



cy to adopt middle-of-the-road positions and sit on fences is really an advantage or whether we might be better off taken a little more direct action like the Americans. (Such doubts don't usually last long, though. I may have been inconvenienced a lot by the strike but at least the situation was legal and was resolved legally and over all I guess I can't complain too much.)

But I do wish the strike had ended just a week earlier than it did. Then I might've been able to accomplish what I set out to do this summer...

The reason I'm not too enthusiastic about doing another fanzine today is that I've spent a sizeable amount of time over the last six weeks working on the publication of ENERGUMEN 16. And for the last ten days I've spent about fourteen hours a day on it. After over thirty thousand slipsheets have been dropped into place and after sixty thousand sheets of paper have been separated into piles of thirty thousand printed sheets and thirty thousand slipsheets, the idea of typing even eight stencils for a 70 print-run FAPazine has little appeal to me. (No-one ever said fandom was going to be easy...)

Some of you may recall that I usually spend my summers travelling and visiting friends and selfishly enjoying myself. But not this year. This year I've spent more time in Toronto than I have in any summer since I started working a decade ago. For the year prior to the start of the '81 summer I'd been (slowly) gathering the material for ENERGUMEN 16. Susan Wood and I had roughed out the issue last summer and had made a small start on getting it into shape before Susan died last November. After that, I decided to keep on with the project but since it was entirely a fan-finish thing and since fans are fans, things proceeded slowly. I'd already decided on the line-up I wanted and I'd also decided that rather than rush the issue out incomplete I'd wait for the people I'd asked to get their contributions to me. As this summer loomed ahead, I was at the point where I could begin work on the actual production so I acknowledged that most of the summer would have to be devoted to the actual production of NERG 16. I realized I was looking at several hundred hours of mechanical work.

At the start of the summer I had all but four of the contributions I was waiting for, being short just one article, two sets of illustrations and the front cover. I saw no problem in getting the issue ready for initial distribution at worldcon. Of course, I didn't foresee the six week postal strike.

Even then, were it not for yet-another unfortunate break I might have been able to work around the strike. Buffalo isn't far away and I have friends there and mail could have been sent to them and a car rented one weekend to pick up the material I so desperately needed. But that would have made things too easy.

Stu Shiffman mailed me the artwork for a Terry Carr reprint about two days before the strike was declared. Two days earlier and I would have had those drawings. Two days later and they would have been returned to Stu and we could have made other arrangements. But as it was, they arrived in Toronto just in time to be sealed up in the main postal station for the duration of the strike. Without those drawings I couldn't have finished the issue even if I'd managed to get the three remaining contributions in. (I got the article, at great expense and after travelling to the US for a couple of days but the other artwork and the cover are still somewhere in the mail system. With just three days before I fly south there's no way I can finish up even if they arrive tomorrow. So it goes...)

But the summer certainly wasn't wasted. I typed ninety six stencils and over the last ten days I ran off three hundred copies of each of those ninety six stencils, in fifty seven of which I'd pasted electrostencilled artwork. As already mentioned, I slipsheeted every page, and then had to deslipsheet all those stacks of mingled paper. Not exactly a fun way to spend a few weeks but I knew that when I started. I also collated as much of the issue as was reasonable so that when the cover arrives and

is printed I'll have just seven stacks to collate into the final issues. Plus the stapling and the mailing, of course, but I don't want to think too much about that! (According to the post office it will cost me \$1.70 to mail each North American copy that goes first class, \$0.87 to mail each North American Printed Matter copy and a whopping \$3.08 to send air-mail contributor's copies across the Atlantic. No wonder there aren't many genzines being published nowadays!)

At least I'll know what to do during those first few evenings in September when I'm back from DENVENTION and getting used to working for a living once again.

It's been worth it, though. NERG 16 is exactly a hundred pages (plus covers and one insert) of some of the best fanwriting currently available. Overall I'm delighted with the issue and my only concern is that the blue paper I finally got from Gestetner (you *did* know that for months their paper mill was on strike and the paper I had to have to publish on wasn't available until the middle of the summer, didn't you?) turned out to be thinner than it once was and consequently there's a great deal more see-through than I'd have liked. Not much I can do about it with only four pages left to run, though, so I'll have to hope other fanzine fans won't notice it as much as I did.

I think it's probably the best fanzine I've published and certainly one of the best fanzines I've seen so far this year. And that's what Susan and I wanted it to be so I'm pleased with all the work it's taken so far.

\* \* \* \* \*

Well, that's enough of this self-congratulatory bullshit, so what about the rest of the summer?

