

# CONFAB

May 31, 1954

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"The Fan-Dads' Gazette"

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Bob Peatrowsky

\*\* Box 634

\*\* Norfolk, Nebr.  
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NORMAN BROWNE, 33 Lyonsgate Dr., Wilson Heights, Toronto, Ontario

I am fascinated by all this talk and discussion about Fan-Dads and Fan-Grandads. Unfortunately, I am neither of these. But, and this is most important, I am old enough and capable of becoming one. How many other fans can make this claim?

In view of the fact that Fandom's lines of communications are mostly letters and fanzines, I am of the opinion that mental age and not physical age is the deciding factor. A lot of these so-called adult fans have a mental age that is less than their physical age. But then this also applies to a lot of the younger group who act their age. In the case of Joel Wydahl and Dave Ish, you have a mental age that far exceeds their physical age. And what about Pohl or was it Wolheim who edited a prozine when he was a mere 19 years of age?

I've read a lot of letters and material by fans who by their writings gave me the impression that they were a lot older than they really were. In fact, I am usually startled when I find the truth. I was also startled when I learned the age of you and Geis, for I always assumed you were much younger.

I, personally, am only a mere 22 years of age and have been reading stf for only seven years. And I am not and never have been a confirmed Spinster. Though I have been confirmed.....

You and I must bear in mind that there is nothing new in fandom. I came up with the original idea for FILLER not knowing that the idea had been thought of and been discussed before. You come up with the original idea of a fannish who's Who not knowing that the idea had been originated before. Practically every conceivable idea has been thought up by fans, though only a small percentage of them ever see reality. FILLER would have never become a reality if it hadn't been for the encouragement and help, both financial and material-wise of Dean A. Grennell.

I need at least 500 items before I can print FILLER #2 so any help you or your readers can give me along that line will be greatly appreciated. I might add that the same rules apply for this issue as did the first. 12 or more accepted items gets you a free copy. 50 or more items and you are an associate editor. Items can be either original or reprints. All items must list the originator and the source. Items need not be either fannish or funny - though these types are desired. Length is limited to 5 lines, though I won't adhere to that rule strictly in case of exceptional items

((Attention, fandom! \* A second issue of FILLER is in the

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\* to be careful?

making.))

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"Your zine arrived and snapped me out of a semi-gaffiac condition."  
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HARLAN ELLISON, 41 E. 17, Columbus 1, Ohio

My contribution for CONFAB this time. Small, but perhaps of passing interest to one or two folks. Been so busy with school work and developing DIMENSIONS (I still haven't abbreviated it), that any topics in CONFAB I'd really enjoy teeing off on are sadly outside my reach. But...

The fan-readership may be mildly innervated to find out that after all these years of writing for fanzines, apprenticing himself to the ranks, and hoping over hope to seriously be a writer (I neglected the capital "W"---forgive me), I'm taking the step. In the next few weeks, after the MidwestCon, I'm moving to New York, permanently, to Write. I was in NYC about three weeks ago, and while there penned a short story entitled Gnomebody which Algis Budrys considered good enough to market for me. So I now have a marketer---AJ is not an agent, and wants it known that he has no desire to be, though once he almost was one, handling the work of himself and Jerry Bixby, with whom he lived for a stretch---and the story is now in the hands of Horace BEYOND Gold for use in aforementioned fantasy publication. IT HAS NOT YET BEEN SOLD! LET'S GET THAT STRAIGHT NOW! GET IT? NO RUMORS OTHERWISE! IT IS UNSOLD AS YET! Wheeeeew!

So that's the pitch. My address will change to someplace in NYC sometime by June, and I'll keep all in fandom informed, of those who give a damn where I am hiding.

I will continue publication of DIMENSIONS for as long as it doesn't interfere with my writing. Need I mention that College held nothing for me. And what I wished to get out of it was nowhere to be found.

Such an enigma.

DIMENSIONS has a tremendous article by Damon Knight coming up, among the other manuscripts recently solicited. Also a dandy Willis ms. which appears to be styled after someone named Spillane.

What's that? Why doesn't DIMENSIONS get Spillane? Hmmm, now that you mention it...

((Bestest to you on your Writing, but doesn't that make DIMENSIONS' future sound a bit uncertain now, considering recent announcements? Ah, fandom...))

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"I ain't got Gnomebody..."  
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BOB TUCKER, P. O. Box 702, Bloomington, Illinois

Happily for you, CONFAB continues to give every indication of being a sempiternal fan-fan zine, in that every issue carries within itself the seeds of the following issue. Such as this:

In one fell swoop I can lay to rest a large part of the question now arising concerning the ages of fans, and also your own



brilliant idea of compiling a Who's Who of fandom complete with pertinent data. It has been done before of course; few things consistently appearing in fandom haven't been tried before. The earliest effort which I recall was a Who's Who published by Ted Dikty and Fred Shroyer about twelve or more years ago. Although I can't remember the size and scope of the project, it was large for its time and may have consisted of a hundred or more names. But a really superhuman effort to publish such a roster was done less than four years ago by Len Moffatt, of California, in a printed booklet entitled "1950 Fan Directory".

