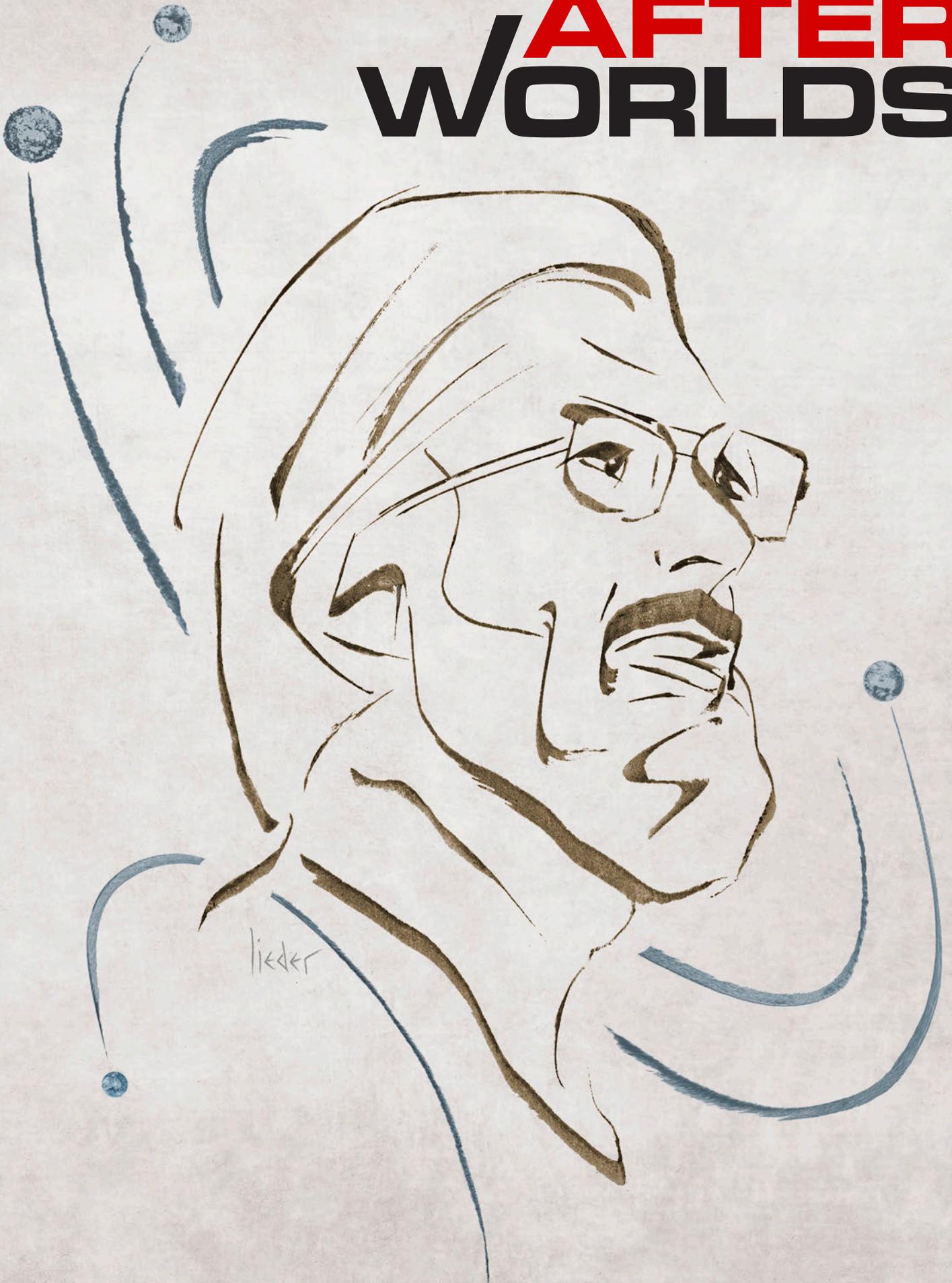


AFTER WORLDS





new to fandom,

told I had to meet
Bowers – in my mind a
a towering image forming.
I began my defense,
my fear that I could never
measure up to such a friend,
science fiction fan, creator
of zines, lover of cons.

the shock of it all,
a singular most encompassing
smile, the eyes in the universe of
that smile, the extended hand and
nod which said “no pretence here,
welcome, friend of Glicksohn, new
face, I am not imposing – I am glad
You are here.”

dear Bill, when we met
you couldn't know how amazed
by your strength I would be –
your strength to go on,
to be seen, to bring your star-gazer
joy to the con suite – sitting
angled in a chair, loving the
language of fandom.

And now in your afterworld
and in ours without you, we
gather again on these pages,
with you in mind – you are back
in our spheres of influence, holding
us in orbit, accountable, then
letting us spin toward eternity.
Thank you!

–Susan A. Manchester

AFTERWORLDS

Afterworlds

*An Eclectic
Bill Bowers Appreciation...
...and Fanthology...*

*edited by
Pat Virzi, Jeanne Bowman,
Rich Coad, and Alan Rosenthal
design, layout & production by
Pat Virzi*

ArtWorlds

*Afterworlds cover art
by Rick Lieder*

Sheryl Birkhead 21, 64, 154, 217, 227, 289 •
Bill Bowers 77, 101, 104, 107, 246 • Jeanne
Bowman 237 • Grant Canfield 1, 81, 213
• Derek Carter 118, 138 • Al Curry 59, 80,
139 • Alex Eisenstein 99 • Kurt Erichsen
125, 131 • Connie (Reich) Faddis 106, 113
• Brad W. Foster 142, 214, 252, 281 • Dick
Glass 89 • David R. Haugh 61, 75, 108,
123, 235, 239, 245, 265, 276, 277, 282 •
Alan Hunter 18, 182, 186, 189, 248 • Jonh
Ingram 121 • Terry Jeeves 8, 88 • Tim Kirk
9 • Stephen Leigh 72 • Linda Michaels
169 • Pat Mueller 211 • Peggy Ranson 16,
70, 76, 206, 271 • William Rotsler 12, 34,
35, 41, 42, 100, 111, 129, 137, 148, 162, 168,
172, 179, 181, 234, 264, 275, 278 • Dave
Rowe 39 • Schirm 66 • Stu Shiffman 27,
28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 • Dan Steffan 121 •
Taral Wayne 13, 44, 66, 126, 161, 204, 230

Photographs

Fred A Levy Haskell 10, 58 • Andy
Hooper 53, 54, 55, 56 • Rob Jackson
38, 40 • Denise Leigh 47 • Stephen
Leigh 20, 37, 48, 58 • Rich Lynch 69 •
Sam McDonald 72 • Andrew Porter 6 •
Jeff Schalles 291 • Chris Sherman 79 •
Skel 7, 50, 259, 283 • Joel Zakem 62

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- 1 Susan A. Manchester: new to fandom,...
- 5 Pat Virzi: Post-It Notes from Beyond
- 6 Bill Bowers: July 20, 1943 – April 17, 2005
- 8 Michael Glicksohn: Upsetting the Parlance of Bowers
- 10 Cy Chauvin: Bill Bowers: "I need friends... who care."
- 13 Michael Glicksohn: Welcome to **Energumen 16**
- 15 Leah Zeldes Smith: How I Met Bill Bowers
- 17 William M. Breiding: Bill Bowers Considered As A Helix
- 19 Patty Peters: Catalyst
- 21 Larry Downes: The Voice in the Dark
- 27 Chris Sherman: Colonel Bowers & Me: An Appreciation
- 34 Joel Zakem: All the Way from Kentucky
(Remembering Frank Johnson)
- 36 Denise Leigh: Remembering Bill Bowers
- 38 Rob Jackson: Why I Went to Cincinnati
- 41 D. Steven Black: A Letter to Bill
- 43 Geri Sullivan: Details, details
- 44 Alyson Abramowitz: Designing the World
- 46 Carolyn Doyle: Memories of Bill Bowers
- 48 Stephen Leigh: from the LiveJournal
- 51 D Gary Grady: My Friend, Bill Bowers
- 53 Andy Hooper: Thots on Bill Bowers and the Late, Great **Outworlds**
59 *Memories, Musings, Classic LoCs, and more... The Final "Lettercol"*
*In order of appearance: Dave Locke, Frank Johnson, Art Metzger, Joel
Zakem, Linda Bushyager, Suzanne Tompkins, Sheryl Birkhead, Grant
Canfield, Brad W. Foster, Derek Carter, Schirm, Mike Glycer, David
Langford, Taral Wayne, John Hertz, Devon Leigh, Gregory Benford,
Susan Wood, Robert Lichtman, John Purcell, Arthur Hlavaty, Rich Lynch,
Skel, Michael Dobson, Sam McDonald, Tim Kyger, Sutton Breiding, Hope
Leibowitz, rich brown, Mike Glicksohn, Jerry Kaufman, Rick Sneary,
Terry Carr, Buck Coulson, Dennis Quane, Norm Hochberg, Eric Lindsay,
Billy Ray Wolfenbarger, Wm. Breiding, Paul Novitski, John M. Koenig,
Chris Sherman, Dick Bergeron, and Al Curry.*
- 81 From William's Pen: A Collection of Writings: 1963–2005
- 290 Billy Wolfenbarger: Remembered, and Never Forgotten

LoCs & Comments:

Wm. Breiding will be publishing the Final Locs on **Outworlds 71 / Afterworlds** in a final issue of **InWorlds**. It will be produced as a print-on-demand zine and will go to all LoCcers/WAHFs. For completists who don't LoC, it will available for purchase from Amazon.

There is no timeline for publication date, but Wm. says he'll likely wrap it up in a fairly timely manner after **OW71** has been published ("maybe six months?"). Please send your LoCs and comments to both InWorlds20@gmail.com and outworlds2020@gmail.com.

From William's Pen

A Collection of Writings: 1963–2005

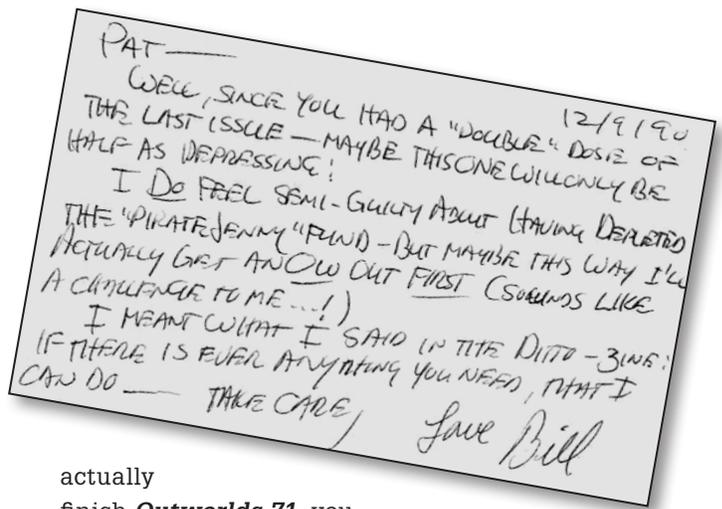
- 82 *Just Plain Bill:*
Sermon of the Month Club
Double-Bill 6, August 1963
- 83 *Just Plain Bill:*
"Which Bill are you?"
Double-Bill 7, October 1963
- 84 *From William's Pen:*
Someday I Might Learn
Double-Bill 10, August 1964
- 85 *From William's Pen:*
A Farewell Welcome! To Arms
Double-Bill 11, October 1964
- 87 *From William's Pen:*
Actually Written By William's Pen
Double-Bill 12, April 1965
- 89 *From William's Pen:*
The Stateside Expatriate
Double-Bill 13, September 1965
- 90 **"Discover the Universe!"**
Outworlds 1, Summer 1966
- 94 **Sphinx Press: the First 5 Years**
Outworlds 1, Summer 1966
- 97 *From William's Pen:*
**How I Walked and Talked
With St. Louis Fandom**
Double-Bill 16, February 1967
- 98 *From William's Pen:*
Letters from the P.I.
Double-Bill 18, March 1968
- 101 *From William's Pen:*
When you love, when you care
Double-Bill 19, January 1969
- 104 **Impressions IV**
Double-Bill 19, January 1969
- 107 **...from William's Pen**
Outworlds I, January 1970
- 109 **Konfessions of a Rapidograph Addict**
Outworlds I, January 1970
- 111 **Random Thoughts on a
Fanzine Review Column**
Outworlds I, January 1970
- 112 *inchoate:*
Going the Exponential Route
Outworlds 3.1, January 1972
- 114 *INchoate:*
**Outworlds, Redefined
(with New & Improved Goals)**
Outworlds Series 3 #5, November 1972
- 116 **"Mae Strelkov's Friends" ::
The Fannish Fundraiser**
INworlds 4, April 1973
- 117 *Excerpts from*
"Mae Strelkov's Friends" :: Auction Sheet
INworlds 6, June 1973
- 119 *From William's Pen:*
**Regarding "The Flap", and Other
Diversions**
Outworlds 18, October 1973
- 122 **"The Fanzine for The Geritol Set"**
Father William's MISHAPventures 1, May 1976
- 127 **Mike Glicksohn Introduces:**
Bill Bowers' Fan GoH Speech – ConFusion 12
- 128 **Bill Bowers Explains Mike Glicksohn...
and Other Short Subjects:**
*The ConFusion 12 Fan GoH Speech
Prehensile 15, Sept. 1976 | Mike Glyer, ed.*
- 134 **Bill Bowers' Second Practice
Iguanacon Speech**
*A Statement of Ethical Position
by the (Other) Worldcon Guest of Honor
Xenium 11, June 1978 | Mike Glicksohn, ed.*
- 138 **"Welcome to my 100th fanzine..."**
Xenolith 5, June 1978
- 141 **Tucker was my straight man...**
Xenolith 6, July 18, 1978
- 143 **Letters to Friends**
Xenolith 7, October 22, 1978
- 147 **Definitely not an "After Iguanacon" report...**
Xenolith 7, October 22, 1978
- 149 **Another Fresh Start**
Xenolith 1 (Second Series), January 8, 1979
- 153 **Hindsight and My Ongoing Battle
with the "Real" World**
Xenolith 1 (Second Series), January 8, 1979
- 154 **Notes towards Another Speech**
Xenolith 1 (Second Series), January 8, 1979
- 159 **1979: Some Settling May Have Occurred**
Xenolith Three, January 10, 1980
- 162 **Nameless by Design**
Xenolith Three, January 10, 1980
- 163 **Notes toward a Speech delivered
at the NASFiC, NorthAmerican:
Friday, August 31, 1979**
Xenolith Three, January 10, 1980
- 169 **A Summer to Conjure With**
Xenolith 14, October 1980

- 172 *From the Archives:*
A Computer Relic
Xenolith 14, October 1980
-
- 174 *Notes Toward a Speech Delivered at*
"The Nine Billion Names of ConFusion,"
Jan. 23, 1981
Xenolith 16, February 1981
-
- 180 **Impressions (Series 2, Number 1)**
Xenolith 16, February 1981
-
- 182 **Bill Bowers' Thots While Swinging**
Energumen 16, Sept. 1981 | Mike Glicksohn, ed.
-
- 190 *Brought to you by the Editorial Whim of*
"The Cult Object of Midwestern Fandom"
Himself
Xenolith 18, September 15, 1981
-
- 192 **Bill Bowers' "If You Don't Put That Sword
Away, Fucker... I'll Run You Through!"**
*...being Notes for a speech delivered at
ConFusion 11, Friday, January 29, 1982
Xenolith 20, June 18, 1982*
-
- 199 **...welcome to Outworlds 37**
Outworlds 37, January 1984
-
- 200 **Genuine OUTWORLDS**
Outworlds 37, January 1984
-
- 206 **Digressions... with interludes of space-filling**
Outworlds 38, April 1984
-
- 210 **Annotating Bowers?**
Outworlds 40, August 1984
-
- 211 **...my convention for
wimpy fanzine fans everywhere...**
Outworlds 41, December 1984
-
- 212 **Note: I'm still not mentioning
certain names**
Outworlds 41, December 1984
-
- 213 **The End of the Porch Swing Era**
Outworlds 41, December 1984
-
- 214 *The Annotated Bowers*
Shticks. History. Coping. Volleyball.
Some 'bits' play better in the Midwest...
Outworlds 46, August 1985
-
- 218 *1985 NASFiC Speech*
Still Practicing After All These Years
Outworlds 47, October 1985
-
- 226 **Predetermination?**
Outworlds 47, October 1985
-
- 227 **My Fanposal**
Outworlds 47, October 1985
-
- 229 *"Outworlds 48.5": Contradiction 6 Fan GoH Speech*
Fanac sideways...
Outworlds 49, April 2, 1987
-
- 232 **A Fanzine for Corflu IV**
Outworlds 49, April 1987
-
- 233 **Time Lapse Memories**
Outworlds 51, Summer 1987
-
- 235 *Dreams/Schemes/Plans:*
But Only One Big Project At A Time!
Outworlds 58, September 1988
-
- 236 **1988 – A Good Year...**
Outworlds 59, October 1988
-
- 237 **ZIP+4 &C**
Xenolith 35, March 29, 1991
-
- 240 **Post-It® Notes from FAFIA**
Outworlds 60, April 1991
-
- 245 **I will do my fanzines...**
Xenolith 36.5, August 1991
-
- 247 **Fandom & Friendship is Eternal**
Xenolith 36.75, August 25, 1991
-
- 248 **Post-It® Notes / all in a column**
Outworlds 65, February 1993
-
- 249 **Post-It® Notes On The Cutting Edge**
Outworlds 66, May 18, 1993
-
- 253 **Post-It® Notes From Across the
Span of Years...**
Outworlds 67, June 1997
-
- 260 **One Editorial, Spanning 1992-1997**
Outworlds 29.5, December 1997
-
- 265 *Looking Back...*
**A Meandering Autobiography,
with Mysteries**
Xenolith 42, February 10, 1999
-
- 271 **Imagining the Revival of All Night Fandom**
Xenolith 43, May 11, 1999
-
- 272 **By The Numbers**
Xenolith 44, February 16, 2000
-
- 273 **For A Breath, I Scurry...**
Xenolith 44, February 16, 2000
-
- 275 **My Life As a Hanging... whatever!**
Xenolith 45, May 7, 2001
-
- 277 **Here's Looking At You;**
or, What I Did on My Summer Vacation...
Xenolith 46, March 31, 2002
-
- 279 **Beware the Ides of Wednesday**
Xenolith 46, March 31, 2002
-
- 281 **Speaking of 'Stamina'**
Xenolith 48, July 20, 2002
-
- 281 **Downsizing Woes**
Neither Rain, Noir Murder 3, July 20, 2003
-
- 282 *MyLife These Days...*
**A wee bit crowded,
but could be a lot worse...**
Xenolith 50, February 10, 2005
-
- 284 **MyPublications**
The final listing...

AFTERWORLDS

Post-It Notes from Beyond

Pat Virzi



THIS VOLUME – *Outworlds 71* plus *Afterworlds* – has been in limbo for over fifteen years.

After Bill’s funeral in 2005, Dave Locke sent me the *Outworlds 71* files he found on Bill’s computer and Zip drives. I remember some back-and-forth fanchatter about publishing “The Final *Outworlds*” on the trufen and timebinders e-lists – but in Dave’s estimation, I think, I was the most likely candidate available who might be able to mimic Bill’s unique style and publish *OW71*: I’d known Bill since 1978 (~~she said obliquely~~), I’d been known to publish a fanzine or two in the past, and I was (at the time) a designer/typesetter at a small print shop equipped with a mecca-load of goshwow toys that would be perfect for fanzine publishing and production.

So I ended up with almost 9 megabytes of files (.txt, .doc, and .rtf, plus some barely-usable .tif artwork scans – with 7-characters-plus-tilde DOS filenames by virtue of Bill’s system crash and semi-recovery in 2002). A few weeks later, Dave sent me a CD of Ditmar art he’d also found. I printed everything out, read through it, organized it in 3-ring binders, and... despaired.

D Gary Grady offered his help, as did Murray Moore and others. There were sundry dwindling queries: “Any progress?” Years passed, as did Locke, and Glicksohn, and too many others. I looked through the binders semiannually, and could not figure out how to do it *right*.

Fastforward to late 2019: We hear rumors of a new coronavirus popping up in China. Then, in early 2020, there’s more and more talk of a potential pandemic.

March 2020: I’m at Corflu 37 in College Station, TX; this year, I’m running the consuite. We’re all having a cautiously great time (and using a lot of hand sanitizer). But by Sunday afternoon it’s evident that Corflu Heatwave has been the Last Hurrah for Conventions As We Knew Them back in the 20th Century.

My Personal Mortality Alarm is going off. “You can’t put it off any longer, Pat,” it screams. “If you want to

actually finish *Outworlds 71*, you have to do it now!” A flash of inspiration: I recruit Jeanne Bowman, Rich Coad, and Alan Rosenthal for the project. Planning, delegation, and editorial matters ensue, with bonus shenanigans and the (inevitable) scope creep of *Afterworlds*.

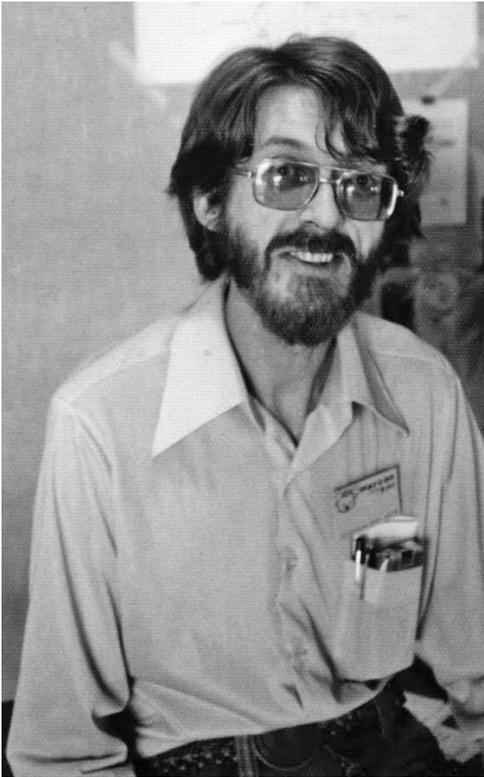
Many, many thanks to everyone who made *OW71 / Afterworlds* possible – particularly Denise Leigh, who mentioned that she had a stack of Bill’s old paper files with artwork and “would that be helpful?” You have no idea HOW much that helped, Denise; we couldn’t have done it otherwise. Thanks to everyone who contributed to *Outworlds 71* and never gave up hope that the final issue would eventually see publication. Much gratitude to all the *Afterworlds* writers and artists, and to everyone who shared those wonderful photographs. And finally, thanks to the invaluable online resources provided by *fanac.org* and *fancyclopedia.org* (Joe Siclari, Edie Stern, Mark Olson et al.) and *efanzines.com* (Bill Burns).

Please send your LoCs on *Outworlds 71 / Afterworlds* to Wm. Breiding at InWorlds20@gmail.com (cc: to outworlds2020@gmail.com). He will be publishing the Final LoCs in a last issue of *InWorlds*, which he plans to finish in about six months (June 2021?).

I’m not a mystical magical woo-woo kinda person, but the people I love are always with me, deep in my soul. It’s been a trip, working on this volume and “hearing” Bill tell me how to put it together, what to include, how it should flow, and which piece of art I should use *here*. I’m afraid Bill was rather *particular* and quite bossy during this process, and I hope he’s pleased with (and not too embarrassed by) the final edition.

And yes, this one is obviously for a friend – Bill Bowers; be happy...

Pat Virzi | October 20, 2020



Bill Bowers

(July 20, 1943 – April 17, 2005)

WILLIAM L. BOWERS was a long-time fanzine, club and convention fan. He began publishing fanzines on a hectograph in 1961, attending his first con, Chicon, in 1962.

Bowers co-published *Double:Bill* with Bill Mallardi in the 1960s as well as *Star*Dust*. In 1970, he started his genzine *Outworlds*, which he continued publishing until his death.

His meticulously executed fanzines were nominated for the Hugo many times, including the 1965 Best Fanzine Hugo for *Double:Bill*; and for *Outworlds*, the 1971 Best Fanzine Hugo, the 1974 Best Fanzine Hugo, the 1975 Best Fanzine Hugo, the 1976 Best Fanzine Hugo, and the 1977 Best Fanzine Hugo. *Outworlds* won the FAAn Award for Best Fanzine three times (1975, 1976 and 1999).

He also published the sometimes-perzine, sometimes-genzine, sometimes-apazine *Xenolith* for some 50 issues beginning in 1977, and the apazine *Neither Rain, Noir Murder...*, among others. He participated in numerous apas, among them FAPA, MISHAP, FLAP and DAPA-Em. Other fanzines included *Abanico*.

He was fond of making lists and addicted to ellipses. He was one of the first faneds to move to offset printing, and enjoyed making his fanzines look as much like slick magazines as he could.

Bowers won TAFF in 1976 in a tie with Roy Tackett, but there was only money for one to travel, and Bill withdrew. TAFF administrators offered Bill the opportunity to finally take his TAFF trip in 2001, on the Silver Anniversary of his original TAFF win, but he was unable to make the trip.

He co-chaired the relaxacon SpaceCon with Rusty Hevelin through the 1980s, chaired Corflu 4 and was on the committees for Ditto 5 and Ditto 10.

Tall and lanky, Bowers had light reddish hair and a sparse beard. He and his short, dark, hirsute friend Mike Glicksohn made such a contrast in appearance that it became a running joke between them.

Though a quiet introvert, Bowers made friends with fans of all ages, who jokingly nicknamed him Father William, after the Lewis Carroll poem and its parodied source, Robert Southey's *The Old Man's Comforts and How He Gained Them*.

Along with fanzines, Bowers had a Kolektinbug passion for books and videos, and was an avid con-goer in the 1970s and '80s. Meanwhile, he kvetched so much about not having time or money to pub his ish that his friend Leah Zeldes gave him a kitten, which she named Responsibility, so he'd have to stay home more. That didn't work, but he came to love the little black cat so much that when she died, he kept her ashes to be buried with him.

Originally from Barberton, Ohio, a small town near Cleveland, he was the son of Clifford L. Bowers and Eva Mae Otto, and brought up in a fundamentalist Christian household that forbade movies and television, to which background he attributed his later addiction to them.

Bowers became a draughtsman after high school. He served a stint in the Air Force and then went back to his old job until 1977, when he chucked 15 years' seniority and moved to Cincinnati to be near Paula Gold, although she was not interested in a serious relationship with him. He had trouble maintaining steady employment in Cincinnati, though he spent some years, on and off, working for Hasbro and Kenner, the toy makers. However, he became active in the CFG, and continued to publish and go to cons.

He was married twice, to Joan Bowers in the late 1960s – she co-edited early *Outworlds* until they split up in 1971 – and in the late '80s, briefly but disastrously to a mundane who fainted him, cut him off from all his friends, then made a false report to the police about him, and left him broke.

Bowers suffered many health problems. For many years, he took steroids for a skin condition, and these led to osteoporosis. The pronounced slump from bone loss affected his lung capacity; he was also a chain smoker. The combination developed into emphysema, though up to the end he was unhooking his oxygen in order to have a cigarette.

Some issues of Bowers' zines are available on fanac.org and eFanzines.com.

[from http://fancylopedia.org/Bill_Bowers 7/24/2020]



Awards, Honors & GoHships

1975

- FAAn Award for Best Fanzine Single Issue
- FAAn Award for Best Fan Editor

1976

- ConFusion 12 GoH
- TAFF winner
- FAAn Award for Best Fanzine Single Issue
- FAAn Award for Best Fan Editor

1978

- IguanaCon II (36th Worldcon) Fan GoH

1986

- Contradiction 6 (Niagara Falls, NY) Fan GoH

1991

- Past President of FWA

1999

- OryCon 21 (Portland, OR) Fan GoH
- FAAn Award for Best Fanzine



Upsetting the Parlance of Bowers

Michael Glicksohn

(originally published in *Outworlds* 3.1, January 1972)

“DEAR,” said my beloved, “it says here that *Outworlds* 9 will be a Special Anniversary Issue.” My wife had actually been reading the latest *OW* which I had casually tossed on top of the open butter dish after reading my letter there in order to peruse the newly arrived *Procrastination* which I was sure contained my deathless prose in an unedited form. The woman has perseverance and stamina you wouldn’t believe.

“How inspiring,” I replied. “Last year we celebrated the Fortieth Anniversary of the first fanzine, and now Bowers is celebrating the Fortieth Anniversary of *his* first fanac. Hectographs are probably quivering in their jelly at the mere thought of it.”

“But, dear, it says here that Bill will be celebrating his *Tenth* Anniversary.”

“WHAT!! TENTH!! Let me see that!” And I grabbed the seasick-green page, scraping butter and jelly to the side in the hopes that they had deceived my poor wife’s ailing vision. But no... it actually *did* say “Ten years of fairly steady fanzine publishing on my part.” HA!

“What effrontery!” I bellowed. “The man’s an out-and-out justified scoundrel! A rogue! We can’t let him get away with this.”

“But what’s the matter, dear?”

“What’s the matter? WHAT’S THE MATTER!! He’s trying to hoodwink fandom! That cad’s been publishing for forty years if it’s a day! Why, he published Forry Ackerman’s first LoC. And I’ve heard it said that there was an ad for a Bowers fanzine in that first issue of *Amazing*. Hell, he’s one of the Elder Imps of Fandom.”

“But why should he try to deceive people?” My wife’s touching ingenuousness is a rare and wonderful thing.

“Fear,” I explained, “simple fear. He knows that today’s new younger fandom would never trust an ancient like him. Even Jerry Kaufman, a fan so conservative as to make Bill Buckley look like a Maoist, estimates Bowers’ fanac at 30 years on the basis of the yearly appearance of the last few *Double:Bills*. And Jerry forgot to allow for the decades it took Bowers to speed up to that schedule. No, today’s new fans are young, hip; they can’t relate to an old fogey like him. So out of sheer desperation Bowers is trying this far-fetched scheme. Tenth Anniversary my flat-bed mimeo! Fooey!”

“But Boy Wonder, it says right here that Bill was born in 1943. So how could he have been publishing for forty years?”

"Gosh! What fiendish **Goon Show** oriental cunning! What subtlety! You can almost admire the bounder. Can't you see the deviousness of the scheme? Doubtless if cornered he'd merely argue that it was a misprint, that he'd meant to type 1913! Look here on page 256 where he's deliberately typed 'the little *olf* lady' just to set a precedent should anyone catch him. Boy, he's thought of everything. He obviously planned the whole thing from the start. You can *bet* he was cagey enough to arrange for that first fanzine – probably four copies printed off cut up slices of raw potato and given to his family – to appear on February 29, 1932 *just* so he could work this ridiculous semantic subterfuge 40 years later. Tenth Anniversary! Oh, he's a sly one... BUT IT WON'T WORK! I'll expose the rascal; I'll start a Holy War; I'll form a foundation..."

"But what could he possibly hope to gain, dear?"

"Why *acceptance*, of course. It's probably all part of a greater scheme to become 'in' with today's fans. Old enough to be revered, but not old enough to be ignored. He's probably letting his hair grow; and he'll start dropping references to pot and rock music in his editorial; and you can bet they'll soon be moving out of *Barberton*! And have you noticed how he never shows up at cons any more? Remember how he copped out on Fan Fair II? Was he at Lunacon this year? Of *course* not! He can't afford to be seen; it would give the game away instantly."

"What do you mean, Tweetie? Does he look all that old?"

"Old! OLD! The man's positively decrepit! He and Joan look like originals in a Rotsler cartoon! And look, he even *admits* he's in FAPA! How much older could anyone be? Oh... I'm going to enjoy revealing the truth."

"Dear, you *can't* start a crusade. It would shatter the carefully-nurtured image of good-natured friendly rivalry you've set up to hide your seething jealousy of Bill's imaginative layout and superb graphics. You explained it to me yourself."

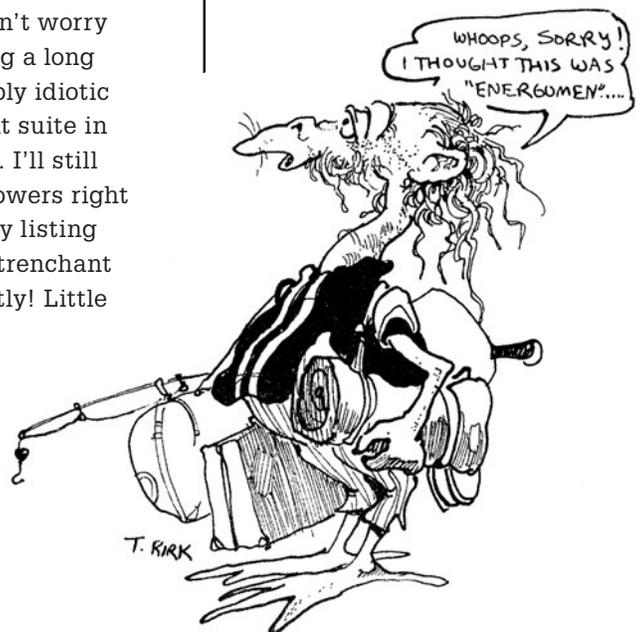
"You're right. Barr George, you're right! *I'll* have to resort to subtlety too. Hmmm... what to do... yes... I'VE GOT IT! That's it! I'll write some innocuous little piece of fannish froth for his Nefarious Number Nine, lulling him into thinking he's fooled *me*, too... then after Noreascon, when it no longer matters to me, I'll expose the fiend! But still subtly... without appearing to..."

"I recognize that gleam in your eye. What are you up to?"

"Oh that? Squeezed the damn tube in the middle again; don't worry about it. Here's my brilliant scheme: remember I was planning a long Noreascon report for Energumen telling about all the incredibly idiotic things that are bound to happen to the nine of us sharing that suite in Boston? In my usual urbane and witty style, of course? Well... I'll still do it, but I'll cunningly work a devastating denunciation of Bowers right into the article! While appearing to merely be setting forth my listing of the petty foibles of fans, I'll actually be writing a fearless, trenchant and outspoken expose of Bowers' diabolical scheme! But subtly! Little cunning additions like a listing of all the words in **OW9** that also appeared in the first issue of **Amazing**, thereby revealing Bowers' subconscious connection with his neofannish days. It can't miss! It will be my greatest piece of fannish writing, my swan-song to fandom! And I've got the perfect title for it!"

"You don't mean...?"

"Yes! What else... *Ah, Suite Idiocy*, of course!"





BILL BOWERS:

“I need friends... who care.”

Cy Chauvin

(originally published in the *Iguanacon II* program book, 1978)

I FIRST SAW the name ‘Bill Bowers’ in a fanzine review column in 1970. It was a review of *Outworlds*, and the reviewer called the fanzine “pretty” but downgraded it because it “only consisted of letters and a short editorial.” This was before there was a heavy emphasis on graphics and artwork in fandom; when the written word was more important than layout.

This review put me off *Outworlds*, so it wasn’t until some time later that I bought a subscription. I was graphically amazed, but found it a bit confusing. Why did the fanzine begin with page 134? Why were there names under all the illustrations? A fanzine done for my “visual entertainment”?

Outworlds, from the beginning, was known for its experimental graphics. When I first bought the fanzine, it was mimeographed, with offset covers. *Impeccably* mimeographed. There were half-page inserts (made by folding one page lengthwise), color coordinated ink and paper, large margins around the artwork (unheard of when he began his fanzine, at least to me) and special art folios, which have almost disappeared again from fanzines. In some issues, to place more emphasis on the artists’ contributions to *Outworlds*, he typed their names underneath their artwork. One issue, he had a special Alfred Bester tribute: a folio of artwork drawn by Stephen Fabian, illustrating some of Bester’s stories and also the man. Another issue Bill produced in an 8½ x 14 format. Just to experiment.

Arnie Katz once wrote that if Bill Bowers were president, he’d soon have artists out trimming the borders of the states, so that maps of the USA would be more graphically pleasing.

Certainly, fandom’s artists have never had a better friend than William C. Bowers.

As an editor (rather than graphic designer) Bill seems to be “looser”. Discovering the Bowers “editorial slant” would be difficult. His editorial policy tends to change every other issue, and usually Bill would devote half his editorial to explaining it – often, one suspected, to clear it up in his own mind as much as to inform the readers. He’s had many conflicting goals.

Bill seems willing to publish anything; serious criticism, humorous anecdotes, poems, cartoon strips, fancolumns, procolumns, even some off-beat fiction. There are two types of fan editors: those who accept what comes in over the transom, and those that actively solicit material of a certain kind and style. Bill has always tended to be the former; this is not

to say that he'd publish your laundry list if you sent it to him (unless, say, your name was Mike Glicksohn), just that he is unprejudiced. Anything Bill finds entertaining I suspect he finds fit to publish in **Outworlds**.

What impressed me most about **Outworlds**, however, were neither its graphics or the wide range of written material, but Bill's own editorials. They seem written with an honesty and sense of personal vulnerability that is rare in fandom, and almost unknown in the outside world. In the last issue of **Outworlds** published to date (No. 28/29), he writes, "I think I am a rather 'open' individual – and yet always on guard and conscious of protecting that part of me that makes me me instead of you... I probably will be writing more, with more candor than ever before." (Page 1104 – the page numbering is continuous, from one issue to the next.)

Does the editor of **Time** – or even **Analog** – write things like that? This element of soul-searching and personal evolution is as unique as the graphics in **Outworlds**. Bill wants to communicate himself to his readers. (He once wrote that he was reluctant to sell **Outworlds** through dealers, because he wanted to know who got each issue.) His comments on the "status" involved in being a Big Name Fan (a humorous appellation, originally, but now taken seriously by many) say even more about Bill Bowers, the person:

"I won't deny that I have spent 15 years working to be accepted and acknowledged by my peers, striving to become a Famous and Respected fan editor/producer. But, having attained that to such a degree that I detect envy (and, damnit, "awe") from some other fans, I have to ask myself... was it worth it?"

"...I do sometimes wonder... if the people who spend time with me do so because I'm me, or because I'm Bill Bowers, Big Time, Big Deal Faneditor. The answer, of course, is that some do, some don't. The 'fame' is useful for making contact; it is a detriment if it is the only reason for maintaining that contact... and while I've certainly 'used' it, that is not what I want: What I want, what I need, is friends who care for me in spite of the 'image' rather than because of it." (p.1104)

One of the people who is a friend of Bill's in spite of his image is Roy Lutz-Nagey. Bill and he planned to go into partnership together and produce an sf magazine called, uh, **Outworlds**. The partnership dissolved. Why? Bill wrote "I am a bastard to work with. I'm not being noble or anything... but I don't want to subject a third person to that on a continuing basis... Friendship is more important than partnership." (p. 1105)

That's Bill Bowers. On paper.

It wasn't until 1974, four years after receiving my first **Outworlds**, that I met Bill Bowers in the flesh (I never went to cons when I first became active in fandom). Mike Glicksohn introduced me – "You mean you've never met Bill Bowers?" – and there before me on the floor sat Bill, gangling, awkward, not quite seeming to fit in his clothes. He sat quietly, not saying much, while around him Diane Drutowski was dumping ice down Larry Downes' back, Leah Zeldes was in rapture with Jeff May, and Mike Glycer was laughing uncontrollably, while trying to write notes on it all. Later, Downes, Drutowski and I sat on an air conditioner and watched **Deep Throat** with thirty other people in a small, hot room.

BILL BOWERS: "I need friends.who care."

By Cy Chaus



It had been one year since Bill Bowers' "A Famous and Respected fan editor/producer" was published in **Outworlds**. It was a column of criticism, and the criticism called the fan "open" – but also "closed" in his own mind. "This was before there was a heavy emphasis on graphics and artwork in fandom, when the writers would be more important than the art." This article just one year after "A Famous and Respected fan editor/producer" was published in **Outworlds**, so it wasn't until some time later that I thought a follow-up. I was particularly interested in how Bill had responded to the criticism. He had always tended to be the fan who would be the first to publish your laundry list if you sent it to him. He had always been open to criticism, but this time he was particularly open. He had always been open to criticism, but this time he was particularly open. He had always been open to criticism, but this time he was particularly open.

Bill Bowers, the person:

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IGUANACON PROGRAM BOOK

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Bill seemed out of phase with all this, as though he wasn't really at the con, but just observing it. The eye in a hurricane.

About six months later, I saw Bill at ConFusion in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he was Fan Guest of Honor. Bill was very nervous and, as he gave his guest of honor speech, his emotions became like a vapor in the air. Bill talked about his friends in fandom, and how much they meant to him. He said that he might be difficult to meet because he clung to those people; when he went to a con he wanted to see these same old friends, and he felt selfish about absorbing all their time and his, but that was the way it was. By the time he finished, he was in tears.

It was not the usual sort of speech one heard at a con.

I think I saw Bill next at a one-day convention we held in Detroit, at Wayne State University; Mike Glicksohn was guest of honor. This seemed to be a turning point for Bill and he started coming up to Detroit more and more, for parties and picnics, or just to visit people. We kidded him, told him Canton, Ohio (where he then lived) was just a suburb of Detroit. A group of the women in the local sf club (Leah Zeldes, Patty Peters, Diane Drutowski, Anne Shoup, Marge Parmenter) who all lived in the same area, plus Larry Downes, made up their own t-shirts which read "Suburban Femmefan" (and "Mascot", on Larry's). Bill was infatuated with them all, so they made up a special shirt for him: "Suburban Femmefan Groupie". It was a little large, but Bill loved it. When the whole group went to Big Boy's one night, the waitress thought they were from a bowling league.

Leah Zeldes noticed that Bill, with all his newfound friends, was never spending any time at home, however. Every weekend he was off to another con or three-day party. How could he publish *Outworlds* or anything else if he kept this up? Could fandom afford to lose this Publishing Giant?

She decided he needed Responsibility: and gave it to him in the form of a small black kitten.

It didn't help. There at the next con was Bill, with Responsibility sitting on his hucksters' table amid the piles of fanzines. The cat attracted more attention than did *Outworlds*.

I can't write much more than that about Bill Bowers: I'm not one of his intimate friends. Often, I don't know what to say to Bill when I see him, beyond the usual pleasantries, but I've always found him kind, friendly. Easily approachable.

I enjoy his fanzine, and his person.

He is a most deserving Fan GoH.



POSTSCRIPT June 2020

*I never expected this appreciation to be in the Iguanacon II program book; I thought it was intended to be used in one of the progress reports. And when it didn't appear in any of the progress reports, I thought, oh well, so it goes... So it was a surprise to me when I talked with Bill at the Worldcon, and he said how much he enjoyed it! Gosh, Bill, it was an honor indeed writing it for you! (Or that's what I should have said, but didn't.) One shy person introducing another. My last communications with Bill were via an e-mailed personalzine that he sent out. I remember being very excited because we were e-mailing back and forth to each other in real time (a new concept to us in 2005) and *laughing* electronically at our jokes.*

– Cy Chauvin

Welcome to *Energumen 16*

Mike Glicksohn

WELCOME TO *Energumen 16*, the Tenth Anniversary Issue that should reach you just about twelve years after *Energumen 1* and eight-and-a-half years after *Energumen 15*. But who was ever able to prove that Fans Are Slans?

It's initially Bill Bowers' fault.

Early in 1980, Bill first presented orally and then published – in a pale, puny twelve-page imitation of a fanzine – the Tenth Anniversary Issue of *Outworlds*. With a sense of timing uncharacteristic of fandom, he did this ten years after (re)starting his fanzine. While he did not actually come out and *challenge* us to match him, that speech/issue was liberally sprinkled with misspelled references to *Energumen*. The gauntlet had been thrown.

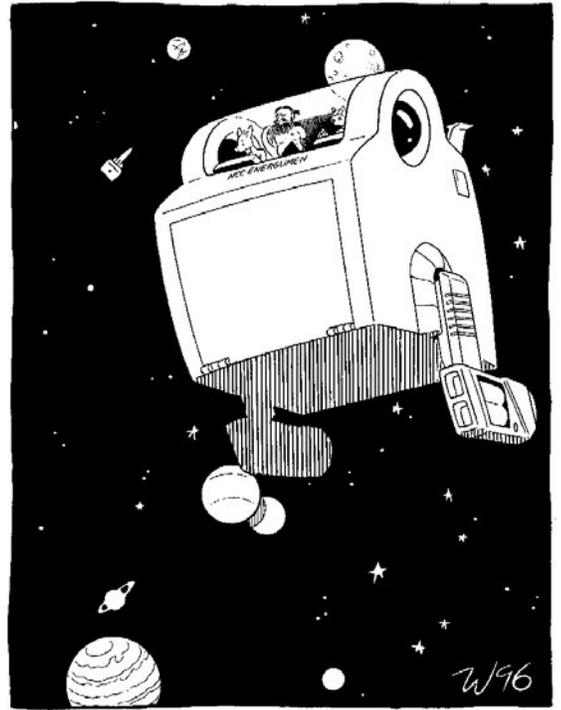
It's mainly Susan Wood's fault.

A little later in 1980, Susan called me from Vancouver. She'd read what Bowers had done, noted the implicit challenge, remembered all the fun of the "rivalry" between us and why didn't we show the bastard what a *real* Tenth Anniversary Issue should look like? Her voice raced and bubbled over the wires: we could drag the old columnists out of their cobwebs to write again, Alicia might be persuaded to do something, Terry would probably find a good reprint, perhaps Tim would... and I was swept along on the tidal wave of her enthusiasm. I began adding suggestions of my own and suddenly the issue was taking shape in my head and I was feeling that heady excitement that comes from creating something special, something fannish. All this despite the fact that I'd bound the first fifteen *NERGs* years ago and had long considered *Energumen* a part of fandom's history.

But my lust for egoboo didn't totally overwhelm me. Let's keep this in the dark, I suggested somewhat later in the conversation. We'll work on it secretly, have all the contributors keep quiet about it and then we'll spring The Perfect Fanzine on a crogged fandom! (It's that sort of thinking that makes Bill Bowers refer to me as "Machiavellian".)

A part of it is Alan Bostick's fault.

At this stage, wiser heads might still have prevailed. Late-night, scotch-enhanced, long-distance enthusiasm can wilt in the cold morning light of labour and economics. But a mere two weeks later, with only a few desultory feelers having issued from Toronto, I read all about

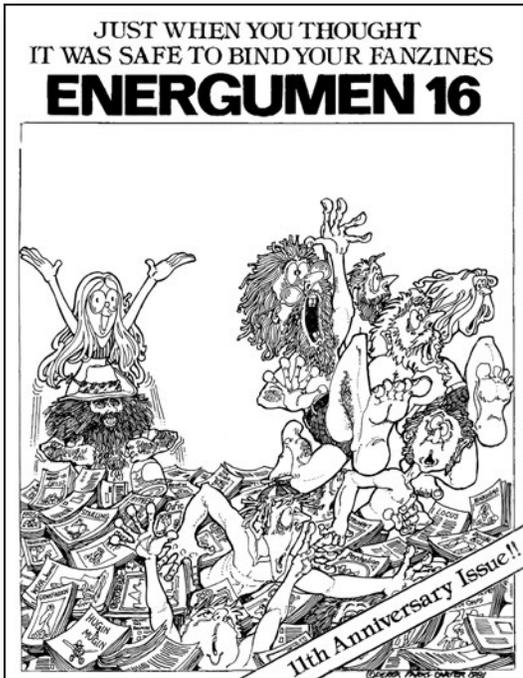


Energumen 16 in an issue of Alan's formerly frequent fannish fanzine. Suddenly fans all over the country were talking about and writing about **NERG 16**; I even got a subscription in the mail. So much for croggling fandom. While my back was turned, the gauntlet had been picked up, cleaned and pressed and mounted in fandom's collective scrapbook.

I guess it's also Mike Glicksohn's fault.

Presented with this apparent *fait accompli*, I could still have backed down. I could have pleaded poverty, Old-and-Tiredness, Twonk's Disease or even Bergeron Syndrome. I could have simply vanished, reappearing at conventions with a haircut, shave, three-piece suit and an appropriate alias to join in the general condemnation of cop-out faneds. Instead, I visited Susan in July of 1980 and in the kitchen of her Vancouver apartment we thrashed out the basic structure of the issue. I'd have to do all the actual production work if we decided to go through with it and it would be a *lot* of work indeed. Three hundred copies of perhaps a hundred-page fanzine: all that typing, printing, slip-sheeting, de-slipsheeting, collating, mailing... you would have to be a fool to undertake a task like that singlehanded. A fool, or a fanzine fan. And those twenty-four boxes of fanzines in the storage room aren't there because I think they're cheaper than fibreglass insulation.

So welcome once again to **Energumen 16**, the fanzine that was never supposed to be. At least now you know who to blame for being here.



*For someone who never wrote for the original **Energumen**, Bill Bowers managed to be as closely associated with it as anyone, including the editors. When #16 was conceived, Bill was one of our "must" contributors. His piece is typical of the recent Bowers canon: convoluted, esoteric as hell, yet possessed of a beautifully intricate structure. Perhaps it belongs in a personalzine but there are many good reasons why it appears here. You won't understand it all but I think you'll admire the craftsmanship of the writing. It proves, again, that Bowers isn't just another pretty caftan.*

*[Mike Glicksohn, **Energumen 16** | September 1981]*

How I Met Bill Bowers

Leah Zeldes Smith

BILL BOWERS was my friend for some 30 years. He was a complex and sometimes unfathomable man, at turns confident and diffident, strongly opinionated and easy going.

Bill was a tall rangy redhead, a little inclined to stoop. Well past the hippie era, he still combed his hair back with Brylcreem, as he'd done as a 1950s teenager.

He filled his meticulously designed fanzines with lists, stunning artwork and what he himself called "esoteric/gut-teasing/literary masturbation stuff." He was addicted to ellipses and parentheses.

We met at a Marcon in the mid-1970s. Marcon, then still in March, was a dull Columbus, Ohio, regional nobody much liked, but everyone (for the Midwest fandom value of "everyone") went to because otherwise it was a long, lonely, con-free stretch between ConFusion in January in Ann Arbor and Minicon in Minneapolis in April, or maybe even till Midwestcon in Cincinnati in June.

Cons in those days actually had programming about fandom, even fanzines, and Bill was a BNF who'd been pubbing his beautiful, much lauded zines since the '60s, with a Hugo nomination to boot. Randy Bathurst and some other friends of his had been roasting him, and Randy had, facetiously, made up a handful of "Bill Bowers Groupie" buttons for Bill to hand out to his admirers.

I shocked him, I think, by shyly introducing myself and asking for one.

We fell into conversation – easy, absorbing, fascinating – and, to neofan me, immensely flattering.

Then came the tornado warning. For those you who don't live in tornado country, a warning means a funnel cloud has actually been sighted. Naturally, therefore, most of the fans flouted the hotel's cautionary directive and went up to the top floor to watch for it.

Bill, however, had been through a tornado in his youth – a real, tumultuous, wind-whipping, house-tossing, witch-killing twister – and they terrified him. He grabbed me and almost literally dragged me down to the basement.

And we sat down there and talked. We talked about tornadoes and our childhoods. We talked about fanzines and fandom and graphic design and typography and anything and everything... until the all-clear came in the wee hours of the morning.

Thus began one of the most important friendships of my life.

*from Father Williams
MISHAPventures #7,
January 1977*

One reason this person is intimidated by Leah is because she leaves four-legged calling cards...

from *Xenolith 5*, June 1978

Regarding Marcons...

I have, more than once, said that the only validity Marcons had for me was the fact that they were so damned close. (...a statement that has as much validity from the South, as it did from the North.) But, just recently, I've begun to wonder if that statement is, perhaps, just a bit too flip. I wonder...

My records say I was at a Marcon in 1972, but I don't remember anything of that one. But I have been to the last five in a row, and of those Marcons I do have a few memories...

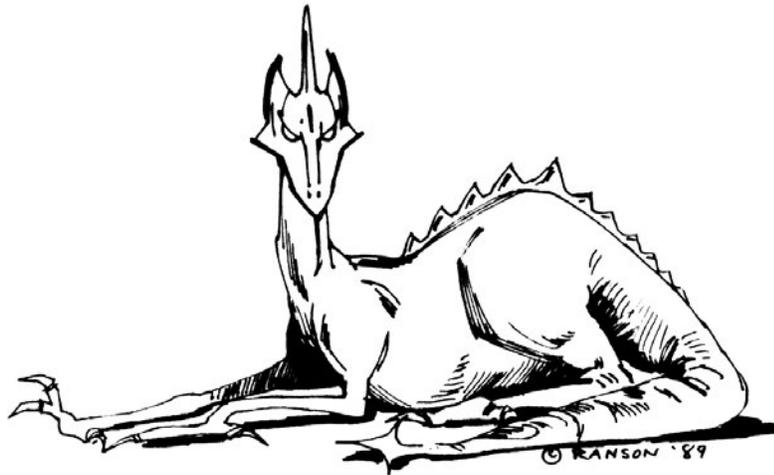
Marcon #11 – 1976:

Ah, yes... this was the Marcon where, just before the delightful task of introducing Randy Bathurst, I publicly announced Mike Glicksohn as The Very First "Official Bill Bowers Groupie"... in response to a dare. (Hi, Jackie!) The Groupie thingie, the "Official Bill Bowers..." namebadges, and all that, *were* fun. (I'm not saying that I've outgrown them, but there does seem to be a lull at the moment, for a variety of reasons. We shall see.)

It was at this convention that I witnessed a miracle. I was sitting in the con suite with Gay Haldeman when a friend who had known me for years – but who had not seen much of me since I'd managed to shed a little bit of my (previously) almost total shyness... walked around the corner. Seeing what must have been to him a rather far-fetched scene, he dropped to his knees in front of us. Gay blew him a kiss... and *andy offutt blushed!*

I *think* this was Tornado-Con I (memory fails); it certainly was the last one at the Neil House... which I minded less than some, but the HoJo's is definitely superior.

...but by far the most important aspect of this particular convention was being able to spend some time with, and start to get to know, someone who has become one of my closest friends as well as being one of the small handful of people I can honestly say I love... Stay happy, Leah...



from *Father Williams MISHAPVentures #2*, June 1976

...of course, I am one of those who has made "remarks" about Leah's age. And yet, I should like to think that *that* is one topic of discussion that we have straightened out between us... after she "called me" (and rightly so) on a statement I'd made previously: "That is one of the beauties of fandom, the fact that age really doesn't matter at all."

That is a statement I honestly believe; and yet, for a variety of reasons (primarily my upbringing) it is also one I sometimes have some difficulty in "practicing". The Old Man of Fandom bit *is* just shtick. Basically I was somewhat bemused when, at Boskone, fannish friends (basically Genie DiModica and Ginjer Buchanan, who have known me at least 8 or 9 years) told me that I looked *years* younger. Perhaps I have, at last, learned to relax a bit and let what's going to happen... happen. Or perhaps the rest of the world is simply catching up with me?

Leah, the age question will, in time, solve itself. In the meantime, accept the fact that people *will* comment; ...some out of their own basic insecurities; some out of honest awe – but don't let it get to you. You are what you are; everything else is nothing.

Bill Bowers Considered As A Helix

William M. Breiding

A type of smooth space curve with tangent lines.

IT AMAZES ME how quickly a kid can grow up.

In 1973 an inarticulate seventeen-year-old scrawled a postcard to Bill Bowers. From that mere request (not even a sticky quarter) Bill put me on his permanent mailing list for **Outworlds**.

Four years later as a newly-turned-twenty-one-year-old I was traipsing cross-country with Patty Peters to set up housekeeping. We stayed at Bill's for the night on a teeter-totter "bed": a double mattress laid atop a single-bed box spring.

In retrospect I think that might be a good metaphor. Not only for Bill's mind, but Bill's entire life.

When I talked to Patty Peters about writing something about Bill, she plaintively asked, "How can you write something that's not about yourself, but about Bill?"

My reply was that it was nearly impossible. One of the Bowers hallmarks was that it was always about *you*, not him. To write about Bill is to write about oneself.

Patty Peters knew Bill Bowers in the flesh. She met him as an anonymous man sprawled on a party couch, quietly observing. I knew Bill Bowers as a fan who had been publishing extraordinary fanzines for more than a decade. Yes, he was a BNF, but Bill never played that card, or if he did it was archly, with a little nasty twist to it. He wasn't above fucking with someone who took it too seriously.

How do you write about someone you actually didn't know very well but who gave huge texture and meaning to your life?

Bill Bowers and Mike Oldfield. Strange linking of names, eh? Not so much. Both Oldfield and Bowers had the ability to reach down into my soul and deeply affect me, leading to long-term effects in my life.

Bill endured the mess of my fanzines and sent me his pristine, beautiful **Outworlds**. He endured the mess I called my writing and sent Post-It Notes of encouragement that said "...And then what happened?" I'm now older than Bill was when he died but he's still there, in my head, encouraging me.

from **Outworlds 38**,
April 1984

Hearing from [Wm. Breiding], from Larry... and getting a note (w/ photos) from Patty –

"I'm not sure why you're keeping up this frenzied rate of publishing, but sure am glad to hear from you regularly."

– can't help but give me flashbacks to the Summers of '76, '77... even '78: surely one of 'the more... err... 'intense' periods in my life, even if it was easy for all the rest of you... and Those We Knew. Still, We All not only seem to have Survived, but to have done so with a certain degree of Fortitude & Style none of us would have suspected of each other Then – even though I'm not going to be certain of any of this until I get a Certificate from Leah certifying that I have passed beyond the adolescence I so recently entered.

from *Outworlds* 66,
May 1993

[in reply to Wm. Breiding's LoC]
Sometimes I think that Chris [Sherman] "crafts" his words out of his life experiences... and Larry [Downes] "chisels" multi-faceted-nuggets out of *his*. The fact remains that both, at least in terms of what is sent to me, are a lot more, err, polished than you... or I... will ever be. They do what they do, and neither will ever fully know how much – snideness put carefully aside just this once – that I do appreciate their words, their caring... and their incredible patience.

You... Young William: You write with your life hanging out, with the emotion of the moment, the passions unfettered. That is a special skill; one I "envy" more than I might aspire to the structure Chris and Larry bring to a piece.

Bill preferred the company of women. Ones with quicksilver minds, emotional depth, and sharp wit. Bill was an awkward uncomfortable man and quiet. I once visited Bill in my travels and he later wrote in his fanzine that we had discovered that we were both rather quiet guys. But the truth of the matter lay squarely in Patty Peters' catalyst theory. Had she been there Bill would have felt more comfortable to be himself.

Bill's depth of insight into people was nearly always displayed in humor and rarely noted for what it was. This sensitivity translated directly to his fanzines where he created puzzles of nuance that sometimes only one or two other people fully "got" (...to use a Bill-ism); sometimes there was section after section, with perfectly timed segues, that had this intention and anyone with even a half-knowledge of what was going on could only look on in wonder at what he created in *Outworlds* (and *Xenolith*). The beauty of it was that you didn't need to know anything about it, and could enjoy *Outworlds* while being oblivious to these other levels. *Xenolith* was different. Its smaller print run meant an inner crowd which necessitated an understanding.

I don't know anything about Bill's upbringing but I am guessing a strained parental relation and a conservative background. Obviously he was bookish and introverted. Through the years he learned to wield a big stick and then to heft it through words, first verbally, then written. Bill fused these two brilliantly with his "speeches" at various conventions, usually while dressed in a kaftan.

Bowers once told me that had he had a different upbringing he might have lived a life more like two other Bills – Breiding and Wolfenbarger.

Billy Ray Wolfenbarger and I lived more peripatetic lives physically and emotionally. Bill experienced this through our writing, mine a headlong emotional soul-baring ("gut spilling") gush, Billy's a thoughtful, spiritual, incantatory bohemian romantic tract – both of us risk-takers that longed for home. Bill wrote that he felt the three of us were soul brothers. And, though the three of us were very different from one another, it was that knack of insight Bill developed that caused him to make that leap. And, of course, he was right. There was a bond and Bill nurtured that bond, pursued it, even.

Bill made a lot of bad decisions financially and in relationships. He was usually indebted up to his ass and his final marriage remains a complete puzzlement to absolutely everyone who knew him. What this woman tapped into that caused Bill to give up everything he loved and to totally debase himself is as mysterious as it must have been compelling.

After his long, agonizing extrication from that marriage Bill created a series of extraordinary fanzines, first *Xenolith*, and then, finally, the magnificent final few issues of *Outworlds*, where he was at the absolute perfect pitch and fulcrum of his publishing apex.

Bill's defining aspect was his ability to love. He was a helix, twining with others in an upward spiral. His love allowed us to be our best selves. He helped me to be a better man, and certainly a better writer. When we meet again he'll get the payback due.

And Bill? He'll just smile and light another cigarette.



Catalyst

Patty Peters

cat-a-lyst

/'kɑd(ə)lɪst/

- a substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction without itself undergoing any permanent chemical change.
- a person or thing that precipitates an event.

BILL HAD MONIKERS for many of his friends, sometimes more than one per person. They were small in-jokes, where he labelled... recognized... the role someone was playing in his life. Sometimes they were subtle, sometimes not so much. One of my favorites was when he highlighted a friend as his “Official Bill Bowers Red Herring”.

The reason these titles were so significant was, bottom line, they were so very true. True as in the truth. True as in funny, but not hurtful. True as in true-blue... unwavering loyalty.

One of the titles Bill bestowed on me was his “Catalyst”.

This was an in-joke on many levels... in school I loved chemistry & HATED physics, which Bill found pretty darn amusing... wordsmith to the max, Bill recognized *both* definitions in our relationship... it put to rest the speculation about our relationship that annoyed us both.

Of course, the title came about after we experienced the phenomenon more than a couple of times. What phenomenon? Friends who had said to me in the gosh-wow-boy-o-boy tone, “You’re friends with BOWERS?!” The first friend who said this had to explain it to me.

You see, I met Bill at a party of Detroit fans and he was, in my mind, this nice guy from the party. He’d been sitting on a couch not talking to anybody for quite some time. As is my wont, that was the person I approached and started to talk with. Hey, it works for me. I don’t like being the center of attention and generally get along with others of that ilk. If the person sitting to the side, quietly observing, is amenable to conversation we will generally get along quite well. If they just want to be left alone, that becomes apparent quickly and I can just move on without offense/harm.

It was not until later that I learned Bill was a Big Name Fan. Bill was incredibly talented. Bill had this phenomenal history of fanzine publishing.

Our conversation at the party was not about his fanzine. I certainly did not mention it (being ignorant of it) and I do not recall if he brought it up. If he did mention it I am sure my reaction would have been along the lines of, “that’s nice”. Bill, being Bill, did not take offense. I later learned/confirmed

**from *Outworlds 62*,
January 1992**

...Bill ... William... (I’ll try!)
whom I’ve seen only a handful
of times over the years; yet as
we discovered on his Cincinnati
visit a few years ago... in person,
without the Patty-catalyst, we’re
two rather non-talkative guys...!

that he actually liked becoming friends with someone without his reputation preceding him.

Time went on and our friendship grew. He lived in a different/adjoining state, but was coming up to Detroit quite often for weekends, parties, small conventions, etc. Friends showed me their copies of his fanzines. Bill added me to his distribution list. I'd write snarky LoCs that would tickle him, sometimes earning more than a WAHF.

But I still had friends who had never gotten to know him beyond the reputation. I'd be hanging out with said friend and Bill would mosey over. Conversation happened. After initial introductions and conversation among all three of us, it would evolve to me becoming a quiet listener/observer. I'd fill in awkward silences, but little else. Things going well, I'd eventually need to excuse myself to go to my hotel room to get another drink or use the john or whatever. On more than one occasion Bill would say, "We'll walk with you."

The conversation would continue away from the large party/con group. I mostly listened, still filling any awkward silences. Sometimes for hours. I loved it. So did Bill. Any friends who commented after-the-fact were really happy to have a chance to meet the person and not just the BNF. A few went on to life-long friendships of their own.

For quite a few I was a precipitant of events, just by Bill moseying over to say, "Hello." For some I increased the interaction rate/intensity between them, but my friendship with Bill did not undergo any permanent change as a result.

cat-a-lyst /'kad(ə)ləst/

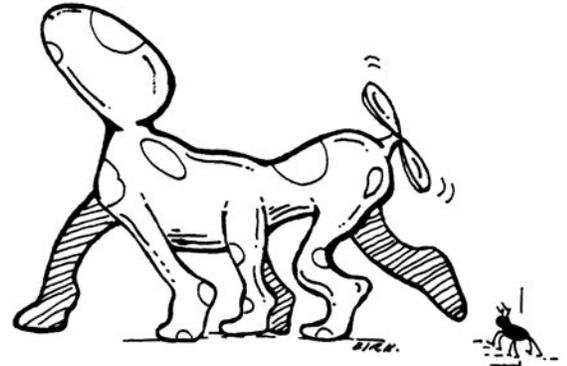
N.B. I leave it to the "Official Patty Peters Surrogate" to self-identify. Perhaps a LoC!



*Patty Peters & Bill Bowers, early 1977 [printed in **Outworlds 51**]*

The Voice in the Dark

Larry Downes



I MET BILL BOWERS in the mid-1970's, just as he was winding down (or "killing," as he said) one of the most spectacular runs of *Outworlds*, the issues numbered in the mid to late 20s. As a teenager churning out crappy dittoed fanzines (crappy in every sense of the word), I, like everyone else, envied Bill's professionalism, attention to detail, and editorial restraint. *Outworlds* was beautiful to look at, and always interesting to read. Bill was in a league of his own.

The details of that first meeting are fuzzy. I remember introducing myself to Bill, who was standing behind a dealer's table. I said hello, bought some copies of *Outworlds*, and went my way, starstruck. It must have been Midwestcon, or some other convention drivable from Detroit, in 1975 or maybe 1976.

Our subsequent friendship, which lasted roughly thirty years, was an unlikely one. For one thing, Bill was considerably older. And I was pretty immature, even for an adolescent. I struggled with the usual teen angst, exacerbated by a toxic home environment and unresolved sexual identity issues.

In my fan life, which only lasted a few years, that translated to pretty obnoxious behavior, a string of painful crushes, and a lot of acting out. Being surrounded by so many other social misfits did not bring out the best in me. I pretended to feud with all of the people I liked and admired most. Many of them, including Bill, saw right through it, and indulged me, I now see, with astonishing kindness.

My 1976 LoC on *Outworlds 27*, which Bill published twenty years later in *Outworlds 29.5*, says it all, unfortunately. "Since you went to such lengths as to print my name in your zine," it begins, "I actually read the thing for a change and now I suppose you'll be wanting a letter of comment or something." It's downhill from there, mostly cracks about Bill's age, his height, and his mostly-benign publishing rivalry with Mike Glicksohn. I'm not entirely sure what embarrasses me more – reading it now, forty-five years later, or that fact that I can't help chuckling at one or two of the attempted zingers.

At the time, Bill was experiencing an awakening of his own, signaled by his shift away from *Outworlds* and to *Xenolith*, which was much more personal if not always intimate. Since I didn't know him before his emergence, I'm not sure how long he'd been in his cocoon, or what had sparked the sudden metamorphosis. I arrived just as it was happening.

from *Father Williams*
MISHAPventures #2,
June 1976

[You know Larry Downes, don't you... The Semi-Official Bill Bowers Proto-Groupie"...]

from Father Williams
MISHAPventures #2,
June 1976

I might have figured that if anyone could come up with a line like “Someday you’ll be a fossil, too”, it would be Patty... and I just hope she remembers it the next time Larry [Downes] says “Bill Bowers likes my fanzine!” (which is, of course, an outright lie...)!

Bill’s transformation manifested largely through relentless convention-going. According to Fancyclopedia (<http://fancyclopedia.org/Outworlds>), Bill didn’t publish a single issue of **Outworlds** between 1976 and 1983. I’m not surprised, given the frantic pace of his travels. Some of Bill’s friends, who might have known, were concerned that he was risking financial ruin. At one point, Leah Zeldes, with whom I went to high school and who was my introduction to fandom, got him a cat, on the theory that he would have to stay home to take care of it. He named the cat Responsibility, and then just brought it with him wherever he went.

I went to many, though not all, of the same conventions as Bill, sometimes traveling with him. We hung with many of the same people – a younger crowd of relatively new fans. That cohort, most in our late teens and early twenties, remained important touchstones for him for the rest of his life. We had witnessed something, even if, at least in my case, we weren’t entirely aware of what it was.

That was the period when I knew Bill best, though I can’t honestly say that I ever knew him that well. In person, we had the kind of jokey insult-trading relationship that was popular in the late 1970’s, in and out of fandom. He was quick to laugh, happy to be surrounded by people who valued him.

Not so when he was alone. Bill would often call me late at night, or ask that I call him, for long talks. (I was by no means the only one.) Bill was amazed – and grateful – that at 16 I was paying for my own phone line, mostly for self-preservation. He mentions it frequently, even decades later, replying to letters from me that he printed. (**Outworlds 55**, March, 1988: “... just the way you used to answer, Larry... back in the days when you ‘had your own phone!’”)

Back then, long distance actually cost money – money neither of us had much of – but the calls would often go on for over an hour. My recollection is that Bill did most of the talking, mostly about his love life, which was, to put it mildly, disappointing, and his job as an engineering draftsman, which bored him. He would often become morose and fatalistic.

Even though I couldn’t see him, I could easily imagine him sitting alone in the dark, smoking cigarettes and sipping from whatever bottle he had handy. There were often long silences, when neither of us said anything.

But what did we really talk about? What was his personal history? What was his daily life really like? I can’t seem to remember any of the specifics. Maybe I lacked the context to understand Bill’s struggles, which were of course the problems of an adult. Maybe now that I’m over 60 myself, I’ve simply forgotten.

Or maybe I just wasn’t listening all that carefully; Bill’s quiet voice, which nearly disappeared as he went on, drowned out by the background noise in my own head, about homework, or relationships, or my own family drama.

Why he felt comfortable confiding in me I’m not entirely sure. It occurs to me now that I never asked him. Perhaps he admired my own style of letting it all hang out in my fanzine writing at the time. Though it was a formative time in my life, with many happy memories, plenty happened that I don’t like to think about. It’s not a time I understand much, if I ever did.

So perhaps it’s for the best that I don’t remember details – including for Bill’s sake. Still, those phone calls feel central to saying something meaningful here. They were where the real Bill came closest to revealing himself.

I will have to look elsewhere, and to less obvious clues. It won’t help that I saw and heard from Bill only rarely once the calls ended. I didn’t

last long in fandom – I was more-or-less done by the time I left for college. I took with me a very few of the friends I made, and they have stuck with me for life, although with plenty of gaps along the way for some.

There wasn't really a place in the pantheon in which I could easily slot Bill, to be honest. But he refused to let me go. That, I think, was his most endearing trait; certainly the thing about him that I miss most, fifteen years after his death. He never stopped writing to me. He sent me everything he published until the end, often with post-it notes attached letting me know some tidbit of news about old, mutual friends, or himself. He was always ready for it to be 1977 again. Perhaps for Bill it always was.

I have a single storage tub of mostly random fanzines I've carted around for fifty years, and going through them now for the first time in decades, I see that they are mostly my own sorry productions as well as a subset of Bill's.

My sense of my post-fandom interactions with Bill was that they were all one-way, from him to me. But rereading the small stack of *Outworlds* and *Xenoliths* I've kept, I'm surprised to find how often I'd sent detailed LoCs, letters that Bill always printed. I am even more surprised to see that he published two articles I wrote, in 1992 and 1998 respectively. How did he manage that, and how had I forgotten? The answers, whatever they are, are more a testament to Bill's persistence than my own engagement.

The first article reprinted something I wrote for the local Chicago arts paper about enjoying but not really understanding a series of lectures on language and meaning by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, which I attended while in law school in my early thirties. The second was an overly-long selection of diary entries I made during a trip to Burma, which I'd originally written as preparation for an article on Burmese Internet use (in 1998) that was commissioned but ultimately never published by *Wired*.

The letters, like the articles, reflect my own aging. I hardly ever pick fights, make mock fun of Bill's age, or snark gratuitously. Mostly I just go on about myself – travels, career changes, publishing – with the occasional reappraisal of my brief time in fandom.

I think I thought that's what Bill wanted from me, and maybe he was satisfied with what I gave him. In any case it was all I had time to offer (always so busy in those days, almost all of it pointless). But the more I wrote, the better-crafted the letters became, and the more impersonal they read. Despite the pretense of updating Bill on my life, they don't mention anything especially important. They do a great job of appearing to be intimate. But I see now that their true aim is to say nothing, or nothing of substance.

Yet in doing so, they somehow betray everything that was so meticulously not being said. The omitted truths are all there, revealed by the carefully-chosen details meant to direct the reader elsewhere. Exactly, come to think of it, the point of those Derrida lectures.

Consider this non-comment from *Xenolith 45* in 2001, my letter regarding an earlier issue, which, like many of Bill's final publications, detailed in a detached but clearly distressed voice Bill's increasing health, personal, and financial troubles:

I suppose as long as you can still muster the energy to describe your difficulties with this much elegance things aren't all bad. Your body is obviously suffering, but your spirit remains unbroken; I dare say you haven't changed – thank goodness – in over 25 years I've had the pleasure to know you.



from *Outworlds 54*,
January 1988

I dunno; I probably never will get completely beyond the "little magazine" syndrome. "Putting together" a fanzine is the fun part for me, and I do have fun with convoluted layouts/titles/whatever. But I don't deliberately set out to make it inaccessible for my readers; not really...: the feedback, the continued contributions, is the incentive, the only "reward" for the considerable effort and expense I do put into this. I may try to tweak and irk to get your attention, but I don't want to deliberately "exclude" anyone.

from *Xenolith 3*,
January 27, 1978

...well, I had a chance to get back in AZAPA, and I *was* in APA-50 (briefly), but I've dropped both. I don't know... I've been in several apas over the years, but while I can appreciate the lure they hold for many, I've never really been comfortable in one. (Part of the problem is that half the people I want to talk to aren't in a particular apa, and that involves over-runs, etc.)

At one time I speculated on forming My Very Own Private Apa – but that was a bit too egotistical, even for me. Still, I suppose that in its own way *Xenolith* is a variation of that “private apa” idea; only I set all the rules, in an arbitrary and thoroughly capricious manner... If you meet my activity rules, you're in!

I'm ashamed of that paragraph, especially its pretext at empathy. Bill increasingly used his publications to reach out for human connection. Instead, I gave him a cookie.

More clues. Rereading the back issues, I'm also reminded how endlessly fascinated Bill was with the cohort of contributors who made up APA-50 in the 1970's. Like all APAs, I suppose, APA-50 began as a place for fans of similar age to share thoughts about science fiction or fandom itself. (I wasn't part of the original group, so I can't say for sure.) But with a lot of help from me, the mailings soon devolved deeply and dangerously into wrenching personal narratives, driven in part by projected romantic feelings among the members. We knew each other, if at all, largely through the writing, which made the rhetoric all the more over-the-top.

My contributions, which even now I can't bring myself to re-read, were shamelessly devoted to what Bill called, characterizing his own similar efforts, “gut-spilling.” The dismissive term was misdirection. It was always clear that Bill loved that kind of writing, and wished he could do it more successfully. During the 1970's, certainly, he admired and even envied our naïve freedom in producing it, even when it wasn't the most literary or even readable prose. It did have a certain lack of pretense, maybe even a hint of honesty – an honesty that frightened me into relentlessly beating it out of my communications ever since.

Bill was clearly sorry to see the party end, as it did soon after MidAmericon in 1976, when too many hormones came to a boil all at once as some of us got together in person for the first and last time in Kansas City. Long after most of us had left fandom behind, Bill diligently followed constant changes of address and circumstances for the principal players, and regularly published letters in his zines from people, like me, that no one in his current circle of readers had ever heard of. In *Outworlds 60*, April, 1991, he proudly refers to the lettercol as “the ‘official’ Update Service of the Lost APA-50 Generation.”

He was clearly pleased to be the last person in fandom most of us corresponded with, even if we weren't really engaging with him beyond the superficial. Bill would often group our letters together, smirking to himself, I'm sure, about intimating a continuing community that didn't exist. He was certainly entitled to the small digs – and they were never more than that, always tinged with deep regret.

On the one hand, I think he genuinely wished we were all still friends, and young, and that he could be more a part of our adventures and less an observer. But the truth, as he knew better than anyone, is that Bill was the only thing we had in common anymore. He cared more than we did.

I seem to be getting a little closer to Bill, and the forgotten contents of those late-night phone calls. There is a little more ore to be mined from our unpublished letters. Thanks to the wonders of the information age, I have ready access to our complete digital correspondence, starting in 1998, when Bill began using email, until our final exchange in August, 2003, a few years before he died.

The emails are, of course, more direct than the fanzines. In June of 1998, for example, as he waded for the last time into the breach with *Outworlds 70*, Bill sent one of the most assertive sentences he ever wrote to me: “Just a note to let you know, if you have any doubt, that you *are* one of the handful of people who I really want to contribute to *OW70*.”

I aw-shucksed my way around it, but ultimately accepted the request as the compliment it was intended to be. It was high praise I didn't deserve. I played an important part in Bill's life, but I was never really comfortable

with *Outworlds*, or an active part of its community of readers. To me, it was still that mythical, pristine, and grown-up publication I was so impressed by as a teenager. I wrote the Burma piece anyway, and promptly forgot about it.

Or consider an exchange from May of 1999. Bill responded generously to an email I sent him with a link to a *New York Times* article about my recently-published first book. He offers his congratulations and notes, as he always did, that he takes only pride in the accomplishments I never hesitated to share with him. As for his own “news,” he says, plainly, “I’ve finally, belatedly, faced reality, and am applying for disability. I *should* have done so six months ago, but I was too stubborn. Now it’s a matter of holding on, until things kick in...”

Message received, that time at least. “What a goof I am – primping like a peacock while you’re truly struggling to get by,” I wrote him back immediately. “I feel pretty foolish.” Then a half-hearted lob in the direction of sympathy. “All I know about disability from my year in federal court is that the process seems interminably long – or at least it was in the cases that got to us. Do you have any sense of when benefits will kick in?”

See, I am telling myself, this time I am paying attention.

Bill replies – I have no doubt – sincerely, “Hey – I didn’t vent to make ‘you’ feel bad!”

My last communication from Bill was a copy of a mass email he sent in late August of 2003, saying that, fingers crossed, he was soon moving into a Salvation Army home for those “entering their Golden Years.” I assume it was his last residence. “I’m not proud: I’m going to need help, in many forms, once again,” he writes. “But more than anything, what I need now is *your* patience with me for the next couple of months, should I seemingly drop off the radar for a week or so at a time. I’ll still be here... chugging away... at least until I’m finally... *there!*”

My response, as someone who had permanently dropped off the radar, emotionally if not literally, decades before, was short, polite, and non-committal: “I’m so glad to hear you don’t mind the term ‘Golden Years’ (caps and all). I do hope this works out for you, Bill – you sound very excited at the prospect.”

He died two years later. I’m not even sure how I found out.

Bill, I now see clearly, was never ready to end those late-night calls, or their electronic equivalent. But I always kept him at bay, a reminder of a past life I wasn’t eager to revisit, perhaps because I was afraid it would somehow collide with the present one, perhaps because I wasn’t especially keen to look too closely at that one, either. I never budged, and he never complained or expressed any hurt.

Sadly, that last response was typical of most of my interactions with Bill. Indeed, reviewing for the first time all the letters, articles, and notes back and forth that I still have, I’m astonished and then depressed to realize now how doggedly he tried to connect, to have a real conversation with me. I deflected every time, sometimes elegantly but more often awkwardly. I always answer, I always comment. I’m usually timely, but never unguarded.

