

# *Obsessions*

## *5: Gary Farber*

Have him stripped naked, covered in  
chocolate, and sent to my tent.

## What is a Fan?

We all started out as neos, you know, and took years to pick up this stuff. No one is born knowing this stuff. There are no written tests administered, really. All anyone cares about, if they care anything at all, are about *attitudes*, like having a sense of humor, being interested in other fans and fandom generally, being interesting, and so on. Everything else is mere details.

You must also remember that we are all individuals. Hell, there are people *I* think are excessively close-

minded about “who is a fan” type questions, whom I get annoyed at. It’s natural that we all have different standards, and opinions about these things. You get to make up your own mind. That’s a cool thing about fandom. We really don’t have “leaders,” though certainly the voice of someone who is generally respected carries weight with many. So I know many fans whose opinions on various issues I respect. But we’re all free-thinkers, and stubborn ones at that: that’s a key fannish trait. A lot of fans love to argue, too, though I’m sure you’ve never noticed that. :-)

Fans tend to be the loner types, who feel a bit odd, strange, and different from the norm. They tend towards the slightly asocialized, and are usually heavy readers, often feeling "out" of the social crowd. They also have a greater-than-average tendency to be left-handed, eldest or youngest or only children, and they sometimes suffered childhood illnesses, or their parents travelled: anything to give them something of that "outsider" feeling.

I just thought you might like to know some of this stuff.

Also keep in mind that each con is unique in its own flavor to lesser or greater degree. Balticon is rather different than Disclave, for instance. Balticon is much larger, and more media-oriented, while still being a more fan-oriented con than not; it might make a good "compromise" "starter" con for you. :-) There are so many cons now, that I don't know much about many of them, but just keep in mind that whichever you go to, you can't generalize *too* much about another one, and, for that matter, there's sometimes significant change from year to year; it kinda depends.

You travel to a few, meet people, hear about what other cons other people like, give them a try, and so on.

You might also check fanzine listings, and send off for some samples. Many people still regard fanzines as the “heart” of fandom, after all, and I’m rather fond of the good ones myself.

## **The Archivist**

For the life of me, I don’t see significant differences between writing on my keyboard and posting, and writing on my keyboard and calling the printout a

fanzine. Not for most intents and purposes.

Nor am I much interested in tribal identifications of "fanzine fan," "con fan," "e-fan," as I am in "interesting fan," "smart fan," "creative fan," "contributing fan."

However, I do think that given the exceedingly small print run of most fanzines, that it is a very inconsiderate act to destroy them when there are other people who would appreciate receiving them. Depriving people of the possibility of obtaining that copy is a subtraction from the world.

This is number 11 in a  
series of 13—

## **The Lost Fanzines of Gary Farber**

Produced by Alison  
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All contents

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