

Eelsey Ambergris stretched out on the thistle branch and frowned. Something was decidedly wrong! Before her stretched the grounds of the N.E.Galactic College for Young Ladies, and, directly below, a small dot, she could just make out the shape of her pet, the Qanto Pogo. In fact, the Qanto was only ten feet underneath her, but in spite of possessing one of the most powerful PSI mentalities in the known Universe, Qantos were on the small side. Now its thoughts reached her in awesome waves of energy.

"THE BLIND SPOT IS STILL THERE, EELSEY!"

The branch rocked as she clung to it. "F'evvens sake, Pogo, can't you turn down the amperage? You know that I'm the most sensitive PSI receptor around here!" She straightened and looked away again, into the evening sky which was starting to glitter with the light of the ten thousand stars visible from the fifth planet of a Virginis. "It's still there!" she said.

"YES, IT'S STILL THERE!" agreed the Qanto. "YOU CANNOT PENETRATE THAT BLANK AREA. NEITHER CAN I. FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED A THOUGHT-PROOF CONSTRUCT. IF THIS IS A SHIELD HIDING AN INVADING SPACE FORCE, IT COULD BE THE END OF CIVILISATION AS WE KNOW IT."

Eelsey nodded her blonde head. "Or - even worse. It could be another issue of

SCIENCE NEWS OCT. 1982

NOT FANTASY

MEDICAL, GARDENING & BUSINESS DEPT.

I was both pleased and disappointed by the reaction to NSFN 1.

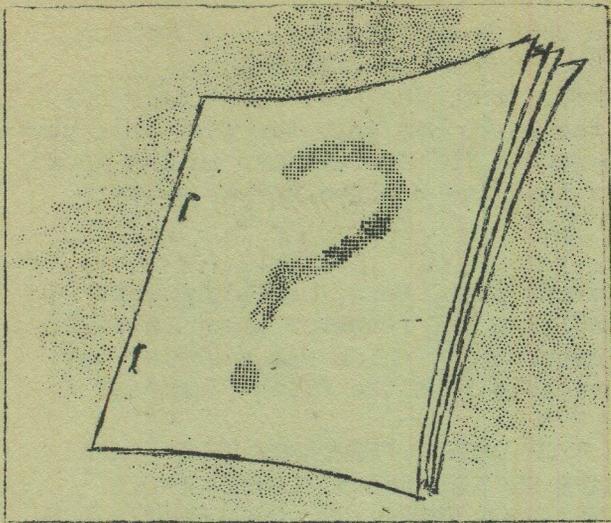
Why were you both pleased and disappointed, Vincent?

Because there arrived such a volume of egoboo, cries of 'welcome back', etc., the boast I made that I was going to reply to all letters is now one of Hell's paving-stones. In fact, I've had a most peculiar summer. Finding that I had high blood pressure earlier in the year I went on a course of tablets which gradually reduced the BP -- and also reduced my Will To Do Things to the level of an imbecilic snail. Unstapling ANSIBLE left me exhausted. A heartfelt plea to the Doc. ("I've got a fan...ugh...amateur magazine to publish...") got me a second course, a sort of geriatric pep-pill, which now appears to be having the desired effect except that I have this terrible urge to chase nurses and an inner rattle accompanies me everywhere. It's too late to save the garden this year - I'm thinking of turning it into a wild-life sanctuary, as I saw a fox in it this morning - and slugs are setting up holiday camps there, but at least I can publish a fanzine...I hope.

Inside you will find some shining examples of the Creative Response for which every fan-ed lusts, turning it into a fairly respectable imitation of a mid-fifties fanzine. Anyone who thinks this is terrible can go away and play elsewhere. There are also replies to my remarks concerning Karping Critics. As I'm not really interested in starting arguments (and am full of pills) I'm cutting out various remarks which went a lot further than I did in condemning the behaviour of certain fans. Sorry, friends.

I put forward some suggestions in NSFN 1. These were only a few fanciful ideas

(cont.-)

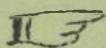
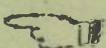


tossed like a handful of jewels onto the black velvet of space (if this metaphor sounds familiar to you, you may be a re-incarnation of a 6th. fannomer - see your psychiatrist at once) and I was waiting for someone to come up with something wilder. But...no new notions. No one suggested a 'zine on the life work of one (mythical) author; no one suggested a competition 'zine. Not a single fan thought that it might be an idea to allow twenty different fans to have editorial control of a sheet each, then to staple the whole lot together (the sheets, not the fans). Possibly, some day, all the active fan-eds will get together and publish a 'combozine' of their efforts, to be sent to all the new names on the BSFA membership list -but not yet. No one suggested a - but no,

I might want to use that one myself, some day.

But there was a lot of interest expressed in a Theme 'zine - so, why not?

Ooold fans and tired needn't bother to think of an idea. It'll be provided. All you need to do is to write. Story, article, pome, illo., thoughts. Some small connection with fan life would be preferable, or s-f or fantasy in general. A few pages further on, Lee Hoffman provides in the middle of a letter a beautiful example of the theme postulated in NSFN 1 - that of RESIDENCE. Anxious not to strain my brain too much (see Bob Shaw's letter) I think that I'll make that the subject of the first THEME 'zine and follow up with other subjects - TRANSPORT, perhaps, or READING THAT HAS MOST INFLUENCED ME (a notice reading 'Please adjust your dress...."?), HOLIDAY ('Vacation' in the US Edition) etc etc. later. Come to think of it, I could ask people to submit ideas for that too. Then I could just lie back and think about replying to those 15 unanswered letters that are beginning to go yellow around the edges.....

So...your contribution on the subject of RESIDENCE is respectfully requested by
 DEADLINE  DECEMBER 15th  DEADLINE

Thanks, *Vincent*

CONVENTION REPORT ** The First N.W.Kent S-F Convention was held at the Editorial address on Sunday, 5th. September, when a mighty throng of two attendees congregated in the front room. I met Arthur (ATom) Thomson for the first time for 22 years, Terry Hill met him for the first time. Much fan chat was exchanged, and in lieu of a film show my '50's photo-album was minutely examined (Cor! There's Terry Jeeves and Eric Bentcliffe!). ATom enthusiastically volunteered to illo. the 'zines of the faneds present, and in return Lady-the-Poodle let go of his ankle. ATom hasn't changed in appearance over the years, but now smokes more. And he chain-smoked then. I regret to report that a tape-recording made at the Con. was a dismal mechanical flop, but a Good Time was had by all.

NOT SCIENCE FANTASY NEWS No. 2: OCTOBER 1982 : Published by A.Vincent Clarke from 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BN, United Kingdom, stencils cut on an Olivetti Editor 4, and duplicated on a hand-wound Gestetner 230. All the characters in this production are characters. Geriatric Fandom Strikes Again!

a coincidence

Incident

to Vince Clarke
16 Wednesday
Welling
Kent

VINCE
CLARKE

There was something Odd in the TIMES a short time ago. There, peeping out between the chips was a mention of Edgar Allen Poe - Bob Bloch's grandfather - and the fateful word 'coincidence'. I've always had a weakness for coincidences - the 'yes' in a million 'no's', the spit in the eye of infinity, the meeting of Jane and Tarzan, the happy smile on the face of Dr. Rhine - and here was chronicled another.

Of course, as We Experts know, there are different grades of coincidences, First, Second and Third kinds, and for the benefit of those fans who can't wait for my forthcoming OMNI article (we are having a little trouble in finding an illustration for it), let me elucidate.

Coincidences of the First Kind are those separated by Time. When, after a lapse of twenty years, I received a letter each from Walt Willis and Bob Shaw in the same post - neither knew the other was writing. The oft-noted remark - "If you'd only have come into the shop last week, I had just the book/magazine/complete collection of AD ASTRA you were looking for...." etc. etc.

The Second kind is that of Space; the Moon just covers the Sun when seen from Earth during an eclipse; your thumb occupies the space you thought contained the nail-head; if you wait long enough in Times Square or Piccadilly, everyone you ever knew will come up and ask you for directions somewhere else. In the late 1940's I tried to collect ARIZONA HIGHWAY, a very obscure magazine issued by the Arizona State Highways Board, which extolled the scenic beauties of that State and surrounding territory. It was illustrated by marvellous photographs, with full technical notes. I obtained two or three dozen copies via. fannish connections, then fanac caught up with me and I stopped actively pursuing them. For nearly thirty years I didn't see one single, solitary copy for sale or any mention of it. Then, in the mid-70's, in a Charity Shop a few hundred yards from home, amidst piles of camphorated second-hand clothes, worn lampshades, scuffed shoes, Victorian collections of sermons...a copy of ARIZONA HIGHWAYS.