No, it’s worse than that. My emails, LoCs, and even the articles tantalized him, sometimes cruelly, with the possibility of intimacy. They always pull back at the last moment from revealing anything truly personal, from offering any real insight. I was afraid to tempt fate, but still I couldn’t resist tempting it anyway. It might almost have been better not to respond at all. Did I even notice that’s what I was doing?

from *Xenolith 36*,
May 1991

I suppose I shall eventually burn in hell for my unrelenting “gamesplaying” which is evident in such things as the juxtaposition of Larry’s [*Downes*] and Chris’s [*Sherman*] LoCs – but I hope that they, at least, realize that I don’t do such with malice; it’s just a manifestation of my “cuteness” that makes me such a wonderful human being. Or something like that...

from *Father Williams*
MISHAPventures #8,
January 24, 1977

To be perfectly honest, I am much more “keeping a lid on my feelings” than I am “in control” of them – I have loosened up to an incredible degree over the past year – but I still have a long way to go... and I still worry just a bit too much about “what will people think” ... well, mainly about what specific people will think. I sometimes think I have as many “real friends” as you imply; but at other times, I honestly just don’t know. I’m not all that secure... too many of my closest friendships are still very new and untested – and I don’t want to be the one to test them. I am alternately very up and then very down – and, ironically, at this precise moment, very detached about what I mean to the people I care about the most. I am not an easy person to know, I guess; and I make it rough for any one person to know that much about me – I still have to protect that essential “I”... or perhaps I’m just afraid that if I ever reveal the “real Bill Bowers” nobody at all will like him.

There are times when I definitely wish that I could withdraw and hide behind my fanzine again – and I’m not saying that I won’t – but not now, not yet. Knowing people on a personal level is very hard work... but can be so very rewarding.

Fandom does mean very much to me – it, or rather a certain percentage of the people I encounter through it – is what makes life worth living. To me. Don’t ask me why – maybe I wouldn’t like the answer – but fandom is where *all* of my friends are. It – fanzines and cons – is escapism, surely; but I no longer buy the theory that escapism is “wrong”. I have “given” much to fandom – but I have “taken” far more in return... believe me.

I saw Bill in person only once that I can remember after starting college in 1977. Judging by notes still attached to some of the fanzines he sent, he was in Chicago fairly often, but we always missed each other, perhaps because I was regularly out of town. “I tried calling you last Sunday when I was in Chicago,” he wrote on a copy of *Xenolith* dated August of 1991, “but my avoidance of answering machines held fast.” That or my avoidance of answering the phone.

The one time it did work out, Bill was at some convention out by the airport, and I took the El to see him. This could have been any time before I ultimately left Chicago for good in 2000. All I can say for certain is that it was sometime after 1991.

It was a strange meeting. I walked into the hotel lobby to find Bill surrounded by young people I didn’t know, yet recognized by type. He introduced me grandly, but rather than excuse himself, he stayed right where he was, and we had a stilted conversation with all of them listening and sometimes offering color commentary. He was his old jokey self, trying to get me to trade light insults. It didn’t last long, and I left as soon as I could. Back to my busy life doing something – anything – else.

I rode the subway home without giving much thought to the meeting, let alone the stunted trajectory of our friendship, of the rises and falls in his life or in my own, many of them never named between us. But in retrospect, as the last meeting, it becomes inevitably infused with meaning. Again, I’m drawn back to Derrida and those haunting lectures. What was Bill trying to tell me? What was I trying not to tell him?

Obviously, I can’t say. It was, after all, just a brief if awkward conversation in a hotel lobby. But my impression, for what it’s worth, is that, outward appearances to the contrary, Bill wasn’t especially happy. The problems he shared with me as a teenager had only gotten worse over the years. His romantic and professional lives became more hopeless. Eventually, he lost his autonomy, his freedom to travel, his ability to publish beautiful fanzines. What those last few years were like, when I heard nothing at all, I can only imagine.

Still, maybe in Chicago and wherever else he traveled in those days, with a new group of energetic and admiring young science fiction fans to hang out with, maybe then he could at least experience some kind of peace, a temporary truce with his demons visible and otherwise. Even if it was a ceasefire that held only during long weekends spent hanging out in airport hotels, which, owing to his declining health and finances, must have become increasingly infrequent and eventually stopped altogether, no doubt to Bill’s great frustration.

Perhaps I’m making all this up. I have, in the end, so little to go on. But I’d like to think, if only to quiet my own conscience, that Bill had long-since found others he could talk to in the dark, especially through those long nights when the cigarettes and the booze were warring with each other and with him, when the next convention was far off, when the prospect of escape grew ever-fainter. Maybe there was even someone in particular, who was always home and didn’t own an answering machine, who could soothe his soul just by picking up. Someone else with their own phone, and an unlimited long-distance plan. Someone who knew how to listen, at least better than I did.

At least I hope so. I truly do.

– Berkeley, CA
May, 2020

Colonel Bowers & Me: An Appreciation

Chris Sherman

*Being a little-known or accredited account of 1970s and '80s fandom, adapted from the unreleased Hal Ashby film **Being Where?** (with special thanks to the curators of what were then known as the “post-orifice” archives, rebranded decades later as social media timelines).*

LIKE MOST OF YOU, I loved William Tiberius Bowers, who served as inspiration, then mentor, then hard-assed coach during my formative years as a person and fan. He was like an uncle to me, and my respect for him ran (and still runs) deep. And yet, as you’ll see below, it was a complicated relationship.

Opening Credits, Circa 1974.

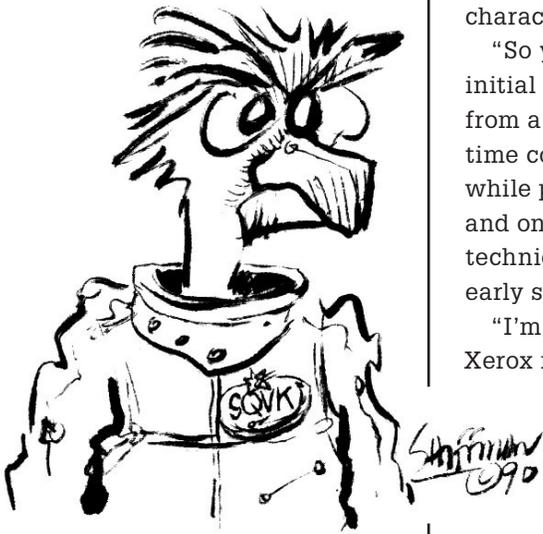
I first met Colonel Bowers when I assumed acting command of the first division of APA-50 in 1974.

APA-50 was created as an elite task force specifically and highly trained to complement and eventually take the reigns [*sic*] from the entrenched legions of actifans dominating the global networks of the day. To be sure, there was nothing inherently broken or wrong with what these honorable and well-meaning “older” fans were doing. It was just a new era, and – well – it was our duty to assume the mantle of leadership to move things forward toward the new century that would be dawning a true-generation hence.

The early '70s were a time when protest against the entrenched order was surging and young people like myself were striving to make a difference. One of the Colonel’s favorite aphorisms, always spoken with a smile and a deep exhalation of cigarette smoke, was “*plus ça change, plus c’est la même chos.*” As for me, a born and mostly raised Minnesotan, I had no idea what the fuck he was trying to communicate (when I mentioned this to him, he replied with a snigger: “*je ne sais quoi.*”). In any event, his frequent displays of confidence and bravado always bolstered my own sense of purpose.

So I was both humbled and honored when fandom president Harnold Flump (passionately known to his followers as “Richard Cranium” thanks to his unpresided [*sic*] intelligence, gregarious charm and uncanny ability to avoid criminal charges) recruited me with the goal of “making fandom great again”.





Flump wasted no time, and with great pompast signed an executive order designating Colonel Bowers as my supervising officer. At our first meeting, the Colonel was calm and poised, but quickly flexed his sharp elbows and displayed the edginess that were his trademark idiosyncratic characteristics, two of many that garnered him so much respect.

“So you think you got what it takes, kid?” the Colonel asked during our initial interview, smirking behind a plume of blue smoke, casually exhaled from a cigarette with an impossibly long ash. Despite the lack of the real-time communication tools we take for granted today, he managed this while pecking away at his well-worn IBM Selectric typewriter, two states and one time-zone away. Despite myself, I was impressed at this display of technical prowess, but not yet willing to let him intimidate me at such an early stage of our relationship.

“I’m not a kid,” I retorted. “I’m fourteen, AND I have access to both a Xerox machine and an offset printing press.”

Clueless and ambitious, I really had no idea who I was corresponding with. The Colonel had a reputation a mile long and an atmosphere high, but I was just a punk who hadn’t yet learned the meaning of respect. Redoubling down, I typed: “Take that, you fusty old fart with your mimeo-stained fingers and multitude of paper cuts on your tongue from years of licking envelope flaps.” At this age, I had attitude, and was more than willing to challenge the fanac officer who would be guiding my career for the indefinite future.

Colonel Bowers’ smirk tightened, an instinctive tactic he used to intimidate both fans and foes alike, his handsome craggy face crinkling in that winsome ironic grimace unique to him. It was an expression well-known to all who had flocked to him while he fanwhiled away, even when he was allegedly sparring with the likes of so-called frenemies like Mike Glicksohn and a multitude of others.

“Heh,” he said, then paused for effect, pointedly making a display of moving a Rotsler cartoon around on a mockup of an *Outworlds* page he was compositing.

“OK, kid. Your first assignment: Minicon 11. You’re not old enough to drink, but inebriation is a critical tactical maneuver at any convention of strategic importance, so consider this premature enunciation. You need to start preparing, because you have no idea what you’ll encounter, especially from selfishly rogue pros who will certainly endeavor to derange your teenage hormones.” He flashed a brief knowing but sympathetic glance my way, then returned to his *Outworlds* prepwork.

“Huh,” I snorted. The Colonel’s taunt prodded me to snap back: “You do realize I’m the acting commander of the first division of APA-50?” Yet at the same time thinking: I’m ready for anything, but I lack your well-known battlescars, sir. In retrospect, decades later, I clearly did not absorb the nuances in his warning. Only now, 40-some years later do I comprehend how truly little I knew back then. Also how wise the Colonel was back then.

Pulling himself up to full posture, shrouded in a whirl of blue smoke, the Colonel rapped out his orders.

“Report to the Leamington Hotel on April 16, 1976, in downtown Minneapolis. You’ll get an in-depth orientation from fan officer in charge Lieutenant Don Blyly. He’ll provide you with full dossiers on pro guests of honor Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett, fan GoHs Leigh and Norb Couch, as well as Jackie Franke and Rusty Hevelin who will be official toastmasters.” Another drag from the cigarette. “They’re your allies. In all

likelihood, they may become your friends. But make no mistake: you'll be under fire from unexpected camps."

The Colonel stubbed out his butt and lit a fresh cancerstick. "Meanwhile, your mission is to begin active recruitment for APA-50, with the goal of persuading as many of your fellow kids as possible to attend Minicon '76." Another smirk, followed by what back then was known as a pregnant pause. "Are we clear so far?"

"Crystal," I replied (thinking: we're not kids, you fracking asshole. At that point in our relationship, I had no way of knowing that his gruff posturing was a ruse. He didn't really think of us as kids, but was rather regarding us as peers and allies who would advance his legacy forward in decades to come. Like any professional coach and gifted leader, what he was really doing was pushing all of us to higher levels of performance.)

"Siryessir!"

"Perfect. You'll be contacted by sub-commander Tucker with further instructions, beginning with your orders for on-the-ground maneuvers at Minicon itself. This will be a hardcore but essential tour of duty for you, kid. Prepare to be Jim-Beamed up."

The Colonel took another long drag on his cigarette, looked away, then stubbed it out in an ashtray full of dozens of expired drags. Then unexpectedly he sighed and his shoulders drooped, looking askance at me in that way all commanders in SF novels do when feeling sheepish or ashamed or "knowing something." Quietly, he exhaled one last time with that inevitable plume of smoke. "Sorry kid – it's probably not going to go well for you this time, but don't give up hope. The future is bright. Dismissed."

"Sir!" I snapped in reply. I was annoyed by the Colonel's attitude, but also recognized that this was a man I could learn from and respect. If... And yet... Hmmn, was this the point where the elliptical "dot-dot-dot" was destined to become APA-50's new official mode of differentiation from other APAs of the day? Confusion in my brain whirled like the smoke above his head.

So that's how Bowers and I began our long and intertwined (to use a then-potent LeGuin or Herbert verb) relationship. My time with the Colonel would take many twisting courses and enlightening paths until it abruptly ended, when the fucker just up and died on us (but more on that later (or not, depending on how many parentheses I have left)).

Minneapolis, April, 1976.

A winter that Time magazine dubbed the "new Ice Age."

It was cold as shit everywhere. The media were predicting mammoth stampedes in the streets, glaciers careening like freight trains through suburban boulevards, tens of thousands of lakes plummeting to the center of the earth under the weight of their ice, and much more. Really, really cold. But hey, Minnesota, eh? No prob.

Unfazed by climate change, our APA-50 recruitment efforts had largely been a success. We had more than 18 members, and at least five of our recruits had reported for duty in downtown Minneapolis at the spacious and posh Nanjing restaurant on the Nicollet Mall the day before Minicon 11. All of our enthusiastic recruits were avid readers and ardent LoCcers of *Outworlds*, so naturally a good chunk of our excited conversation that afternoon was about the wondrous fanzines the Colonel kept cranking out. How he managed to maintain such quality and quantity, while still dutifully carrying on with the wide range of his quasi-military responsibilities was a mystery to all of us.



We were pleasantly supping on what my inexperienced palate registered as *dim sung* and *ratsmift* and *bangdong* in a decidedly nondistanced fashion. We were happy, engaged, under-25-somethings. My recruiting mission was working. I knew the Colonel would be pleased. As we smeared our faces with greasy food and spicy hot mustard and pretended to enjoy '70s-era wok-fried vegetables, we spoke of how our dreams of unfettered gutspilling would lead to a new wave of fandom and how it would solidify our legacies in what we dubbed newfoundum.

But then... A curious future-dread came over me. Maybe it was the MSG, but I was experiencing an unsettlingly all-too familiar feeling of disassociation. Was APA-50 really ready to fulfill the Colonel's expectations? My eyes blurred. Was *I* able to fulfill the Colonel's expectations? A shake of the head followed by a stiff shot of icy tap water cleared my uncertain thoughts. We would report to the Colonel after Minicon with mostly fantabulous results. As the MSG continued to wend its way through my system, all became fantosmorium once again.

Later that night, supine but mostly upright and relaxed on the fourth floor of the Leamington hotel hallway, I leaned in to the welcoming warm woman I had met months earlier at a Minicon planning briefing organized by Lieutenant Blyly. I knew little about her, other than she was soft and lovely and spent hours reading Gene Wolfe, Bob Silverberg, Damon Knight's **ORBIT** anthologies and most of the other SF I was absorbed with at the time. I was smitten.

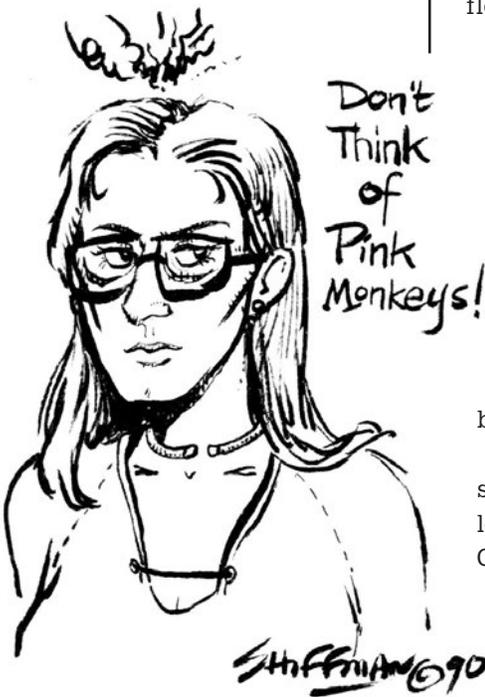
The scent of her honey-sweet hair wafted into my face as I pressed closer to her, sprawled in the hotel hallway. Seven years older than I, she was a dangerous vision but my teenage hormones were working overtime to assure me that this would be a good thing. A vague stab of the Colonel's warning nudged impotently at some reptilian part of my brain, but all I could do was recall his confidence, so I conjured my best imitation of his knowing smirk, and nuzzled closer to her.

Just then, the elderly officer slouching next to us passed the strategically obligatory bottle of Jim Beam with a stern and meaningful look. Recalling my earlier briefings with Lieutenant Blyly, as well as the Colonel's emphasis on tactical inebriation, I dutifully hefted it, took a swig, then handed it to her with a profound look of longing. She took a delicate but meaningful draw from the bottle, then dropped it to her side with a pronounced sigh, languidly returning eye contact. My outlook and other significant parts lifted. With no clue about what was to soon happen, I relaxed. Again, the Colonel's warning echoed. Heh – so you think, Colonel. So you think.

Caught up in the fannish mood I smiled sheepishly and passed the bottle to sub-commander Tucker. Legs outstretched and splayed, he enthusiastically grasped the neck, took a long pull and raised his right arm with a huge smile and show of bravado. In response, all 30 or 40 of us slumped in the hallway (undoubtedly annoying the hell out of all the non-fan hotel patrons trying to sleep behind closed doors at 1 or 2 or whatever the fuck time it was in the morning) raised our arms as well.

"Smoooooothhhh..." Tucker sonorously chanted, leisurely slicing the air with a graceful downward salute. "Smoooooothhhh..." we all chorused in response, arcing arms downward in an epiphany of fannish oneness, slouching even more toward the floor as the alcohol oozed further into our brains.

Just then, as if on cue, the elevator door at the end of the hallway (which looked exactly like the set for Kubrick's **The Shining** without the gallons of blood racing like a slow-motion tsunami our way) sluiced open.



"Hello everyone!" The not-guest but still pro of honor singsonged as he trumped into our gathering. Most of us were so drunk we just waved. He made a beeline for me, then abruptly plopped down next to her. She twittered and the two entwined. (There's one of those LeGuin or Herbert verbs again. (It's starting to look perilously like I'm running out of parentheses.))

Twenty minutes later, she slowly turned her head toward me, pressed her lips into my ear and sighed an intimately warm bourbon-tinged "sorry," followed by a brief wet kiss. She stood shakily and tottered off back toward the **Shining** elevator, arm in arm with Harlan Ellison. I never saw her again. The Colonel had been right, of course, just not in a way that I had either expected or anticipated.

Sub-commander Tucker watched keenly as they left, made a harumphing sound, then twisted and handed me the remnants of the bottle of Jim Beam with a sympathetic downward handwipe. "Sorry it wasn't as smooth as you hoped for, kid," he said. "The Colonel will understand. Just keep up the important work."

The Colonel had been right. As the sub-commander had just reminded me, this was difficult work, and it was now sharply apparent that I needed to dig deep to see if I was really prepared to make a success of it. Both for myself and the Colonel.

Los Angeles, 1980.

Westercon, at a dank hotel dark in the heart of where you really don't want to go now.

It was one of those cloyingly warm and unpleasantly humid nights in the City of Angels, and I really wasn't having fun. As we walked along what local L-Aliens bizarrely refer to as a "surface street" I had to raise my voice to overpower the too-loud drone of passing vehicles.

"I can't keep doing this," I said, unable to make eye contact with the Colonel. He scowled and flicked the ash from his cigarette into the street. Though wordless, his disappointment sliced through the air with an electric, shuddering charge. Unexpectedly cowed, I turned to him and said, "I just don't have the interest I had when I was younger. I need a change of pace."

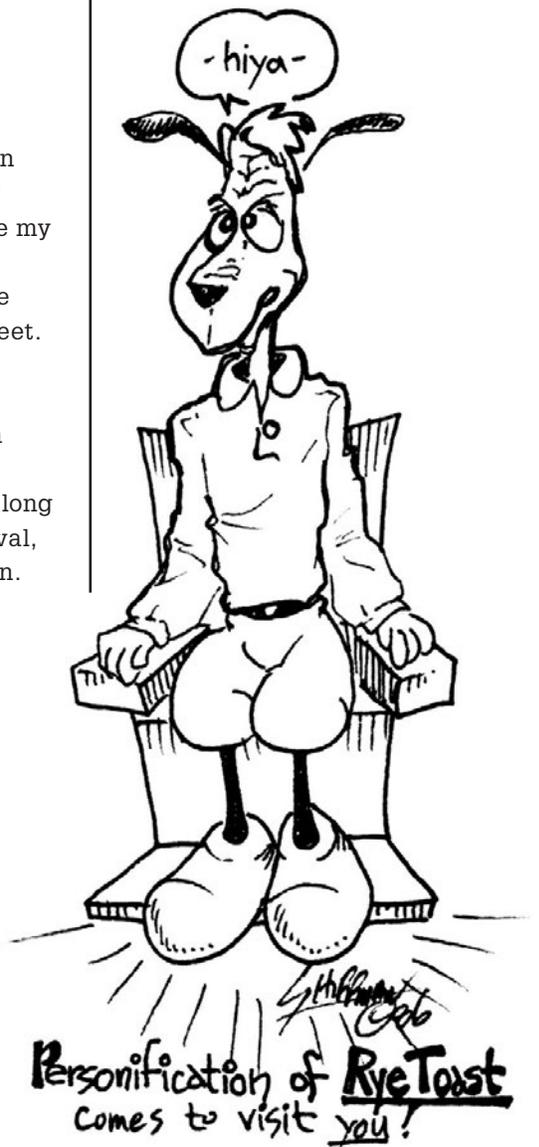
The Colonel shot me a stern look, his steely gaze holding mine for a long moment. Then suddenly withdrawing the electric force of his disapproval, he tipped his jaw upward and smiled his familiar lopsided, crooked grin.

"Zats fine, kid" he said, physically assuming a perfect mimicry of Peter Sellers' Dr. Strangelove. "We can have a transition in leadership. But you'll need to reach out to a few more kids in particular, as zey'll be invaluable assets and longtime contributors to zee cause." Then he dropped his eyes and lowered his voice. "Unlike you, I zuspect."

The Colonel was clearly not happy with me. But my heart wasn't in APA-50 any longer, and I knew I needed to move on.

Involuntarily, I found myself grasping for my next words, steeling myself for the effort it would take to speak. Despite all my training, I never imagined I would need to step up and use the force with the Colonel. Tentatively, I said "With all due respect sir, even if I do leave the service, I still want to keep writing for you. What should I do?"

"Gafiate!" he spat, his gloved hand jerking upward to poke furiously at the monocle in his right eye. His left hand raised slowly to his mouth, grasping the clenched cigarette wafting smoke into his



lungs. "Nothing else will work or help." Visibly struggling, he gradually calmed, then once again smiled his trademark crooked smile. "I'll see to it that, hum, arrangements are made."

Turning away, he snuffed out his cigarette but uncharacteristically did not light a new one. Instantly and inevitably I knew I had just voluntarily staggered full-force into an uncertain new era. Really? Here? Now? But as the weeks wore on, I persisted. I kept writing for *Outworlds* even as I drifted away from APA-50 and fandom in general. And the Colonel kept pubbing. As usual, the Colonel was right.

Sacramento 1985.

Westercon, Anonymous suburban Red Lion Inn.

Editor's note: This section has been edited for clarity and probable confutation of fact and the historical record.

Growing up in Minnesota, I loved Poul Anderson's novels (if you don't know why, check out Wikipedia and Kindle... (DAMN! Even perilously closer to running out of parentheses now.))

Arriving on scene with none of Ellison's fanfare at Minicon, here was Poul, his huge Scandahoovian body splashing full-force into the hotel pool, a belly-flop splat that caught everyone's attention. All of us lounging in the stiflingly humid enclosure applauded his non-athletic prowess.

I've never been shy about approaching people I admired and wanted to talk to. But as I respectfully stepped up to introduce myself, I felt a chilling presence and an unmistakable aroma of smoke behind me. The Colonel barked: "Kid. We need to talk tactics."

"Um, sure," I said, turning to face him. Then froze, unable to hide my shock at seeing how much he had changed. Years earlier when we first met, the Colonel towered over me, his lanky form projecting authority and confidence. The shrunken man standing before me was hunched and a full four inches shorter than I. Only later would I learn that he had been prescribed steroids to ease agonizing back pain. Tragically and ironically, the hormones had the opposite effect, attacking the molecular structure of his spine, compressing it to smithereens and sharply increasing his pain.

We left the pool and took a booth in the hotel coffee shop. He lit up yet another cigarette. "I'm gonna cut to the chase, kid. The docs tell me I don't have a lot of time left, so changes need to be made."

Disregarding the usual foul blue haze of cigarette smoke in the air, I sucked in a deep gasp and regarded him closely. Despite delivering this devastating news, he still radiated his steely calm.

With a feeling of dread, I asked "You're not going to stop pubbing *Outworlds*, are you?"

"No, no, no." Without his Selectric, Bowers was never adept at summoning all-caps in real-time. This surely would have been a moment that he did so, but he was clearly shrunken and lacking his former strength.

"*Outworlds* is something I'll keep doing until I drop dead. What I have in mind is more of a fashion makeover. I've got something new I'm going to try. A graphic change. Starting with my GoH speech today." He grinned. "You'll see."

Memory is a strange thing. I do seem to remember Bowers on stage wearing what would soon become trademark garb for him – a full-length caftan. I also seem to recall listening to Poul Anderson's GoH speech. But *westercon.org* contradicts these memories; James Hogan was the pro GoH and Paula Crist was the fan GoH. I recall Bowers; sadly, I have no memories of either James or Paula.

As an expert—
I say "hitchie"!



In any event, the last time I ever saw Bowers alive was at some con on stage in some important city somewhere, cracking the audience up with jokes and puns – caftan flowing gracefully as he strode across stage, cigarette waving like a conductor’s baton. And just like every issue of *Outworlds*, it was a masterful performance, rich with detail, subtle nuance and... (“dot-dot-dot”) all-things-Bowers, if you ever had the precious opportunity to know him.

So, no matter if parts of this memoir are invented, it’s the way I choose to recall him. As a long-time student who learned countless things from the Colonel, I can only remember him now, one way. Paraphrasing the famous line from the late, great Robin Williams’ movie *Dead Poet’s Society*, and with all due respect to the Colonel:

“Caftan, my Caftan.”

ENDNOTE.

As a young man, Bowers actually did serve in the Air Force. I have no idea what role he played while in service, so I decided to pull rank and commission him with the honorific of Colonel, as a tribute to the leadership and encouragement he constantly and generously provided and demonstrated for an entire generation of young fans. A salute and a hat-tip to you, sir. May you continue to pub in peace.

(Author’s note: Due to pandemic shortfalls, additional parentheses and commentary are unavailable until further notice.)



from *Father Williams MISHAPventures #7*, January 1977

I spent a lot (and by that I mean over ten) of years spending a *lot* of time being very lonely at conventions. It’s a feeling I didn’t much like then... but I didn’t know what to do about. Contrary to what superficial appearances indicated at 16 conventions last year (“... but every time I saw you... you were always *with* someone...”) I still find myself very lonely, many times – even when I’m in the middle of a “group” – but I’m beginning to know what to do about it... and *surprise!* am even finding myself “aggressive” enough to do something about it. That, in itself, is perhaps the biggest “change” I went through in 1976.

I am fairly selective in those I *want* to spend time with – and there is never enough time... or they have too many other friends... or... But I have learned to adapt – have developed enough “options”, if you will, that I can generally be with the ones I specifically go to see a fair amount of the time... but never enough.

I continually search for patterns in my own behaviour... at conventions I react to the situation, but afterwards, away and back here alone, I do tend to get rather introspective. And I do follow patterns. I’ve always been more at ease with women than with men; this year... rather 1976, I accentuated that part even more than usual. Another thing, perhaps more to the point, that I’ve noticed is this: of the (still) handful of people I consider close friends, none achieved that “status” overnight – even tho it sometimes seemed so. More often than not, it was someone whom I’d seen at 3 or 4 cons... someone I knew the name of and not much more... and then, suddenly, for no apparent reason, at a particular con, something clicked. It’s happened several times over the past year... and it continues to amaze me. And intrigue me.

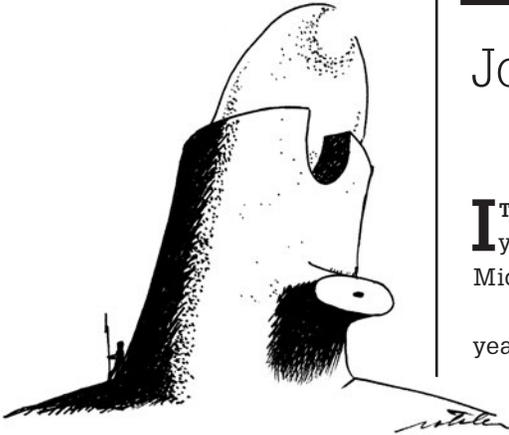
I am very intense and very one-person directed when I’m with someone I really want to be with; I am aware of that... and I’ve had it pointed out to me when someone else I’m equally close to feels that I’ve shut them out. That’s something I’m working on.

I’m not unapproachable; but I’m not a person who approaches people either. I’m not setting myself up on any throne by any means... it’s just the way I am... but if anyone wants to get to know me, I’m afraid they’re going to have to make the initial contact. Would that I could be effusive and outgoing, but I’m not.

All the Way from Kentucky

(Remembering Frank Johnson)

Joel Zakem



IT IS CURRENTLY the second week of June, 2020. If this were a normal year, I would be preparing for what I believe would be my 53rd straight Midwestcon. Unfortunately, 2020 has been anything but a typical year.

Midwestcon, like most other conventions, has been cancelled for this year. In addition to Midwestcon, I was planning to attend Conglomeration in Louisville, Kentucky, over the Easter Weekend and I was hoping to attend the NASFiC in Columbus, Ohio, during August. Both of these cons have also been cancelled. Windycon in Chicago, scheduled for November, is still on, but it would not surprise me if it does not take place.

Even if there is a Windycon, I'm not sure how comfortable I would be in attending any con during a pandemic. Since I am over 65 years old with mild diabetes, I am in a high risk group for the Coronavirus. While I have not exhibited any symptoms, and was negative for the disease when tested on May 5, I am trying to be careful. I've avoided restaurants except for take out and have been wearing a mask and trying to maintain social distancing while shopping for necessities. Thus, I would probably be making a decision closer to the date based on the circumstances at that time.

Skipping Midwestcon, had it not been cancelled for 2020, would have been a harder decision (even though, like me, most of its attendees probably fit into a high risk category). It was the first convention I ever attended (back in 1968) and it served as my introduction to fandom. Though it is no longer my local con, it is an essential event and remains my favorite. I've met a lot of people that I still consider friends and even fallen in love (it didn't last) there. Though the numbers are unfortunately falling, there are certain individuals that I count on seeing at Midwestcon who I might otherwise not see during the year. I may have even first met Bill Bowers at a Midwestcon, though he believed that we did not meet in person until the day he moved to Cincinnati.

And even though I would see him elsewhere during the year, one big part of my Midwestcon experience would involve spending time with Frank Johnson. I had actually met Frank, at a used-book store in downtown Cincinnati, a year or two before attending my first Midwestcon, and he was one of the three other 15-year-olds who traveled with me to the North Plaza Motel on that Saturday in 1968.

Around that time, Frank and I, along with Brad Balfour and Earl Whitson, edited one issue of a horrendous crudzine entitled *Advocates Of*

The Infinite. Much later, we were both in a music APA, ALPS. Frank and I contributed to every all-Cincinnati issue of **Outworlds** and both joined the Cincinnati Fantasy Group at the same meeting on the weekend before the 1969 Midwestcon.

Before his untimely death from cancer on March 19, 2019, Frank and I attended 51 straight Midwestcons. Beginning in 1982, which was our 22nd straight Midwestcon, the two of us hosted an anniversary party which continued, at five-year intervals, until our 50th straight in 2017. Frank did make it to the 2018 Midwestcon, though it was evident that he wasn't in the best of health. His last con was that year's Windycon which, for personal reasons, I decided to skip. I did offer to give him a ride to ConFusion in January 2019, but he said he was not up to the trip.

There is a story about Frank's death that I have told elsewhere, but it bears repeating. While I have lived in Louisville since 1983, I still made regular trips to Cincinnati, often seeing Frank and Karen, his long time significant other. In fact, in early January of 2019, I ended up driving Frank to one of his treatments. At that time, he was noticeably thinner and weaker, but still seemed alert. After the treatment, we returned to the house he shared with Karen, where he insisted on playing me certain musical selections on his surround sound system.

Unfortunately, in March 2019, his condition radically worsened, and he ended up confined to bed. I had planned to drive up to see him on March 20 but, around 9 a.m. on Tuesday, March 19, I received a call from Karen saying that I should probably drive up today. I quickly showered, threw some things into the car, and hit the road to Cincinnati.

I arrived at Karen and Frank's at about 11:30 a.m. and was shocked at the deterioration since the last time I had seen him. He probably weighed less than 100 pounds, could not talk, and was completely listless. While I would like to think that he knew that I was there, I cannot be sure. I was still there, with several of Frank and Karen's other friends, in mid-afternoon, when Frank took his last breath. He was 65 years old.

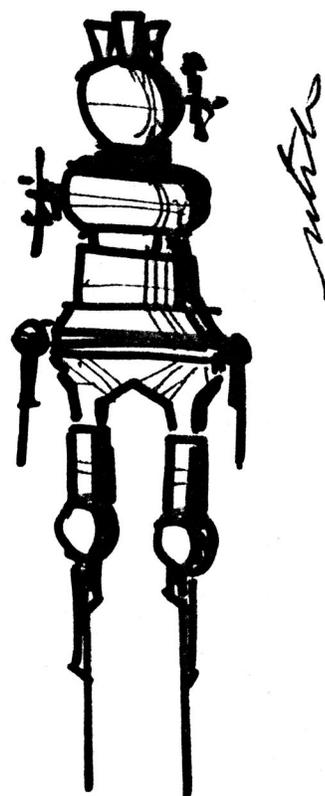
Something kind of wonderful did happen right before Frank passed. A few months back, Frank, accompanied by Karen, made a last visit to the public/classical radio station where Frank worked. A long-time **Hitchhikers'** fan, Frank asked, somewhat jokingly, that if he did not make it back to work, could the phrase "So Long and Thanks For All The Fish" be used in any on-air tribute to him.

A package for Frank had arrived from the radio station earlier in the afternoon of the 19th. When Karen opened it, she discovered a glass fishbowl containing a number of paper fishes, each one with a message from one of Frank's coworkers on the back. Karen, with a little help from us in deciphering some of the handwriting, read each message to Frank. The last one, read shortly before Frank died, read "The Answer is 42."

And a recording of Frank saying "So Long and Thanks For All The Fish" ended the station's subsequent on-air tribute.

*The first installment of "All The Way To Kentucky" (which Bill named when I could not think of a title) led off the 51st issue of **Outworlds**, which was Bill's first all-Cincinnati issue. Subsequent installments appeared in **Outworlds 64** and **67**. While my contribution to **Outworlds 70** had a different title, it could have been the fourth installment. Thus, adopting one of Bill's numbering systems, I deem this to be number 5.*

– Joel Zakem



Remembering Bill Bowers

Denise Leigh

WHEN Pat Virzi and Jeanne Bowman asked me if I had anything of Bill's for *Outworlds*, I didn't have to look very far. When Bill died, his sister gave Steve and me several boxes of material that Bill had set aside for an unfinished issue of *Outworlds*. This was in 2005 and most of the boxes have been on our third floor since then. At the time I let some people know that I had them and didn't know what to do with them. I believe I contacted Leah Zeldes and maybe Patty Peters and maybe Pat Virzi to let them know I had them.

I hadn't thought about them since then, except for going through some folders and taking them to the San Antonio Worldcon to pass along to the artists and leaving them in the fan lounge for whoever wanted them. Earlier this year, I sent Pat a large amount of files and LoC's and artwork that I found in Bill's folders. That is pretty much the extent that I have been involved with this project, and I'm sure it is a PROJECT in every sense of the word. I am glad that they are being put to good use.

When Steve and I first discovered Fandom, at Midwestcon in 1977, Bill had recently moved to Cincinnati from Barberton, Ohio. We didn't meet at the con, though there is a story about how I met his cat, Responsibility. We met Bill later at CFG meetings and for some reason we connected and that was that.

Bill introduced me to Fanzines and over the next year or so he talked me into producing a fanzine, *Graymalkin*. With a lot of help from Bill and Steve and some Cincinnati fans, I published 6 issues and then children and life got in the way. I hadn't thought about *Graymalkin* for a long time. I've yet to find all of my files, but I found enough of them to see that it was a decent fanzine. I'd forgotten how good it felt to get praise from people like Mike Glicksohn, Harry Warner, Reed Andrus, Al Curry, Eric Lindsay, and a few pros like Robert Bloch, George R.R. Martin, and many others along the way.

I know that Bill was the reason *Graymalkin* got so much attention and such good contributors at the time. He also taught me a lot about publishing a fanzine. And about not finishing what I started. I found a folder full of LoCs for issue 6, intended for issue 7. Maybe I'll go through them when I find the rest of my files and come up with another issue, just because Bill would have wanted me to. Maybe nothing more will come of it, and that's okay... (ellipses are Bowers' fault).

Thanks to Jeanne and Pat for putting together this issue of *Outworlds 71 / Afterworlds*.

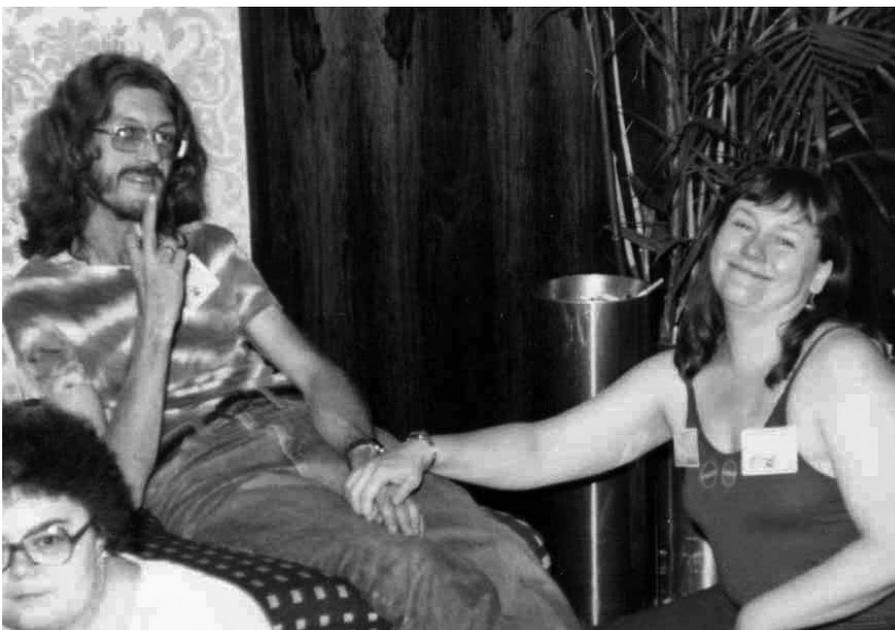
from *Xenolith 6*,
July 19, 1978

Since I've been told that I'm somewhat responsible, I suppose I should mention that Denise has put out Her Very Own Fanzine: *Graymalkin* [...] [50¢ or the usual]. It's not bad, Denise. Really.

Of course, the second issue will be considerably better, now that you have a Big Name to carry you! Maybe you can even tell What Really Happened Friday Night in Mike's Room. [All I did, you see, was tell Denise that all of my friends were creative... but in her case I'd make an exception...]



The Smoking Table, ConFusion (1983)



Bill Bowers & Midge Reitan, Noreascon Two (1980)

**from *Xenolith 1*
(*Second Series*),
January 8, 1979**

Denise blamed a chance remark of mine as the reason she did a fanzine for Midwestcon, which was cute. (The reason; not the fanzine.) When she did a 2nd issue for Iguanaccon, even though it was better – I was in it – I still thought the aberration had run its course. After all, everyone knows that people who get into fandom through cons don't do fanzines.

...well, with the third ***Graymalkin***, I'm beginning to feel immensely proud that I had *anything* to do with its inception – whatever the remark was, anyway. This is not a review; it is an appreciation. If you want to see a *good* fanzine, send a dollar to: Denise Parsley Leigh.

Denise... I *like* your fanzine!
(Ask Patty Peters to explain that to you... sometime.)

Why I Went to Cincinnati

Rob Jackson

IF YOU ARE due to get back to New York from Miami, it's a long way to go to divert to Cincinnati. I must have been mad.

Or maybe I had a really good reason.

I did – it was to see Bill Bowers and get to know him a bit. And I certainly didn't regret it afterward.

That was after the 1977 Worldcon, Suncon. I was among the Britfan contingent who were in Miami in force to bid for Seacon '79, the third-ever Worldcon to be held in the UK.

But why Bill Bowers? Let's rewind a few years, to when I was about to assume editorship of *Maya*, the fanzine launched by two fellow Gannet group members: first Ian Williams, then Ian Maule.

In fact we can rewind even further, to my profanish time with the Oxford University Speculative Fiction Group in 1972, who produced a fiction zine called *Sfinx*. Issue 5 of this was produced like most other fanzines of the time, duplicated with hand-stencilled illos. But the first issue I helped with was issue 6, which under the editorship of Diana Reed (later to marry Kevin Smith, who later co-edited *Drilkjis* with Dave Langford) was very neatly photolithoed. The stories were very patchy; no. 6's most memorable line was from Kev Smith: "My name's Nuff, and I'm a fairy." 'Fair enough,' I replied."

The Gannets mostly duplicated their zines, and Ian Maule's issues of *Maya* were excellent. But by late 1974, when I was preparing my first issue



of *Maya*, I was Really Ambitious, and however neat duplicated zines from over the water such as *Energumen* and *Granfalloon* were, I saw a few issues of one zine whose production values totally knocked me sideways.

Outworlds, of course. I thought this was quite simply brilliant.

Though there were places where the content wasn't quite as engaging as, say, Mike Glicksohn's issues of *Energumen*, or Terry Hughes' *Mota*, I wasn't going to be content with second-best. For a start, I right-justified the type by typing everything twice, the second time round with the

spacing between words (on my IBM Executive C with variable spacing) widened or narrowed as each line demanded.

Maya 7 was A5; the print was small as I did A4 camera copy which was photo-reduced for printing. But I had bigger ideas; I really wanted to be Bill Bowers.

And Dave Rowe in his LoC to **Maya 8** and the illo he sent which I printed in **Maya 9** – reproduced here – thought I ought to be Bill Bowers too.

Starting with issue 8, **Maya** went A4, from A3 camera copy pages. There were various experimental features in the way I laid it out – see the scan on fanac.org if you really want to see what a dog's breakfast it was (especially page 5, and the double-page spreads 6-7 and 8-9),¹ and my reply to Dave Rowe's LoC in **Maya 9** for more detail on how it ended up that way.²

This was in 1975, when the TAFF race for the 1976 Eastercon was between Bill Bowers and Roy Tackett. Sadly in my opinion, though the 1976 race ended up tied, Bill conceded and Roy was the candidate who made the trip.

I still wanted to meet Bill. So the next year, when I was part of the committee bidding for the 1979 Worldcon, I was Not Happy when I learnt on arrival at Suncon that Bill was not going to be there. I had this fantasy that it was a given that any American Hugo nominee in any category would be at the Worldcon in their own country. Even though **Outworlds** placed second that year, beating **Locus** into third place and only losing out to Dick Geis's **Science Fiction Review**, Bill wasn't at the con.

At the con I impulsively started to think about travelling to Cincinnati to meet Bill. Lou Tabakow, an older Cincinnati fan I'd never met before, was quite amazing – he immediately set to work finding out what he could do to help, and put me in touch with Brad Balfour, a local fan and aspiring rock journalist who was driving back to Cincinnati in his MG after the con. So at two days' notice I changed my travel plans.

The car journey was somewhat eventful; I told the tale in an article originally published in **Gannetscrapbook** but reprinted in **Inca 9**, along with the most relevant of my ancient photos from that trip, now digitised from their often seriously bleached original 35mm slides.³ See also my editorial trip report in **Maya 15**.⁴

After finally arriving in Cincinnati I rang Bill and announced my arrival. With incredible generosity he put me up for the three nights I had available, and with equal generosity Lou showed me round all sorts of parts of the city, meeting Mike and Carol Resnick, showing me round the city and arranging a dinner outing with Brad, Mike, Bea Mahaffey and Bill among other guests. While there I was also able to see both **Star Wars** and **The Rocky Horror Picture Show** for the first time.

I have only met Bill that once, but I remember him as quiet, yet with a gentle, kindly and generous nature. He must have been, to put up with a British fan who had the *chutzpah* to arrive in his city completely unannounced and say "I've come here to meet you..."

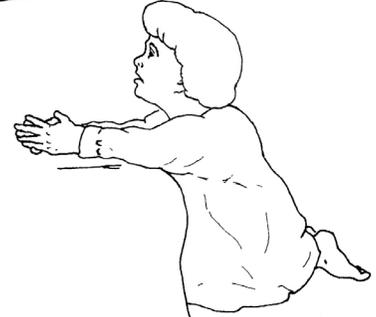
1 <http://www.fanac.org/fanzines/Maya/Maya08.pdf>

2 <http://www.fanac.org/fanzines/Maya/Maya09.pdf>

3 <https://efanzines.com/Inca/Inca09.pdf>

4 <http://www.fanac.org/fanzines/Maya/Maya15.pdf>

AND PLEASE
BRING BILL BOWERS
TO BRITAIN
QUICKLY



ONLY HE CAN SAVE THIS LAYOUT

from *Maya 9*



Of course, for the three days I was in Cincinnati we were far too busy having good old fannish fun for Bill and I to talk at all about such topics as how to make a fanzine's layout look good. Like most of us, I learnt more about that by looking through *Outworlds* than anywhere else.

I learnt nothing very much about fanzine layout, but the trip was among the best three-day periods of my fannish life. Thanks again, Bill and Lou.

*The dinner group photo (from my retrospective in **Inca 9**) is quite historic. Sadly it is badly bleached from having been a 35-year-old 35mm slide by the time I came to scan it. Also included are two other photos: one of Bill on the phone in a rather rubbish side view with two other Cincinnati fans, and one of Lou Tabakow and Bea Mahaffey.*



A Letter to Bill

D. Steven Black

25 June 2020

DEAR BILL,

I have convinced myself there is nothing odd about writing to a man I hardly knew who last sawed Courtney's boat on River Styx 15 years ago.

A Ouija board interview with Susan Wood or Philip Dick would confirm that I am given to inquisitive historical obsessions with distinguished members of the deceased community.

The past *is* another country; my transition to adulthood was marked by departure from Canada to the U.S. For that rite of passage, fandom is as much to blame as anything. It certainly provided me with accomplices who made it possible.

I was impressed by your reaching out to reconnect with me in 1999, when at Bill Breiding's suggestion you added me to your email list. This renewed a very vague acquaintance from the 1970s.

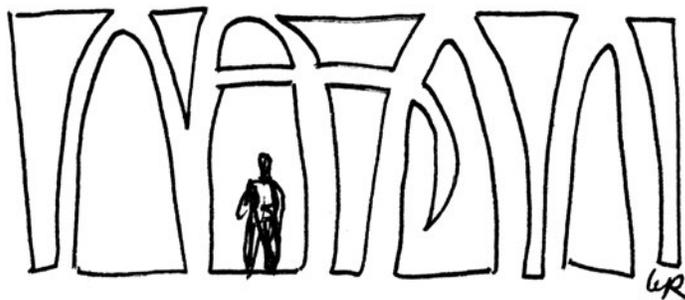
Besides my fated association and identification with a bambino-mince of "BB"s (Breiding, Benny Bufano, Bill Bradley are a few who come to mind) I have observed and appreciated your fine fannish works over the years, even if I never became well-acquainted with you as a person.

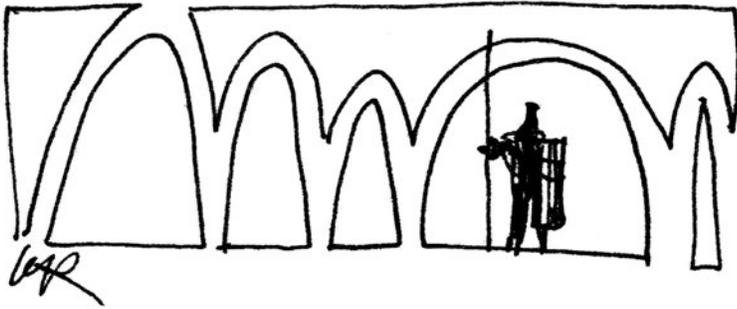
You were a guy someone I was crushing on in those early years was crushing on, so yes, I certainly noticed you – with awe and, briefly, a touch of annoyance.

In person, you were quiet, sucking on an ever-present Virginia Slim. I'd be surprised if we exchanged more than a dozen spoken words in the many times (1976–1982) we met in space and time.

The local luminary I associate you with was Mike Glicksohn. I was quite a bit younger than most in the Glicksohn coterie, but spent a memorable afternoon at Mike's house in 1976. It was during a relaxacon called Symposium, which drew a number of fans from the U.S. to Toronto.

After missing the boat, or rather, ferry to the Toronto Islands, where Toronto Derelicts had guided some of the younger visiting fans for fun and adventure, I passed a rather dejected few hours alone with Taral at World's End (home of Janet Small and Bob Wilson), my nose buried in a copy of **MARTIAN TIME-SLIP**, suffering all manner of FOMO – before proceeding to Glicksohn's High Park home where I hung out, mostly tongue-tied, for the rest of the day.





I was not the only tormented teen in the house. Mike generously opened his home, and on this day was joined by many Traveling Giants at play in cheerful fanhomicie.

People I remember included fan artists Derek Carter and Joe Pearson, whose marker pens were a blur of motion with dueling illos in their sketch pads.

Derek was in high dudgeon over the fannish ToC term “bacover” art which prompted histrionic rage at Joe’s baiting reference to an upcoming “froncover” illo appearance in a fanzine.

Joe and Gay Haldeman were there, as was Barb Nagy, Larry Downes, Cy Chauvin, Michael Harper (editor of *Nit-Wit*, the OSFiC newsletter of the time). Repartee was clever, exposing rivalries I only dimly understood.

The *Nit-Wit* editor verbally sparred with our host, who with mellow humor and hirsute scorn, casually and rhetorically cuffed him the way an elder lion would a feisty cub.

There was an air of anticipation, awaiting an arrival, not a Godot of Ghu’s green earth, but someone who turned out to be *you*.

Were folks *not* involved in competitive comic art playing cards? Quite likely, but I was seated on the edges, chatting mostly with Cy, and later Joe.

There was an undercurrent of abeyant lust – apart from the Haldemans, there weren’t any obvious liaisons, but plenty of flirtatiousness on display.

Even though I was... four years underage in Ontario... I was happy to become acquainted with cocktail fandom: Mike made me Vodka Alexanders, my first mixed alcoholic beverage. I can’t say the booze had much effect, although if I said anything to anyone, it was because my tongue was loosened.

I listened and learned, impressed to be in a community of writers, artists, and folks I fancied were ghetto outlaws: pariahs in a world of mundania.

The outlaw part was largely projection, although they were definitely open to and in favor of letting their spirits flow.

The summer of 1976 was also the season of MidAmeriCon, a socially seismic event for many of my fan friends. I was unable to attend. Looking back, I can tot up attendance at 6 Worldcons over the course of my fannish career, from 1973-1993.

This missive is really a con-report disguised as a LoC, written 44 years after the fact, addressed to a Trufannish legend with whom I hardly ever spoke. Yet a connection was made, one that has endured. I eagerly await your next ish; your acolytes tell me it is due Real Soon Now.

Yours for a rebirth of wonder,

D. Steven Black
Berkeley, CA

Details, details...

Geri Sullivan

BACK IN 1992, Bill took me to task in a letter of comment. I hadn't queried Stu Shiffman's mistaken description of the Corflu IV hotel in "I Remember Corfluvia," Stu's overview of Corflus past that I published in *Idea 5*.

"Tsk," Bill wrote. "You were there; you should have caught that one. (... he said, having been called to task on one or two occasions, in the aftermath of printing something he should have queried.)"

Thanks to Bill's mild poke, I'm able to revisit my then 5-year-old memories of the Cincinnati Corflu he ran. I replied:

"Memories of Corflu IV include the outstandingly entertaining dinner expedition to a downtown pub, music in Al Curry's room, David Emerson getting delayed overnight in Chicago (and welcoming him in fine fannish fashion after he arrived Saturday morning), bits and pieces from the program, and absolutely nothing about the hotel! You're right, though, I probably would have remembered if it had been a Tudor Nightmare Village, and thus should have queried Stu. This small example gives me the opportunity to remind our readers that while all knowledge may well be contained in fanzines (and in fandom), many of the so-called 'facts' are anything but. My own dear son, Chuch Harris, is one of fandom's greatest revisionists even as he is one of our greatest entertainers. Events and timelines become murky up in the haze that quickly swallows every convention we attend. And each of us sees just one portion of the elephant called life. Or is it even an elephant?"

It all seems like a lifetime ago.

I was and remain amazed by Bill's attention to detail as reflected in the pages of *Outworlds* and *Xenolith* as well as in our conversations. His capacity to develop and maintain lists, to keep count of the conventions he attended and fanzines he published as well as recording books read, movies watched... there's an upside to compulsion, to keeping such track of things. Thanks to Bill's lists, I know that we attended at least eight of the same Corflus and three of the same Worldcons. It looks like his last Minicon was the year before my first...

It's hard to believe that we knew each other for nineteen years. Never well, but always comfortably. We shared sensibilities when it came to fanzine production standards and enjoyed talking about them. I remember taking *him* to task when assumed Jeff Schalles did all of the mimeo work on *Idea*. And I wish Bill were still with us so we still could take each other to task when it was called for while more often encouraging each other in whatever we were up to.

from *Outworlds 66*,
May, 1993

I've been led to believe that Fannish Family Relationships (where the "father" [Rusty] can be years younger than the "son" [Tucker]; or the "son" is *slightly* more 'mature' than the "Mom"... Hi Suzi!) is primarily a Midwestern phenomena. Be that as it may... some of these "relationships" are definitely "real"; even when their connection to fandom is tenuous:

How else to explain that, when I journey Up North to see my mother and my sister (& family), I make a side trip into dear ole Barberton to see "Aunt Barb" and her family. My only "tie" to Barb is through a fannish relationship – with her niece; initiated in Iowa of all places, and "over" for a decade now – but whatever it is, it's closer than my relationship with most blood relatives.

Designing the World

Alyson Abramowitz

I ENTERED FANDOM a lonely kid in a challenging family. I'd always had an affinity for math and science and had a plan to be an astronaut. No matter that astronauts had to have perfect eyesight in those days and I most definitely did not.

Fanzines were a natural for someone like me who couldn't easily get to a fannish anything at a time when a computer and driving were shortly to become an option. Talking to a stranger was petrifying anyhow. My cousins speak of me in those days as a mouse. So I received fanzines, and commented on a great many, resulting in my getting even more. One of the fanzines was called *Outworlds* and it looked quite different from the others. It was more magazine-like. Its faned was interested in layout and design, having come from a background as a draftsman and a love of design and art. I was intrigued. I was fascinated. It was this odd design thing which fit no category I had. I had no idea how he did it but I *wanted* to know.

I had never shown any particular talent in artwork beyond the occasional crafts projects. I thought drawing and painting beyond me although I kept up a steady stream of what I called doodles throughout school. Doodles which, on the rare times I let others see them, they thought were artwork. I found this entirely unbelievable.

As the *Outworlds* came, I was growing up. I soon managed to figure out ways to go to my first cons on a shoestring budget. I traded babysitting an author's kids for a ride to my first Worldcon. I believe it was there that I first encountered Bill Bowers. He was in the hucksters' room. I mustered up all the courage I could imagine and hoped I could produce some words. I wanted to know about this design stuff I was seeing and he was the only source.

Bill was a slightly shaggy looking man with a cigarette tipped from his mouth. Reddish hair and midwestern drawl accompanied the look. No matter. He was a BNF. I was a kid trying to pass. Prepared to run away any moment, I approached Bill fully expecting him to take off my head for daring to talk to him. I was sure the knife was under the table.

He was delighted to talk design. Apparently no one else asked him about design. He told me of magazines that showed design principals. His words opened a new world. Bill gave me recommendations of magazines and told me to study them. These were how Bill learned about design, he said. He neglected to point out that, as a draftsman, he already had a design background and I had none. He didn't point out that I was a kid. He spoke adult. He spoke of this new world as one I could explore too. He took my interest in it seriously. He had no idea what came next.



Memories of Bill Bowers

Carolyn Doyle

from *Outworlds* 38,
April 1984

Of course I take my fanzine seriously... even if not so seriously as when it was Big & Fancy... but in many ways even *more* 'seriously' than when it was Big & Fancy. Then it was my life; now it is a part of my life... flexible & mutable, but still a very important part of whatever it is I do, of wherever it is I go. Taking something seriously, it took me a while to learn, does not equate with somberness, humorlessness, or pretentiousness; even though the mechanics sometimes get wearisome, I have fun with what I do, and the way I do it. At least most of the time!

A COLLECTOR and a completist, Bill Bowers did not like to compromise. *Outworlds* is proof – it set the standard for what a truly excellent fanzine could look like, attracting top-notch contributors... and readers. It reflected Bill's passion for quality and precision, which were essential in his career as a draftsman. His professional career included working on Mattel's **Star Wars** models. (Bill had some proudly on display in his last apartment).

Bill owned at least two Selectric typewriters (the holy grail of the fan-ed of that era), and an impressive collection of type font balls. He bought Liquid Paper by the box, not the bottle. Looking at his bookshelves, you would see all the **DOONESBURY** or **GARFIELD** collections, all the episodes of a favorite series on videotape.

The care he lavished on *Outworlds* demonstrated Bill's commitment to excellence. Perhaps you can only lavish that kind of care and attention on something if you disregard what you're not passionate about.

Cooking was certainly an example of the latter.

I once made Bill a meal of Tuna Helper – on the lone burner of his stove that still functioned.

And I can remember proudly bringing Every. Single. Ingredient. I would need to make a cake at Bill's place – down to the salt, tucked in a tiny screw of wax paper. But I had to mix it up in a plastic flour canister, because he had no mixing bowl. (Why did he have a flour canister? We will never know.)

In person, Bill's height gave him a presence. He had a wicked sense of humor, and could deftly toss sharp sarcastic quips with the best. But he had a soft-spoken courtliness, and at conventions preferred to park himself in one spot, and let people come to him.

Yet when he was Fan GoH at the 1978 Worldcon in Phoenix, I recall he launched a series of well-attended Worldcon practice speeches¹ leading up to it, at regional cons over the summer.

He formed good friendships with good people. Leah Zeldes (who got him his cat Responsibility). Dave Locke and Jackie Causgrove. D Gary Grady. Steve Leigh and Denise Parsley Leigh. Paul Skelton. Mike Glicksohn, whose *Xenium* was right up there with *Outworlds*. And

¹ See <http://www.cdnsfzinearchive.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Xenium-11.pdf>

Rusty Hevelin, with whom he put on SpaceCon in Wapakoneta, Ohio, for several years starting in 1979.

I recall Bill kindly hosting me and other fans at his apartment in part of a house on Harrison Avenue, when we were in town for the Annual Cincinnati Floating New Year's Parties. I remember duplicators and dust, cats, stacks of videotapes and books... and a kitchen table so piled with mail, magazines and fannish flotsam, there was almost no space to eat.

Bill was stubborn. He smoked, and was determined to live life on his terms. He liked Pringles, Gold Star coney dogs, sauerkraut, Chinese food, and those doughnuts coated in cinnamon powdered sugar. He was a great fanned... and my friend. I miss him.

June 15, 2020 | Paho, Hawaii



Bill with Carolyn Doyle and Mary Martin

from *Father Williams MISHAPventures #8*, January 24, 1977

[...] most of my fannish career I have purposely chosen *not* to respond to questioning of my methods & motives, particularly in regard to how/why I “do” something like *OW*. I long ago found out that such arguments are counter-productive in that they eat up the very time/energy I need to do “my thing”. Plus they rarely solve anything, in that the more strongly I deny something, the more “guilty” I am judged. People will think what they will no matter what I say. Still, I *do* react to judgements passed on me (pro *and* con) even if I may not always respond or retaliate visibly – I am still victim of an upbringing that says that while women may freely display emotion, males WILL remain in control of themselves, at all times. But I’m learning; perhaps a bit overly!

from *Xenolith 1 (Second Series)*, January 8, 1979

I spent Christmas weekend working on this critter, but I took a break between typing the Wolfe interview, and finishing up the draft of the speech. The occasion for this time-off-for-(relatively)-good-behavior was the 2nd Annual Floating New Year's Parties, sponsored by The Cincinnati Committee of the Tall & Short of It.

...now, Marla and I don't actually “host” anything: we just invite the out-of-town people, and then tell the Leighs, the Currys, and the Tabakows which nights *they* can have a party. Last year it was a two-nighter; this year, three nights. I don't see anything against a four-nighter next year...

It was fun! Thanks to everyone involved... and the 50° (if wet) weather!

from *Outworlds 32*, Spring 1993

Editing a lettercolumn is an area of the fanzine discipline that I came to late; the one in *Double:Bill* was Mallardi's domain, and my previous solo-efforts rarely had to worry about handling more than a couple of letters at a time. Still, response is very important to me: I invite it, angle for it, play to it... and to a large degree I even *demand* it (at least if you wish to continue receiving what I do). Still, some things get a bit out of hand – I still have boxes of LoCs in response to *OW25* through *28/29* that remain to be printed. This time, now, I'm not going to get behind. I'm not. I'm not!

Everybody has their own way of doing these things: one of my quirks is that I often do not rise to implicit gambits, nor answer direct questions... even those contained in the portions of letters that I *do* print. This is not to construe that I either agree or disagree with the unanswered gambits, nor to indicate that I am unaware of the direct questions. It's simply the way I do things... for my own amusement; just a quirk...

from the **LiveJournal**

Stephen Leigh

Publishing the last issue...

MONDAY 4/18/05 5:09:00 PM

Music: *Dreaming Tree* – The Dave Matthews Band – *Before These Crowded Streets*

THIS IS A HARD ONE TO WRITE...

Bill Bowers, a long-time friend, has passed away. It still doesn't seem possible. Denise has stuff in the car that we were planning to take over to him in the next few days; I was working with him to purchase a new computer, and his printer is sitting in a box in our hallway. I just had a back-and-forth e-mail conversation with him a few days ago. In that conversation he said "It's been a very rough couple of weeks; the Doc was out yesterday, and changed some of my meds. Hopefully something will 'progress' soon; this constant list of *ailments* is getting old!"

It's difficult to realize that I won't be talking with him again, having one of those rambling conversations that encompassed everything from books to music to movies, that I'll never again read a new *Xenolith* or *Outworlds*, full of those ubiquitous ellipses...

Bill was a Capital-C Character. He was contradiction personified: a stubborn man who smoked cigarettes in full knowledge that it might drastically shorten his life; who was generous with others but also a collector who couldn't bear to part with much of anything he accumulated... and when it came to books, magazines, fanzines, CDs, videotapes, DVDs and the like, he accumulated much; a person who desperately tried to retain his independence but who, because of health issues, had to rely on friends to do many things for him; someone who had decided opinions about many things, but who would also listen to those who disagreed; a precise, fussy man when it came to his publications and getting them to look exactly the way he wanted them to look, even when doing so came at a greater cost than he could truly afford; a man of lists, who recorded the books he read, the movies he saw, the words he published; who wanted nothing more than to live surrounded by the books, the music, the movies he enjoyed so much; an intensely private individual who would still rip open his heart and display it publicly in his fanzines...

When Denise and I first met Bill, it was the mid-'70s and we had just found sf fandom ourselves, not long before Bill's Fan GoH stint at Iguanacoon. He was newly moved to Cincinnati, a genuine fannish legend already, a BNF in sf fandom (Big Name Fan, for those not familiar with fannish acronyms). He quickly became one of our closest friends, and it was through Bill that we met many of the people we now also call friends. Bill was our chief mentor, our guide into fandom.



CFG Picnic, 1982

Over the decades, he continued to be part of our lives. There was the brief interlude of Bill's disastrous marriage when no one much saw Bill at all, but after the divorce he returned to active participation in fandom, publishing zines and going to conventions. Bill was often a rider in our car or someone else's when we'd go to out-of-town conventions; I still remember the five-hour drive back from a ConFusion that seemed to take only an hour because Bill, Denise, and I were having such a great conversation.

In recent years, though, Bill's health became more and more an issue, and he became more and more an unwilling recluse: dependent on oxygen, having to use a cane or a walker to move around. He'd said that he planned to attend only the local convention – Midwestcon – from here on out, simply because he no longer had the energy to handle cons, though he loved being there and talking to friends he'd known for ages. Like many sf fans, most of his friends lived far away... For the last few years, especially, most of his contact with people outside the local fan group was via e-mail. A dyed-in-the-wool Rapidograph and straight-edge, cut-and-paste, do-it-by-hand graphic designer, he was nonetheless enthusiastic about finally moving into the digital world. He and I had spent a few hours playing with Apple's new page layout program (Pages) on my computer, and he was looking forward to getting his hands on the program himself and putting out fanzines again.

At this point, we don't know the details of what happened. Certainly his health had been bad and worsening, but that's the way it had been for many years now. Just as certainly, none of us expected this. His sister and brother are coming in, and arrangements will be made. For now, there's just the shock and the emptiness and the disbelief...

You'll be missed, Bill... by all of us... and for many reasons...

Bill Bowers – Your Homework Assignment

THURSDAY 4/21/05 11:13:00 PM

Music: *Dreaming Tree* – The Dave Matthews Band – *Before These Crowded Streets*

OK, KIDDIES... Here's your homework assignment. Those of you who knew Bill Bowers, leave a comment giving us your favorite memory, a telling anecdote, a paean, a bit of truth, an elegy, a remembrance or just a few words on Bill.

There's a memorial service for him at 10:00 AM on Saturday, and around 8:00 AM on Saturday, just before we head over there, I'm going to print out the comments so I can give them to Esther and Jim, Bill's sister and brother. I may even read a few of them at the service. So you have from now until about 8:00 AM on Saturday to reply.

So tell us about Bill as you knew him. Spread the word to others who knew Bill and tell 'em to do the same.

If we all remember him, he'll never really die...

(edited to add: I have to print this out for the memorial service now, but if you're coming across this late and you'd like to add a memory of Bill, then please do so – I'll pass along any new entries to his family.)

Bye, Bill

Monday 4/25/05 9:19:00 AM

Music: *Mr. Bitterness* – *Soul Coughing* – *Ruby Vroom*

BILL HAD A GOOD SEND-OFF. He was cremated Friday, and the ashes of 'Sponse, his cat – Bill had kept 'Sponse's ashes with him after the cat's death – were mingled with his ashes. Esther took the remains with her for

from *Xenolith 1*
(*Second Series*),
January 8, 1979

I have a different address than I did when that last *Outworlds* came out. Why I moved to Cincinnati (instead of Chicago or, God forbid, Michigan!) is not a long story; quite the opposite as a matter of fact.

Transition: Conventions (parties & visits) have become an increasingly vital part of my "fanac" over the past four years: enough so that other things, such as fanzines and letters, have had to take a backseat. Still – although my first convention was long before, it wasn't until my 23rd (the first Windycon, in 1974) that I had enough nerve to go to one completely on my own. Some still aren't easy, but perhaps, just perhaps, I have reached the stage where I can combine both the publishing and social aspects of my "career" – and manage both with some degree of equality. End transition.

I moved to Cincinnati in June of 1977, the Friday before Midwestcon 28. The following Thursday night I went to the pre-con party at the hotel... and returned the next afternoon for the remainder of the weekend.

Veteran con-goer that I was, I suppose it never occurred to me that my 54th convention might well be the first for someone else...

from *Father Williams*
MISHAPVentures #2,
June 1976

The question of “Age” – *my own* – is a subject of some importance to me... in that Age leads to Death... my ultimate paranoia. And yet, with the help of friends, and with a little help from myself, I do believe I’m making progress in dealing with that one topic that has so dominated my every action for so long. I don’t propose to ignore it – but I do intend to learn to deal with it... and in the end, I’m going to have to do that for myself. (I suspect that, in an issue or two, I may be at last ready to run the [I think] rather brilliant letter that Dave Rowe sent to me over a year ago... on how he learned to deal the death blow to that fear. It is only one of the reasons I’m so looking forward to meeting Dave at Midamericon this year...)

burial in the Barberton area... The cause of death, for those who were wondering, was listed as a “massive heart attack.” Considering the variety of ailments that Bill had been dealing with over the last many years and the stress his heart must have been under as a result, that’s not a surprising finding. It’s comforting to know, though, that it was almost certainly quick...

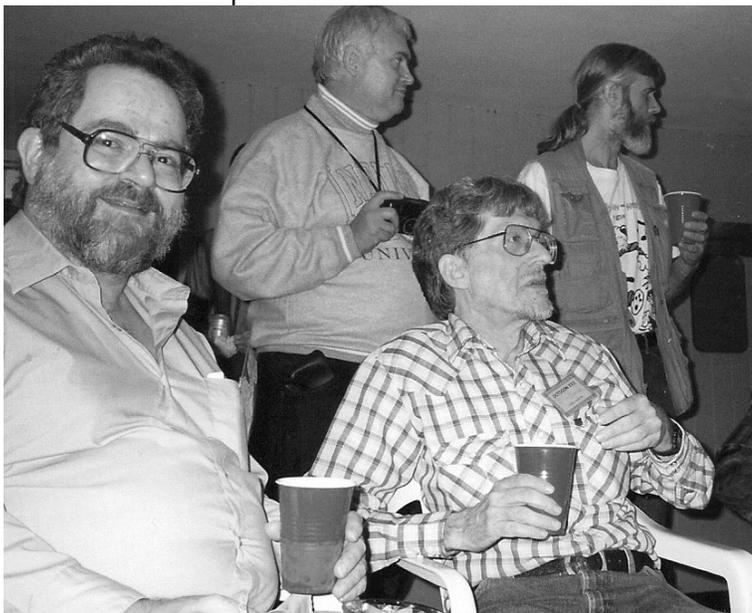
The memorial service was well-attended with local fans and a sprinkling of others from out of town. D Gary Grady probably was the furthest traveler – he’d been an incredible help to Bill for some time, coming into town many times to lend a hand. After the service, we had an informal gathering at the facility... We’d brought over a dozen large boxes of VHS tapes Bill had recorded himself and let people go through them; what was left was donated to the Salvation Army, who also had Bill’s TV and DVD/ videotape players. Bill recorded everything, from old movies to TV shows – in fact, it was routine for us to get a call or e-mail from Bill saying “Hey, tapes are on special at Walgreen’s; next time you’re there, pick me up as many as you can...”

Somewhere during the get-together, a wake for that night was proposed; Denise and I offered to host, and so another gathering – this one with alcohol – came together in the evening and went until the wee hours. We shared memories and toasted Bill (the Cheese Whiz toast was, well, awful; the Bacardi Dark Rum toast was a little better...), looked at old pictures from the albums Denise and I had, and in general we remembered the man we’d known...

Sunday, Denise and I went back over to the apartment to finish cleaning it out. Nell, Bill’s nurses aide (who is now the proud possessor of Bill’s collection of **Columbo** tapes) stopped by while we were there to get the canned goods and groceries to donate to a local food bank. We took stuff to the cars and vacuumed. We both stood at the door to the room and looked in before we locked up, remembering what the place had looked like three or four days ago, stuffed to capacity, a forest of books, tapes, DVDs and the like with the paths Bill had worn out engraved through the midst of it.

Empty now.

I made yet another trip to the storage locker with a few more boxes, and today I’ll go over there one last time to double-check the apartment and give the manager the keys...



Octocon XXX:
Dave Locke, Bob Smith,
Bill, and Dave Rowe

My Friend, Bill Bowers

D Gary Grady

I FIRST MET Bill Bowers in person at the fanzine con Ditto 4, held October 18-20, 1991, in Virginia Beach. We were already acquainted in print and were both members of FLAP, the apa founded by Dave Locke and Jackie Causgrove (and of which I eventually became OE). One of the first things Bill said to me was that I looked a lot like Dave Locke. I was thinner then and still had my hair, but I'm still not sure Dave would have appreciated this.

I took an immediate liking to Bill as most people did, and when I later became a regular at Cincinnati's Octocon (which continued through 2002) and Midwestcon I always spent a lot of the time hanging out with Bill and Dave, and with Jackie while she was still alive. I also started taking occasional trips to Cincinnati to visit them. During these visits I inhaled a lot of tobacco smoke. Unlike Dave, Bill never doubted that smoking was harmful, but he was convinced that the damage was done (especially after he was diagnosed with lung problems) and as far as I know never tried to stop.

There was a large old used-book store near the University that Bill, Dave, and I visited several times, and on one of those trips Bill ran across a copy of *Outworlds* for sale. I seem to recall that the owner of the bookstore gave it to Bill, or at least offered to.

Another time Bill, Dave, and I went to an old-school theater to see *Being John Malkovich*, a film definitely to be seen with fans.

For years Bill and I had a running gag about a cartoon I hastily sketched during a lunch with him and some other fans at a Midwestcon probably circa 2000. I drew it on a paper napkin or an index card or something, and it depicted a poorly drawn waterfall that arced high into the air before crashing downward to the channel beyond the cliff, and underneath I wrote the words "Viagra Falls." Bill immediately grabbed this and for years after would use it for purposes of extortion, threatening to print it if I didn't contribute an article or something. I assumed he was joking, but I was afraid to take the risk.

For most of the time I knew Bill his health was not good. As I recall he strained his back trying to lift a mimeo machine he acquired from someone at the Virginia Beach Ditto, but that was a minor problem. Much more seriously, he had chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in addition to scoliosis, which gradually over the years bent his upper body forward, reducing the volume of his chest cavity and restricting his breathing.

I don't recall when his health deteriorated to the point that he was no longer able to work. We didn't talk much about our mundane lives, and all I know about his professional career is that he designed toys,

from *Outworlds* 57,
July 1988

I like [A. Langley Searles'] concept of a "Guinness" Book of Fannish Records.

I (as every fan does, I'm sure) believe I've achieved a few "Firsts" if not necessarily "Mosts":

Such as "preprinting" the major speeches of a convention [Genuine ConFusion] before they were presented [*Outworlds* 37, Jan. '84]; such as "having given the best Worldcon fan guest of honor speech *made by a tall person in a caftan*" [©1979 by Ro Lutz-Nagey; emphasis mine]; sometimes I am slightly aghast at my younger self... but not often!

...such as being the first fanned to "publish" a single fanzine issue in *four* different media: "Live"; printed; video; audio cassette... well, that last "entry" is only three-quarters complete, but by Ditto... really!

...I like [*the*] concept... I'd like somebody other than I to do it though!

from *FLAF-4*,
May 23, 1992

I get enthusiastic; I overextend/
overcommit/overpromise – in my
fanzines, at least.

...and I've never been more
optimistic about the future of *OW*
than I am at this moment: I have
formats galore in my mind; I'm on
the receiving end of some really
neat material, from some really
neat people. There's never enough,
of either, of course.

It was never my intent for this
particular "series" of *Outworlds* to
see life as a big, sprawling genzine.
I like big issues; I also enjoy
smaller, tighter... more frequent
issues. I want both... and, in time
I'll have it both ways! Next year...
(ff I don't "win" DUFF!)

I want it all: I want to "do" my
fanzine, to amuse, bemuse, and
occasionally infuriate you. I want
to "write" something other than
first-draft; I want to write for
others, as well as occasional,
more-structured pieces for *OW*.

...and I now have this nagging
urge to go out and buy a
Rapidograph.

Now, don't go telling me that I
can't have it all. I'll probably never
do it gracefully, or on time. But
tomorrow I buy that Rapidograph...
[*click*]

including some **Star Wars** spaceships. For quite some time after he was no longer working he had no health insurance and was waiting to qualify for Medicare. Since he'd served in the Air Force in the 1960s several of his friends urged him to see if the VA could help. For some reason he was reluctant, but eventually it became a necessity, so he went to the Cincinnati VA Medical Center, and they proved to be very helpful, assigning a whole team of doctors and nurses to plan and carry out his treatment.

Eventually Bill moved into a retirement home run by the Salvation Army and had a crowded two-room apartment there. I visited him several times a year, staying in a hotel not far away. We both were inclined to sleep late, so I would drive over late morning, often picking up orders of Cincinnati chili en route for both of us. (Once Bill was running late and told me to take my time, so I ate at a Skyline restaurant before picking up an order to take to him. When I asked for the check the waitress told me it had already been paid. It seems that when I arrived she had asked me how I was doing and I had jokingly replied "Mediocre," and another customer who overheard me thought that I was having a bad day and thought that paying for my meal would cheer me up. When I told Bill this he said, "People do that here. That's why I like Cincinnati.")

Often in the afternoon I'd drive him to a grocery store or Walgreens where he would pick up supplies including some snacks for us and a stock of the Sunny D orange drink he liked. On a couple of occasions we'd also go to a discount store where Bill would buy shelving units for his DVD collection and back at his apartment I'd end up press-ganged into assembling them while he read me the directions. He got a lot of mileage out of that Viagra Falls cartoon.

But mainly we'd talk and watch television, often well into the evening. He was a huge fan of **Gilmore Girls** and got me addicted to it as well, so often he'd show me talk show appearances by Lauren Graham (who played Lorelei Gilmore) that he'd recorded since my last visit, something we both enjoyed. On one early visit he gave me a long, complicated series of directions for the shortest route back to my hotel that involved traveling under, around, and across the Viaduct bridging a giant rail yard to Cincinnati's east side. I recall Bill getting more and more annoyed when every time he said "viaduct" I repeated Chico Marx's question "Why a duck?" (To my amazement I managed to remember and follow those directions, something for which Bill deserves far more credit than I do.)

When Bill died it was a heavy blow even if not unexpected. He fell in his apartment, and though he always wore a button around his neck for summoning help, he didn't press it, so he apparently lost consciousness either before the fall or immediately after. He wasn't found until the next day when his cleaning person came.

Bill's funeral was held in a church at the Salvation Army home, and a young Salvation Army officer officiated. Despite that, it was a secular service as Bill would have wanted, and during it the minister explained that Bill's ashes had been mingled with those of his beloved cat. I don't think I ever met that cat, but its name was Bill Bowers' Responsibility, or 'Sponse for short. I hope someone else will say something about 'Sponse and how the name came to be.

After the service I met members of Bill's family for the first time as well as the woman who had cleaned for him and had found him after he died. She proved to be an extraordinarily nice person and Bill's family gave her some things to remember him by. I still go to Midwestcon almost every year but it's not the same without Bill and the other fannish friends and acquaintances I've lost over the years.

