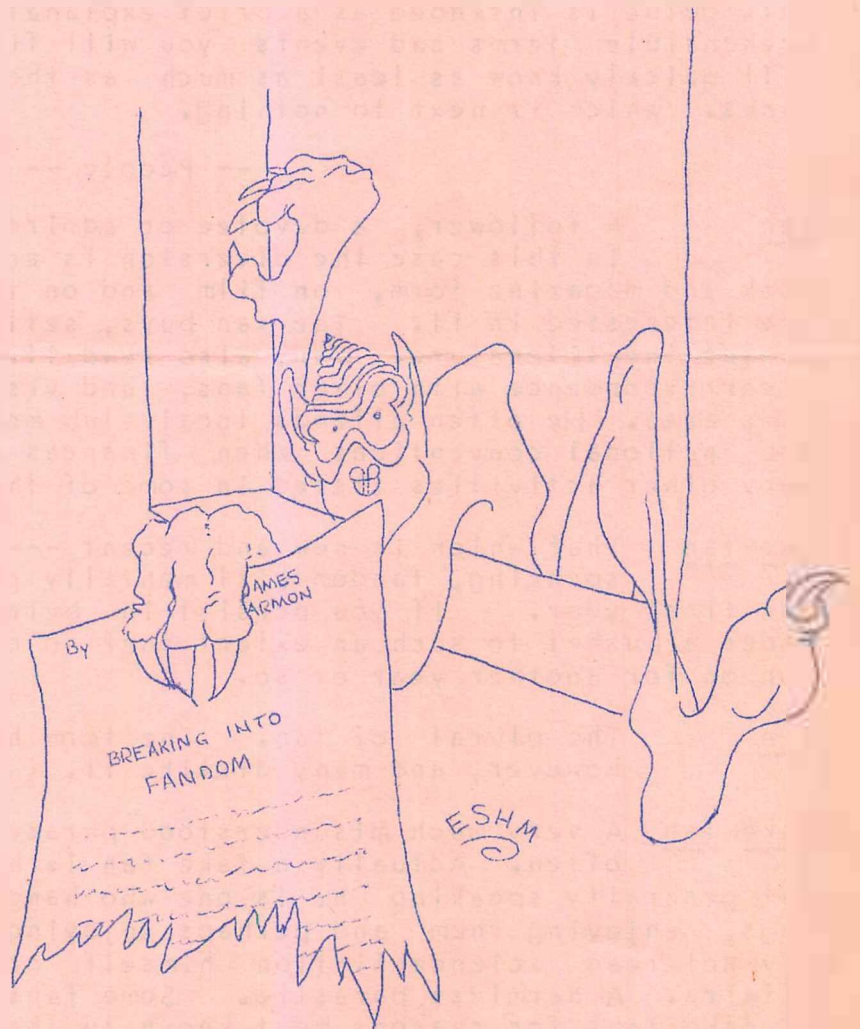


THE NEO-FAN'S GUIDE

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THE NEO-FAN'S GUIDE
to the jungle known as
Science Fiction Fandom

Very well. You have stumbled onto something called "Fandom." It appears to be connected with science fiction. Much of fandom seems next-to-impossible to understand and some of it seems downright crazy. Your impression is correct. It is. Our advice is to back out while you can and find some other hobby. Year after year, new people are attracted to science fiction fandom and almost without exception they chase around blindly for weeks or months, attempting to understand what is being said, being done --- to understand what it is all about. This guide is intended as a brief explanation of some of those incomprehensible terms and events you will find in fandom. With it, you will quickly know as least as much as the eldest graybeard in fannish ranks. Which is next to nothing.

-- People --

Fan A follower, a devotee or admirer of any sport or diversion. In this case the diversion is science and fantasy fiction in book and magazine form, on film and on the airwaves. We assume you are interested in it. The fan buys, sells, trades, collects and discusses the literature. Many also read it. Usually the fan maintains a correspondence with other fans, and visits them when located in the same area. He often attends local club meetings, or state conferences and national conventions when finances permit. He participates in many other activities listed in some of the paragraphs below.

Neo-fan That which is new and recent --- a recruit. You. Generally speaking, fandom will mentally classify you as a neo-fan for the first year. If you persist in being idiotic, or hide yourself under a bushel to such an extent that no one ever hears of you, it may run on for another year or so.

Fen The plural of fan. The term has not been widely accepted however, and many dislike it.