In addition to the mail strike, there was/is the air traffic controllers strike. I suppose I should be glad our flight to Florida is this Friday and not last Friday since last week there weren't many flights leaving Toronto at all as Canadian controllers went out in sympathy with their American counterparts. Today, though, all seems back to normal as far as Canada is concerned and it's up to the individual traveller to decide whether or not it's safe to fly in US air space. I feel it is and have no intention of changing any of my coming travel plans. They're complicated enough as it is.

In three days, my girlfriend and I are flying to Florida to visit Joe and Gay Halde- man and do some snorkling off Key Largo. I did this last summer, loved every minute of it, wrote about it in FLOCCI 7, and talked Doris into trying it with me this year. (It seems I'm destined never to snorkle with Joe Haldeman, though: he smashed his toe last year and couldn't swim and this year he's busy writing the novelization of some big sf movie Hollywood is working on so he can't take any time off this summer. It is admirable the way he makes these sacrifices...) So we have a few days together in ~~stuffy~~ soggy Florida to look forward to.

Shortly thereafter, of course, is worldcon. The average sf fan -- having broad mental horizons and other useful stuff like that -- would have made travel arrangements to fly to Florida, fly from there to Denver and then return to Toronto. The average sf fan would also have spent a couple of hundred bucks more than was necessary by so doing. At least that's what the travel agent told us. So I fly to Florida with Doris and then spend a couple of days there after she has to return to work. Then the Wednesday before Worldcon I fly from Daytona Beach to Atlanta and from Atlanta to Toronto (Daytona Beach airport is extremely tiny) and after waiting an hour or so I fly on to Denver by way of Chicago. This whole trip takes some thirteen hours and that is probably not the best way to get to a worldcon. However, from what I've heard about DENVENTION it just may be that arriving -- and staying -- comotose might be one of the better ways of preparing for that particular gathering!

That may be unfair; I certainly hope that the rumours of disaster emanating from all over fandom prove unfounded. But the spread-out nature of the con facilities are going to be hard to overcome and I have to admit that I'm going to this con with more feelings of trepidation than I've had about a worldcon in some time. But I'm still going. We shall, as the pundits say, see.

I've been asked by most of my friends (who are not going to Denver) why I'm going to spend so much money for something that probably won't be worth it. My basic answer is that if they have to ask, they won't understand my answer. Because I'm going for the feeling of being there, for the first-hand experience of the con, no matter how bad it may be. I don't want to read about it afterwards, I want to live through it, and as long as I can afford to be there I'll continue to go. This will be my 15th worldcon and will also mark my 15th anniversary as a fan. To hell with the expense, full steam ahead!!

\* \* \* \* \*

The other thing that happened to dominate this less-than-exemplary summer was that I moved. Not too far in terms of distance but quite far in other respects. And it certainly wasn't my idea...

I lived at 141 High Park for almost eight years and would have been happy to live there for eight or thirty eight more. I was happy and comfortable there -- in the second floor of an old house -- close to work, in a lovely neighborhood and with a rent that was almost criminal for the area and the accomodation. Moving was about the furthest thing from my mind as the summer of '31 drew near. At least, moving me was far from my mind.

During the spring, I helped just about everyone in our group move. My girlfriend and one of our friends moved into an apartment together. The friend's former roommate and yet another of our friends moved in together. Two other friends moved into the apartment they'd vacated. For what seemed like months we spent most Saturdays climbing up and down stairwells with boxes and pieces of furniture. Two friends bought a house. Etc, etc, etc. It became a standing joke and I took solace in my apparent permanence. After all, 141 was one of fandom's better-known addresses. It had stature, notoriety, solidity. Or so I thought.

Then I finally decided that trudging to the laundromat through snow and rain and having to sit there for an hour and a half every so often was just too much for an old respectable person such as myself and decided to buy a set of apartment-sized washer/dryer units. I chose a Friday evening to go and make the purchase but as I was just about to leave I spotted my landlady and decided to warn her to expect delivery-men sometime during the next week. To my amazement, she started to cry and told me she had just sold the house and I'd have to move.

I was stunned. She hadn't put the house on the market and I had no idea she was even thinking of disposing of it. But she'd been sick a lot lately and when she told the man who owned the house next door and the sixplex next to that, he made an offer on her house and in a fit of depression she signed a contract to sell. By the time she told me -- and saved me eight hundred dollars I'd have spent on laundry machines otherwise -- she was already regretting her decision but it was too late. To get out of the contract, she said, would cost her several thousand dollars and she just couldn't afford that. So there I was faced with the sudden news that six weeks later I'd be living somewhere else. 'Twas not a happy night, you may imagine.