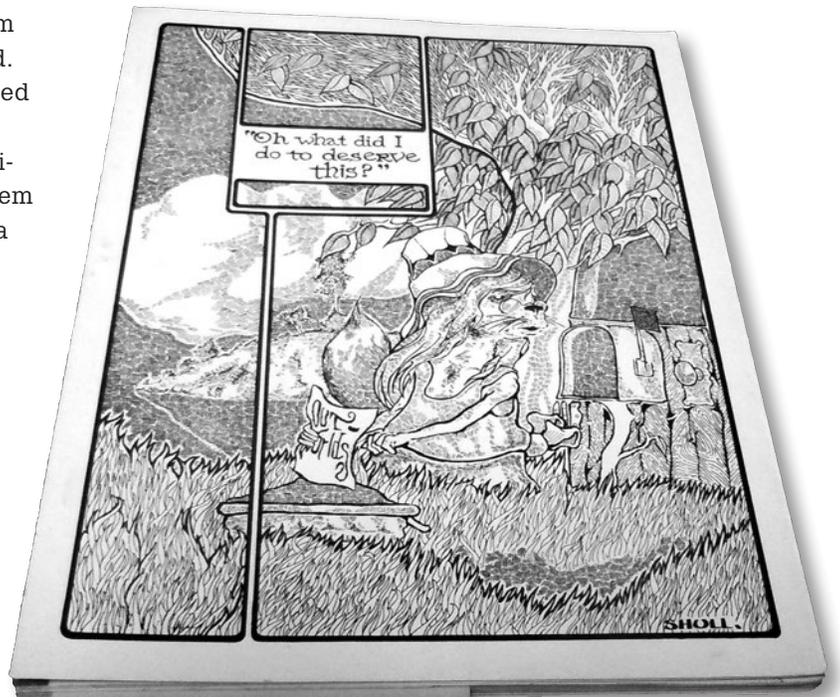
Thots on Bill Bowers and the Late, Great *Outworlds*

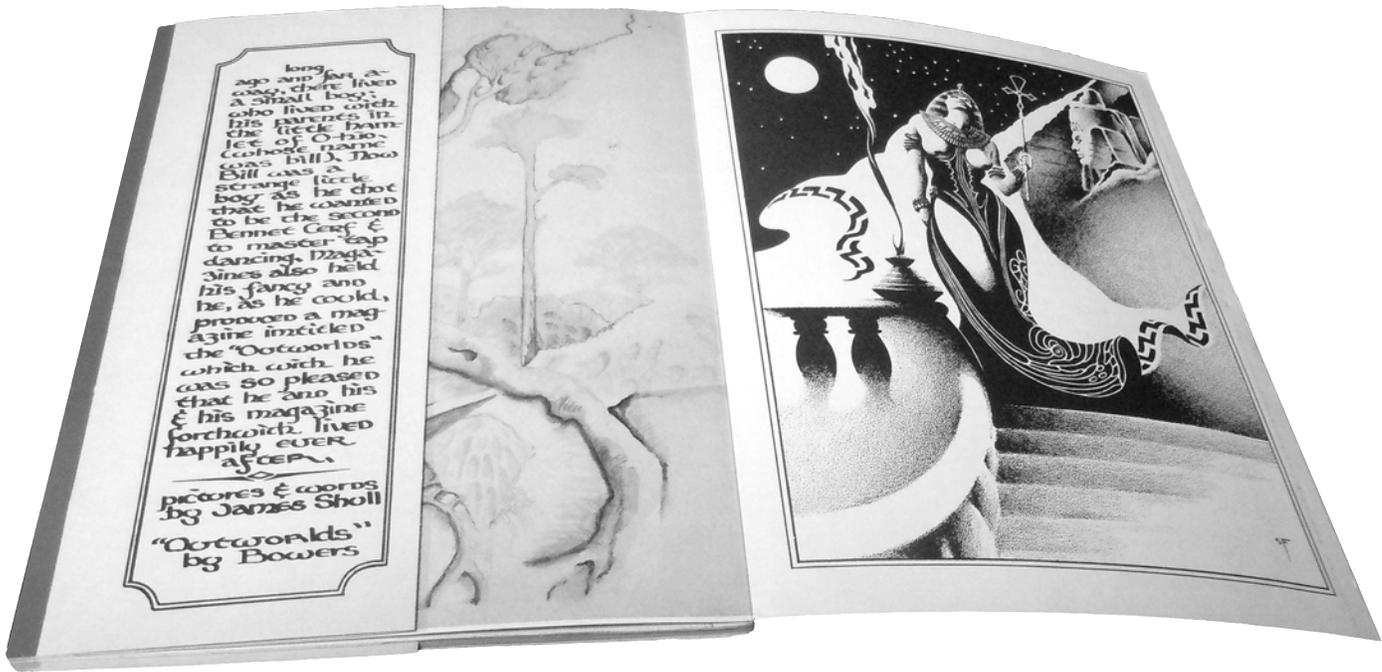
Andy Hooper

IT STARTLES ME to realize that I knew Bill Bowers for twenty years, but almost all that acquaintance was conducted at a distance. This was perhaps an accident of geography; although I was a Midwestern fan, I never attended Midwestcon even once and my fannish gaze seemed to be ever fixed upon fans and fandoms which were farther to the west. Thus did I miss many events at which our latter-day fanzine fandom coalesced, such as the AutoClaves of Ann Arbor and Bill's Corflu, held in Kentucky in 1987. We knew each other primarily through the pages of our respective fanzines; he traded *Outworlds* faithfully in exchange for whatever crud I sent him and provided a consistent example of what a competent fanzine should be.

We certainly had some face-to-face interactions; interesting conversations at Corflu in several cities, and at least one Chicago Worldcon. In later years, he was usually exiled to an exterior smoking area, and I would happily lurk nearby. He seemed to know something about everyone in fandom and I just tried to absorb whatever he shared. But I have to admit that I internally questioned some of the lore around him.

I learned of his multiple Hugo award nominations for Best Fanzine by reading about them in Worldcon memory books; but that was in a land before the World Wide Web, and there was no way to see the issues of *Outworlds* and *Double:Bill* which had earned those honors. In the 1980s *Outworlds* was an admirable fanzine, and more than the equal of Hugo-winners such as *Lan's Lantern* or *File 770*. But people seemed to regard Bill as a kind of Zen Master of fanzines, and that did not seem quite warranted by the affable columns and lists of movies viewed which had become his most regular features in *Outworlds*. He did have remarkable letter-columns and





many letters felt like the continuation of twenty-year conversations, which of course they were.

I began to understand more of this admiration when some early issues of *Outworlds* and later issues of *Double:Bill* appeared in fanzine auctions at Corflu and Ditto, and I had the opportunity to look at them before the bidding began. First there was the stunning art; then there was the presence of major fan and pro writers in its pages; and then I was physically affected by the design and quality of reproduction. Looking at a portfolio of work by artist Stephen Fabian, I began sweating and trembling slightly, as if I had taken a swig of Tabasco sauce.

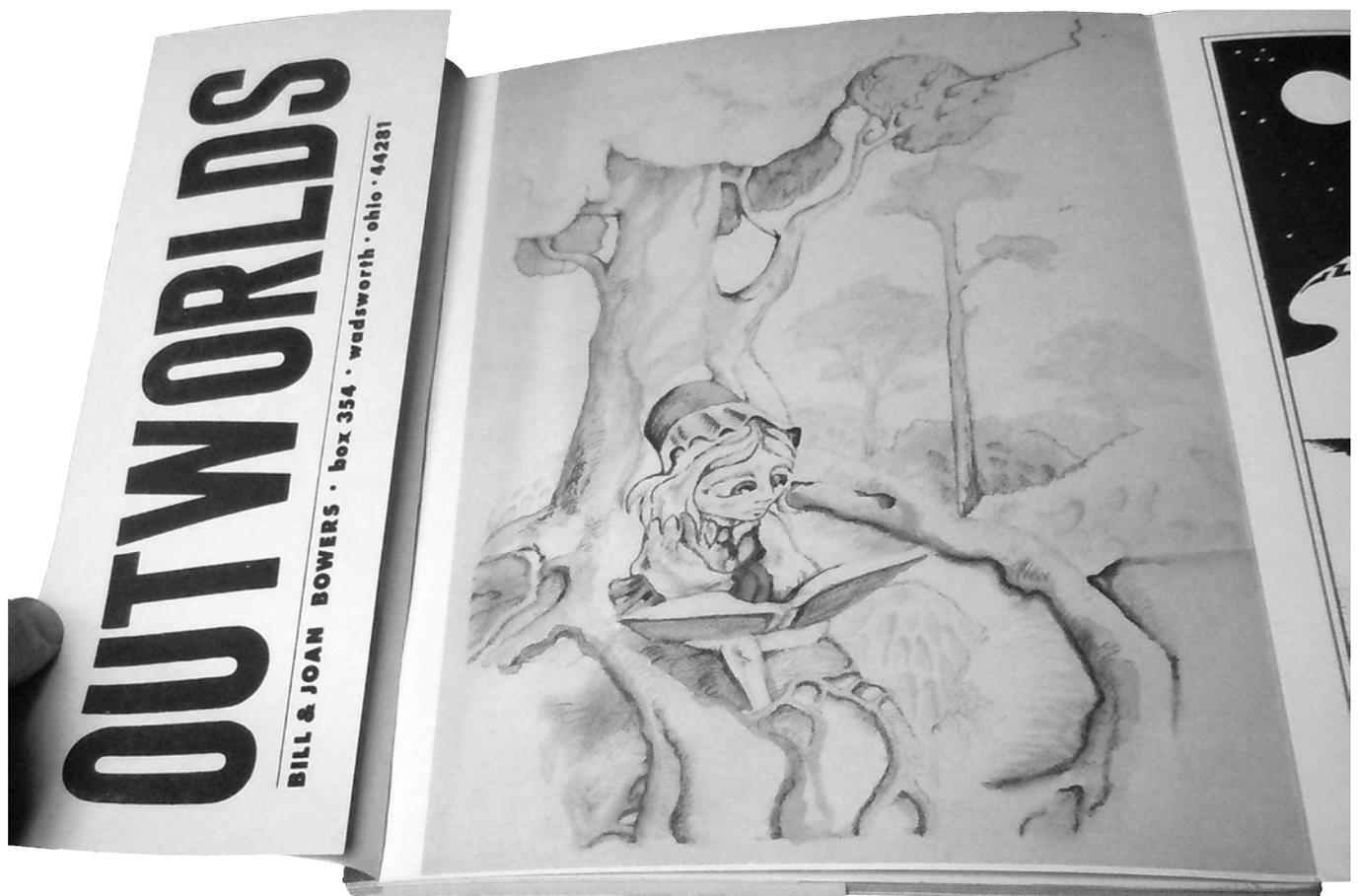
Holding a copy of the 90-page *Outworlds 15*, it seemed like some kind of fabulous atlas or almanac, not a fanzine. I had seen plenty of impressive fanzines, but the professionally reproduced fold-out covers with beautiful art by Fabian and James Shull were without many parallels. What suddenly became clear to me was that advances in self-publishing technology – word processing on personal computers, cheap photocopies of dot matrix print – might have allowed Bill to keep publishing through some challenging conditions, but they had also diminished his fanzine from the heights it had once ascended. The entire package seemed like a work of art, in stark contrast with the modest efforts that most fan editors produced.

Issue #15 was published in January of 1973; this was the first number in a three year-span of Hugo-nominated work. (Bill lost twice to Richard E. Geis, and then to *Locus* in 1976.) Most of the pages were produced on mimeograph, but there were also numerous pages that had been created by offset-print, most of them decorated with art that ran from pure cartooning to fine illustration well worthy of display in a gallery or on one's wall. In #15 alone, Bill had work by Grant Canfield, Derek Carter, Jim Cawthorn, Paul Docherty, Stephen Fabian, Freff, Dany Frolich, Mike Gilbert, Catherine Healy, Terry Jeeves, Tim Kirk, Jim McLeod, Bill Rotsler, Walt Simonson, Dan Steffan and Jim Shull. Graphic art was an equal partner to written material in Bill's ideal fanzine, and he continued to publish full-page illustrations by Alan Hunter and Linda Michaels through the later history of *Outworlds*.

The written material in *Outworlds 15* was also enough to make any editor envious. The regular columnists included Poul Anderson (“Beer Mutterings”), Robert A. W. Lowndes (“Understandings”) and Andrew J. Offutt, who contributed “S.H.U.C.K.” to #15. Greg Benford contributed two of his “Thots While Typing” columns, sub-titled “How to Be An Eastcoast Fan” and “How to be a Boondocks Fan”. These were sequels to his earlier essay “How to Be a Berkeley Fan”, which would subsequently inspire imitators including Patrick Nielsen Hayden and myself. (Another faithful Void veteran, Ted White, would soon join the roster with his columns “Thots While Lawnmowing” and “Thots While Waiting for the Lawnmower to be Repaired”. Susan Wood’s “Energuwoman” would also become a regular feature.)

This would be enough for any one fanzine, but it occupies only a small slice of the issue. He also offers both fiction and verse by Sam Youd, under his pen name J.R. Christopher, a story titled “Handy Book’s *Behind The Golden Bookcase*,” and the poems “Viet Nam,” and “To The Poetic Avant-Garde.” Joni Stopa and Alex Eisenstein manage to be both sercon and other-worldly in “The Astrological Cast of Science Fiction Writers.” And Bill gives an amazing 30 pages to the inimitable Billy Wolfenbarger, for a collection of essays and poems titled “The Lizard Speaks.” I have at times characterized Billy Wolfenbarger as my fannish spirit animal; I believe he is the only writer in fanzine history with the ability to transform into a bear under the right conditions, although there are persistent rumors about Dean Grennell.

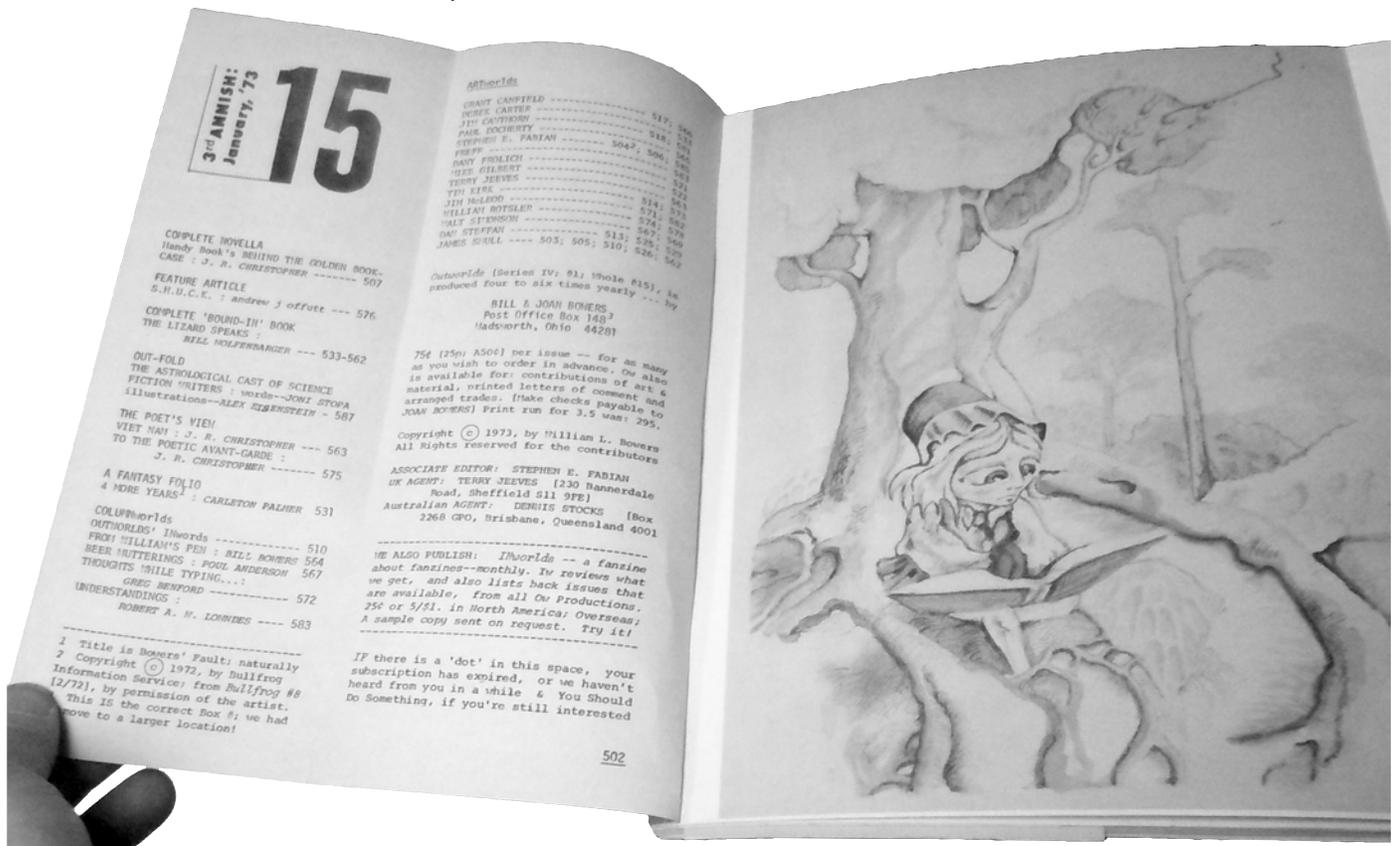
Finally, I must mention “*Outworlds/Inworlds*,” the letter-column, a typically sprawling catalog of communication, with messages from Ted White,



Doc Lowndes, Frank Denton, Ed Cagle, Harlan Ellison, Mike Glicksohn, Ted Serrill, Dick Lupoff, Roger Waddington, Rick Shears, Ursula K. Le Guin, Norm Hochberg, Sheryl Birkhead, Eric Bentcliffe, Robert Silverberg, Wolfenbarger, and Carleton Palmer. How many thousands of words were encompassed in this omnibus? Bill helpfully inserted a light-blue cardstock "bOWkmark" to help the reader keep their place, anticipating that several forays would be required to read through it all.

MODERN READERS are sometimes surprised to see that major SF professionals like Le Guin and Silverberg contributed to and corresponded with fanzines. While this was more common in the pre-Internet era, it was still not exactly routine to present the cast of pros that wrote for Bill Bowers. Dick Lupoff, Barry Malzberg, Philip Jose Farmer, Piers Anthony, Jerry Pournelle, Dean R. Koontz, Wilson Tucker, James Tiptree Jr., Thomas Burnett Swann, Gene Wolfe, Avram Davidson and Sterling Lanier all composed articles or letters for *Outworlds* between issues #15 and #21. Lanier wrote responding to Piers Anthony's 4-page profile of his writing and sculpture, probably the most attention his unusual career, spanning training in anthropology at Harvard and bringing Frank Herbert's *DUNE* to publication, ever received from fandom.

Simply listing writers and the titles of their contributions gives some sense of what *Outworlds* was about, but it would be easy to conclude that it was trying to be a critical journey or perhaps a literary little magazine. *Outworlds* was still unmistakably a fanzine, and cartoons by Bill Rotsler, Phil Foglio and Alexis Gilliland were given the same careful placement as an impeccably rendered Canfield robot, or an intricate cityscape by Derek Carter or Tim Kirk. Articles deconstructing Samuel R. Delany stood shoulder to shoulder with Jodie Offutt's "Letters from the Funny Farm". Fanzines specialize in presenting divergent approaches that professional



magazines struggle to accommodate. As a vehicle for sheer speculation, **Outworlds** exceeded its newsstand-dwelling rivals like **Locus** and **Science Fiction Review**. Admittedly, Andy Porter's **Algol** also had a reasonable grasp of the absurd, but I still think I'd have chosen **Outworlds** as the more adventurous read.

The word which best describes Bill's approach to publishing **Outworlds** in the 1970s is "ambitious." He put Stephen Fabian on the masthead as the fanzine's "Art Editor," and almost every issue they produced together has work by a dozen or more graphic artists. Perhaps this left Bill more time to solicit written contributions, but it seems more likely he had to turn some potential contributors down. He tested the capacity of state-of-the-art staplers on some issues anyway. During this era, **Outworlds** was certainly a focal point fanzine for those interested in the traditional dialogue between sf professionals and their fans and was far more entertaining than any critical journal in the field. And the columns that talked about fandom, by Greg Benford, Ted White and Susan Wood, made a far more lasting impression on me than any of the well-meaning skiffy stuff.

Seeing those fanzines helped explain the way that people in fandom felt about Bill – he seemed like a combination of Franklin P. Adams and the Fisher King, someone who had accomplished great things but also paid a price for them. Bill's health issues and problems with relationships didn't arise from his fan activity, but it is easy to see the effect that it had on them. Like Joel Nydahl, I think he is sometimes seen as a model of putting a little *too much* of everything into a fanzine, to the detriment of both the zine and its editor. On the other hand, **Outworlds** seldom contained anything that I wouldn't be delighted to publish myself.

I felt like I had just begun to make his acquaintance when he was forced away from fandom in the late 1980s, and it was an occasion of considerable happiness when he returned to activity in the early 1990s. I pelted him relentlessly with my own fanzines, and was so pleased whenever an issue of **Outworlds** or **Xenolith** came in reply. When Randy Byers, Carl Juarez and I began collaborating on **Chunga** in 2002, I felt like we were starting to cross the outermost borders of the country where every issue of **Outworlds** had once lived. We traded 8 issues with Bill before #9 bounced back at the end of April, 2005.

Now both Bill and Randy are gone; but there will be another issue of **Chunga** sometime around the turn of 2021. I know they would both insist that it contain a review of **Outworlds** #71.

Postscript:

On the Numbering of Early Issues of **Outworlds**

*Anyone wanting to collect Bowers needs to be aware that he was often eccentric in his titles and the numbering of his fanzines. The first five issues were given Roman numerals, and ran from I to V, after which Arabic numerals were used for a span of four issues. Beginning with issue #10, he declared that **Outworlds** had entered its "Third Volume," and began numbering issues 3.1, 3.2, etc., while still parenthetically noting the "Whole Number" each issue represented. He abandoned this and reverted to those "whole numbers" with issue #15, but was always prone to publishing "fractional" issues and fliers, particularly when the volume of correspondence threatened to make the issue unworkably large, or when delays in publication seemed to call for a reassuring "extra" sub-issue.*

from **Outworlds** 54,
January 1988

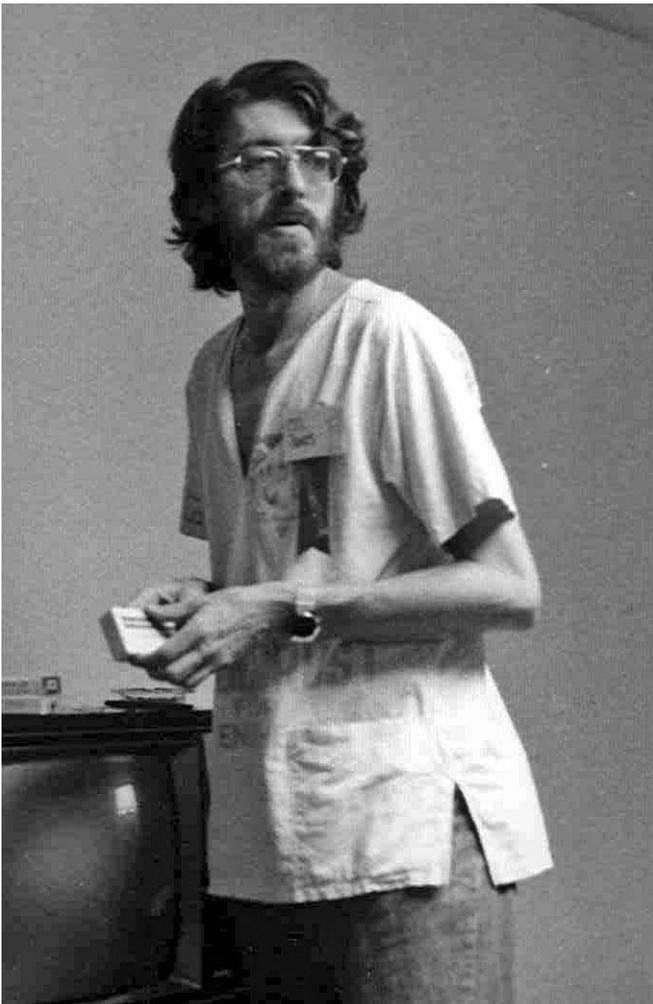
Well, if you who were with "us" from the beginning (Terry Jeeves, the Coulsons, Harry Warner, Jerry & Suzle, Bill Rotsler, Mike Glicksohn, the Offutts, Bruce Gillespie, Billy Wolfenbarger... perhaps one or two others) had invested your futures money wisely in salt at that time, you'd certainly be well-off today, wouldn't you? My ever-changing sense of direction in both editorial policy and lifestyle became the stuff of minor legend (and, I suppose, possible embarrassment, were I to read on any further in the Canons, past that first issue).

This fanzine has never quite realized the initial concept that spun it off from the ashes of **D:B**, nor the primordial dream that gave me the courage to do that deed... but it has come close a time or two. Seven of these years saw no issues at all (though I suppose in retrospect some issues of **Xenolith** were more **Outworlds**-ish than some issues bearing the title). And, had I the material on hand, I suppose I would have stretched this issue, damn the expense! Another 24 pages simply to encompass the 1800th page. It doesn't mean anything, but I still do play the numbers game, to my own occasional amusement.

The circulation today is fractional to that in the mid-seventies; many of you have only been around a fraction of this fanzine's half-life; but to all of you still aboard, to all that have ever contributed in one way or another... my thanks and appreciation.

There will be more.

That, in sum total, is the current and the ultimate "Editorial Policy".



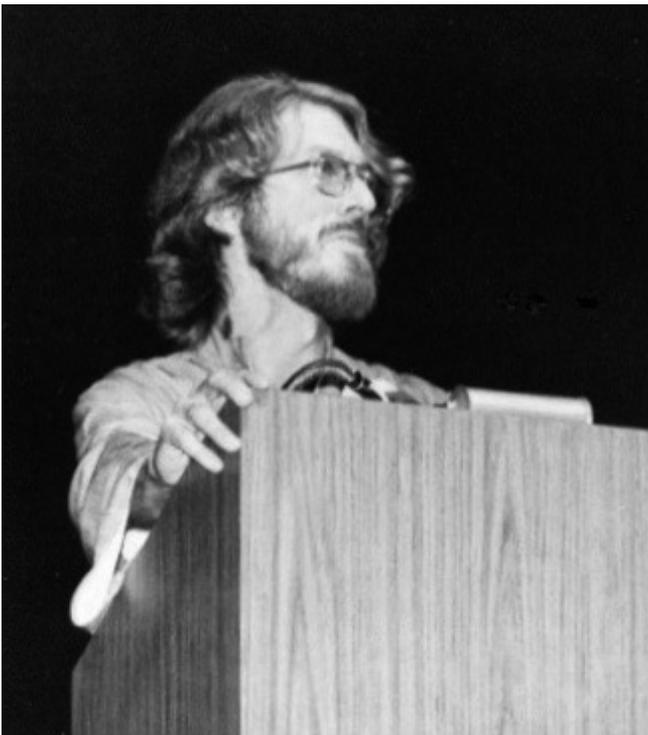
Midwestcon 1978 (photo by Stephen Leigh)



AutoClave (photo by Fred A Levy Haskell)



NASFiC 1979 (photo by Stephen Leigh)



(photo by Stephen Leigh)

from *Outworlds* 37, January 1984

After taking 12 years to accomplish my first 21 cons, there was a jump to 9 in 1975 alone. Following a record 16 in '76, the record shows 11, 9, 13, 15, 14, and 10... leading up to the 10 last year; neither a 'burst' nor a sputter. Yet, while realizing trends can't be detected until over, I may be on a downswing. Partly because of finances, partly because of 'this' & other interests, and in large measure because of local priorities, I only plan on 5 or 6 cons this year. Which statement I will laugh at when I look back at it next January!

*Memories, Musings,
Classic LoCs, and more...*

The Final “Lettercol”

Dave Locke

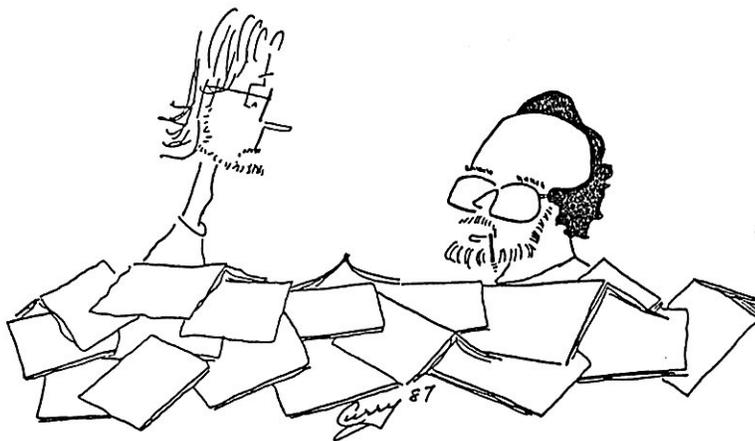
TWICE I ASSISTED in moving Bill Bowers. I could spend twelve pages telling you about this if I decided to be merely concise. If I let myself go, there’s an entire novel-length manuscript which could be generated after editing with abandon.

The first time I helped to move Bill, he had stayed put for a great number of years and accumulated an unsurpassed amount of kipple, clutter, dust bunnies, and tumbleweeds. As items were moved out, treasures would be discovered hiding behind things. We found unopened mail from 1977 which had fallen behind furniture. It was the furniture itself which presented the greatest hazard. Under each piece was a small mountain of dust. When the piece was lifted, the dust collapsed like a house of cards and then spread evenly over the whole floor like water seeking its own level. Tanya Carter spent the better part of an entire day vacuuming and re-vacuuming the living room as each piece of furniture was carried out, just to keep the level of dust down so we wouldn’t lose a piece of furniture if we dropped it on the floor. I told him: “Bill, you don’t need an allergist, you need a housekeeper.”

One of the greatest challenges of moving Bill Bowers is that Bill doesn’t believe in boxes. Arms and paper bags and plastic bags are fine, but boxes are primarily reserved for books and magazines that don’t get looked at in between moves. Boxes are actually more time-consuming to move, because first you have to sweep off the bugs and spiderwebs – and then you have to reinforce the boxes with tape so they don’t disintegrate when you lift them. This is probably why Bill doesn’t much believe in boxes.

Bill Bowers, like Bill Cavin, doesn’t much believe in supervision. He sends each of his helpers to different rooms with the instruction that they’re to take their best shot. All he asks are status reports. “Did you get your room done yet?”

Both Bills tend to dither as to whether an item should be pitched or saved. “Bill, what say we shitcan this five-year run of the *Cable TV*



Really wish you had remembered
to get boxes before we tried moving
your fanzine collection, Bowers.

from *Outworlds 55*,
March 1988

For you Members of the Jerry Lapidus Fan Club: The text for the 'articles' was entered on the Kaypro 1, under WordStar, in 50-character-wide columns, printed out on the Brother HR-10 daisy wheel printer, and reduced on the Canon PC-25 copier utilizing the 78% reduction setting. [The text for the 'Mania' section (and this) was generated in – and is presented full-size, in 15-pitch.] The LoCs text was entered on the Amstrad PCW8526, under LocoScript 2, at 10-pitch in 6½"-wide columns [with my comments entered in the proportional spacing, or 12-pitch], was printed on the Amstrad's dot matrix printer, and reduced at the 68% setting. The original page grids were produced under AutoCad and were plotted out while playing at a (former) part-time job. This issue will be printed on a document-fed copier, from 2nd generation masters.

This issue contains slightly over 25,000 words.

...of which the following are the last entered...

Bill [3/27/88]

Guide? "Bill, this two-year-old stack of newspapers seems to be moving on its own. In another couple of weeks it will probably be over next to the trash, anyway."

Sometimes we make mistakes when moving one of the two Bills. "Hey, one of you guys hauled my trash over!" We'd look at each other, then look at the various items from the latest haul, and then one of us would ask, "which item do you classify as the trash?"

*[excerpted from "A Moving Experience",
Outworlds 51 | Summer 1987]*

Frank Johnson

NONE OF US really knows the whole Bowers (and you only get glimpses in the fanzines), but that part of the man that we are allowed to examine is astounding.

We see his publishing efforts that seem to appear quite frequently. His home media obsessions include a pair of video stereo tape machines, CED video disc player, compact disc player, 8-track and cassette audio machines on the hardware side. The software includes hundreds of video and audio tapes, records and CDs and a couple of dozen CED discs. There's also the material broadcast over the air (Bill catches a lot of television and radio – remember the **Hill Street Blues/St. Elsewhere** style opening to one of his fanzines a couple of years back?). Then there's the magazine subscriptions and tons of fanzines that Bill must get. And books, too. Oh, did I mention that Mr. Bowers has a full-time job with Kenner?

Take all that into the equation, add all the conventions and fan pubbing, then include the mundane things like eating, sleeping, doing laundry and you come up with one question: WHERE DOES HE FIND THE TIME FOR ALL THIS?

I think that with all of these anniversaries now would be the perfect time to perhaps reveal the secret of Bill Bowers. Over the years, he has shown off a few of the more complicated devices that he's designed for the Kenner company. His draftboard (uh oh – sixties flashback! Let me rephrase that) drafting table has sketches of the latest implements of (Star) War(s). But I think I know the truth.

Those aren't toys. They never were. Bill Bowers has invented, perfected and makes constant use of a Time Machine.

Now think about it for a moment. How else can you explain the massive amount of projects that Bill not only embarks upon, but also completes? Take this fanzine, for instance. This is supposed to be out the same time as a video/audio production of Corflu, a get-together which he got together as well. There are also a number of activities that I can't go into here for various reasons (and knowing Bill he'll explain a few anyway). Ordinarily, there isn't enough time in the day for all of these goings-on. Yet Bill does them all. The only explanation is a Time Machine, one that adds those hours to the day. Perhaps it's one of those models that slows down all time around him. Maybe it allows to him to relive days at a time and finish those numerous projects.

I believe he has a portable model that goes to conventions. Sometimes it's disguised as a videotape recorder. Or maybe a boom-box. It would explain the long periods that he couldn't be found at various SpaceCons, a convention he put on for so many years. It's my guess that he was sleeping for the forthcoming month in a compressed amount of time.

So why then, Bill, do you keep this marvelous device to yourself? We all have books and fanzines to read, music to hear, movies to see and LoCs to write. But we don't have the time to do it all. Go public with your great invention. Think of all the good your Time Machine could do for mankind. You'd be a certain shoo-in for a Hugo. Or at least a Nobel Prize.

This would be a good time to finish my few pages here and give Bill a fair chance to answer these speculations into what may be the biggest fannish secret of our time. Think of all of us, Bill, your friends and readers. I know you'll do the right thing.

[excerpted from "Speculations on the Mutability of Time and Cicadas", *Outworlds 51* | Summer 1987]

LET'S GET RIGHT TO IT: let's talk about Bill Bowers.

He's a man of obsessions, ones that seem to come and go with time. This may, or may not, be easily evident to you by now. For instance, he was for a while taking note of his destination whenever his car odometer reached significant marks, like the passing of a multiple of ten thousand miles, or a repetition reading of the same digit. I think I cured him of that one on the drive back from the Atlanta Worldcon in 1986. While on Interstate 75, in some southern state, my still-relatively-new 1986 Tercel was about to reach a total mileage of 8888 miles. That was the perfect excuse to exceed the posted speed limit to that of 88 miles an hour. Fortunately I didn't have the flux capacitor turned on, so eventually we wound up back home in Cincinnati rather than 30 years in the past or future as in the movies.

The publication you hold in your hands right now represents a pair of his other obsessions: publishing and anniversaries. For as long as I've known Bill, he has always been heavily into fan publishing. Even before that long-ago move from NE to SW Ohio, he was quite well known for fan pubbing, one of the geniuses behind *Double:Bill*. For many fanzine editors, myself included, Bowers showed a graphic sense that made the simple look elegant, something that a lot of us copied. Since then there have been various issues of *Outworlds* and zines that start with **X** long before Chris Carter made that letter so very popular.

And through some very trying times, Bill has almost always put out. The old saying goes: "Publish or Perish". Bill continues the former and has changed the latter to persevere.

The anniversary thing has caused this particular work. It was fifty years ago today (do the math) that Sergeant Pepper taught the band to play. Twenty years after that the Beatles did an album about it and ten years after that Bill Bowers arrived at Midwestcon. Similar anthologies (can I be bold enough to actually call it that?) marked numbers 10 and 15 and here we are with number 20. What a Long Strange Trip It's Been.

To further show how this has become a matter of habit for Bill, more than tradition, he used "as usual" when defining the non-boundaries of what we contributors could write. Every five years doesn't fall into the normal ideas of "as usual". But then again we are speaking of Bill Bowers.

[excerpted from "The Seven Year Itch (Minus Two)", *Outworlds 67* | June 1997]

from *Outworlds 38*,
April 1984

I'd be the first to admit that certain single issues don't hang together as well as some others. But as you see here [in *OW38*], 'bigness' does not indicate either more 'outside' pieces, or 'long, esoteric Bowers pieces' – and obviously what it does to the "schedule" is all out of proportion to what having stuck to a couple of 12-pagers would have done. The occasional twinge to produce a Big & Fancy genzine still hovers, but the editorial whim is still for smaller, more frequent communication.

From the beginning – no matter how Big & Fancy certain issues appeared – the cumulative effect of issue-after-issue was what was important to me. That's probably the only remaining constant from 1970...



from *Outworlds 65*,
February, 1993

[replying to Art Metzger's LoC]

...when Tanya first "suggested"... I was probably even less "enthusiastic" than you: After The Storm I had grown used to the peace and solitude and not having to jockey ears in the driveway of living alone. Unrepentant con-goer that I am, I'm still by inclination more a "hermit" than not. In my own way, I deal with Life, but I do so by phasing-out while recharging the batteries...

...you come & go, wait patiently for me to emerge from reading marathons in the bathroom, know a lot of the same people that I know, work in a bookstore, and don't seem to be all that upset at the stacks of books/magazines/fanzines that are replacing the leftover knickknacks from the previous administration. No, Art, I have absolutely no problem with being Don Carter's replacement half of Cincinnati's 2nd Cutest Couple.

My only "complaint" was that I was unprepared for hearing a voice directly behind me, as I introspectively typed away. (I was conditioned to anything but quiet.) At first I was going to buy you a bell to announce your arrival, but instead I've simply rotated the computer hutch 90°...

Your presence has made the trauma of moving more remote and that is Good.

My only Request:

Please don't spray-paint my cat brown...

[I used to have a brown cat; that's a different tale.] 1/2/93

Art Metzger

BILL BOWERS: what can I say. I'm sharing your house now, an arrangement which I hope has mutual benefits. It was an arrangement I was really uncertain of when Don and Tanya Carter suggested it, both because I needed a cheaper place and they thought you might be able to use the help with the rent, etc., as well as having someone actually in the house more often for security reasons.

It's working out great for me. I've got the computer set up, I've changed the address on stories as I send them out, I've made friends (more or less) with your cat (especially when I'm eating), and I don't feel like I'm in the way, which is something I was really afraid of, since I really hoped that my days of depending on someone else for a place to live were over. But I hope the situation is going to be mutually beneficial, and not just something to make things easier on me,

The one thing that is strange about it, Bill, is all the fanzines you're leaving around the house for me to look at, almost as if you've decided to try to get me back into fandom. The next thing you know you'll be expecting a letter of comment on the stack of *Outworlds* you gave me.

What more can I say, but "Thanks".

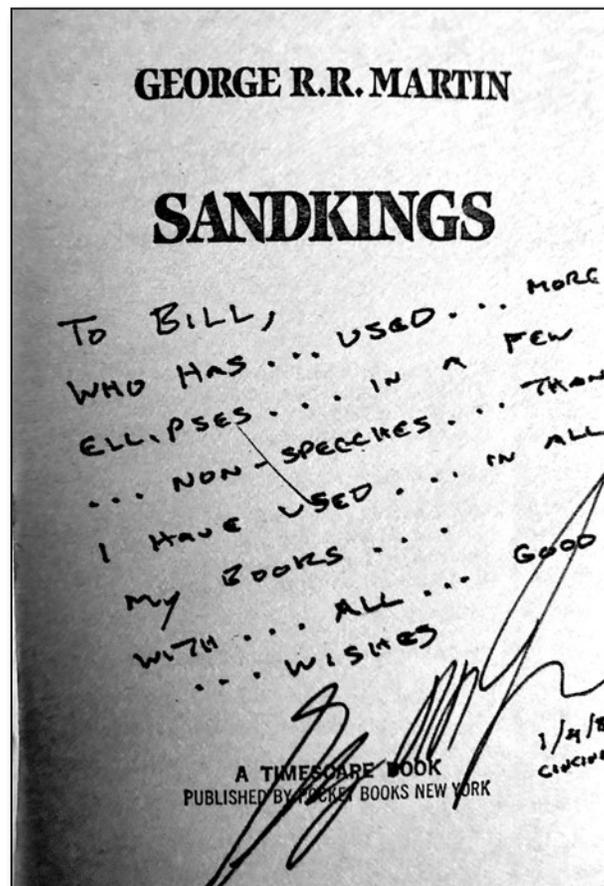
[10/21/92]

[excerpt from a LoC published in *Outworlds 65* | February 1993]

Joel Zakem

This photo is of an inscription that GRRM did in Bill's paperback copy of *SANDKINGS*.

[June 11, 2020]



Linda Bushyager

SUZANNE TOMPKINS AND I first met Bill Bowers at our second convention – Marcon in March 1968. At that time, he and Bill Mallardi were co-editors of *Double:Bill*.

Suzle and I had just published the first issue of our genzine, *Granfalloon*. We were always on the lookout for good material and artwork and noticed that Bill Bowers was a talented artist. We asked if he could do a cover for *Granfalloon*, and he gave us one we published via lithography for issue #6 (about Jan. 1969). He also gave us a couple of extra small drawings that we used in the issue. That was the last issue that Suzle and I co-edited, since we finished college and she moved to NYC, and I continued as the editor.

Issue #7 had a lovely black and white back cover by Bill. I guess Bill wasn't too prolific or saved his artwork for *Outworlds*, because that was all the artwork I could pry out of him. He is known for his writing and producing beautiful fanzines, but they would not have been as outstanding without his artwork and sense of graphic design.

[August 21, 2020]

Suzanne Tompkins

Your request sent me running to fanac.org instead of trying to find my bound copies of *GF* 1-6, the issues I co-edited with Linda (Eyster) Bushyager. Jerry and I have boxed up most of our den book/CD shelves with the idea of starting removing carpet and re-doing the room. We started this process about two years ago...

Bill contributed an article to Issue #5 (11/68) and did a great cover plus other artwork for Issue #6 (01/69).

I did think I had a little interesting thing about producing the #6 cover, but it turns out that my memory is faulty, as well as the story not being about Bill.

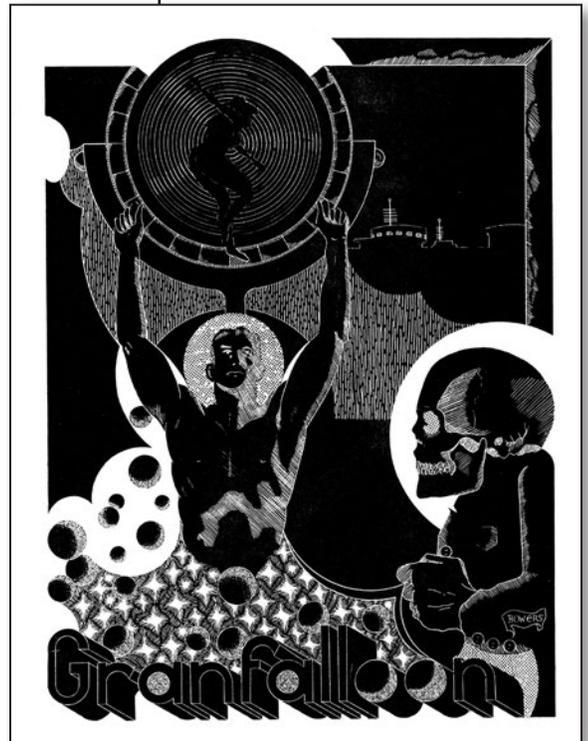
Bill's scratchboard cover was essentially white on black and could not be mimeo'd. My parents' business was the A.B. Dick Distributorship in Johnstown, PA where Linda and I went to from Carnegie-Mellon in Pittsburgh to run off the earlier *GF*'s on our showroom mimeos.

At the time, I spent my summers working for the Red Cross Regional Blood center there, a job which involved running their offset press that produced, among other things, the stationery for all the small RC offices in the large PA region they covered. This particular print job was truly difficult as it was too black to run normally, and I could not run it at the RC in any event.

I have a memory that our salesman took the cover and ran it himself using black paper and white ink. This would be an interesting thing, I think, to some folks, and is why I was writing this up at all.

But, after actually seeing the issue, I confirmed that this is an unworkable idea we had then that's stuck in my head for 50+ years. It was, in fact, printed offset in the usual manner. Though it is true that it was a bitch to do and my parents' salesman was not pleased to have to run it.

[August 19, 2020]

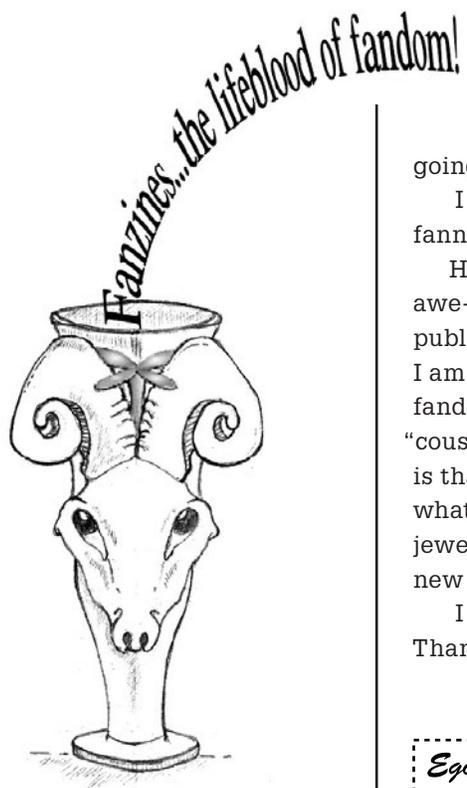


from *Outworlds* 32,
Spring 1993

Not as much now as in days past, I sometimes run across my name in other fanzines. Sometimes flatteringly; sometimes attributing stances and actions to me that don't correlate to my self-vision of the circumstances – assuming I recognized them – that provoked such obvious wrong-thinking. In the beginning it was probably shyness mixed with a firm inferiority complex that has since graduated into sheer laziness – I think of brilliant & witty rejoinders, but never get them written down – but for whatever reason, I rarely respond to comments made to me/ about me in the fanzines of others. ...Though I do sometimes have t-shirts made up. Or made for me by others...

Probably just another quirk.

Sheryl Birkhead



BILL WAS ONE of the first fans I actually met...at a con. Being an introvert and scared of fen in their natural habitat, I just faded into the background and listened. I could sit out of the main line of sight, not quite at his feet, but close enough to hear all that was going on without actually saying anything. You can learn a lot that way.

I think the two little bits of text, above left and below, fit with his fannish philosophy.

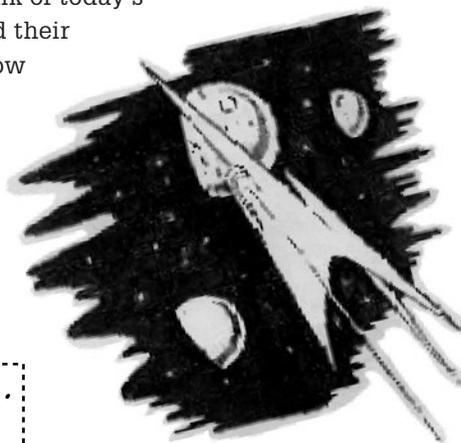
His zines were (and still are when you go back and re-read them!) awe-inspiring. *OW* was such an obvious labor of love. The quality of his publications rightfully drew terrific fanartists and contributors.

I am not quite sure what he would think of today's fandom, especially where fanzines and their "cousins" are concerned. What I do know is that I have no doubt his zines in whatever formats would still be jewels to the eye (and ear!) in the new presentations.

I miss him and I miss *OW*.
Thank you, Bill.

[July 28, 2020]

*Egoboo is the currency of Fandom...
be a Big Spender!*



Grant Canfield

IF YOU ARE putting together a final issue of *Outworlds*, I humbly suggest that I, as one of Bill's artistic mainstays, belong therein. [April 7, 2020]

Brad W. Foster

BEEN EXTRA-CRAZY around here for months, and much has been shoved off to the side. Starting with the tornado that hit our house in north Dallas last October, fifty thousand other things since then have ended with me now sitting in our new house in south Dallas, surrounded by much unpacked stuff.

And it is that unpacked stuff that is a lot of why I'm not really going to be able to contribute much of anything here. I have always had a terrible memory for... well, most everything. But I have been good at record-keeping. And fanzine fandom was great for that – if I got a zine, I could always look back and see what I might have said before, what others involved had said, what correspondence I had so far. I could communicate easily, since I could take my time to research, unlike face-to-face.

Downside of that now as I get older is that a lot of the stuff I was involved with decades ago (sf fanzines, comics, small press, etc.) is starting to have people wanting to write about it, and ask questions of those who were involved. But, if I can't look up that old stuff, my replies usually come down to "Yeah, I had a lot of fun, sent out a lot of art, traded a lot of interesting letters back and forth" and that's pretty much it.

And I've also had to thin out much of that correspondence as well just to save room – then the water damage at the house double-whammied as it ruined a lot of files, plus having to move to a much smaller space meant that several months ago I had to radically thin out what was left; I could not bring all those reams of paper with me. And what I do have, most is still buried in these piles of boxes I am slowly getting to. I'm not sure if I even kept any of the stuff from Bill. I was particularly brutal; if it was correspondence that went back decades, my thought was, "Why hold on to this, no one else would be interested anyway, and I just don't have room for it now..." and it got tossed.

Bottom line: I recall that Bill was always enthusiastic and fun to correspond with, seemed up for my particularly odd brand of fanart, and was a prolific publisher. But that's it. I wish I *could* offer more, it's embarrassing to have to confess all of the above, but wanted you to know I wasn't avoiding this, or didn't think the project was worthwhile, or that Bill wasn't a great guy – I just really have nothing much to contribute as far as memories and such.

[June 3, 2020]

Derek Carter

I DON'T REALLY have a lot to say about Bill although both he and Mike inducted me into the FHF, Failed Husbands of Fandom, when all three of us managed to mess up our marriages at the time. We'd meet at the odd convention or two and I'd happily contribute to *OW* as he always took great care with the artwork.

I think we actually met at a convention in Toronto sometime in 1973 by which time I'd been contributing work to his publication. Communication at the time, and indeed until his passing, was always through the mail and I doubt it strayed much from "Hi Bill, here's a few pieces for you; Best, Derek" and that was it. He took on "Mumps" and we kept it up until the end when we were discussing a transition for the strip from its fan orientation to a more fantasy adventure scenario as I was very much out of touch with matters of a fan nature by that time (my last convention had been, I think, Boston in 1980...).

I don't recall any extensive or memorable events as my personal contact with Bill was very sporadic. However we did remain in contact for quite some time. I was not aware that his final years were spent in a home (if Master Downes' reminiscences are to be believed) which, I think, demonstrates how close we were not on that level.

Thus, I'm really one of his artists, not one of his commentators. Doing stuff for *OW* was a privilege when most of the other publications around him were so poorly executed.

[June 4, 2020]

Schirm

FANZINES...

When I was a kid I didn't get a lot of encouragement to draw. Family and friends thought my drawing style was too primitive, too weird-looking, and my sense of humor too durn peculiar to be funny. And since nobody liked my work, I became a cartooning dilettante, drawing for my own amusement, but making no real effort to improve. When your cartoons get nothing but puzzled looks and criticism no matter what you draw, why bother?

The "what" about writing

I really do appreciate your letters – look forward to them – and should respond in kind. It's not that I don't want to; it's not that I don't have the "time"; and it's not that I don't have the "facilities" with this borrowed typer (for someone who "draws/letters" for a "living", I have abysmal handwriting...!)

Part of it is that, while Generally (once I finally apply the seat of my pants to the chair) I have no trouble "writing" – even if it is Much Ado About Nothing What I've Done – it is generally written "for" publication. A hang-up / misdirection that goes back to Mine Youth when I was determined to be the Complete Writer/Editor/Artist/Designer/Publisher... hey! everyone has their dreams... There have been exceptions (for a while, 15 years ago, Glicksohn and I were exchanging 5- and 10-page letters on our individual, once "mutual", traumas of the day; my, how things don't change... except the letters/notes have gotten shorter...!) but I've generally been a lousy correspondent...

*excerpt from letter to
Jeanne Bowman
[December 10, 1990]*



from *Xenolith 50*,
February 10, 2005

I've never been of the persuasion that a faneditor has to respond to each and every LoC he/she publishes. The fact that I chose to format/print a given missive indicates I've found it to be Of Interest – and, at this stage I suspect I don't need to intrude simply to remind you who's da Boss here. Some times I really should comment, even when I don't, as is the case several places up there. I plead to that dreaded ailment, Deadlineitis...

Then, in 1970, I joined SF fandom, and suddenly had a very accepting venue for my oddball cartooning. Fan editors and readers liked my cartoons, and since I now had a reason for drawing, at last had an appreciative audience, I made a real effort to improve my cartooning chops. It was a slow process, and sometimes damn frustrating, but thanks to fanzines, I became good enough to sell cartoons and illustrations professionally, and then have a successful career as a storyboard man in TV animation.

Fanzines – I'll always be grateful to them for giving me the chance to develop as a cartoonist. [June 11, 2020]

Mike Glycer

ONE OF BILL's great traits was his perpetual growth as an editor. When the Internet took off, many faneds (myself included) ignored it and hoped it would go away soon. Bill was determined we shouldn't miss out on the next great thing, and around 1999 he assembled *Fan Basic 101*, his own directory of fanzine fans' personal pages, sff resources, online newzines, and fannish email listservs. Like any Bowers publication, it was meticulously organized and designed, and I learned a lot from it.

[June 11, 2020]

David Langford

DEAR BILL,

I was always too much in awe of *Outworlds* (which began while I was still at school and was highly regarded before I'd ever heard of fandom) to press articles on you, so it was a terrific boost that you not only asked for something but published it in *Outworlds 70*. Thanks again! Egoboo never comes too late, as I remember writing to Peter Weston at a time when – as he sadly informed me – it very nearly was too late for him; and I hope this somewhere and somehow reaches you. [June 22, 2020]

Taral Wayne

I KNEW BILL SLIGHTLY for a few years, and he was unfailingly friendly to me. I believe he published one or possibly more illos of mine a long time ago.

But though I saw him at this or that midwestern convention, and spoke with him, I cannot say I knew him well. I know he smoked like a chimney, drank little or not at all, but that is almost all. Whatever I did know about Bill from his editorials forty years ago, I've forgotten.

I simply could not write about Bill unless it was pure fiction... and I don't think he'd care to be written up as a Fraggile. [May 20, 2020]



John Hertz

HOW FITTING THAT **O & A** should be collated head-to-tail, like a new **Double:Bill** with both halves of the double being Bill Bowers this time – a double serving – or we’re acting as his doubles – or all of that.

And like the two stories of how Frank Baum came up with “Oz”: (1) from a filing cabinet labeled “O–Z”, and (2) from *Oh’s* and *Ah’s* (both of which I think should be true even if in some sense neither is), I meant the double meaning of **O & A** back there.

Anyway, I contribute this poem.¹

Afterworlds, liquid,
Fuller than mere words alone:
To us, torch in hand,
Even as time, mind, go on,
Reach the past and the future.

[June 18, 2020]

Devon Leigh

YOU’RE MORE THAN WELCOME to republish my interview with Tanya Huff. Happy to be a small part of Bill Bowers’ legacy, and it was nice to reminisce about him and about a forgotten interview from what seems like a lifetime ago now.

[June 5, 2020]

Gregory Benford

ONLY MET HIM ONCE, & don’t recall anything... Or even why my piece from Ed Gorman’s fmz was slated for inclusion in *Outworlds 71*... Tho now methinks, this:

I reread this piece, writ around 1960, and had completely forgotten it! Weird, because I was in my full flood of writing funny (I hoped) and snarky (yes) pieces about Dallas fandom, then, for my own fmz, **Void**. These seem to be bits I wrote flat-out in one draft, didn’t send to Ted White for **Void**, but did to Ed Gorman (who directed me to read Raymond Chandler, a big deal in my life!). Dunno why. Amazed I wrote this when age 19. Yet I had the voice down, even then. Five years later I sold my first short story, also done in a false (not-me) voice, to **F&SF**. I learned to write this way. So this was me, learning to write – a real insight into my earlier, snarky self, then.

[May 15, 2020]

Susan Wood

AND A SPECIAL DEDICATION to Father William – Bill Bowers, somewhere on that lonely road to knowing what a fully alive human being can be. Bowers: fine faned, fine person.

[**Amor 5** | March 1975]

from *Outworlds 38*, April 1984

In response to a LoC from Alexander Yudenitsch, which asked:

“...why the change in the page numbering? The last page in **OW33** was 2026, and **OW34** started (presumably) with page 1227. Was the reason for this explained somewhere, and I missed it, or will All Be Explained at some later date, perhaps a new **Outworlds Index**? Was the numbering cumulative with **Xenolith**, and then discumulated, or did you count wrong? Eh?”

...not only were you the only one out of the Vast & Perceptive **OW** Readership to notice the Case of The Missing Thousand Pages – but you were also correct in assuming that it would be cleared up in an **OW** Index (see **OW37**). [Obviously I am becoming too predictable.] The bottom line is that I simply screwed up.

¹ As you know, and perhaps all of fandom does, I don’t always know how much to explain. The poem is an acrostic (read down the first letters of each line) in 5-7-5-7-7-syllable lines somewhat like Japanese *tanka*. “Liquid” and “fuller” allude to the liquid consonant “l” that *worlds* has and *words* does not. “Torch” alludes to “Grab that torch!”. –JH

from *Outworlds* 38,
April 1984

In response to a LoC from Robert
Lichtman:

...Robert, I should mention that *Trap Door #2* just arrove... was enjoyed... and I was more than slightly astounded to learn that YOU had published the First Issue of *Outworlds*... in 1959... whereas my first-first issue wasn't done until 1966. You'd think that someone would have mentioned it to me somewhere along the line...

from *Outworlds* 54,
January 1988

It wasn't until some time after I first titled a fanzine "*Outworlds*" (1966) that I discovered that Lin Carter had used the term (minus the "s") in several of his books. It is a measure of my affection for the name that I continued to use it after that traumatic discovery.

I wonder what Robert Lichtman's excuse was...

Robert Lichtman

I KNEW BILL for years and years – and we were *very* frequent correspondents. I have my side of our exchanges on my computer (actual letters and evolving into e-mails) dating back to 1993 and I know we were writing well before then but I wasn't keeping track. I only remember meeting him once at the Corflu in Walnut Creek, but there may have been a previous occasion lost in memory. I count him as one of my favorites, and really miss him – and his fanzine. [June 14, 2020]

John Purcell

WHEN Pat Virzi and Jeanne Bowman put the word out about making *Outworlds* 71 a reality, their essential writing prompt for people like me who may not have known Bill Bowers personally, but only peripherally, was to answer the following question:

What do Bill Bowers and *Outworlds* mean to me?

In short, Unattainable. Outside of the lettercolumn, I simply could not see myself as a contributing writer to *Outworlds* since it was such a stellar publication to my neo-fannish eyes. Even as my early fanzines began improving in quality, I simply did not consider myself a peer of Bill Bowers, whom I briefly met in Phoenix at the 1978 World SF Convention. Didn't have a chance to properly talk with him since Bill was whisked off by folks he knew much better, but it was pretty neat to have a chance to chat with him even if only for a moment. Thankfully trading fanzines helped as an introduction, but I felt so unworthy of being in the presence of such a Big Name Fan since he moved in what I considered rarified company, a friend of both filthy pros and other BNFs. At least he knew who the heck I was and said, "Oh, hi, John! Good to meet you," before zooming off: he was, after all, the Fan Guest of Honor at IguanaCon, and quite busy with his duties.

Even today that impression of Bill Bowers still exists in my memory. His fanzine was simply an example of the finest production work I had ever seen in a "fanzine" (it frequently contended for the Best Fanzine Hugo against the likes of *Algol* and *The Alien Critic*) back then, and it maintained that quality for the remainder of its run. Occasionally I would write a letter of comment to *Outworlds*, but I have no recollection if any of those ever saw print. If they did, that's pretty cool. Even having a short letter appear in *Outworlds* was a major event for a fan because it was such an exemplary publication. Without question, his fanzine brought out the best in its contributors, and to this day I consider *Outworlds* one of the best fanzines ever published; it set a standard very few zines have ever been able to match.

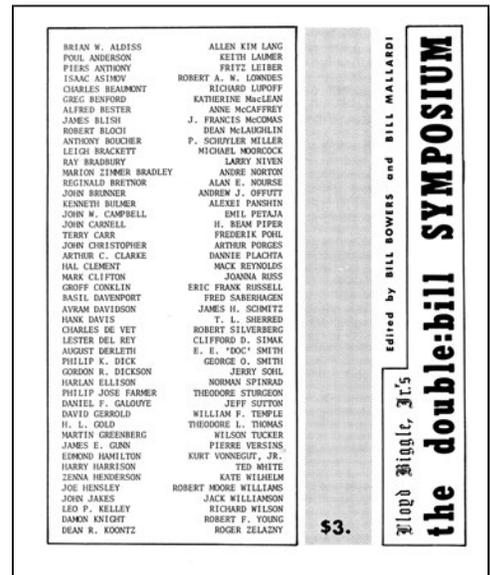
So yeah, unattainable is a good word to describe how I feel about *Outworlds*. However, Bill Bowers as a person was not unattainable. We both attended lots of conventions throughout the seventies and eighties, but my fannish region was the Upper Midwest while Bill circulated more through the central Midwest and the Eastern part of the country, so our paths rarely crossed. Odds are if they had done so more often, things would have been different. That brief "hi, how are you?, etc." conversation at IguanaCon showed that he was a nice guy, and I truly wish I could have known him better. [June 12, 2020]

Arthur Hlavaty

IN 1970 I was just beginning to notice that one of my favorite things – science fiction – had some sort of weird subculture attached to it, encouraging it or sucking the life out of it or something. I liked reading science fiction, and I liked reading about science fiction (In those days it was something to read more than something to watch, and I liked it better that way.) Thanks to an Algis Budrys review in *Galaxy*, I mail-ordered a book called *The Double:Bill Symposium*, a collection of answers by sf writers to questions about how they wrote, that had come from the weird thing called fandom. I was fascinated by the book, and a couple of years later, I heard that one of its editors, *Bill Bowers*, was doing one of those fanzines, so I sent him a buck for it.

It was all good, but I particularly liked the letter column, which I immediately joined in on. It was a step along the way to doing my own zine, which turned out to be a way to find friends, and in fact a whole community, without requiring social skills. I got to know Bill, through the zine and eventually in person, and liked him a whole bunch; he was a sweet, caring person, as well as a guy who put out a delightful zine. His last few years were hard, and now he's gone, but it's a pleasure remembering him and *Outworlds* now.

[June 8, 2020]



Rich Lynch

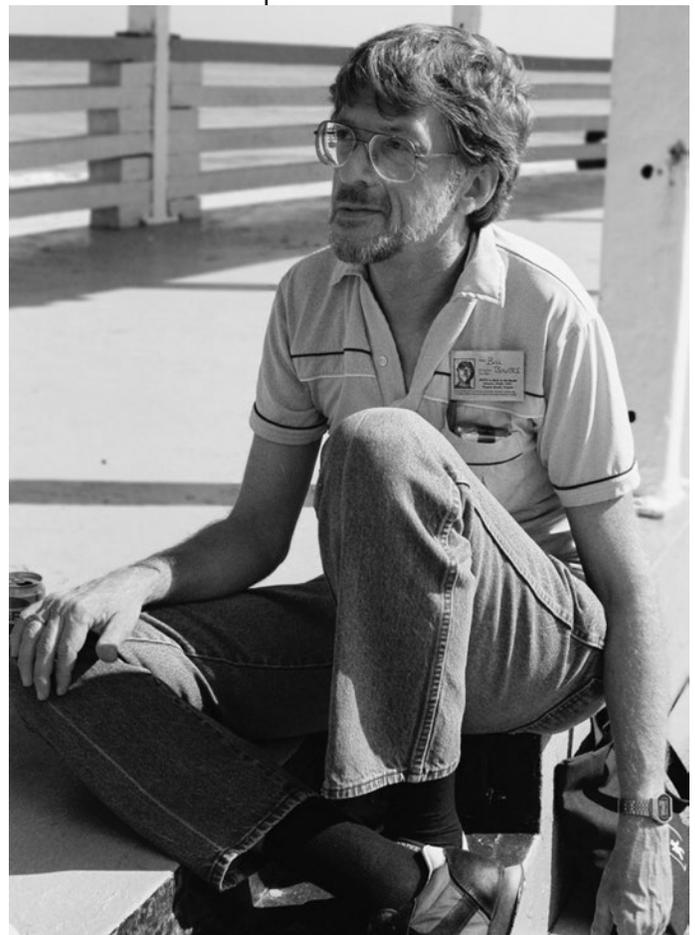
HERE IS A PHOTO I took of Bill at the 1991 Ditto convention in Virginia Beach. It was a very pleasant weekend, where one of the main activities was kicking back in the hotel's veranda to watch big cargo ships from Norfolk harbor sail into the Atlantic, out beyond where the ocean meets the sky.

I'm sorry that I don't really have a story about Bill. We corresponded from time to time and traded fanzines, and before he died I saw him every June in Cincinnati at Midwestcon. But other than that our paths didn't cross very often.

I was trying to find the image of a postcard I sent Bill, which he printed (I think) in *Outworlds*, but I've sifted through all the post-1988 issues online at fanac.org, and it's not in any of them. He'd mentioned that he didn't think a postcard or letter could reach him by zip code alone, so I took that as a challenge and sent him one, using all nine digits of his zip code. He received it, and was apparently croggled enough that he xeroxed it and printed it in one of his issues. Exactly which one, though, eludes me. Now I know what the searchers for that downed Malaysian Airlines jet must have felt like as they searched the depths of the Indian Ocean – it's gotta be in there somewhere!

Looking forward to reading the issue.

[June 24, 2020]





Skel

I DON'T REALLY have any interesting anecdotes about the times Cas and I spent with Bill. We never did anything special, we just sort of hung out together and enjoyed each other's company. Well, we did once go to the Cincinnati zoo with him and Al Curry, but the zoo was the star of that show, although Cas would have gotten the nod for 'Best Supporting' with her vehement anti-vivisection-and-drug-testing-on-animals 'Rats Have Rights' t-shirt.

He did though once get us into trouble with Catherine Crockett, though I suppose you couldn't really blame him, given that he was already dead at the time, and we were simply remembering him and reminiscing. Cas and I recalled an occasion with Bill when we mentioned something about Mike Glicksohn and Doris Bercharich, to which Bill had responded 'That's Mike for you, always did have trouble picking the right woman'. At which Catherine, who was a close friend of Doris, instantly sprang to her defence, before we could explain that, at the time Bill made that remark, he himself had just been chewed up and spat out of 'The Relationship from Hell'. But that was Bill for you; in his fanzine he was front and centre, but he never seemed to place himself at the centre in personal socialising.

Which aspect of Bill sort of brings me to one of our North American visits (either 1993 or 1998 – unfortunately I have no written record and neither my nor Cas' memory is up to the task), or more precisely a couple of years earlier or, even more precisely than that, to Lord-only-knows-when. You see, I used to collect SF magazines. Then I realized that I could no longer really afford them, plus I was losing interest anyway. I was more interested in fanzines, and they were all free. So, I gave all my SF magazines to Mike Meara. I have absolutely no idea when this was. Colour me clueless.

Moving on to the very early 1990's we find Mike Meara losing interest in collecting fanzines and, with amazing reciprocity, giving all his fanzines to me. After many evenings of sorting I had converted the erstwhile two collections into... er... two collections; the generally fannish stuff I wanted to keep and the duplicates and generally sercon stuff in which I was no longer interested. Being now in a seriously organising mode I catalogued both sets on separate spreadsheets (FNZA & FNZB).

Sometime before our relevant visit I picked up on a rumour of some sort of fundraising effort to enable Bill to effectively make the TAFF visit (albeit not under TAFF auspices) that he'd been unable to make back in 1976. So I sent Bill a copy of FNZB and, knowing he was familiar with the technique of auctioning fanzines, said he was welcome to whatever he could get for them, providing it was made plain that postage from the UK would be extra.

Bill quickly pointed out that the proposal had always been a non-starter as his general health wasn't up to such a trip. He quickly added, though, that he'd still like to auction them but strictly on our behalf, with the proceeds helping to offset the expense of our upcoming trip. So, whilst it seemed we weren't able to do something for Bill, his immediate thought was to turn it around so that he could do something for us. Bill put much time and effort into running that auction and I'll swear he seemed every bit as excited as we were when the issues of **Vector** (split into 3 separate lots) became the object of a major bidding war. He netted us over \$1,000 which certainly helped enormously, and all he would take were a few of the fanzines to fill some gaps in his collection.

[May 25, 2020]

from *Outworlds 57*, July 1988

I doubt if I learned the concept through science fiction, but in 1966 I painted the walls of a barracks room with black enamel paint... to go with the orange ceiling, and the orange rug. Of course I was already on less than favorable terms with the First Sergeant, in that my roommate and I were the only ones in the squadron with the gall to wear a mustache. Sometimes I am slightly aghast at the actions of my younger self... perhaps more often than I'd really like to admit at this stage of my life!

Michael Dobson

I THINK I got one issue of *Outworlds* (don't remember what issue, but I think there was a "2" in it) from (I forget which) Bill at a Midwestcon in either 1968 or 1969. I remember that (whichever) Bill seemed like a nice guy, but I don't remember anything else – possibly because of the trashcan full of steaming bog beside the hotel swimming pool.

As far as *Outworlds*-the-fanzine, I can't lay my hands on the single issue I have (I think I still have it), but I remember I liked it a lot and for some reason remember (one of the) Bill(s) writing about his involvement in CB Radio fandom, back before we all turned into truckers for a few years. I'd never heard of CB before, and I blame (I forget which) Bill for getting me interested enough to buy one during the craze. [June 8, 2020]

Sam McDonald

I DIDN'T KNOW BILL. (I only entered fandom, of sorts, in 1998). However, I saw this call on *File 770* (<http://file770.com/final-outworlds-issue-to-be-published-afterworlds-needs-you/>), and remembered that I had bought from Mike Resnick, on eBay:

Bill Bowers Birthday Card...SpaceCon, 1979
signed by Neil Armstrong, Kelly Freas, and others

This is on artists board and is 22x28.

Here is an alphabetical list of zines Bill had art or articles in (I didn't include LoCs). (I own very few of these, but perhaps have more info on many.)

- *Anubis Vol.1 No.2*, Spring 1967 [The Golden Goblin Press, pub.] – art
- *The Best Is Yet To Come* [Bill Bowers, Jackie Franke, ed.]
- *Captain Ro's Whaz-Bung*, late 1970s?
- *Cinder #6*, Nov. 1961
- *Crifanac #7*, Sept. 11, 1998 [Ken Forman, Arnie Katz, ed.] – "OUTburst"
- *Crifanac #8*, Oct. 12, 1998 [Ken Forman, Arnie Katz, ed.] – "OUTburst" column (including the story of how Bill didn't know Robert Lichtman had published a fanzine called *Outworlds* six years before he began using the title)
- *D:B Jr.*, 1969 [Bill Bowers, Bill Mallardi, ed.] – flyer for *Double:Bill 19*(?)
- *double:images*, 1969 – flyer for *Double:Bill 19*(?)
- *Energumen #16*, Sept. 1981 [Mike Glicksohn, ed.] – "Thots While Swinging"
- *File 770 #68*, Aug. 1987 [Mike Glycer, ed.] – TAFF "Hold Over Funds" comment in "Miscellaneous" section
- *Granfalloon 5*, Nov. 1968 [Linda Eyster, Suzanne Tompkins, ed.] – art
- *Granfalloon 6*, March 1969 [Linda Eyster, Suzanne Tompkins, ed.] – art
- *Granfalloon 7*, Oct. 1969 [Linda Eyster, ed.] – art
- *Nargothrond #3/4* (double issue), Jan. 1969 [Alan G. Thompson, ed.] – art
- *Nyarlathotep #6*, Sept. 25, 1968 [Ben Solon, ed.] – "The Lovely Lemon Tree"
- *Nice Distinctions #10*, June 2005 [Arthur D. Hlavaty, ed.] – "Not Forgotten," which included an appreciation of the recently deceased Bill Bowers and Evan Hunter/Ed McBain.
- *Niekas 20*, Fall 1968 [Ed Meskys, Felice Rolfe, Charlie Brown, Marsha Brown, ed.] – art
- *Odd #15*, Jan. 1967 [Ray Fisher, Joyce Fisher, ed.] – art
- *Odd #17*, Sept. 1967 [Ray Fisher, Joyce Fisher, ed.] – "A Soldier's Job"
- *Odd #18*, Spring 1968 [Ray Fisher, ed.] – art plus "Look Dreamward Beggar"
- *Prehensile #15*, Sept. 1976 [Mike Glycer, ed.] – "Bill Bowers Explains Mike Glicksohn... and other short subjects"
- *Quark #10*, April 1969 [Lesleigh Couch, Chris Couch, ed.] – art
- *Quip #5*, Feb. 1967 [Arnie Katz, Lon Atkins, Len Bailes, ed.] – "One Will Get You Two," about coediting fanzines



from *Double-Bill 6*,
August 1963

From now on, I should think, you out there in Fandom Land might do well to treat me with more respect. Like, what other fan can say that three such momentous events as the Coulson Picnic, the eclipse of the sun, and the Miss Universe Pageant all occurred on his birthday? (Now just watch some wise character come up with the fact that his birthday is also on July 20.)

- **Quip #6**, Summer 1967 [Arnie Katz, Lon Atkins, Len Bailes, ed.] – “From the DB Flyer” (Bill Bowers & Bill Mallardi)
- **The Rebel #3**, July 1962 [John Jackson, ed.]
- **Resolution #1**, 1977 [Jackie Causgrove, ed.] – “Iguanacon Practice Speech”
- **Sirruish #2**, July 1966 [Hank Luttrell, ed.]
- **Sirruish #6**, Winter 1967/68 [Leigh Couch, ed.] – art
- **Stet #5**, April 1992 [Leah Zeldes Smith, Dick Smith, ed.] – “Post-Practice Practice Speech”
- **TITLE #46**, Jan. 1976 [Donn Brazier, ed.] – photos
- **Xenium #11**, June 1978 [Mike Glicksohn, ed.] – “Bill Bowers’ Second Practice Iguanacon Speech”
- **Xenium 2.6**, July 1976 [Mike Glicksohn, ed.] – “The Way it Is”

[June 12, 2020]

Tim Kyger

BACK WHEN DINOSAURS roamed the earth (ridden, no doubt, by various Christians) – i.e., 1976 – Bill Patterson and I decided to bid for a Worldcon. Just a pair of wild and crazy guys...

Came the question, then, of GoHs. Who? Harlan Ellison was simply assumed by us for the Pro GoH. But who, then, for Fan GoH?

Bill Bowers was my idea. Patterson’s dead, so he can’t refute. Heh!

I didn’t know Bowers. But I knew of his work over the years. My Ghod, the art of the fmz!

And so we asked him. He said yes. And then we won the bid and actually had to do something. But that’s another story...

[June 24, 2020]

Sutton Brieding

“...impression, everywhere, of aftermath: of having entered, already, an afterworld; of muttering to yourself in some kind of after-language.”

GUSTAF SOBIN

LATE '70s. In Detroit visiting honorable John Benson. Bussed to Ann Arbor to meet Leah Zeldes. Went with her in a Cadillac full of hoodlums to Cincinnati to some Con. Everyone split. Sat alone by pool fully dressed in greasy travel clothes with old suitcase. Sure I looked like a dealer but no one approached. Across pool Bill Bowers holding court, in something like a djellaba, pacing, talking, nervous, surrounded by many energy forms. Did not meet him. Never corresponded with him. Don’t recall ever being published by him. Loved **Outworlds**, especially Billy Ray Wolfenbarger’s beautiful rambling prose. I wasn’t ever quite a Fan, not that kind of human. That’s all I got.

[June 11, 2020]

Hope Leibowitz

MY MAIN MEMORY of Bill Bowers is:

Once he was picking me up at an airport to take me to a Midwestcon. Of course, he smoked, one reason I didn’t/couldn’t hang out with him much. But I said something and for the entire trip (a very long car ride) he didn’t smoke. (I’ve had asthma since 1974, as my mother smoked constantly, and I cannot stand to be around smokers.)

[June 13, 2020]



from **Outworlds 40**

August 1984

A Tale of Two Badges:

“Oh, he’s okay. After all, I shared a bed with him last night.”... said my fifteen-year-old ward/protégé/sister.

SpaceCon 6 came off, was fun... and successful. (Rusty & I made expenses...)

Prior to the con, I asked Jackie-Registration-Causgrove to make up some badges for Rusty and I, the GOHs (Joe & Gay Haldeman), and the sorta committee: her and Bill Cavin. Sure enough, two of the badges were subtitled “Sortta Committee”; Joe & Gay’s were in full color (but too dark for this format); and Rusty’s said “Rusty...”

Jackie, apparently in a mood to do everything twice, made me two badges. But she gave me the one below, to wear.

Thanks, Jackie. For everything. (...really!)



rich brown

RATHER LABYRINTHINE editorial material you contribute (front & back) to *Outworlds* 31.

It occurs to me, though, that reading Bowers must be something of an acquired taste and people eventually get used to tripping through all those ellipses, skipping over some of those empty but pretentious-sounding power word beginnings (“Pride; Integrity; Guts... nonetheless, a short digression.” – that sort of thing) to get to the nitty gritty, and dipping in and out of timelines as you quote from something you said in 1981, which quotes something else you said in 1979, referring back to something you may or may not have done in 1974. Whew! The mind boggles.

But, as I tried to imply above, this could just be My Problem. Judging by the numerous quotations here of what you’ve said in years gone by, it does not appear your writing style has changed all that much. I therefore deduce most of your readers should not only be used to it by now but perhaps have even been bombed by it all so far back into the stone age they have expressed appreciation. (I assume, perhaps without good reason, that a steady stream of criticism aimed at you *by those whose opinions matter to you* on this score may have moved you to attempt some change; and, under the somewhat more arguable assumption that you could have changed had you wanted to, I also assumed that either (a) they like it or (b) you are immune to criticism by your friends, or perhaps a bit of (a) and (b) together.

[*Outworlds* 32 | Spring 1993]

Mike Glicksohn

ACTUALLY, the secret behind the improvement in the appearance of my own fanzine is remarkably simple. Whenever my mimeo gives too much set-off, or fades on a drawing, or blurs the print, I merely grab the latest *Outworlds*, thrust it under the screen of the mimeo and say sternly, “Do you want to be responsible for something like *this*?” and the printing defect clears itself up. [LoC published in *Outworlds* 8.75 | 1972]

[to which Bowers replied: “...just WHO is this guy!!!”]

YOUR MARCON REMINISCENCES generate the usual feelings in me. Apart from the embarrassment at the too-kind things you sometimes put into print about me, there’s my usual amazement at your ability to remember so clearly five years afterwards just what happened and to or with whom at a particular con, a knack I very clearly lack, often to my intense mortification. Of course, there are obvious reasons for that, not the least of which is the fact that in the last forty-three months I’ve attended fifty-three conventions and have gone through rather fewer intense changes than you have. But even so, I’m still somewhat in awe.

The other thing that amazes me is how frequently I seem to be involved, often serendipitously, in turning points in your life.

Sic Gloria transit etc. Department: The nameplate just fell off my Hugo! No shit: “clunk!” I hear, and there’s the engraved metal plate lying on the shelf. Does this mean I can retire, Father William?