This booklet lists some four hundred odd fans in England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Australia, Canada and the States; lists them geographically and then cross-indexes them alphabetically. Where each person cooperated by furnishing data, the fan's name is followed by his address, phone number, sex, birthdate, and club affiliations. Hardly three and a half years later many of the names listed have already faded away into nothingness, but on the other hand hundreds are still with us. Moffatt did not choose to ekkp this book up to date because of the task-- I understand the entire book was handset, printed and bound....thirty-six pages. His address, in case anyone wants to try for a copy at this late date, is 5969 Lanto St., Bell Gardens, Calif. I'm not sure but I think the price was a dollar.

You'll forgive me if I respectfully decline to sit down now and run through those four hundred names searching for old men; although I am aware, just by scanning pages, that many people were born earlier than twenty-five years ago. In the California section alone are fifty people who are twenty-five or older. Of those names mentioned in Mittelbuscher's letter, the Directory gives the following birthdates:

Walter Willis: 1919

W. Paul Ganley: 1934

Jim Bradley: no date

The remaining names mentioned are either too new or were somehow skipped (or neglected to answer) in the original survey. Nor is the fair name of Boggs to be found there, in case some dastardly villain sought to run him down. The booklet is well worth getting ... if you can obtain a copy.

The ages of fans (as well as all related information) have long fascinated other fans, and I suppose it was Jack Speer in the middle 1930's who first began surveying the fan world around him. While living in Oklahoma, and later, he circulated a series of post-card polls seeking data from fans; most of these results were later published in a Philadelphia fanzine. Later on, Art Widner gained a measure of fan-fame by becoming known as the poll-king; you could even expect one of his questionnaires to turn up under your pillow at night. I played around with the idea two or three times while publishing LE ZOMBIE, and again in 1948 while preparing a paper for the Toronto Convention of that year. My early LE ZOMBIE polls were concerned with such things as top fans, top fanzines, top prcs, and so forth. Later on, about 1942, I branched out by asking the occupation and age.

Sixty-four people answered that one, with the ages ranging from fourteen through forty-eight; the occupations ranging from student through coca cola salesman. In general, the greatest grouping fell

between twenty and thirty years of age; there were five men above thirty-five. For the Toronto Convention I launched a really ambitious project by mailing out nearly five hundred questionnaires asking every possible question which remained within the bounds of good taste. And one or two that weren't, including a somewhat delicately-worded query as to whether or not the fan indulged in sexual activities. The response was quite heavy and of such a nature that I was able to prepare a lengthy paper-- It probably took me the better part of an hour to read it and discourse on the statistics thereby revealed.

Following the Convention, a group of Canadians published a convention magazine which included the full survey and its results, plus all the charts and graphs which had been prepared to better illustrate the same. This was the Torcon Booklet. I'm sorry that I can't quote from it here, but it is buried somewhere in my unpacked junk. If you're interested in discovering ages, habits, more and morals of that day, you might root around to see if copies are available.

So much for that. In response to another line of discussion, let me confess that I am perilously close to becoming both a father and a grandmother. My oldest offspring, a daughter, is well on her way to eighteen and is of course going steady; they are furiously saving money for some unannounced but quite obvious plans they hold for the near future. I expect to wake up some morning in the next couple of years and discover myself a grandmother ... even though the rest of your gentlemen never make it. My youngest offspring, sex still unknown, should be along about the first of August. If I could somehow arrange matters so that I could become a parent and a grandparent on the same day, I feel sure I would get my name in the papers.

The following notoriety would probably cause me to launch a new fanzine.

((Apparently there's nothing new under the fannish sun, either. Perhaps the most original fan-project nowadays would be a contest to see who could come up with the most original fan-project.))

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"Can't we scotch these puns about wry-rye?"  
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RICHARD E. GEIS, 2631 N. Mississippi, Portland 12, Oregon

This discussion of MAD and PANIC is interesting, because I am slowly but surely becoming indifferent to those estimable mags. I should say it was a result of the law of diminishing returns asserting itself.

When I first saw a copy of MAD I thought it the most terrific and wonderful thing in the world at the time. I couldn't get enough of it. Honestly, I had the giggles for days after he-hawing my way through a copy. It was new, it was startling, it was fresh and original. In an excess of enthusiasm I subscribed and joined the fan addict club. I am now a chapter president. (Bow low from the waist, fellows.)