But coincidences of the Third Kind...of both Time and Space...In WHILE ROME BURNS, a very readable collection of essays by Alexander Woolcott(my edition is Penguin, but

I doubt that it's in print) that great raconteur tells of U.S. authoress Anne Parrish, who grew up in Colorado Springs USA and wrote books and married, and eventually went on vacation to France with her husband. In Paris they visited a bookstall and there, to her delight, she found - and bought for one franc - a "flat, pallid dingy, English book for children entitled JACK FROST AND OTHER STORIES". It was, she said, a book that she'd been brought up on in her far-off nursery days, and she hadn't seen a copy since. Her husband regarded this outburst of happy sentiment with less than enthusiasm - until he looked at the fly-leaf, where was "pencilled in an ungainly **childish** scrawl 'Anne Parrish, 209 N. Webber St., Colorado Springs'"

And in the TIMES - which I expect you thought I'd forgotten - is a story concerning Edgar Allen Poe. In June 1837, HARPERS MAGAZINE accepted The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym by Poe, and published it in the following year. A long, doom-laden yarn, the wall-to-wall atmosphere thick and heavy, it reads like Lovecraft with indigestion; the sort of story which you finish with a sigh, breathe "Gee, that was a classic" and never read again if you can avoid it. It appears to have depressed Poe himself to the point where he was unable to wind it up in the accepted manner, but copped out with "...the remaining chapters...have been irretrievably lost through the accident by which he perished himself." (Pity Heinlein didn't have the same idea after the first 100 pages of NUMBER OF THE BEAST...I shall certainly wait for FRIDAY until it turns up in that Charity Shop.)

Anyway, a minor incident in the NARRATIVE is the wrecking of a ship, which leads to the four starving survivors eating one of their number - Richard Parker, a youth. Raw, too. Our friend in the TIMES then states: "In the 1880's, a yawl set sail from Plymouth...was shipwrecked...the four survivors chose to eat one of their number, a boy called Richard Parker."

And it wasn't published on April 1st. either.

Wants

I saw my first new fanzine for 2 decades about a year ago. Undeterred, I started to collect them again, to add to the '30's, '40's and '50's 'zines massed in the chaos of home sweet home. I hold it as a simple article of faith that you don't throw away a fanzine except in the direction of another fan. This has caused some storage problems. Generous fanzine publishers have tried to assist my appreciation of What Went On by sending sets of their 'zines, or, in the case of one friend, sending a box weighing 16 kgs. of assorted material. I feel like the neighbour of Noah who remarked that his garden could do with watering, but am still looking for '60s and early '70's items - think of me before you do anything rash such as using them to stuff the kid's Guy Fawkes. Individual items/sets still wanted:

FANCYCLOPADIA No 2
FANHISTORICA No. 1
REQUIEM FOR ASTOUNDING (Rogers)
MORE ISSUES AT HAND (Atheling)
WARHOONS prior to No.28
Any fanzines by Tom Perry, Beryl Mercer, George Charters.

More to follow. I'll reimburse, or donate to TAFF, or exchange. Am willing to publish Want Lists from collectors. I hope to do some sorting and dusting this winter so I can lend out early 'zines to anyone interested.



a streetcar
named
bizarre

Bob (6th fandom) Shaw

I think I'm starting to mature.

That's something I feared might never happen, but the thing that has made me more hopeful is the old Clint Eastwood movie I saw on TV the other night. Clint was wearing a British-style tweed sports jacket, and he looked really good in it - and I did not get an urge to dash out and buy a similar garment.

The discovery that I'm no longer susceptible in this respect has come as a great relief, because there was a time when a chance visit to the cinema could upset my life for weeks. When I was growing up in Belfast I went to the pictures a lot -- there was little else to do -- and I used to get hero fixations. It was all perfectly normal, but my hero worship was always accompanied by a powerful urge to dress like the actor concerned. In Ireland in those days it was hard enough to get decent ordinary clothes, let alone Hollywood creations, and I used to waste days in futile searches of all the local outfitters.

My worst experience came when, in one week, I saw Bogart, Mitchum and Victor Mature, and all three were wearing white trenchcoats. That did it! I had to have a white trenchcoat as well. The situation was complicated by the fact that Victor Mature had also been wearing a beautiful hat which had a very broad brim with silk edging. That was another thing I had to have, especially as Mature had a little trick with his headgear which really fired my imagination.

He is the only screen star I know who did most of his acting with his forehead. He had a habit of suddenly raising his eyebrows and creating a splendid array of corrugations on his forehead, and when he did this his hat moved visibly upwards. For some reason -- God only knows why -- I thought that was the epitome of glamorous, worldly, transatlantic sophistication, and it became my ambition to wear a broad-brimmed, silk-rimmed hat which would move up and down in close formation

Note: A STREETCAR NAMED BIZARRE was originally written for an American club fanzine; the chances of you belonging to that club and reading their 'zine being kinda small, NSFN proudly presents this BRE -thanks, BoSh.

with my eyebrows.

Oddly enough, I was able to acquire an acceptable coat and hat almost at once. The material in the trenchcoat seemed rather thin and skimpy compared to Mitchum's --- which appeared to have been hewn from quarter-inch-thick gaberdine --- but it was a trenchcoat and it was white and it had flaps and straps, and a belt which I could chose to tie romantically instead of buckling, or allow to dangle from its loops with insouciant carelessness. The hat was the weakest point in the ensemble because its brim was much too narrow, making it more suitable for a low-ranking Prudential insurance collector, but on the whole I was quite pleased with the outfit. There seemed a reasonable chance that any attractive young woman glimpsing me in the dim smoky light slanting out from the chipshop window would form the impression that I was a private eye, a shady nightclub owner, or -- at the very least -- a gambler on the run from the syndicate hit men.

Thus kitted out I felt ready for the big event of the week -- the Saturday night dance.

I went into town early on my own, scorning the company of my usual companions, and had three bottles of Guinness, which in those days was sufficient to render me pale of cheek and wild of eye for the greater part of the evening. Near the end of the dance I turned the full force of my conversational expertise on a girl -- asking her if she went there often and what she thought of the floor, and things like that. I rounded off by imparting the knowledge that the fat one out of the Three Stooges was dead. (At that time I was convinced that a familiarity with the innermost secrets of the stars made me appear cosmopolitan.) Then I suggested escorting the girl home. She agreed, but with an evident lack of enthusiasm which I would have found dispiriting had it not been for the inner glee I felt over my wonderful hidden trump. The trenchcoat and hat were waiting in the cloakroom, and I knew she had only to take one look at me in them to become hopelessly enamoured.



In the cloakroom I jammed the hat on at the correct Victor Mature angle, practised making it go up and down a few times, then put on the trenchcoat. Due to having spent several hours crushed in among wet raincoats, it seemed even skimpier and was definitely less resplendant than I could have wished. After some deliberation I decided not to try the romantic knotting of the belt, partly because I didn't want to overwhelm the poor girl, partly because I had developed an uneasy suspicion that with its new network of wrinkles my beloved coat had begun to resemble a Harpo Marx cast-off. Settling for the careless dangling of the belt, I took up a position outside the door of the women's cloakroom and waited. The big moment was at hand.

When the girl eventually emerged I was gazing in her direction with lazy, heavy-lidded eyes. As soon as I was sure she was looking at me I raised my eyebrows to their full extent and was gratified to feel the hat go up with them. I reckoned it had moved a good half-inch, perhaps even three-quarters -- equal to my record. No woman could have failed to be impressed, so I ambled towards the girl with my best Robert Mitchum stroll.

"What's the matter with you?" she demanded severely. "Are you sick?"

"What do you mean?" I said, somewhat taken aback.

"Your eyes are rollin' in your head." She gave me a look of mingled suspicion and distaste. "Are you sure you're not goin' to throw up? I don't like fellas who boke Guinness over themselves."

Deeply offended, I assured her I was in the peak of condition and that the contents of my stomach would not see daylight again until the time and the place were appropriate. We set off to catch the tram to her home. The discovery that she lived on the Crumlin Road -- a thoroughfare which went deep into Republican territory and which I had never been along before -- did nothing to alleviate the gloom which had settled over me. Things were not working out as planned. The girl and I sat down in upstairs window seats facing each other, but the way she stared fixedly out into the rainy darkness made it fairly obvious that this was not the start of something big. I was so desperate that, had I been able to afford to smoke, I would even have tried the old Paul Henreid two-cigarettes-in-the-mouth ploy, despite the risk of pulling a bit of skin off my lip.