The remainder of your convention comments don’t evoke any responses except a warm feeling of remembrances of shared good times. I have to agree

from *Father Williams*
MISHAPVentures #2,
June 1976

I am beginning to enjoy doing things I want to do but have always either been afraid to do, or rationalized that someone of “my age” should not be doing... It is in some ways a heady experience, and I suppose that I’ll “overdo” certain aspects of my new-found “freedom” before, eventually, I come down – but in the meantime I’m enjoying the hell out of doing totally crazy things like simply taking off for a weekend. I do, in some ways, envy younger fans (such as the Suburban Femmefen) their not only “having” fandom, but friends within reach... and I’m certain that part of the enjoyment I derive from spending time with them is a vicarious re-living of something I never had when I was in school. Be that as it may... as long as they (and others) are willing to accept and humor The Ancient One, I very selfishly intend to go on enjoying myself in their company for a long time – while hoping that, in some small way, I may be able to help them avoid some of the mistakes I made along the way.

with one thing you said, though: we're *both* remarkably lucky to have the friends we do and to have known the happy moments/weekends we have.

Among the items awaiting my return was a LoNC (if you can't figure that out you'd better sign up for a refresher course in Basic Fannishness from the N3F) from Denise. It seems that once you've written to one fanzine beginning with an 'X' you can write to them all. I bet Dick Lupoff will be surprised to hear from a total stranger after all these years...

Now that the Venerable Mister Locke has publicly put to rest the question of our relative stature, I suppose I'll have to find some other reason for duelling with him in the lettercolumns of fanzines from *Alvega* to *Zymurgy*. Still, like the hair on his head, the topic had worn a little thin and was undoubtedly due for a recall to the manufacturer. Unfortunately, though, there are few other mutual characteristics where we are quite so close together as to generate a few months of humorous fanzine exchange. He can write rings around me with his brain turned off. As it often is. And I can outdrink him every day of the week. As I invariably do. He's chunkier than I am and I'm hairier than he'll ever be. There really doesn't seem to be much we can fight abo... wait a minute! *He's* been waiting for years for the egoboo arising from material he sent to you. And you've *still* never used those twelve pages of LoCs I sent you on the last couple of *Outworlds*... Say, Dave, care for a quick round of More Ill-Treated By Bowers Than You?

X-6 is even less likely to call forth voluminous response than **X-5** and I really think a two-page conreport is going a little far in your vain attempts (stet) at inflating the number of fanzines you've produced, don't you? I mean, if you can't get it up there anymore (into double pages, I mean) have you considered Tatting as a hobby? Or pressing flowers? Isn't it enough that you ruin the reputations of fine fanzines by *contributing* to them without demeaning the fine (if hard to remember) name of the once-proud *Xenophile*... er... *Multilith*... um... [8/1/78]

[excerpt from a LoC published in *Xenolith 7* | August 13, 1979]

I doubt if anyone other than Bill Bowers will ever completely understand a typical issue of *OW* but that, to me, is part of the fun. And with fanzines nowadays, we need all the fun we can find!

[LoC published in *Outworlds 41* | December 1984]

Jerry Kaufman

AS FOR MY "primary claim to fannish fame", well *your* primary claim may well have been marrying the person you met through my kind... and unpaid... intercession. She didn't move here *entirely* by coincidence. My presence here swayed her slightly. It isn't my fault that the potential of your marriage didn't work out. You might, in future, want to move on to a more recent joke, though it would mean deleting the only "inside joke" I can understand in *Outworlds*.

[excerpt from a LoC published in *Outworlds 38* | April 1984]

Rick Sneary

FRANKLY, *Outworlds* is almost too well done. Like *Warhoon*, it is almost too professional looking, that it puts one off from saying anything about it. While the spirit of the magazine is far from formal, it is so well



from *Outworlds 37*, January 1984

It's not surprising that [Neil Rest] can't remember Jerry Kaufman's name in that his primary claim to fannish fame occurred way back in 1968 when, while attending an sf club meeting at his home in Cleveland Heights (a mere four days after I returned from 18 months overseas)... he was the one to introduce me to (...pause while he reflects on all the gender-depicting discussion in the last few issues...) the person I would end up marrying, a year later, 'at' St. Louiscon. Coincidentally, she now also lives in Seattle.

from *Outworlds 65*
February, 1993

...the “Post-It Notes...” shtick goes back to two “inspirations”: several years ago I made the blanket (and semi-serious) statement that the “Post-It Note” was the single greatest technological advancement of the 20th Century. And: Shortly before “reviving” *Outworlds* early last year, I’d seen the movie Postcards from the Edge.

There’s no telling how many variations I’ll spin off before I weary of the gimmick, but it certainly “beats” some of the previous “editorial” tag-lines I’ve utilized in the past!

[...after all, I have to amuse myself somehow: I’ve been waiting for a quarter-century now for Bruce Gillespie to relinquish the “rights” to “I Must Be Talking To My Friends...” ...]

done that I feel a little scruffy and frayed-about-the-edges in approaching it. Just as, as a letter hack I wrote to nearly every issue of *TWS*, *SS*, and *Planet*, for about three years... but I wrote only one postcard to *ASF*. I suppose to you it is all a creative act, and there is joy in the perfection of it all. There are things I work on, that no one else ever sees... so it shouldn’t be a waste of time. But I can’t help but think of all the time it takes...; and think of how little time I take to notice it. But I’m sure Boggs and Bergeron do.

[LoC published in *Outworlds 8.75* | 1972]

Terry Carr

HOHUM, another splendid issue of *Outworlds*. – I say this because it’s the inevitable result of a faned publishing regularly: you may be remembered in years to come as the guy who maintained a frequent publishing schedule when no one else did, but in the short run I suspect you’re already starting to be taken for granted. Which is a shame; but believe it or not, there are such things as realities in fan publishing, and this is one of them. It may, in fact, be a major reason why there have been so few regularly-published fanzines in recent years: fans publish largely for egoboo, or at least feedback, and a frequent fanzine is inefficient in this respect.

But *Outworlds* does continue to brighten the fanzine scene, so I hasten to give you what egoboo I can. (Who knows? – maybe you’ll be remembered in fanhistory as the editor with “skewed tastes”: that could become an entry in the next *Fancyyclopedia* [more trivial remarks have become legendary]. If so, you’ll finally be getting your due.)

[excerpt from a LoC published in *Outworlds 38* | April 1984]

Buck Coulson

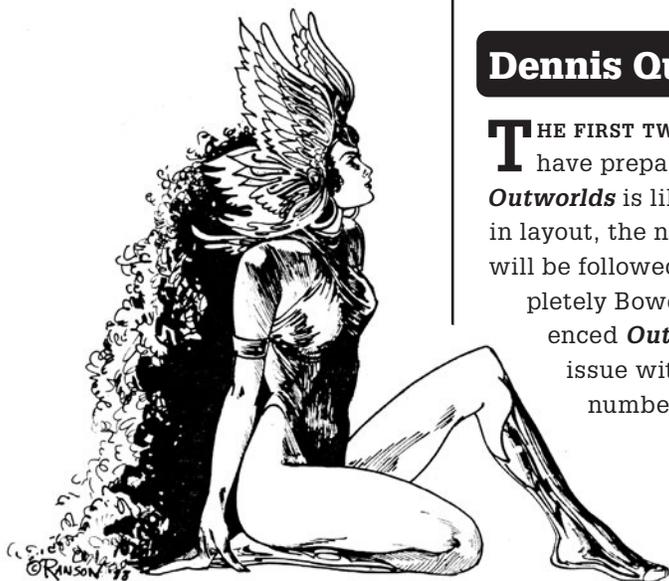
“...the colophon [in *Outworlds 15*] is so beautiful and well-hidden it took me five minutes searching to find it. One of these days Bill is going to publish a fanzine with such a convoluted layout that nobody will be able to figure out how to open it.”

[review of *Outworlds 15*, from *Yandro 220* | May 1973]

Dennis Quane

THE FIRST TWO YEARS of *Outworlds*, had I known them earlier, would have prepared me for one thing – that whatever one issue of *Outworlds* is like, the next one will be different. If one issue experiments in layout, the next will be straightforward. An issue which is all columns will be followed by a separately published lettercolumn, or by one completely Bowers-written. After the experimentation of *OW15*, the experienced *Outworlds* reader might have been prepared for a hectographed issue without any artwork, and been pleasantly surprised at the number & quality of the graphics that were in fact provided.

[excerpt from a LoC published in *Outworlds 18* | October 1973]

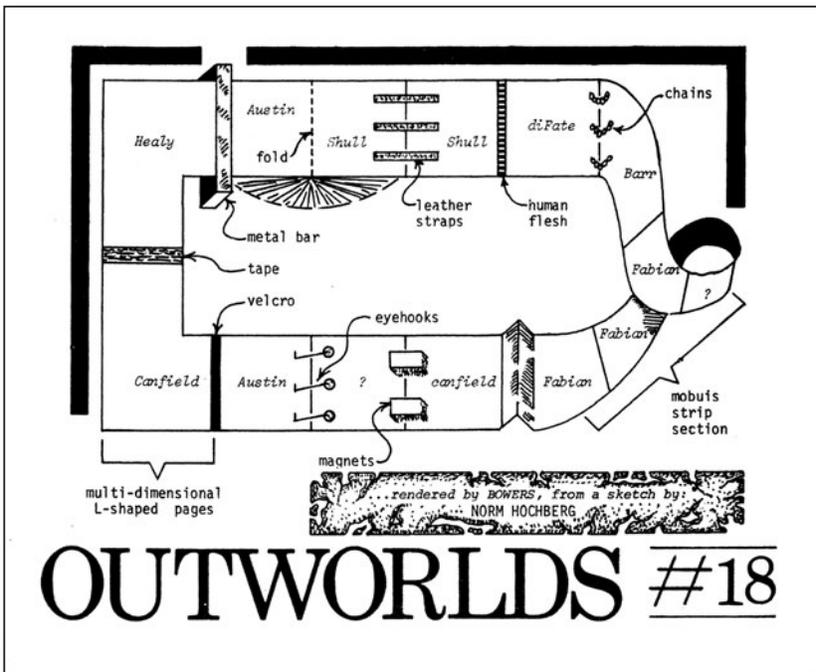


Norm Hochberg

I'VE OWED YOU A LoC on *OW15* for a while but everytime I stare at it and the enormous Wolfenbarger book in it I turn into a pool of Jello. Jello, as you may know, has no hands or fingers so I couldn't do the LoC. Now that #16's here to buttress me though...

Frankly, Bill, I imagine that one day you'll do a zine in which it will be *impossible* to find the interior. Maybe there won't even be one, but we'd never know (unless you slipped and mentioned it in a letter to Mike Glicksohn).

I can visualize the cover for that issue. Naturally, the issue would come with a leather b*OW*kmark which will have the following "cover schematic" on it:



[excerpt from a LoC published in *Outworlds 18* | October 1973]

Eric Lindsay

WHAT CAN I SAY about it: words are so inadequate to express what I feel when I get *OW15* out of its envelope and look through it again (and again). You talk to the person you see every night on the train home and want to stand up and tell him about how long it must have taken, and how much planning, and effort and energy would have gone into a fanzine like that. But you stay silent, because words cannot express what you feel. The train traveler is taking an office equipment course, and once worked for a letterpress printer – he often brings parts of mechanisms to show me – a noiseless typewriter typeface and mechanism and so on, and he knows far more than the casual user of the effects of duplicating (although this is far less than most fans would know), but the idea of the amount of work that is being done by one person just doesn't really occur. I want to shout to the world: Look at this, it is the work of an individual, a man who takes pride in what he does, it is a work of art as much as any painting.

[excerpt from a LoC published in *Outworlds 18* | October 1973]

from *Outworlds 38*,
April 1984

...everything I do in this fanzine is purposeful, even if rarely "Purposeful". The subject of fanzine "layout" is something that is vastly more amusing to do, than to talk about, but what we have this time at least is merely an example of basic linear layout: I simply started out with a pile of letters and simply kept sorting and re-ordering as I went – sometimes trying to "follow-up" on the previous entry; at other times guesstimating what would fill a given space.

from *Outworlds 41*,
December 1984

There was the point in time where I was being mistaken for Wally Franke *and* Andy Offutt. That was manageable, but when Eric Lindsay got into the picture, well... (Fortunately, *he* has gone back where he belongs, and is hopefully growing taller – with an assist from gravity – hanging from his feet on the underside of the Earth...)

Billy Ray Wolfenbarger

11:48 P.M. & COUNTING. Thanks for *Outworlds 36*. It was the only thing in today's mailbox worth reading. You change formats so often we never know what to expect next. Harry Morris, in a strange place called Albuquerque, does the same sort of thing with *Nyctalops*. Which is nice. But fandom: if fandom is a continuing conversation, I sure get a lot of interruptions with everyone.

[...] 12:44 a.m. & counting. Thanks for the space & the time. The only things worth hearing are the typewriter keys and the passing train, distanced by a mile. [1/7/84]

[from a LoC published in *Outworlds 38* | April 1984]

Wm. Breiding

ACTUALLY, I'm not quite done with *OW63* yet, but almost there. Usually, I try to read "It" (as Jeanne has so aptly found to call *Outworlds!*) as you have chosen to present it – from front cover to back cover – but there was too much going on – I experienced it much like a party (a good party where I know everyone!): ...and over here someone was being funny, across the room there was serious discussion, in the kitchen people were smoking and gossiping, the hall party had some people talking and reciting poetry, implicating the deeper meaning of words. That's how I experienced *OW63*. [11/7/92: Saturday, 7:30 am]

[from a LoC published in *Outworlds 65* | May 1993]

Paul Novitski

THIS FIFTEENTH ISSUE is pretty goddamn nice. Looks like a lot of work went into it, there are a lot of nice bits of business. There are also a lot of flaws, but I imagine a lot of them are due to the fact that you assembled the issue over a period of months. It's not very pleasant to collate and staple a fanzine you're already bored with, when visions of layout for issues-to-be are dancing in your head.

(Isn't life great? You slave for months, send your precious darling out to a trusted mailing list and people write back saying, "Eh – it was okay, but..." and shrug.)

But I like the... the *optical odor* emanates. The covers are good, the unfolding is fun. I rather wish you'd folded the covers in instead of out (shoulda called it *Outfolds*), for protection and stability. Those covers of yours fall open and get in the way.

I approve of tables of contents on bookmarks. I dislike ToCs anyway: I rarely read them because before I've read an issue they're meaningless and afterwards they're superfluous. I like to discover articles as I leaf through the issue, so my memory of articles relates to what they had to say, their overall appearance, the way they *lay*, not in terms of an alphanumerical listing of title, author, artist and page number. Fanzines aren't so big that you really need a ToC to find anything – you just flip through until you see it. That's why I like individual pieces to be readily distinguishable – each with its own distinctive layout, artwork, and perhaps paper & ink colors. It's easier to scan and pick out what you're looking for.

[excerpted from a LoC published in *Outworlds 18* | October 1973]

from *Outworlds 38*, April 1984

Earlier this afternoon, in the vain attempt to clear a work area next to the typewriter, I wrote an apologetic letter to a contributor, stating that:

"...but then, fanzine publishing (Bowers-style), has never been an exact science."

Afterward it occurred to me... I'd probably have been further ahead simply quoting the Peter Gill truism of so long ago, but I don't believe in repeating the same thing more than, oh, two or three times.

John M. Koenig

IT TAKES SO LONG to completely digest and understand/enjoy an issue of *Outworlds*; I know how much of my time and energy I put into my humble 34 page mimeo'd issues so realizing how much of Bill Bowers must be tied up in each of your 'productions' is overwhelming to me.

[2/10/77]

[from a LoC on *OW28/29*, published in *Outworlds 29.5* | December 1997]

Chris Sherman

YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED SOMETHING here with *Outworlds* that I don't fully understand. But unlike most fannish output – fanwanking – *OW* provides a perspective that nothing else in my experience seems to quite match. Despite having little direct comment on this issue, I feel somehow compelled to write to you.

[...] *OW* is just plain good shit.

[excerpt from a LoC published in *Outworlds 62* | January 1992]



Left: Chris Sherman reads *Outworlds 68* to his son Skylar (photo originally published in *Outworlds 69*). Above: a much more recent photograph of Chris with Skylar.

Dick Bergeron

I WAS DELIGHTED with the Dave Locke interview with Walt Willis – this may well be the first time I've enjoyed the interview format in a fanzine (and we live in a time when there seem to be almost as many 'interviews' as there used to be book reviews), but it probably has as much to do with the subject as it does with Dave's very evident skill in handling the form. More than occasionally I have reason to be reminded of Dave's comment in *Wrhn 28* (quoted in *Wrhn 29*) which put into words better than anyone what I saw in Walt's work and my experience of him as a fan. Locke was probably the perfect person to write this kind of piece and it's one which would have fit in well in *Wrhn 28* – I needed a sort of coda to wrap things up and bring the reader up to the present in Walt's life after the chronology of what (as Dave points out) "is the story of one fan's odyssey through fandom". [...] And I suppose "grace" is the *mot juste* here as we wend our way through Walt's gentle and unassuming prose – so unlike the strident (and aggressive) tone which dominates so much fan writing (my own included, of course).

A lovely job.

[2/8/84]

[from a LoC published in *Outworlds 38* | April 1984]

from *Outworlds 38*,
April 1984

Actually, I think kids are great in theory – just like the Fan Hugos, the American political process, and communes. I would imagine that a lot of the things I feel strongly about... you would consider "great in theory". But I determined a long time ago that

a) I don't have any great desire to propagate the species as long as others are doing it so well... and that I don't have the personal ego-drive to find out if fanzine publishing is genetically transmitted; and,

b) that in all honesty, I am much too selfish to devote 18 or so years to giving a child the proper amount of attention and caring. (It is my personal observation that at least 90% of those who DO have children are likewise too selfish, but we won't go into that here.) I don't hate kids as a sub-species – but I do find it much more preferable to my chosen life-style if I don't have to HEAR them... and I'd be appreciative if some so-called "parents" would be just the slightest bit considerate of my "space". (What I wouldn't give for an adults-only grocery store... is that too much to ask?)

Incidentally, I find absolutely no conflict between this attitude and the fact that I work for the U.S.'s second-largest ~~soon-to-be-#1~~ toy company... and that if you have any *Star Wars* toys in your house, the odds are that at least a few of the parts in them will have my imprint on them somewhere in the manufacturing process. (It is true that I put sharp edges on at every opportunity... but you should be assured that OSHA keeps knocking them off – no sense of humor there at all!)

Al Curry

from *Xenolith Three*
December 20, 1979

"In my youth, Father William,
I often believed
That platonic affairs were the best.
But now as I age,
I grow rather sage
And see them as inactive incest."

Hal Dresner:
THE MAN WHO WROTE DIRTY BOOKS;
Fawcett Crest / 1966 / pg. 11

"You are old, Father William," the young fan said,
"And your hair has begun to go gray;
Yet now that you're older, it falls to your shoulder.
What will all the other fans say?"

"In my youth," said the sage, pouring Coke in his rum,
I wore it quite short and well-oiled.
But now that it's longer, my sex appeal's stronger,
And my repute is properly soiled."

"You are old," said the fan, "as I mentioned before.
"And you've grown most uncommonly thin.
Yet you stand and give speeches in caftan sans breeches.
Are you brazen... or simply half bent?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to the fan,
"I wore trousers to cover my bums,
'Til I found that the breeze,
as it buzzed 'tween my knees,
created harmonious hums."

"You are old," said the fan, "and the whole world thought
Your faned days were quite dead.
Now *XENOLITH* dashes
from *OUTWORLDS*-ian ashes.
Why couldn't you quit while ahead?"

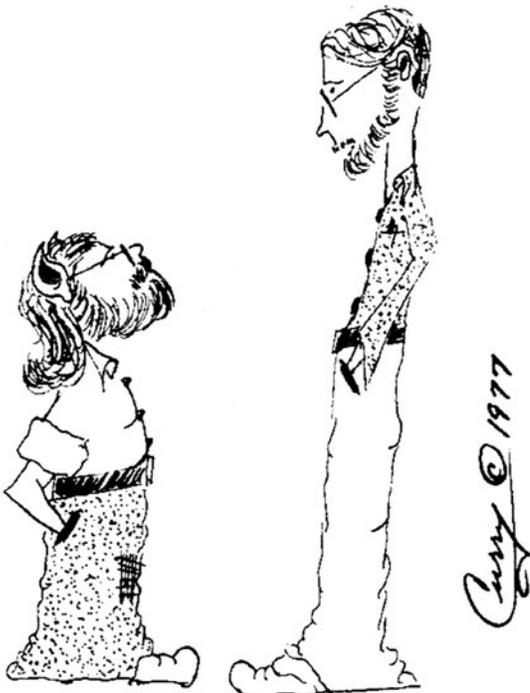
"In my youth," said William, adding strength to his drink,
"I considered retiring from print.
But my bulk mailing rate
has been hurt as of late.
Are you catching the drift of my hint?"

"You are old," said the fan, growing tired of the rhyme.
"One would think all your stamina broke.
Yet you eye each tight sweater,
the younger, the better.
Are you trying, perhaps, for a stroke?"

"I have answered three questions, and that is enough,"
Father William replied in a snit.
"I have made your good name
and I can break it the same.
Now be off, you ungrateful young twit."

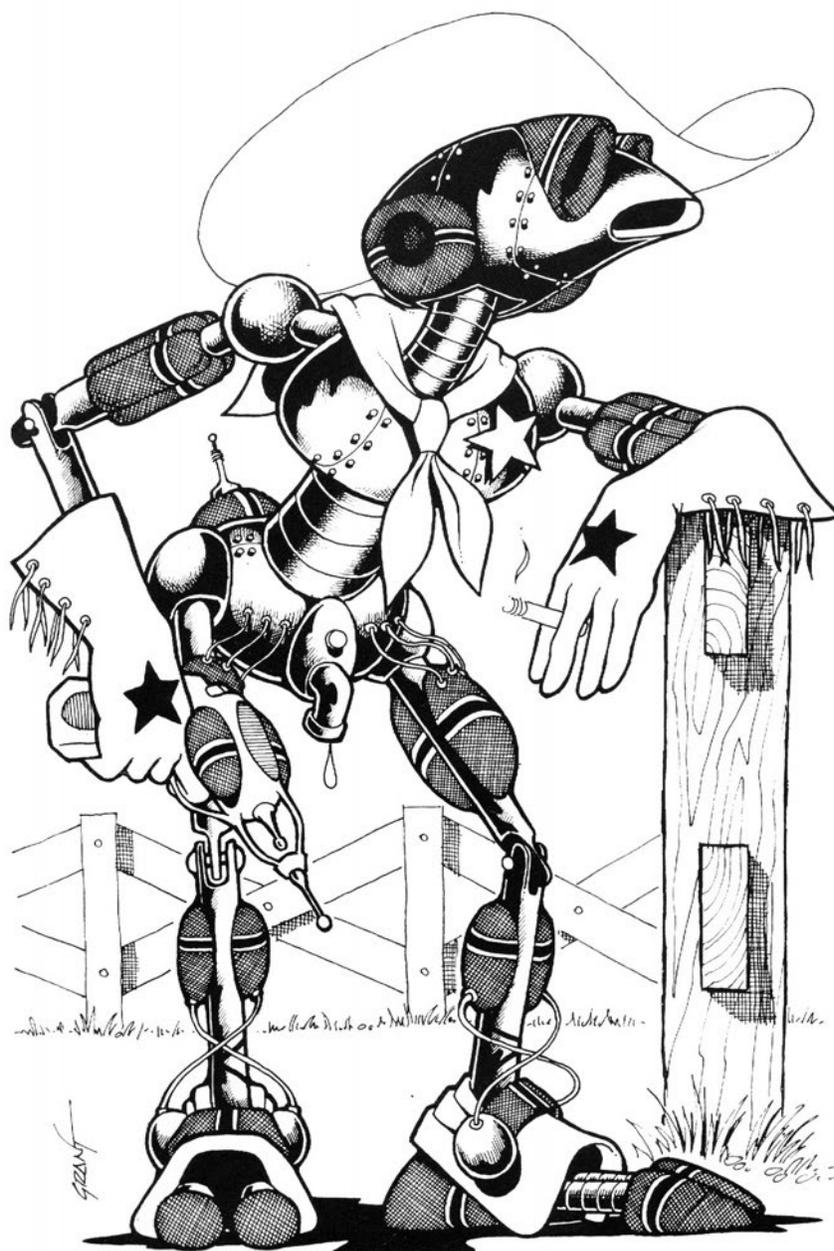
[published in *Xenolith 14* | October 1980]

NO, I DO NOT GET
EMBARRASSED WHEN FANS
ASK WHY I HAVEN'T PUT OUT
ANOTHER *OUTWORLDS*. IT'S
DIFFICULT TO EMBARRASS
A FAN INSTITUTION.



From William's Pen

A Collection of Writings: 1963–2005



Just Plain Bill:

Sermon of the Month Club

Double-Bill 6 | August 1963

I HAVE A tendency for sticking my foot in my mouth (and for me, that's some distance!), in that I seem to make statements which come out in twil-print sounding a shade uppity (re: Sharon Towle in #4), which is certainly not the way I intended them to sound. But I bravely forge ahead, hoping that one of these days I will be able to make myself understood without having everyone feel that I've just insulted them.

This time I may be doing more than just sticking my foot in my mouth. I can only hope that the following is taken in the spirit that it is given in.

I'd like to briefly take to task the butchering of artwork which has been evident in a few of the zines that we've received during the past few months. (Names withheld to prevent a cycle of retribution.)

I am all for more artwork in fanzines – fan artists are just as talented, and sometimes moreso, than fan writers – but not at the price of inept stencilling and reproduction. You would not throw an author's work on stencil resplendent with strike-overs (unless intentional),

and typos (though they do slip through on occasion, as we well know) – or would you? I believe that an artist deserves the same consideration as an author. If you do not have adequate equipment or patience to stencil a drawing, and can't afford electronic stencilling, forget it. Besides the

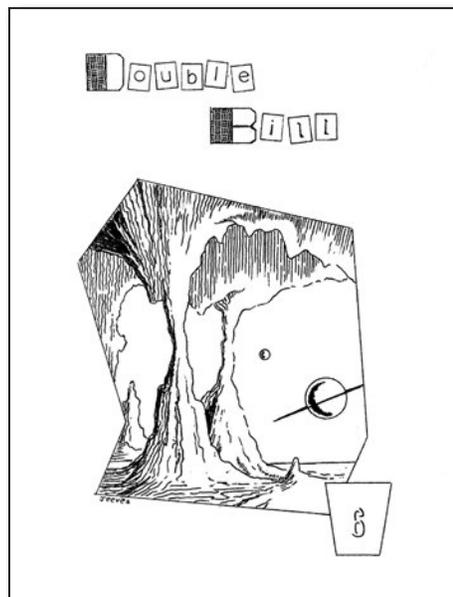
ethics involved in ruining a piece of artwork, it certainly seems to me that such an illo would detract more from a fanzine than an equal area of typos.

I'm *not* by any means claiming that we have fandom's best stencilled artwork in *Double-Bill*, but on the whole, I'm quite satisfied with our presentation of artwork, and believe that we are improving in that area, as well as other areas, with each issue. We try to take adequate time and care with it, and with the addition of a lightscope, thus saving our backs and arms from

the pains of window stencilling, I think even more improvement will be shown.

This is not a Mission To Save Fanzines, people; only a pet gripe.

May you have many of your own.



Just Plain Bill: “Which Bill are you?”

Double-Bill 7 | October 1963

I FIND MYSELF somewhat in awe of this mighty mass of mimeographed matter which goes under the title of **Double-Bill #7**. I find myself somewhat more in awe of the fact that I lived through it to see its completion. I think there should be a term applicable to fans who put out 100-page fanzines, but I’ll be damned if I can think of a printable one.

I suppose it is the Thing To Do, in an annish, to fondly reminisce on the First Year, the rise from a crudzine first issue to the heights of a 6 rating from Buck Coulson. But I’ll spare you this year, and instead indulge in some ramblings, if you don’t mind – but then you really don’t have much choice, do you? Anyway, we’ve enjoyed putting out **D-B** and hope that you’ve got some pleasure out of reading it.

This, then, begins the Second Year.

ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER CON...

Then there was the DisCon. It’s rather difficult to remember it too clearly – seems as if it were many, many moons ago. In a minor sort of way, it was two anniversaries. One for me (since ChiCon III was my first con); and, in addition to this belated first annish, one for **D-B** – it was on the ride back from Chicago that this creation was

thought up... a day history shall never remember... and we will never forget.

I still must stand by my statement in #6 that I prefer the informal Midwestcon to the – in relation – huge Worldcon, but the DisCon was enjoyable in its own right. It was a bit smaller than the ChiCon, but the major difference for me was the fact that I knew quite a bit more fans this time around, and wasn’t suffering from an acute case of being “left out”. Another side-effect, somewhat egotistical in nature I suppose, is that apparently **Double-Bill** has made somewhat more of a “name” for itself than we had realized. It was a bit of a thrill to have someone walk up, peer at your nametag, and ask: “Are you part of **Double-Bill**?”, or, more commonly... “Which Bill are you?” As if I could be mistaken for a **BEM!**

All in all, a good time was had, and we hope to make S.F. next year.

.....
Can you realize how it feels to be *half*
of a well-known fanzine?
.....



From William's Pen:

Someday I Might Learn

Double:Bill 10 | August 1964

SOMEDAY I MIGHT LEARN. It has happened so often that it is almost a custom. I am referring, of course, to the fact that here it is the last minute again before I hurriedly compose my ramblings. Right now it is Friday night; tomorrow we have to run off 20 pages and collate a hundred-plus copies and pack; Sunday, we leave for Chicago. No, I doubt it... I'll never learn.

Perhaps, though, for once the breaks are with me. I have assurances from the draft board that I won't be called up until October at least. I just wish I could place some faith in Harry Warner's statement in the lettercol concerning those who make elaborate plans for the draft seem never to go. At any rate, I shall now be able to make the Pacificon II, something I doubted for quite a while. Mallardi mentions (in his editorial) about being ready to "really cut loose from the state of Ohio and from work" and I can only echo his sentiments. I'm ready now...

To clarify a point in Mallardi's editorial, there are two separate time-tracks involved in the distribution of this issue. 1) In order to get this issue out in time to take to the convention (and save postage and envelope money a la Coulson) we've only run off a little over a hundred copies. 2) The majority will be mailed out approximately the middle of September, So, a plea is in order to those of you receiving this in the mail: *Please* send in your letters as soon as possible, in order to make the next issue. O.K.?

The next issue, #11, will be our 2nd Annish. It should be out in October, but the first part of

November will probably be more like it. It will cost more, but this is purely self-protection. Our last Annish nearly doubled our circulation – a move which we can't bear to think about now – and also neatly doubled our bill. And those who are impressed by sheer (mere?) size, I'm afraid, will be disappointed. It won't be too much bigger than this issue. We've had our hundred-page issue; one will have to suffice. It's nearly a miracle that the magazine survived three such issues as #7, #8 & #9. It is a miracle that we survived putting out this issue in two weeks.

Almost, but not quite, I am ashamed to hold this slim a magazine in my hands.

WITH, AND WITHOUT MALLARDI, I seem to have been doing quite a bit of traveling this summer. A rough estimate indicates that with trips to Cincinnati, Wisconsin and Indiana, plus a family vacation in Kentucky, I have gone well over 3,000 miles, not counting unnumbered trips to Cleveland. The expedition to California will probably add more than twice that. Say, maybe that's why the army hasn't cornered me yet... they don't have the facilities to keep up with travelling fen...

Since Mallardi devotes the larger part of his editorial to the three fan type things we've been to already this summer, I'll just add a note to the effect that I enjoyed myself hugely at all three, and only wish I could be around for them next year. Maybe... But don't believe this nonsense about Mallardi being (ha!) "quiet and unobtrusive". That's a lot of bull, Artie!

.....
One thing is certain; it'll be a pretty long time before we ask Lloyd Biggle to do another article for us.

He has several points against him now.

—ingroup type joke.
.....

From William's Pen:

A Farewell Welcome! To Arms

Double:Bill 11 | October 1964

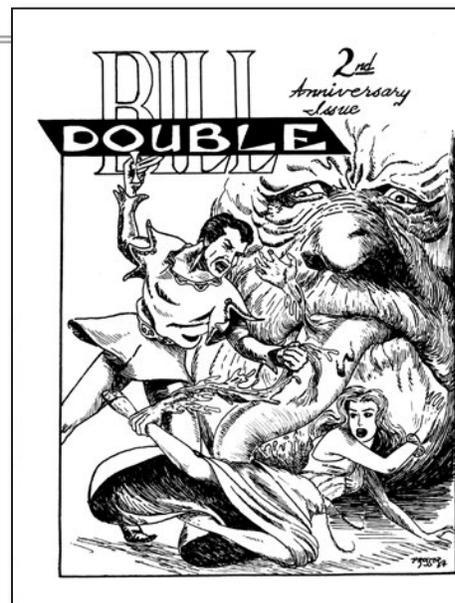
AS SOME OLD wise guy once said – “Well, I guess every good thing must come to an end.” I received my greeting from Uncle on Nov. 13 – 'twas a Friday, remember? – with instructions to report on December 7th; a very suitable day, that. Never having been one to do things half-heartedly, I have now enlisted in the US Air Force. The draft would have taken two years of my time; the USAF will take four – so you can see that I have neatly doubled my tenure in the service. I really didn't want to, but the title of this fanzine does strange things to one.

I leave tomorrow, the 30th (having lost a week of my free time due to the nasty fact that on Dec. 1, I become Army property [boy, we *are* property!], and couldn't get in any other service). This issue won't get collated before I leave, but if I type like the proverbial hell we may get it run off.

The fact that I'm going in doesn't really bother me as much as it seems to bother some; in fact, in some ways I even welcome it. In a very short time I'll find out whether or not I made the right choice in taking the four years over two. They say that some can adapt easily to the service way of life, while on others it just doesn't seem to take. I hope I'm one of the former, but I have my doubts. We shall see.

(I have the very distinct feeling that I'm going to regret this editorial as soon as I've finished it, but right now time is very much of the essence.)

In only one way am I mildly sorry to leave – that is because *Double:Bill* has just started to hit its stride, or so it seems to me. But the mag will go on and all that, in the capable hands of Mallardi, though on what type of schedule, only he knows. Speak/complain to BEM about it.



Since this is (in name) the 2nd Annish, I should have a few nice words to say about it and the previous year. But at the rate this (like #10) has been turned out, I'm not too sure what all's in it, let alone whether the whole will in any way be comprehensible. One thing *is* certain – the size. Not too much similarity to #7, eh? Which is all to the good. (We *said* that it would be a small issue, but I have the feeling that quite a few people are going to be surprised.)

WE TOOK A TRIP this year.

Actually, we took several trips – but the last one! Forty miles shy of 7,000 in three weeks is not too many. In many ways, those three weeks were the most enjoyable in my long life – despite the time span (in which it was the longest) it seemed to be the quickest trip I've ever taken. And I didn't want it to end.

(I don't know how Mallardi is handling his editorial, so there may be some repetition; but herewith, a brief trip report:)

On Sunday afternoon, after hurriedly collating and stapling some 100 copies of *D:B #10* to take with us, we left for Chicago. After some difficulty, we located Durk Pearson's house and from there we found the way to Alex Eisenstein's residence (whose address we'd forgotten to bring with us). After spending Sunday night at the Eisensteins', we again returned to the Pearsons', whence we left about 9 Monday morning. Reaching Omaha early that evening, we stopped to see Tom Perry, his wife, and Joe Pilati (all nice people) before

driving on thru the night till the early hours before stopping. Late Tuesday evening, we reached Salt Lake City, and around noon Wednesday we visited George Barr (a good man) for a couple of hours before taking off for Las Vegas. We arrived in Tucker's Paradise that evening, and stopped on the outskirts to phone Dwain Kaiser and get directions to his house. It was then that we learned that ATom, along with Nick Falasca and Mike Domina, were already there. About an hour and a half later, we found the house. (We learned shortly afterwards that it had also taken the other group a similar amount of time to find Dwain's house.) After a few moments' conversation, the ATom-Falasca-Domina combo took off for LA. ATom was supposed to be there in time to attend the LASFS meeting the following evening; after hearing Nick's car take off we were relieved to find that they had made it. We stayed in Vegas two days, visiting the Hoover Dam and the various places of commerce which have made the area (in)famous. Leaving Friday afternoon we passed through the western suburbs of Los Angeles, but kept on going to San Diego and a certain Mexican town just below it. Saturday evening we arrived at Ron Ellik/Al Lewis's during the party for ATom, already in progress (as they say on TV). Sunday and Monday we and many, many other fans, visited Marineland and Disneyland (in that order), both enjoyable occasions. Our time in LA having been spent at the (now deserted) Labyrinth of Jack Harness/Owen Hannifen/Phil Castora (for which many thanks,

fellows), we left for Oakland around midnight Wednesday. We followed Ted Johnstone and his crew – Jock Root, Harness and Don Simpson, and despite spells of falling asleep at the wheel, we pulled into the Con-city Thursday morning.

About the Pacificon II, I could probably go on indefinitely, but must restrain myself. It was an enjoyable con, despite a peculiar sense of tension in the atmosphere. But since I've become an 'old hand' at conventioning, it wasn't as much a high point of the trip as it would have been a few years ago.

Following the con, we returned to LA (we like it!), attended our first LASFS meeting, and started the mad drive back across two-thirds of a continent, stopping only long enough to visit the Tacketts in New Mexico.

A most enjoyable trip.

(It gets a bit rushed there at the end, doesn't it. Perhaps you'd like to have a BEM leaning over your shoulder telling you to type like 'h' 'cause we got to get it done? It is for this reason I keep a sword across my shoulder – to poke him back and *let me* type. I call it my shoulder-blade.)

Future versions of this editorial column will hopefully be a bit more coherent and will appear at irregular intervals – if we're lucky, they may appear at the same irregular intervals as this magazine. This, then, is my last writing as a free man... may it not be yours...

from *Double:Bill 10*, August 1964

Other fans talk about finding little, out-of-the-way, dusty bookstores – now I found mine. Last Saturday I was in there, and had a rough time getting out before I spent \$15.00, so abundant was the choice. All the stf paperbacks and digest mags are 15¢ each, but the hardcover prices vary. For instance, I picked up a first edition copy of Sky Miller's **THE TITAN** for \$2.00, while a first edition copy with d.j. of **WHO GOES THERE?** was \$3.00. I also picked up a couple of Jules Verne books: an 1873 edition (in beautiful condition) of **IN SEARCH OF THE CASTAWAYS** for \$1.00, and a 1906 edition of **HECTOR SERVADAC (OFF ON A COMET)** (in likewise condition) for 60¢, plus a number of anthologies and later novels. I don't go up there too often, I can't afford to...

We have heard that *Double-Bill #7* was voted the Best Single Publication of 1963. This is an achievement of which we are very proud, and we'd like to thank everyone who voted for us. May you have fewer crudsheets and many sticky coins all your fannish life...

And thus ends the Second Year in the era of *Double:Bill*; it's had its share of troubles, but all things considered, we've enjoyed it. The number of issues dropped from the First Year... from six to four, but those four issues total 304 pages to 248 for the first six, plus the fact that we think we have gone up in quality with each issue. 552 pages in ten issues... isn't that a bit too many?

...the soon to be enslaved Bill Bowers

From William's Pen:

Actually Written By William's Pen

Double:Bill 12 | April 1965

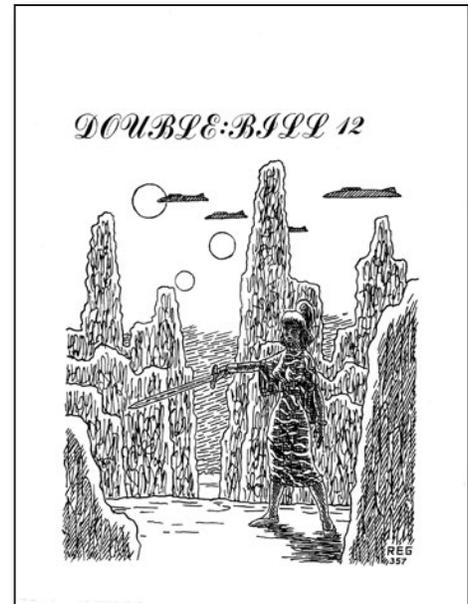
GREETINGS, CIVILIANS AND FELLOW FANS, from an almost fabled fan and military partner of *D:B*. In the not quite immortal – but true – words of Earl Evers: “The Army (c.f. the Air Force) is an excellent time-binder as far as fandom goes.” From where I sit now (in the Service Club surrounded by noisy TVs and card players – but far better than the barracks and my noisier roommates) fandom seems a distant and enjoyable dream – something you wish you were a part of – but probably doesn't exist anyways. It's a strange feeling and not exactly easy to put down in print.

Perhaps the strangest experience of my three months' military career was receiving a copy of *D:B #11* in the mail. I *know* I should have written a LoC on it – but you know how things go...

Before I joined there was a heated discussion among my so-called friends on the question of whether I could take the military or whether the military could take me. So far it's turned out to be a draw – more or less – but I get the feeling that *I'm* beginning to lose. I know that's hard to believe, but even the best of us must fall some time.

As a shocking and distinct sign of how adverse the military has affected me, I have a distasteful confession to make. I know Mallardi and a few people in LA will find this almost impossible to believe – but I swear it is true. *I haven't made a single pun in the last 3 months*. Truly, military life does strange things to one.

I thought before I joined that the experiences I would encounter in the Air Force would serve



to enhance my writing ambitions. I believe it was William Temple who remarked that all that 6 years in the military did for his writing career was to serve a better knowledge of four-letter words – and thus a better capability for understanding “modern” literature. This, I have found, is remarkably true.

I have just learned from Mallardi that H. Beam Piper is dead. To me this is a rather shocking experience, as he always seemed to me one of the type that just seems to go on forever. I had the pleasure of meeting him at Chicago in '62 and again at the Discon. He was one of my favorite writers and his stories will certainly be missed. And with no disrespect to the other kind people who participated, his answers were my personal favorites of all those who contributed to the *D:B Symposium* – especially the one to question 11 which seems a bit ironic now. He will be missed.

I know it may sound a bit strange, but this editorial is actually being written by William's Pen. It's been so long since I've seen a typewriter that I doubt I'd recognize one if I saw it.

The way things stand now, I should graduate from school here ((*Ed. Note: It's an I.B.M. school. – BEM*)) May 4th and be home the next day – which means I'll have been away five months. And I'm not ashamed to admit that more frequently than not I suffer from spells of homesickness – as

does most everyone down here. Theoretically, it shouldn't bother me, as I lived away from home longer than that before I joined, but that was like 2 miles – not 1,800. The current consensus among the students here, along with some of the permanent party, is that if you're lucky you might become used to the base – it's not one that you'll ever like. Right now I'm just existing for May 4th.

One thing (that may seem strange to you – especially those in the South) that has served to make me a bit homesick is the lack of snow. The only time I've seen snow this winter was the day I left home – the 30th of November. I still can't comprehend that Christmas is over – it was in the high 70's at Lackland, and they say New Years was pretty nice too, though I (and my flight) pulled k.p. that day. True, it gets *cold* in Texas, especially here at Sheppard, but damn it all, it's just not a natural winter without snow.

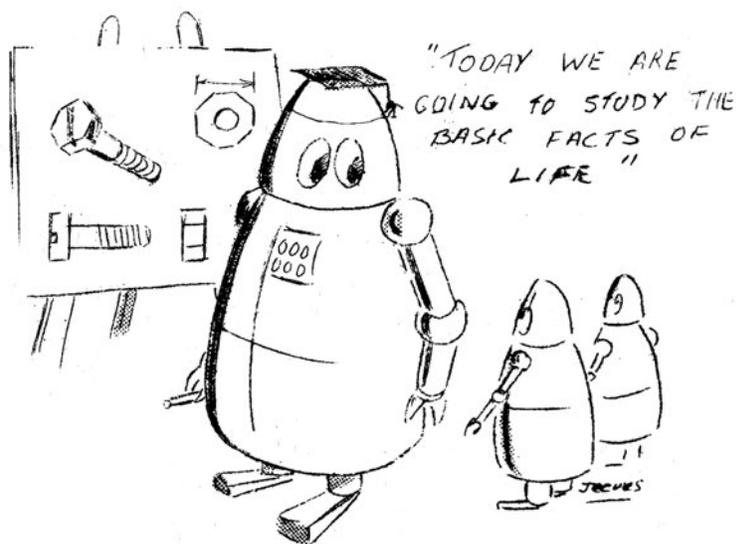
Anyone on this base who admits they're actually *from* Texas is in for a rough time. I don't know, but I'd be willing to bet that if Mexico wanted Texas back now they'd have about 99.9% of the Air Force personnel on their side, and there's a lot of A.F. Bases in this hell-hole.

The thing I most dislike about Texas itself is its screwed-up weather – one day it can be in the 70's – the next 20 or 25 degrees. I don't mind changes in the weather – but every day?

Another interesting fact I learned since arriving here is that April is what they nicely call the tornado season, and Sheppard AFB is right in the center of something they call Tornado Alley. You see, this base used to have 3 theatres – now they have only two. Or rather they only use two. You see, last April they had a little twister that picked the South Theatre up and moved it a foot off its foundation. It didn't even break a pane of glass, either – and that's the most scary thing about it to me – especially when I think of how our barracks construction compares to that of the theatres.

I haven't told my parents about this and neither have I told them that the nearest town (which shall go nameless) is one that you don't go into in groups of less than three – and *never, never* in uniform. You see, the natives don't like their protectors – and the mortality rate of servicemen is a bit scary.

*With such pleasant thoughts,
I remain, militarily yours,
Bill Bowers*



From William's Pen:

The Stateside Expatriate

Double:Bill 13 | September 1965

I USED TO not be superstitious. I was a realist – the supernatural was merely a fantasy world of old wives tales and bedtime stories for the kiddies. Stories of black cats and ladders, broken mirrors, and buildings with a missing floor amused me but had no lasting effect.

I received my draft notice on Friday the thirteenth. I spent 7 months in Texas and 7 weeks in the hospital. I lost assignments in England and Bermuda – and ended up in Missouri.

I'm not superstitious now – not really. Which is why, against my better judgement, I'm going to go ahead and write an editorial for this issue.

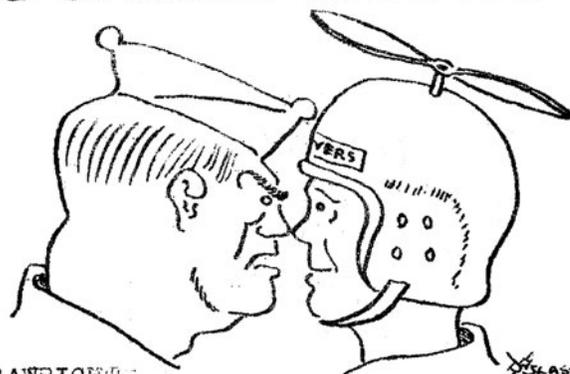
This is *Double:Bill* #13.

It is only fitting that I should congratulate Mallardi on the fine job he did with *D:B 12*, and the equally fine job I'm sure he'll do with this issue. One point though – he won't be able to take the entire credit for this issue. You see, I stencilled two pages when I was home in July.

Perhaps the only sour note in #12 was my editorial. I forced myself to reread it this evening. It was a horrible experience. I hang my head in shame.

Being in the far-removed geographic position I am – far removed, that is, from *D:B's* editorial headquarters – I am almost reduced to using this editorial space as a delayed LoC. Which fact may be great for retrospective judgements, but doesn't make for timely comments.

D:B MEETS THE USAF



"AWRIGHT,
FLYBOY--what's the big idea?"

Perhaps, if you're lucky, Mallardi's editorial may give you a more firm indication of *D:B's* future than I am now. It was on shaky ground for a while and still is not rooted on bedrock, but with some changes and your support I think we (and *D:B*) will survive. I hope so. I hope you hope so, too.

My congratulations to the Hugo winners: Especially to **Yandro**. Poor Buck! No longer able to claim being the most consistent second best, he'll have to find a new gimmick.

And, considering the fact that I got screwed re-routed from attending the Loncon this year – the fact that I should be able to make it to Cleveland next year is something to be thankful for.

*The stateside expatriate,
Bill Bowers*



“Discover the Universe!”

Outworlds 1 | Summer 1966

OUTWORLDS: Volume I, Number 1; Whole Number 1; Genuine First Issue; Collector's Edition. Summer, 1966. Incorporating: **Abanico**, **Bayta**, **Silver Dusk**; and **Star*Dust**. Published for the August 1966 Shadow FAPA Mailing, and a few Others. Written & Illustrated by AF15721969... excuse me... **BILL BOWERS**, who is known to the USPO as – A2C William L. Bowers, CMR Box 1106, Richards-Gebaur AFB, Missouri 64030.

Stencils by Gestetner; Illustrations by Gestefax; Mimeography by Dave Van Arnam. Typers courtesy of the USAF. Typoes by Miss Take.

The 26th Production of Sphinx Press.

The Galactic Viewpoint

Yes, Virginia...? I get the strangest things in the mail these days.

I returned from leave and the Midwestcon to find a full mailbox (a Trend I'd like to Encourage). Stuffed in with a copy of **F&SF**, various bills, a church bulletin (they are *still* praying for me, back there), and an issue or two of the **Saturday Review**... I found this innocuous-looking one-sheeter.

Things just haven't been the same since.

Instead of going out and Getting Drunk over the weekend of the 4th – as all *sane* Defenders of Our Freedom did – guess what I've been doing:

This.

(I know; maybe I should have gone out and Gotten...)

Seriously now, I had fully intended to bring out a fanzine entitled **Outworlds**, even before I received Van Arnam's missive. It was to this end that I had purchased a quire of stencils, and had Gestefaxed a couple of pages of spot fillos while home.

Actually, **Outworlds 1** was intended to be distributed at the Tricon. It was to have featured a full four-color cover, an original by Finlay. In addition, there were to have been various articles and reviews by the likes of Bloch, Tucker, and Willis... plus other unknowns. The major feature on hand was the first installment of a 50,569 word appreciation of fan critics, "Those Ambiguous, Lucid Bastards", by Stephen K. Pickering – writing under his famous pen name of Eric Vaan. Plus a special reprint from **Realm of Fantasy**.

100 plus pages; it would have been a beauty.

Too bad that the one-sheeter didn't get lost in the mail room.

The major feature of *this* particular issue of **Outworlds** – "Sphinx Press, Revisited" – really wasn't conceived to become the major feature. It grew.

Editorial Resolution:

I've been too serious too long, about too many things. Gee, I'm sorry about that.

While at the Midwestcon, I overheard a conversation which proclaimed that the recently organized Science Fiction Writers of America was, in reality, Damon Knight's personal plaything. It's not my right to disclose the names of the individuals – members of the SFWA – participating in the discussion; or to agree or disagree with their conclusions. I don't have sufficient knowledge of the organization.

But a personal observation: Any organization which grants Zelazny two awards out of five possible (and gives one of the remainder to **DUNE**)... any organization such as this, can't be *all* bad.

Nuff said?

Short Subjects:

A note of appreciation to Bill Donaho, who has been kind enough to send his FAPAazines since I've been in the service; particularly for *Habakkuk II:1*, containing Alva Rogers' article on "Schneeman". Also to Len Moffatt, for "The JDM Bibliophile #2". May there be more like these.

A personal preference: I don't know if Dave intends to continue the policy of sending the Shadow FAPA mailings out as a single, stapled whole. I would prefer that it remained so; few things are more discouraging in a barracks room than having a mass of one- and two-sheets floating around.

Outside contributions for *Outworlds* are not actively sought after right now... except in the case of spot illos. However, short pieces – particularly by other members of the Waiting List – will be considered. Comments, if nice, are always appreciated.

Beginning with the next issue, will be the first of a series of reviews, articles, etc. on the works of H. Beam Piper. These are notes for a lengthier work In Progress.

Question: Would anyone like to hear some War Stories? I don't really enjoy telling them. At least not more than twenty-three hours a day. But...

Comments on the... um... artwork... adorning this issue are solicited. I've always considered myself somewhat of a frustrated artist, and have recently started scratching away in my spare time. Some of them didn't turn out too bad, I think.

The Numbers Game

At the Midwestcon, Dave Van Arnam and I briefly discussed this strange fetish many fans have for building up the numerical values of their publishing houses – as fast as possible. Among

other things, the coastal weekly apas have abetted this uncouth scheme immensely. (Could it be...? Might the weekly apas have been hatched for this very purpose? I hope not, but...)

Against the fans in these apas, I don't stand a chance.

Still... I'll play your silly game.

In five years, 26 publications doesn't sound like too much. It averages out somewhere between a bi-monthly and quarterly schedule.

There is, however, another consideration. The actual page count.

The 26 above total up to 890 pages. With various unnumbered flyers, ballots, etc. – the sum is closer to 900 pages. This figures out to approximately 3½ pages a week for those five years. I don't believe that's too bad; anyone who publishes more than that is welcome to what fame he can gain.

So, would you like to play a new game? Anyone?

Perhaps a formula could be invented which would take into account the numerical value of issues, plus page count. This would produce a single publishing indicator. Call it the Fan Activity Rating.

For anyone who really cares.

Addendum: Ideally, one should add quality to quantity in the above formula. Unfortunately, in fanzines quality is a subjective rather than an objective matter.

A Horror Story Shorter by Several Words than the World's Shortest Horror Story

"I, Bill Bowers, am defending you!"

Point of Information

For those of you of doubtful mind: Everything in this issue is second draft. Even this.

The Standstill

I would suppose that the term "writer's block" is not entirely unfamiliar to the majority of you. It is used to denote a wide range of the writer's ills – but basically says that he can no longer write with success. This loss of the creative process – by whatever name you endow it – may be temporary; or unfortunately it may prove permanent. The reasons for this creative breakdown are unexplainable, but few if any writers escape its advent at some point during their career.

Recently, I have encountered a similar loss. Perhaps it might be described as a 'reader's block'. It has proven to be a frustrating and rather frightening experience. Even though there are momentary reprieves, the overall effect of passing.

For the better part of my life, I have been – at least in relation to the majority of those I've encountered – a rather prolific reader. This included not only science fiction (it was the largest single faction), but every form of the printed word I could lay my hands on... through means legal or otherwise. I still have a tendency to acquire the greatest possible quantity of books and magazines. Now apparently, this is only the collector's urge in evidence.

My reading of anything more involved than **Newsweek** has come to a virtual standstill. Oh, I still manage to go through three or four books (and perhaps as many short stories) during the course of a month. Compared to what went before however, this is comparable to the dew following the cloudburst.

Perhaps the most peculiar manifestation of this 'block' is my reluctance to try anything new. Approximately half of the reading I do manage falls within the realm of rereading works which I know I have enjoyed in the past. It is true that once I manage to get involved in a new work, I generally enjoy myself – sometimes tremendously. Stories such as "...and Call Me Conrad" and books such as **DUNE** and **LORD KALVAN OF OTHERWHEN** compare more favorably with a majority of my past readings.

But picking up a new book and beginning to read it has become almost an impossibility. An explanation is difficult to provide. Perhaps it is the aftermath of over-reading, if such a thing is possible. It may be due to the environment into which I've been thrust – a barracks room is not conducive to creativity in any form (other than daydreaming and Getting Drunk).

Is my problem unique, or have others suffered a halt in their reading activities? Is it permanent, or will the block suddenly cease at some unspecified point? I certainly hope so. I find it impossible to conceive of my life being remotely complete without a goodly portion of it being devoted to literary pursuits. I have no great desire to return to the life of a virtual bookworm which typified my high school years. But to me, a life without books is like having potatoes without meat – you can live on half a meal... but you can't grow. (14 Mar. '66)

Back At You

I don't believe I've told this little tale in print before. I was busily engaged in milking it dry for the personal effect. But recently, when someone told it to me, I decided that I'd better get my ego-boo before it is forever lost...

Those of you who have had the good fortune to run into Bill Mallardi and myself at conventions can hardly have managed to have escaped the bit. Those of you who haven't... here's at you!

On our way across Pennsylvania, heading toward the Discon, Mallardi and I stopped in Gettysburg for a fling at sightseeing. This was enjoyable, but rather uneventful – except that later we learned that we had managed to get the battle sites rotated some 90° from the position they actually took place. That wasn't easy.

At any rate, preparing to leave the following morning for the remainder of the drive to D.C., we walked down a few doors from the motel to get breakfast. It was a common enough diner; the food was eatable.

Nothing unusual happened.

Until, as Mallardi was sipping his orange juice, I stated one of my more brilliant deductions.

Disagreeing (naturally), he said: "Bowers... you know that you have a tendency towards sticking your foot in your mouth." It was a statement of fact.

Without aforethought, I bravely replied.

"This is true, Mallardi."

I paused.

"But considering my height, you must agree that it is *quite* a feat."

The orange juice never had a chance.

I swear that the whole thing was completely unplanned. And it's true. (For the life of me, I can't recall the statement which prompted this exchange. Sometimes I'm glad I can't.)

We tried out the bit at the Discon... it went over big. I don't think we were thrown out of more than half a dozen parties.

We've tried it at every convention we've been to since, on anyone we could corner long enough to set it up.

...of course, a lot of very nice people don't talk to us anymore, either.

Will we see you at the Tricon?

Notes Toward A Style Sheet

The utter disregard of some of the finer aspects of typescript has long been an evident characteristic of fanzines in general. I cast no stones, without first admitting that I have been as guilty of general sloppiness in my publications as the next fan.

Layout – which is a major factor in producing a project pleasing to the eye – is certainly important. However, that is not what I wish to discuss here. Rather, the seemingly simple matter of indicating published material.

This is not to be considered an effort to reform; but a mild bitch, an attempt to clarify my own thoughts, and a try at standardizing such items in *Outworlds*.

(We conveniently ignore those luckies who have access to a Varsityper – and thus, *italics*.)

This, then, will serve for *Outworlds*.

Novels and bound (hard or otherwise) books of any type, will be indicated by complete capitalization. For instance: DUNE or THE RISE OF THE WEST.

Magazines, fanzines, periodicals and the like will be underscored, such as: Outworlds; Analog; Best of Fandom; _____ (Oneshot items will merit capitalization or underlining on an individual basis.)

All works of prose, verse, plays... which are shorter than book-length, will be enclosed in quotes. Examples: "The Tiger"; "This Moment of Storm"; "King Lear".

This leaves me with three items over which I am puzzled as to indicative methods. 1) Serials (underlined, with quotes?); 2) Series titles (first letter caps, only?); and 3) Theatrical presentations, movies, etc. (Caps?) Suggestions, anyone?

All of the above is subject to change without notice. Naturally.

OUTWORLDS

A2C William L. Bowers
CMR Box 1106
Richards-Gebaur AFB
Missouri 64030

*3rd Class Mail
Printed Matter
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TO:



Sphinx Press: the First Five Years

Outworlds 1 | Summer 1966

.....
“When material is nil, and so is your energy – list your publications.
–Ye olde fannish axiom
.....

THE LISTING of one’s publications is a Fine Thing; it dredges up old memories (that were best forgotten), and it also provides a clue to where all that nice money has been going the past few years. It is not an original Thing to do, and its desirability might be debatable. However, since it is well established in fannish tradition – it *will* be done.

A month or so ago, I came to a startled stop one afternoon. “My goodness sake,” I said to myself (I talk funny), “here it is, almost August... ’61 from ’66... hmm... that’s five years of Sphinx Press Activity. And I’ve yet to list these wonderful fanzines; not once have I done so.

Or something like that.

Not being one to shirk the righting of a wrong whenever possible, you see the results before you.

(It may be argued by some that I *had* to wait five years in order to compile a list numerically long enough to justify the trouble. We will leave this item until after the listing, however.)

.....
This is all Harold P. Piser’s Fault
.....

Some Introductory Disclaimers:

All the issues of *Double:Bill* listed were co-edited/published with Bill Mallardi (better known to the world as *the BEM*); with *D:B 14*, Earl Evers was added as third editor. This shoots the title all to hell... but what can you do? The *Tightbeam* listed is also a Mallardi/Bowers effort. (Mallardi has since published another *TB*; however, I had nothing to do with that.)

All of the above (in addition to *my* house name), are labeled as King Rex Publications (redundancy? never!).

All copy run estimates are very, very approximate.

Journey with me, then, through the Essence of Sphinx Press:

01. **Abanico 1**
Sept. ’61. Hecto; 16pp.; 70 copies.
This was produced some three months after I entered fandom. Solely the writer, most of the material was lightly rewritten school themes – need I say more? (It was a nice hecto job, though.)
02. **Abanico 2**
Nov. ’61. Mimeo; 16pp.; 150 copies.
Material was not noticeably better, nor more varied. Added was a one-shot column by Seth Johnson (yes!) and a few letters. I had this issue mimeoed by a (nameless) person, and the manner in which pages were mismatched throughout the issue could only have been achieved by careful planning. Strangely enough, I don’t believe anyone noticed.
03. **3sp**
Dec ’61. Hecto; 4pp.; 60 copies. (for N’APA)
This was belatedly retitled **Abanico 3** when the promised third and last genzine issue did not appear before the 4th came out in N’APA. Otherwise, I’d really rather not talk about it.
04. **Abanico 4**
(?) ’62 (does anyone know?). Hecto; 6pp.; 60 copies. (for N’APA)
Its date lost in antiquity, hopefully it is too.

05. **Star*Dust 1**
Apr. '62. Offset; 50pp.; 250 copies.
 Would you believe 50 pages of amateur s.f. stories? Well, not quite. There was an article by Jack Chalker (from the N3F MS Bureau; remember that?) and Buck Coulson's first "Wallaby Stew". A few of the stories I still recall with mild fondness – Don Anderson's and Ray Nelson's – but there is no doubt that this is the most expensive dud I've ever published. (Threat: I still have 70-plus uncollated copies at home. Someday in the far future I may distribute them through FAPA to 'bring back memories'.)
06. **Silver Dusk 1**
June '62. Letterpress; 12pp.; 300 copies.
(for NAPA – without the “_”)
 Bho, was I gung-ho in '62! I'm rather proud of the two issues of **Silver Dusk**, though my billfold still protests. My "Impressions" was commented on favorably by NAPA's Official Critic, which pleased me to no end at the time.
07. **Silver Dusk 2**
Aug. '62. Letterpress; 16pp.; 500 copies.
(NAPA)
 This was the issue in which Bowers and Evers blew the roof off that staid old organization, after which FAPA was modeled. I had accepted a short sketch by Earl in which he used (once) the obvious four-letter word – f**k. Well, Earl didn't have the ** in there, I didn't add them, and neither did the printer (a NAPA member). Several of the letters I received from some of the old ladies which frequent that organization could be considered classics. Even **The National Amateur** made sad noises. At any rate, this was the last **Silver Dusk**, and I neglected to renew my membership in NAPA.
08. **Abanico 5**
Sept. '62. Mimeo; 6pp.; 60 copies. (for N'APA)
 This consisted of three items "by Bowers" – a rather horrible cover, a *story*, and a piece of verse. (Even I couldn't call it a poem.) This also marked the end of my first tenure in N'APA.
09. **Double-Bill 1**
Oct. '62. Mimeo; 44pp.; 150 copies.
 What can you say? Mallardi and I, to no avail, have been endeavoring to re-obtain all existing copies of this so we can d*e*s*t*r'o*y them. It wasn't a bad first issue; neither was it a great first issue. We sort of like to think that it was a *good* first issue.
10. **Double-Bill 2**
Dec. '62. Mimeo; 44pp.; 150 copies.
 (This is as good a place as any to mention that the dates listed are those that appear on the magazine, and are in several cases to be taken with
- a large *cube* of salt as to the actual distribution date. F'rinstance: **Star*Dust** did not appear until July '62; in this case it *wasn't* my fault. **D-B 2** hit the mails in Jan. '63 – our fault. Various others in this listing have appeared at various times; a *few* have even made it out on the cover date.) Meanwhile, back at **Double-Bill 2**: Our first 'real' cover, by Terry Jeeves. Mallardi contributed "Some Defeats for: Integration". Some 3½ years later... well, take a look at **D:B**'s letter column sometime. And I had a piece of fiction which I may not have lived down... but I think I've outlived it.
11. **Double-Bill 3**
Feb. '63. Mimeo; 34pp.; 150 copies.
 Of course; here is Coulson. "Wallaby Stew" is the oldest feature in **D:B** and probably its most popular – with good reason. ("Wallaby Stew" is older than even the editorials, since the first installment appeared in **Star*Dust**, before being shifted to **D:B**.) This is vintage Coulson... written before he grew old and soft-hearted. In #3, among others, he reviews **Realm of Fantasy**. Gosh, that brings back memories. By the way... whatever happened to **Realm of Fantasy**?
12. **Tightbeam 18**
Mar. '63. Mimeo; 22pp.; 300 copies.
(for the N3F)
 Ah yes; **Tightbeam**.
13. **Double-Bill 4**
Apr. '63. Mimeo; 32pp.; 150 copies.
 A REG cover, using Rextripeing (a process stolen from Lupoff), marked our first experiment with mimeo color work. **D:B**'s own "A Basic S.F. & Fantasy Library" – compiled by approximately 15 brave souls – finally made its appearance. And Bowers had *something* which went by the handle of "Born to Die: The Essence of a Fan". I just don't write 'em like that no more. (Or do I? Watch for **Double:Bill 15**.)
14. **Double-Bill 5**
June '63. Mimeo; 42pp.; 175 copies.
 The covers – by Bjo and Ruth Woehrman – led Mike Deckinger to label **D:B** a 'girly' fanzine. (Puzzling Sidelight: 9 out of 10 'girly' drawings that have appeared in **D:B** were *drawn* by artists of the fairer sex. Explanation, please?) And I managed to make an ass out of myself – how's that for asinine symbolism – in an attempt to protect myself from a buzzing letter column, which had not exactly raised up in cheering response to my article of the previous issue. (However, my pasting pretty well died down after this issue. Mallardi's hasn't yet; see Item #10. Hah!)

15. **Double-Bill 6**
Aug. '63. Mimeo; 42pp.; 175 copies.
 I make no bones about it. Of the entire Sphinx Press run, this is my personal favorite. Why? It had nothing particularly great, but this one time everything seemed to click together perfectly, particularly since it was a two week job. Layouts worked out, and reproduction was almost flawless. Terry Jeeves tore into a Mike Shupp "Space Wars" article (another installment of which was present), and an item entitled "GMC On: Integration" added fuel to the running fire. Then... there was the infamous 'Midwestcon Letter'! Remind me... sometime... to tell you all about the infamous 'Midwestcon Letter'...
16. **Double-Bill 7**
Oct. '63. Mimeo; 100pp.; 250 copies.
 Gala First Annish; 100 pages; fotocover; artfolio; Tucker and Berry; the first installment of the Symposium; voted best single publication of '63 in the ill-fated Fan Awards. This – and Lloyd Biggle – is what made Mallardi and I what names we have today. One question... Now how do we get rid of those names?
17. **Bayta 1**
Dec. '63. Mimeo; 10pp.; 60 copies. (for N'APA)
 This was Bowers solo again (except for a brief sketch by Deckinger). I had a rather heated two-page article (written immediately after those three days) which proclaimed that J.F.K. was *not* God, despite the then-current rumors.
18. **Double-Bill 8**
Jan. '64. Mimeo; 76pp.; 250 copies.
 This contained the 2nd part of the **Symposium**, but was chiefly notable for two other items. Si Stricklen's "Fanicdotes I" – a beautiful one-page gimmick story – is the only item which has come close to surpassing the 97-page Symposium in popularity; **D:B's** own 'classic'. And in the lettercol, Bob Tucker first originated the use of the colon, rather than the hyphen, to tie together the two halves of the title.
19. **Bayta 2**
Mar. '64. Mimeo; 8pp., 60 copies. (for N'APA)
 Comments in a two-page lettercol on my opinions of TV (as expressed in **Bayta 1**), prompted a Zelazny story, which eventually appeared in **Double:Bill 10** – if you follow me. This also ended my second, and so far final, affair with N'APA.
20. **Double:Bill 9**
June '64. Mimeo; 80pp.; 250 copies.
 This was the official use of the now indispensable colon. Other than Bill Glass's review of Rupert A. Humdrum's latest, **HORROR PIT**, the final segment of the **Symposium** pretty well dominated the issue.
21. **Double:Bill 10**
Aug. '64. Mimeo; 48pp., 225 copies.
 Only 48 pages! Biggle attempted to explain the making of the **Symposium**; Jeeves investigated "Nartaz of the Baboons"; articles by Lew Grant and Joni Stopa; Zelazny's story (see #19, above); something by Tucker; Coulson; verse by Wolfenbarger and Zelazny; and covers by Joni and Bjo. Plus editorials and the lettercol. Only 48 pages, though.
22. **Double:Bill 11**
Oct./Nov. '64. Mimeo; 46pp., 225 copies.
 Not so Gala 2nd Annish; actually two pages shorter than the previous non-annish #10. This announced that Bowers was going in the service; indeed, before it was completed, I was in the Air Force. I finished my editorial the day before I left for basic, and left Mallardi with 3 or 4 pages to run off, and the whole thing to collate and mail. That's timing.
23. **Double:Bill 12**
Apr./May '65. Mimeo; 44pp.; 200 copies.
 Actually, I can't take too much credit for this, except monetarily. Mallardi did it; from where I was at the time, I could do little but extend (and receive) sympathy. Ted White explained the inner workings behind the "Birth of a Novel", and Lloyd Biggle cornered the poets.
24. **Double:Bill 13**
Sept. '65. Mimeo; 54pp.; 225 copies.
 An expensive cover – perhaps the best black & white item (pro, or otherwise) I've seen by Dan Adkins. "Special Fiction Issue" – ah, well... Then too, I mustn't forget, our first item by Stephen E. Pickering...
25. **Double:Bill 14**
Apr. '66. Mimeo; 38pp.; 200 copies.
 Of nine items listed on the contents page, only two were not columns; that proves something, I'm sure. We obtain Earl Evers as the third co-editor. Pickering succinctly examined Heinlein and his critics; and Alex Eisenstein's beautiful bacover belatedly illustrated Stricklin's "Fanicdotes I".
26. **Outworlds I**
Summer '66. Mimeo; 10pp.; 150 copies.
 Accept no substitutes; you're in it now.
- In keeping with the times, the above has been a nostalgic voyage through memorabilia past.
 (If 4½ pages to list 26 items frightens you... stick around five years. I may do it again.)

From William's Pen:

How I Walked and Talked With St. Louis Fandom

*...or, a stroll through
Konfession Korner with a
Self-Avowed '69er...*

Double:Bill 16 | February 1967

ST. LOUIS IN '69, that is... you nasty-minded people!

During my last couple of months at Dickie-Garbage AFB, I made several trips into St. Louis, attending two OSFA meetings, as well as spending the New Year's weekend helping (?) turn out **Odd #15**, and spending several enjoyable days there on my way home. Again, words fail me as I struggle to come up with a term applicable to a foolish service bhoys who persists in making 500+ mile round-trips, solely for the purpose of being in the company of faans... particularly in a '53 Chevy. Undoubtedly, it's all due to some infectious germ that attacked me during the run of the Tricon.

I'm home now, waiting patiently (hah!) to start my 18-month tenure in The Philippines... the Chevy has all but fallen into a little heap of nuts and bolts... and I'm wondering why the past two months have been so enjoyable, particularly in comparison to the first two years of my attempting single-handedly to Defend Our Country.

As Dave Hall would say... "He's in the Air Force!" ...and I'm a Trained Killer, too.

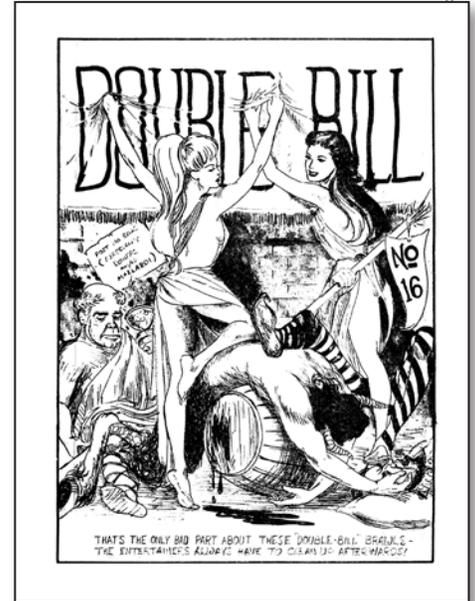
But be that as it may, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my uncomplaining hosts, Ray and Joyce Fisher, for putting me up, as well as putting up with me; their kindness was truly

awe-inspiring, and will long be remembered. And we can't forget the Other Two, who along with me almost crowded the

Fishers out of their not-huge 3-room apartment: Dave Hall and Paul Willis. Plus Mickey & Diana Rhodes, Becker Staus, Chester Malon, and the many others of St. Louis fandom who welcomed an exile into their midst – even though he wasn't a Pillar of anything in particular. Thanks, all.

Despite my somewhat negative enthusiasm over their not-so-wonderful structure, I'm quite sorry that I won't be able to attend the Nycon III. Yes, really. But I've been trying to get overseas for the past two years – almost made it just before the Loncon, too – and all things considered, I'm more than pleased with the Philippines... particularly in view of some of the alternatives I could have ended up with. **Double:Bill**... the Globe-Spanning Fanzine... what with me over there, Alex in Germany, and Mallardi and Evers somewhere in between. I trust that you are likewise.

–Bill Bowers



From William's Pen

Letters from the P.I.

“Through a Hazy Window... Obliquely”

Double:Bill 18 | March 1968

A LIEN CULTURES MEETING... sometimes violently, sometimes seemingly unawares; societies of vastly different heritages and conflicting thought-bases... half-merging, yet one never wholly assimilating the other; the powerful 'protecting' the weaker... but to whose ultimate advantage?

Science fiction – the field to which we allegedly pay homage – has in its more ambitious moments attempted to depict the conflicts and results, the joys and the sorrows, the wins and the losses... of two differing ways of life meeting head-on – usually with the assumption that since one side *has* to be the Good Guys, the others must of necessity be the Bad Guys.

Undoubtedly.

BACKDROP: I've been 'overseas' for the past year and a half. 'Overseas', of course, being a subjective term of reference... Any place in which one spends 18 months of his life should not be necessarily called 'Home' – that usually being a bit more than a term of reference – but by the same token, it cannot be referred to in the same fleeting terms as one uses to describe a place one visits or resides at for a day, a week, or even a month. Rather than a visitation... and with any degree of permanence made mockery of by the fact of an established DEROS... bearing in mind, perhaps we may be permitted to call such an 18-month period a transitory experience-gathering sidetrack, nestling between more lengthy life segments. (Which of those proves to be the most valuable, or the most enjoyable... is not *always* a moot point.)

In those 18 months I've experienced and learned a lot of things – as well as unlearning not a few from the previous 23-plus years – about the fabulous but not-so-glamorous world which I happen to inhabit here and now, rather than simply speculating on that which I think I might wish to reside in some misty and imaginary future. For it was at Checkpoint there on Clark – as I imagine it to be on any overseas military base, but particularly in Asia – that it became obvious that two differing subcultures swirled around that gate, producing an effect not far removed from being a maelstrom.

Of course, it is to be realized that for the necessities of space and time limitations, I must of needs-be focus widely varying shades of gray into a (hopefully) sharpened black-and-white print. Naturally the Filipino people bear not the slightest resemblance to science fictional BEMs – although the orientation lectures I received on landing there had me wondering for a while... And as the only Christianized (that being another somewhat misleading term of reference) Asian nation, perhaps the Philippines may not have been so unworldly to me as say the Japanese might be, to one based at Yokota. But that analogy doesn't work either, because the Japanese have at least a recognizable, and not all that unequal, technology, as well as a compatible standard of living.

But – and I trust that I do not become too deeply involved in my own semantics here – it is precisely the fact that these two cultures have had the most immediate impact on my life... it is the fact that they do meet in the grays that does

enable me to understand both... if only a little... and translate them into the blacks and whites which seem to be the only manner in which a lasting impression can be made on me.

.....
There's a rumor going around in the Far East that you now receive a Combat Ribbon for a tour of duty in the States. A rumor...?
.....

Still, to attempt the definitive summary of my tenure in the Philippines is, at this moment, more than slightly ridiculous. (I haven't been gone long enough to realize that I'm really back in the land of the Big PX... and Race Riots... and Assassinations.) True, when I had been over there all of a single month, I knew everything there was to know about the P.I. After all, what was so difficult in understanding a nation that is, at the minimum, fifty years behind the greatest society this poor earth has ever produced. Especially since I was a product of that Great Society.

...Somewhere around the sixth month, a few nagging doubts began to creep in. The Filipinos turned out not to be quite the simple souls they appeared to be on first impression: true. The Philippine Islands still looked very small and

insignificant on a world map. But the people, while they are considerably smaller than I, and apparently much lazier... they are not at all that insignificant.

Complexity and worth are not always measured in the technological sense. There *is* a human value to consider.

...and so, a year, plus six months.

The doubts are not so few now; and if anything, they are all the more nagging. I have had the singular pleasure of being stationed uncomfortably close to the most evident present showcase of this 'greatest society' of ours... the wounded and maimed which flowed in an unceasing stream through Clark Field's hospital, and the unreported casualties temporarily in transit which inhabited the warehouse in pallets of aluminum coffins, if not merely wrapped in semi-vacuumized plastic bags, as it was during the Tet Offensive.

I was stationed in a country that was 'liberated' during the Spanish-American War – a country that produced its own popularly-backed government *at that time* (the Saigon regime cannot make such a claim)... but said government was brutally crushed for the simple reason that it didn't quite fit in with Teddy Roosevelt's plans to produce a 'Showcase of Democracy' in the Far East – American Style. Naturally.



But later we did liberate these people from the Japanese... oh, yes! (... and had the Japanese kept their hands off Pearl Harbor, and limited themselves to the Philippines... what then? I sometimes wonder.) And now the Great Society has two major military bases (and half a dozen smaller) in that country, using them as a major staging point to produce another 'Showcase', eight hundred miles, due west.

For, By God, we shall bring these people Democracy (Made In America, By Americans, For Americans) and cram it down their rice-starved throats whether they want it or nay. (Whatever happened to the form Made in Athens?) ...and all the world shall be Christianized (as long as they can't read the Bible re: equality too easily), and wear Levis, while smoking their Salem menthol cigarettes, all the while bowing... or is that groveling in the dust I see... before the newly minted sign of Almighty God... the '\$'.

So much for the more pleasant things in life... a little this side of fantasy.

You must forgive me if I sound a bit bitter: I *am* an American, and proud to be one. I could never be a Filipino, and do not really desire such a come-down. Simply, what I am trying to do (and somewhat inadequately, I fear) is to express the fact that attempting to mold the rest of the world into Little Americas is a futile waste of our resources – material and physical – as well as being downright

impossible. The Asian peoples, judging from the limited cross-section I've observed in those 18 months, physically, mentally, and morally, find our system of government unworkable... and repulsive.

What is good and right for us is not, by extrapolation, quite so good and workable for them. If we must consider it our manifest destiny to save the world from itself, there are ways to do it with less strings attached than saying: "If you want what is ours to give, you must turn yourselves into our literal shadows... somewhat darker and smaller, but following our every move." All this theory has succeeded in doing is making Americans the most universally disliked (and surprisingly, the most pitied) race on earth.

And if there is anything that makes *me* more uncomfortable than being actively disliked, it *is* being pitied.

