

The Lesser Flea

no. 11.

Pulished for OMPA 17th Mailing
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So this issue I'm feeling bloody-minded. No different from usual, you say? Ah, well, that's life. I doubt if there'll be any pertinent reviews this time - only comments by the way.

For instance, one of the interesting things worth comment is the hoo-haw foofaraw raised over the acceptance of a non-political pamphlet in the previous mailing. My Ghod, a itty-little-bitty thing that size that can not have raised the postage rate by so much as a mite and screams are raised about the propriety of accepting something not published by the actual person contributing it. All right, if that's the way it's going to be, then all we have to do to get away with it is to staple a sheet like that into the middle of our current offering and it's covered. No sentence in the Constitution says every piece submitted for posting must be by an OMPA member, otherwise how are we going to pass Harry Turner's gorgeous piece of drollery under the KHB frank last mailing? No, out with it - it's not allowable - and that probably raised the postage rate at least a ½d. Let us please be logical about these things - if A's pamphlet offends your political or religious sensibilities you have every redress: you can reply in kind: you can get up a petition (but it will probably do you as much good as Gem Carr's efforts against Coslet and Myers in FAPA): or the constitution can be amended.

Anyway, that pamphlet of course holds considerable interest now that the scientists' report on radiation hazards is out. It's not an encouraging one at the best: its worst is heartbreaking. But what's it matter if a few thousand people die of cancer, leukemia, or any other radiation induced disease to those who want power? I wonder what our rigidly conservative fannies will be saying in the future - both of 'em? One for Britain and one for America should make for some interesting argument, even if we disagree with them.

Talking of Gem Carr, although she can be infuriating at times, I must say how much I admire her for her stand regarding the W.S.F.S. She takes our point of view - one that is currently very unpopular, especially in the States. More and more recently, I've been impressed with Gem's statements - either we're subverting her or she's subverting us. Yet I wonder how she feels now that Dr. Teller - who used to be the Government spokesman on science in the US - has resigned. (He and the Satevepost were Gem's favourites for quoting, and even the SEP now has come out in its editorials against the testing of H-bombs.) It must be extremely disconcerting, and in some cases almost heartbreaking, to find a case you have built up on the words of a man you respect and whose words you believe, fall apart as he suddenly switches sides or resigns. So far I've not been so unfortunate in my quotees.

Then, of course, the other week we received a worried letter from one very revered OMPAn regarding Sandy's not resigning the Treasurership of the 1957 Worldcon to Sneary because we were still in debt. Well, we sadly regretted the passing of CONTACT, whose place as a fan newszine has been taken rather inefficiently by FANAC. At least with Contact you could be sure the 'news' was accurate (rather difficult with Fanac). If anyone else is worried about that little snippet of 'news' at the top of this page, then let's recount the facts. (1) Sandy was never Treasurer - see the Programme booklet for 1957 wherein it states specifically he was Accountant, therefore he could hardly refuse to resign a post he never held. (2) The Solacon Committee in toto took over on the specified date, i.e. the 1st November 1957. And how am I so sure? Well besides being part of the Publicity Committee, I signed the final account as rendered to the US Tax Department, as Assistant to the Accountant. So that's that little item of 'news' down the drain. Then again, the Falascas informed us that Fanac completely misquoted their letters - upon which Sandy's first assessment of their attitude was based (these were the only data available at the time - Fandom's Burden hadn't then been received). So when you read your Fanac, use salt in good strong doses.

The final result of these matters seems to be that Committees of any sort, to forestall backbiting and smear tactics from the uninformed or inimical, should publish a DAILY newsletter, to be sent to all fans and all types of sf-fans everywhere, containing their intentions, the arguments that led up to them, their reasons, what they suspect someone is likely to say, their rebuttal of such possible sayings, the possible answers to such rebuttals, and the further correction of any such statements. All off which would leave them no time at all in which to (a) go to work (b) meet in committee (c) do anything decided in committee (d) think about getting anything done (e) and no money with which to do all this. Q.E.A. Which is, of course, what Walter should have done when TAFF was first mooted, and which naturally the BSFA should be doing right now.