I spoke to the man who'd bought the house and discovered that he'd be moving into my old apartment himself. So I asked him if either of his other buildings would have a vacancy in the near future. It turned out that the basement apartment of 137 (there is no 139 High Park) was coming up at about the time I'd be having to move. I took a look. It wasn't exactly what I wanted and it was *much* more than I'd been paying

but it was also next door, thereby assuring a relatively simple move, and it was as close to my school as I was likely to be able to find. (My girlfriend had recently spent six weeks trying to find an apartment in this neighborhood without success so I knew how difficult the local housing situation was.)

I spent a day checking the papers and looking around the area just in case there was something better on the market and then decided that it would be better to have a place that wasn't quite what I wanted than to spend valuable time trying to find something better when that something better might not exist. So two days after being told of my impending "eviction" I signed a year lease for the basement apartment next door.

I moved most of my stuff myself in the first week of June, had a few friends help me with the larger pieces of furniture one Saturday morning (we finished in an hour and a half), bought a thousand bucks worth of new furniture and while typing NERG stencils tried to get the place in some sort of order. There's still a lot of re-arranging and sorting to do but it's liveable and I know pretty well where everything is. Basement apartments have drawbacks -- dampness and a tendency to attract insects and spiders being the prime ones -- but they are also delightfully cool in summer and as I get very little light down here it hasn't bothered me to work all day on printing and the like since I don't see -- and hence don't miss -- the sunny weather outside. I don't like this place as much as I liked 141 but it's somewhere to live and will do for its year and perhaps longer. We'll see. In the meantime, my landlord has moved into my old place so at least any mail that goes there will get to me okay. And since I only moved about thirty feet south of where I used to live, Bill Bowers won't have to be retrained when he next wants to visit me and sometimes I suspect that's the real reason I took this place!

\* \* \* \* \*

It hasn't been *all* work and no play, though. I started the summer in the traditional midwestern fannish way: with a trip to MIDWESTCON and WILCON and a few days in Chicago in between the two.

MIDWESTCON was, as always, great this year. The new venue -- a sprawling two-storey motel complex actually in Kentucky -- was a vast improvement over the recent location and it was great fun for us swarthy types to watch all the pale people around the outdoor pool turning various shades of bright red. I don't think I've ever seen so many painful-looking sunburns in one place before. And to sweeten the trip even more, I won three hundred bucks in the poker game which is always a nice way to pay for a convention trip.

After a wind-down day at the Leigh hotel in Cincinnati, Doris and I took Amtrak up to Chicago. Doris had never been on a train trip before and since I'd had good experiences with Amtrak in the past (I know that sounds like a contradiction in terms but it's true) and the trip was quite inexpensive, we decided to try it. When we finally found the ticky-tacky mickey-mouse Cincinnati train station hidden away under a freeway overpass beside a scrap-metal dumping yard, we knew we weren't going first-class. Sure enough the trip was less than wondrous, being a milk run and on a train with only a quickly-depleted snack bar instead of a proper dining-car and/or bar car. But the seats were comfortable and the scenery was pleasant so the trip wasn't a complete loss. I still want to take a decent-length train trip in one of those nifty private rooms someday though; someday when I'm in no hurry to get where I'm going and money is no expense, of course.

The stay with Ben Zuhl and Lowry Taylor in Chicago was very enjoyable, despite the absence of baseball due to yet-another Summer of '81 Strike. We all got used to Ben's whimpering after a while. We saw a few sights of the Chicago area, enjoyed several of the many splendid restaurants that great city offers and spent many fun hours at the best pinball/video arcade in North America, namely Wizards, where Ben

works. They have a nice feature there: in the front of the store, prominently displayed, is a large glassed-in board where the names and scores of the top players for each of their machines are displayed. Now there is only one amusement game I'm any good at and that's "Breakout". During my stay there, I was able to set the high score on two of the three games on the "Super Breakout" machine and the management quickly set my name on the board in neat little white plastic letters. Ben was here in Toronto a week ago and told me that I'm still the reigning champion on those two games so every day when he works he has to sit and stare at my name. Since Ben is undoubtedly the most consistently talented pinball and video player I know and since he recently lost the only high score he had on the board, I find this charmingly ironic!

WILCON was smaller this year and there were a few problems with the kitchen supplies but it was still a fine, frenetic fannish weekend with much eating, drinking, playing and relaxing. Winning another two hundred bucks at the poker table helped make having to fly home easier to accept too.