"Do you fancy going to see Broken Arrow?" I said. "Jeff Chandler is in it."

"Nah," she demurred. "Already seen it in The Ranch."

The picture palace to which she referred derived its popular name from the management's habit of offering an unvarying diet of low-grade Westerns, and it exuded such an air of decaying menace that I wouldn't have ventured through its doors for a pension. The revelation that my newfound flower of Belfast maidenhood was a patron of The Ranch gave me fresh qualms. I -- a policeman's son -- was deep in unknown alien territory on a black, rain-swept night, and for all I knew my companion could be a drill-sergeant in the IRA.

"Jeff Chandler is Frankie Laine's brother, you know," I said, offering a piece of folk-lore which, although fallacious, remained dear to the hearts of Belfast cinema-goers for decades.

"This is my stop," she replied, standing up as the tram squealed to a halt. "Are you comin'?"

I nodded, slightly heartened by at least having been invited, and with a gentlemanly sweep of the hand allowed her to precede me along the aisle. I stood up to follow, moved one foot forward, and fell back into the seat as something gave my coat a fierce tug from behind.

Barely suppressing a whimper of fright, I twisted around to see what had happened. My jaw sagged as I appraised the situation. The old Belfast trams had a slot along the bottom of each window, something to do with winding mechanisms, and somehow the buckle of my belt had dropped into the one beside my seat as I was sitting down. I tugged at the belt, but, having got itself inside the window cavity, the cursed buckle had rotated ninety degrees like a toggle bolt, and it refused to come out.

I called after the girl, but she was halfway down the stairs and didn't hear me. Mouthing horrible swear words, I pulled the belt back and forth along the slot, hoping to disengage it and only succeeding in coating the end of it with filthy black grease. I tried to snap the belt by brute force, but the material -- in spite of its lack of body -- seemed to have the tensile strength of a ship's hawser. By this time the girl had descended from the tram, and I could see her down on the footpath, looking around for me in some bewilderment.

Still hauling frantically on the belt, I pounded the window and she glanced up. I pointed at the trapped buckle, but from her lowly vantage point she couldn't have had any idea what I meant.

And at that moment the conductor rang the bell and the tram moved off.

I'll never forget the look of utter bafflement on that girl's face as I was majestically borne away into the rainy night, tugging and gesticulating and swearing...

It took the tram a couple of minutes to reach the next stop, by which time a superhuman effort on my part had snapped, not the flimsy bloody belt, but the centre bar of the metal buckle. No longer a prisoner, I loped back down the road to the previous tram stop, sweating profusely, and wondering if even my intriguing story about Alan Ladd being only five-foot tall could rescue the occasion from total disaster.

The girl, as is only appropriate in stories like this, was nowhere to be seen, and I never saw her again. Now you can see why I was relieved about not wanting to buy a Clint Eastwood sports jacket, but something else has cropped up in the meantime. I've just seen Robert Taylor in a re-run of Quo Vadis, and I really do think I would make a dashing figure in a Roman helmet and breastplate.....

BOB SHAW

20 YEARS IN THE THINKING

WHEN YNGVI WAS A LOUSE is a fanthology of fifties fan writing, featuring Mal Ashworth, John Berry, Eric Bentcliffe, Vin/ Clarke, 'Hurstmonceaux and Faver-sham', Terry Jeeves, Eric Needham, Bob Shaw, Ted Tubb and Harry Turner.

Finely, fannishly illustrated by Jim Cawthorn, Arthur Thomson, Harry Turner, Vin/ Clarke and Hazel Ashworth.

Melded together into a FIFTIES SAMPLER with copious quotes from the period, and some original typos.....

AVAILABLE from Editor Eric Bentcliffe, 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel Cheshire, CW4 7NR, for £1.00 (or \$2.50) in a limited edition of 150 copies.

'Recommended'.....NIRVANA

L
E
T
T
E
R
S

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a faan called Chuck Harris, who lived in Dagenham, Essex, but was an Honorary Irish Fan. He wrote a column for HYPHEN in the Fifties, and his letters were a delight. When annoyed, he made KTF critics of the last decade sound like LISTEN WITH MOTHER. He created the immortal werewolf story beginning: "The family were changing for dinner....." During the last 20 years (when I wasn't looking) he married, moved to Daventry fathered twins, and took up Golf in a passionate manner.

I think it's a shame that UK fandom should be without Chuck-- he sometimes LoC's US 'zines -- and I did have a wicked impulse to string extracts from his letters to me into a column and surprise him. Being essentially Decent I decided against this (and it was too difficult), but here is Ex-faan Harris extracted from half-a-dozen letters. It began with me apologising prettily for the 20 year gap in our correspondence -- "...first of all stop thinking that you're a BRE of J.Christ and your egoboo in BOONFARK has awakened me from the dead....I've been stumbling around for a month or two, Searching - and this bolt through the neck certainly does get in the way of putting your shirt on....."

CHUCK: " I was delighted - really delighted - to see you surfacing again. In fact, I proved my divinity less than one hour after your letter arrived by sticking the carving knife right through the palm of my hand. You think just anybody gets stigmata? I can't type very well - but then, I never could, could I -- but we'll see how we get along: after all, it's fascinating to think of myself in this new concept as a BRE Christ... the shepherd mustering his flock ...watching the little sparrows fall...counting the freewill offerings.

" Bless you my son...the scales have fallen from your eyes... in the Beginning was The Word...and the word was Aardvark. At least, I think it was --it's all such a long time ago, and my memory isn't what it used to be. I can remember doing those tablets for Moses, but he never did run them off for FAPA --and there was a bad typo on No. 7 anyway.

"...Me? Well, Ive changed a bit too. I still have hair but now have a beard to go with it. The main thing you'd notice is that I no longer smoke. As soon as the cancer connection was proved around 15 years ago I packed up overnight. I scare easy.

"You'd probably notice the Plus 2 trousers and the golf bag over my shoulder too.

WARNING
EXPLICIT SCENES
AND LANGUAGE MAY
BE OFFENSIVE TO
SOME -- TOO BAD

"That's a long story but - briefly - by accident, they found out that I had very high blood pressure. The doc did all the usual things....as I said back there, I scare easy. I got three stone off right sharp; waist down from 44 to 36; more relaxed outlook...sod the promotion stakes...all I want to do is breathe... and tried to do some exercise. Sue's friend and her husband had just joined the local golf club and Sue was eager to try the game....."

LATER LETTER: "Well, yes — I guess this is a bit tardy, but the trouble was that I couldn't think of a word to say to Patricia Neilsen Hayden (a lovely name like a flag as Jas Thurber said...and only ten years before I thought of it), and TELOS (datelined Nov. 80 — really deserved some encouragement...never a sparrow falls, and all that. If it hadn't been for her I would never have known that 'Episcopal' was an anagram of 'Pepsicola'. So I chatted about a bit, praised her excellent bit about Mormons, told her that "Spiro Agnew" is an anagram for 'Grow a penis' and thus cleared the decks to answer your letter.

"And I've been very poorly. The Doc thought it was more malinger than malaise and poohpoohed my stigmata...(did I ever tell you about Alice disease? It's far worse than Stigwort's and just as mysterious, although Alice has much in common with its complete lack of symptoms. In fact, the only thing really known about Alice is that Christopher Robin came down with it)....stigmata as I was saying and he was bloody rude about my hypochondria. Do you remember a long bit you once wrote about "Timor mortis conturbat me." ? Well, it does me. I thought it bitterly unfair when ACC (← Arthur C. Clarke) prophesied Immortality circa 2050, which is just about 3 weeks too late for my best expectations. Can't they speed it up a bit? Work weekends or something? This is important.

".....I see you're getting deep into Fanac again, and, if I had a bit more time, I'd like to myself. Out of habit I still stand in the newsagents and turn to the duplicator section classified in EXCHANGE & MART and sometimes I look at the beautiful Nashua plain paper copier in the office —everything you could ask for including a button for micro elite size ideal for letter columns —and speculate.. ..MADNESS! MADNESS !

LATER LETTER: "They call the 6th. "Thrombosis Hill". It seems almost vertical, with a tiny green carved out of some bloody precipice near the top of the cliff. If you've got the slightest tendency to slice (and Christ only knows I slice more than Mother's Pride Inc.), you put the ball (or balls if you're as bad as I can be) out of bounds into the cornfield on the left.