Because, of course, what applies to one Committee, applies to all. Now, while I admit that they say there are going to be further projects supplied for your £1 membership, they don't say what they are in any literature. What they actually offer for £1 is a quarterly journal and the use of a library. Now, current fans in most cases either themselves possess the books that are likely to be available in that library (in our case Vinç almost certainly does) or can avail themselves of such books locally without a great deal of trouble, or have already read them and only want to buy them, not just borrow them. So from the point of view of the established fan, that's out, leaving alas only a quarterly journal.

So as far as we are concerned the journal costs 5/- an issue, whatever might be said. Supposing for instance they have 100 members, the amount acquired by their Treasury is £100. 100 copies of a forty-page fanzine four times a year, including postage can't cost more than about £25. First, because with capital behind you (and these copies are all subscription copies, remember) you can buy stencils paper and ink wholesale at a remarkable saving, and postage on each copy is a maximum of 3d. Allow another £25 for postage, paper, and other expenses of the officers of the BSFA and there is a neat little £50 left over, unaccounted for, and this is supposed to be a NON-profit-making organisation. And what are we being offered for that £50 I want to know? Nobody has said. I wish they would. Because, being fam-

iliar with the cost of producing a fanzine - even with a photolithed cover- I resent paying a quid. In fact, I can't afford to, and am not going to, until I get some satisfactory answer as to what else I'm being offered. If I felt it was something really worth while - and I don't mean just say 3/- off the cost of the entrance ticket to a convention because I'd still be better off not subscribing - I would make myself afford it... till then, uh-uh. BSFA public relations men forward please.

Of course, it's almost too late to bother about PR where TAFF is concerned. The whole thing has bogged itself down in a mad spiteful squabble with Walt on the receiving end. Hickman's piece made me sick, Madle annoyed me for his determined misinterpretations, and Chuck went too bull-headed in defence of Walt. Whatever anyone says TAFF WAS initiated at the Convention Chuck quoted: Walt did NOT say fanzine pubbers were to be the ONLY representatives or voters: the rumour that there had been vote-buying was not put into print by Walt: probably few people actually know but when Walt was informed by American fans that someone had been paying people's 50¢ if they would vote for him, a select group consisting of the Bulmers, Clarkes, Sanderson, Norman Shorrock and Dave Newman and Walt sent a hasty tape - by AIRMAIL - to Don Ford saying in effect "Look we've heard there's been vote-buying. Madle has won, and people will therefore say it was him. Please let us know the facts and if there has been vote-buying who did it?" Back came a very insulting tape, calling Walt all the names that could be thought of. Now, we asked Don to let Bob Madle hear the tape we had sent. Whether he ever did or not I don't remember. But that, so help me, is the actual fact of what happened. Nothing was put into print until after we had received Don's reply, an airmail from Pavlat reassuring us regarding Bob - and only then did Vinc circulate to OMPA members the leaflet that was intended to ease Bob's reception. Which I know from letters we received from some of the recipients of that pamphlet it succeeded in doing. BOB and Hickman now owe Walt a suitable apology and I hope they are both men enough to give it in print. Don Ford will be able to confirm the above statements, although he'll probably deny that the reply tape was abusive - but phew some of the things they called Walt.

Anyway, unless our Ron has suborned the mails or Bobbie or Pavlat or something I don't suppose the current TAFF rep will be having anything in this mailing. We received a pc from him this morning sent from OKLAHOMA and what does it say on the back ... Play an LP for me... and those who know the Sanders collection will know which one he means. By now the business meeting and the Con will be over this year...presumably 50% of the attendees hate us and 50% love us, but what the hell... wish I'd been able to be there tho.

Wonder if I should leave a little space here in case an airmail arrives saying Detroit has won the 1959 con? Um, maybe not, maybe it won't arrive in time. Maybe I'd better do some reviews... there won't be many because of time, so for those that I just read and enjoyed, read and didn't find any arguments in, just read, or put aside unread, I'm not making any comments. Those that roused me to comment will be taken over the page.

STOP PRESS:

DETROIT wins 1959 Worldcon. Congrats!

So, to the reviews and here's hoping they'll come out because first I'm doing temporary work for a change and am currently working in a Solicitors' office where they have neither correcting nor - of all things - type cleaning brushes. Had I known I'd have brought my own but....