I think it obvious that we shall never win in Vietnam militarily. (Quote: "Anyone who commits American forces to a land war in Asia is an idiot." Unquote. Gen. Douglas MacArthur.) And we shall never win politically with the present regime in Saigon... it most definitely is without popular support.

The Paradox: We cannot withdraw without losing our honor (a valuable commodity over there... but here?). But I'll be damned if I relish the thought of dying with honor, while being pitied by two-thirds of the human race... To be, or not to be...

.....
Remember the Pueblo!
.....

THE NUMBER 18 was mentioned several times in the preceding sermon... Welcome to *Double:Bill #18* – our special combination Sixth Annish / Resurrection Issue.

D:B had seemingly faded away into that never-never land where old fanzines go to collate themselves. But Lo!, I have returned (as I said I would, nigh unto four years ago) to Civilian Status, and have managed to revitalize ~~the Old Man~~ the

magazine. If you would like to see it remain that way... there exists a vacuum that can be filled by articles, reviews for "*Stardust*", and, most certainly, Artwork. Hint/hint/hint.

Hope you enjoy this issue... it's been a long time a'coming...

–Bill Bowers



From William's Pen

When you love, when you care...

Double:Bill 19 | January 1969



IT MUST BE that I am growing old. Or perhaps it is merely that my cynicism has at last personified. But when – after a comparatively rustic and restrained Holiday season in the Philippines last year – I find it a rather frightening and cold shock to be thrust so abruptly into the commercially oriented, garishly and disgustingly artificial Spirit... of what?

Now I realize that flanges concerning the lack of the *true* spirit are as perennial (and just about as effective) as New Year's Resolutions (see Page 16), and as old as Charles Dickens (Page 13). However, this happens to be *my* Year of Realization & Truth, so please bear with me. (By next year's end I'll probably have found my niche as a Social Security Number, and be securely enmeshed in the blissfully ignorant rat race that 99.9% of my co-workers are presently treadmill-ing... and we won't have to go through this again.)

I believe (he said, originally) that this mood of wonderment that is on me goes much deeper than the labelling and packaging of Holiday Joy. All one has to do is realize that what the so-labelled 'holiday season' seems to jell, currently, is in reality a year 'round phenomenon... is to pick up any large city newspaper. If it doesn't remind you of throngs of shoppers stampeding and stomping on one another's feet, without so much as an "Excuse me", I miss my mark. Stories have become so commonplace concerning muggings and riots, extortions and petty midnight burglaries, that a rape taking place outside of Mallardi's apartment last year wasn't even mentioned in the local paper. A Season of Good Tidings. Let's face it, today the only method assured of front-page coverage is by route of assassinating a prominent figure – and even that lasts but briefly as the mass-conscious-

ness of an uncaring nation assimilates it into a collective unconsciousness – say: So what's new... and good will toward *all* men.

It almost certainly seems that the nation is going the down and dirty route, does it not? Still an effort in the direction of impartiality (Why?) must be made. News and imaginative versions thereof, are reported virtually instantly from the dark and damp corners of the world. Some of it actually sees print in a vaguely recognizable version of the original; I kid you not. So maybe the recent flurry of Crime in the Streets and High Places isn't such a new thing, but merely the tangible results of vastly improved newsgathering facilities, reporting what has always been there. This is a nice theory and very comforting, but it's not mine. I just can't accept it.

Assuming that you are in agreement with the thesis that this nation, this world, this race of self-proclaimed *reasoning* beings... that all of these are in perilous seas... (and if you're not, I'd be very interested in which particular mind-deadener you're high on; it must be good!). Accepting this, grant me my theory that the next two or three years will be extremely vital in determining the future course of mankind – whether we become irreversibly enmeshed in a strictly technologically-based civilization peopled by mindless androids using green lucre as plasma... or whether with a little hope and a godawful amount of work we might *possibly* make the first faltering step in the direction of an individualistic, but functioning society of caring *human* beings. We can not afford to wait until 1984, people! At the rate things are going now, by then there'll be nothing left except grubby, long-haired hopheads groveling in the dust, grooving their (delightful, admittedly) music

while a mushroom cloud provides the backdrop. Man, this picture turns me off... like now! I like to dream (somewhat wistfully, I'm afraid) of being alive then, and having friends who know where it's *really* at, rather than drifting off into a fantastically pictured, yet thoroughly unreal and unworkable world.

Now, you say, this is all very nice and maybe even desirable, but grandiose schemes in the direction of Utopia are a dime a dozen... so what makes *yours* workable? I truly wish that I could say that it is, that if you follow a certain logical, cold-scientific-fact formula, you will be guaranteed happiness and will prosper for all of the New Years of your life. But I don't really know... I have a frustrating habit of dreaming dreams that fall considerably beyond my own grasp, although I Try. Therefore do I have the gall, the *right* to inflict them on you? Damn right I do!

Several years ago (in *F&SF*) Theodore Sturgeon had a marvelous story – the first of a trilogy regrettably uncompleted – with the beautiful title of “When You Care, When You Love”. These six simple words, I sincerely believe, pin down the crux of the nameless horror currently tearing our once-proud nation asunder. There are various pegs on which to hang the blame – Joan Baker calls it ‘apathy’; Connie Reich refers to the ‘superficialities’ predominant in our society; I call it the ‘zombie syndrome’. But in the long run, they all say the same thing: That if *today* you can watch from your panoramic picture window as a total stranger is being mugged, and not go to his aid – then *tomorrow* you will surely stand with the same uncommitting, uncaring, uninvolved look on your face as your mate screams from a burning room, or as the government of *your* choice sends your only child off to certain death in some future unexplained, unjustified ‘Police Action’! (Or has that already come to pass?) Human sensibilities are a notoriously fragile object – and one to be nurtured and watched over with great care. Once bruised, they inevitably harden to granite-like proportions, and are rarely ever able to be thawed out. No matter how intensely you might desire...

We need to *care* about our fellow man – it is certainly hard in some cases, but we must make the effort if we are to ask for the same consideration in return. We need to care about the objects that are beautiful and useful and thoroughly irreplaceable in this marvelous country that we have – although we seem hell-bent on trying to destroy

that beauty... the people, we may not kill with our bare hands, but of their murder we are literally guilty, by reason of apathy. And please consider the once proud forests that towered above this most endowed of nations on earth... the once sparkling lakes and streams that are now nothing more than stinking cesspools, fed and nourished by the crap of a nation of overfed, overprotected, mindless animals, who have not even the solitary redeeming feature of providing edible food for *other* animals. Consider this, the next time you go through a national park; their days are numbered.

When you care, then you *do* love. Love is a four-letter word which regrettably seems to have degenerated into a strictly sexual connotation. Love is – at least idealistically – something that should be much greater and more encompassing than just this one aspect. Love of a work of beauty, an object produced with caring skill, a person who does his or her thing extremely well... these are undoubtedly maudlin and sentimental weaknesses – at least so would our strong and virile society have us believe. You see, when you care, when you love something or someone, you have to give a part of yourself; this is not an easy thing to do (although there are happily a few delightful people in the world who seem to have enough love for all) for most, and you always run the risk of losing forever that which you have given. Ask me; I make a habit of it.

When you love, when you care...

I *am* an AMERICAN!; I am inordinately proud of being such. It is a rare and wondrous thing to be a citizen of the greatest nation this poor world has ever known. (Which may be an unwise admission; Patriotism and apathy do not seem capable of coexistence. And Patriotism is currently in definite disfavor.) And if I sometimes spout forth half-assed statements, sounding bitter and cynical, it is simply because I *do* happen to care about, and I *do* Love this country of mine; I'm trying to keep it going, the best I can.

...It's just that sometimes I get so damned disgusted with the potentialities we've ignored, the wealth (in terms of manpower, as well as material) that we've tossed down a bottomless sewer, the failure of being able to communicate with the walking, talking zombies that watch the **Beverly Hillbillies** behind the newspulp of Ann Landers – I get so disgusted (and I'm lecturing myself as well here) that I have to say *something*, or go out of my skull. This fannish world just happens to be the media closest at hand.

There seems to be one insurmountable barrier to caring, between people who are not nominally thought of as strangers, as well as those that are. This is a little item that we refer to as Communication. If we only knew how to go about it!

A rather unlikely (and not at all logical) sequence of events have acted to produce this inquest, not an easy task considering the amount of inertia I generate. The unbelievable relief of getting out after 4 years under the military machine, only to fall prey to commercial opportunists, undesirable but necessary to feed my face; *'The Desperate Nuh'*, a small dittoed one-shot from the *Granfalloon* girls; the response of a few people to my last editorial – some do care; and a rather enjoyable book from Piers Anthony, **OMNIVORE**:

...so much of man's vaunted intelligence is required simply to transmit and receive information. Each of us has a wall of isolation, of ignorance to transcend. We have no direct communication, and so we have to master complex verbal codes and symbolic interpretations, merely to get our thoughts and needs across. With such second-hand contact, no wonder such a powerful cerebral backstop is necessary.

It may well be that we'll never be able to do away with 'second-hand' communication, but perhaps with a little caring and meaningful involvement, we might possibly be able to lower the barrier just a notch. I think this is a notable goal to

pursue in 1969, and maybe next year we'll have a little bit more of the True Holiday Spirit.

I'm going to try my damndest.

...which will have to end this round, except for one not so minor Footnote: With all due respect to the apparently sizable group of fans I feel sure will strongly disagree with me, I can't really see any real movement toward improved communications via the hallucinogenic High Road. I had my round with pot a few years ago, and freely admit that it was a pleasant, and even enjoyable experience. I tried it, I'm glad I did, but it's simply not my bag. As far as I can see, it is the ultimate in copping out... a nice easy way to go, if you haven't the guts to take the world like it really is.

You know, I feel more than a little sympathy for those who have to use artificial stimuli to 'broaden their horizons'. It may take some hard work and a lot of sweat on my part, but I like to think that anything I do accomplish in this life will be by my own hand. And I can testify that to do one's own thing by one's own abilities may not be so colorful as a psychedelic spurt of meaningless symbolism, but is definitely a lot more soul-satisfying.

Harlan Ellison has said: "Why should I clown around with all the artificial scenes when I've been on a continual high since the day I was born."

I know the feeling.

Do you?

...may you always have the Best of Everything,
BILL BOWERS

from D:B Jr. – "...or, Things we Forgot to put in the Magazine, proper...

1968

BOTH Bowers & Mallardi want to take this opportunity of expressing a Word of Appreciation to Ted White. As some of you may know, we've had our share of differences – perhaps that's what happens when you have two strong personalities, with the third caught somewhere in between. But be that as it may... it takes a Big Man to renounce a position as Fan Guest of Honor... both to dramatize the value of TAFF... and to give the TAFF winner a position of prominence which has heretofore been sadly lacking.

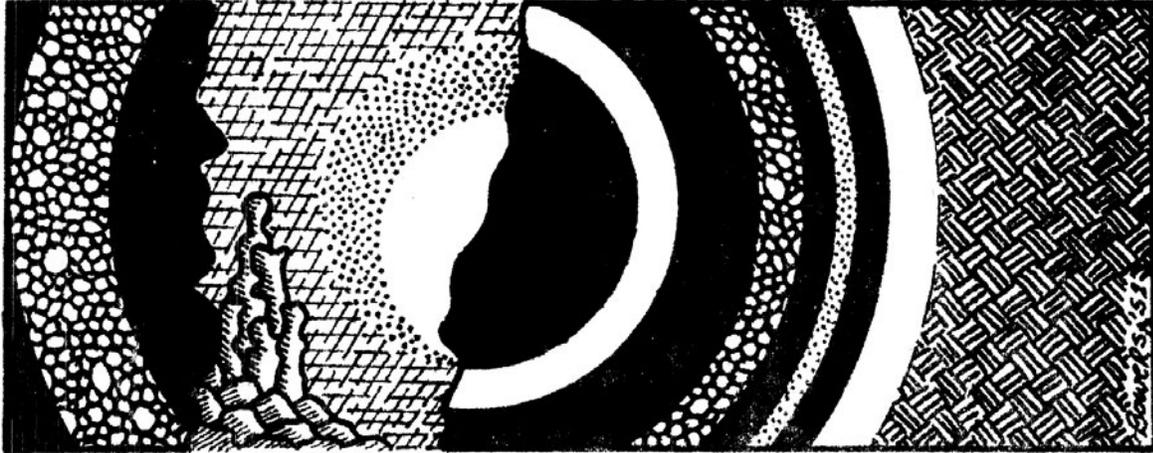
We too, strongly believe in the reason for, as well as the actuality that is the **TransAtlantic Fan Fund**. A dollar, or two, or three, from a number of people – it adds up, and gives us a chance to meet someone we've admired for many years—by mail.

It's a little late for this race (although we don't as yet know the winner) – but perhaps that 15% from the **Symposium** will make next year's race a little easier for all concerned. That's our hope... and one major reason we're doing it this year, when perhaps our own lives would be a little more stable next year.

You're a Good Man, Ted White, in spite of your bark.

.....
For future TAFF Candidates, we'd like to suggest: HARRY WARNER, JR. & TERRY JEEVES...
.....

IMPRESSIONS IV



IMPRESSIONS IV

Double:Bill 19 | *January 1969*

...as I cringe here on the Dark Side of the Sun – dreaming of that which *might* have been – I remember
(huge choking lumps of Pain; small jewels of Beauty and Love)
the Year of the Jackpot (again) : When will it, please God!, end?
Through my twisted, grasping fingers, the time grains of yet another year filter
– there will never again (not so much as once) be another Year of Our Lord:

1968

(Be thankful for small favors, no matter how small.)

You know, I find it hard not to believe that it was My Year
– a Century fractured by 4 have I resided on the belching ball:
the Green, Green Hills of Mother Earth. (I dream a lot.)
A Quarter of the years of *my* century... and what have I accomplished.
A Lament which is mine, all mine, I'll grant it to no other.

1968: It was not, in all respects, a Good year.

Nine months, two days = the Philippines = the last half of an Experience...
which began (and almost ended) in January, bloody horrible January...

– I remember (does anyone else?) words dipped in living horror: the Tet Offensive and bodies (the supply of coffins proved inadequate) flowing through our terminal in a stream so constant that images formed of a giant womb back in the States churning out a continual river of cannon fodder, wrapped in semi-vacuumized plastic bags (transparent) and the corpses (not grinning, these) mutely asking: Why?

Give me now an answer, you who condone this political farce that takes the very lives of my comrades:
Why?

Why does the Pueblo (*I remember*) still sit serenely, 11 months later, in the harbor of a 4th-rate naval power

(Have we no pride; no national sense of dignity, that we struggle to 'save' [unwanted; despised] a foreign people while our own boys rot under the glaring lights of slant-eyed Inquisitors

– Go on now, read your Dr. Fu Manchu; Enjoy! Enjoy!)

We were ready, we were willing, we were damn able... we *wanted* to go and get those boys back (rather than continually passing napalm West; corpses East);

– but we didn't; we were not allowed to do so. Why?

How can I forget a Man, senselessly shot in Tennessee

– another in San Francisco;

not the man his brother (R.I.P.) was; but a Man, nonetheless.

Sitting Ten Thousand miles from home, I read the ***Stars and Stripes***, I listened to AFRTS

– and I wondered and I shuddered and I thought: My God! What have they *done* to the Land of the Free, the Home of the Brave?

(...and I dreamed dreams of Australia and beautiful, beautiful Thailand.)

Somehow (I often wonder why) I survived and Came Home

“When you're going to San Francisco...”

Labor Day... and sat at Travis: sixty-odd miles from where my people were doing their thing...

Although all I heard on radio was of Riots in the Street.

...I came home to the Elections of '68 – a farcical and suicidal exercise in redundancy – and I wondered if *this* was what I had spent 3 years, 9 months and 4 days of my Life for: Defending my right to choose between two such unappealing, uninspiring men – with a third spectre lurking frighteningly close in the backdrop.

...and I dreamed more frequently of Australia and Thailand, Free Land.

...but the Man Most Qualified to Lead America won (or so they tell us) and now we must give him the chance to prove his mettle, and hope that the nation will survive, after a fashion, until '73, and that then a True Man of the People can hurdle the light-year-high obstacles of political machines and bigots. We have no other choice.

1968 – a year almost too generous in its failings:

The death of Friends – Lew Grant, Ron Ellik – and others less well known by me, but well respected men; the gruesome spectre of Man killing his brother in senseless charades that bring not condemnations, but mere apathy; the personal pangs of leaving a place that *had* been home for 18 months, but which was never really mine – and looming over All, the Horror:

The black shrouded, skull-faced spirit of those in the flush of youth, in the prime of manhood, who have fallen on the battlefields of an undeclared War, a continued exercise in unabated bloodletting which makes no sense at all in its *present* form... except perhaps in the mystical way the money-grubbing, uncaring Political mind rationalizes our 'commitments' as falling sequentially before our duty to *help* our fellow men rather than further depriving him of: national pride, food, and his very life.

1968 – the Year of the Grub gnawing ever more successfully at the bulwarks of this Coffin of a World.

But even in the blackest scratchboard... if one has the patience and the desire and the willingness, one can painstakingly etch a few stray beams of radiance and Hope...

...eight beautiful days in May: Hong Kong – a monument to what can be accomplished by a skillful blending of efficiency *and* industry, under a government that *cares*...
...two journeys (June and August) to Bangkok, the most splendid and grandiose of Cities... The home of the Thai, the friendliest and most beautiful people in the world. It was there that I fell in love with an entire Race of People...
...three expeditions (and what tales they be!) into the mountains of Northern Luzon... to Baguio, Summer Capitol of the Philippines. A marvelously *clean*, rustic little town filled with people who haven't quite yet realized that GI's were aliens to be suckered and mugged, rather than welcomed and cared for. The blessed coolness... an exhilarating relief from the hot, humid, stinking plains on which Clark Air Base and Angeles City squat in their own excrement.

and throughout run thoughts of a Girl, and that from which I fled for reasons now unclear...
and the lonely Nights and endless Days are filled with memories only,
tender and bittersweet.

Travis; then San Francisco International: I'd missed the Baycon, but I was Home! Ohio – and **Double:Bill 18**... it intrigued me, trapped me, and once more we are off on the fannish merry-go-round; this time hopefully as a doer, rather than a mere bystander.

Octocon; Philcon – old friends too long (since Tricon) missed – and many, many new. Strange thoughts of cringing in corners while midnite invocations are hurled over our heads (Hi! Dale, Tim, Dennis...) the PgHLANGE Party and Connie Reich reading my palm, telling my fortune (...all I've got to do is survive until I'm thirty, but that may take some doing.)

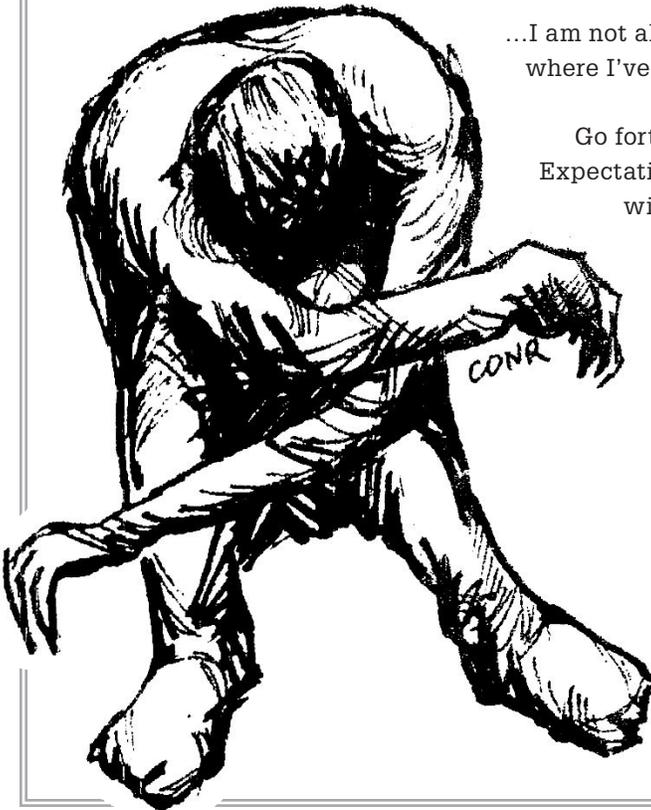
Year's End: Man has circled the Moon (I still can't believe...) fulfilling a dream as old as the first who Wondered at the Stars in the Night – and mine as long as I've had breath. The Pueblo crew is free (but late, much too late) and our Ship is apparently gone forever.

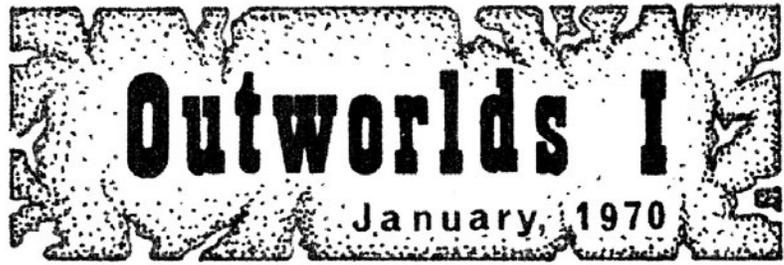
Year's End... and there is Joan. There is Hope, again.

...I am not all that I want to be; I am not at all certain
where I've been or where I'm going... but I say this unto You:

Go forth into the New Year gladly and with Great Expectations – taking care to be prepared for the pitfalls that will surely come. Take a little Good with the Bad, and try each day (how hard it is! I know.) to do a little kindness toward your fellow Man. He is lonely and locked inside an inconel-clad shell not of his own making, but he wishes You the Best of Everything.

paalam,
BILL BOWERS; an American





...from William's Pen

Outworlds I | January 1970

.....
"You are old, Father William," the young man cried.
Southey, THE OLD MAN'S COMFORTS...
.....

A FIRST ISSUE tends to be a bitch, but seems to be an unavoidable prelude to Second Issues, and so on. I've had too many such animals since *Abanico #1* made its unresounding debut in September of '61, and have thus far avoided coming up with a cut-and-dried-and-passable-on formula for instant success in such endeavors. Transferring a clear-cut mental idea to a clear-cut mimeograph stencil all too often gets bogged down in transit. Would that the fingertips were in complete empathy with the brain!

Editorial Policy

...usually proves to be a bore, and as such, should be dispatched with as quickly as possible. It obviously is much better to demonstrate by example than by promise... one's intent, dreams, and fantasies in a fanzine. But as successful as I have been in avoiding the obvious in times past, you may well be right in accepting this with a small grain of salt.

...back when the world and I were both so young, the small, concise, and fairly frequent fanzine was the rule. This was before that 'apa-gap' of the mid '60s, when, other than the ten-issue run of

Xero, the 'Symposium' issues of *Double:Bill*, and a few other isolated cases – the 30-page fanzine was the rule, not the exception. The small fanzine never completely disappeared, but was almost lost nevertheless... in the ensuing onslaught of the 'giants'. Seven or eight years ago, the mere thought of high school students emitting not-uninteresting, near 100-page globs of material with such distressing frequency was more unthought of, than it was accepted as a possibility. Perhaps it's not completely ironic that the new (and in some quarters, welcome) return to the small, compact zine has originated in the same city [St. Louis; *Grils*] that was also responsible for, in large measure, the attack of the 'giants' [the revived *Odd*].

.....
...whereas, when in the course of fannish events, it doth seem Right and Necessary that a fan editor should issue forth a new entrant into the Fanzine Maelstrom – said faned having had some small experience in these strange proceedings beforehand (and being still willing to try it One More Time) – it behooves him to set forth, so that All May Know, Ye Olde Editorial Policy...

...if only for his own personal edification...

Doing such in as Pretentious a manner as possible...

...such being the Faanish Way, an Olde Established Tradition, and thus to be honored above all such mundane considerations as Good Taste and Modesty.

As one undoubtedly associated with a fairly large, and not-so-frequent fanzine, I suppose it is rather pretentious to believe that I can manage to bring out a relatively small *and* regular entry. Therefore I do not promise such; I rather shall demonstrate, and succeed... or fail, and never be heard from again. So be it.

Rest your weary bones, oh ancient one!

From October, 1962, all the way to September, 1969, is a long time. For a fanzine, anyway. I suppose a few tears might be shed over **Double:Bill**'s departure; and I imagine a few cheers of "they're finally gone" will echo in the vast, disinterested sea of our mailing list. In time, I suppose, even I will shed a few tears in print. At the present, if you're sorry, I'll accept full responsibility for the axe; if otherwise, well... what can I say? It was a ball... in spite of everything!

OUTWORLDS: Second Series; Volume I, Number 1. Whole Number I; Genuine First Issue; Collector's Edition [accept no substitutes]. January, 1970.

Combining: **Abanico**; **Bayta**; **Silver Dusk**; **Star*Dust**; one half of **Double:Bill**.

Produced bimonthly for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, and Directed by:

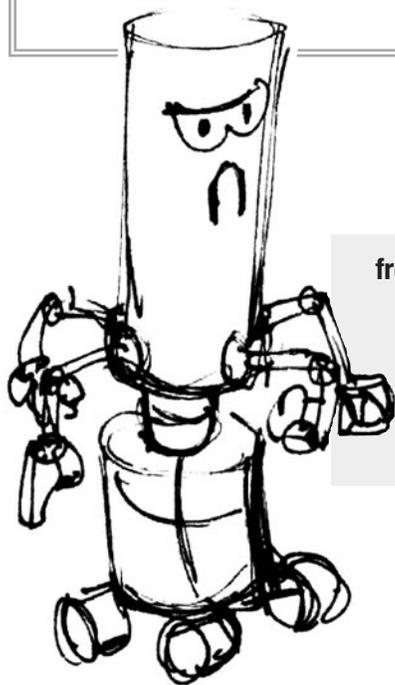
BILL & JOAN BOWERS: P.O. Box 87, Barberton, Ohio 44203

Very Expensive 6-S blue stencils from Gestetner; Illustrations [for the most part] via Gestefax; Mimeography on the **D:B** 360 Gestetner-with-a-cracked-drum. The typer [the one we refer to as our 'baby', much to the distress of most relatives] is an IBM Selectric, utilizing 'Adjutant' and '*light italic*' elements.

Paper of record is: 20 lb. Duplitone 8-1/2x11 green. All typos courtesy of our Miss Take.

This is the 36th Production of the recently renamed Outworlds Enterprises, Uninc.;

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from **Outworlds 18**, October 1973

Joan referred to it [**Outworlds**] as "Owww..." for a while, which made me grit MY teeth! (It's almost as bad as "sci-fi", which has still got to be the most horrible sound in existence...)
Actually, while it is permissible to refer to the mag as "**OW**" in print, it is *pronounced Outworlds*... always!

Konfessions of a Rapidograph Addict

Outworlds I | January 1970

I can't imagine the Bowers back cover with any of its elements removed or shifted around; each curve and circle seems to be absolutely essential as a balance to something else, and the extreme contrast of shading techniques and positioning of black areas creates an extra third dimension impression in the right places.

Harry Warner, Jr.

Bowers' back cover is an extremely impressive blend of techniques. I've never associated Bill with this style before, but now that I view his example with its various shifts, I can't conceive of anyone else doing a more successful attempt. Was Bill ever influenced by the Dillons?

Mike Deckinger

The two quotations above are excerpted from the letter column of **Granfalloon #8**, and comment on an effort of mine appearing behind the previous issue.

AT TIMES, I find myself labeled an 'artist' despite my fervent cries to the contrary. ...and receive requests from other faneds for contributions of 'art'. I must confess that this, along with comments such as the above, are flattering (we are in this thing for egoboo, after all, aren't we?), particularly since they come as a continual shock. Then, in moments of weakness, I make rash promises that, as often as not, I find myself literally unable to honor.

Then there are those who wish me to explain that which I have produced. As one example, Richard Geis commenting on the cover of **Granfalloon #6**: *The striking Bowers cover was obviously symbolic as hell, but what does it mean?* I wish I knew.

...and so, for all you 'artistic souls' [as Mallardi terms it] out there, here it is... the never-before-told story of how a small-town boy grew up to become a fannish artist-in-demand. (Well, somewhat...)

Background: Two years of high school art, taken mainly as a 'skate' course, dominated by an aging lady who seemingly loved my abstracts, but firmly discouraged any efforts toward, or any queries on *how* to draw 'realistically'. "Anyone can draw realistically: only a gifted few can create *meaningful* abstracts!" Bull! is what I should have said, but I didn't talk that way. Then. ## An apprenticeship, occupying portions of the first two of three-and-a-half years as a mechanical draftsman. Which left me with an assortment of templates, and an unarguable urge to construct everything within pre-set boundaries. (You may have noticed.)

Contributing factors: Color-blindness, which leads me to visualize in b&w, but not to the exclusion of the intermediate greys. ## A passion for much – not all – of the work of Virgil Finlay, which, despite the 'critics', remains unshaken to this day. ## Eventually finding myself to be a uniformed number, stationed twenty miles outside of K.C.,

Miss-ur-ey, where I 'worked' swings (4pm till midnight). I, being sans car, and with no bus service to the City, and at the time not inclined to indulge [this being pre-P.I., baby!] [other than at proper occasions, like cons] found myself with time on my hands. Wishing to get this ghastly burden off my paws... I began to doodle. It was during this period – mid-'66 – that the item referenced by Harry & Mike was etched. [An oddity: With all due respect to those two, it is perhaps my least favorite of my published items. But this was well before the Ace Specials and DV brought the Dillons forcibly to my delighted attention, Mike.] I met Ray Fisher later that year, and he was the first to actively encourage me.

I am, by nature, and among other things, nervous. I have sat in barracks the world 'round, making my little cross-hatches, while GI's leaned over my shoulder, saying, "I wish I could do that... but I haven't the patience." It don't take what you call patience, me boy. It takes being just a little crazy; having *something* to get out of you that you can't say. How/Why/I dunno... but often it's great therapy!

After promising CONR something for her folio, I attempted to fink out; then I received the following, which [lacking modesty], I firmly feel should go here:

I know exactly what you mean by this mental block – I've suffered it often, especially after not using a pen for a while. However, I have also recovered. I'll let you in on some of the secrets, but first let me tell you why: You have a number of wonderful talents, one of which is most certainly writing; I have no doubt at all that it is your first love. Nevertheless, you are a draftsman, par excellence and not without a heavy streak of valuable imagination. Kid, you have things to say: It's harder to say them pictorially than journalistically, I agree. But I am firmly of the opinion that the pictorial effect is more immediate and effective (though possibly not as lasting) than the written word. Why give up one medium when you can have BOTH!???! CHRIST, WHAT A WASTE!

Anyhoo – here's a method to give the ole mental block the heave-ho: First, invest some time in going to the library somewhere & getting a book of somebody's prints, sculpture,

painting, or somesuch thing; get something from someone that turns you on. Get one of Dali, Giacometti, Turner, or any one of the greats. Don't read it: Look for a long time at the illustrations. Take a few notes on the works that you really like. (Drawn notes, not written.)

Then get into a bad mood! Or a good mood, or anything in between that you work well in, and grab an old tablet and pencil. Right. Pick up the pencil. Put on some powerful music. Now sketch. Sketch freely, very loosely, without the idea of getting any kind of a finished drawing. This is a loosening up. It is absolutely necessary: You have to get your hand used to the feel of the tool again. Spend a spare hour (ha, what's that!) or so just scrawling around. Draw anything in the room: Turn on the TV, and take a fast glance, draw what you saw without looking back at the set. Start getting subjective.

As soon as you begin to tire, put the stuff away. Don't go back for a day or two. Then start playing with ideas. Force yourself to look back at the sketches you did. If nothing there germinates an idea, try some strangeness like a satire of a modern crucifixion: Modern man crucified to time, to a clock. This is an easy one. You are largely concerned with the human condition in regards to the blacker side of the human race: The urge to violence and selfishness. Find a way to express it, in a face, a design, with texture, line, shape.

Feeling better? I've done all of these things – not necessarily in that order, and certainly not always at the same time. You might try going through your clipping file (you DO keep a clipping file?) for inspiration, but whatever you do, the hour or more of easy, swinging sketchy warmup is absolutely necessary; the hand has to be tuned up, just like anything that's been lying around collecting cobwebs. You should never never NEVER let yourself get out of practice again! You should be boiled in corflu and india ink (pelikan, of course) for letting it go this long.

[Connie Reich Faddis]

Will it work? Is the suspense killing you? I honestly don't know yet. But if you're curious, there's only one way to find out, and that's by ordering a copy of the **PgHLANGE Art Portfolio** NOW from Connie. \$1.50, pre-pub., if you hurry!

Random Thoughts on a Fanzine Review Column

Outworlds I | January 1970

HE WHO TOUCHES a fanzine, touches the life-blood of a fan. Over this nondescript collection of stapled pages endless hours have been sweated: First, in the act of obtaining... pleading, begging for... material; then in the creative act of throwing all these unrelated things together... in one fashion or another. Money is unimportant; the days spent over the not-so-enchanted duplicator are not in vain: Egoboo is Ghod, and LoC is misbegotten son.

He who *opens* a fanzine... really oughtta know better!

Just what is it that makes a fanzine review column a necessity – and apparently, to many it is – when it usually is skimmed over only for a mention of your very own fanzine? Is it tradition, force of habit, or simply the desire to fill up a few more pages... that leads many a fanzine editor to entreat an Outsider to review (somewhat) competing fanzines within the pages of his own publication? Why is it that other than Buck Coulson, and damn few others... why is it that most neophyte fanzine reviewers rarely last out the first year? The fatality rate is certainly awe-inspiring! [Isn't the 'payment' enough? Does it become futile trying to keep up with the never-ending stream? Does that 'new' crop of fanzines lose their flavor when left on the bedpost, overnight?]

And just what *is* a 'fanzine review column'? Is it merely a listing of the Table of Contents, with perhaps a passing nod to one of the 'Name' contributors? Is it a never-ending exercise in mutual back-slapping: "You review my fanzine,



and I'll review yours."? Is it only a manner in which to obtain free copies in return for a 3- or 4-line 'mention'? Or should one even attempt to provide criticism... as valid as any criticism... is it worth it?

Are ratings – be they numeric, asterisks, or obscenities – necessary to provide a basis between reviewer and audience? Are Coulson-short reviews preferable to long and intricate critiques, or Doll Gilliland just 'talking' to you from the pages of *The WSFA Journal*? And would there be any possible benefit other than that of self-preservation, to be gained from operating behind a pseudo-mask?

Should a reviewer who *does* attempt to approach his thankless task in some seriousness, attempt to mention every issue of every publication he is fortunate... or unfortunate... enough to receive? Is a fanzine reviewer any more exempt from clarity and good taste than a book reviewer? Should our hypothetical reviewer even strive for objectivity... or dismiss it as futile from the beginning?

These, then, are some random Questions. Surprisingly enough, I don't claim to be able to furnish answers suitable to all. Still, it gives me a podium from which to begin:

**THE NAKED FAN: Discourses on a
Subculture, and its Outpourings**

which will commence in a near future *Outworlds*.

inchoate:

Going the Exponential Route

Outworlds 3.1 | January 1972



... **A**ND AS I WAS SAYING, just before I went down for the count...

I have to say it – 1971 was a Very Bad Year. Beginning with Joan’s miscarriage in February... through the mimeo breaking down in the middle of *Outworlds Eight*... and culminating with our separation in September... It had me down for a while, yes, but I’ve taken my pulse, and decided that I’ll live, after all. (Besides, what would the Boy Wonder do if I up and gafiated...?)

The separation may, or may not, be permanent. It was Joan’s decision, and where we go from here is largely up to her. She had what she considered valid reasons – and I would be going against everything I profess to believe in, if I denied her the chance to attain what *she* wants out of life. We’re still friends, (which IS important to me... but causing some consternation among those ‘who know’), and see each other often (she helped me run off the better half of this issue)... and had some long talks. You can’t sum up anything involving two human beings – particularly a man and a woman – neatly, I guess – but if there’s one ‘thing’ perhaps it’s that we’re too much alike in temperament; we never had the proverbial knock-’em-down arguments that look to be the rule in marriage. Perhaps we both need someone a little bit ‘stronger’ – Joan for security, and me... to keep me in line. I have done a considerable amount of self-examination, once I worked myself out of the self-pity phase (the male ego is truly a fragile thing; HE is the one who will leave, if it is to be done), and am working under a new set of priorities.

Let me say this: I’m none too sure of my feelings toward Joan... whether they are deeper than that of friendship... but regardless of the way things work out, she’s a Good Person, and deserves every chance to attain what she wants most out of this (one?) life. As do you... As do I.

Joan is currently working at the Cleveland Public Library, and has (natch!) become the resident s.f. expert, wielding Vast Powers as to what is to be bought... I’m sure she’d enjoy getting some fanzines – it’s irritating to both of us, but she WAS a fan before I met her, and still is. Her address is on page 24, if you’d like to get in touch.

-o0o-

It’s possible that you may have noticed that this is not *Outworlds Nine*; it is, however, *Outworlds 3.1*. All things considered, I felt that a fresh start was in order, and even (quite seriously) considered changing the title; I couldn’t find a new one that would adequately replace the household word that I had. As it was, I just about went the exponential route, i.e. *Outworlds3 #1*, but decided that would be carrying things a bit far. (Incidentally, the significance of the ‘3’ is that this is the 3rd first issue I’ve published under this title – I like it. The decimal portion of the counter will carry the actual issue number; next time it will be ‘3.2’. That’s it...)

I consider this to be a brand-new fanzine; you are at liberty to call it a direct continuation of the ‘old’ *OW*, or most anything you wish to. *Outworlds* (the Second) was getting a bit out of my control – size-wise, circulation-wise, money-wise. I half

suspect that HAD I managed to get out the super 9/10 combo, it would have finished *me and* the zine off. Circumstances dictate that definite limits be placed... and enforced. (After all, my standard cliché at 'the office' is that Americans automatically equate increased size to increased quality, and here I was going the same route.) Hence, an arbitrary figure has been selected: No issue will be larger than 24 pages. But there should be more frequent output...

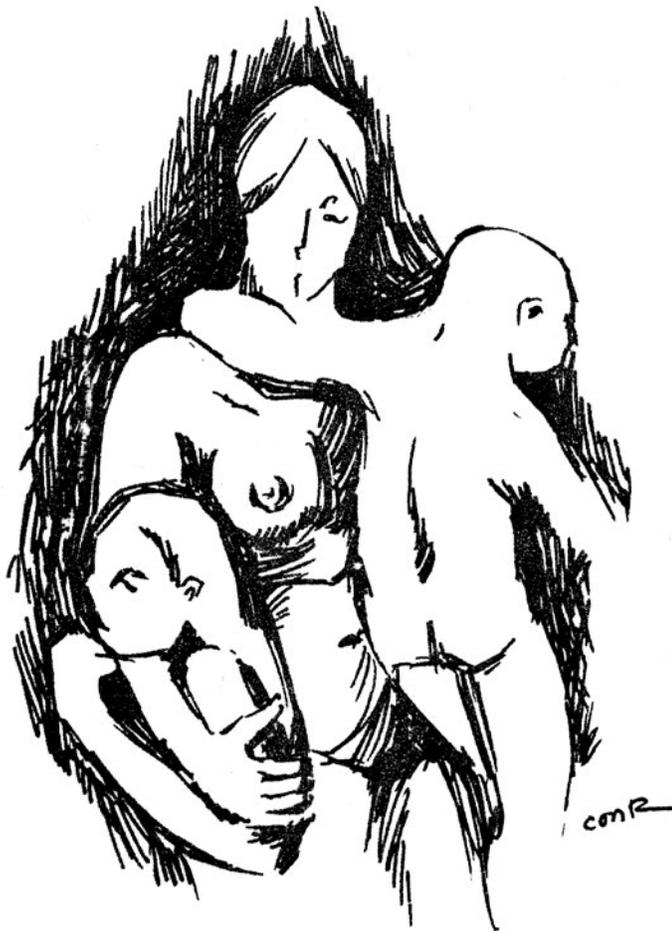
To put it mildly, I have a nice backlog of material, built up for the mythical anniversary issue(s). Therefore the next 2 or 3 issues should be out before too long. There is no way that I can catch up with the correspondence at this late date... and I haven't had enough nerve (or, honestly, time) to write to the columnists and the 'faithful' art-people. I do hope that you will believe that the silence was unintentional, and accept my apologies... and let me know if we're still on

speaking terms. Some of the items on hand will be dated; this is inevitable – but not, I think, Fatal.

-o0o-

On a personal note... if I can get around all the paperwork, I plan on starting (with the Spring Quarter; almost 11 years late) Evening College, working toward a two-year thingie in Commercial Art. The goal is to have it done by the time of Australia in '75! ...and before the year is out, I plan on buying a place to live (right now I'm into condominiums) – this nonsense of having the 2nd place in a row sold out from under me has to cease. The G.I. Bill will take care of the schooling; the other will require some economizing. Which means that I won't be making that many cons, for some time to come. Sigh. Well, I guess if the Glicksohns could make the Pilgrimage down here to Mecca, so can others...

In the meantime... onward!



INChoate:

Outworlds, Redefined (with New & Improved Goals)

Outworlds Series 3 #5 | November 1972

THIS IS BEING PRODUCED as I struggle out from under my second bout with bronchitis within the last month-and-a-half. Never having been the healthiest of individuals anyway, such things tend to wipe me out... which is why you've got this now... rather than a month ago when it was 90% done. So goes the 'schedule'!

*I am enclosing \$2.00 for a subscription to **Outworlds**. I suppose that means I'll get **Outworlds 3.5, IV-ONE, IV-ONE AND A HALF**, and **EPSILON/ALPHA**...*

Phyrne Bacon

Well, Phyrne, would you believe...

Yes, fans of the status quo, ye old dependable **OW** is about to undergo another metamorphosis. January will mark the start of the fourth year since the revival of **OW**... so it seems an appropriate time to initiate the 4th Series. I'm not about to be pinned down to specifics here, and you'll find no 'Previews' in the form of 'Things to Come'. But perhaps a word or two on where I'm at these days is not out of order...

The decision(s) was/were made before the latest **Energumen** arrived, but Mike's editorial/farewell address struck a responsive chord, and while I'm just as unhappy as Joan is to see **NERG** go, I think I can understand Mike's line of reasoning a bit more sympathetically than she (or, perhaps, even Susan) can. It's not entirely the fact that, with the impending departure of **NERG** – and, if to a lesser degree, the just-announced 'official' folding of **The Essence** – the fact that I'm begin-

ning to feel a bit lonely in 'my area' of the fanzine field (the definition of where that is, is best left to others), that prompts this piece. Nor am I about to write a paean to the **NERG** file I have – it, after all, is not complete yet.

The Kid – much as I hate to admit it – does have it over me, in his feeling of accomplishment. Yes, I've accomplished the basic goals I set for myself after the demise of **Double:Bill** – and the 'run' of **OW** that I keep in a loose-leaf binder is, I think, an impressive stack of paper. But, somewhere along the line, I've developed a brand-new set of goals... goals that are more flexible than fixed in concrete form on a flow-chart that defines each step along the way. And where Mike finds that he cannot attach the title he has to a 'different fanzine' – and I had a similar feeling when I went into this 3rd Series – at this stage of the game, I have the feeling that I can go in most any direction I wish to with **Outworlds** and still have the basic core of my readers and contributors follow me, without having them feel that I'm leaving them just to follow a tangent. Believe me, there is a sense of progression to my madness, and that the changes in direction I abruptly make are *not* simply for the purpose of change for change's sake.

No, you'll probably never find **OW** as "comfortable" as **NERG**, or some other fanzines. This situation is neither "Good", nor is it "Bad". But I've somehow managed to develop a basic freedom where I can publish most anything that interests me, in most any format I care to play around with... I can do this without worrying about the proverbial question of: "Does it fit?" And this basic freedom is rather important to me; it's important enough to write off such things

as continuity between issues, or the feeling of a 'down home' atmosphere... although these are qualities that are by no means to be disparaged. I don't think you can have both; someone will prove me wrong...

All this heavy stuff is by way of saying that **OW** is going back more toward its original posture as an elaborate & semi-pretentious collection of things Bowers can con out of the talented people he knows in and around fandom. There will be no fixed schedule (though at least 4 issues a year will make it out) and no steady size/number of pages – one issue may be 24 pages, the next 50...

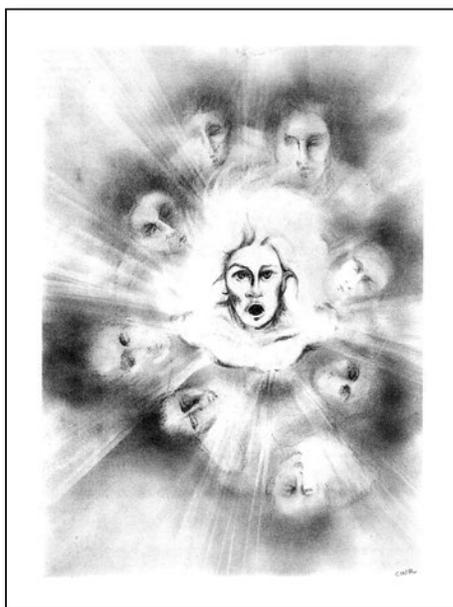
If you started at the beginning, you will have noticed that the price of this thing has jumped to a new, ridiculous high. This (unwanted) step has been taken for one reason, and *only* one reason (despite what some may think, subs rarely cover even the postage on an issue). That reason: circulation control. In order to do some of the things I want to do, in order to prevent becoming bogged down in the mechanics of fanzine production, given the antique equipment we have (the mimeo is well over 20 years old, and erratic in performance), I must out of necessity keep the circulation within definite limits – until we either go all offset, or get a new mimeo. Neither option is very likely, very soon.

The mailing list grows and changes; but basically, it grows. I, honestly, would like everyone who has the slightest interest in what I do, to be able to get **OW** with a minimum of trouble/

expense. But if I did so, everything would get so bulky that those who are willing to do a bit extra in terms of response/cost would be the losers when I folded. True, like the Glicksohns, by going this route, I negate any possibility of getting a Hugo (no matter how "good" **OW** is/becomes), but such things are unimportant in contrast to the continued existence of the zine. To me.

A rather extensive pruning has been conducted on the mailing list this time. It hurt. But it had to be done. The 'trades' were the hardest hit: what I did was sit down and ask myself as honestly as I could: "Do I really look forward to the next issue of ___?" If the answer was "No", well, check your label. Some are going to be unhappy or mad, I imagine – but I had no choice. It's that simple.

In between developing/sweating out this whole ball of wax, something else was born. **INworlds**. O.k., so it's not a particularly brilliant title, but it indicates what it's all about. I do (surprise) have the urge to do something more relaxed than **OW** – something lighter & simpler. What **INworlds** will be is 1) small (6 to 8 pages), 2) fast (mailed first class) and 3) frequent (probably monthly). It'll be mainly yhos, things I want to get out without waiting on **OW**. In large degree it will be concerned with fanzines... reviews (I'll at least list everything I get) and thoughts/raps on them – by me & by you... and not at all pretentious. First issue out early in January (as will be the next **OW**); details on the contents page, if you're interested.



“Mae Strelkov’s Friends” :: The Fannish Fundraiser

INworlds 4 | April 1973

Guest Editorial: SUSAN GLICKSOHN

SF CONVENTIONS, for me, are places for meeting other fans – people you only know on paper, people whom you have never met who are your friends. One of these friends is Mae Strelkov.

Whether you remember Mae from the lettercolumns of *Cry*, or have met her more recently through letters and articles in *Energumen*, *Outworlds*, *Moebius Trip*, *Placebo*, *Aspidistra* and a growing number of other fanzines, you know she’s a fascinating person.

Born and raised in China, Mae has lived for most of her life in Argentina, where she and her husband Vadim share a ranch with children, cattle, crazy goats, pumas – a whole world she’ll create for you with skill and zest. A talented author, and an artist too, Mae is equally at home, and equally fascinating, writing about her lively family – or the world’s problems; about linguistics, and the strange patterns of words and symbols she finds repeating themselves through the Oriental, Western and Amerindian cultures she knows so well – or the antics of her pet skunk; about the Church and its effect on the world as she sees it – or your latest fanzine.

Mae is one of fandom’s Good People. Mae is the sort of person fans go to conventions to meet: a fascinating personality on paper, who promises to be a warm friend in person. Mae’s friends – and I hope you, reading this, are one of them – would like to meet her. At DISCON II.

But we need your help.

Mae Strelkov lives isolated in the hills of Cordoba province, in Argentina. DISCON II is in Washington, in 1974. The plane fare that would bridge that gap costs, at the moment, US\$616, Buenos Aires – New York return. Mae cannot afford the fare; and neither can her friends, as individuals. But perhaps Mae Strelkov’s Friends can raise it.

Mae Strelkov’s Friends is a fundraising organization chaired by Joan Bowers and me, Susan Glicksohn. What we need, now, is your support as a Friend, in the form of:

- cash donations, obviously. One dollar from every Friend would get Mae to North America, at least!
- material for a fan auction, to be conducted through the pages of *INworlds* and possibly at Torcon II; fanzines, art, books, anything you can donate.
- material, both articles and art, for a fannish first: a Bowers-Glicksohn (or Glicksohn-Bowers?) *Strelkovzine*, to appear after Torcon, with all proceeds going into the Friend Fund.
- moral support, through your letters and fanzines. Spread the word.
- encouragement to Mae herself. Write her at: Casilla de Correo 55, Jesus Maria, Cordoba, ARGENTINA and find a new friend.

What we need is your help: NOW. By May 1, 1974, Mae Strelkov’s Friends need at least \$700 in the Friend Fund special account so they and Mae can make plans to fly her to DISCON. Accounts will be kept – and the money from donations will be refunded (monies from the Auction will go to TAFF/DUFF) IF we can’t collect the plane fare at least. But we will, if you help us. Write to:

Mae Strelkov’s Friends, c/o Joan Bowers, Box 148, Wadsworth, OH 44281

A dollar, and your support – today. Will you do it, please?

Susan Glicksohn

OK, FOLKS... you’ve got it straight. Mae is one beautiful person, one who because of her isolated location probably wouldn’t stand a fair chance in a TAFF race, say, but one we, her friends, would very much like to see... and thank her for the many hours she has entertained and enriched our respective lives.

She wouldn’t admit it, but she gives unselfishly of herself to any fan who comes in contact with her. Can we do less?

:: This is Bill, again, if you got lost in the transition. There’s no formal Committee involved here; simplicity is in order. Susan first suggested the idea in the pages of ASP; Joan works in a bank, and since we’ll need the funds in U.S. green, that seemed logical. *IW* is the semi-official focal point gathering spot – this was in the works when I decided to go ahead with the zine – but we’re certainly not selfish: help and publicity from all the rest of you Friends is welcome – and needed! ::

Excerpts from

MAE STRELKOV's Friends :: Auction Sheet

INworlds 6 | June 1973

MAE STRELKOV'S FRIENDS is a fannish fund-raising organization chaired by Joan Bowers and Susan Glicksohn, dedicated to bringing Mae Strelkov, from her home in Argentina, to the Worldcon, that will be held in Washington, D.C., in 1974. \$700.00 is needed for airfare by May 1, '74. We NEED your support, as a Friend: Cash Donations (to Joan Bowers at the above address; a savings account has been established in Mae's name, but please make checks payable to Joan); publicity and moral support for the cause are also sincerely solicited and appreciated!

The fan Auction is conducted by Bill Bowers, in the pages of *INworlds*, a monthly fanzine about fanzines. A sample copy is sent to everyone contributing to the fund; otherwise: 25¢, or 4/\$1. [Copies of this sheet available for an s.a.s.e.] We need material for the Auction; we also need BIDS on what has been generously donated. When bidding, be specific; use the assigned Number. Please! Nothing will go below the minimums; if they are not met, the item will be returned to the donator. [Where you see an "H.B." below, this reflects the Highest Bid received thru May 20, 1973] Monthly totals on donations, as well as High Bids received will be published in *IW*.

Tentative close of bidding on items listed here: October 1, 1973.

[-o0o-]

...SINCE I HAVE THIS SPACE...

I just checked with Joan as to The Status:
As of Today [5/25/73]:

FRIENDS [SINCE MAY 1]: Elaine White # Jerry Kaufman # Suzle Tompkins # Norm Hochberg # Sheryl Birkhead & Harry Warner, Jr. # Robert P.

Brown # Jackie Franke # Don Wollheim & wife # Dennis Quane # Victor Boruta

NEW AUCTION MATERIAL DONATED BY: Bill Mallardi # Gene Wolfe # Robert P. Brown # Ed Conner # Steve Fabian and Don Wollheim / DAW Books!

Plus, Four of the **OW** 'sets' have gone to:
John Carl # Frank Hertel # Dennis Quane # Jeff Summers

**Mae Strelkov's Friends,
as of May 25, have on hand,
from cash donations,
a total of: \$352!**

...which means, start packing, Mae! We're going to make it! But don't let down, folks – the last half is always the hardest, I'm afraid. We need your continued support – and let's have some substantial bidding on the goodies adorning this sheet! I mean YOU!!!

In brief, and very inadequately, Joan & I would like to thank everyone who has in any way participated thus far – and those who will in the upcoming months. But we wish to express our deepest affection for three, who nearly gave us successive heart attacks: **SUSAN GLICKSOHN**, in addition to being the initiator of all of this, gave \$100. **STEPHEN E. FABIAN** sent us the package of his originals, and then the books. And **DONALD A. WOLLHEIM** (& his wife) sent us, on successive days, 1) \$100 & 2) the art you see listed above. My Joan hasn't been the same since!

Again, our thanks to All – and Mae, it's All for You! See you in D.C. in '74!



from *Outworlds 66*, May 1993

[in reply to Mae Strelkov's LoC on *OW64*] ...And I still *publish* "on the same tidal wave of enthusiasm" that – more than "common sense" – has kept me at it for over thirty years.

Over my span in fandom one of my proudest memories is of, in a small way, having been involved in the fund that made the pleasure of meeting you in person possible. Only one thing, though, Mae: I remain convinced that watching you as a pedestrian attempting to deal with U.S. traffic intersections did – indeed – give me my *first* grey hairs...!

From William's Pen:

Regarding “The Flap”, and Other Diversions

Outworlds 18 | October 1973

IT'S BEEN A STRANGE PERIOD since Torcon II... simultaneously very Up and very Down. Weird, and I can't really explain it.

The con itself was fantastic; for me, the best I've been to. And I a small-con-type person at that. But it didn't *seem* like there were **that** many people there, except for the banquet and the 'ball'... and when you were attempting to locate one specific person!

Probably the primary reason I was much more at ease, and thus able to enjoy myself more, was that this was the first Worldcon I'd been to since St. Louis ('69), where I was still being introduced as “the guy who helps Mallardi with **D:B**.” This time I was there as Mean Ole Bill Bowers, who does that **Outworlds** thing... and thus accepted (or not) on my own. Made things considerably simpler.

It goes without saying that, as usual, I didn't get to meet (or re-meet) nearly everyone I'd hoped to, but I did make a number of new and valued acquaintances: Paul (Paj) Novitski... the only person I've ever recognized *without* a) ever having seen a photo of, b) sneaking a glance at a name tag, or c) being introduced to; Derek Carter... a delightfully, madly insane artoonist [after seeing Derek and his wife together the first time, Joan said she now *knows* why he's smiling all the time!]; Sheryl Birkhead, a very shy and very warm human being (who has probably done more for Mae Strelkov's Fund than anyone except Joan – but Sheryl would never admit it); the Aussies, all, but in particular Eric Lindsay, fellow graphics/repro freak and a Mastermind when confronting the System (be it Australian, or American airlines); and many others... some met only once, and all much too briefly...

There definitely should be some sort of award or recognition (although that will always be given

by those who were there) for my Professorial columnist, Susan Glicksohn, and her “All Our Yesterdays” fanhistory room. It was well worth the effort, Susan, and even if future cons continue the idea (as I hope they will), yours was the first... and the best.

Without a doubt, the high point of the con was the awarding of the Fanzine Hugo to **Energumen**... an event that couldn't be detracted from even by the blithering idiots who hissed & booed when the **Locus**-nomination was read. It was the Impossible Dream (numerically) and richly deserved (OK, you can stop twisting my arm now, Mike), and without getting into the politics of the thing, refreshing and pleasant proof to an old cynic like myself that nice things do still happen on occasion. (And in this, the year of the Topless Hugo, I can assure you that any rumors to the effect that the results were “fixed” are totally baseless; and the Glicksohns have the bases to prove it, eh Susan and Mike?)

And Aussiecon won for '75, which is neat (and I'll be there... somehow!), despite the choice of a pair of relative unknowns for Fan Guests of Honor...

Generally, after a con, it is rush-rush back to the work-a-day world; but this time after departing the hotel Monday, we spent 3+ days at 32 Mayard, the abode of Larson E., and his Bearer. Strange tales could be told of that period (“they're nocturnal, you know?”, Jerry; and of zombies appearing at the door when Joan was there alone), but this is after all, an intellectual sercon family fanzine, and we don't print that kind of stuff. Much.

Bruce Gillespie was also in residence that last two days we were there, and as Big Name Faneds are wont to do, we discussed the Ultimate Fanzine... agreeing that at least one of us would

probably achieve it. The withdrawal obviously not yet complete, Michael would naturally attempt to interject some observation on how the reproduction is the medium, or somesuch nonsense, but Bruce and I told him to clam up... since quitters don't count. (It seems as if he's weakening though; according to my calculations – from what he said – **Xenium #2.2** [nice numbering system; where'd you pick it up, Mike?] should round out at about 90 pages, with fold-out covers on stiff board, and contain a book-length autobiographical rendering entitled "Oh, How Fertile My Hamsters!"... and soon after that, I suspect, he'll be changing the title of his zine to something like... well... **Michael E. Glicksohn**. Amateurs!)

Michael, me boy, the opportunity to restore my sprained ankle and wind down in such pleasant surroundings after the con, combined with your unstinting hospitality, was a time of enjoyment I'm not likely to forget... and Joan & I thank you very much.

This issue's late (I guess) appearance doesn't have me too upset, tho I've still the hankering to get on to the offset version. The health bit (with complications) is the major factor when combined with the resumption of school; it's a pain, but I'm stubborn and will see it through. But on the pleasant side, post-Torcon Akron-area fandom (particularly the Wadsworth sub-area – Mecca, as it's known to members of the Pretentious Fanzine Publishers Assoc.) became a social center; remarkably so, in fact, for being out here in the boonies and all. Eric Lindsay and Paul Anderson stopped by for too brief visits, on their way across the States... and I get these phone calls from Andy Porter, Big Time Publisher, who keeps me informed as to what is going on in the Eastern Establishment, and tells me how he takes **Outworlds** to bed... and dreams about **Algol**. (Two separate conversations... but you know how we biased reporters do these things; unfortunately they were conducted over the downstairs phone... which is not hooked into the recording system.) ...and remind me to tell you some time of How I Came To Sell My Soul... Yes, folks, while briefly manning Andy's table at Torcon, I sold two young, innocent, unsuspecting neofans... help me!... subs to **Algol**! I am thoroughly ashamed and apologize; I just don't know what came over me...

...and then, immediately following the con, Dan "Teddy Bear" Steffan was exiled to the wilds of

Northeastern Ohio. And in spite of the fact that Glicksohn had obviously gotten to him (Dan shows very little respect for his fannish Elders), it was a very nice thing to have My Very Own Captive Fan Artist around. I've never had one of those before (I've asked for one for Christmas, but don't hold out too much hope), and it was a pleasure; you'll be seeing the results over the next several issues. It would be a pleasure having Dan around, even if he wasn't a talented young artist; he's one of fandom's good people, and one we're pleased to have as a friend.

Dan has since departed for even wilder climes – in Southern Illinois – unrelenting in his quest to bring Coke canning plants to even the smallest town in America... and we miss him.

Enough of this trivia. A number of people probably won't like the physical make-up of this issue. In fact, Dan has already told me what I could do with that 'flap'. (Shame on you, Dan.) And after getting my first '9' rating from Buck Coulson, I was tempted to chuck the whole thing and go to a nice conservative format... But I didn't.

This issue is this way because, as mentioned last time, I got a 'steal' on a quantity of legal-length paper, because I didn't want it to occupy a spatial area larger than 8.5x11 and this is the way it worked out... and because the money I 'saved' on the paper bought me a saddle stapler... another one of those Things I've Always Wanted.

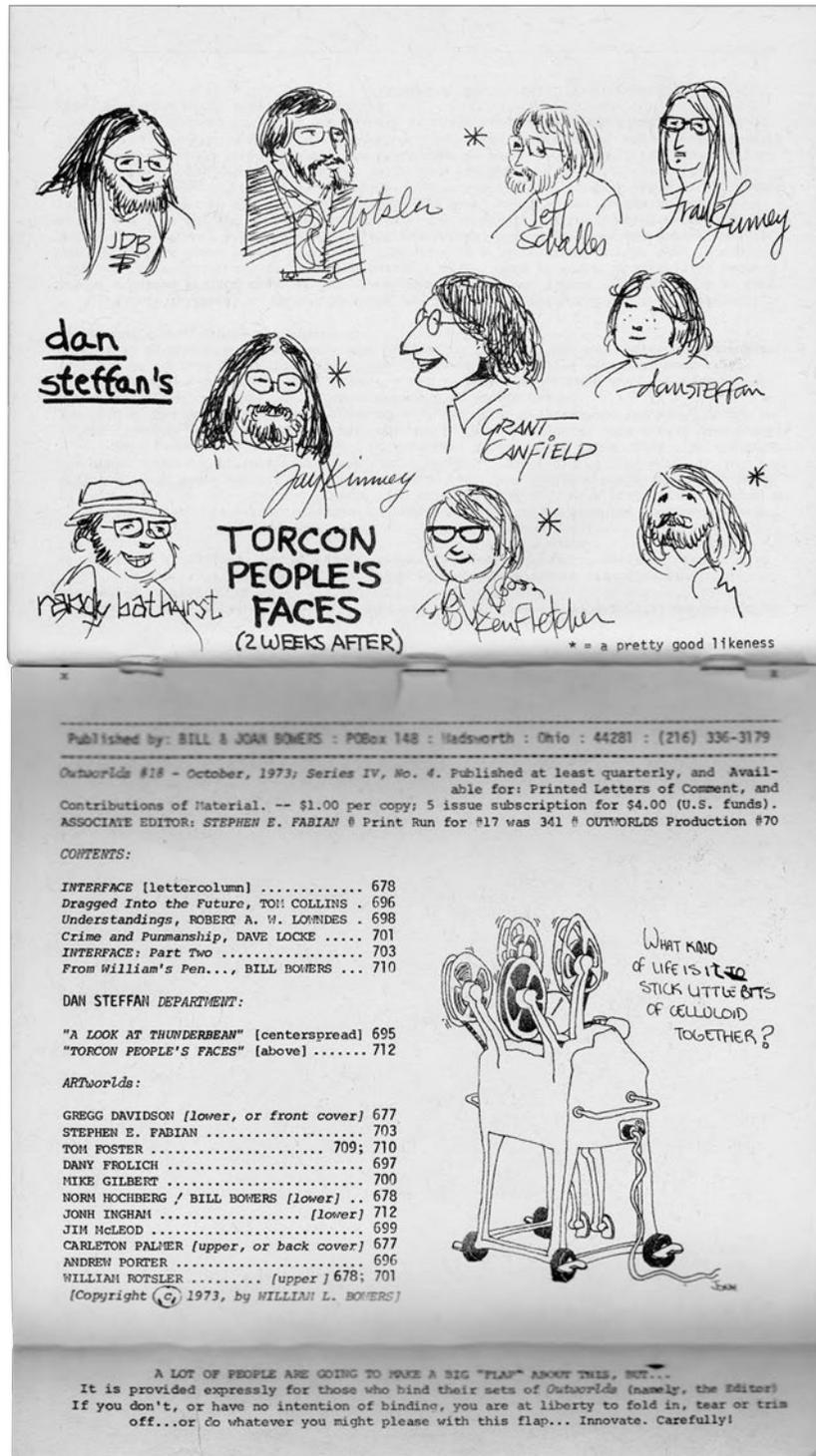
And that's the why of this issue... not because I'm breaking down the graphic conventions of fanzine production. (Of course, if you really want to attribute such trailblazing to my humble self, I'm more than willing to listen. I may even print your comments... and put a neat little box around them.)

In all fairness, so as not to leave you hanging, I must point out that there will not be a Harlan Ellison reply to Ted White printed here. One exists (Ted has it; I've seen it), but the decision not to print was Harlan's alone. This is going to disappoint some, but I'm just as happy things worked out this way. In a 'discussion' of the type in question there would probably never be a successful resolution; the only way it could ever come to an end would be for one party to simply stop, and in effect let the other have the last public word. This, in effect, is what Harlan has done, and I've got to admire him for it.

I may have bent my proclaimed no-personal-attacks policy in this instance (it seemed valid at the time), but I don't really enjoy such exchanges. I do enjoy the hell out of Harlan writing about Harlan Ellison and the things he cares about, and I can't ever recall having read a Ted White piece

that I found uninteresting... irritating, maybe, but not dull! I would enjoy nothing more than having both in these pages more often... but perhaps on or about something other than each other...?

A strange issue, this; hope you enjoyed...



“The Fanzine for The Geritol Set”

Father William's MISHAPventures #1 | May 1976

FATHER WILLIAM'S MISHAPventures, or the Fanzine for The Geritol Set, is bravely put forth by BILL BOWERS [PO Box 2521, North Canton, OH 44720; (216) 837-1072] – and is aimed in the direction of MISHAP 16, for May, 1976. This one is for Leah – who talked me into joining – by NOT pressuring me... Multilithing rendered by Roger Bryant (if I end up doing apazines... he's going to do a genzine, sooner or later!). This is (until I figure out a new “press” name) My Publication #84. Start Date: April 25, 1976.

WHAT NEXT...!

...Bill Bowers...in an apa? I assure you, stranger things have undoubtedly happened, but not many. Why am I here? It is not, I can say with some assurance (looking at the piles of neglected kipple about me) from a lack of “things to do”. Basically it's simply, at this point in time & space, something that I *want* to do – as opposed to all the things I *should* be doing – and we'll leave it at that.

Besides, it seems that I should save Ross Pavlac from the dire fate of being the “lone voice from Ohio” in this apa; it's bad enough having to admit you're from Ohio, without being stuck with being its only representative. (But, no, I will not move to Columbus; loyalty to other fanzine fans in one's own state is certainly desirable... but there *are* limits, I assure you!)

APAty

The word would *seem* to sum up my involvement with apas thus far in my... I guess the term is “fannish career”. True, I was in the N3F's (now it's out) N'APA twice in the early 60's – and I'm still rather pleased with the two issues of *Bayta* I published during my second go-around there (which is more than I can say for *most* of my previous 83 “publications”). And in 1962 I even took a one-year fling at the mundane NAPA (which had served as the basic model for FAPA in the days before even I was born); it was primarily an outlet for letterpress fans – and some of the little pamphlets were

beautiful. But the organization was rather, shall we say, conservative in things literary. I had one of the members print me two issues of something called *Silver Dusk* (a title I just may use again, someday) for distribution through NAPA. In the second issue, I printed a short sketch/story by Earl Evers in which I did not think to add the “asterisks” (and since the printer did not question me, I assumed it was “all right”) to Earl's plentiful use of the word “f**k”. This was in the days before the liberation of *anything*... and the reaction I received convinced me that my publishing efforts should be directed elsewhere. (But lest I raise the subject here: There was a “dirty words in sf” debate which raged for something like three years in the lettercolumn of *Outworlds* – I really don't feel like going through that again... sorry.)

The *last* apazine I published, before this one, was something called *PROJECT: 75*, for the 18th Mailing [August, 1971] of ANZAPA. (The significance of the title was that was the period in which the “Australia in '75” Worldcon bid was first being pushed fandom-wide... and one of my dreams/goals was to attend it. Obviously I didn't attain that particular goal... but it wasn't the first, and it certainly won't be the last I fail to achieve; I know that, someday, I'll still make it Down Under... so I'm content with that.)

A lot of the material from that issue (particularly the parts about mailing comments) will probably be recycled in the first few issues of this; I do

nothing if I don't cannibalize previously written material; but hopefully, each time I get the words a little bit better. (Even if I don't *spell* them that much better...)

Ironically, I AM a member (at least as of this writing) of another apa: FAPA... Yes, *that* one. After six bloody years on the waiting list, I got into FAPA in the latter part of 1970. At this point in time, I have yet to do my *first* FAPAZine! [Well, the *first first* **Outworlds**, in 1966, was a "Shadow FAPAZine", but I suspect that doesn't "count".] I cite my lack of participation in FAPA not by way of bragging – I do feel occasional twinges of guilt – but it is symptomatic of the problems with that particular organization. I have survived thus far by simply occasionally franking through occasional issues of **OW** and/or **IW**, and while I have Every Intention of Doing Something For FAPA by the August Mailing, I suspect I'll probably end up sending **OW27.5** as a postmailing... just in case. If it wasn't that it's the best way I know of remaining on John Bangsund's and Harry Warner's mailing lists... I really doubt that I'd bother with FAPA; it's not even a "status thing". (Sure, I know that I can't complain if I'm not doing anything... but, to face facts, I'm not likely to "revitalize" any apa – I'm too lazy, and I'm much too self-centered to even try.)

MISHAP seems to have the ideal activity requirements for someone like me whose "executions" never seem quite to match his "intentions". In other words, while I like to think I can make every mailing, I'll not be surprised if I don't. In the meantime, by means of this apa-cum-personalazine, I intend to have fun... and to explore certain aspects of things I Care About that might not go as well in the world of Big Time / Big Deal Fanpublishing. (Not to mention the about-to-be-entered world of Small Time / Big Deal "pro" publishing.) I've "intended" to do a personalazine for some time; MISHAP has provided the necessary nudge. For that I thank you.

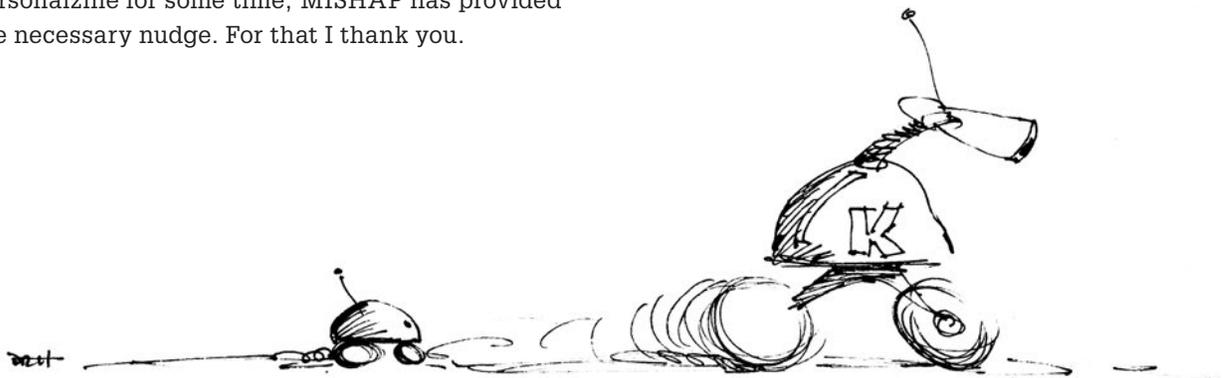
NOW JUST A DAMN MINUTE...!

.....
"There's Bill Bowers in Canton, of course,
but he's an institution by now."

Ross Pavlac, *Avenging Aardvark's*
Mishapzine, MISHAP 15
.....

...I wrote to Leah: "I suspect that one of the first things that I 'do' for MISHAP will be a disowning of this 'BNF' thing I have hung around my neck." How convenient it is that I should find such an obvious example of what I was talking about in this very mailing. (I should note at the outset that this section, at least, really should have been first-drafted. I had initially intended on doing this zine by writing up the individual sections over the period of a week or two, and then re-writing them for publication. I actually started doing this with the "APathy" section, got about five lines into it... and decided, at that rate I *might*, possibly make the July mailing. So until further notice, we are in a first-draft on-master mode – and my apologies for the inevitable twistings-and-turnings my mind takes in transcribing what is clear in thought-form... but rarely so when I get it down on paper. I do suspect I'll be rewriting this particular "section" over & over again, in different places, in different forms, for quite some time to come – until I get the words right – so this is "first-draft" on more than one level.)

I AM NOT A BLOODY, FUCKING INSTITUTION!
I'm also not, believe me, picking on Ross; he just happened to be handy. Besides, I *know* what he's saying... and what I've done to contribute toward his being able to put down a line like that without really even thinking about it. In many, many ways, I "asked" for it... I *worked* for it, for a long, long time...



But, having done so, and having (on several levels at least) acquired a form of BNFhood, is it “worth it”? I really don’t know. Oh yes, I DO appreciate the benefits that come from being recognized as being “somebody” at cons... and of being the person who is, along with Warner and Glicksohn, automatically included on the mailing list when you do your Very First Fanzine. I honestly, truly do *appreciate* these things; and I in no way intend to disparage them. God knows, they’re the things I thought I wanted for so long a time. No, the question is, having attained them... can I now “handle” it?

Certainly the “problem” is of my own making. I would publish a fancy pretentious fanzine (because that way I could shroud my own basic insecurity behind a “slick” mask) – I would push the circulation up and up, “because my contributors deserved the widest audience I could possibly give them” – and, having done this, I would ask, nay, *demand* the total involvement of my readership, no matter how large the numbers grew. And, for whatever reason (and this is not a clue for Certain People to say nice things to reassure me) I GOT that involvement, that response. I joke these days about still working on replying to mail from *last* June, when I took off for Midwestcon/Westercon, and ended up becoming a total con-addict. It’s not a joke; it’s what I SHOULD be doing rather than this. And I do feel guilty about those people who entrusted to me a bit of their lives in the form of a letter, a contribution, or a request. But it’s a guilt apparently I can live with (I am), or else I’d be staying home on weekends and I probably wouldn’t be doing this.

...and the more response I received, the more compliments... the more material I got ... and the more all that happened... the more there was that I *thought* I could do. I overextended myself.

This is not, in any way, shape, or form, a Farewell to Fandom, in any of its aspects; fandom has meant too much to me, done so much for me, and provided me with most of the people I Care About... for me even to conceive of “leaving it”. No, what this is, is simply an acknowledgement of the unwanted fact that I DO have limits as to what I can do, when that is weighed against what I want to do.

I suspect a lot of people are going to be a bit surprised by the type of fanzine I do after *OW*...

Part of the “problem” of being a “BNF” (whatever that is, anyhow) is that you’re supposed to “act” like one... you’re supposed to, apparently, be all things to all people. Sorry, I can’t handle that.

My “solution”, arrived at over the last year, has been simply to become a hell of a lot more “selfish”; I’ve always been self-centered, but I’ve never been *positive* about it – I was taught that it was “bad” to place your own interests before that of others, and I lived with that guilt-trip for thirty years. I still have vestiges of it. But I’m working on them. Before you can live with / deal with others... you have to learn to live with / deal with yourself.

I envy people who can give of themselves freely, and without asking of anything in return, to every beginning fanned, every neo, everyone they encounter. I *know* people, fans, like that. But I’m not one of them. If you see me at several cons in a year, you’ll generally find me with basically the same small group of people. I do also write to (a lot of people won’t believe that one!) another small (but overlapping) group. Maybe this is what makes a “clique”, but I really don’t think so; the people I hang around with are simply people I like, people I genuinely care for. They all aren’t “names”, and they certainly share no common characteristic except that most are, in essence, “quiet” people. (I do, I admit, recoil from “noise” and “loud” people. It’s a survival trait.) What they are, is that they’re my Friends, the dozen or so people on the face of this earth that I *will* go out of my way to be with.

By whatever quirk of nature that dictates such things, I find myself incapable of genuinely caring for more than a very few individuals at a given time; the one thing I *have* learned the hard way is that when you do care for someone, and can admit that to yourself, you have to care all the way. Which I do these days. I know no other way of doing it. And yet, this group of people I care for is not an automatically exclusive one, nor is it a static unchanging entity. It *is* building, slowly but I think positively, as I learn (the hard way; the only way I can learn) that if you do care for someone, and wish to become a part of *their* circle of friends, as well as hoping the reverse comes true... to accomplish this, you have to extend yourself. The ability to do this, in a few cases, has been the hardest thing I’ve ever ventured to do. It also, I must admit, has been the most rewarding thing I’ve ever attempted. It makes life worth living.

I also Sermonize. I must Watch That.

Part of what I'm very inadequately trying to say is this: While I can very well relate to the way some people feel about cons (Donn Brazier and Dave Locke in particular have expressed reservations about them, to me) and the lack of time you invariably have to spend with even the handful of people you really want to see... my basic philosophy has evolved to the point of extrapolating the beer commercial: You have to grab at every possible opportunity to be with your friends that life offers... no matter how brief and fleeting that may sometimes be.

I make very little effort to hide my feelings toward those I do care for these days; you will find me shamelessly attached to them every possible moment I can manage. I feel guilty at monopolizing them, of perhaps denying them access to others maybe they'd rather be with, and I do feel occasional twinges of guilt. But very little, in the end, because, as I said before... I'm doing all this for ME. Not for them, or for you.

I DO appreciate the benefits in being recognized, and attention is flattering... but it's a pain to "act" like you really care about what was in the latest issue of _____ (fill in the blank), when you really want to merely continue snogging with an "Official Groupie". And there *are* times that I do wish I could just blend into the wall at a con... Besides, I don't *feel* like a BNF, or an "institution" even; my longevity in fandom has made me a lot of friends (but few "close" ones) and made my name recognizable to many who aren't quite sure what it is that I do/am... but he's "somebody"... but the drawbacks are equally great.

No, I don't want people to "worship" me, or, most certainly, I don't need a host of "imitation **Outworlds**" running around the postal system, and I don't want people to only like me because of what I've done with fanzines; what I want, is simply what I suspect all of us really want: that is to be liked and appreciated and accepted as an individual (fallible, but well-intentioned) human being...

But can you get there from here?

...BUT I KNOW WHAT I MEANT TO SAY!

I could (as my long-suffering correspondents can verify) very easily go on like that for endless pages... and I probably will... but that's enough to lay on those of you fortunate enough *not* to know

Having spent most of my time as a fan publishing fanzines, I am unaccustomed to public speaking. Therefore, I would like to turn the rest of my speech over to my typewriter.



me, as well as to shock those of you who know me "only" through **OW**. I think better on paper than I communicate in speech, and I have very little inhibitions when I'm alone with the typewriter... (... regarding myself, that is: But I don't Name Names; I don't have the capabilities of Dick Geis or Don C. Thompson for complete total frankness... and I think that is an admission a few others might consider a bit more seriously before setting certain episodes into cold print.)

FOUR... NO MORE...

You know, I really feel a bit of a hangup about putting out "only" a four-page fanzine. But this is perhaps a sign of the "new" Bill Bowers; there have to be limits. Yes.

No mailing comments this time; joining an apa anywhere after the initial mailing *is* a bit like

jumping into the middle of a conversation. It'll probably take me just a little time to "get comfortable" here... but I suspect it won't take all that long. There are some Good People in MISHAP; of course, there are also Larry Downes and Patrick Hayden, but one can't have everything. (Reminds me of the mess Patrick seems to have gotten me into by printing only *half* of my comments on the fan-Dorsai a while back. You will take care of that, won't you Patrick?)

I see Leah is still reluctant to admit that the Wondaycon had much merit. Maybe so in terms of what it was "intended" to be, but that didn't

matter to me. Thanks to her gracious hospitality to Mike and myself, and thanks to Diane and Paul for hosting the parties, I can say in all honesty that it was one of the most enjoyable and relaxing weekends I've had in a long time... and I thank all who had a part in it for making it that for me. (And if you have another one, I don't think you'll keep me away...!)

