

Conversation

number 13

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GENE DUPLANTIER-1960

Conversation #13.

I had hoped to have the two preceeding issues in mailing #27 but a combination of things prevented me from getting the zines run off even though I did have them on master. This time, instead of post-mailing I've decided to hold them up and send them out with this issue in time to make mailing #28.

Today is Feb. 13, 1961 and I imagine that the Hickman-editorial part of Conversation will run somewhat like a diary this time. Earl & Nancy Kemp and the children, Jim O'Meara, Richard and Rosemary Hickey were visitors over the last weekend. The forementioned were only able to stay until late Saturday night but Richard and Rosemary Hickey were able to stay until late Sunday afternoon. A great time was had by all and the conversation was sparkling. An unlucky and lucky thing happened almost at one time. The day before our guests were to arrive I had to stay out in Belvidere, Illinois for a two day salesmeeting, and while I was gone Carole slipped on an icy curb and sprained her ankle rather severly. That was the bad luck. The good luck was that Rosemary Hickey is a very competent pediatrician and taped Carole's ankle for her and of course gave her instructions on just the best way to let it heal with minimum disability.

The Illwiscon will be held in Dixon, Illinois this year over the weekend of July 21, 22, & 23. Anyone reading this that might wish to attend should write me for further information. Some of the fans expected this time in addition to the regular convention fans are Betty Kujawa, Vic Ryan, Rog Ebert and Vernell Coriell.

While Eral Kemp was here, we discussed his upcoming symposium "What is a Fan". It won't be as long as his previous "Who Killed S-F", but I have arranged with Earl for me to put it through OMPA. I'm sure that you will all be glad to recieve a copy and it should prove quite valuable and interesting to you. I will again do the printing for Earl.

Another that you might note if you have been planning to sub to my generalzine JD-A in the foreseeable future. With the #58 issue, subscription prices will advance from \$1.00 to \$2.00 for 12 issues. You can save \$1.00 by sending a subscription to Ron Bennett within 15 days of the receipt of this mailing. After that subs will run \$2.00. I'm sorry to have to have to raise the prices but the size of the zine and costs force me to do it. Subscriptions will not include special issues. They are so costly to produce that in the future I will have to sell them at \$1.00 per copy. The next annish will be on the theme of "Old Stories vs New Stories" and may run as high as 100 to 150 pages. I assure you that if I charge \$1.00 for it, that I will honestly feel that it is worth it and that it will cost me that or more to produce and mail it.

halcyon

(the whither do we draft column)

by hal shapiro, db



Come, gentile reader, and witness the re-birth of a fan. Yes, you are privileged to be in on the resurrection to fannish ranks of the same SB* who used to do that column for Hickman's ancient and honorable Stf Trends, so many years ago.

Now I re-enter fandom's folly to find . . . A group of pompous asses thinking they're Roscoe Almighty, acting as if fandom is really a way of life, that all beatniks, hedonists and other non-conformists should stay the hell away and only good little sercon-fans should be allowed to participate. Typical of these officious oddities is Ted White, who everyone else seems to be slamming, so why be different! (These types even seem to dislike each other.)

I've met Ted once or twice, and he seemed to be a shy, retiring, rather innocuous individual (I'm told it was different at Detention). In print he says nothing, with much breast beating, while blathering on to great extent about prozine editors ignoring the poor little forgotten fan, and that they (editors) should be severely chastised for exercising good business judgement. I note that he has also written a letter to a pretentious publication called New Frontiers in which he calls down the wrath of the ghods on Norm Metcalf for daring to use the name, Stellar Enterprises, merely because he (Ted) has edited a fanzine named Stellar. And this letter, dear readers, does not seem to have been written in jest.

Compounding the asininity, Metcalf (whose New Frontiers belongs to the family of idiotically self-important fanzines) takes White quite seriously and, to avoid confusion, changes his pubbing name

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*One of Charles Lee Riddle's Scientific Boys.

to Terra House. Can you imagine what Shelby Vick would have done in "the good old days" had he received a letter like that anent his fanzine, Confusion?