But now their type of humor is beginning to pall on me quite a



bit. I no longer laugh out loud when I read a copy. Oh, once or twice I'll chuckle and perhaps laugh maybe once, but the thrill is gone. Mostly my lips curl in a smile. Once in a while I even sneer. The truth seems to be that Bill Elder is about the only artist who can really amuse me anymore. I find, too, that most of the things they present are dreadfully repitative of former items. They have about reached the bottom of material that is safe to satirize. To me the mags seem to be going downhill; they reached their peak before they became the nationally known mags they are now. But then I am disenchanted.

Regarding the appalling ignorance of religious doctrine that G. M. Carr talks of in relationship to CHILDHOOD'S END: I'm inclined to think it a good thing. It irritates me no end the way she goes on to speak of the triumph of the human soul over the animal body which contains it, the punishment of Satan, and this business of the Beatific Vision. She speaks quite matter of factly as if all these were accepted facts and not in the least moot. To me and many others they are very moot indeed.

And that calm and at the same time infuriating assumption of truth and actuality is what makes arguing religion with a religious person so damned frustrating. These people won't for a minute, even for the sake of hypothetical and objective discussion, speak of God and such as even possibly without existence. Every statement they make is based on the foregone and concrete realness of what is in dispute.

In fact, it is all but impossible for a religious person to be objective with respect to his religious beliefs. They know instinctively that if once they view religion in relation to the world and the social realities, and compare their beliefs with those of the Australian Bushman, that their whole tidy mental fortress is in danger of blowing up in their face. They've identified themselves and tied themselves so strongly to these beliefs that to admit even the tiniest bit of contrary evidence is enough to shake their whole life. So they don't admit that tiny bit no matter what. Their ego would never admit they had been wrong on such an important thing. Must protect that ego at all costs.

And when you get old and close to death it becomes even more important to preserve that place in heaven. Death is so utterly final, and most people simply cannot stand the thought of final extinction; of utter and inevitable END. They cling to the promise of an afterlife like to a life preserver in the sea. They fool themselves to the very end. And this fear of the black finality of death is what makes even the strongest of us embrace God when we know we are about to die. Deathbed conversions.

And if it weren't that religions promise a life after death, a heaven (and even hell is better than nothing), I don't believe there would be religions.

((We seem to have finally come upon a subject on which we disagree, Dick---religion. Seems to me that the non-religious person is just as set in his ways as you say the religious person is, and neither side is willing to give in. Wouldn't the deathbed conversions be a bit stronger argument for the religious side rather than against it? If a person's beliefs are strong enough to carry him through life, they should

be strong enough to carry him through death too. And how would it profit a non-believer to embrace religion on his deathbed? if he doesn't actually believe in a life hereafter? The life-after-death that did not exist during his life would not come into being merely because he professed to believe in it on his deathbed. And if it exists at his death, it also existed during his life while he disclaimed it. The hereafter doesn't come into being or vanish at the whim of the individual. It either exists or it does not exist. If it does not exist, as the non-believer professes, then what good would it do him to suddenly accept religion on his deathbed? As for hell being better than nothing after death--I dunno, that ain't the way I heard it.))

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 "Putting out a fanzine is a drain and a strain."  
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REDD BOGGS, 2215 Benjamin St. N.E., Minneapolis 18, Minn.

After the nice things Gregg Calkins said about SKYHOOK, I ought to say "Oh gosh!" and draw circles in the dust with my bare toe, but I feel constrained to comment on Gregg's discussion of FAPA. Gregg is of course welcome to his own opinion, but I hate to think of various prospects being scared off by Gregg's report. He is right in one thing, anyway: the life of the organization depends upon the new blood we regularly acquire. Members eventually lose interest and drop out, and of course any group can be improved by new and eager recruits. Nevertheless, I think Gregg is a lot more sour than the present situation deserves.

Check a few points: Hoffman is fading away? I just got an advance peek at a 16-page fapazine she was readying for the May mailing, and in recent mailings she's published some wonderful items like HARLEQUINADE, THE POLAROID DIARY, and others. Non-FAPAns have no inkling of numerous facets of the Hoffman personality. Burbee hasn't been so active of late, but had a pageful of gaglines in the February mailing that was gutsplitting. Burbee couldn't write a "humorless page" if he tried.

I don't know what Gregg means about my "retreat into FAPA". I "retreated" into FAPA within a year of my return to fandom after the war and I've been there ever since. I'm still as interested in outside fandom as I ever was, and am almost as active therein as I ever was, except for brief periods, but FAPA has always been my chief interest and I expect it will always be. I don't regret a moment I've spent in the club, either. In fact, I pity those who haven't been fapans over these past seven years, as I have. They've missed so much!

After all, 95% of the fabulous output of Burbee and Laney appeared in FAPA during these seven years -- including AH, SWEET IDIOCY! and WILD HAIR, which are almost legendary by now. The major contributions of such famous fans as Jack Speer, Richard Eney, Lee Jacobs, Milt Rothman, Harry Warner, and many others, have appeared in FAPA or SAPS, rather than in subscription fanzines. Warner's HORIZONS, probably the oldest fanzine of all time, is worth the



price of membership in itself. And such fans who've edited important subzines, as Lee Hoffman, Walt Willis, Norman Browne, Joe Kennedy, and Bob Tucker, have contributed equally important fanzines to FAPA -- items which most of their subscribers never saw. Tucker's CHAPTER-PLAY, entirely written by Tuck, is -- in my estimation -- better than SFNL.