"Halfway up, wheezing for breath and wondering why the pro-shop doesn't sell oxygen masks, I take up my stance and my five iron for a mad despairing shot at the green.

"Farrago, that's it," I said.

"Huh?" says Sue.

"Farrago," I said. "F dash dash for short."

"Easy," she said. "Don't lose your temper again. Relax, slow back and swing thru the ball. What's the point of paying £3.50 for a lesson and then ignoring all you've learnt?"

I ignored her instead. I went back slow, came down easy, and put the ball on the apron. (I got down in two putts which is par and jolly good for me if you forget to count the lost ball in the cornfield.)

"Farrago," I said again. "If I started a little fanzine, IF I started a little fanzine, that's what I'll call it. I'll ask Vinç and Walt if anyone else has ever used it and if not....I wonder whatever made me think of it just then?"

"We'll pretend you won that hole," she said. "Tee off quick or we'll have to let those horrors behind through."

"Yes dear," I said.

"....Am I the first person to call it "-SFN' ---null SFN.....?"

"...Yes, use the golf thing too if you want. You don't have to ask; if I write it you can use it and I suggest you photocopy this paragraph and ask your lawyer to keep it handy."

***** (← Will the insidious lure of fanac tempt our young golfer from the tee? Follow this drama of the gradual disintegration of our Hero exclusively in '-SFN' !→)

LETTER FROM ROB HANSEN, East Ham, London.

Many thanks for NOT SFN, a fanzine whose format bears strong resemblance (no doubt intentionally) to certain early sixties zines I've seen. (← No, I've never seen a sixties 'zine as far as I can remember. I just think fifties AVC→). As to the contents...

I have to admit being curious as to where you've encountered KTF reviews since the last such column to see print was Joseph's in NABU 10 about two years ago, tho' I can understand why you might find them repellent. I don't necessarily agree (see my column in EPSILON 9) but I can see your point of view.

You seem to have made almost the opposite assumptions about Greg Pickersgill than are actually correct. For instance you "...don't think that he has the - as you might say - spiritual background to feel that as a fanzine fan he's heir to a long fannish tradition...", whereas in actual fact he was one of the few (along with such as Peter Roberts) among those young fans of the early 70s who were trying to build something new on the moribund remains of late 60s fandom who cared about such things - this being the man who at one time used to religiously read a section of Warner's ALL OUR YESTERDAYS every day and who consistently held up HYPHEN as an example of the standard of excellence to be aimed for. Similarly your idea of reading him a chapter or two of THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR wouldn't have gone down too well. I'm certain of this because some time ago I was around his place, enthusing about Dan Steffan's comic strip adaption of the tale, when he opined that "THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR is an albatross around the neck of fandom" (and of course, Malcolm Edwards also recently stated, in PONG, that he considers it one of Willis' lesser works.)

Something else that was also surprising was your perception of a lack of firendship and fellow feeling among present day fans, particularly as it was recent fannish socialising (visiting the One Tun, a party, Malcolm and Chris calling over to duplicate TAPPEN and drink and jaw) that has delayed this LoC. Indeed, since moving to London two years ago (my first ten months here being spent as a house-guest of Greg and Linda Pickersgill) all my socialising has been with my fellow fans, and it's been fairly frequent (three gatherings lined up for the coming week, for instance.) There are definite factions in London fandom but most of us active since the height of the seventies have known our contemporaries for many years now, and see each other so often, that we feel comfortable in each others company and have no need of extravagant displays of fraternalism at conventions - which might explain why you gained the impression you did.

***** (← Rob ends his letter with "I look forward to future issues of your zine", so I'm not totally damned in his eyes. I've been trying to think of a reply to match Rob's earnestness, but I keep on getting this mental image of Gregg Pickersgill carefully reading the history of 1940's fandom every day, albatross round his neck, and presumably beanie propellor revolving gently in the middle of his halo. To be serious, though:

***** I read what I would term a KTF review in a fanzine received in April, by one Alan Dorey, now big-shot in the BSFA. Amongst other things he criticised one 'zine as being too friendly. I also noted in the PONG correspondence of recent months re. MOOD 70 no one stood up and condemned the philosophy/attitude in the editorial as outmoded. Possibly it was taken for granted? You infer it's finished. Good.

***** Yes, I agree — Greg didn't strike me as being the type — in the brief time I talked to him — who would like ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR. I was trying to be funny. I don't think that TED is the greatest piece of writing about a fan since Oscar Wilde, but I think it embodies a useful set of attitudes and guidelines wrapped up in the semi-serious form which marked so much of '50's fan writing, and will do until Malcolm Edwards or someone writes a better piece. Did you know that TED was recently dramatised at a US Con? Not bad for a 30-year old fan yarn.

***** Friendship — yes, I think I was in error in that para., in not taking into account the amount of time that a number of the current fans have known each other. My impressions, gained from several dozen fanzines galloped through in the last few months, will no doubt alter as I catch up on the last few years. ↵)*****

LETTER FROM JAMES WHITE, Belfast, N.I.

While I was reading NSFN 1 I was aware of an enormous temporal jerk — it was this big time-traveller who pops in from time to time (natch) to talk about the bad new days and get rid of the radio-activity — which sent me up to the attic where I have my copy of SFN containing, would you believe, "The Unconventional Fan." Except for the different content it is the same 'zine, changed not a whit by going from irregular to infrequent.

I like very much the way you poke gentle and inoffensive fun at people and organisations like the Star Trekkers and the BSFA instead of wielding the critical scalpel two-handed like a hungover Conan. And the very personal con report, written from the viewpoint of someone who was

absent from the scene for a quarter of a century, was lovely stuff — although the image I was trying to project was of a younger, more dynamic and slightly hairier Moshe Dayan rather than our Horatio, and the grey bits in my hair have been left there by Worldly Experience, not pigeons.

..... Lastly, to my mind the best part of this very enjoyable 'zine was the first two pages containing the Letter to Jophan. Please continue this feature. To open letters like that you might well get an answer.

*****({ Can I believe the words that blur before my aged eyes? You went up into the attic to get your copy of SFN containing what would have been your first overseas sale (if you'd been paid for it? You haven't got it bound in vellum in the Library? Oh, James!) Apart from that, your letter highly appreciated. Instead of 'Jophan' you nearly read a faan TIME MACHINE - and guess who'd be the Morlocks?})*****

LETTER FROM KEVIN. K. RATTAN, of Rossendale, Lancs.

LETTER TO JOPHAN: I couldn't agree more with this. Unlike your estimable self, I am a very recent member of Fandom, and the impression I got of the BSFA and Co. from the beginning was v. unfavourable. This impression was further reinforced by their reaction to Chuck Connor, who I had come across through CE, and found to be a very friendly bloke, not the ogre they picture him as. Also, their attitude to books and 'zines is deplorable (I'm running a skit on this in Ad Nauseam, which should be out by the beginning of Sept. or Oct. at the latest) - which is why I review for PI, to balance those who are capable only of negative criticism.

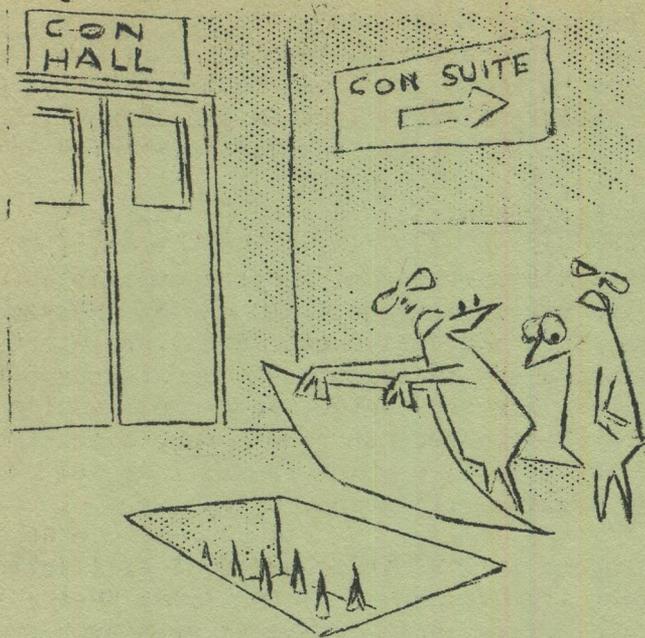
A FEW NOTES...Normally, if the main thing in a 'zine is a conrep. I will pass it by. This one, however, was very different from the usual 'I Can Drink Therefore I Am A Man' crap, but was, I found, quite fascinating in the light it shed on how Fandom has changed.....

