steve Stiles and me, and it was the last to be published at Towner Hall.

If there were three issues of LIGHTHOUSE published during the period Terry remembers, then there were only three NULL-Fs (not six) as well, since both fanzines were FAPazines, published for FAPA's quarterly mailings. We rarely missed a mailing in those days. (There were also some SAPSazines which Terry put out--HOBGOBLIN? I did a column for that, too.)

I gave up Towner Hall because a) the mimeo business wasn't supporting it, and b) it had become such a hangout for NYC fandom that it was becoming a considerable burden on me. Not only did people regard it as a place to stay, fan, hang out, etc., but they seemed to think that I owed it to them. None offered to help with the rent, although some, like Terry, treated it as their office (Terry wrote all his early stories for F&SF there during the morning hours before the rest of us straggled in). My phone bill was enormous (I put a lock on the phone, but that didn't help--they learned how to "dial" using the on-off buttons in the cradle), and trash mounted up at an alarming rate. (I used to complain about the way people left their trash lying about, but no one could be bothered to even put their food-wrappings, etc., in the trash baskets. Walter Breen was the worst in this regard.) Basically, an average of half a dozen people were making regular use of the place without shouldering any of the responsibilities for keeping the place up. I enjoyed the fannish aspects of the place as much as anyone, but I couldn't take the hassles, nor afford the bills. A year after taking the place, I gave it up and moved to Brooklyn, consolidating Towner Hall's equipment with my apartment there.

Terry and I had started V29 before I moved to Brooklyn, and we worked on it for a time after that. I have vague memories of running off some pages for it during the summer of 1962 in Brooklyn. Both of us were getting more heavily into pro-ac; we collaborated on three short stories that summer (all of which sold), and Terry started working for Scott Meredith around then.

It is not true that "Arnie Katz and John Berry found the stencils in Ted's files" in 1969, either. (The actual date was in very late 1968, to begin with.)

What happened was that I threw a party that fell between Christmas, 1968 and New Years Eve, over that weekend. John Berry was in from the West Coast and during the party the subject of VOID 29 came up. I told them that I had run off some of it and had some of the rest on stencil and the remainder in my files. Borne by the enthusiasms of the moment, I dug all the material up (it was all in one place, more or less, and I knew where it was) and we looked at it and decided to finish it up and put it out that weekend. Which we did. I wrote Greg's editorial for the issue--there being no time to get one from him--making up the first half and re-writing the second half from an older VOID editorial with up-dated references substituted.

Since we no longer had a valid mailing-list (six years had elapsed since V28), we gave the run-off copies of the issue to Arnie Katz to be mailed out with his QUIP.

That was the last I heard of it. Some people got copies, but many complained that they didn't. We never got a single letter of comment. I've always suspected that Arnie kept most of the copies for himself...

It made me uneasy to re-read my piece from LIGHTHOUSE from 1961, but as much because I remembered the way I'd felt when I wrote it as anything. Terry and Pete put me on the defensive then; I felt myself to be always in danger of being one-upped, and I strove very hard not to let that happen. (But if you read between the lines of Terry's companion piece from the same LIGHTHOUSE, you'll note that it happened anyway.)

We hated Pete's piece when he wrote it--everyone concerned thought they'd been slandered--but looking back on it from 1980 it's obvious to me that he caught the poetic truth if not the literal truth of Towner Hall very well. That is indeed much the way things were, although not all of the time.

My favorite memory from Towner Hall days is this one:

Andy Main and Les Gerber were (along with Steve Stiles and Andy Reiss) among the younger fans who hung out at Towner Hall, and from time to time Terry or I would turn to whichever one of them was handy and ask, "How'd you like to make a BNF happy?"

This was a well-understood signal that we were thirsty and wanted a Pepsi or a beer from the little shop across the street. It was a good-humored and not that condescending request; we paid the cost of the Pepsis (or beers), and usually Les (or Andy) was quite willing to run the brief errand for us. After a while, "How'd you like to make a BNF happy?" became a tag-line, good for a wide variety of situations, and it was the one catch-phrase which originated at Towner Hall and was not imported from California.