Normally after WILCON, I travel and stay with fan friends throughout the midwest. But this year I returned home to start work on ENERGUMEN. But that didn't curtail the fannishness of the summer...

The week after WILCON there was a small convention in Toronto run, in part, by fellow-FAPAN Taral. It was called TORQUE 2 and I'd been to TORQUE itself last year and while it was mediocre it was better than a poke in the eye with a sharp mimeo. So after working hard Friday night -- to ease my faned's conscience -- I went along on Saturday morning.

The first person I saw was Roger Reynolds who'd driven up unexpectedly from Ohio. Things were looking up. Then I found the con area and found GoH Tom Disch vainly trying to give a reading in the left half on the hucksters' room, said room being the be-all-and-end-all of the TORQUE function space. Things were looking down. But to give credit where it was due, TORQUE turned out to be a surprisingly good weekend. Several out-of-towners showed up and there was much talk about the current state of fandom -- there was even a panel on that topic which succeeded much better than most such efforts do -- along with much time spent enjoyably in the hotel bar. Saturday night there was a small-stakes poker game in which we re-taught Tom Disch how to play poker and he reciprocated by cleaning Roger's high full-house with a well-hidden four deuces, all the time smiling that cherubic little smile of his. And a good time was had by all, or at least by me, and that's what really counts.

The week after that was the third annual SPACECON, another of the summer's enjoyable relaxacons. Joe and Gay showed up, somewhat unexpectedly, and it was a pleasant if low-key weekend.

The weekend after that (the fifth weekend in a row I'd been at a con) Roger Reynolds and I watched a convention die. It was rather sad.

The first two AUTOCLAVES were splendid cons. Aimed at fanzine fans, they attracted a very congenial group and were among the best social gatherings I've been to as a fan. The third AUTOCLAVE slipped considerably, primarily because of the change in hotels. The fourth was cancelled due to lack of interest, then held the next year by an entirely different committee. Their ideas of con fun and mine didn't coincide so I found AUTOCLAVE 4 pretty bad despite the success of the FAAN Awards presentation as described in a previous FLOCCI. Several newer Toronto fans who knew AUTOCLAVE by reputation only left the con shaking their heads and muttering darkly while vowing never to return.

There was a fifth AUTOCLAVE planned for this year and announced as the last in that series of cons. Yet another new committee was working on it and they made the addi-

tional mistake of scheduling it opposite RIVERCON, the well-established Louisville convention.

It would be wrong to say that everyone I normally go to a con to see was planning on RIVERCON (or on staying home) but it wouldn't be far wrong. Even the regular con-goers from Detroit were going to Louisville.

For weeks I'd been pressured by friends who wanted me to go south that weekend but I felt a certain obligation to go to AUTOCLAVE. As I've intimated previously, I'm a sucker for (mostly self-imposed) fannish tradition. Having been at all the previous AUTOCLAVES I wanted to attend the final one. Besides, I didn't relish the twelve hour trip from Louisville to Toronto, especially not when I compared it to the four hour journey from Detroit. So after SPACECON I stayed with Roger in Findlay and we drove up to AUTOCLAVE, waving to our friends as they passed us on their way to Louisville.

It would be kind to say that AUTOCLAVE 5 was mediocre. Were it not for the presence of a handful of old-timers such as Howard Devore, Lynn Hickman and George Young it would have been dismal indeed. (To be fair, the Second Annual "Fannish Feud" was a lot of fun on Saturday afternoon: I added a Michigan back-scratcher to the kazoo I won last year thereby becoming the only double winner in the history of AUTOCLAVE.)

Of course, things may have picked up Saturday night but Roger and I had decided after Friday that we'd drive back early to Toronto for a party Doris was having and surprise her. We also figured we'd have more fun ourselves that way and I suspect we were absolutely right. Sic gloria transit AUTOCLAVE. And it's a damn shame.

I guess when you get right down to it, I've had a pretty fannish summer despite all the time and work that's gone into NERG. Most people would accept five consecutive cons plus visits in Cincinnati, Chicago, Findlay, Florida and a worldcon as a fair vacation but somehow it hasn't *seemed* like a summer to me. Obviously self-indulgent hedonism is highly addictive but I expect to be back into it again next year. One one-hundred page fanzine is enough for anybody's fannish career!