As I write this, the May mailing should be about ready for posting. I don't know what's in it, aside from the above-mentioned Hoffmannzine, and a 50-page GRUE from DAG, and 26-page SKYHOOK, but I look forward to reading it as I look forward to nothing else in fandom. You see, I like to read fapazines!

((Since all my opinions of the organization are based on heresay, I'm staying out of this one.))

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"I heartily endorse my own words of wisdom."  
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VERNON L. MCCAIN, Box 876, Kellogg, Idaho

It looks like Gregg Calkins didn't know what he was requesting when he asked for a McCain column for OOPSLA. Gregg and I seem to be landing invariably on opposite sides of every question nowadays. I've already written columns for him panning MAD and praising CHILDHOOD'S END. (Both written before I knew his views, incidentally.) Maybe I should now do one telling what a marvelous organization FAPA is and just how you go about getting on the waiting list.

At the risk of sounding both supercilious and superior, may I suggest that perhaps Gregg is not yet ready for FAPA? You do not join FAPA in order to find fellow worshippers at the shrine of science-fiction. Many FAPAns are ex-actifens who have long since vanished from the fannish scene otherwise....this does not indicate FAPA is decaying....it is just a sign of the group's true worth in that people who can no longer be bothered with the rest of fandom's institutions still find FAPA worth-while. A certain amount of cynicism and disillusion toward science-fiction is a prerequisite for successful FAPA membership. It's not for the goshwowboyoboy crowd. I think, on the average, FAPA is far more mature, in topics discussed, in depth of penetration, in age and development of the members than any other fannish group, even the readership of CONFAB. FAPA is, in a sense, a step beyond fandom. It has some indifferent members of course. The membership rules are designed to eliminate these..... not as rapidly as in SAPS, but still eliminated they get. That the average FAPAn is indifferent, inactive, and sluggish can be easily disproved. Look at any mailing. Practically every magazine is produced by someone who goes well over their activity requirements. FAPAns are old hands who have learned to pace their activity. FAPAns don't, for the most part, indulge in frantic activity a la the neofen. Super-production is the sign of the inexperienced fan who quickly burns himself out unless he learns to restrict his activity to a reasonable amount. (Here, as elsewhere, Boggs is the sole exception to the rule. Boggs who has no known age, no known occupation ((although I once hear a rumor he worked on a newspaper))

and no family except for one casual reference to a sister, I sometimes suspect of being a robot placed among us as a spy for members of the Galactic Federation, since he violates so many established rules of conduct). I had three magazines, totalling 45 pages, in the last mailing but I assure you it was a freak occurrence which is unlikely to ever occur again. 8 to 20 pages per mailing is my speed, and one I find quite satisfactory. The worthwhile zines (which regularly win the polls) appear regularly and in large quantities and are, for the most part the product of FAPA longtimers such as Harry Warner, Redd Boggs and Les Croutch. A comparative newcomer to the golden circle is Bill Danner who joined three and a half years ago, after many years in VAPA. It's rare for a newcomer to produce anything of much worth, Lee Hoffman and Dean Grennell being noticable exceptions. Incidentally, I rather doubt Gregg's statement that he "remember(s) the Hoffmania spread from one end of the mailing to the other when she first joined". Lee was a member of FAPA a year and a half before Gregg joined, as I recall, and I know she was a member for six months before Gregg first became active in fandom. Of course maybe he purchased old mailings somewhere, a surprising extravagance for anybody with such a low opinion of the group. Actually Hoffman's highly active period didn't commence until the fall of 1951 and ended about a year later at the same time that she dropped 90% of her other fannish activities. But note that Lee, like so many other fans, clings to FAPA after she's dropped the rest.

This isn't meant as a recruiting letter for FAPA. As far as I'm concerned FAPA is one of the privileges of fandom which one grows up to. FAPA accepts you, not vice versa. If Gregg decides to drop from FAPA there's a long waiting list full of people who will jump at the chance to take his place. It now takes six to nine months to get in. FAPA and SAPS are unique in fandom in that they owe nothing to their members. Their members from the moment they join have obligations to the club which they must meet if they are to remain members, unlike the N5F which promises everything to a large quiescent membership and then has trouble when half a dozen active people try to deliver, FAPA doesn't promise a damn thing. And with this policy the individual member actually receives more than from any other group, with the possible exception of SAPS, with its even more stringent policy.

Had three or four other topics I meant to comment on but since you appear to be printing entire letters maybe I'd better stop right here, having spent so much space on the FAPA topic, or CONFAB will become a 30 page zine this issue.