This is not, and will not be, a "generally available" fanzine; but it will go to a few friends outside MISHAP. Because I want them to have it.

PAX,

Bill 4/26/76



Mike Glicksohn Introduces:

Bill Bowers' Fan GoH Speech – ConFusion 12

Prehensile 15, Sept. 1976 | Mike Glycer, ed.

I **IMAGINE I FEEL** much the way your President Nixon must have felt after **his** fall from glory. Not five months ago I enjoyed perhaps the greatest honor a fan can know, that of being a Worldcon guest of honor. And now I'm here to try and justify the choice of Bill Bowers as Fan Guest of Honor here. Sic gloria transit fandom. And I can't even sell the copies of my letters of comment for a quarter of a million dollars!

I've been at all three of Ro Nagey's Ann Arbor conventions. The first had no fan guest who obviously deserved no introduction. The second had a fan guest so famous he needed none. And now there's Bowers, for whom an introduction is almost impossible. (Ro asked just about everyone in the area to stand up here and say a few nice words about Bill and they all said it was almost impossible. I finally agreed to try it... some people will do anything for a few free drinks.)

Bill is one of my oldest friends in fandom. In fact, he's one of the **oldest** friends I've got anywhere. Just look at him. I'm told he's the first TAFF winner ever to carry a notarized affidavit in case they try to stick him in the mummy section of the British Museum.

Bill, of course, is most famous for his publishing activities which many think reached their peak when he coedited the NFFF letterzine **Tightbeam**. He is, in case you didn't know it, the only person in the forty-seven year history of fanzines to win two FAAN awards. That's not to be laughed at, even if he did lead the committee that gave them out.

Despite Bill's fifteen-year pursuit of the perfect fanzine there is no truth to the rumor that he was born with a blue pencil in his mouth. His first words were of interest, though, both for themselves and for the fact that they represent possibly the only time Bill and I have ever agreed on anything. It's reliably reported that with his first spoken words Bill criticized his mother on the quality of her reproduction.

To do this introduction properly I thought it best to read back through as many of Bill's fanzines as I could find. This is a task remarkably akin to Hercules cleaning out the royal stables. **My** problem was I kept falling asleep before finding anything worth reporting on. I did find one or two things that capture the essence of Bowers, though.

Bayta #1 from December 1963, for example: "The birth of a new fanzine is singularly unimportant in the world's scope of events." Now if only the 1976 Bowers would remember that each time he does an editorial for **Outworlds**. Along similar lines there's this astute observation from **Outworlds #1**, January 1970: "Editorial policy usually proves to be a bore, and as such should be dispatched with as quickly as possible." Ho ho ho...

If you ever wondered, by the way, **why** Bill's fanzines are as good as they are, here is the answer, from **Abanico #2**, November 1961. (He typoed the name of his own fanzine, by the way, but any incompetent might do that. Keep quiet, Joe Haldeman!!) Here's the secret, in faded black and white – "Published in Canada!!!!"

Do I really have to introduce Bill? Coeditor of **Double:Bill** and the **Double:Bill Symposium**. Editor of **Outworlds**. President of the "Keep Mike Glicksohn's Name in Front of Fandom Society". Six times a Hugo nominee – and now that Rotsler has one, the longest overlooked fan in the race for the rocketship. Easily one of the most creative and innovative fanzine editors in our history.

But Bill is not just another pretty layout sheet. He has a keen intellect, and often makes extremely insightful observations. Consider this statement from *Inworlds* #1, January 1973: "**Outworlds**... is not perfect. It is too irregular, and too costly, and too formal..." One is left to wonder how he was able to stop so soon! Then there was the time that Bill visited my apartment, and upon seeing my tortoise, remarked, "Why, it looks like a snake with a hat." That is the sort of man who is your Guest of Honor!

But occasionally even a Bowers says something inarguably correct: viz "Fandom may not be one big happy family; it may in fact be 'escaping' from the Real World; it may or may not be a lot of things... whatever it is, it is a lot of fantastic people, **my** people..."

If I were to list the ten men I admire and respect and love the most in fandom, Bill Bowers would be five of them. He's the best fanned we've got, and his selection as Fan GoH is a long overdue honor. It is with tremendous pride and pleasure that I give you (and please keep him) your Fan Guest of Honor – Bill Bowers!!

Bill Bowers Explains Mike Glicksohn... and Other Short Subjects

The ConFusion 12 Fan GoH Speech

Prehensile 15, Sept. 1976 | Mike Glycer, ed.

THANK YOU, MICHAEL – those were, indeed, words worthy of fandom's second best letterhack – and what might be expected from a personal friend of Jerry Jacks.

In case any of you folks didn't understand – and need a translation from the Canadian – what Michael said in essence was... that he admires me immensely, he worships the ground I walk on – and that he has always looked up to me...

But I'm honestly not sure just how much of an honor *that* is, since, of course, Mike has always had to look up to most of the people he's encountered... With the possible exception of Larry Downes.

The title of this is... "**Bill Bowers Explains Michael Glicksohn... and Other Short Subjects...**"

That should suffice to cover a multitude of sins. To begin with, I've never made a speech in my life. I can't help thinking that if God had meant for me to make speeches, he wouldn't have invented

fanzines. In fact, you might say that speechmaking is the second favorite thing I can imagine doing... The only thing I can possibly think of that I might enjoy doing more would be... becoming a field goal kicker for the Spartans.

Either that, or being forced to move to Cleveland...

Still –

After Ro invited me – and Lin convinced me – at Marcon last year (I understand that Randy Bathurst is the prime culprit responsible for my being asked – you'll pay for this, Randy, believe me!) – Well, Lloyd and I talked, and speculated on the consequences of the committee having invited two of the – well, let's face it – two of the less vocal people around fandom. Neither one of us is exactly your Jerry Pournelle or your Sam Moskowitz. So we wondered aloud what we could do to entertain you, not to mention enlightening

you, on this momentous occasion. It was our carefully considered consensus that it might be best all the way around if we simply sat up here – and stared at each other for... say... twenty minutes.

Immediately, Ro – on behalf of the committee – screamed. Since, as he pointed out in great detail, in that calm way of his... Since they were sparing no expense in importing us for your listening enjoyment – the round trip, in gas and tolls, for me, will probably be under \$20; and Lloyd lives, what? ...half an hour away? – After such a great expenditure of your membership fees, they certainly expected more of us than that.

Now I've been called many things. But never before have I been cast as a before-dinner appetizer. Despite that – and against my better judgment, not to mention the condition of my nerves – I'm going to attempt to make like a speechifier. Not, I repeat *not*, because of any veiled threats that this poor fan's Ken Keller has directed at my aging, feeble body... But simply because of a very selfish reason.

You see... I figure if I do well here in the minors, perhaps someday someone will bring me to another convention – one that I couldn't otherwise make – and that would be nice, since I've recently, if somewhat belatedly, become a total con-addict. (Hopefully if I do get a repeat opportunity, it will be at someplace other than this small town in Michigan – whose main claim to fame is that it imports the best football players and coaches... that *Ohio* high schools can produce!)

As an aside, an interlineation if you like:

I must say that the one thing that makes this all a little bit easier, not to mention going a long way toward restoring my shattered faith in my own fannishness... is the knowledge that I am here at a Linda Bushyager officially approved Sci-Fi Convention...

...Or at least it was before she found out that Ro and I are going into business...

BACK WHEN the world and I were young... This year, I believe, marks my fifteenth year in fandom. (I'll know for sure as soon as I can find a competent mathematician to check the figures; I don't see one here on the dais...)

Such an occasion – other than proving that if you stick around long enough – naturally calls for a nostalgic look backwards. Sorta like a Glicksohnian reference to actually publishing fanzines – right?

Besides, it's an easy way to gather material for a speech. They say "Write about what you know best"...

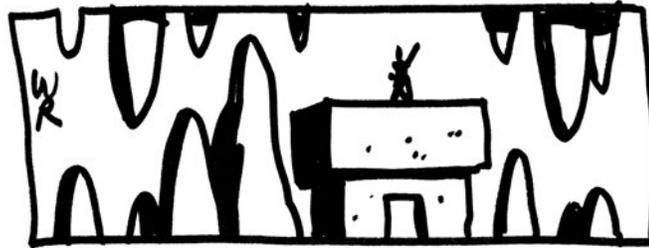
So I'm going to talk about what *I* know best. Me.

So listen my children... and I shall tell you such a tale... You know: all that crap... I didn't start out as the sophisticated, big-time, big-deal faneditor you see before you today. Oh, no. It took me a long time to work my way down to this level! In fact, to quote the caption of just one immortal Rotsler cartoon: "Actually I'm only seventeen... but fanzine publishing aged me!"

I was born old, as Michael probably mentioned – but I started out the typical cliché of one who becomes a fan. I was the oldest child (not the "only"; my parents bravely kept going until they got it right). I wore glasses... And I would have been voted the shyest kid in my class, if anyone had known I was there. (I haven't noticeably changed those characteristics over the intervening years, either.) Of course, it was only natural that I end up in fandom, considering the way I was born: I just found out recently that I was a breech baby. I backed into this world reluctantly; no doubt I will leave it the same way...

This may also serve to explain my somewhat backward manner...

Childhood: I endured, and I read. Adolescence: I survived, and I read. Born in the '40s, raised in the '50s – you do realize that the ultimate nostalgic book about the '50s was written several years ago? **FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD**. No matter what they tell you on TV nowadays, that was the '50s: bomb shelters. It was not the most exciting of lives... I came from poor but not poverty-stricken



parents, and had as strict an upbringing as you're like to imagine. See how far I've fallen?

So I proceeded to lose myself in a world of print... the ultimate world, one that was bounded only by my imagination, and that far exceeds any visual rendition possible. (And *that* from a die-hard graphics freak!) I somehow skipped Doc Smith and Burroughs. But I must have hit just about everything else. And, of course, I *knew* that they were publishing these marvelous books for me alone... After all, no one I knew would be caught dead reading a book, let alone one of *those* time-wasters.

Yes.

I graduated from high school, and entered the real world. In precisely the same time span, I discovered fandom, and quickly exited the real world. I've never been back, and have no intention of doing so. Thank you anyway.

I discovered ***Fantastic Universe*** three issues before it folded. Other than being a nice, large size, compared to the few other prozines I belatedly discovered, it contained something that eventually brought me to a point and place in time that I occupy today: Belle Deitz's fanzine review column. Oh, I'd seen references to fanzines here and there – had never seen an actual one – but I *knew* what they'd be like. Just like little science fiction magazines... Right?

I'll tell you a deep, dark secret: I actually produced a fanzine before I saw one. Really. During my senior year in high school. It lasted three issues, was digest-sized... and featured a staff of every anagram of my name I could think of. It was typed on scraps of paper and published in a press run of one. Only one person has ever seen it, and although I still have those three issues – somewhere – only one person ever will... Me.

And believe me, I can refuse *any* offer. (They reminded me, the last time I looked, a lot of ***Private Ro's Bangwhiz***...)

The first "real" fanzine I got – thru that fanzine review column – was something called ***Yandro***. Yes. As I recall, I sent Buck and Juanita something like 15¢, which was the quoted price. I got a postcard from Buck saying the price had been raised to 20¢... but that they would send me a copy anyway. Just don't let it happen again!

Yes, dearly beloved, my first contact in fandom was kindly Robert S. Coulson. I may not be his peer... but he's responsible...!

Shortly after the postcard, I received this strange thing in the mail. Not what I'd expected at all. Mimeoed on dog-vomit-yellow fuzzy paper – before long I learned that this was the sacred "Twil-tone", worshipped from afar by certain Torontonians – with a Dea cover, several short items and fanzine reviews – *more!!* – and letters. Letters from people, some of whom, apparently, even read science fiction...

Wow!

Home.

That was ***Yandro #97***. I honestly don't recall the number of the latest one – the memory goes as one gets older – or perhaps it's simply the ten thousand fanzines I've seen since then – but the issue number is now a bit higher... (Michael said to tell you he wishes he was, also.)

A couple of months later, in September 1961, I published my first fanzine. Hecto of course...

...From ***Yandro 97*** to ***Outworlds 27***. (This has been an unpaid announcement.)

I could spend a few minutes/hours/days/years – what do you have available? ... talking about the fanzines in Them Daze, and those in the years since... I could take you from the small genzines of the early '60s, thru the apa craze of the mid-'60s, to the giant 100-page-plus fanzines of the late '60s, to... To whatever the hell it is we have today... I could mention names that will make many an older fan leak a fond tear of memory... Those were the days when Willis and ATom still walked among us... And titles like ***Discord***, ***Warhoon***, ***Bane***, ***Enclave***, ***Trumpet***, ***Void***... The list is endless. I could, if pressed, even mention Buck Coulson's favorite fanzine of all time: ***Realm of Fantasy***...

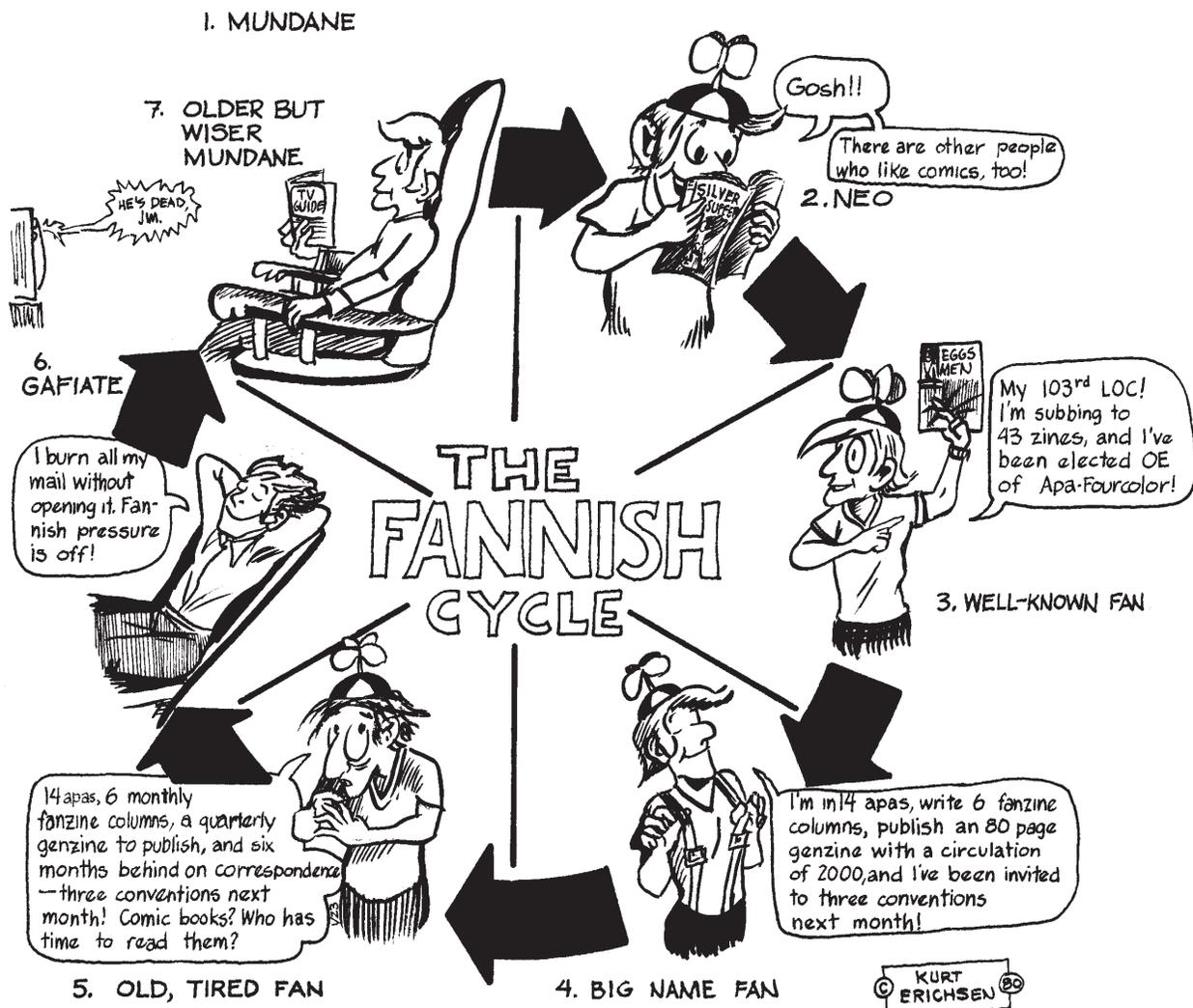
But I won't talk of that at this hour... Such topics are best left for about 4 in the morning, after a few drinks-of-your-choice, and after the children (and burnt-out con chairmen) have been put to bed.

Besides, why should I talk of fanzines and faneds past, when the best is before you today?

...He said with becoming modesty.

In the beginning, fanzines were my fandom in totality; and, to a large extent, they always will be an important part of it. But fandom is also fans-in-person, and conventions...

Shortly after getting into fandom, I got a call. This fellow said that he'd gotten my name from Ralph Holland, then Prexy of the N3F (Yes, the secret's



out)... that his mother was making him clean out the basement, and could I possibly store a few boxes of old fanzines for him... (So twist my arm...)

That was my introduction to Bill Mallardi...

BEM was my introduction to conventions...

Chicon... Three, damnit, not One! 1962. Others have since faded into the slipsheets of my memory. But that one is still there, clear, vivid, alive. Sturgeon's speech, the tale he promised to finish the next time he was a Worldcon GoH, Heinlein's grand entrance, the masquerade ball... with all those women in wicked costumes... not to mention Sylvia Dees... The party Mallardi and I threw. And all those big name pros in our room.

At that convention, much to my chagrin, I found out that pros were, indeed, mortal. *sigh* (And this was before Piers Anthony, even...)

There were other conventions. Discon II, where I met H. Beam Piper – God I wish he was still

alive and writing! Pacifcon II... The Boondoggle... Being present on the infamous Leamington Balcony when the Lupoffs and ATom formed belly button fandom. And there were the delightful Midwestcons in the Old North Plaza...

That was it in those days, folks. The Midwestcons and the Worldcons, unless you lived on one of the coasts. None of this two-and-three-cons-a-weekend jazz. You young folks have it so easy...

Other memories... Being on one of the 32 committees formed before Tricon finally came off... Of one special night when Mallardi and I were up at Ben Jason's house, and the only other committee member there was Roger Zelazny.

...Memories of sometime late that evening when, for some reason, the four of us ended up sitting on the floor in Ben's kitchen... talking... and then Roger read to us the first draft of a little thing called... "...And Call Me Conrad."

And I'll never forgive him for making me wait a year to read the 2nd half in **F&SF!**

Other conventions, other fans, other memories... You don't have 15 years for me to relate them, by chance? thought not...

If science fiction is escapism, is fandom escaping from escapism? I really don't know – I just thought I'd throw that in. I suppose as one who has made escapism a way of life... it's a fairly safe generalization to say that most fans are social misfits in one way or another. Some hide it better than others – but let's face it, if we were all normal, we wouldn't be here today – we wouldn't have travelled in the dead of winter simply to be together. "Normal" people just don't do things like that.

And that's just one of the things that makes fandom what it is...

This is not to imply that "Fans are Slans" or any of that garbage – I certainly don't feel all that smart. If I were, I could have wormed my way out of this! Fandom has its fair share of idiots and overbearing boors. It has its wars and its politics – both generally just as petty as those in the macro-world...

But – and this seems to be the inevitable Bowers editorial – the one thing that fandom has that I've never found reflected in the real world is this: a tolerance... and acceptance... a togetherness... no matter what your age, sex, religion (or lack thereof), race... No matter if you did vote for Richard the First in '72... No matter... You can be accepted here, and judged on the basis of what you, as an individual are – far more so than in any other cross-section of humanity I've run across. You can be accepted here, if you want to be...

It's taken the better part of those fifteen years to discover what fandom is all about... For me...

Fandom is not a literary society – those old pulps crumble with age. Fandom is not an amateur publishing cooperative: some of us do fanzines, others do not. It is not a prerequisite. Fandom is not conventions – some of the truest of trufen have never attended one.

What fandom is, is people. Lots of people, different people. Mostly good people. People just like you...

IN THE END... one person, me, an individual – and yet, part of a larger whole.

I have my prejudices, my hangups; I have my good days, my bad days... I resent well-intentioned

people doing things "for my own good." I react to those who will lay down the law that I must do thus-and-such to be "fannish." But, at this stage in my life, very few things really upset me.

Sure there are the negative aspects of fandom. But there is also the positive.

And I'll freely admit that I'm an elitist: the people I hang around are those who do the things, create the things that I find beautiful and worthwhile in this life. Most of the people who fit those qualifications are, again for me, fans. The ones I appreciate, from a very selfish point-of-view – are those that give me of their time, their talent, their sweat – the ones that freely give me what *they* do best... so that I can do what *I* do best; my fanzine. (I am, by far and away, the winner in the exchange.)

And still... I resent the limitations of time, of my own frailties, the things that prevent me from actively relating to more than a handful of people at a given time. I wish that I could be more giving of myself – be more like those I admire and love the most – but when I look back to where I was only a few short years ago – well, I've come a long way, baby! And I just may make it yet.

FIFTEEN YEARS – a long time – and yet, no time at all, really... I've accumulated a ton, literally, of fannish kipple. I have good memories... ones that far, far outweigh the few bad ones that are inevitable. There's no counting how many fans I've met either through the mail or at cons. The list of those I fondly, selfishly choose to call my friends is equally endless...

But there is a short list, the list of those who, without their kindness and understanding, their unselfish help and the relentless prodding of my lazy bones when I needed it... Well, without these people, I literally wouldn't be here today. These are the ones, more than any others, who you can blame for mean ole Bill, not to mention Father William. These are the ones you can hold responsible for my having subjected you to the preceding century-and-a-half!

And although I'm aware that I will probably embarrass them (with the possible exception of the last to be named), I must thank, however inadequately, my very special people:

BILL MALLARDI – for toting me around to conventions in the beginning, when I never would have

had the nerve to go myself... And for, of course, something called **Double:Bill**, my primary training school for what I do today.

JOAN – For picking up the pieces that arrived back from overseas, for putting me back together... And then when she saw that I was ready, for releasing me to fly on my own...

DAUGHTER SUSAN – for the letters, the advice, the concern... And for caring.

MAE STRELKOV – Earth Mother... Perhaps the most wise, and certainly the most beautiful human being it has ever been my privilege to know.

SHERYL – for simply being Sheryl...

DR. LIN & WHATSHISNAME – for more reasons over this past year than I can ever possibly list... and for the future... (I still say that she could do a lot better... Why him? ... And when I'm around!)

ummm. Oh, did I overlook someone? Oh, yes...

MICHAEL, me boy. God knows *why* I like the little fella – and God also knows he's made it difficult to do so at times... But for being there, for everything (well, almost) – Mike, I thank you.

...And if I ever get a chance to repay you...

Well, at least now we're even on the introductions – I realize that you had to have a bit more time to adequately cover my fannish career... I *did* have to pad that little Aussiecon piece I did for you, I'm afraid...

Do you folks realize that there are still people who are shocked to see Michael and I talking? To each other? Somehow – it couldn't be from lettercolumns; I don't write letters – they've even gotten the impression that we don't like each other.

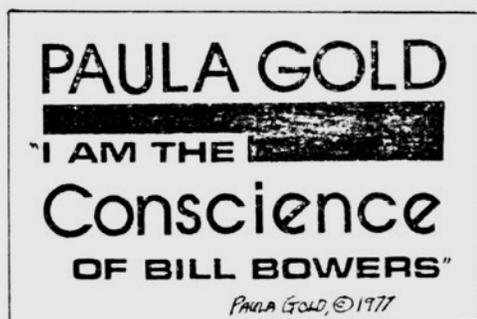
They're right, of course... But don't let him know I said that. He might have to cry over his bootleg FAAn Award...

AND THIS is the bottom line: Linda, I really, honestly, don't think that you have to worry about the future of the fannish con. You see, no amount of money on the face of the earth could have gotten me up here today. Only my fannish friends. And I mean that.

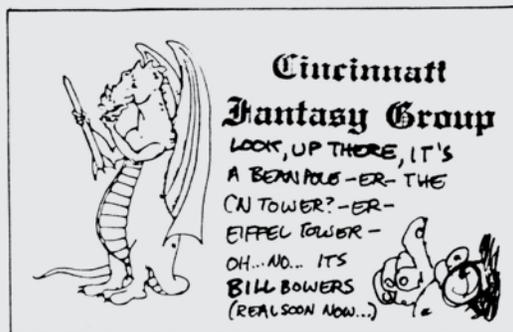
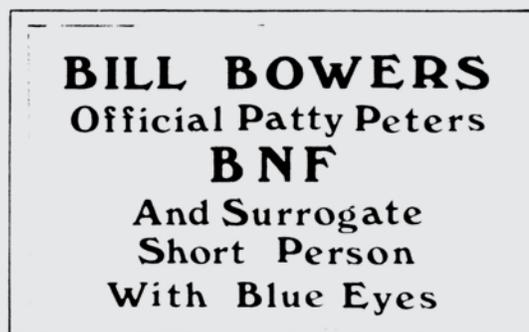
Fandom may well not be one happy family. But it's close enough for me.

And, for that, I thank you all...

from *Xenolith 1*, October 7, 1977



NAME BADGE GAME, Part 2



It has been evident for some time that Bowers is patterning his fan career after my own. I was a Guest of Honor at ConFusion, so he became one. I was a Worldcon Fan Guest of Honor, so naturally he had to be one also. (Of course, I'm going to be there to share in his hour of glory despite the fact that he never came to share in mine.) And in preparation for his Moment of Truth in Phoenix later this summer, Bill has so far presented two "practice speeches" at midwestern regional conventions.

The second was given back in April at Marcon 13 in Columbus, Ohio. Just before he shook his way up to the podium, Bill offered me the opportunity to publish his remarks if I felt like doing so. After I'd heard what he had to say, I most definitely did so feel.

Most **Xenium** readers will have encountered Harlan Ellison's "A Statement of Ethical Position By The Worldcon Guest of Honor" which appeared in **Janus**, **Locus** and **SFR** that I know of. Bill's second warm-up for Phoenix consisted of two parts: the first was a direct parody, into fannish terms, of Harlan's statement. The second part was a serious reaction and counterstatement to the position Harlan outlined. I thought both parts deserved to be published, and I promised Bill I'd have an issue ready for Midwestcon. Which explains the uncharacteristic speed with which this issue has appeared.

If you possibly can, read the first part of Bill's comments in conjunction with Harlan's original statement. You'll appreciate the skill with which the parody is wrought that much more if you do. And don't worry too much if some of the multitudinous esoteric in-group allusions pass you by: I doubt that even Bowers himself understands all of the obscure references he inserted!

As it happens, I'd spent an evening with Harlan here in Toronto just prior to Marcon so I knew how he felt about fan reaction to his statement of ethical position. But Bill Bowers wasn't just any old fan disagreeing with Harlan's stand, he was also a Guest of Honor at Iguanacon, so I sent Harlan a copy of Bill's remarks with an offer to publish his reaction, if he cared to voice one.

Hoo boy!!

– Mike Glicksohn | **Xenium 11**, June 1978

Bill Bowers' Second Practice Iguanacon Speech

*A Statement of Ethical Position
by the (Other) Worldcon Guest of Honor*

Xenium 11, June 1978 (Mike Glicksohn, editor)

IT IS NOT ENOUGH to write statements for fanzines; in this life we must make speeches as well. Otherwise we are lip-service fans. That is the basic problem. What it refers to, is not quite so... clearly printed. In point of fact, the situation to which that problem points, puts me – as they say – between a Dick Geis and an Andy Porter – but no, I'm not Charlie Brown.

I am very much in favor of the ERAFTP – the Equal Rights Amendment For Tall People.

Arizona is one of the states that *has* ratified the ERAFTP.

I think this is a bad thing.

(My short friends made me say that.)

[Insert obscure reference here: Strike obscure reference that was inserted there. I do it purposely to avoid lawsuits.]

But, as I boycotted the Miami Worldcon in large part because I couldn't afford to get there, and because I knew there would be a strong limey influence there, so should I now refuse to appear in Phoenix, because Eric Lindsay will be there? By turning down the accolade of being the 1978 Worldcon's Fan Guest of Honor – something that caps my 17 years, 8 months, and 21 days as a thoroughly unprofessional fan in the field – I would cause myself great relief: I

wouldn't have to make a speech. But would I be able to look at myself in the mirror and say: "They positioned these things too damn low!"?

This was to have been my course... and I could still chicken out.

But there are considerations which make such a decision extremely difficult. First, I was told about the Guest-of-Honorship after the convention was a ratified fact, when I was having a gay old time – sorry, Downes – in Kansas City, and I didn't need such grief. I just wanted to stay in the Phoenix bidding suite and get drunk, and to weasel out today would be unethical... and might imperil future highs. Second, that cause up there (whatever it was) is something in which I passionately believe, and I do think I have the right to morally blackmail the Iguanacon Committee into providing all the free booze that I can imbibe, although I've been advised that many of the members intend to drink me under Rusty's huckster table. Provided he moves to Arizona before the con.

If I were to vacate the Fan Guest of Honor slot, Leah would kill me. And god knows who they would give it to. I would also have to resume publishing *Outworlds*, and make my position known in *Captain Ro's Whizzbang*, *The Avenging Aardvark*, and other platforms of mass fan communication available to me. I would have to urge those who might be coming to Phoenix in part because I would be there, to stay away.

Bowers, stay away! (It says here.)

I would do that, at the convention's expense. It would be the logical extension of my illogical decision. But there is no way of ignoring the ugly reality that such actions on my part would in no way damage the Worldcon, let alone the good and decent fans – not to mention the Webberts – who have worked so long and hard to put Iggycon together. It would certainly save them financially if I didn't come. They have finally signed the contract they can't get out of; they could move the convention to another state, but I was so hoping that Glen Campbell would have gotten there by Labor Day. I would thus be bludgeoning innocent people with my unethical imperatives.

I would be playing a tune I don't know. (Which would be not unlike Al Curry drawing a cartoon.)

Rock. Very loud music.

When I decided that I should think all this out – i.e., when it became evident that the *other* Guest of Honor was getting all the publicity, and I was being left with only the CFG – I went to shorter heads for guidance.

They gave it with only a slight charge, but a lot of abuse. Stephanie Oberembt, Terry Matz, Carol Hoag who is the foot of the Iguanacon Committee, Lynn Parks (token tall person to balance Harlan's token male), Denise Parsley Leigh and Rosanne Rosanna Danna have suggested alternatives as to the extreme position I should assume. One of these alternatives seems perverse enough, both diseased and indirect enough for my own search for egoboo.

Thus it is: I will come to the convention as Fan Guest of Honor, but I will do so in the spirit of making the convention a platform for heightism, underlooking the awareness of fans and Arizona as a whole to the situation. I will not even demand that they replace Tim Kyger with a chairman of some stature. I will do this because I feel like, *Oh, why not?*, but in a way that will minimize any crippling to me below the knees.

I will coordinate with anyone who buys me a drink, and even collate if they wish. I can be bought. I will take every possible opportunity to publicize my position in one-shots that nobody reads. I have been assured by the executive committee of the Iguanacon that there will be time for me to sleep, and that movable platforms will make all speakers and panelists appear to be of equal height. Also, I was told to provide my own entertainment. ???

In this way I will attempt to make as much hay as I can out of an intentional moral dictation. I urge short people to rise above themselves to assist me in this. I suppose in some ways I'm trying to have my Twinkie and avoid being told to "Eat it!", too; but, gee whiz, I can't think of any other way to fill up this time Ross gave me tonight.

As for those who will begin the barrage of flack, well, I can take it: I come from northeastern Ohio. Just because I'm an "institution" (a mishap not of my doing) doesn't mean I have feelings. But may I just remind you that there is a not-so-recent precedent for utilizing a Worldcon for one's own political ends. I'm sure that the Futurians in 1939 believed just as passionately in their rights as any present-day blood-sucker. I am doing the same. And it sucks. But I find myself in my cups and *not* to do it would be sobriety.

As for those who share my belief that the ERAFTP is an issue worthy of US Congressional attention, Real Soon Now, I suggest that fans coming to the convention figure out where all the closed-door parties are... and let me know. The convention should assemble a list of acceptable closed doors, for those who prefer to party elsewhere than the CFG

suite. I will be one of those people if Tabakow's there. Don't shop in the stores; buy fanzines. Spend your money with Linda-Bushyager-Approved Non-Commercial Faneds. None of this is easy, but who ever said that anything that Mike Glicksohn has done can't be pleasurable to a normal-sized human being?

In brevity, let's *just for once*, in the world of S.F., talk the talk and not just walk the walk from party to party. For decades S.F. has trumpeted, and it's about time we changed our musical instrument. And yet, on the whole, S.F. fans and pros live in a Sometimes-Well-Maybe-Land when it comes to believing that the only platforms they should embrace are those under Derek's roommate's feet. I turn my head and say, "That's none of my affair."

Dealing with Harlan from far-flung Ohio is great fun, but I suppose I should be *concerned* about my own safety. Important things first: at what point do we put our bodies on the line... not on this point, believe me; I have no wish to appear in a Joe Haldeman novel. Can we continue to deal with fanzines as being something worthy of Dr. Fredric Wertham? I say *no*, let's put them back in the gutter, as Judy-Lynn Femmefan said, from whence they oozed. Let us howl at critics and reviewers like Buck Coulson; it's fun. Can we permit the gap between *Xenium* and *Ay Chingar!* to exist? Or is this, perhaps, a moment when we can make that foolish decision to publish our own crudzine, our literary abomination, our own platform from which to shoo flies?

I have made my decision. I will come down off my high horse long enough to go to the Worldcon. And I will pitch my tent in the suite the committee graciously offered me.

Arizona, the Worldcon... I offer you nothing.

...except my thanks for inviting me, in spite of my caustic treatment of your 'era' in doing so!

***** POSTSCRIPT *****

Now then... I still carry the scars of a previous encounter, thirdhand, with Harlan Ellison. I do not wish, believe me, for another. But I have to say something, lest my silence be construed as total consent with his methods to implement important and, yes, admirable goals.

You see, nowhere in his statements that I have seen does he mention that there is another Guest of Honor at this year's Worldcon. Or that that other person might *not* feel that politicizing the Worldcon is a "Good Thing", no matter how worthy the goal. In fact, I doubt that Harlan stopped to think that, when he initiated his actions – for reasons of concern, or

conscience – he might be demeaning something that others chose to consider a very high honor indeed.

I would be the very first to agree if you were to point out that I pale into insignificance compared to Harlan as a drawing card for any convention. And were someone to suggest that I might not deserve the honor these crazy Arizonians have bestowed on me, I would again be the first to agree. But all that is beside the point... once I accepted. I feel that I have an obligation, if not to help, at least not to hinder the committee as they work hard to get this thing together.

I was going to define "Guest of Honor", and attempt to put forth, in my terms (of course) the duties of the invited (the Guest) toward his host (in this case, a convention committee.) But the term is, at best, ill-defined these days: whether some Guests of Honor are chosen literally, or for the size of the crowds they'll draw, is a matter of conjecture. You pay your membership, you take your choice.

A lot of the things that are the most important to me, in life and in fandom, I attempt to make light of. It may not be the best method, but sometimes it's the only way I have of dealing with such things. (Institutions shouldn't cry in public.) I've had a lot of fun with the fact that the delegated members of the Phoenix bidding committee neglected to ask me if I'd be willing to be their Fan Guest of Honor until Friday night at Big MAC – after they'd won the bid! (Perhaps it is best it happened that way: if I'd known in advance, I surely would have chickened out.) I'm still nervous about it, and I'll be more so until it's over. And then I'll worry about how well I handled myself...

But it *is* important to me. As Mike Glicksohn said, "The Fan Guest of Honorship at a Worldcon is perhaps the highest honour a fan can receive": it isn't something you can "win", and as far as I know, it can't be purchased or traded for. I am flattered and I am humbled... but not likely to admit to either!

And it hurts to see something I look forward to enjoying immensely being usurped for personal, non-relevant (to a science fiction convention) actions.

Words are Harlan's craft: he uses them and he uses them well. If I have any similar "craft", it is the assembling of the creations of others into something I find pleasing. Even were I so inclined, I doubt I could "win" a contest of words with Harlan. I'm not about to try. I'm just trying to make my statement, for the record.

I don't feel that science fiction conventions, fans, or pros, need any group causes to justify themselves.

Neither do I like the idea that future conventions might become politicized to the extent that if I am not attuned to the ideologies of the chairman, or the Guest of Honor, or whoever happens to represent the most powerful “bloc” that year, I would not feel welcome. Right now I can attend a convention and find both Poul Anderson and Harlan Ellison present: I like it that way.

Listen, I spend the vast majority of my life in the real world, with causes, trials, and tribulations. I may not like the real world, but I cope, and I like to think that perhaps I’ve even gotten across to a few people the things I do feel important. By talking to them, not by shouting at them.

When I read a science fiction novel I do so for entertainment. I am not unwilling to listen to the author’s “message” – as long as it does not interfere with the flow of the story. Otherwise it should have been an essay or a political tract. When I go to a science fiction convention, I do so to be with my friends and to enjoy myself. It doesn’t always work out that way, but if it doesn’t, it’s probably my own fault, my hangups. Yet some of the best and most serious conversations I’ve ever had have taken place at frivolous conventions and fan parties. But they weren’t programmed, or forced down my throat. And if I have managed to overcome some of the prejudices I started out with – you know them by rote – it is in large measure because of the people I’ve encountered in socially-unredeeming science fiction fandom.

It would be the ultimate in self-serving cop-outs to say that I believe in and support the ERA. It would be the easy thing to say; it’s “in”. I’ll leave it this way: if you feel it necessary to judge me, please do so on the basis of what I *do* – not what I might say.

I’m sorry, but I don’t believe that you can legislate equality on the basis of sex with any greater degree of effectiveness than they tried to do on the basis of color. Some progress was made that way, yes: but not much. Women, blacks, gays, whoever, will get the “rights” they are “entitled” to only when they have the *economic* clout to take them; that’s not right, nor is it wrong – that’s the way things work here. Note damn well that I am not saying that the ERA is not to be sought after, fought for, achieved. Simply that it is a step, a goal, a rallying point – but it is neither the final solution, nor a religion.

I honestly believe that Harlan’s actions will hinder, not help, the cause. At least in Arizona. Maybe I’m judging too much on my own reactions, but then again, to attempt any other course would be to pretend to an impartiality I don’t possess.

I don’t know about you, but if you want to change *my* mind on something that was drilled into me in my formative years – as most prejudices are – you are not going to get anywhere with me by shouting. Or by dictating. Or by demeaning me. I am too stubborn, I can turn off very effectively. On the other hand, if you’re willing to talk to me, reason with me, most importantly show me that you practice what you preach, then, perhaps... It may take some time: I’m not always as easy as I’d like to be. But if it’s worth it to you, you have a chance...

The *people* I’ve encountered in 17 years in fandom, the ones I’ve loved, cared for and gone ridiculous distances to see, have done more to convince me that the prejudices of my parents are wrong than any amount of legislation or flag-waving. In any religion, the most fervent are the recent converts. It seems to be the curse of the Judaeo-Christian ethic that we must atone for our sins, imagined or unintentional as they might be. But what if the convert/crusader alienates the very people you need to reach your goals? Faint hearts never won anything of importance, but neither did overbearing zealots.

I don’t doubt Harlan’s current sincerity, believe me. But I can’t help feeling that if he did a bit more missionary work and a little less evangelical sermonizing, he might serve the cause better. But then, what do I know? I’m only a fan.

On the night I was belatedly told about my honor in Phoenix, I made two statements. One was that nobody not yet so honored *deserved* to be the science fiction Worldcon Guest of Honor more than did Harlan Ellison. The second was that I was immensely proud to share the billing with him. I meant them then. I mean them now.

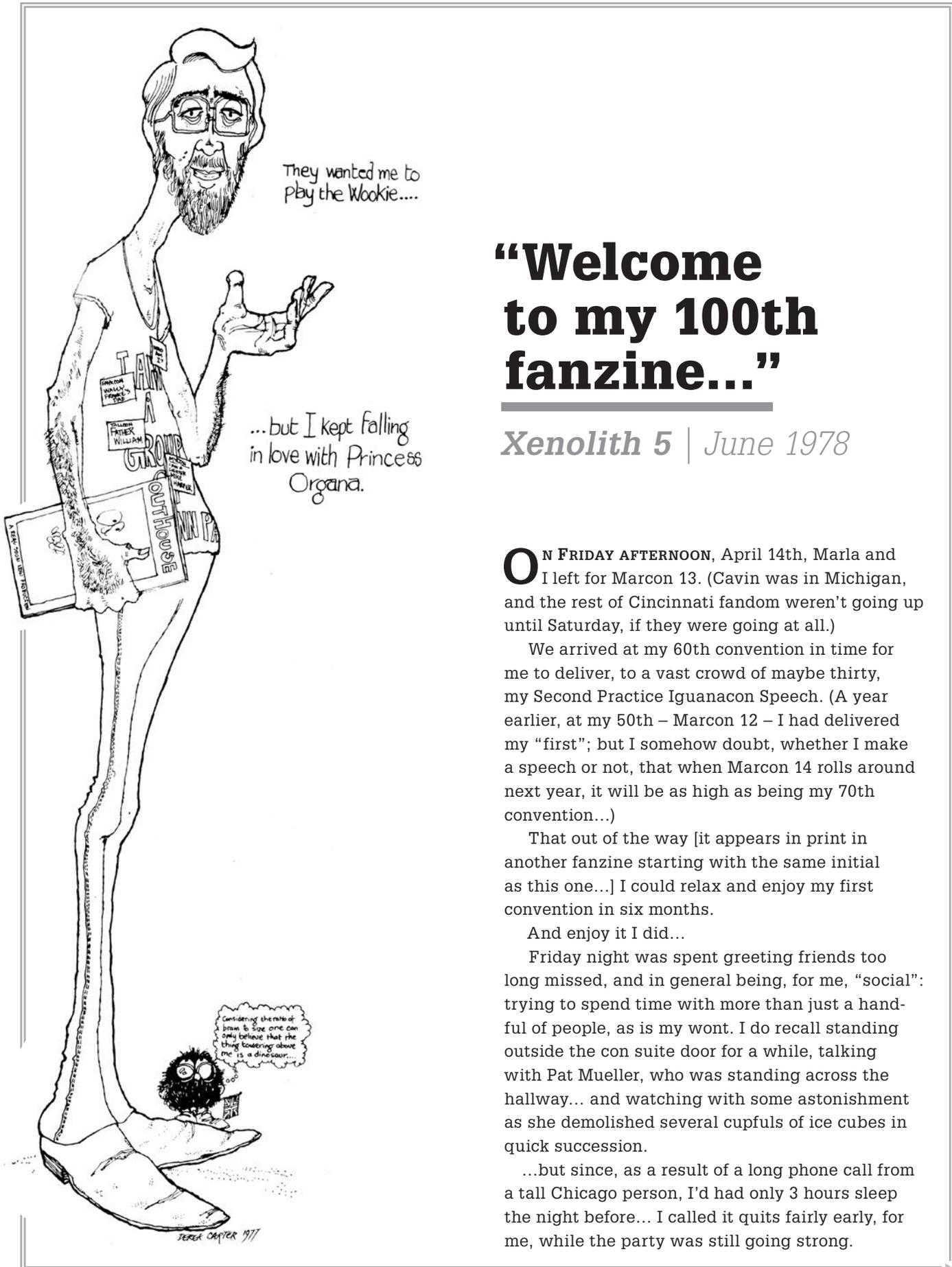
Harlan Ellison is something very special in the world of science fiction. And the more he pisses me off, the more I love him.

And he *does* piss me off at times!

May I do the same for you...

– Bill Bowers 4/13/78





“Welcome to my 100th fanzine...”

Xenolith 5 | June 1978

ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON, April 14th, Marla and I left for Marcon 13. (Cavin was in Michigan, and the rest of Cincinnati fandom weren't going up until Saturday, if they were going at all.)

We arrived at my 60th convention in time for me to deliver, to a vast crowd of maybe thirty, my Second Practice Iguanacon Speech. (A year earlier, at my 50th – Marcon 12 – I had delivered my “first”; but I somehow doubt, whether I make a speech or not, that when Marcon 14 rolls around next year, it will be as high as being my 70th convention...)

That out of the way [it appears in print in another fanzine starting with the same initial as this one...] I could relax and enjoy my first convention in six months.

And enjoy it I did...

Friday night was spent greeting friends too long missed, and in general being, for me, “social”: trying to spend time with more than just a handful of people, as is my wont. I do recall standing outside the con suite door for a while, talking with Pat Mueller, who was standing across the hallway... and watching with some astonishment as she demolished several cupfuls of ice cubes in quick succession.

...but since, as a result of a long phone call from a tall Chicago person, I'd had only 3 hours sleep the night before... I called it quits fairly early, for me, while the party was still going strong.

Saturday afternoon was spent mostly in the bar, with Al & Tanya, Marla, Sid, and Karen Persello... and others who wandered in and out. There was a flying visit by Denise and groupies and Cincinnati's cutest "couple" – Art and Don. Al, Tanya, Lou Jr., Marla, Ric, & I went across the street to Bob Evans for supper. Cavin found us. (Strange, there is a Bob Evans across the street from the Midwestcon hotel; I'm not quite sure what that proves, but I'm sure I'll think of something, given time...)

Later, Ric, Tanya, Lou Jr., Marla and I went across the parking lot to the bowling alley to investigate the pinball machines. There we found the fabled "Ego" machine: I mean, when Marla rang up 400,000 points on the first ball, we knew that this was our kind of machine. [It had a few other quirks which lead me to suspect that its accuracy in scoring is matched only by the accuracy in reportage practiced by a certain Toronto-based newszine, whose title shall be **DNQ** for the moment...]

...after the parties began, and at the urging of my former friend Tanya (thought I'd forgotten about the rope trick, eh?), I at last joined the ranks of caftan fandom. And, once I got rid of the boots – what was I to know – the reaction was quite favorable. With one notable exception:

.....
 "I like my men in pants."
 Copyright 1978 by Leah Zeldes.

(I will say that, after attempting to go to the john in the damn thing, I have a much greater appreciation of what women have gone through... Other than that, it's the most comfortable "public" garment I've found since my sack shirt; I like it.)

At some point close to midnight, I ended up in the con suite, and eventually carved a niche out on the couch. And eventually, the spot to my side became vacant...

...in issue 7 of **Father William's MISHAP-ventures**, in a mailing comment to Janet Small written in January 1977, I said: (...one thing) that I've noticed is this: of the (still) handful of people I consider close friends, none achieved that "status" overnight – even tho it sometimes seemed so. More often than not, it was someone whom I'd seen at 3 or 4 cons... someone I knew the name of and not much more... and then, suddenly, for no apparent reason, at a particular con, something clicked. It's

happened several times over the past year... and it continues to amaze me. And intrigue me.

I don't know: I'm not into mysticism and I don't really believe in predetermination, but sometimes... Are these things really accidental, dependent on a fluke of fate?

...and what a difference a mere couple of minutes may have made!

What if Pat had come into the con suite a minute earlier when someone was sitting beside me? Or what if she had come in a few minutes later, and someone else had filled the vacuum? Or what if, even coming in at precisely the moment she did, I had not had the nerve to ask: "Why don't you sit here?"? Idle speculation... yes. Or maybe not. I wonder.

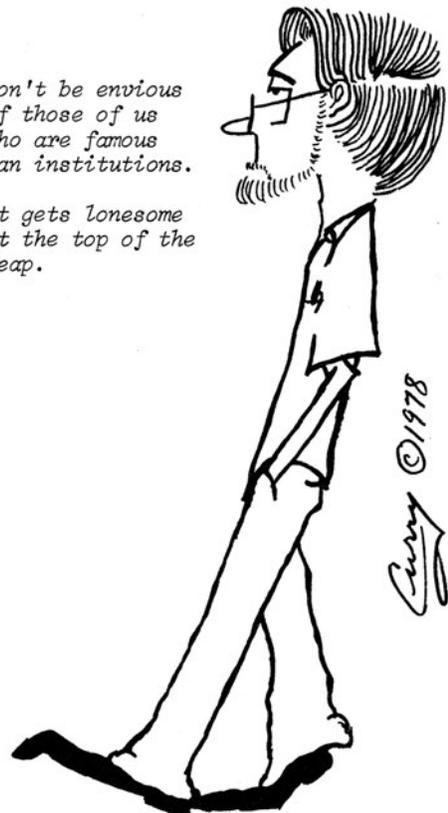
I met Pat Mueller, briefly, at ConFusion 14, a few weeks after that italicized quote was written. I saw her, briefly, Friday night at Minicon... and, briefly, Saturday morning at last year's Midwestcon, when she asked me where to register... and I saw her even more briefly at AutoClave 2.

I knew I liked her; it's the reason she was on the **Xenolith** list from the beginning.

But I didn't know her.

*Don't be envious
 of those of us
 who are famous
 fan institutions.*

*It gets lonesome
 at the top of the
 heap.*



I've told Pat repeatedly that the reason I asked her to sit was that I was so shocked to see her two nights in a row at a con, I couldn't believe it. And that's part of it...

Whatever... After the con suite closed, we formed a small hall party. And after Karen and Phil wandered off, we walked the hallways, had breakfast, and sat by the pool until people began stirring again. And when she got in the van to leave that afternoon, I said something to the effect of "See you at Midwestcon".

Which is this weekend.

It had been nine weeks before Marcon since I'd been out of town, or had out-of-town visitors. In the nine weekends since, only two were spent without seeing Pat. (This may not seem unusual, but when you realize that it is 330 miles and 5½ hours driving flat-out from door to door...)

Well, you see, Larry Tucker was having his annual Walpurgis Nacht Party two weeks after Marcon, so I wrote to Pat... "Gee, it's not all that far from East Lansing..." And the following weekend she was going to Toronto, and I hadn't been there for over a year (and besides, Mike said I should come), so I drove to Annie Hall after work Friday, and then we drove to Toronto with Patrick and Anne Laurie... And the following weekend Cavin was having an "open" CFG meeting, so Pat came down... And... And...

And my phone bill has shot back up. And I wasn't *supposed* to be doing all this running about given my finances... (But both should be cut back, way back, in August...)

I still haven't the faintest idea of what's happened or why: all I do know is that I have not been this happy, this long, for as long as I can remember back. I'm paranoid enough to believe that it's probably all a dream, but if it is, please don't pinch me!

Pat, now that I've thoroughly embarrassed you, thank you... just for being you!

...back to my comment to Janet: immediately following the portion quoted [earlier], I said: *I am very intense and very one-person directed when I'm with someone I really want to be with; I am aware of that... and I've had it pointed out to me when someone else I'm equally close to feels that I've shut them out. That's something I'm working on.*

I'm still working on it.

Somewhere in all that traveling was the latest Sidcon, which the assumption and I attended. I must admit to having been somewhat baffled when, repeatedly Friday night, Larry Downes kept sticking his puny little chest in my face, saying "Look at my t-shirt!" In fact it wasn't until Saturday night that it was explained to me what the emblazoned words "I AM NOT MELLOW" meant.

But then, I'd never gotten a walking billboard LoC before...

Larry, I'm flattered.

...and really pleased to see how well you're dealing with your new mellow image!

Oh, yes: A little over a week after Marcon I got this phone call from Harlan... you see, and he berated me... But that's another story for another "X"-zine...

This is my 100th fanzine. And I was really going to make it something special. But maybe the fact that it is what it is... is special enough. I am not unpleased. But in the meantime, it's now 3am in the morning of June 22, and I probably won't make it to the pre-con party at the hotel tonight... but I'll be there in the early afternoon tomorrow, and I'll get to see Terry, Steph, Patty, Lynn, Eric and many others for the first time in much too long a time. And tomorrow night Pat will be coming in. And I will have one more all too brief a time with my friends. Who can ask for more? (You're gushing, Bowers!)

Bill

from *Xenolith 5*, June 1978

A Brief Word about the "Cover": It comes from a card Michael Harper commissioned Derek to do for my birthday last year, and inside it reads:

*This is a very tall card for a tall person...
...commissioned by a medium sized twit from...
...a very small artist..."*

The original is 22" tall! (& My Printer wishes to point out to My Stat Maker: challenge met!)

Tucker was my straight man...

Xenolith 6 | July 18, 1978

FIRST, I WAS going to publish an issue for AutoClave, and run "Bill Bowers' Third Practice Iguanacon Speech". Then I decided not to publish an issue for AutoClave... everyone would be expecting me to do one. So I bribed Denise into taking the speech for her second issue (she does need the help, after all)... But then I decided the idea of going to a convention "oriented toward fanzine fans" without *something* seems rather ridiculous. So, this.

Besides... I have to have something to give to Brian Earl Brown this weekend, or he'll think that I don't like him anymore!

No, I didn't make it to the Thursday-night pre-Midwestcon party, but by arranging to work an extra hour the first four days of the week, I arrived at the (new) hotel a little after one, Friday afternoon. And proceeded to stand in the registration line for a ridiculous amount of time. What were all these people doing here this early?

I suppose taking a room at a convention less than ten miles from where I live – particularly since it looks like I'll end up staying at Sid's for AutoClave, and crashing at Rivercon – is the height of fiscal irresponsibility. But I'd promised Denise, in more affluent days, that I'd split a room with her and Steve. I must admit that it was nice not to have to drive home at some wee hour, and since I made out well in the hucksters' room (thank you, Robert E. Howard), well... I would, however, like to personally thank whoever it was on the committee who arranged for us to have the room next to the consuite.

After unloading things into the room and, with Art's help, unloading the rest of the stuff into the hucksters' room, I spent most of the afternoon setting up my table, and talking to people as they wandered by. Eventually I escaped out to the hallway, saw Tim Kyger – and said, "Where's Patty?"

I'm really glad Patty Peters made it back for Midwestcon; I hadn't seen her since she and Bill stopped in Cinti on their Amtrak-way-west last fall. And while I got to spend a fair amount of time with her, it seemed like she, Tim, and Phil Paine were leaving before they got there...

It was somewhere in mid-afternoon Friday that someone said something about having read my speech. It took a moment to sink in... and to realize that no, Madman Riley *hadn't* been at Marcon and heard it, so... When Mike agreed to print the damn thing, I asked one favor of him: that he not distribute copies at Midwestcon until *after* I'd repeated the speech Saturday evening there. So not to have to worry about it, Mike mailed out copies of the relevant **Xenium** the Tuesday before Midwestcon. Apparently, in one of the greatest flukes of the century, the Canadian and U.S. postal systems combined to not only get copies to Chicago and Minneapolis, but as far as California within two days. *sigh*

It certainly wasn't Mike's fault; not even science fiction could have predicted such a thing! But I was a bit upset, and must confess to a certain small degree of harassing Mike about it. I wonder if all of this had anything to do with what happened later.

In the early evening, Denise and I went with Mike to his room to get my copy of **Xenium**. I mean, since apparently everybody else at Midwestcon had seen it in print, why shouldn't I?

The next afternoon Mike happened to mention in my presence that he wondered who'd been in his room the previous night who smoked. Cigarettes. Apparently he honestly doesn't remember *anything* of the time Denise and I spent in his room, or of the strange and wonderful things we did together.

Denise and I are currently trying to decide whether it is to our advantage to Tell All. Or simply to continue blackmailing Mike...

Which way do you vote?

About ten Friday evening, when I was on my way out to the lobby to wait for Pat's arrival, Patty asked if she could use the john in our room. So there I was, very innocently, with a drink in one hand, the key in the door to the room, with an attractive young woman beside me... when I was literally attacked from behind without warning!

When Pat Mueller sees what I'm going to do to her at AutoClave... (Of course, she'll probably have scouts out as far as the Michigan-Ohio border, but never fear, I shall find a way to circumvent them!)

I spent most of Saturday faithfully at my huckster table; but I'd like to thank Al Curry, and Pat, for giving me a couple of breaks to wander around.

I spent most of Friday *and* Saturday being nervous about doing *that* speech again.

Saturday evening, Fred Haskell, Kathi Schaefer, Patty, Pat and I went out to get supplies for Patty's Quakecon party (yet another story) and to our own mini-banquet at ye olde Western Sizzlin' Steak House.

When we got back, and I established when the speech was to be, I changed into the discreetly-see-thru caftan Pat had made for me – and lost my nerve.

"But *you* picked out the material," she said.

"But *you* said the other material would be too heavy," said I.

So Pat wore the caftan, and I delivered the speech in jeans and my shirt of many colors.

But come Iguanacon...

The microphone kept slipping, so Bob Tucker held it for me. Having Tucker as a straight man is neat, and something I think I'll ask for at Phoenix.

The rest of the convention is mostly a pleasant blur, even tho I was sick Sunday.

There is one thing I forgot to mention about Friday night (the Perils of First Draft Stencilling):

Pat, Patty and I were walking somewhere, when Patty heard Diane Drutowski's voice and disappeared around a corner.

"My God," Pat said, "they *squeaked* at each other!"

So I listened, and had to agree: Patty and Diane don't talk to each other – they literally "squeak" at each other. Weird.

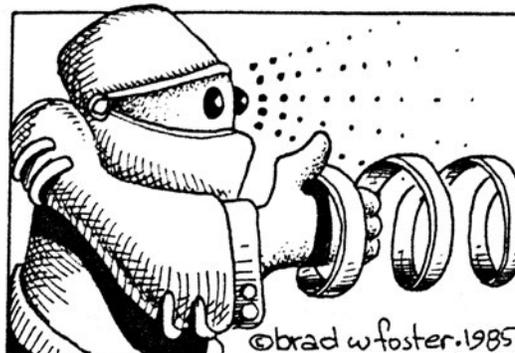
I was going to leave soon after Pat did Sunday evening, but... I guess I am somewhat predictable: after the poolside/patio party broke up, and after watching Flash's slides of last year's Midwestcon (preceded by a commercial, of all things), I ended up having a long and serious, but pleasant, conversation with Terry, Mary and Mike, before leaving about 2am Monday morning, in the middle of a crashing thunderstorm.

I've always enjoyed Midwestcons, but this one was really nice. The fact that I selfishly appropriated most of Pat's time had a lot to do with it, but the chance to spend time with Patty, Terry and Stephanie (none of whom I'd seen since last summer) and Eric (who I hadn't seen in a year and a half) made it all that much more a treat.

Pat was down for four days over the Fourth, and the following weekend I went up to see my parents on Friday night, before coming back down to Columbus Saturday eve for Sarah Prince's combo birthday party/CCSFS meeting. Strangely enough, Pat also showed up.

Last weekend was the first weekend since the one before Memorial Day that I didn't get to see Pat. I survived, with the aid of that venerable establishment, Hap's Irish Pub, and friends: Tanya, Al, and Denise.

And Pat and I made the Bell establishment considerably wealthier.



Letters to Friends

Xenolith 7 | October 22, 1978

This particular issue is for friends who were there when I needed them... and for those who will, foolishly, be there when I again need them. In Phoenix, and beyond...

IMAKE NO GREAT SECRET of my admiration for the writings of Don C. Thompson: the honesty and emotion that pours from the pages of *Don-O-Saur* is awe-inspiring and an almost tangible piece of a man's life laid out before me. It is something I admire and envy. Yet, in its own way, it is all rather frightening.

Because...

I knew this fan who was a devotee of Don, and his style of writing. This fan published a small fanzine, and in many ways attempted (and in a few succeeded) to emulate Don's honesty in writing. Now then, this fan was at a convention and witnessed (strictly accidentally) a very emotional scene between two other fans at that convention. Returning home, the fan wrote a con report – and retold the incident. Oh, the names were changed – and beyond a shadow of a doubt 90% of the readers of that fanzine would not have known who was being talked about, even had they cared. But the fact remained that at least one of the primaries was in no way prepared to deal with any public retelling of what happened at that con, no matter how discreet the rendering: this was a very private, very emotional, and very hurting experience. And the irony remains that the fan who wrote the report witnessed it through only the most unlikely set of circumstances imaginable.

I was the fourth person there, in that room, at that convention. I was there because they were my friends. I was there because I was involved, even though I was not one of the principals. The person who wrote that report was there, primarily, through my doing. [But not totally; these things get incredibly complicated... or is it only me?]

Because the fan “reporter” had enough sense to send an advance copy of the con report to the principals, I was able to exert enough influence so that the piece never saw print. This was prior-censorship; but the preservation of someone very dear to me was involved. Those who knew the principals knew, or could pretty well guess, just what occurred there. Those who don't, well, they'll not know from me. You see, even though that convention was a very long time ago, it was only yesterday also, and there are still feelings, very deep feelings, involved.

Total honesty is not all it's cracked up to be.

Especially when it involves people other than the narrator.

I try to be as honest as I can, with myself, in my fanzines. It's rough, given the nature of Bowers, and the strictures imposed by the Bowers-upbringing.

I do try to be discreet when others are involved: I'm very aware that once something is printed, it never totally disappears, no matter how much one might wish it to do so. (Seen any copies of *Abanico #1*, recently?)

But...

I don't hide too well the fact that I care for certain people very much. I rarely try. This is something it took me a very long time, and a very great deal of work to accomplish. And I'm proud of it: I am not ashamed of the people I spend the majority of my time with – the people I care for, the people I love... even though I can't always show it. Even though it isn't always reciprocated on an equal level.

But there's this problem, you see: Even though (somewhat purposely) I've done nothing of substance in the last two years, I am something of a somebody within the mighty world of fandom. As such, I am visible even when I don't always want to be. People seen with me, are identified with me; and I encourage it. People make their assumptions, and I do very little to disillusion them, whether they are valid or not. This is all very flattering to me; it is not necessarily fair to inflict on other parties. But it happens; human nature is a valid cliché.

I have this other very basic problem. (Self-Deprecation 101.) Perhaps I build it up too much; perhaps, in the vast scope of things-at-large it is not all that important. Be that as it may be; it is of vital concern to me, to the way I function, and to the way I deal with people. And it is this:

Do the people who spend time with me do so because I'm *me*, or because I'm "Bill Bowers", semi-well-known former faned.

The friends who are the most precious to me are those who have had the patience to convince me, if only for a while, that the former is, in reality, the case. This is, I know, all very egotistical, selfish, and petty. Yet, regardless of that, the people who deal with me, have to learn to deal with that aspect of me. It may not be "right", but it's in there, and the skepticism runs very deep.

I know myself to a certain degree; I know pretty much how I'll react to certain situations. Yet knowing all that, I can't always react the way I *want* to... the way I should...

All of this is, of course, prelude. I rarely get to anything directly; I always have to "explain" things. Or at least try to.

Names are not important; people are. Those who know, will know; those who don't are free to speculate. This is not fair; it is called self-preservation.

There are times that I should not write, and do. There are times I should have written, and didn't. I don't want to hurt, or embarrass in any way the people I care about. I do both; and I do both knowing what I'm doing. I'm sorry, but I do what I have to do. We all do, because if we do otherwise, nothing is ever solved... only avoided.

...I don't know: Maybe it's that the world is simply not ready for a happy Bill Bowers yet.

I had this dream once, you see.

...and then somebody pinched me.

...Letter To A Friend

I never wrote you the letters I wrote to others. Perhaps I should have; perhaps you would have known me better. Perhaps things would have been different; but probably not. This is not such a letter; it is neither the place, nor the time... That time is past; it was a different place.

What is this then?

...it is a cry of lament for what might have been and yet, strangely, it coexists with a song of joy for what was. It is simultaneously the sincerest way I know of saying: "Thank you for being a part of my life" – and the Eternal Question: "Why?"

This won't be long; you may get that letter yet. Or you may not. It's in my head: whether it stays there, or spews forth onto paper, only time will tell.

Communication: the bane of interpersonal contact. The one thing I practice incessantly, but never come close to perfecting. To understand me, at all, you have to understand one basic fact: As long-winded as I am, with this strange blend of obscure references combined with probably too much frankness... I am much more at ease behind the security of a typewriter and the postal "system", than I am in person, or even over that strange hybrid – the telephone – where I can hear you, but not see you. In this form I can think things out in advance; revise them (though I rarely do) if they don't come out the way I want them to. Over the telephone, well, I can cover to a certain degree: blaming obscurities on static on the line, or the traffic outside my window. I can hear the inflections in your voice that I can't catch in print – but I still can't *see* you, and determine whether the inflections are valid, or not. It is an imperfect medium, and by its inconsistencies, much more frustrating than print, or direct contact.

You were different. I *could* talk to you, in person, and you would listen. It's the closest I've ever come to attaining the degree of direct communication I seem to be continually searching for, and for that, if for no other reason (and there *are* many), I thank you.

There are, yes, the hurts.

There are the things I wanted to show you, that I never got around to. There are the experiences that I wanted to share with you... that will never be. There are the things that I did, and shouldn't have; the things I said in the spur of the moment, and regretted... but once said...

There is this feeling that without you I am less than I was before; there is the selfish reaction of: "It must be my fault; what did I do this time?"

And there is that bewildering sense of loss always; the pain and emptiness of being lonely that I know so well... but I know it so well only because I have experienced otherwise.

There is, also, the blow to ego. But that's my burden to outgrow; not yours.

And there is the hurting, aching, self-pitying act I know so well: I am well-versed in the art.

Then there is the realization that I made one very basic mistake: No involvement (this time) I proclaimed loudly and persistently. But, as we both know, I did become involved: I came to care for you a lot more than I was prepared to admit was possible for me.

There are the hurts, yes; but there is no regret.

You see, surmounting all of this is the sheer joy of having known you, of having been able to share a portion of your life. You did more *for* me than you'll ever realize:

Because of you, I had the three happiest months of my life.

I have this friend who, in similar circumstances, told me that the joy of what was, is not worth the pain that comes with loss. I disagreed with her then.

...and even though when hurt, I hurt back (perhaps it is only human?) I disagree with her now. Time doesn't heal; what it does is it endures, until the next time. And even though, right now, I say there will be no next time, I know that there will be. I will meet someone, and, no doubt the curtain will rise on the next scenario in the play of my life. And it will be new, and it will be good, and I will play my role again.

And I will be cynical and self-protective; and I will be gosh-wow and let myself go... I will do so because, even if I do go about it rather strangely, I *am* a living, functioning human being.

If you, my friend, can ever tell me just what happened, please do. I need to know.

But, for now, go where you must. Do what you feel you must. And please, don't forget me.

You have a portion of my life in your hands, and I, yours. What was, was. What is...

And remember this: if ever you need me, you have but to let me know. I say that to very few people; I say it to you... because, no matter what

happens, I care for those few people I care for, very, very much indeed.

Forgive me, please, the hurt and embarrassment I've caused you.

And whatever you do, do it because you *want* to do it, not because you should.

Be happy.

...Letter To (Another) Friend

When I knew that I had to get away, for a little bit, to start the healing process, I called you first. I had other "options", yes, and that is nice to know. But once before, in a different world, under different circumstances, a long time ago, you unquestioningly took me in, and helped put me back together. I remember.

I think what I like about you the most is the fact that while you do care, and understand, you won't humor me. Too many people tell me what they think I want to hear. Well-intentioned, but ineffective.

In some ways I'm sorry we didn't go out and "do" something that weekend, but I needed the break, and I was feeling mellow (something in itself rare for me), and thoroughly enjoyed just sitting and talking.

Incidentally, I *did* appreciate the choice of music you played for me: It's well known that I'm a total musical illiterate, but I'm getting increasingly into it.

The first time I heard Joe Walsh's *Life's Been Good To Me*, after the split, it hurt a bit – but, all things considered, it's true. (In fact that song may well end up the cornerstone of the selections for this 90-minute tape I'm assembling, titled *Putting Bill Bowers Back Together, Reprise*. I figure that with the right combination of songs – God knows there's enough candidates – I ought to have it whipped. [Of course, there's still a bit of hope for me: I haven't played any Ronstadt recently... and I *always* play Ronstadt when I'm emotionally depressed!])

...it's good to know that I've got friends who, even if we haven't communicated for six months or so, I can simply call up and say, "Hey, can I come and crash with you for a weekend?" – and know that you'll say "yes" without hesitation... without asking why.

Thanks; it helped.

You're a total turkey... but I love you anyway.

...Letter To (Yet Another) Friend

...it wasn't my idea, but I'm really glad we called you that Saturday afternoon.

Yes, I know that I could have come and seen you that weekend; and I wouldn't have had any hesitancy in asking, or doing that had I had to. You know that.

You see, even though we haven't really "talked" for a couple of years, there is no doubt in my mind that you know me better than any other human being alive. We've been through a lot, together and apart, old friend. And I've probably hurt you endlessly, but I love you very much – and I know that you will always be there if I ever really need you. And that's why it hurts so very much when people see *only* the schticks and the routines, and give that as the reason for not asking you to do something I wanted very much to have you do for me, since I had done it for you. They just don't understand.

But then, demonstrating caring and love for one of one's own sex is so very hard to do. For me, at least. But I'm working on it.

You know a little of what I'm about to go through in Phoenix. And I may very well accept that offer to lean on you for support. Because you meant it. Or: conversely, I may not need your support. We shall see.

Either way... whatever: We both know how rough it is... if you ever *need* me you have perhaps the highest priority. Even though you almost never exercise it.

We go our way, the both of us, to the best of our ability. Most don't understand at all... but a precious few understand a little bit. But we do seem to survive, don't we?

I don't know what strange quirk of fate made you my friend, but whatever the reason: Thanks for being there.

Letter To Friends... Here...

...and you know who you are.

No, I didn't *have* to go away that weekend. I could have stayed here; I know that you care... and I knew that I could have leaned on you, and you would have coped with it.

You've known me, in terms of length, less than the above two, but you get the "benefit" of me on a continual basis... and I can't unload on you all the time.

Very few people become precious to me, and right now there's no single larger geographical concentration of those people – still not that many – as there is here in Cincinnati.

And, even if I do go away – having to, or simply to start anew; I don't know yet – I know that I can always come "home" if I have to. I give so little, and take so much – that I don't deserve people like you. But I do care; please believe that.

A Letter To Readers...

This is, yes, an "unfair" issue. But I had to do it; with some things, I have to get them down on paper before I can understand them... before I can deal with them. Some of you will know the identities involved in the preceding *Letters*; others will speculate. Please don't ask; for my sake, and for theirs.

Next time, whenever, *Xenolith* may be back to fun and levity: my life is like that. But then, maybe my life isn't quite as unique as I'd like it to be?

I laugh and I cry. I love and I hate. I hurt and I hurt back. I will give anything to one I care for, but I am totally selfish. I get in over my head occasionally, but I can also walk on water.

Perhaps, in my mid-thirties, I am just entering the adolescent real world; or perhaps I *am* locked into perpetual, recurring patterns. I know I over-dramatize; I know that I can hype you while bleeding before your very eyes: the preceding several pages are totally sincere – yet at one and the same time, they are the most carefully controlled, coldly self-serving words I have ever written.

I am different things to different people; I am a different person at different times. And if you have a bit of difficulty comprehending just what it is at a particular moment, just think of what it must be like for the mind, soul, and heart that is locked into the selfsame body...

Letter To Myself

Bowers, one of these days, you've really got to grow up and stop doing things like this.

But it's so much fun!

But it solves nothing; that you have to do alone, and in private...

Maybe you should go back to doing semi-pretentious fancy fanzines...

[written 13 August, 1978]

Definitely not an “After Iguanacon” report...

Xenolith 7 | October 22, 1978

...and here it is, the Sunday evening before Octocon (the “real” one) again...

TIMEBINDING ASIDE: *Double:Bill 7*... 100 pages. *Outworlds Seven*... 50 pages. *INworlds 7* graduated from letter- to legal-size. *Xenolith 7* comes out to a grand total of 10 pages. Now I’m certain there’s neither a pattern, nor any great significance in those stats, but.

Internal evidence will show that this really wasn’t intended to be The Gala First Anniversary Issue. The “exercise” that takes up 4.5 pages was written in mid-August. Shortly thereafter, I decided against publishing it; but on my return from Phoenix I changed my mind, and fully intended to have it out by mid-September and another, *X-8*, out by now.

But... With the Ides of August rationalized, and the culmination of the two-year “trip” to Iguanacon over, I came home on an emotional high, ready to “do things” at last. Unfortunately, I have to contend with this, my physical body, which has a time-track of its own. Came this one Sunday evening when I was faced with the sensation of an almost total lack of the ability to breathe. I got a bit shook, and drove myself the two miles to the emergency ward.

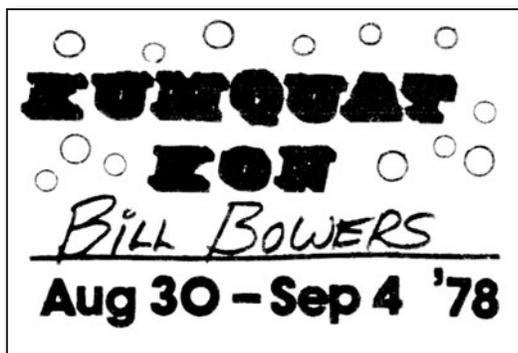
They call it “acute bronchial asthma”; whatever it is, it’s the total pits. I missed two weeks of work (no work / no pay), and spent most of that time imposing on

Tanya & Al, until I finally reacquired the ability to walk from the living room to the kitchen without (literally) gasping for breath.

Missed PgHLANGE, but Marla, Denise and I did make it to Windycon, which was fun. And I was feeling better, so, of course, I stopped taking the pills... and I’ve spent the past couple of weeks paying dearly for that indiscretion. Maybe I’ve learned my lesson at last: I’m taking the medication religiously, trying to be a good boy... I really don’t enjoy feeling like this, and besides, I *want* to go to Octocon... and then, there’s ConClave the following weekend...

I’m not going to do an Iguanacon “report”: Time has, as expected, dulled some of the bitterness and disappointments. And besides, not only did I make it through, but I did so to a degree much higher than I, and some others, thought possible. ...and despite a “failure to communicate” with the committee (that led to Rotsler giving me a “WHO AM I?” badge to wear), I did so on my terms. You

will pardon a certain bit of the pride I take in the fact that... from my arrival Monday until Mike bought me a drink *after* the speeches Sunday, I didn’t have a single drop of anything stronger than straight Coke. (And, even including that, the total was only four drinks when I left Phoenix.)



Add to that the fact that a) I had the nerve to wear the caftan, and b) I did not fall flat on my face in front of almost 2,500 people... well, call it ego or whatever, but there's really nothing I can't do now – if I set my mind to it!

I did it. And I did it largely on my own.

But I had help, caring, and support: Marla. Mike. Patty. Steve & Denise... and I can't forget the kindness of Jim Corrick. Or Gay Miller... whom I'd never met before backstage pre-"the"-speech, but who held me together long enough to get out there. Or Kathi Schaefer, incredibly busy but with time for a smile and an encouraging word several times when I needed them most. Or Curt and Mahala Stubbs... or Renée Sieber (sometimes one discovers a friend under the strangest of circum-

stances)... all of whom helped more than they knew; all of whom I want to know better.

And now it's over, and I can relax. For a moment... There's 1982, you see, and...

Marla says I promised to have **Outworlds 30** out for ConFusion. Denise is saying the same thing... but neither can remember *when* I said something that foolish. But both promised to help, so we shall see. Where that leaves **Xenolith**, I know not. Whatever... it's been a year: both the very best and the very worst... status, normal! Thanks to all of you for, each in your own way, being a part of this, my life...

Bill [10/22/78]

from *Xenolith 1 (Second Series)*, January 8, 1979

...in those euphoric moments following my Iguanacon speech, after Mike, Marla, and I managed to squeeze past the hordes descending on the Hugo winners and escape to the lobby and waiting friends... I was approached by a man, handed a sample cassette, and was asked if I'd be willing to do an on-tape interview. I begged off as best I could; that was not the moment in any event. I never do well, to my satisfaction – but I do much better when I can write it out first.

It's the same when people ask me to do things for their fanzines or a special project. I am flattered, but most of the things I do, I use myself. If not, I do them first... and then decide where to send them. Assignments are not my thing; and anyways, I'm not that prolific. Not even with "speeches"...



from *Xenolith 40*, June 30, 1997

Issue 7. This contained my attempted "understanding" of the break-up of one of the two most important relationships in my life. It was not easy to write; it is not easy to (re)read. But it is one of perhaps the three most therapeutic pieces of writing (all in pages under this title) that I've done. It is there, on the record.

Another Fresh Start

Xenolith 1 (Second Series) | January 8, 1979

O*utworlds* IS NOT DEAD, he said. Repeatedly. It is only resting. And, having rested...

You were expecting, maybe, *Outworlds 30*?

Well, until perhaps a month ago, so was I. With, for better or worse, my excuse for two years procrastination out of the way... I apparently (in a moment of weakness) made a statement, in front of witnesses, that I would have an issue of *Outworlds* out for ConFusion. Now, once or twice in my life, I've made foolish statements before. But this time I made the mistake of saying it in front of two very persistent persons – Gold, Marla, and Parsley Leigh, Denise – who would not let me back down. I suppose that eventually I'll end up thanking them for the continual prodding... in time. In the meantime, if you are one of the milling hordes of people thrilled to find Bowers “doing something” again, Denise and Marla deserve a large measure of the credit. (And I'll get them for it, too: they promised to “help”... and I've only begun to count the ways.)

...of course it is still my remembrance that I never said *which* ConFusion. But in order to maintain harmony in the Wonderful World of Cincinnati Fandom (a Lou Tabakow / Sean Curry Enterprise), I am willing to make certain sacrifices.

It's not that I've been totally inactive since October of 1976 when *Outworlds 28/29* came out: over the intervening years I did a couple of apazines, several flyers for parties & things, stand accused of having inspired a particularly catty fanzine – have lent out this Selectric toward the production of several issues of other Cinti fanzines – and published seven issues of a personalzine. Just to keep my hand in it, so to speak.

The name of that personalzine (I *hate* the term “perzine”, especially when it is pronounced!) was: *Xenolith*...

I once (at least) said that the basic concept of *Outworlds* was such that I could publish anything I wanted to under that title. And I did...

And there's nothing stopping me from doing so now. Except me. By that curious combination of intentions modified by conditions leading to actual execution, the material you get in this issue would have been basically the same – and in almost the same format – no matter the title employed to identify it.

Why then, the (fair) question is, a title change?

Two reasons, really. The first of which is that no matter how large the gap between issues, the name *Outworlds* carried definite pretensions – an image I somewhat purposely built, and deliberately cultivated... but implications of which are now of necessity invalidated. Yes, *Xenolith* is a continuation of what came before, but perhaps not a direct one. That we will see.

...and I suppose that (selfishly) I'd like to give the material in this issue a chance to stand on its own – and not be judged against that making up *OW28/29* or preceding issues. (But of course it will be.)

The second (and probably major) reason is that periodically I feel the need for a fresh start. I see my life progressing in “stages” – and these stages are, naturally, reflected in what I do. (What these stages “mean”... I'm not all that sure: If *Double:Bill* were to be considered blissful childhood, and *Outworlds* painfully growing adolescence – that would give this pretensions that I'm not about to claim – or inflict on myself!)

On a tangent from this: *Double:Bill* was co-edited with Bill Mallardi, and although I exerted a strong influence on those last four issues – it was not mine: it was ours. And, although *Outworlds* ended up mine, and was my dream from the start... without Joan, it would not have been, in all probability. I have had, and will have (I need it) help

with *Xenolith*, but, in the sum total, it is at this moment totally mine/me.

I am learning (the hard way) that possessiveness toward another human being is self-defeating. I doubt if I will ever learn that lesson regarding my fanzines. I really don't want to, you see.