And it seems that every fifth rate fanzine I receive has enclosed an abomination called Psi. More pretentiousness. This thing is printed, eight pages, excellently reproduced, and could have been used to publish some good materials. In fact, the editorial states, "PSI is going to use quality material, with a big 'Q'". Of course, he does go on to qualify the statement with, "This issue does not come up to quite the standards that I would like it to, simply because I have raided the old PSI for what I considered the best material available." I'm glad he said Psi contained material he thought to be the best available. I'd hardly place an Orma McCormick poem or some unintelligible ~~blank~~ blank verse by Mark Miller in that classification. Miller's item, incidentally, ends with the appropriate line, "Enough of this nonsense."

And there are other such fans abounding. Let me relate an incident of correspondence. When Otto Pfeifer acquiesced to my conditions and asked me to review fmzs for WRR, I was very flattered. So cards were sent to various faneds asking that I be placed on their mailing lists and explaining why. Everyone I solicited was most cooperative, with one exception. Buck Coulson, editor of Yandro, which looked to me like the best fanzine ever to come out of Indiana from the one copy I saw (of course, this isn't much of a compliment considering Indiana fandom) sent back a card reading: "Yandro goes out only for cash, contributions or trade. No review copies and none in exchange for letters of comment. (We used to send out review copies, but that was before our circulation got up to 150. Now we don't care if we get reviews or not.)" Well, it had been my finding many years ago that most faneds publish for that esoteric, fleeting feeling of Egoboo. And that is, I feel, as it should be. If one wishes to make money publishing, or break even, even, one can go into business and compete with the other asinine attempts now on the stands. MiRoscoe, there are over 25,000 publications (not counting newspapers and books) on the stands today. Surely one more won't make any difference. But, if a person is going to term his publication a fanzine, why be so damn snotty about it.

I firmly believe that a faneditor has a right to limit circulation should he desire. But a refusal to send a zine can be couched in polite terms.

Then, at the other extreme of fandom, we have fun-loving hedonists, typified by George Young, Teddy Bear, Donaho, Ellick, possibly even myself. It used to be that almost all fans (with the possible exception of MezBradley) were fun-loving exitturs. Even GMCarr once wrote (in SAPS or FAPA) of the joys of having bubbles tingle merrily along ones spinal column after farting in the bath tub. Is fandom gradually going puritanically pompous?

Enough of this tirade.

Another tirade:

The United States and Canada have just gone through National Library Week. One of the joys of living in a border city is that one may pick up both US and Canadian networks. The latter, perhaps because younger, offer much better radio and TV programming. They're

much more uninhibited. Anyway, in deploring the sad state of affairs regarding the reading of books in Canada, the commentator remarked that the number of libraries and booksellers in Canada, per capita was far surpassed by such countries as Greece, Australia, Italy, Spain (!), England and almost every other "western" civilized country, with the exception of the United States.

So here we are, two countries, with the majority of the free world's technical know-how and alleged brain power, rapidly sinking into a sump hole of literary and cultural ignorance.

For the hell of it, I wandered about the downtown Detroit area for three hours one day last week pretending to be a Gallup-type poll taker, asking people about their book reading habits. This was inspired by the commentator's remarks. While a rather un-scientific thing, the cross-section of fifty people I talked to contained only five who habitually read books. Eighteen of the people were proud possessors of library cards, but only eleven had used the cards within the past year.

The reasons given for not reading more were given as, "Don't have the time," "So many other things to do," but the most common answer to my question, "Why don't you read more/any books?" was "What in the world for?" Only nine people refused to answer any questions.

It would seem that we're rapidly becoming nations of technically superb robots without any feelings for the finer things. As Ellison so aptly put it, "We sit in front of a 21-inch glass tit sucking entertainment through the nipple, without getting any solids."

Now, I realize that this doesn't apply to the majority of fans, pompous or not. Just thought I'd rant and rave a bit about the generally decadent state of US and Canadian culture.

Changing the subjects twice this year I've sent my trench coat to be cleaned. Twice, it's come back clean, except for a tiny grease spot. On this spot was pinned a tag which read, "We did our very best."

What pathos: "We did our very best."

Immediately before my eyes there arrises, full blown, a panoramic scene in vistavision with stereophonic sound of a busy cleaning establishment's work room. Their motto is on the wall: "We do our very best."

The coat comes out of the tumbler and is examined by the spotters. Horrors! The spot! He attempts his remedies, to no avail. He calls to his co-workers, tears in his eyes, "I did my very best."