((There's danger of CONFAB outgrowing its ~~10/10/52~~ pages anyhow this issue, Vernon, even though you have limited your self to one topic. When I first started CONFAB I had doubts of drawing enough letters to make up succeeding issues, but now I have doubts of getting everything that I want into a reasonable number of pages. # And I'm still staying out of the discussion of FAPA as I have no first hand info on the subject.))

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 "I'm the type who wants a feud -- as long as I'm not in it."  
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NORBERT HIRSCHHORN, 853 Riverside Dr., New York 32, N. Y.

Oh hell, I expected some sort of controversy but not Grennell's type of letter. I wrote that, as you remember, to help out a little. I'd appreciate it if you would explain in CONFAB why I wrote the letter and the fact that you took it out of context. Please save my fannish reputation.

I've never denied I was a teenager. My best friends, both in and out of fandom are teenagers. I've read several copies of MAD and some of PANIC. Some of the earlier issues were good, and some of the latest ones.

I still think current fandom is not as mature as previous ones, and I did note, I think, that VEGA and SF were pubbed by teenagers (maybe Grennell missed it or I didn't include it).

I don't want any feuds -- especially when I'm outclassed by someone like Grennell.

If you manage to print this letter, please print it in its entirety -- not out of context.

Think I'll write to Grennell and patch up a few fences.

((To save Bert's fannish reputation, I must admit that I printed his letter in a previous issue out of context as he says. This was the situation: Bert wrote saying that he thought CONFAB needed a good feud to stir up interest in the mag and then proceeded to state his controversy, which was the part of his letter that I printed. He closed the letter with a remark to the effect that said controversy should rouse some of the Seventh Fandomers in the crowd. I printed only the controversy. I don't know how I could have handled it differently. To my way of thinking, it was a matter of either printing just the controversy or not print the letter at all, as the parts both before and after the controversy gave the whole thing away. The controversy drew very little comment, and in Grennell's case, not the type that Bert wanted. I don't know how much of the controversy was Bert's honest opinion and how much was said merely to draw comment. But this I do know -- No more "faked" letters will be printed. In my opinion, they seldom draw the intended response and that which they do draw isn't worth the trampled egos and apologies which follow. Sorry if I unintentionally printed the thing other than you had intended, Bert. Hope this will straighten out everyone concerned.))

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"...the only fanzines I grab and eagerly devour in order to get  
the latest undiluted dose of the real fandom..."  
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NAAMAN PETERSON, 880 Burwell St., Bremerton, Wash.

...3-D is not on the way out. I think it has merely reached it's level and will continue to be with us for a long time. CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON seems to have done pretty well all over the country and for pictures of this type, the horror type, and blud and thunder pics, the 3-D media is unexcelled.

Pics that have derived no betterment from 3-D have naturally

hurt it.

I only hope somewhat the same does not happen to Cinema-scope-- that we won't have too many pics that draw huge crowds simply because of high pressure advertising, and send them away disappointed. One recent Scoper has had huge boxoffice success and I doubt very much that the majority of persons who saw it liked it. I contribute it's success at the boxoffice to extensive ballyhooing.

Oh well---anyone for Stereoscope???

((I haven't seen any Cinemascope yet. In fact, I haven't taken in a 3-D in quite some time though they do still play here occasionally. # And while we're dusting off the Stereosopes, lets not forget to get out the old Magic Lanterns too.))

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"...and then I'd gaffate some more till the letters piled up again."  
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DICK CLARKSON, c/o Harvard U., Leverett H-33, Cambridge 38, Mass.

...as you know, I've had a lot of leg trouble, and it isn't over yet. Every time I get a cold or something, it hits the leg, and as a result I always end up working like a mad SOB just to stay caught up here at college. Harvard is no picnic...

This might be the place to say to a lot of fans, should any part(s) of this letter see print, that the circumstances leading to my dropping from active fandom were beyond my control. I owe a lot of you letters. Some that I don't, I should be writing anyhow. Maybe this summer I'll be in a better position to take care of that. 'Till then, hang on -- you can do without me and not strain a gut, I imagine.

Speaking of age, what do you do with me? I'm almost 19, will be before long. I was "raised" in Sixth Fandom, but had several feet in Seventh Fandom, though I don't think either Seventh Fandom or myself ever considered me as being a real Seventh Fandomer. I'm not 15 or 16, do not publish a crudzine if only for the simple reason that I don't publish anything whatsoever, and have no overwhelming desire to get active again until fandom comes up with something as good as Sixth Fandom was. Yet I still am interested and still get a kick out of it, when I can. What little corresponding I do goes to ex-Sixth Fandomers. Aweel, you-all can place me; I won't argue, because I'm beginning to wonder myself where I fit in now.