Double:Bill lasted 21 issues – and seven years. *Outworlds* lasted something like 29 issues – and seven years. I love the title “*Outworlds*” (and do have definite plans for it), but it's time for a change.

See me in 1985, and we'll talk about it.

But before we get to where I'm going, you may wonder where I've been since October, 1976.

Many are the places I've been (which is one reason my car has 74,000 miles on it in about 30 months) – in body and in mind: One of those places was Phoenix, on a Sunday evening (Sept. 3, 1978). And it went like this:

SOMEHOW, I can't help feeling that I stand here as the warm-up act for the Second Coming.

...and, since we all occasionally have to do that which is expected of us, and so that you won't have to wait for it, we might as well get the obligatory out of the way first off:

I must admit that when I first heard that Harlan was to have an hour and I but half that, I wondered as to the equality of certain things. But then, standing beside him earlier today, I decided that things *do* have a way of averaging out.

On one occasion, a couple of years ago, when it was demanded that I “say something”, I managed to get out:

“I don't make speeches; I just print them.”

Now... despite the “practice” – and the constant advice of concerned friends who tell me to test them before mirrors, or memorize my words, or at the least work from note cards, I STILL don't make speeches.

I read them (from genuine Twil-tone) and let others print them.

In *Dilemma*, *Resolution*, *Xenium*, *Graymalkin*. Not the biggies... just my friends.

In any event, this is BILL BOWERS' FIRST NULL-PRACTICE IGUANACON SPEECH, and it is called:

**“I HAVE NO CAUSE,
AND I MUST PONTIFICATE...”**

Ten years ago tonight – Sunday night of Labor Day weekend – there was another World Science Fiction Convention going on. Baycon. But all I know of that one was what I later read in *Granfalloon*.

On that night, on that very same night, I was in another world.

It was the last night of my eighteen-month exile in an alien land. I was coming home.

I arrived at Travis Air Force Base Labor Day morning of 1968... but I couldn't get discharged until the next day.

I had come home, but not in time to get to the largest annual gathering of my people, my friends. So close, yet so far... I think that made it worse than coming home any other day of the year.

Sitting in that barracks that day, I couldn't help identifying with the title of the Hugo-winning novel of my first Worldcon.

Sixteen years ago this weekend, there was another World Science Fiction Convention going on. It seemed huge to me, but “The Proceedings” assure me that there were only about 700 people there. It was my first convention: Chicon III.

...and the Hugo-winning novel of that year was, of course, **STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND**.

...but, for the first time in my 19 years, funny, I didn't feel like one.

Two years ago. Etc. Kansas City; Big MAC. Friday night. Late.

I wandered into the Phoenix bidding suite, and Diane Drutowski said: “Congratulations.”

I said, “...for what?”

“We won.”

“That's nice,” I said, “but what does it mean to me?”

“...you mean they didn't *tell* you!?”

Later, when I recovered, I remembered to ask who the Pro Guest of Honor was going to be. When I was told I said, among other things: “Good... he'll

get all the attention, and I'll be able to relax and enjoy myself."

Of course, at that time, I didn't realize just *how* he would command that attention...

Labor Day weekend. 1978.

It's been an... *interesting*... two years for me. In many ways.

Alternately flattered at the prospect of being here, sharing this stage, with this man, tonight... and scared to death at the mere thought of it.

It hasn't been easy... and there have been times when I was convinced I *wouldn't* be here... but it seems that I am.

And now, in a very few minutes, when this is over, I will be able to relax for the first time in two years. And that is something, no matter how great this honor (and it is) that I look forward to very much. And that is something that is also a bit frightening...

Who knows... maybe I'll go back to doing what I do best: Fancy, semi-pretentious fanzines...

But in the meantime, I stand here, having been dubbed the champion of frivolous socially-unredeeming fannish conventions.

I suppose, given my commitment to "mindless partying, not shaking things up, being a nice, quiet, hypocritical amusement", that has motivated my work for sixteen years, that is a fair assessment.

It is, almost, to laugh.

Given the nature of one of my "practice" speeches (and the response to it), I suppose there are those who came expecting some sort of dramatic "confrontation" between the Guests of Honor. Almost, I was tempted... I am well-acquainted with the vicarious watching of blood-letting – and the fascination it holds for many. And there are those (those in a room one night at the first AutoClave, among others) who will bear witness to the fact that I *am* perverse enough to do what I think I have to do, no matter how wrong it may be, no matter how deeply I may hurt people I care for in the process.

But not this time.

I had my say in a speech before at the most three hundred fans at two small conventions, and in a fanzine with a print run of perhaps two hundred. And if I didn't say it as well as I might

have wished, and if parts of it were hype and hyperbole thrown in for effect – amateur though I be, I am not unaware of the value of playing to an audience – well, to say it again, would have no appreciable benefit.

Let's put it this way: I am still waiting, and I am watching, to determine just who is walking the walk... and who is talking the talk. And if the skepticism shows, let it here be noted that I have never questioned the goal: only the methods chosen to implement that goal.

Although I may well have slipped up in other areas, I have been very careful in one aspect of these recent speeches: I *never* say "we".

By the nature of this position, for this brief moment in time, it might be suggested that I "represent" fandom. (And it has so been suggested.) Perhaps, in a sense that is true, in that this position is something I suspect most fans aspire towards, but few accomplish.

If this is your first convention, or if you've just published your first fanzine... I've been there. I know a little bit of where you're at – both the joys and the tribulations. For each one it is the same, but for each one it is totally new.

I still don't know *why* I'm here – though I probably do deserve it—and I am very well aware, even though I may not always show it, that I wouldn't be here if it were not for all those neat people who wrote and drew for my fanzines, if it weren't for those few who had to put up with me as I did them, and if it weren't for the very special few, my friends, who have held me together, in and around everything else.

These people need no cause to justify themselves to me,

What I am trying to say is this: I do not pretend to speak for anyone else other than Bill Bowers.

And *no* one, other than I, speaks for Bill Bowers.

No matter how good, or noble, or necessary the cause.

I say this with no malice whatsoever: I envy those who have their act together enough to comprehend the vast inequities that *do* exist in this world, this country, this state... this very room. And, even if I do reserve the right to, always, question, I do admire those with the courage of their convictions to fight for those goals necessary to right those wrongs.

But, as for me...

At the moment I'm still working, very slowly, sometimes painfully, on the simple process of coexisting with myself: of resolving the inequities that exist between what was drilled into me that I should be, and what in reality, I am. And once I accomplish that, and I will – you will never encounter anyone more stubborn than I – and then attempt to learn the fine art of relating to others as total individuals, because you are, each and every one of you... why, then, perhaps...

Labor Day weekend. Say ten or fifteen years from now.

When I stand before you again...

...as the PRO Guest of Honor.

(No, it's not such an impossible dream: I've seen Harlan's fanzines. Mine are better.)

...and as I sit waiting to speak on something of very vital concern to me, while this upstart takes shots at me from the podium.

Well, I only hope that I am able to handle them as well as this man has.

I, almost, will have to:

I'm from northeastern Ohio, too, you know.

Postscript

It's been said before, but I say it again: Fandom may not be one big happy family... but it is, in so many ways, a family. It's my family, and I'm glad you're here to share with me this, our annual picnic.

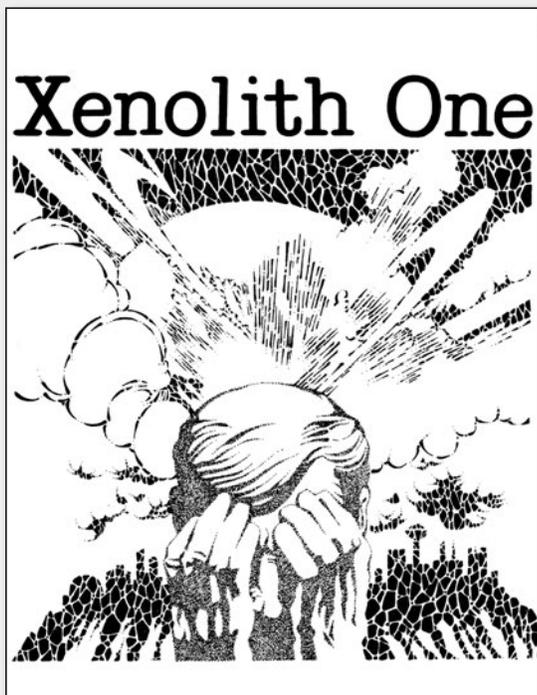
I ask only one thing of you, and that is this: No matter what your beliefs, or opinions... if you call yourself my friend, you will extend to Harlan the same courtesy you have given to me. While he is speaking.

Afterwards, he is yours.

Thank you for listening.

Bill Bowers

8/27/78



from Xenolith 1 (Second Series), January 8, 1979

I find it hard to believe that this issue (the second "first" *Xenolith*) is drawing to a conclusion. It has been a while, hasn't it?

I have a lot of fences to mend with contributors ignored far too long... a lot of things to catch up with in other ways, but it's a start; not a bad one!

I do appreciate the fanzines and other things that came my way during the lull, but I will point out that, other than subscriptions carrying over, this is *not Outworlds*... and it starts with essentially a new mailing list. At the moment I can neither afford (nor do I want to) the 300-400 "freebies" of yore. And a lower print run dictates a tightening of availability, in any event.

I do welcome contributions: as I said, whatever you do best...

I promise nothing, except that there will be more, when you least expect!

Without my friends, I am nothing: Thanks, Denise & Marla... for the push!

Hindsight and My Ongoing Battle with the “Real” World

Xenolith 1 (Second Series) | January 8, 1979

UP UNTIL A very few years ago, given my upbringing and temperament, the fear of death was, far and away, my biggest paranoia. I still have a healthy respect for it – but the entire complex is on a much lower key than I would have ever thought possible. For me. Perhaps this means that I am finally “living well”; perhaps it just means that, slowly, I am learning to accept the inevitable – and while not capitulating (I backed into this world, and I’ll go out the same way) neither am I spending large amounts of my limited energies in a useless attempt to avoid.

I have gone through a number of changes in the past few years – I’ve gone places and done things, in body and in mind, that would have been beyond even speculation for me, not all that long ago. I found that some things thought forbidden were “good”... that others, whatever the reason, were not for me. It has not been easy, for me... or for those who have encountered me: some to stay, others to pass on after having touched my life. But it is all a part of a process that I’d heard about, speculated about, but very rarely participated in. It’s called, very simply... living.

And I have a few friends (say those who’ve known me, well for at least five years) who will delight in telling you about the days I cringed in corners, and found myself an observer rather than a participant, because it was the only role I knew.

...yet the biggest change is in an area those very same long-time friends know little about, because it concerns my ongoing battle with the “real” world. When I left northern Ohio to move here, I quit a job where I had sixteen years seniority, four weeks vacation plus eleven paid holidays... and a fair degree of security. And a fair degree of dissatisfaction... but that magic word “security” kept me locked in.

The reason I found to get out of that trap, and out of that area, did not prove to be all that I had anticipated. Naturally. But regardless, the decision to leave and the reason to move to Cincinnati is, in retrospect, one of the few major “moves” I have no regrets about. It was a break that I needed, very badly.

After a gap of over ten years, I’ve gone back to drafting. But I’m not working for a “company”, per se. What I’m doing is contract work, or job-shopping. (Or, if you don’t understand that, what I am is a glorified “Kelly Girl”.) It’s surprising how many fans are “temps”, or maybe my awareness has just been heightened.

It has its benefits: I get paid considerably more per hour than I would if working direct, and I don’t have to participate in office politics (except, of course, as an impartial agitator!). It has its drawbacks, like the bit of three weeks out of work just after moving here... or when I’m sick I don’t get paid... And only a one week vacation. But above and beyond all else it has given me the confidence to know that I can go to virtually any part of the country and get a job. That degree of self-confidence is rather new to me.

How long will I stick with it, before accepting one of the offers that inevitably come? I really don’t know, but... You see, the “temporary” job I started in October could last anywhere from two-and-a-half to five years... which will see me through (unless I change, at my request) until I take some time off to go to Detroit for the 1982 Worldcon. After that, we shall see.

(But no, despite the fact that Kalamazoo is *this* year’s Mecca, I will not be moving to Michigan. After all, if I ever did anything like that, I’d probably end up visiting Ohio a lot, and that’s a fate I’d rather not wish on myself!)

Notes towards Another Speech

Xenolith 1 (Second Series) | January 8, 1979

...notes toward a speech, to be delivered at E/c2 ConFusion: Friday, January 19, 1979

YOU PEOPLE... particularly Lin, Ro and Randy... really don't know what you started when you placed a very self-assured individual on the ConFusion stage just three years ago.

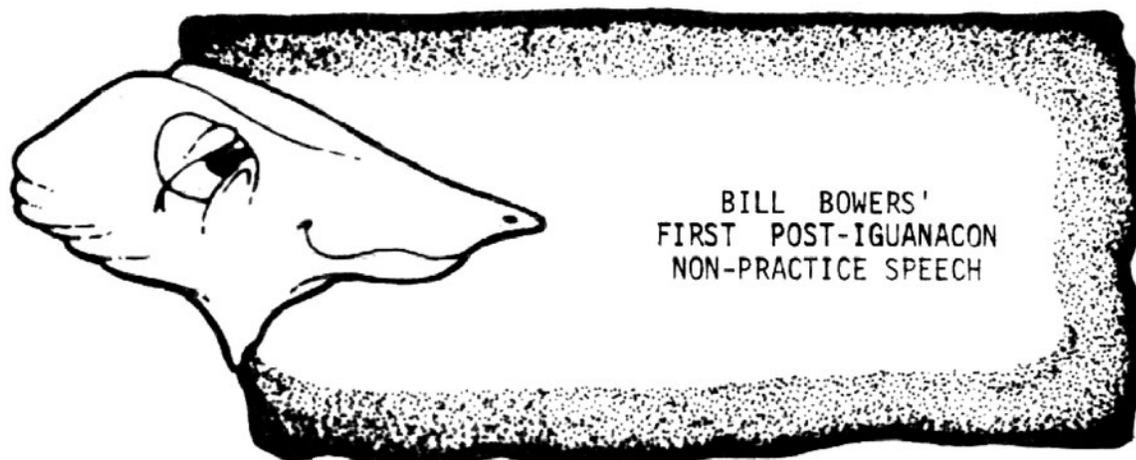
You're about to find out.

I hope you can live with it!

...after Phoenix, I had thought (other than for the one Ross asked me to do for Marcon) that I wouldn't have to do any more of these things. Perhaps, after my Moment in the Valley of the Sun, it is only sheer ego.

But, more probably, it is simply the newest Bowers shtick: the name-badge game is past-tense... and the groupies have groupies of their own now. Of course, I could simply resume publishing *Outworlds*, but...

In any event, I must admit that I *asked* Larry Tucker for the time for this:



BUT FIRST, a brief commercial:

Nine-and-a-half years ago this weekend, a man stepped out of a spiderly-looking vehicle, onto the surface of the Moon. I saw it happen, and I've never been quite the same.

All the details aren't finalized yet, but I can tell you this much:

Six months from this weekend [July 20-22, 1979], Rusty Hevelin and I will be co-chairing something called SpaceCon – to be held in Wapakoneta, Ohio. And if you don't know the significance of that little speck on I-75, then you probably won't understand why I wouldn't let Rusty forget an idea he mentioned to me in a van, on the way to Boston, almost two years ago.

But even if all that romantic sense of wonder nonsense don't grab you, you should come anyway...

You see, it'll be my birthday party, also.

End commercial.

NOW THEN... this is the 70th convention I've attended, which is trivia – and Labor Day weekend of 1982 will mark the 20th Anniversary of my initial contact with such things... which is probably also trivia – but still sufficient enough an excuse to let me talk about a subject apparently dear to the heart of most any fan from a city starting with the letter “C” in the state of Ohio:

Worldcons.

...which, of course, requires a very forceful disclaimer: When I say *I*, that is precisely what it means: a personal statement or opinion. It is no secret that I am associated with a few others who share some thoughts on the subject, and while I have shamelessly appropriated what I have liked from those others, nothing I say here is in any way “Official”. Nor has what I have to say been in any way dictated by **anyone**, no matter how fervently some might wish to believe it. What I have to say is, in the final analysis, on my head and my head alone. End disclaimer.

...and part of the problem is that I felt it necessary to say that in the first place.

I've attended nine World Science Fiction Conventions. I was involved in the initial stages of one (Tricon), was very close to the people who put on another (St. Louiscon) – and the “Guest” of a third.

Because of what I saw it do to people, and some of it wasn't pretty, in the first two cases, I swore I would never involve myself with a Worldcon on any level other than as an attending fan. My experience (at once a part of, and no part of) with the third did little to reassure me that putting on a Worldcon was any form of fanac other than suicidal for those who did it.

...well, as I learn the hard way never to say never about anything, no matter how unlikely it may seem at the time... after all, I managed to control myself (if not my hair) enough to talk in front of a couple of thousand people, and Harlan Ellison... and if *I* could do that, there's no reason I can't accomplish other things I've been so convinced I couldn't possibly do.

...and, having done *that* (you can't rest on your laurels, and mine aren't that big anyway), I am about to embark on another of my never-nevers.

Why?

Several reasons – some Big & Important. Others – well, the fact that it would be neat to be a

part of a Worldcon on the 20th Anniversary of my first – perhaps not so terribly significant.

Perhaps, as ridiculous as it sounds, I do feel a sense of obligation, not only to fandom as a whole for being such a large portion of my life – but in particular to those idiots who persist in putting on these conventions – large and small – for me to enjoy myself at... a place to meet my friends... and make, in my own inimitable way, new friends. I like to think that this is one way in which I can repay a small portion of that debt.

And I do have a few ideas on how things *should* be done.

Let's take a “for instance” –

Suppose by some far-fetched process I was to end up associated with six others on a Worldcon bidding committee. Accepting this, suppose these seven people had fair claim on being possibly the most experienced Worldcon bidding committee ever assembled, with credentials such as having run over sixty regional conventions, having had intimate association with over a dozen Worldcons, as well as being active in all areas of fandom... and with a total aggregate number of conventions attended (not to mention active years in fandom) that would be astounding if calculated. Suppose further that these seven said that we will prove that a democratic – one person, one vote – committee *can* work.

...suppose I were to somehow discover myself in that position, on something that has already been described as the most laid-back committee imaginable... would I go with it?

Yes, I think I will...

But let me make this one point perfectly clear at the onset: I do not have any intention of spending the next several years at conventions – win or lose – smoffing. Given a committee that despite a geographical spread, are friends and see each other frequently in any event, this isn't necessary.

Besides, I have other things to do: I personally will be rather disappointed if, over the intervening years, I don't regularly get accused of “womanizing”. (Advertising pays.)

Nor do I intend to spend the 1982 Worldcon – wherever it is – locked into all work and no play. There is no need to: by choosing competent people, delegating authority to them – and by *trusting* them until and unless shown incompetent – it not only should be, it *can* be possible – that there

be a Worldcon at which everyone, including the committee, can enjoy themselves.

(...and if this can't be managed by people who started Octocon – the real one – as a relaxaçon from the pressures of putting on Midwestcon, who could do it?)

But the main reason *I'm* involved is this: I would hope that we in our miniature (but growing, whether we like it or not) world, have learned one lesson from recent world history:

I (for one) don't believe that it has become necessary to destroy the Worldcon (as we know it) in order to save it... either by innuendo concerning people's competence – or by imposing a continuing board of directors.

...even if they are our friends: "Pogo" said it best.

Yes, yes, yes... there are indeed problems, and big ones, in not having the professionals run our conventions. They are big business, and there are a lot of people involved, on every level... and good intentions don't always match expertise. But may I carefully point out that the word "amateur" is *not* spelled "incompetence" – no matter how many recent examples you may be prepared to cite.

The things that I do that I take the most pride in, and the most care with, are the very things no amount of money could entice me to do.

...such as making speeches;

...or being on a committee. *Any* committee.

Organizations serve a purpose. They allow us to function in roles other than as the individual – and no matter how much some of us... me – decry that, it is to some degree necessary.

But one thing history *has* proved, time and again, is that no matter how good or noble the reasons for the initial organizing – organizations rarely disband themselves after their goal is accomplished – if, indeed, they limit themselves to the stated goal they used to gather support and acceptance. Organizations tend to become institutionalized – sometimes it even happens to individuals – ask me! – and at best that leads to stagnation. At worst it stifles any vestige of individuality.

Once an organization has done its job, congratulate it or chastise it – but don't perpetuate it. And that includes World Science Fiction Convention Committees.

Every convention is special – but Worldcons are more so – to a lot of people... and for as many different reasons as there are people.

In nine days in Phoenix, I attended (count 'em) four scheduled events: a panel I was on, a banquet to which I had free tickets, the Sunday Night of Reckoning, and... ..well, I was sitting with Patty Peters and watching Phil Paine's Neofan's Room, innocently reading the Pocket Program and idly wondering how many words I could get in a fanzine if *I* were to stoop to something like reducing typewriter copy – when I noticed that there was a panel in progress down the hall called "Introduction to Fandom."

"Hmmm..." I mused aloud – "You know that I've never been *properly* introduced to fandom." ("All I've had is Mike Glicksohn," I might have added. Had I thought of it.)

A former friend of mine happened to overhear this remark, and proceeded down the hall to inform the in-progress panel as to what I'd said. Whereupon I was forcibly dragged into participating on it...

(All of which is by way of informing you that there will be a party in Midge Reitan's room at all future cons. Lou Tabakow is in charge of arrangements.)

Obviously I don't go to Worldcons for the programming. I go for the far too rare chance to be with my friends from faraway places. (Places like... Cincinnati, lower Michigan and... dare I say it? Chicago) – if I can find them.

But the one thing I think anyone connected with a Worldcon bidding/planning committee must never forget is that, more than any other, a Worldcon is a *first* convention for a lot of people. And if you take their money in the form of a membership, you owe them something in return. You can't automatically assume that they will amuse themselves.

However, you can assume that I will amuse myself or, failing that, at least amuse other people.

In any event, be kind to the neophyte Worldcon goer. After all, who knows, in a mere 16 & ½ years he too may well end up telling you what for!

I hate to be the one to break it to you – I'll try to be gentle – but there *is* such a thing as fan politics. And it is well-known that the Midwest is the hot-bed of the art; Mike Glycer said so. And since the rotating finger of fate has placed the Year 1982 in the Midwest...

...well, you got it.

Obviously there are differences of opinion, or you wouldn't have more than one Worldcon bid for that year. There are differences of varying degrees of magnitude – some very basic, some mere whim – and given the fact that most fans are no less than human there are, and there are going to be, personality clashes.

If I didn't think that the people I am associated with could (and will) put on a better Worldcon than anyone else in 1982... I wouldn't be associated with them.

That is a given.

But it is also a given that competition is necessary, and that it can be fun... as well as meaning more parties.

I reserve the right to tweak a few noses (and if I can't continue to pick on Lou Tabakow, I'm getting off right here...), and I reserve the right to disagree, and to do so strongly.

But I have my limits: I will not be caught smuffing in a bathroom; the Flushing bid is passé. (That's for all you Chambanaccon Esoterica 101 fans out there.)

And I have placed limits on myself.

What I am saying is this: I've attended every Windycon and at least seven Marcons – and I fully intend to continue enjoying both. But then, I would not consider making this particular speech at either of those conventions. It would be inappropriate.

However, I have come up with a possible topic for my next Marcon speech.

...something about whatever happened to some of the kids around Cleveland fandom in the mid- to late-Sixties. You know, Scott Kutina, George Fergus, Jerry Kaufman, and... now what *was* his name...?

There are many Michigan fandoms. Maybe as many as there are Chicago fandoms; sometimes it's hard to tell.

Now I really don't know if you want a Michigan Worldcon; that's not for me to say.

What I can and will say is this –

There is friction and factions; there are people who will not talk to each other, but will endlessly talk about each other. There is, to put it bluntly, a considerable failure to communicate. On all sides.

This is not news; nor is it noticeably different from a lot of other areas, in and out of fandom.

No, I don't know if you want a Michigan Worldcon – but if you do, a certain amount of fence-mending is in order. Again, on all sides.

Lifelong friendships are not a prerequisite; a certain amount of cooperation and basic respect for the positive qualities of others *is* required.

It is certainly presumptuous – but then I am nothing if I am not... – but perhaps a slightly "tainted" outsider might be able to help.

If I can, I will. To the best of my abilities.

I have certain credentials. For one reason or another (a little moderation on the snickering, please; Sid doesn't realize that he's the one I'm after) I seem to have spent a fair amount of time in Michigan over the last few years. As a result I know a fair number of Michigan fans (even if it does seem as if there's a new Ann Arbor fandom every time I come here...).

I am willing to help, if I can, but I have one basic drawback: I rarely initiate conversations; you'll have to talk to me.

Above and beyond that, there is enough talent and experience in Michigan fandom to put on a fantastic Worldcon.

But only if we come... err, strike that... only if we pull together.

...but before anyone gets any ideas from my use of the word "we" in that sentence, I wish to squelch one persistent rumor for all time:

There is simply no way that I'm going to *move* to Michigan. If I did that... knowing me, I'd end up visiting Ohio a lot. And that's a fate I wouldn't even wish on Larry Downes. (I always mention Larry in my speeches; he likes my fanzine.)

But, in case I do move, remind me to tell you about my Cincinnati in '85 bidding committee sometime...

Science fiction fans are, as a group, probably the most conservative people on the face of the earth.

I should know; I am a science fiction fan.

The self-proclaimed broadening influence of the genre is not always reflected in our dealings with each other as individuals. It is very rarely reflected in our fanzines: the fact that I received acclaim for utilizing essentially common graphic formulas is proof of that.

...nor is it reflected in the conception and execution of our conventions – most of which have about as much innovativeness and sparks of originality as your average PTA meeting. (A fanzine panel is, it seems, a fanzine panel... whether it is at the Worldcon, or AutoClave.)

Generalizations? Yes...

I'm sure that some of my opposition to a Worldcon governing body is based on a conservative gut reaction against change. But not entirely. I didn't Quote – join – Unquote SF fandom to join an organization. I'm here because it, and its people, and the trappings such as fanzines and conventions, fulfill a certain need in my life better than anything else I've found to date.

No, I don't have the answers. At least not all of them.

But I can't help feeling that the most innovative, the most far-out thing a Worldcon committee could do at this stage is to go back to the basics.

And perhaps the most basic of basics is that a Worldcon should be *for* the attendees – and not the ego-gratification of the committee.

Simplicity, in both concept and execution, is perhaps the most complicated goal to achieve. But if God had meant for the World Science Fiction

Convention to be a Van-Vogtian exercise in maze-building, he would have made it the domain of the U.S. Congress...

When, in the course of human events – or Boston in 1980 – it comes time to choose a place of our own for 1982, please examine all of the factors:

...not just the city;

...not just the facilities;

...not just the names on a committee –

...but consider, while remembering that everyone involved is human, the basic concepts behind *each* of the bids.

And if you do, I'm pretty certain of where that Worldcon will be... and even more certain that it will not be a Worldcon built for you – but one that will be evolved for you, for your pleasure – and mine.

Bill Bowers; 1/2/79

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1979: Some Settling May Have Occurred

Xenolith Three | January 10, 1980

I WAS LAID OFF immediately preceding the NASFic, and was off for four weeks.

Back to work for five weeks; laid off immediately preceding ConClave.

Off two weeks; back for a two week contract; off one week...

You wondered why, when the bulk of this issue was done in September, you're only seeing it now?

Monday, Dec. 10, I am to start an open-ended job. Stipulation: a mandatory 55-hour work week.

If I find it acceptable; if they find me acceptable... in a couple of months I may be able to afford to put out fanzines and go to conventions.

But I won't have time off for either.

It's almost enough to tempt me to try and find a "real" job.

You really don't know how refreshing it can be... while sitting on a couch with a very attractive woman... to say something about "my friend Mike".

...and when she says "Who's that?" – and I point across the party room to Glicksohn at the poker table...

...and she says: "Oh, who's that?"

It's almost as refreshing as, after having spent a very enjoyable amount of time at two successive conventions with a new friend... just before the end of the second, when I hand her copies of *X:One* & *X:Two*, and she says: "...oh, you do fanzines?"

Readers of something called *Father William's MISHAPventures* (a few years ago), may understand a bit of the ramifications of the preceding.

Bob Hilles asked me, at PgHlange, if the new caftan (one of a triplicate) I was wearing was the "official Detroit bidding uniform". I replied:

"No, Bob. I am an individual first. The bid comes second."

Sorry. I should have checked the operations manual before acting so snippy.

Since it was my last Wednesday night of freedom (i.e., I didn't have to go to work in the morning) for the foreseeable future, I went over to Hap's Irish Pub, to listen to "little" Bill (sorry, but if you had a last name I could spell...) play, as well as to "submit to mundane women" (thank you, Dotti!).

Bill opened his set with a nice shtick about how, at his last "concert", seven people were elbowed to death. Attempting to leave when he started to play...

You have to realize that this was the Wednesday night immediately after the Monday Night Stampede at the ~~O.K. Corral~~ Riverfront Coliseum.

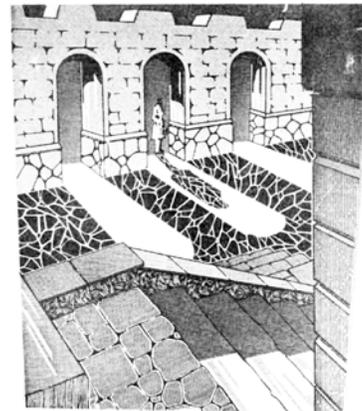
But then, humor like that belongs in *Graymalkin*; not here.

It occurs to me, since I've found myself a few times recently defending the place, that I've now been in Cincinnati long enough to consider it "Home".

It has its problems, of course: all three of the local network-affiliated TV stations are staffed by parodies of the **WKR**P crew... and I was literally unable to breathe again this fall. (Part of that is my fault, granted.)

But our new city manager is a black in his thirties... recruited from that conservative town of Ann Arbor; our new mayor is a 31-year-old black. I find this delightfully ironic in that Cincinnati surrounds the town of Norwood: a...place... 99.9% so pure white, and determined to stay so.

Xenolith



Of course, we've still got that idiot Elmer... the head of the F.O.P., running around in his cowboy boots. And never let us forget good old Simon Leis... the dedicated keeper of our morals.

Cincinnati is a very conservative city. But it is concurrently, a very liberal place... you just have to be a little bit cool about it.

No, I'm not planning on staying here the rest of my life, but right now I like it a lot. (I even stay in town at least one weekend a month. Usually.)

But then, what do I know? I was born in Barberton... a place no one has ever heard of, except those who were raised there...

Hi, Michelle.

I was discussing with a relatively new acquaintance the sciencefictional concept of whether it was simpler to make a lover into a friend... or a friend into a lover.

She looked at me in some disbelief when I said that both had happened to me this year.

For her, she said, the first option never worked; she needed to get to know the person first... to become friends.

I took that to be a "No."

But hopefully not a permanent one.

When Mike Glicksohn tottered in from Indianapolis, a few days prior to SpaceCon (which was interesting, thank you; someday I may tell you of my "birthday party"!), he showed me a letter he'd received from Tim Kyger.

For the record, then:

"The decision to run someone other than you [Glicksohn] for Bill's appreciation was mine. Period."
—Tim Kyger, 18 June 1979

Bowers, being Bowers however, can never leave well enough alone:

I note the parenthetical insertation, viz.: "Copy of this letter to Bill Bowers, my files, and the Iggy files."

I now have a copy of that letter.

I took Mike's copy to work, and Xeroxed it.

Speaking of Worldcons and other exotic forms of fanac:

Yes, the Detroit in '82 Worldcon Bid is alive, well, gradually building... and continuing to mystify the Opposition in our own inimitable way. When we win, we will put on an enjoyable

and well-run Worldcon... for you, and for us. But in the meantime, we are still very much the same people we were before all of this, and I don't see that much advantage to be gained in losing sleep or getting an ulcer by worrying about what people will think if we don't make every party bigger, every flyer/ad fancier, or every pronouncement of world-shaking import.

Still, I do have a bit of news for you...

Though we seven generally know what we will be doing on the Worldcon, it hasn't been formalized with titles yet... we're still on a first name basis. But I did ask for (before the selection was made), and was given, one specific function.

The Fan Guest of Honor at the Detroit Worldcon will have a liaison with a vested interest.

Me.

One correction to the Detroit bio/ad in Boston's PR#3: I've lost *seven* (not six) Hugos. Accuracy... even when it hurts...!

I've never bequeathed any of my possessions – mimeo, typer or autos – with a fannish name. But I'm having second thoughts about it in regards to a slightly battered and thoroughly tired 1976 Mustang.

When I took possession of it [4/26/76] it already had 2,830 miles on it. The first weekend thereafter, I went to Michigan; the second weekend, a trip to Chicago. This past week – when I found out I did have a job to pay the bills, and also a job that would severely curtail my weekends off – I made some phone calls... and went to Chicago to visit friends. On the way back Sunday evening, Dec. 9th... somewhere between Indianapolis and here... the odometer clicked past the 90,000 mile mark.

It's the last "long" trip I plan on taking this car on – even though I've been saying that all year; after all, I have only one payment left to make on it.

No, that's not record mileage; but it's slightly impressive for/to me.

And when you consider that I did not drive it to either the Kansas City or Phoenix Worldcons, nor on at least two of my trips each to St. Louis, Chicago and Toronto, not to mention the PgHlange, Lunacon, Minicon, two Chambanacons and a few trips to Michigan and Other Places where I rode with others (including ICON this year)... well, the thing begins to border on the ridiculous. I suppose I have enough notes and records around (including

a complete log for the car) that I could, if I wished, figure it up. But at a very rough guess... since the event I point to as my "breaking loose" (going to Westercon, and then to BYOB-Con 5 via A2 in '75) I'd guess that the total of my fannish "travels" will be close to 100,000 miles by next July... five years.

...and then, on a hunch, I figured out that (including the 13 conventions), I've either been somewhere or had visitors here 25 of the 50 weekends so far in 1979.

Not bad for a former hermit... and one who still has leanings that way.

No, Roger Waddington: I am not the "epitome of all Con-Going fen". Things have been going very well recently... but still, it's not easy. Believe me. But, in doing what I feel I "Have To" (read: "want to do"), I tend to overdo. A bit.

That much, at least, has never changed.

...I knew I left this gap for a reason: Despite other dates scattered about, it is now the 10th of January, and we find ourselves with the first **Xenolith** of the '80s, rather than the last one of the '70s. As to why this is so... I have both reasons and excuses; but neither are valid here. The schedule is maintained!

In the meantime, the Third Annual Cincinnati Perpetually Floating New Year's Party – lasting four nights this time – has come and gone. Invited out-of-town guests showing up included Mike Glicksohn, Suzi Stefl, Dotti, Mary Mertens, Anne Glancy, Ro & Lin Lutz-Nagey, Leah Zeldes, Larry Tucker, Sid Altus, Dana Siegel, Bob Tucker, Phil Wright, Roger Reynolds, Carolyn Doyle, Hillarie Oxman, Ruth

Kaplan, Rusty Hevelin, & Alex Krislov. I think we all survived it, and I – the "Official Inviter" enjoyed it, but it's definitely getting a bit out of hand for house parties. Next year...?

My "old year" ended up very pleasantly... a condition extending into the New Year... with a lot of help from my friends... and I find myself looking forward to 1980 more "up" and with more enthusiasm than I can recall approaching any year.

...knowing my past history, such optimism can be dangerous, but... why not?

All I have to do is to endure "the job" long enough for some financial security, and to make sure that this is out for a ConFusion – just as the first issue was.

And make sure **X:Five** is out by next ConFusion. If not, just possibly, before...



Nameless by Design

Xenolith Three | January 10, 1980

A WHILE AFTER I delivered the NASFiC “speech”, I happened to be thumbing through an apamailing. Imagine my surprise at finding one of my “incidents” rather liberally quasi-quoted.

I suppose it could have been worse: the two names attributed to the incident in the retelling could have been the real ones. But they weren't.

The writer has apologized and promised a retraction, but it's an almost too familiar replay of what was happening when the last incarnation of *Xenolith* epilogued.

It's all my fault... but it's not.

I could do something about it... change my “ways” of writing; but I don't plan to.

I don't have a “journal”; this and my speeches are the closest I come to recording the important aspects of my life. I employ some throwaways, and exaggerate for effect, but most of what I write/talk about *is* important. To me. No matter how transitory that “importance” may prove to be over a length of time.

I haven't sat down and analyzed it (perhaps I should?) but I'd guesstimate that maybe 80% of the incidents/anecdotes/interplays that I recount are “real”. The other 20% or so is split between those that were combined from two or more separate events, and those that are totally concocted.

And no one, other than me, can tell which is which. Though we do like to guess, don't we?

I've read a lot of science fiction this year; I could write about that.

And I still remember more than I've forgotten about fanzines...

But it's only been the last few years that I've been able to deal with *people* (on any level other than the totally superficial) without the security of a typewriter in front of me. But I am doing so now... sometimes less than successfully, and

mostly taking two steps back for every three I take forward... but I'm doing it.

And that's what's important. To me. Right now.

I am not above teasing, intriguing, innuendoing. It's fun. But it's not the rationale behind all... not even most... of what I write.

I've said it before, and I say it again:

I'm not ashamed of *anyone* I've been associated with, involved with, infatuated with. But it's up to them to tell you who they are, and then only if they wish to.

I haven't always been noted for discretion, but this one thing I learned well:

Once a name is put into a fanzine, you can never erase it.

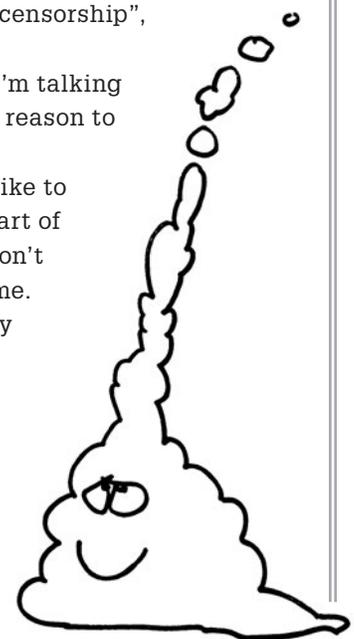
But still, because they involve *me*, I am entitled to write of these encounters. What I do to my own “name”, “reputation”, whatever, is on my own head; what I do to others is on my conscience. And to me, that justifies “prior censorship”, always.

If you know who/what I'm talking of, fine; you probably have reason to know.

If you don't and would like to guess, that's OK too; it's part of the game, as long as you don't expect confirmation from me. ...and don't put names in my mouth.

If there's any one thing that's inherently more amusing and ridiculous than fanzines and fannish relationships, it's sex.

But that's another subject entirely...



MY VERSION OF ECSTASY. WR84

It was not intended that the following item appear here: After I'd written it, and before I delivered it (since with only one exception, no one has ever read one of my "speeches" before its deliverance), I told Denise that, if after hearing it, she wanted it, she could have it for **Graymalkin**.

She sat in the front row, listened... and afterward said she'd like to run it.

Well – perhaps it's only natural – but it seems that the Leigh's financial fortunes seem to parallel mine remarkably... and Denise has been unable to publish an issue of **Graymalkin** since Midwestcon.

So, I asked for it back.

I want it to see print before my life changes too dramatically, once again.

Not that my life hasn't (surprise) changed considerably since NorthAmericon...

Other than that, you are free to interpret it, each in your own way.

1979: If the peaks weren't as high, the valleys weren't nearly so deep... Bill 12/19/79

Notes toward a Speech delivered at the NASFiC, **NorthAmericon:** **Friday, August 31, 1979**

Xenolith Three | January 10, 1980

...after I'd written this, I realized that parts of this might be a bit heavy for a Friday afternoon.

But then... if I did it later at night, you might think I was serious.

IT SEEMED LIKE a good idea at the time.

In the Iguanacón report/exposé/speech I did at Marcon, I said, talking of my Iggy Fan Guest-of-Honor speech – this:

"It wasn't the speech I *wanted* to make; it was dictated by public and non-public events preceding the con, but I was, and am, pleased with it. Overall.

"Still...

"If whoever's programming NASFiC were to offer me a podium for perhaps half an hour, I might be able to say what I wanted to say in Phoenix.

But couldn't."

Saturday afternoon at Midwestcon, Bob Roehm said to me: "You've got it."

He didn't say anything about 55 minutes tho.

I really don't know how I end up doing these things. It's not as if I *asked* for them, you know.

I probably knew precisely what I wanted to say when I wrote that quip. (I am never less than self-assured, after all.) But that was written in late February. And this is, suddenly, late... very late August.

And I'm really not at all that sure of what I do want to say.

But don't worry; I'll manage... possibly with a few things having to do with the prospectus – and probably several things that will be totally irrelevant.

...I have to keep doing these things, you understand, if only to keep my name in the fannish idiom...

...just so I can keep running around, saying: "God, life would be so much more simple if no one knew 'who' (there's quotes there, folks!) I was..."

I *did* have this neat gimmicky ploy for an opening... something along the lines of, since it is a given that alternate universes and time travel are accepted tools of the trade, well... come, let me take you far into the past... to a world that was not created... but which happened.

In other words – several hundred miles west, a year ago, this weekend...

And I have no doubt but that I could have pulled it off.

But that would have been a bit too much like work – and if I'm going to invest that much energy in something, I might as well do a fanzine.

Besides, if I were to do *this... that* way, it would negate the happenings in my life of the past year. And, no matter how much I might try to get around it, *this* is as much dictated by public and non-public events preceding *this* con – as that speech was.

My Moment in The Valley of The Sun: that was what it was.

Leaving this to be:

**BILL BOWERS' FIRST ANNUAL
(Boston and Denver, please take note)
POST-IGUANACON RETROSPECTIVE**

–or–

**...saying "I'll keep doing it until I get it right"
does not apply to fanzines
(or relationships) alone...**

Realizing that this is, indeed, 1979, and not 1978 revisited – this:

My very first fanzine was dated September, 1961.

...which means that I have now been in fandom, publishing the bloody things, for half of my life.

Which is a rather frightening thought.

Almost as frightening as the realization that a couple of the people I spend a fair amount of time with these days were born *after Abanico One* was mailed out.

Everybody have their calculators handy...?

(But then, we all have our reputations to maintain, don't we? I do my best.)

Realizing that this is, indeed, 1979, and not 1969 (or St. Louiscon) revisited – this:

In one of those alternate universes I mentioned, this weekend may well mark my tenth wedding anniversary.

In this reality, it doesn't.

So much for yet two more Great Moments in Fannish History.

When in doubt... they say... talk/write of what you know best. And so, since this seems to be a year with less "causes" and more "because" than last – and since, by a perverse sense of logic probably peculiar to me, it does tie into what I wanted to say last year – but couldn't – let's talk about those two most noble forms of fanac –

Fanzines... and fannish relationships.

...immediately following the mandatory – of course – disclaimer: Since I am only a recent grad-

uate of the Suzi Stefl/Denise Parsley Leigh School of Discretion (a subsidiary of the Mike Glicksohn School of Applied Embarrassment), I must needs go about this in my own subtle way. In other words, there will be times when I seem to be avoiding the subject.

Probably because that's what I'll be doing.

But I'll get back to it eventually.

Have I ever failed to tell you All?

There were some who were puzzled by the fact that I went to the trouble of right-justifying the first couple years of *Outworlds* – but they claimed to admire my perseverance in doing so. It was simple, really: It was my way of teaching myself to edit. If something was not worth typing twice... it probably was not worth printing.

Some of these same people were less tolerant and considerably more derisive – the demeanor of my friends hasn't changed remarkably over the years – when they found out that I'd typed up dummies of entire issues – and then had torn up the results because they didn't "look right" to me.

And I've done the same thing to some relationships.

...not something I'm particularly proud of, but a fact some people should be aware of. Particularly those who persist in telling me what a "nice guy" I am... before they know me.

Once an editor... always an editor.

Before I go much further, there is someone I owe an apology to. And that is to my little seester, Dotti Bedard-Steffl, because for the past two months I've been saying that I couldn't possibly contribute to her fanzine... her fanzine on "Family Relationships". The fact that I was trying to figure out how to put *this* together is an excuse... not a reason.

Most of you, I'm sure, are aware of this extended family of ours... With Rusty as the Father, and Tucker as His Son... and with Glicksohn as Ghod... as was proven in Derek Carter's AutoClave 3 speech (which, considering the proclaimer, and the proclaimed, makes Mike a very minor deity, indeed)...

Still, I think I first became a bit disillusioned about the whole thing a couple of years ago when Gay Haldeman informed me that I could no longer call her "Mom", because she was chronologically younger than I.

No one before that had ever indicated to me that logic had any place in fannish relationships...

Outworlds One was 26 pages long, and I was harassed because it had no contents page.

Outworlds Two was 34 pages long, and I gave them their contents page. On page 17.

...and **Outworlds Three** had one on the cover... and **17 & 24** had one on the back cover... and I remain convinced that some people *still* haven't found the contents page for **Outworlds 15**.

Some people apparently have to have everything laid out neatly and logically before them.

And I'm one of them... or else I wouldn't have done those things, I suppose. Or did I do them simply to remind you that I was there, behind the fanzine? And when a friend told me that they were working on a "Handbook", to try to prove that there was indeed a person behind the "myth"...

Well, I'm working on my own version of the Handbook.

And all of this is only a footnote to it.

Speaking of family relationships...

In this very same city – but at a different hotel – in other words, at last year's Rivercon. The scene was Friday night.

Early. (Which qualifier should relieve a couple of people poised to do me injury.)

Denise and I went into the hotel restaurant with Marla, Sherry... and their parents.

The incident probably wouldn't have stuck in my mind except that shortly before then I'd been asked why Lyn & Nathan were going to so many cons and fannish gatherings, when they obviously weren't fans in the classical sense.

My answer was that I really didn't know – but I suspected that despite the day & age, and all the laws, it might be as simple as the probability that they were more readily accepted... simply more comfortable... here, than they were in most other places they might go as a couple.

...and, as all the people around us were waited on, and served, and as the waitress continually circled our table at a safe distance... the impatience of we the starved ones gave way to stronger emotions.

Finally, Denise stood up, went and stopped the waitress in her tracks, and said: "You're not serving us because my daddy's black..."

We were served rather soon thereafter.

One of the devices that I used in **Outworlds**, and succeeding fanzines, is that of continuous pagination: each successive issue picked up in page

number where the previous issue had left off... rather than resetting the counter to "one" each time. I do this because, to me, each issue is part of a continually building "whole" that I hope will be greater than the sum total of the individual parts.

I have been accused of following patterns in the type of people I become involved with. At times there was an element of truth to that; at other times, I think not.

...and yet, each individual issue of **Outworlds**, and now **Xenolith**, is/was just that: individual. Totally unique unto itself.

...and each of the rather few people that I have cared for has been just that: an individual. Totally unique unto, and for, themselves.

I have yet to cease publication of a particular fanzine in a manner that I wish to, on a neatly predetermined note.

...next subject.

I went into the subject of shticks in my Marcon speech, because almost a decade of such antics was cited as the reason my best friend was not permitted to write my introduction for the Iggy Program Book.

Therefore, having nothing to lose, since he's already been a Worldcon Fan Guest of Honor... and I was asked to write his introduction... this:

At one point, Mike & I figured out, much to our mutual dismay, that over a six-month period, we'd ended up sleeping with each other at conventions more times than either of us had slept with anyone else.

Now this was obviously some time in the past. In Mike's case.

Part of the beauty of both shticks and cliches is that they generally have some basis in truth... if you dig deep enough.

Now fannish "reputations" are another thing entirely...

I mean, everybody knows that, really, Mike only drinks and plays poker...

...and that I, being totally "safe", only drink... and make speeches...

In fact, the only burning question remaining is knowing which of us wears *only* the caftan.

Some people have been known to go to remarkable lengths to find out the answer to that one.

One of the neatest things I ever saw in fandom occurred at a Marcon quite a few years ago:

In the lobby, the classic confrontation: the middle-aged, suited, clean-shaven, military-type... and the (obviously) pinko-commie-punk-kid – he had long hair – arguing.

I eavesdropped.

It seemed like much longer, but it was probably less than an hour – but it seemed that, nose to nose, they could find no common ground to agree on...

And yet, in all that heated exchange, never once did I hear one refer to the other's age, occupation, heritage... or lack of legitimate birth.

They were arguing over their interpretations of a mutually favorite science fiction author.

...only in fandom have I seen that relationship.

This summer, after having recounted the Mike-&-I-sleeping-together shtick... for perhaps the second or third time since it happened... I was asked:

"I've heard those stories. Does that mean that Mike is... does... Both ways?"

In roughly the same time-frame, a friend commented that being "bi" seems to be the "chic" thing to be in fandom these days.

A cynical person might observe that it does seem to be the case.

An idealist might say that it finally means fandom is growing up.

Being a totally confirmed cynical-idealist I can't help but remember what a definitely non-bi friend once said in a totally different context: "There's simply too many people in the world to love... to restrict yourself to just one."

I was mildly upset that, since the stories were of Mike & me, the lady only questioned Mike's orientation.

For the record, and trivia buffs everywhere, however: as far as I know, I am a dedicated heterosexual.

...while remembering that I never say never about *anything*, these days.

And, no, I'm not going to repeat here my answer about Mike's preferences...

I understand that the item following me... I use the word "understand" there because, as of this writing, apparently everyone in the world has received the 3rd North American progress report, telling them that I'm "on" at four today... everyone except me, that is. Please tell me that this isn't Phoenix Revisited, someone... please?

(It's not... but I couldn't resist...)

...anyway, I understand that the item following me is a panel titled "Living With a Writer". I don't know all of the participants, but in at least two cases I think the about-to-be-dumped-upon deserve a break. I'd like to see Steve Leigh and Andy Offutt demand equal time to depict the joys and trials of living with a fanzine editor, and a fanzine writer...

Now *that* would be a panel with some significance... as well as dealing with the realities of the creative process.

Just look at all the people who couldn't take the pressures of fanzine editing and writing... who have ended up in SFWA...

A quote:

"It would take a good psychiatrist to work out all of the ramifications of this, but I think I could make the obvious point that fandom does provide a sublimation for sex."

–Bruce Gillespie, *Outworlds III*,
May, 1970 [p.69]

It has been suggested that my fanzine output has been somewhat down in the past few years. What can I say?

Freshman Fannish Relationships, 101:

"Let's do it... and say we didn't."

Basically, I'm a chicken.

But if the right friend issues the challenge, I'm liable to try most anything.

I suppose a whole new generation of fans have arrived since the day the namebadges of the "Official Bill Bowers Groupies" littered the fanscape.

I still don't really believe that I had the nerve to present the first badge in public... because, obviously, the first recipient had to be someone short and cuddly... as well as someone I'd slept with.

Did I forget to mention that he was also considerably hairier than I?

But my hair is much *longer* than his.

A few years ago, at Jon & Joni's annual sacrifice to their mosquitoes:

A teen-age fan was carefully reconstructing the remnants in the roach bowl for one last try.

Someone asked his mother, sitting at the same table, if she approved of such things.

"Hell," she said, "I turned all of my kids onto grass."

Some fannish relationships are simply beautiful.

Sophomore Fannish Relationships, 201:

"Let's do it with everybody..."

...and, as I write this, I try to rationalize yet another relationship that had started so simply... that so suddenly had become incredibly complex...

The Bowers-cartoons in fanzines have not been as prevalent as those devoted to Warner or Glicksohn. There have been a few, but the classic was commissioned by Jackie Causgrove, and depicted by Alexis Gilliland:

In the first panel, a rather strange-looking individual is telling the obviously adoring sweet young thing: "'nd I have my own fanzine..."

The other panel shows the two strolling away, arm-in-arm, with the taller of the two saying: "How about coming over to my place for a little collatio?"

I must admit that I did find the fact that Alexis had scrawled the word "**Outworlds**" across the taller individual's back a bit tacky, tho.

In January, 1977, in one of my rare introspective moments, I wrote this:

"(...one thing) that I've noticed is this: of the (still) handful of people I consider close friends, none achieved that 'status' overnight - even tho it sometimes seemed so. More often than not, it was someone whom I'd seen at 3 or 4 cons... someone I knew the name of and not much more... and then, suddenly, for no apparent reason, at a particular con, something clicked. It's happened several times over the past year... and it continues to amaze me. And intrigue me."

I could rewrite that observation today, with as much validity.

And I'm still amazed. And occasionally intrigued.

Fannish Relationships, Junior and Senior Level:

"Let's don't... and say we did."

And then, last August, I found occasion to write this:

"-I make no great secret of my admiration for the writings of Don C. Thompson: the honesty and emotion that pours from the pages of **Don-O-Saur** is awe-inspiring and an almost tangible piece of a man's life laid out before me. It is something I admire and envy. Yet, in its own way, it is all rather frightening.

Because...

I knew this fan who was a devotee of Don, and his style of writing.

This fan published a small fanzine, and in many ways attempted (and in a few succeeded) to emulate Don's honesty in writing. Now then, this fan was at a convention and witnessed (strictly accidentally) a very emotional scene between two other fans at that convention. Returning home, the fan wrote a con report - and retold the incident. Oh, the names were changed - and beyond a shadow of a doubt 90% of the readers of that fanzine would not have known who was being talked about, even had they cared. But the fact remained that at least one of the primaries was in no way prepared to deal with any public retelling of what happened at that con, no matter how discreet the rendering: this was a very private, very emotional, and very hurting experience. And the irony remains that the fan who wrote the report witnessed it through only the most unlikely set of circumstances imaginable.

I was the fourth person there, in that room, at that convention. I was there because they were my friends. I was there because I was involved, even though I was not one of the principals. The person who wrote that report was there, primarily, through my doing. [But not totally; these things get incredibly complicated... or is it only me?]

Because the fan "reporter" had enough sense to send an advance copy of the con report to the principals, I was able to exert enough influence so that the piece never saw print. This was prior-censorship; but the preservation of someone very dear to me was involved. Those who knew the principals knew, or could pretty well guess, just what occurred there. Those who don't, well, they'll not know from me. You see, even though that convention was a very long time ago, it was only yesterday also, and there are still feelings, very deep feelings, involved.

Total honesty is not all it's cracked up to be.

Especially when it involves people other than the narrator.

Xenolith' 7; page 60.

That was the lead-in to an exercise that a friend labeled "literary masturbation" because even though I told "all" - I had to get it out - for once I named no names.

I have not always been so considerate.

The one thing I have consistently said, when asked to evaluate my fanzines, is this:

"I have often been pleased with the things I've done... but I've never been satisfied."

I suppose that some statements can apply to more than one area of one's life.

...not to mention the Derek Carter cartoon I published, showing me wearing a t-shirt emblazoned:

“Owned and operated by Femmefen International.”

I'm not quite ready for a gravestone yet, but when the time comes...

Having been one who has sometimes been judged by the way things appear to be; having been one who is on occasion not adverse to having people judge by the way things appear to be, I give you this:

The *only* ones who know precisely what is going on in any relationship are those directly involved in that relationship.

...and sometimes even they aren't all that sure.

Graduate Level Fannish Relationships:

I'm not there yet.

I have enough skills and experience in the art of fanzine publishing that, if I wished, I could put together virtually any “type” that you might request. The fact that I now do scrap-book, non-linear fanzines is not simply to be different – although, of course, I do sometimes play for the effect – but simply because that's the way my life is: a collage of events, happening in a very illogical sequence.

And the reason that none of my seven or so speeches has come across its “title” until well in-progress... and even then tends to be fragmented segments rather than a developed whole... well, it's not really just a cute gimmick... but simply that nothing, and no one, that's important to me, ever arrived prepackaged with a title – though once I'm aware of a situation, I tend to “label” it – or followed through with a logical flowchart of preprogrammed actions/events.

But I do have fun with my fanzines... and my speeches.

And I tweak a few noses.

Never excluding my own.

No, I am not flexible. I am simply inconsistent within very wide parameters.

Sometimes I have this way with words.

I recently said to one of mutual acquaintance-ship (which is undoubtedly the cutest euphemism I've come up with recently) that, if I ever met a woman I cared for who hadn't slept with Mike Glicksohn... I'd probably marry her.

...and then encourage her to sleep with him.

Because he's my friend.

And that little by-play typifies two things: Fannish relationships, and fannish mythmaking.

Because it is a concocted byplay, you see. When I made the original statement, I did not add the qualifier.

The qualifier is one of the things I hope to become secure enough to say, to mean... but not just yet.

Steve Leigh called me early one Sunday morning, and inquired: “Are you up yet?”

“...no sexual reference intended,” he added.

I ended the Marcon speech by saying:

“You see, it's always better to go out on a shtick.

“It's a lot simpler than just saying: I love you...”

But I'm ending this one... this way:

In the early sixties, Theodore Sturgeon had a story in *F&SF*. I don't remember the story itself... I rarely do... but I believe it was to be the first part of a trilogy. As far as I remember, the remaining two parts were not published, at least in that time-frame.

But the title of that story was the heaviest stringing together of six words I know of in the English language.

It was called, simply:

“*When You Love, When You Care...*”

I try, with my fanzines, with my relationships, but I'm still not at all certain that I can handle those words...

Can you?

Bill Bowers

Draft: 8/23; final: 8/28/79



A Summer to Conjure With

Xenolith 14 | October 1980

I SUPPOSE THAT EVERYONE, at one point or another in their scholastic “career”, has been asked to write something about “What I Did On My Summer Vacation”. Or, even if not so asked, did so at least to fill fanzine space.

Somewhere in the morass that is the contents of this apartment are several such exercises. At least I suppose them still to be in existence; I do *think* I finally disposed of my grade-school workbooks when I moved down here three years ago. (I would hope so; my tendency toward holding onto things long after their validity has passed is too well-developed as it is.)

I am slightly past the academic requirement for such reports, but this year my summer “vacation” has lasted from the Friday before Memorial Day... with but two very limited exceptions... until now.

And as summer fades into fall – and the time to change the clocks fast approaches (I don’t *live* in Indiana anymore), I can safely say that it has been a summer to conjure with.

I say that with a very subjective frame of reference, but that’s okay. As we all know, if we stop to think about it, objectivity is only subjectivity rationalized.

I know: I’ve objectively rationalized all of my subjective reactions to... well, you pick the subject.

This is, after all, a participatory fanzine.

Even if I have the “most equal” vote.

I thought I was... but I guess I’m not quite ready to relate the definitive version of BILL BOWERS’ SUMMER OF ’80. All the data is in, but the carefully constructed program that was designed to separate the wheat from the chaff, (i.e., what really happened vs. what I *thought* happened) has been known to malfunction. It must be doing so: after all, I was there, and I *know* what happened! ...don’t I?



Well, sometimes. F’instance, I do know the lyrics to that old standard:

“HAPPY SPACECON...
HAPPY SPACECON TWO YOU...!”

The last really “happy” birthday I had was in 1975.

Now that I have your attention, I should point out that of the five birthdays since then, only one was a total disaster... and a couple were rather enjoyable, if with complications. I have my own sets of criteria for determining “happiness” and “enjoyment”, of course. But because I have them, I have to grant them some validity.

...and if you’ve been paying attention, you’re aware that I’m capable of stringing together the damndest bits of circumstantial happenstance – be it Marcons, the relationship of conventions-attended to fanzines-published, or the number of times Dave Locke has been introduced to Susan Wood – as a lead-in to getting where I want to go. Granted, sometimes the point I’m attempting proves to be fully as obvious as one of my patented blatant propositions... but that’s okay; I get there.

Besides that, the opening statement is valid.

In 1975 my birthday occurred during BYOBcon 5... of fond memory. (I’ve found out since that, for some reason, more people I now know well, but

then didn't know at all... were at that convention than had any right to be... Mind-boggling.) As it was, the people I *did* know helped to make it a very good convention, and an extremely enjoyable birthday.

Of course I know what July 20th Signifies – it's Viking Landing Day. Seriously, as one of the two known sf fans (the other being Richard Delap) who share Lunar/Viking Landing Day as birthday, I hereby Declare that All Future Significant Steps in Space take place on said date. Be it Noted. Actually I do think it all rather a neat thing, and thank whoever had a hand in arranging both events.

*– ct to (then) Patrick Hayden in **FATHER WILLIAM'S MISHAPventures**, 7/27/76*

That year, the actual birthdate was during the week, but the weekend before Patrick and Phil Paine had arranged something called Symposium 2 in Toronto to celebrate the anniversary of the Lunar Landing. Naturally I went; and I basically enjoyed. It was interesting.

Now then, I've been down a few times in my life – and when I do it, I do a damn good job of it. But I've never... before or since... been as depressed as I was over my birthday in 1977. Still, even at my worst... although I'm not pleasant to be around... I've never been suicidal. But that one time... It's why I've said that between them, Mike Glicksohn, my friend, and Denise Parsley Leigh (whom I'd known a grand total of two-and-a-half weeks), literally saved my life. Simply by being there.

I go through my spells of forced self-dependence – some things you gotta work out for/by yourself... but it's nice to have friends. When you really need them.

...and while the actual birthdate in 1978 passed uneventfully, it led directly into an AutoClave that was not the best of conventions... for a lot of people... and a very bad one for reasons not unlike those leading to the downer of the year before... but for reasons totally different. The patterns were similar; the people were different.

And so it went, leading up to this excerpt from "Bill Bowers' First Post-Iguanacon Non-Practice Speech" [delivered, 1/19/79, at ConFusion]:

Nine-and-a-half years ago this weekend, a man stepped out of a spiderly-looking vehicle, onto the surface of the Moon. I saw it happen, and I've never been quite the same.

All the details aren't finalized yet, but I can tell you this much:

Six months from this weekend [July 20-22, 1979], Rusty Hevelin and I will be co-chairing something called SpaceCon – to be held in Wapakoneta, Ohio. And if you don't know the significance of that little speck on I-75, then you probably won't understand why I wouldn't let Rusty forget an idea he mentioned to me in a van, on the way to Boston, almost two years ago.

But even if all that romantic sense of wonder nonsense don't grab you, you should come anyway...

You see, it'll be my birthday party, also.

I should have known.

...A Bedtime Story for Cas:¹

Early in the evening, as Mike and I stood caftan-clad outside the "programming" room, the lady approached us... and commented on the rumor that one of us wore "only" the caftan.

Mike grinned, said "There's one way to find out..."; she smiled, and wandered away.

A while later, as Mike and I were standing in the doorway to the huckster-cum-banquet room (it was a slow night; the poker game hadn't started), she returned.

Pausing in front of us, she announced: "I'm bored. One of you take me away from all of this."

Mike looked at me and said: "If you don't take her up on that... I will."

So I did.

Later.

...the phone calls and the knockings-at-the-door began. Eventually it was communicated to me that there was this "surprise" birthday party for me in Ro & Lin's room at Midnight. And my Presence was required.

"Go away," I said. To all of them...

The harassment continued; she giggled.

And when we not only made a fashionably late appearance at the party... but spent a good portion of the remainder of the weekend in each other's company (in spite of her persisting in wearing that

¹ ...and that's probably the most esoteric thing in here since, a) I've never met her, and b), she's never before been mentioned in any of my fanzines.

“Harlan Ellison” T-shirt), the talk began. We were aware of it and, because it was fun, we played to it.

When, the following weekend, we showed up together at an out-of-state party, the rumor mill went into full gear. This time it came in two parts:

a) We were obviously an established “couple”, and...

b) I had “stolen” her from Mike.

(Leaving aside for the moment whether 1) she had a mind of her own or, 2) was indeed anyone else’s in the first place... I really shouldn’t have been surprised. Apparently I’m very good at such things... whether it be at all-night fast service stores, or Institute parking lots, in addition to cons... since this was the fourth time in a little over two years that I was accused of having “stolen” someone from someone else. The only difference in this instance was that the person supposedly ripped off *wasn’t* the source of the accusation.)

(...still, I often wonder just how I do it. It never works when I consciously plan it!)

We were aware (we couldn’t help being otherwise – my friends aren’t subtle; I am) of both parts a) & b)... and again we played to them: to the hilt.

Well, we at least were having fun with it...

Came the next convention on down the line and at least five different people, the first night, inquired: “What’s wrong? Why aren’t you together?”

“Nothing’s wrong,” I replied. “We both came to this con to see other people, and we really didn’t plan on spending that much time together,” I continued... but I could sense that they didn’t believe me.

Ironic. Because, for once, I was telling the absolute truth.

The next convention after that was the first time that Mike was in attendance after the original encounter. We placed into motion the plan we’d fabricated the very first weekend:

The lady and I disappeared from the con suite Friday evening... and re-emerged in matching caftans. As we wended our way back toward the con suite we were the recipients of several comments... and a few knowing glances.

...until we entered the con suite, escorted an unknowing Mike out between us... and later emerged in *three* matching caftans.

Okay, so it was a cheap (well, not totally; the material cost money, and the caftans then had to be made) way of making a point. And, probably in the long run it didn’t prove anything – except

maybe to us. But tweaking people’s assumptions is so easy.

Plus it’s a lot of fun.
...most of the time.

So, you say, you did have a good birthday that year?

Well, yes. But no, not really.

And no, I’m not telling you why. It is not teasing this time. I can’t yet, and probably never will. It was something so completely unexpected that it hurt all the more. And it has since been resolved, thankfully. So Be It.

At least, from everything I’ve heard, the other 115 people at SpaceCon One had a very good time!

So Rusty and I decided to do it again...

[Speaking of the SpaceCon Two Guest of Honor, Dotti Bedard Stefl...]

...well, that’s my little sister for you!

(And a remarkable accomplishment... her sitting on that chair atop a table, making the speech on her own... without all those people who *had* to have done her fanzine for her not lifting a hand... Must have been done with mirrors, or strings...)

You did well, Dotti!

There were something like 64 people at this year’s SpaceCon; a little over half of last year’s attendance.

...probably not entirely because this year’s Guest of Honor was only slightly more than half the size of last year’s, but.. Well, following this train of thought through to the logical conclusion – say we have Sean Curry as GoH next year. Naturally that would almost guarantee an attendance of 32. Assuming we could come up with a series of increasingly smaller articulate (that leaves some of my friends out) GoHs, I can see a trend developing: 16 attendees in 1982. 8 in ’83. ~~7~~ in ’77. 4 in ’84...

This obviously would, in 1985, leave Rusty and I with a Convention Of Our Own.

And I think I have the perfect GoH to fit the requirements of SpaceCon Seven... don’t worry, I’ll take care of it. After all, it is *my* Responsibility!

[And here you thought I’d picked Glicksohn? O, ye of little faith!]

...oh, and in case you thought I’d forgotten the opening gambit of this exercise in fannish cobble-stoning:

Yes, there will more than likely be a SpaceCon Three next July.

Everyone else seems to have had a terrific time...but I can't help being very glad that my birthday will occur during the week... afterwards!

(And who knows; by then I may even feel it's... "safe" to tell another "Bedtime Story" to Cas. Wouldn't that be fun, eh, kids?)

CAR-TUNES: "The car" now registers a little over 3,400 miles. I didn't notice the exact moment it turned all zeros, but that wasn't because it happened during mundane driving. Rather it occurred south of Toledo, as Mike, Sandy and I were returning from AutoClave. An accident forced us off I-75, and somewhere in the back country roads... as I was trying to find my way back to the Interstate... (I'm taking Mary Cowan's word now...)

CONVENTIONS Attended since last report: Marcon 15; Midwestcon 31; Archon 4; SpaceCon 2; AutoClave 4; Rivercon 5... and #93: Noreascon II. More, much more, input for the mill...

REMIND ME, sometime, to tell you of how I came to be "fired" from a job for having a beard and long hair. August, 1980... right here, folks. *sigh*

THE FIRST *Xenolith* was sprung as a surprise at an Octocon shortly after I moved to Cinti. And while my convention "schedule" for the remainder of the year is definitely in sad shape, it does look as if I'll make it to Octocon 17 next weekend. Which is nice... this being the Gala Third Annish and all. [Only 4 more years!]

From the Archives:

A Computer Relic

Xenolith 14 | October 1980

BEFORE IT BECAME the "in" fannish occupation, I was into computers. So to speak. When I landed in the Air Force in 1964, I was still worried about the state of my eyes – so I didn't bother to tell them I was a draftsman... so they told me what my eight "career field" choices were... and in their infinite wisdom they made of me a "Data Processing Machine Operator". After basically surviving Lackland AFB, I was sent to Tech School at Sheppard AFB (three cheers for the tornado that wiped out Wichita Falls, Texas), and marched into the first group designated to operate the dinky Burroughs computers they'd just bought a zillion of.

I was informed that I would have relatively safe assignments: I would not be sent anywhere there was not a Burroughs computer.

They did not lie to me. After completing school and "losing" assignments to Bermuda and

England (yet another story, part three), I ended up near Kansas City, MO. And, bighod, Dickie-Garbage AFB did, indeed, have a Burroughs computer. Oh, joy!

(If you are one of the two or three who don't understand the levels involved, let's put it this way: If you were to equate a "real" computer with an automobile (nothing fancy; four wheels will do)... then the Burroughs would come out a Moped. As for the IBM... definitely a tricycle. With training wheels. Front and back.)

Given the reception to the two fillers last issue – and now noting in particular the almost-inappropriate "date" affixed to the following – I couldn't help giving you yet another piece of unpublished Bowers-stuff. But with a Disclaimer following...

ISSUED IN SOLEMN WARNING, THIS 21ST DAY OF JULY 1968, TO THE FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, AND RELATIVES OF ONE WILLIAM L. BOWERS..

VERY SOON HE WILL ONCE MORE BE IN YOUR MIDST, DEAMERICANIZED, DEMORALIZED, AND DEHYDRATED. READY TO TAKE HIS PLACE AS A HUMAN BEING WITH FREEDOM & JUSTICE FOR ALL – ENGAGE IN LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE SOMEWHAT DELAYED PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS.

IN MAKING YOUR JOYOUS PREPARATIONS TO WELCOME HIM BACK TO THE RESPECTABLE SOCIETY, YOU MUST MAKE ALLOWANCES FOR THE CRUDE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH HE HAS BEEN SUFFERING FOR THE LAST 20 MONTHS. IN A WORD HE MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT ASIATIZED – PERHAPS SUFFERING FROM AN ADVANCED CASE OF >PHILIPPINITIS< OR TOO MUCH >SAN MIQUEL< BEER.

THEREFORE, SHOW NO ALARM IF HE PREFERS TO SQUAT RATHER THAN SIT ON A CHAIR, PAD AROUND IN SANDALS AND TOWEL, SHYLY OFFERS TO SELL CIGARETTES TO THE POSTMAN, AND PICKS AT HIS FOOD SUSPICIOUSLY, AS IF YOU WERE TRYING TO POISON HIM, OR SMELL IT TO PROVE THAT IT IS NOT >DOG<. DO NOT BE SURPRISED IF HE ANSWERS ALL QUESTIONS WITH >I HATE THIS &%%X*/&%& PLACE<, >NUMBER ONE<, >ITCHIBUSN<. BE TOLERANT WHEN HE TRIES TO BUY EVERYTHING AT LESS THAN HALF THE PRICE ASKED FOR, ACCUSES THE LOCAL GROCER OF BEING A THIEF, AND REFUSES TO ENTER AN ESTABLISHMENT THAT HAS NO STEEL MESH SCREENS OVER THE DOORS AND WINDOWS.

ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SHOULD BE AVOIDED, SINCE THEY CAN PRODUCE AN ADVANCED STATE OF SHOCK. THESE ARE >TELEVISION< AND >ROUND-EYED WOMEN<. IN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME HIS PROFANITY WILL BE DECREASED ENOUGH FOR HIM TO BE PERMITTED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH MIXED GROUPS, AND SOON HE WILL BE SPEAKING >ENGLISH< AS GOOD AS HE DID BEFORE. HE MAY ALSO COMPLAIN OF SLEEPING IN A ROOM & REFUSE TO GO TO BED WITHOUT HIS MOSQUITO NET.

MAKE NO FLATTERING REMARKS ABOUT >EXOTIC ASIA<. AVOID MENTIONING BENEFITS OF OVERSEAS DUTY, SEASONAL WEATHER, AND ABOVE ALL ASK BEFORE MENTIONING THE FOOD DELICACIES OF THE >EAST<, SUCH AS >FRIED LICE< /RICE/. A MERE MENTION OR REFERENCE ON THIS PARTICULAR SUBJECT MAY TRIGGER OFF AN AWESOME DISPLAY OF VIOLENCE.

FOR THE FIRST FEW MONTHS /UNTIL HE IS HOUSEBROKEN/ BE ESPECIALLY WATCHFUL IF HE IS IN THE COMPANY OF WOMEN, PARTICULARLY YOUNG AND VERY BEAUTIFUL SPECIMENS. THE FEW >AMERICAN< GIRLS HE MAY HAVE SEEN SINCE ARRIVING IN THE P.I. ARE EITHER ONLY HALF AMERICAN OR A PEACE CORPS WORKER, WHO WOULD RATHER BE WITH A FILIPINO. THEREFORE, HIS FIRST REACTION UPON MEETING AN ATTRACTIVE >ROUND-EYE< MAY WELL BE TO STARE. MOTHERS AND SWEETHEARTS ARE ADVISED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS MOMENTARY SHOCK AND >MOVE THE YOUNG LADY OUT OF HIS REACH<..

KEEP IN MIND THAT BENEATH HIS TANNED AND ROUGHENED EXTERIOR THERE BEATS THE HEART OF PURE GOLD. TREASURE THIS FOR IT IS THE ONLY THING OF VALUE HE HAS LEFT. TREAT HIM WITH KINDNESS, TOLERANCE, AND AN OCCASIONAL FIFTH OF GOOD WHISKEY, AND YOU WILL BE ABLE TO REHABILITATE THIS HOLLOW SHELL OF THE MAN YOU ONCE KNEW.

SEND NO MORE LETTERS TO P.O. BOX 809, APO SAN FRANCISCO 96274, AFTER THE 21 OF AUG., FOR HE IS LEAVING THE DUST AND THE ROCKS OF THE P.I. IN 41 DAYS AND WILL BE HEADING FOR THE >LAND OF BIG BARS AND LIQUOR STORES<.

FUTURE MAILING ADDRESS WILL BE.. WILLIAM L. BOWERS, 3271 SHELLHART ROAD, BARBERTON, OHIO 44203
>FILL THE ICEBOX WITH BEER AND THE SHELVES WITH WHISKEY – IT WILL BE NEEDED<

...THANK YOU...

You see, actually, I didn't "write" that.

I've no experience outside the technical world, but I'm assuming that almost every office has a tattered copy of pregnant Lucy ("Damn you, Charlie Brown!") cartoons, creative inter-office memos ("Company Policy dictates two weeks advance notice in the event of your death."), and other similar fanzine-worthy material. Assume, hell: I know that this is true because not more than two weeks ago, none other than Dave Locke showed me how to get properly screwed. True, it took both sides of the paper... but I assumed that there'd be a quiz later.

There wasn't. It was a full-fledged exam...
...and any computer room has the mandatory programs for printing out "Merry Xmas", or X-created calendar girls in several sheets. Even the most primitive version of a computer room...

What we had was the above.

I'm fairly certain that I modified the basic deck in other than the obvious "personalizing touches", but if I can't remember the rationale behind the excerpts in **X:13**, you can't really expect me to know how much of the preceding is "mine".

Besides, I never said I wrote it.

I ran off (out-putted?) maybe a hundred copies; I recall sending out four or five. I seem to have 7 or 8 left. Such is the state of my ability to hang onto things.

In any event, herewith a Genuine *Xenolith* Contest:

I will send/give a copy of the original printout to the two or three people who most uniquely convince me that I *should* give them a copy.

Threats of bodily injury are not nice, but Ohio's Truth in Fannish Myth-Making Laws require me to inform you that bribery and alternate forms of entertainment are certainly acceptable forms of entry... with no prior commitment on my part to deliver the goods.

This is, after all, America.

Winning entries will be printed. If they can be.

Contest closes when 1) I run out of copies; 2) I'm too tired and high to get out of bed; or 3) I get bored with the whole thing.

Or, as Jimmy Carter said to the electorate:

Caveat Emptor!

I'm making no commitment to publishing these tidbits from the past in every issue, but I probably will continue the tradition from time to time, as I run across things. If worst comes to worst, I can always tell you the epic tale of my twenty-fifth birthday, electro-stencil my tax returns from those years, or recap the losing of my virginity...

Just think of all the wonderful things you have to look forward to that you won't find in *Locus* or *Starship*... and probably not in *SFR* either.

In the meantime, I'm still looking for my masterwork composed overseas. It was not an article, nor was it fiction – and it was intended neither for fanzine or “real” publication. Rather, it was a letter. It was a letter but not to a friend, or a fan (I used to have both). In fact, it was a letter to someone I'd never met; and, as far as I can remember now, never did meet.

I'm still looking for it; it's in here somewhere. I saw it no more than two or three years ago. Over there somewhere, mixed in with the watermelons and pink things...

Notes Toward A Speech Delivered at **“The Nine Billion Names of ConFusion”, Jan. 23, 1981**

Xenolith 16 | February 1981

SOME THINGS ARE EASIER IN OCTOBER... when, for instance, I asked Larry & Leah if I was to do another Friday night ‘speech’ at ConFusion. And, when Larry said, “Sure, if you want to...”, I replied: “I want to.”

I was even sober at the time, which only goes to show that I'm capable of making foolish commitments in any state. But it had been a long time since January, the pre-Friday night worries of last year had faded along with my budding speech-making career... and besides, I had all these neat things to tell you about.

Well, I still have all these neat things to tell you – as well as several new people to make “famous” – but despite perhaps twenty-five “speeches” mentally composed in the interim, here it is, a week and a half before the convention... and, as usual, nothing has been committed to paper.

I sometimes wonder why I bother worrying about it: After all, the only way I can assure something having more than a seven-day gap between conception and appearance is *not* to make it into a speech – but rather write it out for Glicksohn or Denise to publish...

But that's already been done, and it still doesn't alleviate the problem of the moment.

It is with some reluctance that I resist the urge to pick up the phone, call Larry, and tell him that, since he's so convinced that I'm a mere hoax... HE can bloody well do the speech himself! But I can't do that... Still, what stops me is not anything silly like "not letting friends down"... ..or even because if I copped out I know Leah would attribute it to my recently attained puberty.

No, it is a much more pressing reason than either of those that keeps me sitting at the typewriter. You see – if I back out this year, I know they won't let me have a slot *next* year...

...and I'm certain that I'll have the rope trick perfected by then!

(Besides, Leah assures me that they need even more footage of my hands shaking on videotape... for inclusion in the next Spare Chaynge production: **Big Bird Eats Chicon IV.**)

If the hands do shake, it will only be a sign that it's been too long since Happy Hour; not because it's been a year since the last speech.

It hasn't been quite that long since my last fanzine, but it has been a while. And, for reasons soon to be stated, it will probably be a while before my next one. And so, never one to let precedent stand in the way, I see here an opportunity to fulfill two obligations at once... and give to you:

BILL BOWERS' *XENOLITH* #15:

A Relentlessly Eclectic Personalzine

Two days after Ronald Reagan was elected, I got a job.

After all, even though I voted against both Carter and Reagan, in the end, as I quipped to women friends (and Frank Johnson), I didn't lose: YOU did!

If I was a bit ecstatic about the job, the fact that I'd worked less than three weeks between Memorial Day and the Election may have had something to do with it.

I had, several years ago, after careful observation of older relatives, and after having gotten rid of my own ulcers, decided that the only sensible way to approach life was to take my "retirement" on the installment plan, rather than waiting for some mythical age when I'd be too tired – I understand some people get that way – to enjoy myself.

Still, while my current lifestyle is wildly extravagant only in terms of the amount of miles I put on my car, my income level over the past several years has not been sufficient to support a six-month yearly "vacation".