They hold a conference. Various spot removers are tried. No good. They wail in unison, "We did our very best."

Committees are set up. Telephone calls are made. Telegrams are dispatched. All formulas which arrive are utilized. At length the tagger is called, and he pins on the tag with the poor, pitiful, pathetic prose, "We did our very best."

But why, I ask myself, should that masterful phrase be limited to the drycleaning industry. Just think of the statesmen who could return from summit talks wailing, "We did our very best."

Stf publishers could relinquish the ad revenue for their back covers and print (agate type) the lonely words, "We did our very best."

Television producers might, after the credits have been duly displayed, stand sobbing before the cameras, crying, "We did our very best."

And, if the editor of JD-A has any compassion in his alcoholic soul, he will print, following the end of this month's halcyon,

"He did his very best!"



Harness



Nicole leaned against the wall of the hallway, breathing quickly. "I had a fight with Larry. He beat me up. So I ran."

"Oh, marvelous. Well, I'm awfully sorry. You can sleep here tonight. That's what you want, isn't it?"

"Oh, Rena, I'm never going back to him. He's so childish, and he's crazy. You know what the argument was about? He wanted me not to use my diaphragm. He wants a baby. I don't want a baby--- especially not his. He's half Negro, you know, and I'm not going to bring a kid into the world like that."

from The Girl in the Gold Leather Dress by Victoria Kelrich Morhaim. Signet S1894. 35¢

"I couldn't Rena," she said. "I just couldn't. I owe them so much. They're my parents. I couldn't do such a thing."

"I hear regret in your voice, Anna," insisted Rena. "Do they know about the science fiction books you keep hidden under your mattress? Do they?"

Her mother's face registered disbelief. "Anna doesn't read such trash."

"It's not trash, Mother," said Rena. "It's just escape."

Anna's whole posture had changed. She slumped, and her hands were limp and unholding.

"Why did you say that, Rena?" she cried. "Why did you say that? Why did you tell them?"

"You mean you've hidden those books from me?" demanded her mother. All her attention was on Anna now. Rena watched the play unfold.

"No. I don't have any science-fiction. You said I couldn't read it, and I always listen to you, don't I? Don't I?"

"We'll see. I'm going to your room now. Do you want to come along? Or will you stay here until I see what there is underneath your mattress?"

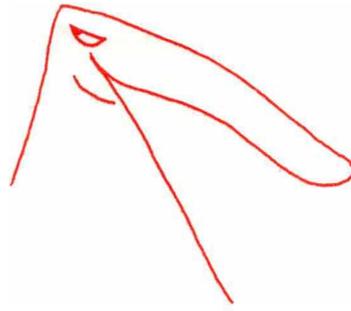
Anna didn't answer.

from The Girl in the Gold Leather Dress by Victoria Kelrich
Morhaim. Signet S1894. 35¢

Note: I had typed up issue #14 before I finished this one. Since then I have a letter from Basil Wells and his address has changed. Send any zines with comments on his article to: Basil Wells, RD 3, Conneautville, Penna.

Watched the U.S. Steel Hour last night when they presented "The Two Worlds Of Charlie Gordon". This was an adaptation of Keye's "Flowers For Algernon" which won a Hugo at the Pittcon. Pretty fair. Carole, who hadn't read the story, enjoyed it very much.

Artwork this issue by Rotsler, Duplantier, Harness, Cornell and Trend. Material by Hal Shapiro and Hickman.



Feb. 27, 1961.....Just received a letter from Ron Bennett and find I was th first Stateside fan to return the Skyrack Poll. For once, I didn't put something off.....Also a letter today from Mike McInerney, 81 Ivy Drive, Meriden, Conn. Mike is going to start a fanzine soon and is looking for a good buy in a mimeo or ditto. Can any of you help him out?.....While printing these issues of Conversation and JD-A #56, I have ran out of every supply imaginable. First ink. So I had to mix some blue with the black and then go to plain blue. Ran out of blue also so had to switch to brown. Also ran out of paper, distilled water, blankrola and etch pads..... I'll have a lot of shopping to do the next time I go to the city before I'm able to put out another issue.My wife finally got me interested in playing Bridge and it has interferred quite abit in fanac of late. Fun though.....

Lynn