STRAIGHT ON STENCIL: What, pray, is wrong with a fiction 'zine, or a poetry 'zine? That is an attitude I associate with the BSFA and Co. I suggest you send to Ken Mann for a copy of FUSION 2 and then consider if your opinion of ficzines is still so low. Also, grrr! I've been planning topic specials in Ad Nauseam! One idea I had was on time travel, with articles, fiction, etc., from all over, and you got there first!!

*****({ I've slashed your letter to bits; Kevin, 'cos I don't want to start any feuds in fandom-at the moment, and you fling the acid about a bit. You say in a later letter "I had expected fandom to be like it was in the '50's (by all reports). I have been involved in Tolkien Fandom for some time, and thought s-f fandom would be as friendly!" Well, my present object is to build bridges, not bomb the beach-heads. I've been researching old fanzines for Eric Bentcliffe's WHEN YNGVI WAS A LOUSE, and although we did have feuds and fights in the '50's, the characteristic flavour that I found was the sheer wonder and pleasure of communicating with and meeting with others of that rare sub-species, the s-f fan. When I came back to fandom, I was aghast that certain Characters had taken it upon themselves to be the arbiters of taste and style in British fandom, and my reaction is still one of mingled horror and laughter...talk about your Big Frog in a Little Pond syndrome.....

*****What's wrong with fiction/poetry in fanzines? Well, I've written some poetry myself - but only doggerel. Fan poetry rarely works on a serious level - the discipline is too difficult. I wouldn't mind being proved wrong. Fiction - yes, I might have been letting my age show there - there were so many prozines about in my former existence that a (serious) piece of fan fiction was automatically suspect as "not good enough for the pros." Of course, most of us used to write faan fiction - with fan-orientated plots - and I even did a pantomime once.

*****No reason why you shouldn't do a Topic type 'zine, is there? Or did you think that people might believe you pinched the idea? Why worry? If everyone that way, AMAZING STORIES would be reigning in solitary glory in the pro. field...or we might be reading the BRE of the Swedish HUGIN (1916-1919). Wonder what it would read like.....? *****



"THERE SHOULD BE ONE OF THOSE
BLOODY 'RUNNERS THROUGH
IN A MINUTE"

ATGWA

Bob Tucker wrote, in the Introduction to ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, that "...it isn't too much of an exaggeration to claim that Harry has appeared at least once — and at least in the letter columns — of every fan magazine published from 1936 to date...." That was written in 1968, and I'm glad to report that 'Harry' — HARRY WARNER Jr., of Hagerstown, USA, amongst other estimable qualities the greatest historian of fandom — is still writing letters it's a joy to receive!

"My emotions wavered between astonishment, rapture and rejuvenation when I received the first issue... The first of these was technically unsuitable because I'd read somewhere or other that you might be publishing again, but memory isn't good enough to spoil the surprise.... The rejuvenation won't last, considering everything, but you aren't to blame for that. The rapture remains unalloyed.

"Perhaps the nicest thing about your return to fanac is the fact that you sound in print just about the way you did so many years ago.... (← Much more of this and I shall start calling myself Peter Fan, the Boy Who Never Grew Up. Every time you say you don't believe in KTF critics an ego withers.....)Con reports continue to be among my favorite types of fanzine material, particularly when they are done in the old tradition that you maintained when you wrote about the ChannelCon. You deserve all sorts of deafening means of unrestrained praise for refraining from the temptation to relate everything you described to the things you remember from long ago to the great disgrace of the 1982 Con. The restraints you did slip in about the way Cons. are staged nowadays are pretty well in line with some of the reasons I've not been attending Cons. in recent years. Health and unwillingness to let this house sit empty for any length of time have also caused me to stay away from Cons. (the next thing I know, someone will start to describe me as the hermit of Hagerstown!) but it's mostly a case of feeling lost amid all those congoers who are so different from me in age and main interests.

About your ideas for potential fanzines: the theme fanzine was anticipated many years ago in a different form. (← Who let that man in here?) There was an apa called IPSO which was based on much the same basic notion you describe, except that members were expected to write and duplicate copies of their contributions to each theme and send them to a central point where they were collated with other members' contributions into a stapled mailing. It got along pretty well for the first few issues or mailings or whatever you preferred to call them, but encountered too many problems to survive very long, principally the fact that new mailings went out rather frequently and membership was strong on both sides of the Atlantic with consequent difficulty in getting everyone's contributions on each theme produced and mailed in time to meet the deadline. The fake fandom concept is a new one to me unless we discover some day that all those Los Angeles fans over the decades have actually been the invention of

Forrest J. Ackerman....."

***** (← And more, in an information-packed letter. Even tells me when the first SFN was published..... Thanks, Harry. On Conventions, I haven't the experience of: modern Cons. to judge this one I attended except on the level that it enabled me to meet a lot of old friends and a lot of new faces, to buy some stuff, and to talk to people living in the same little sub-cultural background as myself. In that respect it wouldn't matter whether there were 100 attendees or 7000, as at the ChiCon. On a more impersonal basis of judgment, there is a need for our kind of fandom to recruit our kind of fans from the general mass of s-f readers, and a Con. is one of the ways of doing it. Therefore as said mass has enlarged over the years, mass Cons. with their greater financial 'clout' are inevitable. Also re. 'recruiting' I thought it a pity that the fifties tradition of a 'combozine' - a combined fanzine containing examples of current fanzines published especially for the Con. - appears to be defunct.

***** One oddity (to my eyes) that I didn't have space to mention was the type of fans who run Cons. In the fifties, the Con. committees used to come out of the wood-work once a year, and except for one or two like Eric Bentcliffe and myself, fanzine fans usually kept clear of committees. I was surprised by the note in the prospectus for the (abortive) London '83 Convention that the organisers had published scores of fanzines between them.) *****

LETTER FROM ABIGAIL FROST, London E.14

I'm preparing my ANSIBLE review page just now...I'm probably reviewing NSFN and asking your permission to quote the anecdote about Pickersgill on page 4 (How much I quote, and if I quote it at all, depends on space, so I'd rather not commit myself.) The review will be short but broadly favourable, since I found NSFN a pleasant and relaxing read (tho. short). (← Don't relax too much)

I don't think our views are really diametrically opposed (← ref. to a note I sent) you know. All you know of my view is what I've written, and what I write is all a carefully constructed piece of artifice, y'know. "Fandom is fun" you say, and I agree -- we only disagree about ways of having fun (and I never yet met two people whose ideas of fun precisely matched).

I anticipated your idea of theme fanzines a couple of years ago, actually. Do you know Paul Olroyd? He wrote a letter to ANSIBLE with an amazing story of being attacked by one of the people he looked after as a residential social worker, and the next time I saw him he had an even better such story. I suggested that he start a fanzine called VICTIM to consist entirely of attack stories...for some reason he never took the idea up. Seriously, I think theme fanzines might relieve the monotony of the fanzine scene a bit, the trouble might be selecting the right theme at the right time. As to fake fandom, it's a wonderful idea, but you've blown it now, haven't you?

***** (← Before you rush to your typers and write to Auntie Abigail, be advised that it was me (I? Myself? Moi?) who was responsible for her mis-reading my little piece, for on the back of her envelope she wrote a PS.: "Actually, re-reading the 'fake fandom' bit inside, I realise I mis-read the point in my note. I like the idea. You really are a constructor, not an expresser, you know. A"

***** Boooooom! With one pregnant sentence, the lady has unmasked me. On the back of an envelope....I could be the laughing stock of the local post-office. It's enough to make one break into song:

"I thought it'd go to the grave with me, The secret I've never told,
Now, no longer hidden, my problem, unbidden, has had to come in
from the cold --

I'm a constructor, not an expresser, my meanings are labelled
NO ENTRY

No wonder it's hard, to make like a Bard, when I'm barred by the
literate gentry.

Deep in my mind the fear scurried around, Penned in its own
reservation,

But now it's burst out with an 'Alien'-like spout, Naked to all of
the nation.

I'm a constructor, not an expresser, My words are so clumsy and
crude,

My participle's dangling, my adjective's jangling, And my tongue's
inexpressibly rude.

I've studied the greats, the fan heavyweights, like Willis and Langford
and Nicholas,

But alas all that thinking, my writing is stinking, (Are comparisons
odious? Ridiculous!)