I do not like Arthur C. Clarke's writing as a rule, and the only (personal Opinion) good s-f movie in 3-D I saw was IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE. I still religiously follow Sam Mines' zines, though they are now fewer and farther between, and just recently I wrote him again, after a long lapse on my part for the above-stated reasons. When I can, I read ASF, GALAXY and MoF&SF, but that's on vacations, when I read four-five months' production of those mags in one gapp. I haven't read any of 'em now since about their March issues. Much catching up to do, I see.

((Ah, sad is the life of the retired actifan. Or is it?



I sometimes wonder if the retired fans aren't the wisest fans?))

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"...about time your labors bore some fruit---if slightly overripe."  
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G.M. CARR, 5319 Ballard Ave., Seattle 7, Wash.

I guess I'd better explain again about my address. "5319 Ballard Ave." is the business address. "8325-31st NW" is my home address. Both places have a rubber stamp (I'm a dirty Capitalist!) and whichever place I happen to be at the time of writing--that's the address I use. No ulterior motive. I get the mail at either place...

Harlan Ellison is just flying in the face of fate (not RAP's) when he specifies that his new fanzine's title is not to be abbreviated.... No matter what he decides to charge for it, I'll wager it ends up as a DIME.

These guys that go around analysing fanzines into "fan-fanzines" and "stf-fanzines" sound just about as silly to me as the guys that go around trying to categorize stories as "science fiction" and "science fiction". So what?.... Lupoff makes a better point when he attempts to draw some conclusions about the effect of a fan's "formative years" on his fanactivity. However, I was a '49 Neofan, but it does not follow that my formative years were spent between 1941 to 1948. Gois, also, was a recent Neofan -- '52 or '53. But his formative years, as he says, were '34-41. So what? The basic assumption that all Neofen are 16 years old makes the whole theory silly. In fact, even without the 16-yr-old neofen, the theory is silly, because if there were anything to it all 16-yr-old fans would be similar, all 26-yr-old fans and all 106-yr-old fans.... (In the latter case, they might be similar, but not because of their "formative years"...) People are people and mature according to their own individual pattern...even fan-people. Some mature at an early age, others don't. Some never achieve what others would consider mental or emotional maturity. The effect of environment, including the environment during the "formative years", will indeed have some effect upon the person. But until any fandom, 6th, 7th, or 17th, is composed entirely of fans of the same age, I doubt that the "formative years" of any of them will make much difference to the maturity of that fandom. However, his second suggestion, that recent fandoms have been made up of less serious readers of stf, carries weight. Also the fact that the stf flood has been of more superficial nature. Except for JWC with his pedagogic angle, the greater portion of stf (that which I've seen at any rate) is less the labor of love on the part of the authors that it used to be when I first started reading it seriously, and more out-and-out potboilers. If and/or when the hack writer finds it more profitable to pour out reams of "boy-meets-girl" slush than "boy-meets-girl-meets-BEM" slush, no doubt we'll have a "mature" fandom again -- whether the neofans are 16 or 60.

I wonder what Gregg thinks of the USMarines? He tore his hair when he joined NFFF, and now thumbs his nose at FAPA....(not that what he said wasn't entirely true. I particularly commend the vivid

word picture...".a splotch scraped off the top of fandom and set off by itself to decay...") Funny thing, I'm quite comfortable decaying out here on the shelf.

((Thanks for straightening me out on the addresses. # I recently saw where someone--forget at the moment just who it was--was categorizing fanzines into "science fiction (pause) fan magazines" and science fiction fan (pause) magazines". But it still all boils down to distinguishing between fanzines which devote themselves to science fiction and those which devote themselves to the activities of fandom. I personally prefer the latter type, so go ahead and categorize me.))

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"If 16 year olds have trouble with their parents over fandom, what do 28 year old married men do?"

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TERRY GARR, 134 Cambridge St., San Francisco 12, Calif.

...Just for the record, I am currently seventeen, so I guess I don't rate with you ancient people. The trouble is that I never will, because by the time I'm 25 you'll be in your thirties and so on, ad infinitum. This reminds me of the Abbott & Costello gimmick wherein Costello sez that when he was 5 his brother was 20, 4 times as old as him. Then, when he got to be 15, his brother was 30, just two times as old as him. When he was 30, his brother was 45, just one and a half times as old. Mighawd, he'd say, pretty soon I'll pass him up!

I'm not surprised to see that Galkins didn't like CHILDHOOD'S END at all. I said when I finished reading it that stfen would either like it a lot or not at all. It's that type of book: it's controversial, for one thing, and the ending is another thing that would strike different readers in different ways. Personally, the ending left me with a deep feeling of poignancy, and for a while I couldn't decide whether I liked the book or not. Finally decided that I did, though I wouldn't call it a classic. The writing is too uneven for that. Harness' opinion that the high-point of the book was the revelation of the physical aspects of the Overlords corresponds in large part with my own opinion. The first third of the book of course, up to where they find out what the Overlords look like, was printed in FANTASTIC NOVELS or FFM as GUARDIAN ANGEL. It struck me as an excellent novelet at the time. As a book it strikes me as being an excellent novelet dragged out a bit too much and eventually leading to an ending which has little or nothing to do with the novelet from which it sprang. Nevertheless, I liked it a lot.