\* \* \* \* \*

I don't know if it's a symptom of early senility (I reached 35 this year) or an indication of the changing nature of fandom but more and more of late I find that fans in general don't seem to be as interesting or as imaginative or as creative as they used to be. This doesn't mean that I enjoy the company of my friends any less than I used to, just that fandom as an entity seems less fascinating to me today than it was some years ago.

As I said above, the best parts of a rather dull AUTOCLAVE were spent sitting around listening to a bunch of real old-timers talking about the wild and crazy things they did in fandom long ago. Every now and then Roger or I would add a story of our own but I realized that in comparison to Howard and Lynn and their generation, I just didn't have a storehouse of interesting tales to relate. I don't think this is entirely a matter of longevity: after fifteen years I should have at least a third as many stories as they do but I don't. Or at least I don't seem to. This may reflect on my abilities as a raconteur but I think it also reflects on the nature of fandom now and fandom in its formative years. The pioneers set the standards and those of us who follow in their footsteps inherit a structure and a history and a set of traditions and we tend to be somewhat more staid as we work within a system instead of creating the system as we go along.

I got a phonecall a few days back from Don Thompson, DENVENTION co-chair. So now I'm on a panel at worldcon on history of fandom in the '70s. I'm going to try and get to the earlier panels in the series and see how/what they do. It should be interesting to see if I can make *my* fandom as interesting to others as people like Tucker,

Rusty and Howard make their fandom to me. I just hope I've got our equivalent of a Harlan Ellison or a Bob Tucker to help carry the ball.

This comparison of fandom now and then goes beyond just personal fannish experience. Part of my editorial deals with the changes in fanzine fandom in just the last eight years since ENERGUMEN was last published. Fanzines just aren't what they used to be and that isn't blinkered nostalgia talking. With one or two exceptions, the people doing the very few current worthwhile fanzines are the same people who've been doing fanzines for years. There's a noticeable absence of new blood and talent. There's also a noticeable absence of fanzines, period but in our current economic situation that's rather understandable. It doesn't bode well for the future of fanzines, however, when the big stories of fanzine fandom are WARHOON, VOID, INNUENDO and NERG.

It goes into conventions, too. There's always been a lot of complaining about how fandom has gotten too large, too impersonal, too commercial -- another topic I touch on in ENERGUMEN -- but perhaps for the first time in my fannish memory something may be done about it. At that panel at TORQUE, I heard for the first time about the possibility of a "no-frills" worldcon bid.

Apparently at least two groups are seriously considering announcing a no-frills worldcon, a back-to-basics approach to cutting down the crowds that now inundate our larger gatherings. No art-show, no films, no fringe programming, nothing except fans getting together to enjoy each others' company and talk about science fiction and fandom.

Personally, I'd be all in favour of such a concept, provided it was very thoroughly explained to the voters. I also happen to think that it wouldn't win because only the hard-core of fannish types would support it and they'd be swamped by the much larger masses of non-fannish types who want twenty-four hour films and masquerades and banquets and art-shows and plays and concerts and discos and other such peripheral stuff. But that's just my opinion. I hope I get to find out whether or not I'm right and I hope I get to find out pretty soon. But in the meantime, I'll put up with the three-ring circus that worldcon has become: it may not be ideal but it's the only game in town and there are ways to get around the milling masses and still have a damn good time.

\* \* \* \* \*

FLOCCI 1 was published in June 1974 for FAPA #148. So in seven years and two months I've managed only eight slim issues, a not-so-grand total of merely sixty one pages. Many FAPAns do that much in a single mailing. Yet I'm still here, even if I can't find a satisfactory answer when Dave Locke asks me why.

I guess it's partly for the same reason I pay far too much to go to worldcons: personal fannish tradition. I enjoy getting FAPA mailings, even if I only read parts of them. And I enjoy having to publish a little gray fanzine every now and then. It ensures that I don't entirely lose touch with my fanpubbling skills (and helps me remember how to spell "floccipaucinihilipilification", a word I always find most useful when I'm forced to teach Computer Science) and helps keep the mimeo from going completely to pieces. So I expect to hang in here for a few more years, minacing my way into my dotage and recording my fannish travels and tribulations so I'll have resource material when I become the Howard Devore of my generation and need to sit around regaling younger fans with tales of what it was like in the Good Old Days, before fans got to conventions by matter transmitters and sent three-dimensional full-colour fanzines to each other's personal computers.

So, perhaps I'll see some of you in Denver. I'll be the one in the bar. And if anyone is interested in a hundred pages of Damn Fine fanwriting I'll mail you one for US \$4 (\$3 in person) and donate the money to the Susan Wood Scholarship Fund. See ya.