I'm a constructor, not an expresser, Is this how an architect
feels --

"Let's try building a club, next door to a pub., and mounting the whole
lot on wheels" ?

I could draw up a fanzine, totally blank --just planning, the idea's
incipient;

Fifty sheets of A4, two staples, no more, To be written on by the
recipient.....

I'm a constructor, not an expresser, I played with Meccano, not
trains;

I am I confess a verbal transgressor, I couldn't impress a lesser
Professor,

Put under stress, a wordy processor, a semantic messer, I need a
suppressor,

Hasn't someone a space for a fan out of place,
Where the need is for brawn and not brains?

*****({I wonder what's in those pills?})

HARRY TURNER, artist, publisher of numerous fanzines (ZENITH, NOW AND THEN, etc)
writes (and I wish I could reproduce his script) from Romiley, Cheshire:

....Eric Bentcliffe told me you'd turned up at the Eastercon; having been dragged
back into a somewhat bewildering fandom in the early 70's, I can understand your
reaction to fandom in the 80s!

.....Me, I've lost touch with everyone and everything for the last years because
of eyesight problems. But after a series of operations I seem to have emerged from
the misty darkness and now have useful vision in both eyes.....

*****({ And judging from the cover of MICROWAVE 3, 'useful' is understating it. Many
thanks for the fanzines, Harry})

ERIC BENTCLIFFE, publisher of WHEN YNGVI WAS A LOUSE etc etc, writes:

...Needless to say, I agree with your comment on the not very fannish (old-time

meaning) state of fandom today....I don't know why it's like it is but I do think ~~that~~ one of the reasons is that it reflects the period it exists in rather more than 'our' fandom did - mass media wasn't quite as mass back then - although most people now in this country have more money and free time than almost any time in history it's also a time of great dissension and protest (perhaps I'm being cynical if I say you have to have a lot of free time to create protest, but I suspect it's true,) and this is reflected in fandom. Things back in the 50's were much worse - in that you had to work harder for that which you got, and had less leisure time - but things appeared to be getting better all round and this optimism was reflected in the fandom of the day. It was a thing to be enjoyed after the efforts of earning a living - whilst today it is (perhaps?) a place to rid yourself of the frustrations of mundaneity. I shouldn't really indulge in such dialectical dictat, but then it's not every era Vin/ Clarke publishes a fanzine and its bound to have a strange effect on people!!

***** (← Sounds like the basis for a real old-fashioned sermon, Eric -- fans now are better educated, wealthier, have more leisure, their hobby is not looked down upon --or less than it was --and...a lot of 'em take themselves so damned seriously.)*****

SIMON OUNSLLEY , late fanzine reviewer for the BSFA writes from Leeds:

Welcome back and thanks for NSFN - I'm intrigued to see what you come up with next. You've probably guessed that my main incentive for loccing comes from your comments on fanzine reviews, which you seem to regard solely as an attempt to "get... egoboo for destructively criticizing the work of other fans in public." Your 'Letter to Jophan' mentions the BSFA specifically in this regard. OK, so you've got me hooked.

Of course I get satisfaction from writing fanzine reviews, the same as I do from other writing when I feel I've done it well, and if someone happens to mention that they like what I've produced then, yes, I get satisfaction from that as well. But surely that's only one aspect of the enterprise. As far as I'm concerned, fanzine reviews have a Purpose or two apart from this. To start with, they are a way for people, particularly newcomers, to get to know about the fanzines which are available. In particular it's vital that the BSFA, originally set up (as you know) to introduce newcomers into fandom, should fulfill such a service. (← Couldn't phrase it better myself)

It's unlikely that new fans will be able to send off for every zine that's mentioned in MATRIX so it's helpful if the column can give some indication as to which are the best, so that a first-timer won't be put off by sending away for a handful of utter crud. Once they're hooked, the newcomers will want to send for more stuff, of course, and they will find crud in the course of time, but by then they will know that better things are possible. After all, with fannish fandom we're trying to introduce people to something which seems strange and difficult to understand at first. The least we can do is to give a little encouragement by directing them to, say, Dave Langford or Malcolm Edwards to start with. So yes, there does have to be an element of WHICH FANZINE? about the column.

My predecessor in MATRIX, Rob Jackson, used to guide people by putting a 'Recommended' sign against the best of the bunch. I tried to get away from that. It seemed to me that the majority of fanzines didn't fall into such black and white categories; most of them had some good points and some bad points. I tried to write

longer reviews so that I could discuss both aspects and, above all, when I criticized a zine, I tried to explain why I didn't like it. There wasn't always space to do this as well as I would have liked, but I tried.

It amazes me that a few people thought I was writing KTF reviews whereas I (and many others: 'bending over backwards to be kind' was one comment) thought I was writing constructive criticism. I certainly came out and said what I thought in reviews but I tried to draw attention to people's strengths as well as their weaknesses. Fortunately, the majority of 'zines did exhibit some strengths.

(It occurs to me that the column title may have misled people. DEEP CUTS was partly a homage to the STRAWBS, a favourite rock band of mine, and partly in the grand tradition of shit-kicking fanzine review titles. The title was perhaps a mistake because it didn't reflect the style of reviewing, but then neither did Greg Pickersgill's BURNING HELL in STOP BREAKING DOWN. That too, if you go back and read it, was quite a mild-mannered column.)

The truth is, though, that many people wouldn't recognise constructive criticism if it laid itself in their lap and purred; they would think it had leapt up and bit them in the leg. Criticism hurts, however well it's intended, and the 'private letter' which you suggest in WALLBANGER 6 could be every bit as hurtful to a sensitive fan.

But criticism is necessary. Perhaps you will disagree here, but you do seem concerned, at the end of your con report, about the status of fanzines, and that status is surely dependant on the quality of the fanzines which are coming out and the interest which people take in them.

I've already mentioned in the DEEP CUTS column itself that if anyone wants to do their bit to improve standards, then it's better to produce a good zine themselves and thereby set an example, than to spend all their time writing reviews and kicking other people up the backsides. But reviews are also important, if only to get through to people that fanzines are worth thinking about: that just because they're only sent out to, say, a hundred people, and just because they don't bring money in doesn't mean to say that they aren't worth the maximum effort you can put into them. To quote Malcolm Edwards' famous remark for the umpteenth time: it's pointless to produce a fanzine if you don't do your very best, and I think that's something that not everyone bears in mind when they first start out.

I certainly hope that nothing I said in DEEP CUTS caused anyone to stop pubbing or writing for fanzines. I'm not aware that anything I said had that effect. A few people told me that they appreciated the more positive remarks I made; a few others thought I was too unkind to them, but the latter's attitude, I'm glad to say, was more one of renewed resolve and defiance than of defeat. After all, they kept on sending me their fanzines to review, so they can't have been too upset by the column.

It was always my hope that people would think about my remarks and either (a) decide that they were justified and try to act on them or (b) decide they were stupid and accordingly ignore them, always bearing in mind that my comments were only my personal opinions. How could they be anything else?

It was nice to see some of the zines improve during my stint in MATRIX and it was also nice to think that a few of them seemed to be improving along the lines I'd suggested. I've no idea at all whether any of my comments actually had any effect, but

I think the important thing is that I was there for people to send zines to and willing to read them and, for the most part, comment on them at length. I agreed to take the job on in the spring of 1981, before Malcolm and Rob Hansen had started publishing again, before the Cretins in Glasgow had fulfilled their earlier promise, before I started getting PONGs from across the water, before you'd rediscovered fandom and thought it worthwhile joining in again. If fanzines are a 'minority interest' now, then things were even worse a year or so ago. Very few people seemed to be producing fanzines and not many more seemed to be interested in receiving them. I had the feeling that even if I went out and produced the best fanzine in history, no one would take a blind bit of notice. That's why I took on the job; because I thought it would help those who were prepared to take the time and trouble to produce a fanzine if someone else was willing to take the time and trouble to read them and think about them and give considered comments.

I hope that MATRIX and a handful of other zines will continue to run review columns, hopefully being honest and explaining any criticism as fully as possible, and hopefully being received, once the initial smart has worn off, in the spirit in which they're intended.

Anyway, congratulations on getting me to send you a loc: a rare thing for me, I'm afraid, though hopefully I'll manage a few more now that I've no MATRIX column to write. I look forward to receiving your comments on STILL IT MOVES, 2.

***** (← For the benefit of newcomers, I had a half-sentence in NSFN 1, fantasising that "the magnificent edifice and HQ of serious constructivism known as the BeeEss-EffA - resounds to the "karp-karp-karp" of the dwarves, and swollen heads can be seen in many passages." I'm glad I didn't write a paragraph.....