Fake fan A very much misunderstood phrase, but one you will encounter often. Actually a fake fan is hard to identify or describe, but generally speaking he is one who hangs around people and gatherings, enjoying them and perhaps enjoying their activities, but who may not read science fiction himself or take an active part in fan affairs. A harmless parasite. Some fans like to describe themselves as fake fans for reasons best known to themselves, but their continual activity in the field reveals the description as false. The phrase was coined about 1940 and applied to one man, Jack Wiedenbeck, who roomed with fans and enjoyed their company but who shunned all responsibility in fan doings and fannish institutions.

Passi-fan The passive fan. He who sits back quietly, looking on but seldom participating. Not to be confused with fake fan.

Acti-fan The active fan. The opposite of the above. He who is always found in the middle of fannish activity.

Ex-fan He who has walked out and left our madhouse behind. Sometimes the ex-fan slides out quietly and is seldom missed, but sometimes he goes out with a whoop and a holler, denouncing those who stay behind and blaming them for his trials and tribulations. A very few ex-fans have been known to have a change of heart and return.

Fanne The female of the species. This term has not been widely accepted because it is sometimes mispronounced with a second syllable. An older and frequently used term is "fem-fan."

Serious Constructive fan A label that is more scorned than honored in certain quarters because of the nature of the critter. A do-gooder, or a self-appointed Censor. This fan often believes he has a Mission in fandom; he labors for some lofty Purpose or worthy line of Endeavor. He may be the fannish equivalent of the Rotarian or the Chamber of Commerce booster; he likes to think fandom or science fiction will be infinitely better for His Work. And sometimes he is the organizer or builder who accomplishes an enduring work despite the scoffing of the group mentioned next below. The abbreviation infrequently used is "SerConFan."

Insurgents The fun-loving crowd, the happy rebels kicking up their heels at authority or stuffiness. The Insurgents may be isolated individuals with a chosen target, or small splinter groups that walked out of a club because they could no longer tolerate the atmosphere. They delight in making life miserable for Serconfans.

Pros The professional class. Men and women who write the magazine stories, literary agents who peddle them, editors who purchase and print them, book publishers and their salesmen, and the artists who illustrate both books and magazines. These people are often called "filthy pros" and "dirty old pros" because they are supposedly rich, and because it is whispered they will stoop to any trick to rob, cheat or villify an innocent fan. The pros occupy a dubious place in fandom. The majority of them are as much a fan as anyone, and large numbers of them are older fans who turned to writing for fun and profit. Several pros active in the field today are the very ones who founded fandom back in 1930. In the face of all this, they are both despised as parasites and fawned upon as minor tin gods. Those fans who are loudest in their censure are frequently the very ones who try the hardest to sell fiction and thus become a pro. We feel the interpretation is obvious.

Fandom The group as a whole, the loosely-knit organization of fans and pros who read and collect science fiction, who boost it and would like to share it with you. Fandom got its start in 1930, in and around New York City and a few other large centers, when people who had been writing letters to the magazines gradually began writing to each other. Science fiction clubs were formed and monthly bulletins were issued. The movement spread like an epidemic. The size of fandom has never been adequately determined. In the 1930's it was thought to consist of one or two hundred people; in 1948 an estimate placed their number at five hundred. Today there may be one or more thousand fans scattered all over the globe. They have appeared in some thirty or more countries outside the United States. Two of these foreign groups deserve special mention.

Canadian fandom became an important factor in the mid-40's, and hosted a major convention in 1948. After several years of subsequent inactivity, it enjoyed a renaissance beginning in 1952 and the number of "Canfans" is still increasing as of this writing. British fandom seems, at the moment, almost more active than American fandom-- judging from the number of fan magazines currently published, the number of "Anglofans" contributing to fan magazines in all countries, and the numerous conventions and local gatherings which take place in the Isles. Because of kindred interests and personal ties through correspondence, Canadian and British fandom may be considered -- along with American fandom -- as a homogenous unit.

-- Activities --

Clubs Clubs of all sizes and purposes abound everywhere, with memberships ranging from a mere handful to several hundred. Many cities large and small boast such clubs and you can ferret them out by writing letters and asking questions. There are also national organizations in existence, such as those detailed below.