((There seems to be some debate about whether those luggage straps belonged to Bashlow or not. If you read Bhob's piece earlier in the issue, you'll notice that he has definite memories of Bashlow's ownership of the straps. I would venture to guess that your memories are the correct ones (seeing as you were the proprietor of Towner Hall), but then again I have to take in effect all those brain cells of yours that have been burned away by years of drugs. I don't know...does anyone else have any idea of who really owned them?))

Dave Locke 2813 #2 De Mel Ave. Louisville, KY 40214

You know, there's comments in your lettercol about how hard or embarrassing or uninspiring it is to comment on fan art. Nonsense. This would be an easy thing to do.

Your cover, for example. Any fool can plainly see that this theme has never been treated so expertly in fan art. I challenge anyone to show me a fanzine with a better rendition of a robot horsefucking a duck with tits. Or even without tits. There just is none better done than this magnificent collaboration between two of fandoms more renowned fan-artists and certified weirdos. But that's all objective and obvious commentary. Subjectively speaking, I haven't



seen a cover this amusing since the one Grant did for AWRY #8 in December '74. You know, the one with the naked female devil climbing up the body of a naked troll. I mean, this is what good fanzines are all about. If I'd gotten a cover like the one you two guys did, this could be AWRY #11 instead of BOONFARK #3.

Of course, the similarity would stop at the cover. I'd never, for example, spend 2 2/3 pages of a 31/2 page editorial telling everyone that fanzine fandom smells like a ripe turkey fart, even if I believed it, which I do, and then right in public don a cape, put my jockey shorts over my trousers, and announce that I would fight for thruth, justice, and the faanish way. I might aim to do that, but I sure wouldn't say so. Easy, old shoe. You're not the Katz or MacDonald type and, though you didn't really make a press release about publishing a Good Example, there was a whiff of that. You're also not the Bowers type, to confuse a prolix announcement of policy for an implementation of policy, but you were leaning in that direction.

Ted White said it all right on page 27. "appropriate to the spirit of fannishness, something that could not be taken too seriously."

Any day now you will be called to a hearing to discuss charges of taking fannishness too seriously. You may get off, but it will be to your advantage to enhance your case with a mild swerve in editorial direction. Evidence that you have been too sercon in bemoaning the scarcity of fannishness can be offset by fannish writing in future editorials. Otherwise, you see, they'll nail you for sure if you take the part of Judith Crist doing introductions for MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS.

But, you know, as much as I enjoyed thish (ah!), except for the Graham reprint which was a pointless downer (the worst kind of downer, I guess), it's not so much fannishness as it is fannish fanhistory. Reprints and remembrances and slightly out-of-date material is what it is, and it's good and I enjoyed it. If you want fannishness, though, you could gather up Ted and Terry and rich and the gang and say, hey, we did a good job in memory flogging the past, now what say we whip up a little wit and style and direct it at some of the amusing things that we begin tripping over as soon as we get out of bed in the morning. Even if someone takes that too literally, and you get a three-page article on the problem of waking with a hangover and finding two socks of the same color, you can't lose.

((Gee Dave, great minds in the gutter together. My editorial for this issue deals with most of your observations about my ardent fannishness. (even though I haven't written it yet) Basically, I was just trying to say, "the buck stops here". When putting together last issue I knew I had to state my policy about fanzines as a starting point for this current and frequent incarnation of BNF. By the way, Dave, when can I expect that article from you about waking with a hangover? As far as socks go, may I suggest buying them all in one color. Saves ever so much time, and you don't even have to open your eyes.))

W*A*H*F: Michael Dobson, who said: "I was confused by your comment that "getting an issue of the WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG is about as much fun as an enema." This can be easily misconstrued; I suspect that many fans would, indeed, enjoy getting an enema even more than getting the WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG. Possibly much more." John D. "Heself" Berry, who quipped: "'Mr. Spock is still in the tree," said Eileen. Mr. Spock is a kite who has been caught outside our window for weeks. Won't somebody please beam him down?" Flushing Chairman Stu Shiffman, also added: "The cover was splendid, Tho I had to keep it under cover while at my parents this past weekend. My great-Aunt Adele was there, and old jewish ladies from Miami simply do not understand." And Dick Lupoff of the Berkeley Lupoffs wrote to say he wasn't going to write: "But as a consolation prize, I hereby present you with a Sneak Preview of CIRCUMPOLAR! The first paragraph of page 150 (ms. page, of course; typesetting is another matter): "Well, then?" Hughes's face darkened with anger. "What do you want to do? Crawl out of here and surrender? Not me, palsy! I'll go down fighting first!" Now (the critic emerging over the author for a moment), if the "Palsy" addressed is a very thoughtful kind of person, does that make him a cerebral palsy?" That's it -djs

