

NEVER QUITE ARRIVING

Bonus "Not By Christina" issue
Please don't take glasses into the Lake

Fannish Exclusivity

I've been working on a General Theory of this Exclusivity topic in fandom for umpty years now, as it is a permanent and inevitable recurrence in every fannish group. I'm still somewhat inarticulate about it.

The fact is that any group must have group characteristics to distinguish the group and its members. These can include personal characteristics which people share—and to a large extent, fans do this. They can also include jargon, which fans have. There can be other Member-of-The-Group Cues, which fans do have.

And when a group is recognizable, some people will assume they are welcome to join, some will look for signs, and some will assume they are unwelcome. What the group does to make new people welcome or drive people away will affect this, but no matter what the group does, newcomers will still react across the spectrum.

But it might be worthwhile for fans to do some self-analysis as to what sort of signals we put out that make some people feel unwelcome, unwanted, and excluded. Which are legitimate self-defining acts, and which are thoughtless bits that we don't realize look very unwelcoming from the outside?

Some people, naturally, I do want to exclude: the excessively creepy, the utterly unpleasant, the excessively stupid. But the permanent existence of nitwits unjustifiably claiming they have been unfairly excluded from a fannish social group does not preclude the frequent existence of desirable people making it clear that they have not recognized "come on in, the water's fine" signs from us.

What do y'all think we do to put out such signals, positive and negative, and is there anything we should work on changing?

Similarly, one doesn't "join a newsgroup." We are social, but we are not a group, save as we act as such. A newsgroup is a forum. Open to all. How the regular denizens react to you is another matter, but there are few things all will agree upon. What I'm trying to say is that groupings of people who post to a newsgroup are clusters of friends and acquaintances, as in any situation in life, and they are subgroupings to the entire set of People Who Can Post, which is made up of everyone who can reach Usenet, of course. But there is no unitary Group.

Formatting Fanzines

Well, I wrote quite horribly in my early zines (yeah, sure, there was promise there, and creativity and humor and other good stuff, but technically I was quite awfully ungrammatical). And I did terrible things at times with set-off or badly lettered headings, and other bits of production ugliness. Various other aesthetic mistakes did I make.

But I was always well aware of the importance of margins, though I might have accidentally committed some errors—none that I recall, but I could easily be forgetting. And not only did every one of my genzines have illos, but so did most of my apazines.

I plead absolutely guilty to "no columns."
When using pica type (12 pt.), with a clean layout, I don't like columns, as a rule. I'm not fond of them with elite type (10 pt.) either. [*What about 7 pt type on A8 paper?—Ed.*] I only consider them necessary when using a typeface and layout that would otherwise be an excessively off-putting use of endless type. This is a matter of taste, of course.

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The Lost Fanzines of Gary Farber

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