N3F Also called the NFFF, the initials of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. It is said to have a membership of about four hundred, and supposedly publishes a frequent bulletin. The N3F was organized in 1941 after the downfall of another large club and was intended to be a social and service organization for all fans everywhere. Its purpose was to organize, standardize and coordinate fan activities, to provide a common meeting ground, and to publish informational booklets such as this one. However it was so large and unwieldy that it seldom got off the ground; a series of crises plagued it and few of the projects it announced ever saw completion. For many years it has been the object of scorn and ridicule, but despite this it continues today, aided and abetted by those who have faith in it.

Fapa The initials of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, an amateur journalism club. It contains 65 members who write, illustrate, edit and/or publish their own magazines for the enjoyment of the general membership. Each member is obligated to produce at least eight pages per year, but frequently they produce many hundred such pages. All magazines are sent to an official editor, who assembles them into bundles and then ships one bundle to each member at quarterly periods. Depending upon the activity of individual members, a bundle may contain as few as a dozen magazines totalling a hundred pages, or as many as thirty or forty magazines totalling five hundred pages. Officers are chosen in annual elections, and dues are set at \$2 per year to cover postage and other expenses. Not all of the contents of these bundles pertain to science fiction or fannish matters, but the general tone is usually fanatic.

Saps Initials of the Spectator Amateur Press Society, an organization which functions in a manner similar to the Fapa, except that the membership is limited to 35 persons, the dues are \$1.50 each three mailings, and activity requirements are at least six pages every six months. In addition, Saps require that minimum contribution in the very first bundle a new member is to receive.

Ompa The Off-trail Magazine Publishers Association, with headquarters in Great Britain and a membership in several countries. Again the organization is patterned after the Fapa, with the present membership at 37 persons, and higher activity requirement.

Others There are many smaller amateur journalism clubs similar to those listed above. Providing reliable data on them is hazardous to the extreme, for their life-spans often may be compared to that of the May-fly. As this is written, the following are known to exist: WAPA, the Whimsical Amateur Press Assn.; 13-APA, which contains thirteen members; The Cult --- that's all, just The Cult; and PAPA, the Pornographic Amateur Press Assn., which exists only in the fertile imaginations of certain fun-loving fans. In addition to all of the above there exists of course numerous correspondence clubs.

Fanmag The fan magazine, a booklet or journal produced by the fan for his own and others' amusement. Also called "Fanzine" and "Fmz." Fanzines are reproduced by mimeograph, hektograph, spirit duplicator, lithography and the printing press; a charge ranging from 5¢ to 35¢ is usually made for each because the editor simply cannot afford to give them away. They may be as small as one or two pages or as large as a hundred pages; they contain fiction, non-fiction, verse and artwork by the editor and other fans who are invited to contribute to his pages. This material is not paid for in cash, but in free copies of the magazine. Naturally, the quality varies widely.

The first fanzine was called "The Comet" and was published during the birth of fandom in 1930. Ray Palmer, now a dirty old pro, was its editor. During the past twenty-five years there have been far more than a thousand fanzines published, although no one has kept count of their number. Some fanzines have lasted but one issue while others have gone on to thirty, forty, fifty or sixty. The current longevity-leader is "Fantasy Times" with well over two hundred issues. Fanzines are published by individuals, by local and national clubs, and by groups of two or three who pool their resources. Readers and subscribers are obtained by advertising, by sending out sample copies, and by getting favorable reviews in both pro and fan magazines. Contributors are obtained by either begging for material or by publishing such an excellent journal that fans WANT to appear in your pages.

Warning: as a neo-fan, be careful in sending large sums of money for subscriptions to fanzines. We have already said that fanmags sometimes last only a few issues and then vanish; it isn't considered sporting to refund your money to you. The best policy is to first make sure a magazine is still publishing and then send only enough cash to purchase one copy. Later, when the fanzine shows signs of continued life, you may send larger amounts if you wish.

One-shot A fanzine which is published once, and once only. The editor clearly states his intention of publishing only the one issue. This is a one-shot you are reading. Frequently, a group of fans will hold a "one-shot session" for the express purpose of publishing such a journal; usually in the late night hours.

Promag The opposite of fanmag, the professional science fiction magazine sold on the newsstands. Those promags which have fan magazine review columns are valuable sources of publicity.

Books Remain books. The phrase-colners have neglected to offer a tongue-twisting abbreviation for them, thank heavens, altho those abbreviations used in the publishing trade are used. "HC" means a hardcover book, while "Pb" is a paperback, or pocketbook.