***** I was fascinated by your very eloquent letter, Simon, because our viewpoints seemed to come together at brief intervals, then glide apart like a couple of skaters dancing on ice. I don't want to write a detailed reply to your letter in the length that it deserves because I've already cut the 'Oct. 1982' legend on the cover, and it's already the 16th day of that month, so I think I'll briefly outline my own thoughts on fanzines, and this will, I hope, make some kind of understanding possible.

***** To me a fanzine is a semi-public letter to friends, a sharing of thoughts and a chance to exhibit the talents of friends which one thinks deserve an appreciative audience. It's an extension of the ego on paper, communicating with people I'd rather talk to face-to-face. You cite the Malcolm Edwards quote. The thought wouldn't even have occurred to me, in the fifties or now, because I would take it for granted that one keeps the quality of communication as high as possible; one doesn't go around mumbling to friends. If, for instance, you have a joke to tell, you don't flatten your delivery but try to entertain. You just do what you can, and if your efforts are not so good as those of other folk -- so what? We're not competing in a professional ratrace or even in an amateur talent contest.

***** I could even offer a defence of crudzines. People evolve you know; they grow up, and the crudzine of last year can become the star zine of next year. When the 18-year old Lee Hoffman started QUANDRY she ripped it off 44 days after seeing her first fanzine, and couldn't even spell the title correctly. Ten issues later it was attracting contributions from most of the top fans of the day, and became a legend. And - aside from other considerations - why should all fanzines attain the same high sophisticated level - or be damned? You've got to think of the neofan reader too.

I remember when as a callow, naive youth of 16 or 17 I read my first fanzines, and one or two writers, such as Sam Youd (now better known as John Christopher, author of DEATH OF GRASS etc etc etc.) impressed the hell out of me. Sam had to be in his thirties, I surmised, a sophisticated mature man who'd have no dealings with such as me. So I hovered in obscurity, until the War came along and Things Happened. Just this year, I came across a reference to Sam's age (I met him years back, but the question didn't arise.) There was 4 days difference between his date of birth and mine. If I had known that...if the writing had been cruddier.....

*****In your letter you say that faneds kept on sending you 'zines, even after a poor review. Well, they would, wouldn't they? The MATRIX column is the foremost point-of-sale, as it were, for the neofan. Personally, I see no reason why MATRIX shouldn't just print a short explanation of what fan zines are, add a rider to the effect that they are of wildly differing qualities and not to be disappointed if a first 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ p. stamp appears to be wasted, but try again. Then just print current faned addresses. This would get over any agonising by the reviewer that he might have squelched an incipient QUANDRY, and leave the choice of what he reads to the newcomer.

*****A couple of final points. I didn't have you, personally, in mind when I put out my views in NSFN1; to me you were just one of a crowd whose efforts seemed to have the effect of taking the fellow-feeling from fandom. I appreciate the honest views in your letter, even if I don't agree with your outlook. And..."I had the feeling that even if I went out and produced the best fanzine in history, no one would take a blind bit of notice." ?? I take it you are the Simon Ounsley who wrote in MATRIX No. 41, April-May '82 in a review of WARHOON 29 -- "...there is considerable discussion of the Willis issue herein (which is not all that interesting for those of us who've not previously read anything by Willis)..." and later "WARHOON 28 is still available..at (gulp) £15. Might just be worth it, though....."? Well, WARHOON 28 has been out nearly two years. It's the best fanzine in history. Do you want to borrow my copy before you buy your own?*****

LETTER FROM LEE HOFFMAN editor of QUANDRY, S-F FIVE YEARLY, etc. of Florida USA

"...I shuddered a bit reading your comments on a convention with an 'attendance of 500+'. This time next week (← letter written August) I am supposed to be at a convention with an attendance of several thousand anticipated. "7,000+" And I am supposed to appear on a program and Say Something to all those people. Well, not all of them -- just the ones who attend Official Functions. But even that is not very assuring, since when I was a Young Fan and Fannish, us Trufan seldom made it to the Official Program items. The ones who did that were the Sercon fans, and the newcomers -- the ones who didn't know anybody and didn't know what else to do with themselves. (← How about a poker game with Bloch, Korsak, Eshbah and Evans?). I fear I will be trying to Say Something to a sea of strangers who have drifted in from the streets of Chicago because they had a few days of spare time and \$75 at-the-door membership money they didn't know what else to do with, or they hoped that William Shatner or Tom Baker would be speaking.

I am still boggled at the idea of a \$75 price tag for membership. Somehow I don't think this is going to be much like that Chicon Walt Willis and Shelvy Vick and barefoot Max Keasler and I waded through in those rosy days of yesteryear.

The idea of a fanzine with a THEME sounds terribly formal to me. (← Do you honestly think that I could possibly be associated with anything informal? →) When I was publishing more frequently than once a lustrum by proxy, it usually took just



about all the material I received to fill an issue, regardless of quality. (That was the true secret of my success as a fanzine editor you know. I printed just about anything that anybody sent me.) On the other hand, actually having a THEME might give a blank-minded fen like me some hook on which to hang a thought and build a short article.

Residence, for instance. Did I ever tell you about the time it rained for several days in my kitchen, which was kind of odd because I was living in the basement of a five-storey building?

That was a great apartment. I spent a good part of my New York life there. I moved in in October of 1958. That's one of the few dates I remember. I remember it because I wrote it on the wall next to the bed. At night I could lie there and contemplate it before I turned the light out.....

***** (← No. I've had second thoughts. LeeH's other 500 words on RESIDENCE can go into the next 'zine (I guess HOOK wouldn't be a bad title, at that), and I'll be sure of at least one contribution. LeeH ends:

"The hard part was holding up the bathtub while we slid the floor under it.

Ah, those were the good old days!

But getting down to the stuff which is really important in a fanzine, the duplication is excellent. There's hardly any showthrough and no set off in my copy at all, and all the mimeoing is very legible. Hoping you are the same*

*Copyright Robert Bloch, 1886"

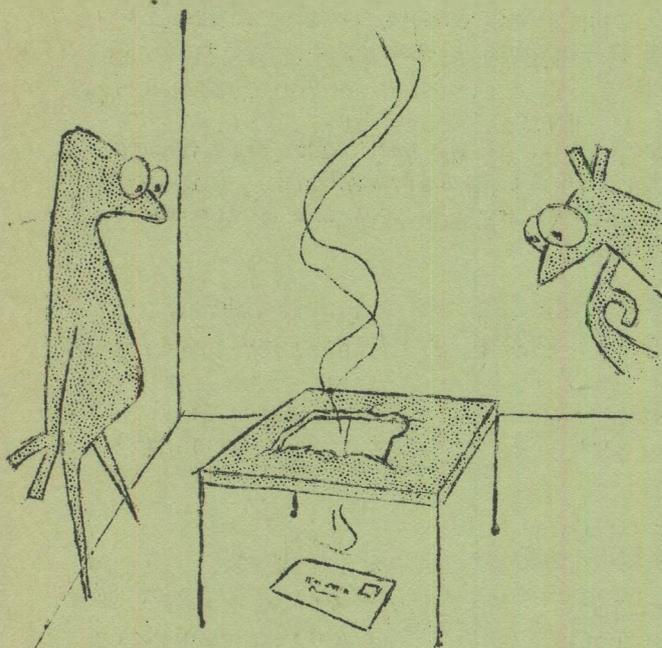
*****I was getting worried sick...2½ pages and she hadn't mentioned the really important points of a fanzine. Welcome back to British fanzines, Lee!)

LETTER FROM DAVE LANGFORD, of Reading Berks, editor of ANSIBLE, TWLL-DU, etc.

....."About NSFN: enjoyed. I think your comments about really savage fnz. reviewers are a little exaggerated, but then I tend to agree that an attitude which started as a backlash reaction to cloying niceness and illiterate tweeness in the late 60s does seem to be continuing too long and at too high a level of intensity. On the other hand and on yet another....if people are making all the old neofan mistakes (the inept reproduction, the review which is a mere plot summary, the hard-hitting article which collects a few newspaper clichés and utterly fails to reveal any spark of thought on the subject from the author, etc), it is no service to them to pat them on the head and jolly them along. Point out the good bits, yes, but also explain why the bad bits seem bad. Of course there is no point in giving such a review to, say, Keith Walker, whose indifference to wise advice and determination to achieve new lows in illiteracy, illegibility and tastelessness can provoke the most well-meaning reviewers to KTF excesses.....