((I didn't read the original novelet from which CHILDHOOD'S END was built, but after reading the book I believe I'd have preferred the novelet version. Most of the added-on part seemed too anti-climactic to me. I lost interest in the story after discovering the nature of the Overlords and only finished reading the book because I'd read quite a bit of comment on it. Good novelet but a poor novel, to me.))



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"This letter is a wee bit late, but that's the way of the actifan."  
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GEORGE WETZEL, 5 Playfield St., Dundalk 22, Md.

The "controversial" article is little desired by the majority--if not all with one exception--of fanzine editors. Yet contrarily enough there are many fan writers--and I will give the proof for such--that have and would write such articles if a few, at least, of fanzine editors would consider their printing. Fan readers also are inclined to allow the inclusion of "controversial" articles if only the body of fanzine editors would print occasionally such articles. This favorable attitude of fan readers I will also shortly authenticate.

Since CONFAB is the best forum for such a suggestion of mine--that "controversial" articles be given more consideration than previously accorded them--I am for that reason presenting my views to you in the hope of their ventilation and consideration by the fanzine editors in general.

In Semenovich's RENAISSANCE #6, Oct. 1952, appeared my controversial article EDMUND WILSON--A CRITIC?. I had been making notes for this article when Semenovich sent me an urgent letter for an article by return mail. Of course the article was not in a finished form when I sent it to him the next day, due to the urgent plea for it, so any faults it has in development I attribute to that. In view of the row it caused I think a revision of it in the final form I had planned and a reprinting of such a revision would be in order if anyone would ever consent to it.

This article anent Edmund Wilson was to reveal that literary critic's ridiculous and slurring appraisal of science fiction and fantasy.

In the letter column of RENAISSANCE #7 and #8 there was a vitriolic attack upon me and the article from Shapiro and Ellison, not counting some unprintable letters Semenovich wrote me of.

Curiously enough that article of mine seemed to establish RENAISSANCE as the "controversial" zine and Semenovich afterwards received quite a number of articles of highly controversial nature which he could not print because of prior commitments on previously received material. However he told of said received controversial articles, some of which I would like to mention. Hal Shapiro had spent a good deal of research--taking the inspiration from my Edmund Wilson article which oddly enough he took exceptional dislike to--on an article recounting the immoralities present in the Bible. I had pointed out the superstitious beliefs and magical practices in the Bible which Russ Watkins disagreed with, he then remarking that the Bible promotes only goodness; at that point Shapiro answered Watkins. Then Shapiro wrote more of his refutation in an article.

G. M. Carr then wrote a strictly political article defending McCarthy (which view I am in accordance with, being a staunch McCarthy backer myself) which she sent Semenovich.

Both the Carr article and the Shapiro articles were to appear in RENAISSANCE #9 but Semenovich was in Chicago then and their mss. in his New York City home so that Semenovich then sent me a plea for something controversial for #9 as he did not have time to get the

others. My FORTEAN PHENOMENA article appeared as their replacement in #9 and significantly Semenovich got letters from people like Ev Winne and David English, to name a few, remarking that they enjoyed the Fortean article but that it must have caused a rash of argumentative letters.

In the same issue was Elmer Kirk's SCIENCE FICTION VERSUS WIERD FANTASY which verged dangerously close to a polemic piece also, proof that Semenovich was getting printing controversial articles and that his readers thought well enough of such (as with Carr and Shapiro) to contribute fuel themselves.

RENAISSANCE #10 contained two separate items sure to raise hell in minor form in Lillith Lorraine's TURN TO THE GHOSTS and more dynamite in the FORUM on the intelligence of s-f fans by Paul Ganley and Rich Elsberry.

I forgot Semenovich's attempted blast in RENAISSANCE #6 at Etro and Etro's mild retort in #8.

I might mention that the only other contentious article I know of in another mine was E. Taylor's EMANCIPATION OF MIND in English's FANTASIAS #8.

The subject matter of all just listed articles was concerned with fantasy mainly; yet there is some justification for their appearance and others like them (with one exception) in fanzines.

The exception is G. M. Carr's laudatory article on McCarthy (whom I likewise admire). World Politics has no place in fandom and I wrote an article sometime ago and sent to Joel Nydahl of VEGA but as he never printed or returned it and now thru CONFAB's pages only have I learned VEGA folded, I presume my article will never see print as I lack a copy. In that article I pointed to past evidences and present evidences of world politics being aired in fandom. I mentioned the unpublished Carr article on McCarthy, Calvin Beck's anti-McCarthy statements in ASFO #2, Sept. 1953; and pointed out Langley Searles comments (which agree with mine) in FANTASY COMMENTATOR #2, June 1944 wherein he, too, spoke out against the number of fanzines that then were engaged in promulgating world political beliefs. In this regard I would also mention myself the fanzine SCIENCE AND CULTURE of Stan Crouch, promulgating the United Nations. And there was also Ed Noble who used the zine EXPLORER to funnel his political beliefs through.