Cons Science fiction conferences and conventions. Generally speaking, a conference is a regional gathering catering to

those fans in a metropolitan area, a state or group of states. There are many such conferences held across the country each year, usually in a hall or small hotel. They attract from thirty to one or two hundred people, and are limited to one, or possibly two days. You can find the date and location of the next few by asking questions and by reading fanzines.

The national conventions are held annually, only in the larger cities and the sizable hotels. They attract fans and pros from everywhere on the North American continent, plus a few from foreign countries; in recent years the attendance is never less than 200 and on one occasion shot over 1000. The convention program is made up of formal and informal talks by pros, the same by fans, club meetings, special previews of science fiction movies, home-talent plays and ballets, and most anything else the harried convention committee can throw at the audience. Expenses are met by charging a \$1 or \$2 membership fee, selling advertisements in the program booklet, and by auctioning off material donated by the promags. This material consists of original manuscripts, illustrations taken from their pages, and paintings that have appeared on their covers. Frequently the author or artist will autograph the matter purchased. These auctions are a part of the program and will run on for several hours, or until all material is disposed of. Too, there is usually a banquet for which a separate fee is charged, and at which fans and pros are feted. It is customary to select a Guest of Honor, usually a well-known pro, who delivers the principal address.

Convention sites are chosen by balloting. The country is divided into three zones (East, Midwest, and West) and every effort is made to permit each zone to have a convention in turn. While this arrangement has not always proved possible or desirable in the past, it is expected to be standard procedure in the future. Conventions are usually sponsored by members of an active fan club in a principal city. Cities wishing to sponsor such conventions make known their intentions well in advance, with much propaganda and political jockeying; they present their cases at the current convention and attendees who have paid the registration fee vote their choice. For a number of years, the British Isles have held annual conventions attracting increasing numbers of Anglofans, plus visitors from the Continent and America --- or "the Colonies," as they would put it. British conventions are distinguished by the greater informality of the programs and the greater velocity of the water-pistols.

Following is a list of North American convention cities thus far, with dates and identifying code-names:

New York City	1939	"The Nycon"
Chicago	1940	"Chicon One"
Denver	1941	"The Denvention"
Los Angeles	1946	"The Pacificon"
Philadelphia	1947	"The Philcon" (one)
Toronto	1948	"The Torcon"
Cincinnati	1949	"The CInvention"
Portland, Ore.	1950	"The Norwescon"
New Orleans	1951	"The Nolacon"
Chicago	1952	"Chicon Two"
Philadelphia	1953	"The Philcon" (two)
San Francisco	1954	"The SFCon"
Cleveland, O.	1955	"The CLevention"

Coming conventions are well advertised in the fanzines and often

are mentioned in the prozines. If you decide to attend, bring plenty of money, a propellor beanie and a zap-gun.

Convacation A group of British fans proposed that several of them take their vacation together at a resort hotel, having both a convention and a vacation at the same time. A convacation will presumably last two weeks, replacing one's regular vacation.

-- Abstracts --

Ego-boo Publicity for yourself. Ego-boosting activity. Every fan loves to see his name in print and be talked about (In a nice way of course) by others. The usual channel is the fanzine.

Slan In fannish jargon, a superman or superfan. Supposedly, a fan with extraordinary intelligence, a gone genius. About 1943 a group of fans in Battle Creek, Michigan rented a house together and called it "Slan Shack." There have since been imitations.

Gafia "Getting Away From it All." The desire to leave fans and fandom far behind, to go sit in a quiet corner and sulk, or to go out and get drunk and forget all about science fiction. Properly, the term "gafia" is applied to one who retires for months or even years, sometimes never to return. Many ignorant fans today, particularly those in Southern California, misuse the term by saying they are "going gafia" or "have gone gafia" when they did nothing more than spend an afternoon in a movie or a week-end visiting relatives. Also heard recently: "Safia," sneaking away from it all.

Lino An abbreviation for interlineation, which is a quote, quasi quote, or other longer phrase or sentence which has been taken from context and reprinted between two parallel lines somewhere on a fanzine page. A sample lino follows:

Chuck has got a new duper and is drunk with power

LNf or Lnf A "Little-name Fan" or "Little-known Fan." You, until you make a respectable reputation for yourself in fandom. It may take only a year or two, or it may take several.

BNF or Bnf The "Big Name Fan," the person who is well-known and who has made a solid reputation for himself. This is usually accomplished by participating in fannish affairs for a long while, or by publishing a superior fanzine, or by consistently writing or illustrating in a manner identified with quality, or by any number of ways which keeps your name before fandom in a responsible manner. The term "Bnf" has to be earned, it can never be appropriated or purchased, nor conferred upon yourself or your friends.