the enchanted duplicator

BY BOB SHAW & WALT WILLIS

Once upon a time in the village of *PROSAIC* in the country of *MUNDANE* there lived a youth called *JOPHAN*.

CHAPTER ONE:

IN WHICH THE SPIRIT OF FANDOM APPEARS TO

Now this youth was unhappy, because in all the length and breadth of *MUNDANE* there was no other person with whom he could talk...

Or who shared the strange longings that perplexed his mind and which no *MUNDANE* pleasure could wholly satisfy...

Each day as *JOPHAN* grew nearer to manhood he felt more strongly that life should be something more than *MUNDANE* offered...

And he took to reading strange books that told of faraway places and other times.



adapted & drawn by *dan STEFFAN*

The people of *PROSAIC* mocked him, saying that the things described in his books could never come to pass...



And that it was as foolish to think of them as to aspire to climb the great mountains that surround the country of *MUNDANE*.



The mighty peaks that hemmed in *MUNDANE* were ever present in *JOPHAN*'s thoughts, for since childhood he had loved to look at them and wonder what lay on the other side.

In late summer, he even fancied that he heard happy voices singing, borne over the mountains by the summer breeze. The people laughed at him. Even if someone could climb these impassable mountains there was nothing on the other side except howling wastes fit only for madmen and savages.

JOPHAN believed them, for they seemed older and wiser than he...