Controversial articles I think have a definite place in fandom but not when they air world politics.

All the foregoing controversial articles I mentioned with the exceptions noted have some bearing on fantasy, s-f, or fandom itself. Unfortunately, most fanzine editors are so narrow that they will not print articles on fantasy, limiting themselves to s-f only. This is regrettable as the field of imaginative literature is two-fold (fantasy and s-f) and not one fold as these certain individuals would try to make it. I have in the past sent out mss. pertaining to fantasy, on which I spent much research and writing time in polishing, to only have them rejected. Then I see in the next issue of the zine that rejected my fantasy mss. the most revolting dribble and garbage printed because it had a rocket ship in it and a BEM. This sort of discrimination against the fantasy side of the field is wide spread. It is very significant that RENAISSANCE and FANTASIAS which printed the controversial article also used fantasy mss. Only until fantasy material comes out of the shadow of disapproval will the



controversial article be accepted.

This observation can be made: that the struggling upsurge of controversial articles is a sign that a change is going on in parts of fandom for an attempt for "freshness" of ideas. This upsurge is due primarily to the present narrow-mindedness of most fanzines to accord respectability and publishing to s-f only.

And this is a form of dogmatism and stagnation. Present day science is approaching the borders of many phenomena once regarded as fantasy. To evidence this: the influence of the moon on mankind and other life--there is a sympathetic reaction in the electrical energy in life forms and the lunar variation in the earth's magnetic field. In my Fortean researches I found new data myself of this correspondance. Zoologists are now admitting the possibility of the legended sea serpents after finding an enormous larval eel. The alchemistic transmutation of lead into gold is realized in part by modern day atomic research. The astrologic belief of planetary effect on mankind is evidenced in the discovery of statistical economic cycles corresponding with sun spot cycles as is the moon's influence. There are many more but I will stop. In light of all this how can any fan editor maintain that fantasy should be ostracized from fanzines. Fort's "wild talents" may be laughed at but a "water diviner" still can find water underground by what is regarded as "unscientific" means. Religious mythology has been reexamined in a scientific light as in the book WORLDS IN COLLISION and even the much discussed CHILDHOOD'S END is an attempt in this direction.

I could make this a 20 page letter as I have much more to say but fear I have made this letter too long. Even now I fear you will cut it down for CONFAB considerably.

((Not so, George, though I'll admit the temptation was there. Your letter appears in its entirety. # I wonder how much success you'll have in getting fanzine editors to give equal consideration to fantasy and s-f. Most fanzines reflect, to some degree, the editor's personality, his own likes and dislikes. If the editor of a particular zine happens to like fantasy and s-f equally well, his zine will probably be equally devoted to the two. But not all faneds' interests are so divided. I doubt if many faneds feel any serious obligation to give equal space to both. Most faneds are in the business mainly for the enjoyment they get out of it--not to make money as a pro-editor must--and therefore figure they might as well print material that appeals to them personally, rather than to try and please the largest audience possible with a more varied choice of material. So I would say that the whole problem hinges on the personal likes of the various faneditors.))

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"Why aren't there some really OLD actifans---say about 65 or so?"  
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JOHN HITCHCOCK, 15 Arbutus Ave., Baltimore 28, Md.

...And I have quoted Lao-Tze in the original Chinese! Me, I enjoy MAD, but not to the wild state of some of the characters in MAD MUMBLINGS. I'm going to wait (in fact, am waiting) for CHILD-

HOOD'S END to turn up as a pocketbook on the newsstands. Otherwise, UMBRA might fold, and fandom would present no serious obstacle to the new comers. ... I have absolutely no comment on McCain's letter. I never read anything he writes. Too dry. Except occasionally in PSY. ... If you don't print this letter, mention UMBRA in your editorial, will you?

Of course Ellison isn't abbreviating the name (of his zine). the abbrev would be DIME. Or DIM. Just the thing for creative abusers of his efforts. ... All the support in the world? Man, you've got it! There's the world right under you, supporting you.

What's the significance of the "wo50w" on the back page?

((CHILDHOOD'S END came out in pocketbook form from Balentine at least several months ago. At least I picked up my copy that long ago. # The "wo50w" stands for "wide open 50 way", which is a slight variation on a Grennellian term explained in a recent issue of GRUE. All clear?))

CONFAB #6 will be in the mails within 3-4 weeks....

*Bob Peatrowsky*

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"If you find an "X" marked on the envelope of this letter...  
remember, your idea works both ways."  
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wo50w

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