LMJ or Lmj A "Loud-mouthed jackass," and fandom is shot through and through with jackasses. There is no need to tell you how and where to find them; they betray themselves with their braying. See to it that you don't become one.

Fugghead Closely related to the Lmj. A fugghead is one who speaks before he thinks --- if indeed he thinks at all. He is fond of making assinine statements, silly assertions and fraudulent claims. A fugghead is a stupid oaf with a babbling tongue. Sometimes called a "fuggfan."

Taff The "TransAtlantic Fan Fund," a sum of money raised annually to help speed some fan to a foreign convention.

Quasi-quote A method of quoting someone else, where you do not use the speaker's exact words but DO faithfully reproduce his remarks in words to the same effect. Care must be taken not to distort the meaning. Quasi-quotes are marked "like this" and an example follows: "I do not expect precipitation today" may be converted in this manner: "He said he didn't look for rain today."

Quote-cards Small mimeographed cards about two inches square on which is printed some fannish quotation, usually a brief statement made by a humorist, a fugghead or an Lmj. These cards are passed around at conventions and by private correspondence. Also in circulation via the mails are "Short-snorter quote-cards," a demon knight invention, on which each fan signs his name and date, then passes it along to some other fan for more of the same.

Quote-covers A king-sized presentation of the above, in which the entire cover (or most of the cover) on a fanzine is given over to funny or silly remarks made by fans. It should be noted that quote-cards and quote-covers use exact quotes, not quasi-quotes.

Foo One of the minor gods or patron saints of fandom. There are many such private gods, saints and religions, the others being Ghu, Roscoe, Pthalto, Bheer, etc. Choose your weapons.

Others QBA, quite bloody awful. VFB, very fine business. Faunch, an irritating, impatient waiting for something.

Feuds An early fan named Noah Webster defines a feud as "a contention or quarrel; hostility; often declared warfare between families or parties in a state." Such phenomena are not unknown in fandom, particularly amongst the Lmj and Fugghead element. Differences of opinion, ideology, taste in reading matter, and sometimes personality clashes are the basis of such feuds. Fan clubs may enter into rivalry with one another; or there may be a schism within the ranks of the club itself, with members taking sides. Usually a feud takes the form of vituperative assaults in the pages of fanzines. Seldom is actual physical violence resorted to, and there is no conclusive evidence that anyone has actually been murdered in a fan-feud, as of this writing. The neo-fan is cautioned against participation in feuds; few of these have legitimate basis. Certain rabid elements in fandom seem to believe they can attain Bnf status by inciting a feud but the resultant sound and fury usually resembles the yapping of dogs quarreling over a bone.

There are also "fake-feuds", in which various fans adopt an arbitrary attitude towards a given topic or person, and burlesque the ravings and righteous indignation of the fugghead element. Sometimes they succeed in being almost as funny as the real feudists. Again, neo-fans would do well to abstain, although they will find that reading about feuds offers much interesting and revelatory material of value to both neo-fan and psychiatrist alike.

Hoax The past history of fandom is studded with hoaxes, some mild and some virulent, ranging from the announcement of a fictitious convention, the heralded publication of a spurious magazine, to imaginative concepts bordering on the libelous. Imaginary fan personalities have been "created" as a hoax, and real fan personalities

have been "killed off." Typical instance: in 1952, a fund was raised for the purpose of importing a British fan to the American convention. Shortly before his arrival, postcards were mailed out by a hoaxster reporting the sudden demise of the British fan and alleging that funds would be returned. Needless to say, the British fan turned up alive-- although the rigors of the convention and post-convention hospitality nearly caused him to fulfil the hoax. In recent years hoaxes have been on the wane; their passing is not mourned.

7th Fandom The neo-fan will find many vague and puzzling references to something called "7th Fandom," and to other numerical Fandoms as well. So far as can be determined, an abstract called 7th Fandom does not exist, and this is the explanation:

An ancient fan historian divided all fannish activity (and the rise and fall of fannish institutions) into eras, or epochs, giving each a consecutive number for identification purposes. "First Fandom" was said to cover that period of time from the birth in 1930, down to 1936 when the cycle obviously declined. The historian said: "A Fandom is a Period, not a group of people," although of course groups of people definitely influenced each period. He likened the various Fandoms to the eras of English history: the Elizabethan, the Puritan, the Neoclassical, and so forth. Later, a second historian enlarged upon the theme and although they did not completely agree, in the end fandom was divided into six segments beginning in 1930 and coming down to almost the present time. There has been no serious, impartial attempt to continue the historical markings since 1952.