***** (← Dave then goes on to assess various KTF reviewers. Here's a very neat summing up by an intelligent fan of the attitude of a lot of current fans. And it leaves me asking why? Why take it so seriously? Why go to all the trouble of printing searching, soul-searing, I'm-only-doing-it-for-your-own-good type criticisms? I haven't seen these 'zines of 'cloying niceness' you mention, but so what? If someone wants to put out a 'zine of that sort, it's his money, his time, his work. You don't

have to read it, subscribe to it, exchange with it. I've seen a couple of FANZINE FANATIQUES from Keith Walker, and I was disappointed in them - as a fanzine collector I'd have liked a more interesting and more legible 'zine -- but if he wants to go on publishing it, it doesn't worry me. Why should it?



from "IT'S A LETTER FROM JOE NICHOLAS"

Approximately 3/16th. of an inch and 24 hours separate this sentence from the last and during that period I've given some thought to your problem, and the only answer I can come up with is that you might be able to get your Sense of Proportion back if you exercise it. Keep in mind the fact that we're talking about a few dozen amateur magazines at the most, most of them with miniscule circulations, put out at a loss by people who are trying to enjoy themselves. Try to remember that there's room for brilliant people with money and time, and also room for morons like myself with little money and less time. Go in peace.

LETTER FROM MAL ASHWORTH, of Skipton:

I can only conclude you have displeased Roscoe in some way. (← No, only Dave Langford. Do you think...?→) Having been prevented by house-buying negotiations from writing to you when NSFN first arrived, I took it on holiday with me (it looked as though it needed a holiday) and got prevented by beer, books (← Follows 200 words of ingenious excuses for not writing, incorporating Buddhism, Yoga, etc etc.→)..so before the place catches fire or Butcher Begin decides to invade Embsay, Skipton, in the cause of lasting peace, I had better tell you quickly how pleased I was to get NSFN. Someone is going to have to investigate this strange phenomenon of the simultaneous crawling from der voodvork out of all us old and hoary fans. Do you think we may be the homeless victims of some sort of fannish Rentokil? (← Some would agree→).

In your Con. reminiscences you (got) me confused with six other people. 'Fals-taffian! indeed; I'm not a centimetre over Sir Toby Belch! You're right, though, about how disgustingly unchanged Ken Bulmer looks; we're going to have to do something to age that guy. (← I could suggest a couple of fanzines to send him.→) I remember back in that Distant Age We Don't Talk About For Fear Of Dropping Into Sickening Nostalgia (wasn't that a place in one of Cordwainer Smith's stories?) I was appointing Uncles for reasons I disremember now. Ken Bulmer was one, as was Harry Turner. I told Walt Willis I'd like to appoint him, but suspected he was too young; but had to appoint him instantly when he replied that being my Uncle would no doubt age him very quickly.

***** (← Welcome back Mal - just in time for the pub.... we pass the Church Of 23rd. Fandom on the way, with the stained glass windows of St. Gregory and the rest, so slip a couple of half-bricks into your pocket.....→) *****

LETTER FROM E.G.O'BOO PUBLISHING LTD., Maidstone, Kent:

Dear Sir,

I should like to complain in the strongest possible terms about your recently publicised intention to publish a magazine under the title "Which Fanzine?"

Several years ago, for tax purposes, I formed the above company, and registered titles for several dozen magazines, all of which saw one or less issue. Among these titles were "Which Surgical Support?", "Which House of Ill Repute?", "Which Foul-Water Drainage System?", "Which Typewriter Ribbon?", and other world-beaters. Also included (and as these titles are still registered to my company, this directly affects your future), were "Which Con?", "Which Duper?" & "WHICH FANZINE?"

Therefore, unless you are prepared to offer my company a substantial sum for the rights to the title, I must ask you to cease and desist from using said title either as a title for a magazine or as a sub-title for a section of, or supplement to, a magazine. I have been in touch with my lawyers regarding the use of said title in your advertisement in question and they will be in touch shortly. I think we can probably settle out of court.

Yours faithfully,

P.S. Should you doubt the ability of my lawyers, may I refer you to the author James H. Schmitz? He will be able to tell you about the lengthy action resulting from the similarity of the title of his novel WITCHES OF KARRES and the registered title of our magazine on dental decay.

***** (Do your title registrations cover "Which Bob Shaw?", "Which Crudzine?", "Which Albacon Committee?", "Which Which?"....bet I can find a title you haven't got. Unfortunately, "Which Fanzine" will not now be published, as the entire review panel suicided after reading a publication which, oddly enough, seems to come from your address - MICROWAVE 3. Published by one Terry Hill, though.) *****

***** (Publishing a fanzine has its compensations, and one of them is when a truly appreciative letter arrives. PAMELA BOAL of 4 Westfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, Oxon, OX12 7EW, who is confined to a wheelchair and who ceased to take a part in fandom after failing health and commitment to charity work writes:

I enjoyed everything about NSFN - its clarity, its sense of fun, its absence of petty vitriol and avoidance of further denigrating what used to be useful Anglo Saxon words before they were overused and misapplied. You ask in various ways how you should develop NSFN; I believe and hope that there are enough true fen around whose answers to this first edition will point the way to a natural development. I rather like the thematic approach combined with a letter zine....I think you will edit in such a way that the feeling of fellowship, developing into friendship, through people talking to people (that I used so much to enjoy in fanzines when I first came across them and has been missing from most for some time) through this medium will grow again, at least in NSFN. With people talking to people instead of just trying to impress them, then surely the sense of fun will also return?

I have always felt that if an editor produces his or her 'zine with the

consideration that he or she would give to any friend that he genuinely wanted to communicate with, the standard of presentation and interest is automatically that which is required....Happily, despite my grumbles, there are so many fans who write letters or articles that are interesting and have that sense of fun you so rightly insist should be part of fandom.....

***** (← Insist? Who am I to insist? Substitute 'passionately believe'. I could go on quoting Pam, but she almost uncannily echoes my own views - and readers may be getting an inkling of those already. I've printed her address - send friendly fmz., for though writing is difficult for her, she'd deeply appreciate them.

***** And now I find myself in an unfamiliar dilemma and neck-deep in stencils. When I started stencil-cutting, I envisaged a simple little 'zine of a dozen pages or so. Later, I thought of 18 or 20. I now start back from the laboratory table, scalpel dropping from my hand in horror, as a monster swells and proliferates...It Is Later Than I Thought, MICROWAVE 3 is already finished and lies around awaiting to go into the same envelope...Double Horror Programme. So.....

***** I also heard from, had interesting letters from, desperately want to print, am full of guilt feelings that I can't publish: COLIN WISE, ATOM, SYDNEY J. BOUNDS, JOAN & JOHN NEWMAN, LILIAN EDWARDS, CHRISTINA LAKE, BERYL MERCER, JOY HIBBERT, ANDREW STEPHENSON, CHRIS PRIEST, CHUCK CONNOR, TERRY JEEVES, HARRY BELL, JON WALLACE and about 3 others who've got buried in files somewhere, dammit. Thanks to ATOM for illos., TERRY HILL for physical/mental help,..oh yes, there's another letter from a fan who used to write criticisms of SCIENCE FANTASY NEWS, so for old time's sake:

LETTER FROM BOB SHAW (the Original) from Ulverston Cumbria:

...You know, when I heard you were planning to revive your fanzine I was pleased but also had one or two minor regrets. It won't be like the old SFN, I thought. In the last 25 years Vince is bound to have learned something about how to cut stencils neatly and how to lay out a page with some style and elegance...It was a genuine relief

to me to find out that I had think wrong. Your front cover is exactly the same kind of endearing cluttered mess that was your trademark back in the Fifties. Looking at it gives me the same keen nostalgic pleasure I get from brown bakelite light switches or acid drops that are sold loose from glass jars. Thank you! (← Bakelite light switches turn you on?)

Talking about things not changing, you worried me a little by referring to me as 'young Bob Shaw'. This may sound crazy, but way back about 1953 or so Arthur Thomson did an on-the-spot cartoon of me which I still have up in the attic. I looked at it the other day and found there must have been something wrong with the ink or the paper. The drawing seems to have distorted with time, and now it shows

a horrible decrepit, debauched looking wreck of a man, something like Bela Lugosi on an off night. You don't suppose....? (← No, the drawing sounds OK to me.)

I noticed you trying to get your readership to plan future issues. Nice try, mate, but I don't get tricked into extra fanac so easily!

(← No?)