52nd Street It was good to see you at the Globe Jim. It seems you Jim Linwood were brave enough to overcome your shyness. Try it again some time when we are not in such a rush. It's odd how you and Sandy picked on the same book and very interesting to see a rabid jazzfan's reaction to it in comparison with that of a general-type musiclover like Sandy. Both identical in fact. As for your list of best books, I can pick nine giving no particular order as I wouldn't dare try to pick the best. One is non-fiction (you said s.f. but it comes in my category of s.f. non-fiction) and so many clamour for the tenth position I can't separate any of them out. So for size how about Simak's "City", Heinlein's "Door into Summer", "E Pluribus Unicorn" (fantasy really) Sturgeon, "Pebble in the Sky" (or any of the foundation series) Asimov, "Prelude to Space" Clarke and "Shadow on the Hearth" Merrill - both for their documentary style "The Disappearance" Philip Wylie, the non-fiction "Conquest of Space", and for ninth either "Galactic Patrol" or for its immense sweep through the ages "Triplanetary". It's an impossible task.

Vile Deeds Welcome to our coterie. We shall really have to start The Youngs "blotting-paper fandom" amongst the addicts of this typically American style of paper. I'm fascinated by it and I believe many others are too. We look forward to more of your own particular stuff.

Morph He's done it again - just LOOK at that cover. Fine John Roles montage John. And please, please don't keep me in suspense,,, I'm itching to get to the place where you are actually inducted into Hindi (or whatever is the exact word for the religion of the Hindus). Have you, by the way, seen "The Lost Continent"? I was fascinated by it, but completely swept away with two sequences. The first was the temple sequences filmed I believe in the Shwe-Dagon Pagoda - the timeless peace seemed to absolutely exude from the screen. The second was the volcanic sequence, mainly for the weird landscape, so much as one would expect to see on the moon. It was completely eerie. I would like to see this again-- it was on with M.Hulot's Holiday which was hysterically funny. Vine nearly bust a gut laughing at the section where he lets loose the fireworks saved up for the end of season display. So beautifully done, with each person speaking his or her own language and Hulot (Jacques Tati) saying only a couple of words at the very beginning of the film. Characterisation was superb. Re the Limbo 90 scene, I am damned if I can see what puzzles you - it seemed only too clear to me - except for the timing. Clinically I always thought recovery rate was supposed to be longer than that! That dance - you should have reminded me in the clubroom...come down to London and we'll spend a whole evening dancing, these two can't even get round the floor. More Morphs like this please.

DUPE You say about giving peerages to Socialist politicians & Mashworth. T U leaders and "So put them harmlessly out of the way in the House of Lords". But then they wouldn't be because it is the Socialists who are trying to eliminate the use of the Lords and with all of them in the Lords no doubt it would then become a much stronger and far more useful place. This suggestion about an OMPAnthology comes up regularly once a year it seems. Since Chuck first mentioned it in about the first year it comes up regularly, and it is still a good idea. I think Chuck ought to start it off but if anyone cares to send their list of 10 items from the first three years only to me, I will willingly list the possibles with their frequency of mention and we might be able to carry on from there. Let's try it for size anyway.

STEAM Well, well, do you think wonders will never cease, or H.K.Bulmer. are you just left flabbergasted? Mind you, it's the wonderful Turner stuff that gets me about this. Good to see him back again, and such style too. As to your comments re Kyle, perhaps you've now read Sandy's last Blunt and have revised your opinions. And now that you know he wants to institute a damage suit for \$25,000 (how ridiculous can you get?) what do you think? About the official posts, I quite agree. We shouldn't have them running one year after another BUT, and it's a big but, how do we get replacements? It's academic at the moment admitted: there's a possibility a ruling might be needed in the future: but we seem to be rather on the horns of a dilemma. I have no suggestion except to say let's carry on as we are while we're O.K. and, if there should in the future be cause to alter it, we have complete recourse to the last sentence of Clause 9 of the Constitution.

Fanlandia - I reckon I could make a weavable fibre from the plants there by making a distaff with half a coconut and a stick. This would give us thread of a sort and I can weave material. For finer work I'll grow my hair a bit longer and pull a hair for use with a pierced fishbone for a needle. Of course we can pierce it - you can pull a nail out of one of your shoes, can't you? We should make out all right. I'm interested to see what the others could do.