However, a couple of years ago a group of youngsters, most of whom were neo-fans, started a campaign to introduce a new fandom, the seventh. They based their claim on the fact that a few Bnfs, and some important fanzines, ceased activity to enjoy the fruits of gafia. They insisted that 6th Fandom was dead because of this; that they were not only the vanguard of the new 7th but its leaders and its body as well. They chose to ignore the continued existence and continued activity of many hundred older fans, fanzines and institutions. They also ignored the prime historical fact that Fandoms, or Periods, do not begin or end with someone's pronunciation, someone's bald decision to close-off one era and start another. They were probably ignorant of the fact that only the historian, looking backward and judging men and events, can successfully separate one age from another. Therefore they promulgated "7th Fandom," only to be met with instant opposition from old hands who refused to lay down and die. Eventually, it was dubbed "The phony Seventh."

An interesting sidelight to the death-knell of the phony Seventh is that still other neo-fans, not having learned the lesson, proclaimed themselves members of the new, rising "8th Fandom" ... now that the 7th was supposedly dead. And some fans, poking fun, said they were members of 69th Fandom, 200th Fandom, etc.

The best that can be determined at this point, in the absence of historical hindsight, is that we are still living in the age of Sixth Fandom -- or barring that, the Sixth ended somewhere and we are in a period of interregnum. It remains for some future historian to examine the records and suggest a decision. A table of Fandoms follow:

First Fandom	1930-1936	
Second Fandom	1937-1938	
Third Fandom	1940-1944	(disputed)
Fourth Fandom	1945-1947	
Fifth Fandom	1947-1949	

Sixth Fandom	1950-
The Phony Seventh	1953-1954
The Unlikely Eighth	1954

The Cosmic Circle Many allusions current in fandom today can be traced back to a fan club called The Cosmic Circle and the fan who organized it, Claude Degler. About 1943, Degler left his home in Newcastle, Indiana, to travel about the country visiting fans and organizing local clubs; later he announced the Cosmic Circle, claiming to have hundreds of members all over the world. He was a highly controversial figure and many quarrels arose with him and about him; he remained on the fan-scene for nearly a decade. A true Fugg-head and Imj, he gloried in feuds, had a fondness for extravagant claims and wild assertions, and would do or say almost anything for sensational publicity. He believed all fans had a genius-rating, that they were "star-begotten" and were the proud possessors of "cosmic minds." He proclaimed that someday fans, as the natural inheritors of the earth, would take over not only the world but the solar system. To speed the day when "cosmen" would rule, he offered a plot of land as "the Ozark love camp;" you were expected to supply your own women. Degler's fan career came to an inglorious end as one fan and one club after another disowned him, as several fans published biting exposes, and in particular after one man visited his home town to discover the self-styled "cosmic thinker" was a sometime-patient in a mental institution there. Nevertheless, traces of his passage still linger.

Recommended reading There are two excellent reference books to the fan world, each providing in its limited scope the histories and definitions of fans and fandoms up to certain dates. First to be published, in 1944, was THE FANCYCLOPEDIA, edited by Jack Speer and mimeographed by Forrest J Ackerman. The volume is understandably hard to come by at this late date; you must search long and diligently to obtain one. It is a hundred-page enlargement of this booklet you are reading, and covers about fifteen years of history.

The other volume, still available, is THE IMMORTAL STORM, written by Sam Moskowitz and published at \$5 by the Atlanta Science Fiction Organization. The 260-page bound book covers fandom in minute detail from inception in 1930 up to the eve of Chicon One in 1940. It is obtainable from Carson Jacks, 713 Coventry Road, Decatur, Georgia.

Welcome to our jungle.

A Double-Bob, Double-Dean Production

The Neo-Fan's Guide, published in February 1955, to help guide the stumbling sheep to the slaughter, to delight the old hands and to infuriate the younger. Edited and published by Bob Tucker, Post Box 702, Bloomington, Illinois. Consulting Editors were Bob Bloch, Dean Grennell and Dean (Redd) Boggs. The Guide was published on the Mafia Press, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. This is a first edition.