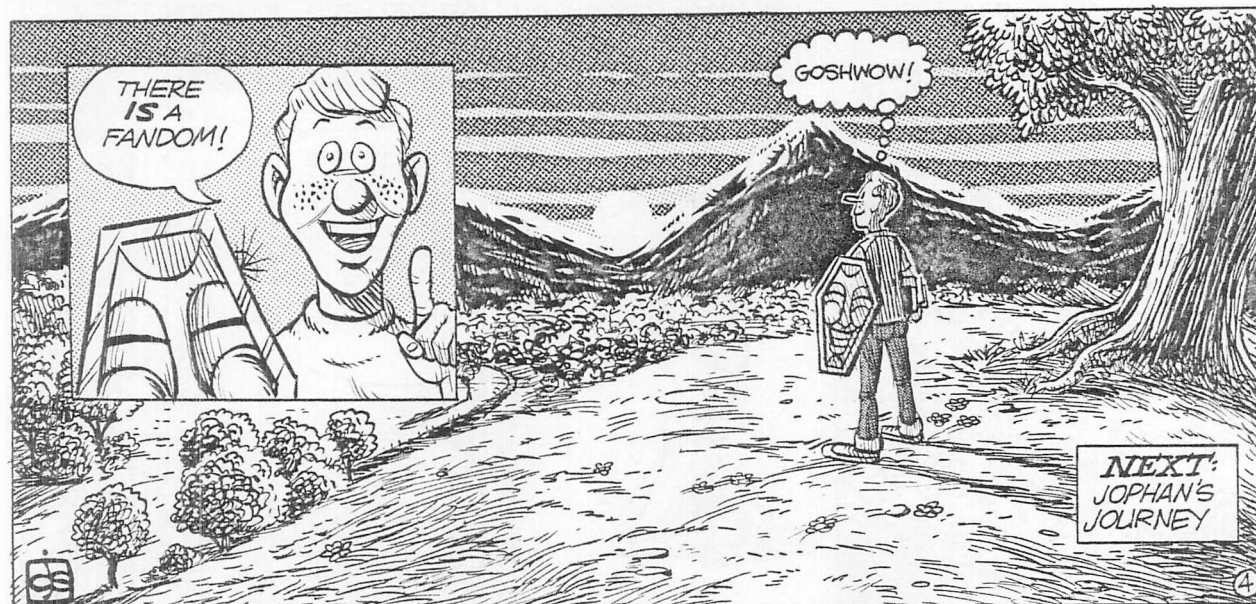


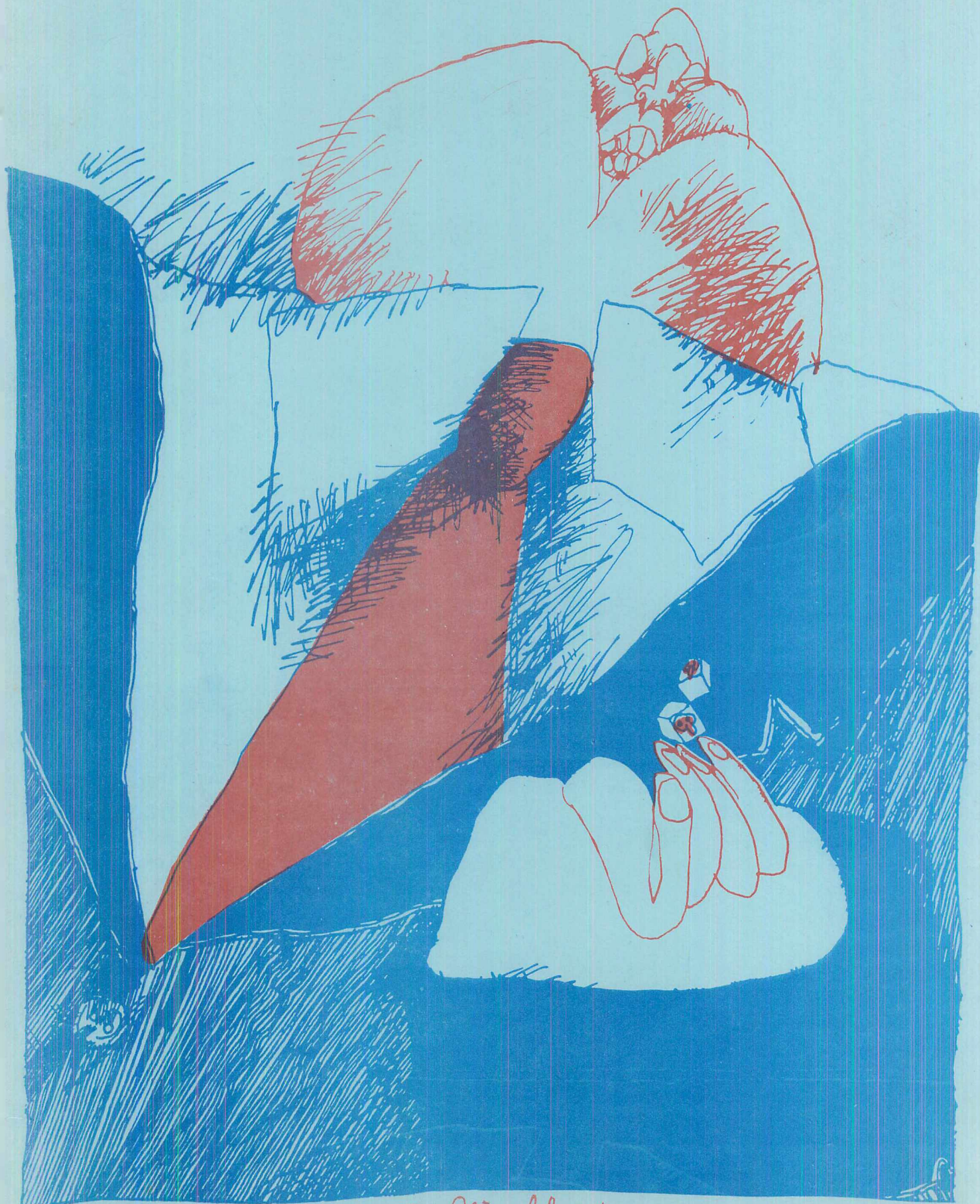
but he still read the strange books, and in the long evenings of summer he would go into the fields and read until nightfall...



Now one day while reading in a cornfield, the drowsy fragrance of the corn lulled him to sleep. In his sleep he dreamed that a fairy came to him...







2. flinchbaugh