VAGARY Thanks for the family tree : it certainly seems to ease R. Wild. matters. Further detailed comments appear earlier in this issue.

DOGIE Hi Bob. Standard office hours over here are 9 or 9.30 to Pavlat 5 or 5.30 depending upon how hard the bosses are (i.e. it might be 9 to 5.30 or 9.30 to 5: it varies) with an hour for lunch. Five days a week. Very few firms work a regular Saturday morning every week. You must remember, however, that a temporary shorthand typist has prestige value. She is filling a hole that the firm desperately wants filled at that time and of course with demand and supply as they are (supply being very short) they can command good wages and good hours. I personally have been doing this a month or so now: the first firm I went to offered me a permanent job, but I didn't want it - I've too much freedom at the moment. And if you're a good worker - and without boasting I can

say I am - you are very much in demand. *I am bitterly disappointed in Bob Madle's attack. Why pick on Chuck? Why not Gem Carr & her correspondents (I know what was said in FAPA about your being a personal friend of hers & her denial). There are several things wrong with Bob's article, apart from the nauseous underhanded method of attack in a tasteless display of erudition, mainly caused through his own lack of knowledge of Britfandom. Apart from that, Whatever Bob may say about 'our' fandom, in British circles the ones who pay in the money to TAFF are the vociferous fen. A maximum of 50 Britfen contributed to it this year. When one thinks of all the readers of fmz in Britain that's goddamned awful. But when one counts all the active fans - those who run conventions (& attend), start & run clubs & publish fmz (which over here happens to be the same people each time) it is good. They should, then, be entitled to their opinion as you are entitled to yours. Actually Don did get protests from nearly all those people on his vote-count (via the Contact group) and if you'd read all that's been said on that count you might stop bitching about it. Chuck's article was based on the origination of TAFF at which he was present - I know because I found & lent the quote to him. Since the idea was that fen should be wellknown both sides of the Atlantic he is right in saying you were not a suitable choice. Nor were Hoffman, Raybin or McNulty. Neither, as you say, was Ken Bulmer, BUT you must admit he was better known to fanzine fans in the US than you were to fanzine fans (the active fans) in Britain. As for your statement that you'd have won TAFF minus the Midwescon votes Ford sent a letter to us in which he gave us figures showing the exact opposite. Have it out with him. With only 50 Britfen voting, Eney had a good following in US. You call those credentials. Till '55 Britfen knew nothing about Worldcons except for reports by WAW & EJC. All your passports to fame are strictly US-style, not likely to make you known to us. Remember there was no contact between fans in US & GB except for FANZINE FANS. *Candidly I can't see why the host country can't do the nominating. My attitude is: right, since it's "Chuck's little group" (i.e. actifén, you want to antagonize, you must remember that the fakefan (your definition) who will be over in 1960 will have to do without welcome by that group. It was "CLG" who entertained YOU, and thought we'd sorted things out. But did you ever publish anything to clear up misunderstandings? If you had this spiteful attack on those who made your passage round Britain easy might have been avoided. My final attitude is that all this is so bloody silly I'd like to hit all your heads together. The only reason I come in is I'm annoyed at the libel on Walt, & many people feel the same way. That's why they're kicking up a stink, not just to denigrate Madle and Ford.

BURP - Bennett. If $38.6\% + 51.1\% + 42.2\% + 51.1\% + 4$ is not = less than 50% you should see some scientist. YOU have found a new maths. Young Lions was pubbed soon after the war (I read it then): I wouldn't read it now if it were to come out for the first time. Ask Michael if he's heard of little legal things called Bills of Exchange.

X PHENOTYPE - Eney. Hey, dollars were 4 to the £. Holidays: Scots get New Year's day instead of Boxing Day.

ARCHIVE - Mercer. The thing that beats me is why everyone is so sure the west would LOSE a conventional war, when the satellites would probably do behind lines sabotage. Colour: Read that racial hatred is probably a race fear built up on white man 'civilizing' a country and considering native women his meat. Now he considers the native males wish to retaliate. I'm sickened by the whole thing, Notting Hill, Nottingham & Little Rock. Ghod what a bloody, bloody world we live in. Must stop, that's the last of space.