1980 was not a fiscally sound year for me – but I made it with the dint of some creative bookkeeping, and the friendship of some neat people. And when they sighed, and asked when I was going to settle down and get a "real job"... well, that was a fair question. Still, I don't think they quite comprehend the total (almost physical) aversion I have to that concept: I played it straight for almost sixteen years, and what I have to show for that "real job" are the ulcer scars – and a pension of \$128 a month... starting in 2008.

Still, I've been tempted more than once over the past six months. A sense of stability in at least one area of my life has a certain attraction. But I'm not sure I'm mature enough to handle stability.

The fact that I enjoyed the job was a bonus, but since I temp, I knew the duration was limited. One or two months, they told me, going in; I hoped it would last through the holidays, but wasn't really surprised when it ended on December 12th. From past experience, I knew that the chance of a new job that close to Christmas was minimal, so when I found out that the agency not only had a job for me starting the next Monday, but that it could well last a year, I was, in a word, overjoyed.

Even if it was a 59-mile drive. One way.

On the Friday of the first week at that job, I was called into the office and told that they couldn't use me.

Flashback:

In August, a few weeks before Noreascon Two, I was told to report for a job, starting on a Wednesday. Three days later... Friday afternoon, I received a call from my boss at the agency – ten minutes before I was to leave work. He told me that the company had called him, and told him that they no longer needed my services. "I'm not sure why," he said. "Call me Monday and I'll let you know."

That was one of the more despondent weekends in my life, but I survived it, and called the office the next week. "They said your initial drawing wasn't good enough; it was sloppy and the line work wasn't up to par."

"Bullshit," I said. I may be self-deprecating in evaluating certain of my abilities, but while I'll never set any speed records, I take pride in the quality of my technical drawings. I'm a damn good draftsman.

"Okay," he said. "I'll check into it."

I waited a week, my self-confidence in the balance, as he pulled strings through contacts in that company, and finally I received a call:

It turns out that the supervisor I had been working under, new in his job, had received several cracks from fellow supervisors about the length of my hair.

This was pre-Boston, and it was a touch longer than it is now, I guess... but still, my calendar said that it was August of 1980 ...not 1960.

Working temp, you work at the mercy of who you work for even more than in other jobs. And I don't quibble with the right of a supervisor to dismiss me; it's a part of the price you pay for the relative freedom. I just sometimes wonder about the guts of someone who takes off work an hour early so he won't have to be the one to tell me... and then lies to my boss on top of it.

We had several phone discussions over the ensuing months of no work, my agency boss and I, and finally I agreed to get a haircut before reporting to my next job.

Ah well, it had been a while since I had sold out. In any aspect of my life.

End flashback.

...and the December story continues:

The Friday of Reckoning was the Friday before Christmas. This time I knew that there was no chance of my getting another job until after the first of the year and... for reasons I'll get to in a bit, I was even more depressed over this dismissal than I was the one in August. In many ways, it was the biggest bust of my life.

Now let's face it: I'm never going to arrive at the point where I'll enjoy rejection. In any area. But I haven't survived until this age (1943 was a very good year!) without acquiring – with some effort – defense mechanisms that automatically come into play given the proper stimuli.

...and when the rejection involves a job (and, sometimes, not) the procedure is simple: I call up a friend, say "Hey, can I come crash with you a bit?" – and simply take off for a couple of days. Some would call this running away from the

problem; I choose to call it putting myself back together. One more time.

After the Ides of December, I made a few phone calls, survived the weekend, refiled for unemployment Monday morning... and Monday evening I took off, planning on spending a couple of days in – of all places – Ann Arbor, before paying an obligatory Christmas visit to my parents in a northern Ohio town that's so small it couldn't possibly have produced a fan other than myself.

I crashed with the Prosecutor and Leah that night – but Larry had hidden his so-called evidence well – so I departed for deepest Ann Arbor Tuesday morning. That afternoon I proceeded to start running a slightly incredible fever for three days, and in the process forfeited a rather unique Christmas present.

Finally, realizing that I should at least *visit* Ohio before ConFusion, I crawled into my car and left Saturday afternoon, for a token visit to Barberton. En route, I paused at the Perkins just down Reynolds Road from the ConClave hotel (it seemed appropriate) for my first solid food in four days.

Upon finding a semblance of my normally substantial self back in Cincinnati that Sunday evening, I wanted nothing more than to simply hibernate the remainder of the winter, regaining strength and the ability to smoke and to drink anything other than gallons of orange juice. But such was not to be: Casting aside all thought of selfish things like health and sobriety, I managed to appear all *five* nights of the Fourth Annual Cincinnati Perpetually Floating New Year's Party. (It was, after all, my duty as one of the prime perpetrators.)

I must admit it slightly strange that I found the highlight of the whole shebang was taking Sid "home" to Tabakow's on my way to pick up a lag-gard at the Greyhound station 5 ayem, Friday the Second – but then, I've always been amused, and bemused, by the strangest of circumstances.

And so my version of 1980 ended.

I have written much in this fanzine of the mystical magical touring beast – the dirty green 1976 Mustang that has motorvated me the past four-and-a-half years – and which now has an odometer reading an imaginary "ten" after the nine thousand miles actually showing. I went back and read the relevant issue, and belatedly noticed that

when Maia said that – “If a Mustang lasts 100,000 miles, it’ll last forever.” – she did not add any guarantee that it would do so cheaply.

Now I’ve rarely been accused of being cynical, but I have the distinct feeling that my 1981 began that same Friday afternoon when – nine or ten hours after having dropped Sid off – as Ms. Tardiness and I were on the way out to breakfast, the car died.

I was not thrilled, I must admit... but by utilizing the services of the Cavin Transit Authority, we were able to make it to the parties until I could borrow Tanya’s – *Cincinnati* Tanya’s – pickup truck. The Mustang spent a week in the garage, until they told me it would cost close to \$300 to fix correctly... but that it could be made to run for about thirty bucks – with absolutely no guarantee that it would run more than a day.

Most of the times I have heard that phrase – “no guarantees” – over the past several years, it hasn’t been in reference to parts meshing in a mechanical fashion, but, then, I would probably have been unable, in those cases also, to pay the asking price for firm guarantees.

Still, with the death of the car it did seem as if the end of 1980 was blending into the beginning of 1981 with a bit too much similarity. The feeling was only intensified when, after the parties were over, the guests were gone, and we were left to our own devices, I parked Tanya’s truck outside Cavin’s apartment while we went out to see a cheapy matinee.

Now I’ve said “I should have known better” in just about as many instances as I’ve foregone guarantees – but in this case I think I had an excuse: Just because a succession of Cavin-mobiles had been wiped out by cars failing to negotiate that curve in the road... well, that was little more than a subject of idle curiosity to me... after all, I’d been parking my car there on the average of two or three times a week since June of 1977 with nary a scratch.

You guessed it – but only as proof that not everything I write is terribly esoteric. When we returned from the movie (and the incredible sight of Bill Cavin *not* being able to finish a second helping of LaRosa’s spaghetti) I noticed that something was amiss. The fact that the truck was at a different angle, and several feet farther down the street from where I’d parked it, might have been a clue.

Once the note was found wedged in the door, and it was established that the accident had been

reported to the police, I worked up enough courage to call Tanya. She took it quite well... considering that she had been laid-off that very same day.

But this particular segment-story doesn’t end quite there:

A few days later, as Tanya and I were in the truck touring Cincinnati’s junkyards, looking for a bed... for the truck... we stopped at a self-service gas station. As I walked up to the window and offered my credit card, the attendant asked for the license plate number. I looked back at the truck and saw no front plate. Slowly realizing that was ridiculous – since the truck was registered in Ohio and not Kentucky – I called back to Tanya... and she went around to the back of the truck...

Apparently the plates had been ripped off the previous night when, once again, it was parked outside Cavin-territory.

As we drove off from the gas station I commented to Tanya that knowing me had certainly made her life more interesting.

“Yes,” she replied, “...but I was *so* looking forward to a dull and boring year, for a change.”

“Wrong,” I said.

Obligatory Mention: In my SpaceCon “report” last issue – I made a glaring omission. For those of you who are curious, yes, Mike *did* knock on my door once again. This time it was particularly amusing in that he not only did so at 11:30 – *before* the appointed hour – but while I was participating in a mini-hall party... and was seated right beside that same door.

I understand that he returned at midnight to repeat the performance, but, and this will come as a distinct shock to some here tonight... in some cases I actually *do* learn from prior experience... because, by then, along with several friends (and Bill Marks), I had migrated to down by the pool, and was quite visible.

This has been the obligatory Mike Glicksohn mention.

...and THIS is a blatant attempt at plea bargaining:

I have been told, with some fervor, that the future of fanzines lies in videotape, or with home computers. This may well be, but it is not likely to be an immediate future in my case. The economics do not compute: not when the priorities lie in access to people rather than access to equipment.

But I do have one piece of equipment that I suspect more of you here have... or have access to... than have mimeographs or dittos. And that is a cassette recorder/player.

I'm not saying it's a first – but I haven't heard of one before – and so I was a bit surprised when, after hearing it was coming out almost as long as I've heard *Imp 2* was coming out – when Larry Tucker handed me a copy of the first issue of *Uncle Albert's Electric Talking Fanzine* at Octocon. (Do I have to add – “the real one” – for this audience?)

...and, other than a minor aesthetic nitpick: Just as I prefer Twil-tone to slick stock, and just as I prefer Tri-X to Pan-X, so do I prefer masking tape to Scotch... I rather enjoyed the production. I do think Larry should have looked over the graphics in *Xenolith Three* before presenting the Reynolds interview, but Spider is always enjoyable, the Martian Entropy Band selections were a form of art that even Bowers couldn't put in a box... and the Rotslers and Gillilands were, as usual, in their stark simplicity, brilliant.

...and the fold-out of the entire Air Corps was nostalgic: I take it Ro was in town the weekend it was shot?

But, Larry, you did commit the one unpardonable sin of a first issue: The only horror I can think of that is worse than being forced to read... is being forced to *listen* to... a piece of fan fiction.

For shame.

(If you're going to have stories, at least have relevant ones: Get Ro to do the verbal “Secret Handgrip” story for you...)

As for me, I now have a unique copy of *Uncle Albert's*... I have recorded over “Sub-Space Scraps” a couple of selections from the album *Al Curry Goes Disco* – and can now listen to the second side with some degree of appreciation.

Larry, you ask for RoCs: Well, you've just recorded mine...

...I still can't help preferring Larry Downes' variation on a LoC a lot more, though.

And this has been the Annual Obligatory Larry Downes Mention.

...and sometimes you almost choke when you have to swallow words that have been put into print:

A while back I published a letter from Mike Bracken, that Mike Glicksohn responded to.

In *X:14* I published Bracken's answer to Glicksohn. To ultra-simplify things, for the purpose of segueing to the story I want to tell as quickly as possible, Bracken said that the reason he gave up doing fanzines is because he is now making his living in the graphics and writing professions... and he no longer has the inclination, or need, to do fanzines.

My reply to him went like this:

I'm sure that there is a “proper” term for it, but I call it one of your basic “life” decisions. Surprisingly, this one was made consciously. To wit: I have the skills/training/talent to do what Mike is doing for a living. But I'm not.

...about that job in December: the one-week one.

It was through the agency, but it wasn't drafting: It was as a technical illustrator in a large industrial firm. I said, sure, why not... I'll try it. And when I got there the first day, I knew I'd found a home.

With direct access to a composer, stat machine, headliner, waxer, and various other neat toys... what would-be Andy Porter wouldn't have been at home? And though most of the work thrown at me was mere doctoring of previously drawn items, I enjoyed the people. And I didn't even mind the hour and fifteen minute drive.

I was happy.

And when the chief engineer asked me to come into his office that Friday afternoon:

...with a sinking feeling, I knew what was coming; I wasn't fast enough; my line work on doctoring up reduced mylars wasn't adequate to their needs.

I've been here before.

I don't know: I had been given no specific deadlines, and no comments were made to me directly on the quality of my work. Maybe their judgment was valid, but I was happy with the job and with my output. Obviously, different perspectives from theirs, and yet they were very nice about the whole thing.

Still, I was out of a job again... and totally, painfully crushed.

I doubt that I'm unique in having a few things in life that you want, need... so achingly, desperately much, that you can virtually taste it.

...and when you have something like that, if only for a fleeting moment – or a week – and then lose it, the hurt of withdrawal is so intense that you

invariably say that it would have been better not to have experienced it at all.

...you say that for a while – and mean it; but gradually the pain diminishes, and the gradual realization that having experienced joy for a while is its own reward... and besides, we do go on living, don't we?

Still, I can't help but wondering if it is possible to want something TOO much – so much that your self-doubts become self-fulfilling, and in the end you lose that which you want most...

I really wanted that job.

And that basically ended what I was going to say... until *this* week:

Again, a three-day job – but since only two had been promised, I was pleased. And they were happy, saying that they would ask for me by name the next time they needed temporary help.

As a bonus, I even got a half hour overtime Wednesday.

– but I paid for it.

Because of that extra half hour... I found myself trapped in the lobby, along with the tools of my trade. The office staff had left, locking the door exiting out to the real world.

...and the door through which I had entered the lobby could only be opened if someone pressed a buzzer.

Strangely enough, the buzzer was not in the lobby itself!

Now... obviously... I made it out: After scientifically analyzing the situation – screaming for help didn't... – finally, by leaning through the opening into the receptionist's cubicle (fortunately, the sliding glass panels weren't locked) I was able to prop a dictionary up against the buzzer button... and race across the lobby to open the inside door before the book slid down a third time.

The whole episode probably lasted no more than five or ten minutes – but the sense of total entrapment was not one I cherished..

Later, of course, I was able to laugh at the situation – and pad out a speech with it. But retrospect has that advantage over reality.

Still – sometimes I wonder what it is about my life that makes me occasionally think I'm a character in a Kafka story (**METAMORPHOSIS** will do), when all I *want* to do is to live in a Robert Rimmer scenario...

...or perhaps inside a Camel cigarette pack.

In fact, after all of the trials and tribulations of the past few months – I'm not at all sure I should dispute the hoax charge tomorrow.

Oh, I *will* – the show must... whatever. It would make things a hell of a lot... err... "simpler"... to be someone else's creation, though.

But it certainly wouldn't be as interesting.

I guess it's my responsibility to live my life in whatever weird way it occurs – but for you, I can only hope that whatever lobbies of the mind you get locked into... will have a crash bar on the Exit door!

...until next issue...

– Bill Bowers

23 January 1981; 6:50 pm

My Publication #111

...note that time; my speech was scheduled for 8:30 that same night. It was closer to nine before I was "on", but that's still cutting it a bit close. Even for me.

In the aftermath, a few people told me it was "depressing"; I don't quite see it that way. Rather it is a self-reaffirmation that I'm not paranoid – my delusions are real! – and that, no matter how rough things seem at times... I always do survive... (This is not to wish for a continuance of the trend!)

...you'll never know how close I was to giving this to someone else to publish... then simply publishing **Xenolith 16** without a word of explanation. (At least I'd hear from Terry & Ken that way.) I am remarkably pleased with my own self-restraint...

...then again, I have this notion. Ah well, we'll see how it goes when I wrap thish...

2/12/81



IMPRESSIONS

(Series 2, Number 1)

I used to write... ~~and publish~~... assemblyings of words
that I labelled "Impressions"
(they were not essays / they were not poems)
– rather I thought of them as Word Sketches

But that was long ago
– before serially-monogamous love letters
– before esoterically-personal "speeches"
– before personally-esoteric (read: "gut-teasing" fanzine word concentrations.

But – what to do
this time ...when it is different – because you are different
...when it is the same – because (essentially) I am the same

And when I want to say
very simple things, really

But I can not ...the situation, you know
and so I do the best I can – here; I have no choice.
Unlike others, I have no diary, no Journal, no private repository
I only have this (my "fanzine") and my letters to you.

It is unfair (of course), but among promises made, "fairness" was never included.
– and, as always (with me), I suppose Remember?
– Nothing is as simple (as it appears to others);
– Nor as complex (as it seems to me). So what's new?

None of this was planned, you know.
And I really didn't need this now
I was doing quite well – for me – thank you.
And yet, I really needed it/you now
more than even I realized.

What attracts one person to another?
Some things simply can't be analyzed/graphed/flowcharted. Of course, I try.
There have been those who have attracted me physically & those of emotional bonding:
But there have been few (so very few) to whom I was... drawn... both ways.
So. Why. You?

Some of the factors I know / others I assume / others leave me puzzled.
All I know for sure, though – is this:
Rightly or Wrongly (words inoperative for the duration) I love you.

Three Words.

Words that either come too easily – or much (when it counts) too hard.

This Time

(for this is our time... no matter how long or short it proves to be)

when they – the words – came out

They came naturally ...if a week delayed.

I don't know

where "we" are going

The book is not yet written/plotted/scripted & the movie will be made by others.

I do know that there will be problems, pains, hurts

to counterpoint the joys

Life/Love is like that, I guess.

Sometimes I wish that everyone else would simply go away –

and leave us alone

But that is hardly possible – is it?

...and probably not even desirable.

(As much as I shut them out, I really do need my friends... now more than ever.)

I make grandiose plans – they never work

I go with it naturally – and it usually works

I know this (on paper)

knowing it in reality is another ballgame (sorry!)

But then, reality was never my strong suit. Weird, isn't it...?

I guess, like you said, we just have to take one day at a time

and see what happens

We don't have much choice, do we?

And for this day, what I have

(I don't know about you) is this:

Once again,

All is new

All is true

All is you



Xenolith 16 | *February 1981*



CAUSE AND EFFECT.

...of words: spoken flippantly, or written carefully.

I've never been totally at ease with words, in either format, and I probably never will be... But I like to think that I've gradually become just a bit more fluent in non-touching communication over the years: while the sequence and the logic of the words still gets jumbled a bit from time to time... from time to time I'm actually pleased with something I've written.

...or said.

"All of my friends do creative things," I said to Denise Parsley Leigh, "...so what is with you?" That was sometime in the fall of 1977. The following June, at Midwestcon, a copy of *Graymalkin #1* was thrust into my hands. Along with a snide comment. Or two.

You will, of course, pardon me if I take more than a small amount of pride in the fact that (at least in my conception of things; Denise may have a slightly different version!) one of my caustic remarks was the impetus for the production of what has since become one of the best fanzines of recent memory. (It probably would be the best, if Denise didn't publish on a Glicksohnian schedule, while utilizing my dictionary for spelling.)

...but of course, the fall comes shortly after the pride:

At *this* year's Midwestcon I was introduced to a very attractive young woman. "I've heard of you," she said, glitteringly. Ah, I thought to myself. (And here I'd believed that only males from Toronto – and Steve Leigh – had that kind of reputation.)

Several days later – days filled with wondering just what she'd heard of me; I was convinced that it would probably be a very pallid version of the truth – I worked up enough nerve to ask Hania just what she'd heard about me.

"Oh, nothing much," she said, "...just that you're a friend of Denise's."

After that, I think the wisest course is to go back to *writing* words for a while... which leads us to:

Bill Bowers' Thots While Swinging

Energumen 16, Sept. 1981 | Mike Glicksohn, ed.

WHEN I MOVED INTO 2468 Harrison (first floor, front) in June of 1977, I did not plan on staying for long: it was simply a base camp, one that once I was established in and familiar with Cincinnati, I would vacate for other quarters. My record for not having spent much more than two years (usually less) in any one residence after "leaving home" in 1961 lent credence to this theory. Besides, it was much too small: I moved from a two-bedroom townhouse – which I had more than adequately filled with kipple – into three medium-sized rooms. A lot of the boxes of books, fanzines, and magazines had to go into the basement that Saturday in June... against the day I either got organized, or moved.

Almost forty months later those boxes are still in the basement, and I hesitate to go down and investigate what ravages time, humidity and the kids from upstairs have inflicted on my once precious material possessions.

The back room is insufferably hot in the summer and the front room is frigid in the winter; the kitchen is generally used for storage and not cooking... and I hate anyone who can enter the closet-sized bathroom without ducking. Water pressure is a myth; the thundering herd of kids overhead (I've only seen three; I haven't had my eyes checked in years) is matched not only by the mufflerless cars laying rubber out front, but (even more irritatingly than *Fugghead #8* at AutoClave) by every asshole over five foot two banging – resoundingly – the directional signs that mark a curve in Harrison. Said curve equals the frontage of this house; hence the inopportune placement of the signs.

And while it may be big enough to handle my Responsibility, it is certainly not big enough for the two additional cats I have received (on perpetual loan) since moving here. Oh, yes... I'm still

here. Occasionally, if not weekly, I say that I'm going to move. Once I get a little bit ahead...

I'm not so sure about that "getting ahead", but eventually I'm sure that the return address on that other fanzine starting with the letter "X" will reflect a change. Still, even should that happen tomorrow, I suspect I will remember this place for a long, long time: several of the "best" and a few of the "worst" episodes of my entire life have taken place while I have inhabited this space. It is, I realize with a sudden start of surprise, quite literally my home.

But while the memories will remain, I suspect that what I will miss most about 2468 Harrison is the one physical aspect I have yet to mention: the large porch spanning the entire front of the house.

I've spent a lot of time out on that porch – usually after the sun has gone down, and sometimes until almost dawn – whether I was working the next day or not. On that porch I have solved the world's problems, and occasionally my own. I have mentally created the world's greatest compositions and devised the appropriate response – snappy comeback/understanding support – for every contingency. I have commiserated over my sorrows and celebrated my joys; both with goodly quantities of rum-'n'-Coke.

It's the very same porch on which, less than a month after my arrival, a short hairy friend accused me of having "plunged all of Cincinnati fandom into war."

I've spent a lot of time out on that porch... if only to watch the small cross-section of humanity that passes before me on the sidewalk. Sometimes I watch with amused superiority... and sometimes with bemused envy because "they" seem to know where they are going. And sometimes it almost seems that I "know" these anonymous passers-in-the-night better than those I know best... better than I know myself.

Even though I enter and exit the apartment through the side door, in ever so many ways that front porch is my launching pad where I build up thrust and then, later, my landing strip where I come back to regroup and to refuel my energies. Or my emotions.

The first year I simply sat on the top step, leaning back against the railing. Then, in late July, 1978, I bought a porch swing. (~~But that's another story.~~) The swing is now a bit battered since I haven't taken it down the past two winters, but the wood has aged well. I'm a bit more battered than when I first sat in it, but I've aged and, well...

Porch-swinging may not be everyone's perfect method of coming up with Vast Thots and fanzine material but I've personally found that it beats the hell out of lawnmowing.

...even with a Toro.

We could go for the obvious.

I would suppose that (at least among those who "know" us) given this space in this circumstance, many would presume that I would regale you with tales of Mike Glicksohn's shortcomings... adding just a few more planks to the building of the mythos started a decade ago.

The temptation is certainly there; the structure occasionally seems near collapse, and this would be the golden opportunity to respond to / repay for the one formal piece of Mike's writing I've published. (Now *that's* esoteric! (But my standards were lower then, I guess.))

The material is certainly there: I've just looked over the editorials – and Rosemary's columns – in the first several *Energumens*. But those who know me will testify that while I am often obvious... it's usually when I'm attempting to be subtle... so with this one exception...

I owe Mike Glicksohn an apology.

From time to time, if not oftener, I have chastised Mike (in print and otherwise) because I "felt" that he all too often referred to *NERG* as "his" fanzine...which I defensively felt (intentionally or otherwise) diminished the role Susan had in the fanzine that formerly bore this name.

(And, yes, Mike, I well remember the dinner we shared before the awards presentation at Torcon II.)

...defensively for two reasons:

1) I was continually irritated (and didn't know what to do about it) when I was introduced at conventions by Bill Mallardi as "the person who 'helped' [him] put *Double:Bill* out." (No... it was in no way malicious; but it hurt nevertheless.)

2) ...and while I have pretty well consistently reiterated that, without Joan, *Outworlds* (that what made me famous) would not have been what it was, I have just as often stated that it was "my" fanzine... that it would have come about one way or the other in any event. It just wouldn't have been as "easy".

End defensiveness; enter apology...

It wasn't until this summer, in a moment of enforced idleness (i.e., unemployment) when I was sorting through boxes of old fanzines (well... they were in a box labeled "good fanzines") that I realized/remembered that, indeed, the first few *Energumens* were solely edited by Mike.

What this all proves, other than that *NERG* started out "Mike's" and *OW* ended up "mine", I'm not sure, except that I'll have to postpone convention-wearing of my new T-shirt.

...the one that proclaims "I am the Memory of Mike Glicksohn."

...and here I'd been doing so well recently.

...and so with that one exception, I will attempt to not again mention Mike Glicksohn's name in these pages.

Instead of going for the obvious, let's go for...

WELL, BACK OUT TO THE PORCH to think about it for awhile...

Synergy was very carefully explained to me in the parking garage at Noreascon Two. It's what Theodore Sturgeon writes about.

No writer of worth can be stereotyped into a one-subject summation, but if I identify strongly with much of Joe Haldeman's (1943 was a Very Good Year) work to date, perhaps it's because – even though I "only" manifested the bodies in plastic bags through... and emerged physically unscathed – I was much, much too close in '67 & '68.

...and since my instructor taught well the concept that objects in works-of-art should always be depicted in odd numbers, here's a third:

Ro Lutz-Nagey is inarguably the best natural story-teller I know. And he's not a bad writer, either. But I really couldn't tell you what he

writes *about* because, outside of his job, the published sample is far too small to make a valid determination from.

(That's probably unfair, but it's the only tactic I know to get Ro to actually set down in typewriter copy the piece that he promised me in response to the-speech-that-was-***Outworlds 30***. ~~It's worked before.~~)

That all leads into this:

I recently proclaimed myself (***Graymalkin 5***, page 10) as being much more the fanzine writer than the fanzine editor these days. It was an immodest thing to do, therefore completely out of character, but I had to: nobody was noticing.

Returning again to Boston over the Labor Day weekend: I was told, in a place other than the parking garage, that the fact that I'm obviously very introspective was one of my greatest strengths.

Several hours later, I was told that I introspected too damn much.

It was my eighteenth-anniversary (and 93rd) convention, so why should things be different? I came home confused.

If someone before that had asked me for a summation of my "work" over the past several years, I would probably have replied that, obviously, I wrote about me... and my problems in dealing with my world and the people who intersect it. It's been a bit repetitious at times but that's the subject matter that motivates me enough to sit down at the typewriter and actually put the words I think on paper. I don't know about the synergistic success of my work but I definitely do tell "war stories" (of the most ancient "battle") and the stories that I tell myself out on the swing are much better than the ones that get written down.

Still, I think I've pinned down a one-word theme that I've been exploring in my own way over the past decade:

Assumptions.

The trouble is, I'm still not at all sure which bothers me most:

The assumptions I make about others...

...or the assumptions others make about me.

I *do* know which intrigues me the most: I'm still not firmly convinced Hania told me the whole truth about what she'd heard about me.

I would assume that the basic "speech/not-a-speech" format that I utilize is by now familiar to enough people that I won't have to explain it here. I also assume that, like most things, some people like it, while others don't. That's okay; I'm still having fun with it.

And most of the aspects of the format are here: the pre-title intro, the egotistical usage of "I", the convoluted segues. But one is not: the extensive insertion of quotes from the previously published Bowers Canon.

The deficiency here is not due to a lack of suitable quotes on which to draw: no way.

The lack here is simply that I knew that you'd expect them.

...and while I think it's nice to try and give both sides of the story, in my role as The Fannish Observer, I often don't. Sometimes because it impedes the story, the point I'm attempting to make. Having come out of the corner to become a participatory observer lends some inherent, even if not insurmountable, obstacles to objectivity. Besides, being subjective is so much more fun.

The one thing to remember is that I'll always go with what intrigues me the most. Even if I have to embellish the truth.

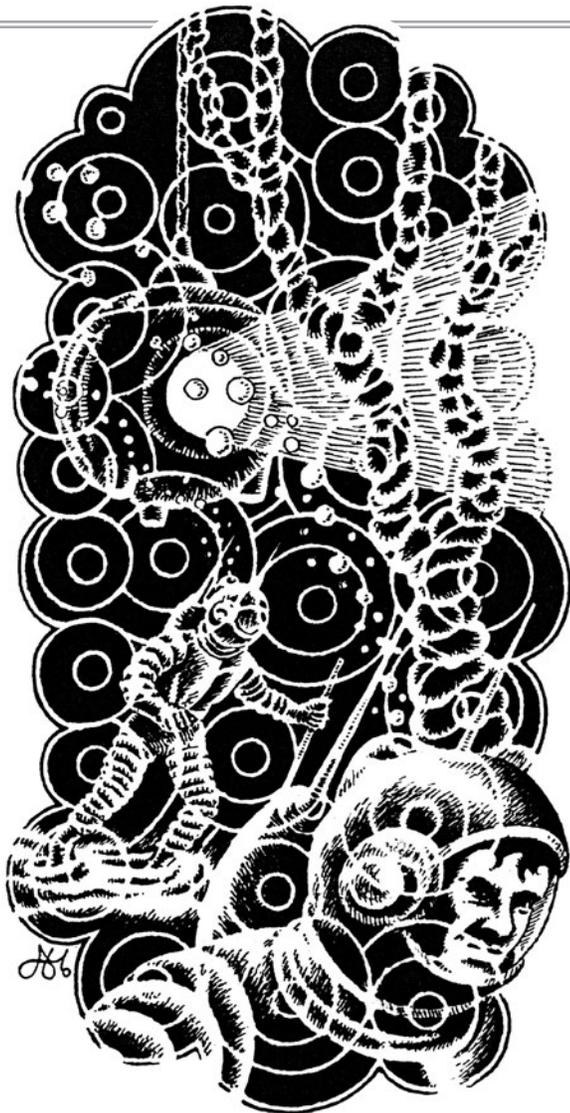
...or, on occasion, unembellish it.

I've this feeling that ***Energumen 16*** will be a rather strange and unique blending of contributors and material. It's only a feeling because, although I know a number of the people who've been asked to contribute, I've no idea of who will come through (tho I'm sure Ro won't), or what the material will be... other than Patrick's piece which I read (and enjoyed) in the original version.

...well, that's not totally true: I *have* promised to introduce Dave Locke to Susan Wood at the first available opportunity. After all, I can see *over* small, furry objects. No matter how fast they move about.

And if you suspect this is a particularly convoluted segue, you are right. If only because I've realized that I am not yet capable of unembellishing enough the incident I was going to relate here. Changing gears, slightly, then...

The impetus for my writing varies. But whether it be done for a "speech", for a fanzine of my own,



or because of a request from someone I love, anything I write – and *finish* (with the exception of personal letters; and we all know how prolific I am with those) – is generally published.

...as will be the segment that would have been here: when I'm ready, when/where you least expect it...

But it still all ties together, because... Well, give me a minute...

Earlier this year, for the first time in a very, very long time, I exercised prior censorship: I did not publish something that I had written, and stencilled, for my own fanzine.

(Some will be impressed. Dave Rowe will be intrigued.)

The reasons are irrelevant (Mandatory Esoterica): it was a conscious (if awkward) decision on my part.

What is relevant is this: Having an unexpected page and a half to fill in *Xenolith 13* and very little

time to fill it, I rummaged, and found a couple of unpublished segments written in the late sixties... threw them together with a concocted rationalization for including them, and (despite my mimeo aborting) had the issue published "on time."

You wouldn't believe how many comments I've gotten saying that those two fillers were much better (... "more poetic"...) than anything I've written recently.

I may not be able to learn... but I can take a hint.

Having had a not totally unexpected (I've spent two weeks occasionally thinking about it) problem in tying the loose ends of this piece together, I went rummaging again... and I found this slightly battered sheet of cheap white typing paper. The upper left-hand corner is folded over, and it's unsigned, but I know it's mine – the dashes, x's and periods, vertically and horizontally, are a registered trademark of the way I type things up before transference to stencil or master.

The typewritten heading on the page went:

(33/59) OUTWORLDS II (59/33)

There was such an *Outworlds*; there was such a page. Singular. (No comment.)

I promised you no "extensive insertion of quotes from the previously published Bowers Canon." This is true. But, as part of my contribution to the rather strange blending of this, the *NERG* that is *16* (much too young for me)... perhaps a timebinding insert?

Relevance is what is important to me; the totally unexpected is my day-to-day norm. The rummaging is finding a way into, or out of, 2468 Harrison; segues are to articles as consistency is to relationships.

And I've not only read *THE PRINCESS BRIDE*, and very recently OD'ed on John Varley short fiction, but I'm finishing up my first Tom Robbins... err... novel, ever. (He stole my technique.)

My sister had/has hair that color, and the Moon I see has no anus betwixt its smile – and besides that, no matter how high the cliffs I have to climb, I see no sex... changing the fact that:

There was such an *Outworlds*. It was dated March, 1970.

There was such a page.

But it contained nothing such as this.

Why it didn't, I do not know. You'll have to ask my memory...

Given that... this:

IMPRESSIONS VI

I was conversing with myself, the other night
(a habit into which I fell quite naturally)

...and I said: "Self..."

(we being equals... eliminates a lot of needless formality)

..."why"...

(the word is nice and concise; almost as much so as is 'if')

"...why is it that we persist in publishing a fanzine?"

*

Just why is it that we do this thing

...when stories that are unwrote, remain unwritten?

...while not unlimited finances make other 'hobbies' more practicable?

...while books lie unread

and prozines proliferate in the shelves

...untouched by human hands?

*

Why not, indeed, let the Dead remain so in Piece?

...why must a new tendril escape from the stump of *Double:Bill*?

...an offshoot, and yet...not

)despite what they may say(

in the image of that which went before.

*

– something considerably smaller (physically)

and yet maybe

– considerably larger in its own way?

*

Why do I/we/you&me, self... why do we ask that the wife should collate

(we do it in the living room, Joyce)

before she dusts and sweeps.

(Methinks that maybe *she* would like an answer to this one?)

*

What is this thing called 'Egoboo'

that makes grown men tremble at the slightest whiff of it?

Is it contagious,

or curable (once contracted)?

*

Need I worry (or should I hope for) my children to be born with mimeo ink coursing
through their starblood

– and have them weaned on the sickly smell of corflu?

*

Better minds than mine have attempted Answers and Rationalizations

– but I'll tell you the Truth and the Reality:

*

It's a delightful (yet demanding) joyful (with moments of depression) affliction.

– it's just a ghodammed hobby... evolved into a way of life;

But more than All This:

It's what I do best.

(*Bill Bowers; probably January or February, 1970*)

And I still do.

In my own, slightly, inimitable way.

An Observation:

After almost two decades of reading the stuff, I have come to the conclusion that the trouble with most fanwriting is that, no matter how excellent the writing, no matter how intriguing the theme, most fanzine material comes up short. In other words, I see one hell of a lot of vignettes, but very few developed essays, and even fewer full-fledged articles.

Yes, I know the cited reasons: we are all just amateurs here... we don't get paid for what we do. But I still refuse to accept 'amateur' as a pejorative term; and payment tendered in cash is the most easily frittered away. Ask me.

I don't know; mayhap it's only a personal idiosyncrasy, since I prefer novels to short stories... just as I prefer extended relationships to one-night stands. (...not to say that both can't be works-of-art; in either case.)

But, naturally, as with all other Bowers Sermonettes, the faults I find in others are usually ones that I've been unable to "correct" in myself. When I do write these days, I generally do so at some length. But I achieve that length by... let's face it... utilizing a series of vignettes, seemingly united only by the overall title.

And I very rarely reach the denouement of the theme I've set out to explore. I hate stories that end leaving the final solution up to the reader.

But that's OK. I love **Lou Grant**.

...and, after the credits:
COMING NEXT WEEK –

Very late, after the party, the four of us retired to the room.

After maybe an hour of settling into place, I commented: "...you know, given our respective reputations, nobody at the party would ever believe what we're doing now."

A giggle...

(...we sipped our drinks...)

...and I dealt the next euchre hand.

The Epilogue as a Station Break

Cause and effect.

...of words: spoken flippantly, or written carefully.

This time – rather than asking – I was asked to do a Friday night "speech" at ConFusion.

I had fun with this one in the concept stage, and I did it well, by focusing on the front row of the audience (but that's another story, Part Two) – despite the purported evidence I viewed on videotape at SpaceCon Two.

And it went over well: in *Graymalkin 5*, Gregg Trend wrote "...the structure of a Speech as an aural fanzine was clever, if not inspired." Ro promised to actually write the article I had titled over his name. And Joe Haldeman is working on the song...

Modestly, the ConFusion speech was titled: "Bill Bowers' *Outworlds 30*: The Tenth Annish."

Before publishing it, since I was a bit worried about one of my former columnist's reaction to a particular humorous aside, I sent out an advance copy of the transcript. It was passed ("...people keep asking if I was ever a fan...") and I published it in time for Marcon.

In May, 1980, I received a letter... "When you sent me advance word of the annish, I wrote to Mike. Mike is coming here to visit in July. We are sitting down to plan the Tenth Annish of *Energumen*, the Hugo-winning fanzine. It's your doing, Bowers!"

...from Susan Wood.

Now I may not be totally sure of my role in *Graymalkin's* gestation... and I'm even less sure of Hania... but this one I have proof of!

And I'm pleased, but...

No, don't thank me.

The thought occurred to me, as I was sitting on the swing with a young woman the other day, that the idea of Mike sitting up there, having to stencil and run off all this... well, that is reward enough for me.

After all, I have in Mike's own writing the fact that as "of late [*Bowers'*] sex life would prove to be far more interesting than [*Glicksohn's*] anyway!" The poor man needs something to do with his spare time and, since he is my friend, I'm glad that I could provide it.

...well, if you've enjoyed this fanzine, and really want to thank me, that's okay too.

I just want to thank Mike and Susan... just for being...

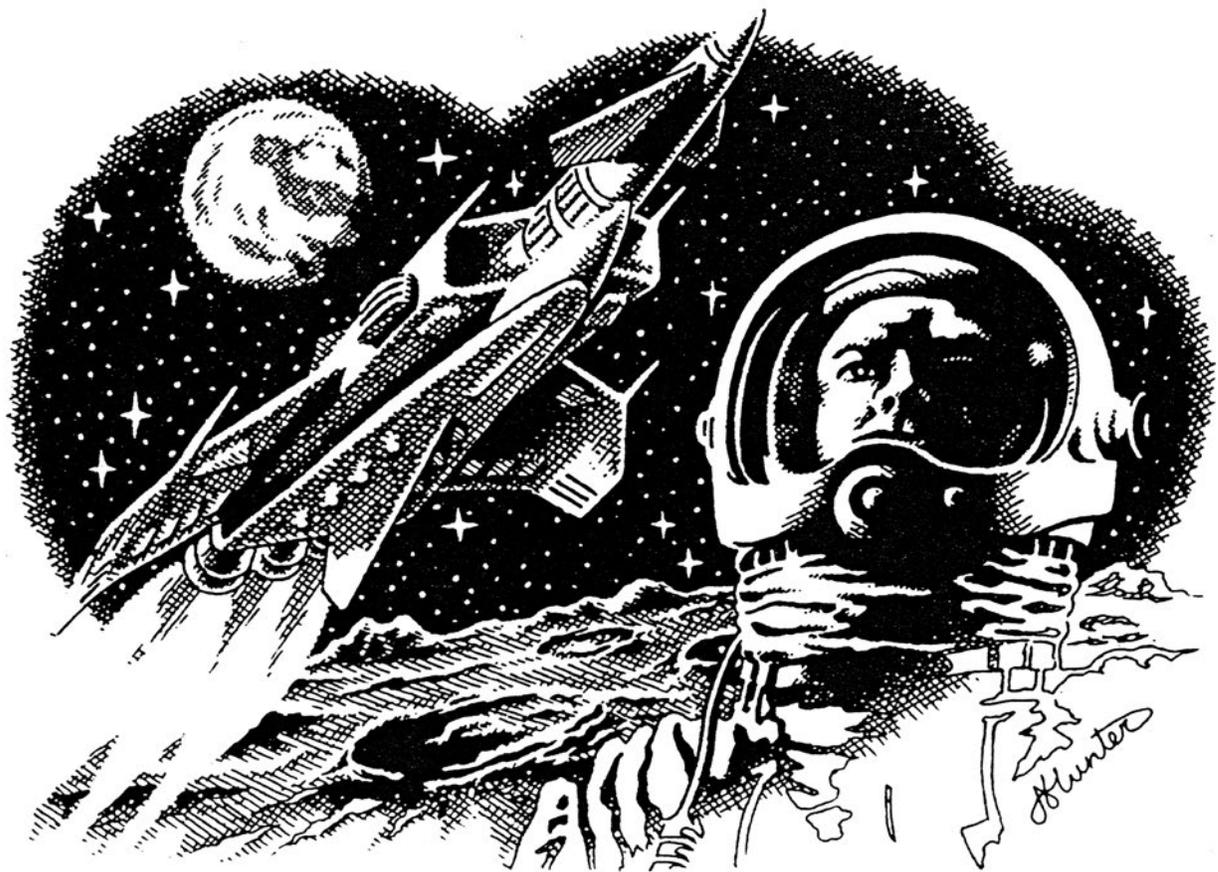
ENDNOTE:

I was going to title this piece "*Outworlds 31*", and dedicate it to Ken Keller, so that He could tell me where to file it. But I have a better idea: do you suppose... you with the slantastic imagination... that we could arrange to have the speech that will be *Outworlds 31: The Twenty-Fifth Annish* printed in *Energumen 18: The Twenty-Fifth Annish*...?

Ah well, just a thot.

...don't hold your breath.

(But where the hell *is Science Fiction Five-Yearly*?)



Brought to you by the Editorial Whim of

“The Cult Object of Midwestern Fandom” Himself

Xenolith 18 | September 15, 1981

IT IS A LITTLE PAST SIX O’CLOCK, Wednesday evening, October 7, 1981.

I’m Bill Bowers, and this is yet another slice of my life, in yet another cleverly cute issue of my fanzine, *Xenolith*.

The reason I say all of this so simply, so directly, so soon... is because it’s been a long time since February, and the last “real” issue.

...and I probably have a lot to say.

I say probably because I have only a week in which to say it (and in which to get it published) before Octocon. Naturally, despite multiple subjects (mostly about myself) in mind, I was still unsure of what opening gambit to utilize... as I came home from work today, determined to at last get started.

So, procrastinating, I examined the mail:

A form from the City of Cincinnati dunning me for the quarterly installment of their income tax (so Simon Leis can keep getting his check, I suppose);

An issue of *Rolling Stone* with “ELVIS: The Party Years” and cover banners informing me of a “Simon & Garfunkel Special Photo Report”, and “J.P. Donleavy On Violence” inside (this, as I wait to see what that maniac Begin will do now, as the repercussions of the Sadat assassination remain unclear);

A statement from MasterCard informing me that I’m now a remarkable \$91 *under* my credit limit... ~~have faith, Mike!~~

A large brown envelope from the Academy Life Insurance Company of Valley Forge, PA, bulk-mailed, containing “Non-Transferable Documents For: Mr. Alvin Marshall”... of this address. The residents of the other two “apartments” in the house are female, and have been so for a surpris-

ing number of years (30 in one case, over 50 in the other), so I shall transfer the documents to the large container containing used cat litter.

...and, surprisingly (given my level of direct response) without an “X” over The Axe, my copy of *Pong #24*.

At Denvention II (without a doubt, the most enjoyable Worldcon I’ve been to since Torcon II) Mike Glicksohn showed me a single copy of a large fanzine he called “*Energumen-16-but-with-a-substitute-cover-because-the-real-one-is-still-at-the-printers-damnit*”. I verified that my name was on the contents page, and that I was mentioned appropriately early in Mike’s editorial... and so I was not terribly surprised when a copy-complete-with-the-cover-that-depicts-two-of-my-fanzines-but-only-one-of-all-the-other-faned’s’ of *Energumen 16* was personally delivered into my hands on the stoop of a small, humble fannish abode in Findlay, Ohio... on September 19th of this very year.

It all seemed somehow fitting that the first comment I made to Mike after egoscanning the issue was to chastise him for omitting the date-completed from the end of my contribution.

That date was, according to my carbon, 9/25/80. For the record.

Last Thursday evening, I was over at the Locke-Causgrove Publishing & Drinking Emporium, to run off an apazine. After I had published a remarkable total of four stencils, we sat around the table testing our respective drinks. After Jackie and Dave had spent an appropriate amount of time respectfully making awe-struck noises about the latest Bowers-publication, the conversation fell

to the level of discovering that Dave had, indeed, read **Energumen 16**.

A suitably short time later (I wasn't eating, and I was tired), I glanced over Dave's shoulder, saw his copy of **Warhoon 28**. "I really have to get that soon –" I-said-without-pausing-for-breath "– and so what did you think of it?"

Stroking his beard as if he found it reassuring to still have one, Dave unexpectedly responded straightforwardly: "...possibly the best thing you've ever written."

I was surprised.

And when the following afternoon, as Joel and I were waiting for Denise to get it together (so that we could leave for ConClave), Steve Leigh said virtually the same thing, I was more than intrigued...

I wondered if Dave and Steve had read the same fanzine, with the same Bowers-piece, that I had.

I made Denise read it on the way up, and she's still speaking to me. But at ConClave (#107 on My List; #10 for 1981), the few who acknowledged having read "Thots While Swinging" were those who had been referenced in it – so that wasn't valid feedback.

Everybody else was off doing whatever it is that Midwestern fans do at conventions.

...and so I come home to find that Ted White considers my contribution to **Energumen 16** "The worst piece in the issue..."

Now, that's a relief!

I'm sorry that Ted didn't like the piece, but I'll probably continue to write things that are "filled with ellipses... references to local ingroupisms... and, most of all, Bill Bowers, who may be not only Bowers' favorite subject but his *only* subject, and certainly his major focus of concern."

Next on the agenda, after this (and Octocon) is completed, is to do something for Denise, who has promised another **Graymalkin** once I deliver;

...and something for Leah, who has promised to have **Imp 2** out for ConFusion, if I contribute by December 1st;

...not to mention Yet Another Friday Night "Speech" at that ConFusion, plus several "projects" in various stages of completion.

All, I'm sure, will be extremely self-centered and esoteric.

But then, maybe just to prove that I can do it... We'll see.

Right now I wouldn't consider the **Energumen** piece my "best"... or even my favorite self-work to date. Those distinctions would fall somewhere in a group of four earlier works: the NASFiC-speech-about-Mike's-sex-life; the Post-Iguanacon "Report" delivered at the 1979 Marcon; the Iguanacon speech itself... and the "Letters To..." segment that ran in **Xenolith 7**.

I reread "Thots While Swinging" a fair number of times in the year between its writing and its publication... and I still don't know what to think of it. Still, there it is – affectionate tribute to Ted in its opening and all – right out there where you can all see it now.

I am curious as to what reaction it will garner (but then I'm *always* curious), while suspecting that most of that response will fall in between the two extremes I've already encountered.

...and when, on the season opener of **WKRP In Cincinnati** tonight, Les hopes that his "scoop" will get him a spot on the Al Schoettelkotte Six O'Clock News... Well, I couldn't help wondering whether that was esoteric, or merely local color. That mouthful is of course the title of the local news on Channel 9, the CBS affiliate here. But that should have been obvious to anyone who was paying attention.

But then, we so rarely pay attention to what we are viewing... or reading, for that matter,

And our Very Own Venus Flytrap has landed a job on KISS 96. It's a bit north of here but still in the area. I, and my budget for tapes, are both glad for that fact!

...just in case you weren't paying attention earlier, I'll remind you that this is the Illustrated Version of the Fourth Annish of the fanzine Ted White reads to find out what's going on in thrilling decadent Midwestern fandom:

...brought to you by the Editorial Whim of one who has been, at one time or another, "an Institution", "almost unanimously categorized as 'an eminently decent person'", "Machiavellian"... but who is now "the Cult Object of Midwestern fandom" Himself –

BILL BOWERS

2468 Harrison Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45211;

513-581-3613

IT IS VAGUELY REASSURING that at least a few things in life remain constant.
...while skimming over what I had to say last year, I came across this – in the third paragraph:
“...here it is, a week and a half before the convention... and, as usual, nothing has been committed to paper.”
Pause.
A look at the calendar.
...ah well.

...and having maintained that tradition, let's depart from others... at least in the conception stage: This will not be labelled a “fanzine”, “editorial”, or whatever; neither will it be a confessional or a recanting of employment and financial woes; and if you want to find out the latest thrilling chapters in my sex life... well, Denise's *Graymalkin* and Leah's *Imp*¹ contain enough explicitness for even the most vicarious of you.

...well, enough for everyone but my friends.

Some things remain – the format of determined non-sequentiality, for example – and there will undoubtedly be an occasional touch of esoterica (just to see who's awake out there). The ellipses you'll have to insert on your own; the awkward pauses as I reach for a drink or a cigarette are carefully choreographed; and the end result will not be the most thrilling moment of your (or, hopefully, my) ConFusion this year.

...what it *will* be is the closest thing to a “real speech” that I've attempted in years.

Let's hit it...

Bill Bowers' “If You Don't Put That Sword Away, Fucker... I'll Run You Through!”

*...being Notes for a speech delivered at
ConFusion 11, Friday, January 29, 1982*

Xenolith 20 | June 18, 1982

Now that I have your attention...

.....
“Guns don't kill people. People
carrying guns kill people.”
.....

I apologize for not being able to recall the source to which to attribute that particular quasi-quote to. It is what is known in the trade (and Haldeman, Kentucky, home of the offutts) as a knee-jerker.

As such, it has some validity – if not total accuracy.

A matter of taste:

I am not a vegetarian. I eat meat, and I have no quarrel with sports hunters. I find other ways preferable to “prove my manhood”, but then I've always been better at utilizing my mouth than I have been with long objects emitting projectiles.² The sensation of spearing someone (or something) verbally is just as satisfactory as any other method – and the potential side-effects are just possibly not quite as consequential.

And you can both have your cake... and eat it, too.

1 Leah's fanzine never made it out. Eventually I ran the piece in an apazine... and it will probably end up here or elsewhere... unless she does something R.S.N.!

2 ...at this point, while listening to a tape of the speech, one can distinctly hear Glicksohn's voice proclaiming from the audience: “At last! A major breakthrough!” I'd ask him to explain that... but if I did, he just might!

A position of personal Philosophy:

I am an ersatz involvist – even in the causes I believe in most passionately.

Still, while I don't know the solution – even to the extent of suggesting a possible (let alone a satisfactory) one – I am less than thrilled with the mere existence of handguns.

I can only visualize them as the ultimate in mechanical masturbation: a short burst of relief, inexpertly (no matter how skillfully) delivered by the hands of someone whose only recourse when irked is not idiosyncratic fanzine articles (or self-serving convention speeches) – but rather the climatic stroking of a hair trigger.

It all depends on what you consider fannish – and who you select as the arbitrator in determining the canon of standards.

Me?

Well, I've always been rather fond of Buck Coulson.

After all, he is twenty-plus years responsible for me becoming hooked on fandom.

We all have our crosses to bear, our shrouds to imprint... and our Sundays to re-emerge from the tomb-like environs of a convention hotel...

...where at least one of us may have been crucified Friday evening.

No, it's not because of the valuable ones we Lost – Lennon and Sadat. Nor is because of the less valuable ones – Reagan and the Pope – that we didn't lose. Thank God... yours/mine/theirs... wherever she might be.

God, it is a given, has to be female.

There is no other rationalization for the capriciousness of fate.

...and that is an inane rationalization.

And yet, in other forums, people have been gunned down for uttering lesser inanities.

We all say silly things. Some of us specialize to the point of making an art-form out of sticking our foot-in-mouth. The fact that I have raised the level of performance to new highs has nothing to do with physical stature: it is simply that I am an elitist – a topic to which I will return shortly.

When you care enough to send the Very Best...

...make sure that it is of a caliber capable of rendering the recipient incoherent...

...but never incapacitated.

Of course it's personal.

The following did not form the philosophy; nor did it quick-freeze the anti-handgun aversion into total immutability.

It's just an anecdote, you know.

...you know... anecdotes: the ones you live through to tell others. Later.

A number of my friends own handguns.

They are experts in the care and feeding – and firing – of the fistful of manhood. So I am told; I have no reason to believe otherwise: my friends never lie to me... except when it's for my own good.

This:

A number of years ago – and a friend who was as emotionally fucked-up as I've been known to be.

A friend who is now an acquaintance – primarily because of one momentary action.

Action can be verbalized, fantasized... or enacted.

He had handguns; he knew handguns.

We had killed several fifths, in incredibly short timespans, of Bacardi 151 Dark between us, over the preceding year. He from time to time drove me up the wall, but that is a talent only my best friends possess. We jabbed back and forth, but I cared for him... and I thought he cared for me...

One night. Late. Several of us. His apartment.

Those of us who drank, had done so.

Those of us who smoked...had done a few bowls.

He... who patronized both forms of alternate entertainment... had (to the best of my recollection) not overindulged in either.

Later, kibbitzing, inanities and slandercon completed, he brought forth his collection of weaponry.

Projectile orientated.

Hand-held.

I, as is my wont, said...

...something;

...whether what I said was, a) witty; b) insightful; or c) unintelligible – is dependent on your perspective... and where you were that particular night in fannish history.

He reacted, in apparently good spirits.

He is not, was not an evil person... nor an unlikable person. In many contexts – more than many fans – he was a "good" person.

But then he pointed one of the fistfuls of penis caricatures at me...

...and pulled the trigger.

I heard the click.

I saw the barrel... the infinity of it...

...and I died.

He knew that the gun was unloaded.

I knew that the gun was unloaded; I trusted him.

And I undoubtedly had agitated him; sometimes I do that with my mere presence. Without saying a word.

Though I usually do say a word: if not three.
In retrospect... I probably had asked for a response...

...but some responses are totally unacceptable.

I told him that, if he ever did that again, I would take his prized brass-gleaming object-dé-manhood... stuff it down his throat to such an extent that the butt stuck out his asshole...and, having made sure that it was loaded with something other than superlatives... give the trigger a squeeze for the old gipper.

For it was, after all, only the merest freeze-frame in the fictionalized script of life and legend.

Even though, in this TV-movie – I tell only the truth.

I have seen the end – my own personal end (the only one that counts) in dreams uncounted.

I am still less than thrilled with the concept of dying... but I've come a long way from the time when, after I'd fallen into a four-foot-deep pool on an obstacle course, I literally dragged under two men who were bigger than I.

The first time I had a major asthma attack and I hyperventilated, I knew it was all over.

I have laid on my back, on an asphalt road east of Chicago, and gazed up into the universe as the meteorites descended.

...but I have never seen anything bigger, nor experienced anything more frightening, more indicative of sheer terror, than I did... when that vaster-than-empires gun barrel loomed black-holishly less than a meter from my face.

Ah, well... one can't dwell endlessly on the impetuous act of a gun-handler.

I will say this.

I meant what I said to him.

...and, had I had a handgun – loaded – within reach, I probably would have used it that night.

...and *that* is what frightens me most about the whole episode.

Elitism and the particular impetus for the subject matter of this extended (even if after-the-title) prologue:

I'm going to shortly mention a specific magazine.

Boos and hisses will automatically erupt: you are preconditioned, and you cannot help it; you will not want to:

I purchase and read... *gasp* ... *Starlog*...
(pause)

...and in the latest issue (#55) I discovered the following letter, quoted in, and leading off

the editorial... An editorial titled "Symbols of Violence!!!" (yes, complete with three, count 'em, exclamation points!!!).

"I am alarmed by the increasing violence in fandom. Conventions have ceased being fun for me and are now actively frightening. Fans wear guns, uniforms and weapons, and I have been threatened with blasters, swords and verbal descriptions of violence. At a recent con, somebody set off a real flame-thrower in the audience of a masquerade, and one fan started a small fire when he ignited a flare in the Parking Lot."

The writer continues:

*"I shuddered through parts of **Raiders**, and I fear Lucas will make ripping faces, bloody propellers and burning snakes a part of **Star Wars**. I do not want SF as a retreat from reality, but neither do I want it to be endured instead of happy vacations from everyday life. I do not want to get used to gore and fear. I run from the violence that will coarsen my soul."*

signed: Sylvia Stevens

I found the editorial response to be both evasive... and surprisingly naive, but it is not my intention to reply directly to that... nor to attempt answering the letter writer myself. It must be a given in that Sylvia Stevens wrote to *Starlog* – and Kerry O'Quinn publishes the same – that the subject matter raised can be of only academic interest to us.

After all, nothing of the sort could possibly happen within the continuum of a *science fiction convention*.

Still, it does serve as a convenient springboard to discuss a few things that have been bothering me – at science fiction conventions – for some time now.

In 1975, responding to a LoCwriter in *Outworlds 25*, I wrote:

"The Dorsai, in this case, are a quasi-military group of fans who have been playing at being door guards at some Midwestern cons for about a year now... in what can only be described as stormtrooper uniforms. I don't know any of them by name (I wonder if they have numbers?), and I'm sure they do what they do for the most honorable of reasons, but their training and capability in preventing ripoffs is suspect from what I hear. I must admit in all honesty that the entire idea of uniformed, role-playing fans

(certainly we all play roles, and wear "uniforms", but you know what I mean...) grates on me. I spent 3 years, 9 months, 4 days, wearing a uniform in no-good-cause, and while I can rationalize the necessity for them from cops to nurses, anything resembling a military uniform produces a physical repulsion in me. Give me back the rent-a-cops; at least THEY had a reason to glare at every fan as if he were a potential thief..."

Long ago, and far away...: In fandom all of the passionate concerns of the moment – be it the size of conventions, the point-of-origin of new influxes of attendees, or whether the Best Fanzine Hugo has any function other than as a paperweight for Dick Geis – all of these seem to pass with time.

Some scars, yes, are left, and some wounds are slower to heal than others... but, by and large, we all emerge co-existing. And some times we even resume speaking to each other.

...rather than *at* each other.

...as time went on, and I encountered new people, I was surprised to discover that a number of them were active members of the fan-Dorsai. I was intrigued to find out that they rarely grunted, and that relatively few of them maimed children as a form of fanac.

Some of them have proven to be valuable friends... but in every case, the initial encounters took place when they were in civvies... and out of the role.

As I progress through life I grow increasingly more tolerant of certain aspects of social interaction... and considerably less tolerant of others – but one has remained constant:

I deny no one the right to wear a military-style uniform at conventions.

But if you do so, please give me a little space.

In other words, don't stand directly in front of me.

You see, the mere sight of such things *still* produces a gagging sensation in me... followed by an almost uncontrollable urge to puke.

You might end up with a rather messy uniform.

...which wouldn't be so bad except that some of the offal might splash back on my caftan...

...and I'd be left with a foul taste in my mouth for quite some time.

I dislike having a foul taste in my mouth: other than the finely honed skill of firmly inserting my foot up to the hilt... err, the ankle... I am generally

quite choosy in the ways I indulge my oral gratifications.

I dislike concentrating on negative reactions to fans, or fan activities at cons. Not everything is as I would have it, either, but I have been subjected to much too much bitching and griping about how some don't enjoy conventions as much as they used to... because conventions aren't as much fun as they used to be...

...primarily because this or that group, performing this or that activity, is not consistent with trufannishness.

Trufannishness, it is a given, is what *I* point at when I define it... but that doesn't alleviate the fact that things have changed over the past twenty years... and will continue to change.

Overall, I find conventions more fun than ever – but that may well be because of a considerable change in personal priorities combined with a lessening need to "prove" anything to anyone (including myself): the simple enjoyment of being with one's friends, discovering new friends... and tweaking a few noses (if not presumptions) in the process, provides me with enough satisfaction so that the inevitable nuisances of hotel elevators, con committees, and the occasional total asshole are tolerable... if not easily dismissible.

...and besides, it's generally a lot easier to dissect the convention, and the problems with it, on the way home – with whomever I'm riding with – and then leave it there...

Doing something about the irritants usually involves work...

...but, since I had to write something for tonight, anyway:

Even though I have formed my own self-serving guide to survival at a science fiction convention... it does not mean that I am totally unobservant in my constant search for personal enjoyment. Despite my carefully honed mantle of protectivity, I can still be irritated... and occasionally more... by the actions of others. Even when the actions are not directed at me.

I am convinced, having attended 42 conventions over the past three years alone (and having read of, or heard about as many others), that it is inevitable, sooner more probably than later, that we're going to have to deal with something we'd all find it more convenient simply not to think about.

And that is this:

A fan being seriously injured or maimed, if not killed, by another fan...

...a role-playing fan:
...a fan with a weapon.
I am frightened.
...and totally unsure of what to do about it.
But I've got to try, and all of this is it:

Please note that this possibility is not just a bad dream, nor a worse-case scenario. All of the individual components necessary for its realization:

- an escapist environment;
- weapons, plastic and real, mixed indiscriminately, and brandished openly;
- ample supplies of alcohol and other forms of Alternate Entertainment available;
- a remarkable tolerance of determinedly eccentric modes of behavior & dress;
- all in the hands of adolescents (of varying chronological ages);
- are present at every convention you'll attend.

Simplifications? Yes, of course.

But I have only so much time... and you have only so much patience. Even if you happen to agree with me.

(pause)

Just because conventions run by present or former members of the Columbus Cavalry seem to have some difficulty staying in their proper month... doesn't mean they aren't trying.

Just because a woman sleeps with more than one person doesn't mean that she's a whore... or that she'll sleep with you.

Just because an author depicts a certain society in a work of fiction... doesn't necessarily mean that he intends or wants... that you should live it, be it.

Just because you identify strongly with a fictional world or characterization does not mean that you are a less worthy person than I. (...nor more worthy.)

And just because I raise touchy subjects and make provocative statements in public forums, it does not mean that I'm going to be willing to sit down and talk with you about either immediately after descending that step...

If you agree, or not... either way... think about it, and write me a letter – *after* the convention.

After all, if I had the answers to the quiz with me, you'd be hearing them.

I must have left the textbook at home.

Peacebonding. Now there's a nice solution.

But there are a lot of nice, idealistic solutions to a lot of things: Peace with Honor, supply-side economics, Universal Brotherhood, the Faan Awards...

I know. I have a bagful of idealistic solutions to my own problems, financial and emotional.
Sometimes they even work.

Strangely enough, I am not an avowed pacifist.

Conflict is not only necessary, it is essential to the human condition.

It is on the manner in which the conflict is executed that we have to agree to disagree.

I have a total aversion to role-playing board-games. (That is probably because I've never been too good at strategy... or at plotting speeches.) I say that because too many of my friends have been sucked into these fantasy worlds never to be seen again... though I occasionally encounter the shells of their bodies.

(However, I thoroughly approve of poker playing at conventions, if only because it takes mainly males out of circulation.)

As to role-playing at conventions... well, there... here... I have a bit more sympathy.

...obviously, since I also assume a role while up here;

...sometimes, even when down there.

And who is to say whose role is more right?

Modestly, I have to find my type of role-playing preferable – both aesthetically and quantitatively (in terms of decibel levels emitted) to those roles requiring weaponry other than verbal repartee – but I must admit there is room for disagreement.

Not much room... but some.

As to the costuming aspect of role-playing – well, if you choose to encase your body in a fatigue shell – or yards of wookiee-fur – and sweat your way through a convention... that too is acceptable.

Downwind, if you please.

It's ironic that I raise this topic at the same convention where, only a couple of years ago, Spider Robinson depicted a list of Whacky Weapons.

I enjoyed that.

I also enjoy seeing what Tullio will come up with in the way of pulsating toys. (I think I enjoyed the latest one best: you know, the one that, when fired, sounds remarkably like a moo-oo-ing cow. Udderly nonsense, I know, but...)

And a lot of the novels I've enjoyed most detail war, death, and weaponry galore.

...as well as the ones I can't say that I "enjoyed" – but did identify with.

...and, yes, I'll go see the movie **Conan** when it comes out.

...as well as, next year, the third **Star Wars** movie – no matter how many people are blown away (or unhanded) in the name of special effects.

But that's business, you see. The company I work for has a license to **Raiders** and the **Star Wars** series.

We build toys for the future generations of America.

...including play-sets with guns that click convincingly... and blow up on demand.

It's the most fun job I've ever had.

I never said I was logical.

...only opinionated.

...but I can't help wishing that those who are equally opinionated pro- *quote* "the right to bear arms" *unquote* might have had the thrill of manifesting pallets stacked high with maimed corpses sealed in giant baggies – the coffins ran out early in the Tet Offensive – and then to wander over to the base snack bar, only to encounter a baby-faced 19-year-old American:

He was in uniform.

...complete with a string of human ears hanging from his belt.

And as he sipped a Coke, he could only talk about going back.

"To waste more gooks."

...sort of like, mellowed out at the dead dog party, talking about the next convention down the line.

I can't help but wonder if you –

– those of you who have to strap on a blaster or a sword to complete your persona at a science fiction convention (alien territory, yes, but hardly inherently dangerous) –

I wonder if it would make any difference if you had ever seen a slain human being –

– no, not a dead distant relative, a testament to the mortician's art, wax-like on display for The Loved Ones –

– a dirt-encrusted body, the face frozen in eternal grimace, congealed blood everywhere: someone who had been alive but was no longer... never again –

– murdered (no matter what the cause, no matter by which "side") – his body penetrated – messily – by a weapon.

I'm the eternal optimist.

Maybe, had you seen what I saw almost fifteen years ago... just maybe it would alter your mode of self-expression at conventions.

...or maybe not.

I guess you had to be there.

...but I'm glad you weren't.

I wasn't "in" the "quote" war.

I was a safe 800 miles off the Viet Nam coast – keypunching ammunition one way, keypunching bodies the other way – and the only wounds I suffered were as the result of dedicated bar-hopping down in Angeles City...

– but I saw enough to validate my credentials to raise this topic, here.

...and now, just now, you are possibly beginning to see why I play my role the way I do:

No expert – still very much the adolescent amateur – I prefer making love to the alternative.

...and I prefer writing about it, speaking about it – esoterically hinting at my successes while analyzing my failures, tweaking your curiosity of the "who's" while hopefully retaining your attention for the "what's" I find important.

It's a lot more fun than this has been... I don't have to add.

Making love is an affirmation of life.

Weaponry, by inherent design, is a denial of sight and limb...

...and all too often a denial of life itself.

One moment more... please?

Listen... I'm not telling anyone here how they have to dress or act, at a science fiction convention:

I know only too well how negatively I react when even the best-intentioned tell me I "have" to do something. Even if it's for my own good.

This is what I want to say:

I think we have a very serious problem, at some conventions, with role-playing fans carrying potentially injurious weaponry.

What should we do about it?

I don't know... but I think it's something more convention committees are going to have to address themselves to... and then enforce (diplomatically) their decisions.

As for me... Well, I won't avoid going to a convention simply because it does not have a weapons policy... but it will prove a determining factor in cases where I am otherwise undecided.

...for those of you who do not know me, for those of you who disagree with me: not to worry.

Even if I were to launch a Holy Crusade, and even though I am incredibly important in certain circles of Incredibly Decadent Midwestern Fandom... I am not in any position to enforce my edicts.

You have an input, if you wish: Talk to the convention committees.

With one exception:

I am 50% of the committee of one convention.

...in three years we haven't had any problems (our clientele seems to be preoccupied with other things) and I don't foresee any arising, but, for reference, anyone showing up at SpaceCon with weaponry, will be asked to leave same in their room.

Failing that, they will be invited to leave.

Politely. But firmly.

Somehow I don't think I'll have too much trouble getting this passed at the next committee meeting.

Rusty?

I like being able to see.

You... all of you. But, in particular...

I like having the unimpaired usage of all the extremities of my body.

...and I like being alive – *now*, more than ever before.

The odds *against* my continued enjoyment of all those things are much, much too high in the Real World: I really don't need the deck stacked against me here: ...here, with my family and friends... and friends yet to be made.

Like, just possibly – after we all cool down – just possibly you.

Stranger things have happened at science fiction conventions.

The Last Page:

You know, I'm incredibly lucky:

I am thirty-eight & one-half years old – and I have only lost one that I cared for, to death.

That was Susan, of course... and even though we hadn't seen much of each other for years... the hurt still aches. The fact that she is gone is

unjust: the only consolation is that it was done by no man's hand... rather, ordained by whatever the force is that mandates our natural longevity in this place and time.

Life goes on.

...and sooner, or later, in each of our cases it won't.

My friends are very, very important to me.

I really don't need your help...

...or the aid of your weapons

Should you injure, or maim one of my friends – even accidentally – you will discover why I disclaimed pacifism.

That is neither threat, promise... nor speech-making bravado.

That's the way it is.

The battle is over... let me propose a truce:

You've all heard the homily "Let's put science fiction back in the gutter, where it belongs!"

But unless you're a southern Michigan fan from a fannish decade ago, you may not have heard the one that follows this:

"Conventions are created to have fun."

So... Let's go back to the days when it was sufficient reason to go to one to... get drunk, high... or Laid."

...and, if you swim... the pool's over that way.

I don't... so I think I'll have that drink now.

This, and the surrounding material by that Uncle Albert role-playing character, is collectively known as:

Friday Night Live!

Let's keep it that way.

– Bill Bowers (1/23/82 : 12:35 am)

Cheerful stuff... what say?

It was pointed out to me afterwards that none of the people it was directed at were in the audience: they were there... but they were out in the lobby and hallways parading. I suppose the same would hold true no matter where it was published, also... which is slightly discouraging. But at least I feel better now.

How about you?

...welcome to *Outworlds* 37

Outworlds 37 | January 1984

4:05pm, January, 26, 1984...

the last page to stencil.

I started with the page facing this, the evening of January 3rd...

Two days off work last week because of Twonk's Disease (thanks, Dr. Bob!), and this, a vacation day I really didn't want to take: over half the pages remain to be run off... and I really should be at ConFusion by this time tomorrow.

With substantial help from Dave & Jackie... just maybe.

Is it a good issue?

I'm much too tired, and much too close to it... but I'd have to say that it's the best single issue of any fanzine I've seen thus far in 1984.

...but the final verdict is yours.

Editorial Policy...

...courtesy of DAVE LOCKE, writing in *Camera Obscura* 7 (responding to a member of the apa it's distributed through):

*"One of the interesting things about the fanzine **Outworlds** is that one issue hardly bears resemblance to another. Bill varies his approach to content, format, and to approach itself, and a collection of **Outworlds** bears intellectual resemblance to a fruit salad. In effect, change is the only constant. I can't tell you that you won't appreciate an issue for its own merits, but what I found was that several issues brought an added level of appreciation, mainly because every fanzine develops a syntality or personality to you over a period of time. There are still interesting fanzines around these days, and a Bill Bowers fanzine is never mistakable for any other interesting fanzine..."*

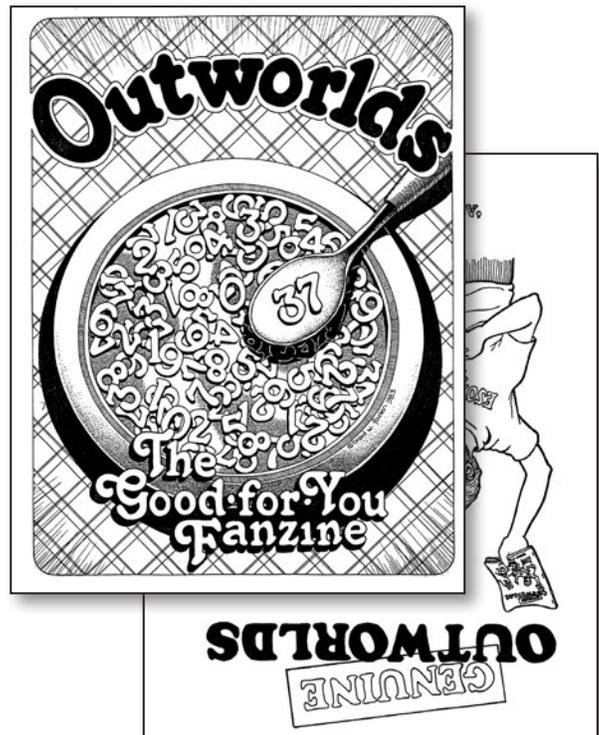
That's the idea: to have fun, to surprise you... and never to be confused with any other fan... or faned.

...and to do all of this fairly frequently.

I admire the hell out of big & fancy fanzines, but getting them only once a year, or getting them nine months after publication because the fan-editor couldn't afford to mail them out... well, it's rough identifying with, or responding to something like that.

This is by far the biggest single issue I've published since 1976, but it comes only a month after the previous issue. And, in a month, or three, I'll be back, in the 12- or 24-page 'first class' format, four or five more times this year.

In the meantime, he said not at all modestly, you have a treat ahead of you...



Genuine *OUTWORLDS*

Outworlds 37 |
January 1984

[Excerpts from]

"...an Outworlds Pre-print: #2 | 1/20/84"

Friday, January 27, 1984:

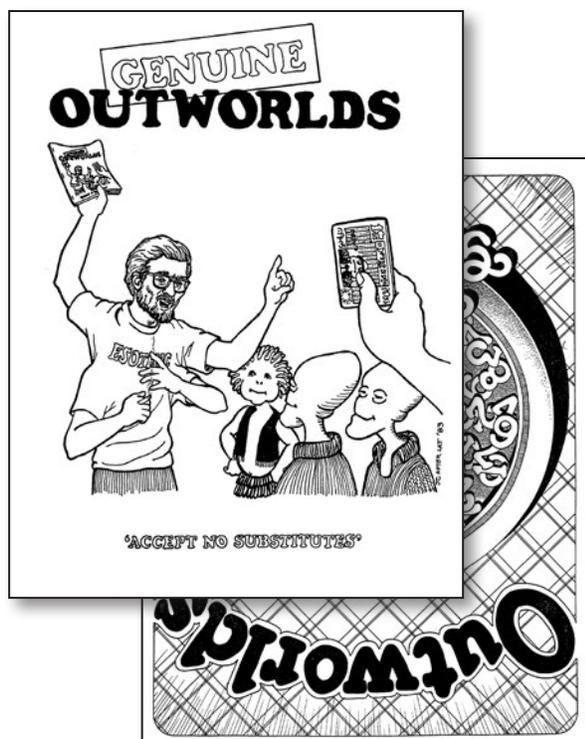
...somehow, one more time, you've survived the rigors of January to journey to the Far Frozen North – a.k.a. Michigan – to attend ConFusion. (But then, getting to ConFusion is rarely the problem...)

The Scene: The Plymouth Hilton Inn, Plymouth, Michigan. (ConFusion used to be an Ann Arbor convention; now that's ConClave, which used to be an Ypsilanti convention. But then, Michigan fans tend to do these things.) It's a nice hotel, if a bit out in the outback...

...and now, you are here:

...you've found out, to your surprise, that your room is ready, you dump the bags (and the sleeping bags for the twenty-five people who are crashing in your room)... and head down to the lobby to see who else has showed up. You greet old friends – it's been a long time since Chambanacon... Octocon... ConClave ... Worldcon... or even since ConFusion 101, and you've missed them. You idly notice (sometimes with amusement; often with bemusement) who's-with-who this time, and you wander off to check out the art show (it's still being set up; art shows are always "still being set up") and the chaos of the hucksters' room – where you encounter Bill Cavin doing his clever imitation of Howard DeVore.

You cruise the lobby again, now firmly in the convention shuffle mode, then get dragged along to the bar: it's happy hour, after all. You notice a large group of fans clustered around a table in the darkest corner of the bar and you drift over, surmising



that the object of all this attention is the Pro Guest of Honor. No such luck; it is simply Bill Bowers struggling to finish the "speech" he is to deliver in less than two hours, being "encouraged" by his friends-of-little-faith.

Bored with all this "fanzine shit", and suddenly hungry, you wander around the corner to the Jolly Miller... You decide you're not that hungry – maybe some of the parties will have munchies – and once again do the art show / hucksters' room / lobby circuit. Back to the room to see if any of your multitude of roommates have shown... some have, but none of the ones who had volunteered to help subsidize the hotel bill. You take the stairs up to the fourth floor, and walk halfway down the hallway, enter a strangely uncrowded con suite, and grab a Coke. Heading back down to action central, you discover why the con suite was empty: everybody is waiting on the elevators. Sighing, you take the stairs down to the lobby... give a different sigh when you spot roommates-with-money, and escort them up to the room. More stairs... but you don't want to give up possession of the sole room key. Back down – fortunately the room is on the third, not the fifth floor – you realize it's almost eight o'clock. And so you join the mass in Plymouth 5... for:

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE and on Tape...

...with Toastmaster DICK SMITH, and Video by Larry Tucker.

Larry was certainly in evidence – scurrying about issuing instructions to his crack team of gophers – and early evidence indicated that several of the videos had been taped with the mikes on – but where was Dick...?

“In the bar...!” went up the cry in unison, but that was just obligatory; everybody knows Dick doesn’t drink. Speculation abounded: “Has anyone actually seen him? He’s probably still in Chicago... you know Dick always gets to conventions late!” ...from Bowers, esoterically: “He’s probably retired early, figuring he’ll get an 8 a.m. wakeup call from Bill Marks in the morning.” Crueler still: “Oh, he’s up in his room collating copies of the new issue of **Uncle Thing’s Little Dickie.**” But all of that was simply Terminal Idle Fannish Chitchat... no one really knew where Dick was. In particular, Chairman NANCY TUCKER didn’t know where Dick was. 8:15, and she was becoming increasingly more frantic.

Fortunately, BOB TUCKER was there to Smooth the troubled waters... with his omnipresent bottle of ~~rotgut~~ Beam’s Choice. Several rounds were made, but strangely seemed to hang up every time the bottle came to someone with the surname Tucker. Steve Leigh and Ro Lutz-Nagey kibitzed from the sidelines, and volunteered to juggle if the crowd could empty three fifths. Several fans actually started sipping the stuff, on hearing this, and Bowers – straight from happy hour – opined that two fifths and a child-named-Megen would provide a more interesting act... and then ducked behind Roger Reynolds as a vengeful Denise Parsley Leigh yelled: “You stay away from my daughter, Bowers!” Michelle giggled. Several snickered. (Fans are like that – this has been an Unsolicited Editorial Intrusion.) ...eventually, at approximately 8:52:31 Eastern Standard Time, a considerably less frantic Nancy Tucker was helped to the rostrum and – as Cosmos and Chaos juggled five empty fifths (and Megen) – announced:

“I give you our Friday Night Speaker, a man who needs no introduction... and who obviously isn’t going to get one...”

BOB TUCKER.”

[Tucker ascends to the stage, uniquely sideways with his back to the wall, flinches as a-woman-in-a-tux darts by... and opens with a]:

DISCLAIMER: All the characters in this speech are fictitious, and any resemblance to actual persons or things – living, dead, or rusted out – is purely coincidental.

This is an overview of science fiction fan conventions, an overview based on 45 years of study. I don’t know how many conventions I’ve attended in those 45 years – the figure will be some unknown number between five hundred and a thousand, and I’m tempted to say ‘That’s not too many’. I’ve learned more about you – and myself – in those 45 years than any of us really want to know. My very first convention was in Philadelphia in 1939. Dick Smith and Mike Resnick were waiting to be born, while Martha Beck was still running around in rompers and seeing UFOs.

[Tucker speaks for another two and a half pages, concluding with]:

The Friday night speaker looks you in the eye, the complete master of the room, confident with the knowledge that he invented the fandom you are now living in. When the room is hushed, still, expectant, he speaks with a pleading voice:

“I want your booze!”

Bob Tucker | November, 1983

...Tucker, beaming, stood at the podium and took in the assembled applause. Tucker descended, mingled with the crowd. The crowd milled... and soon lost something like 90% of its strength. It must have been the liquor...

Dick Smith had still not put in an appearance... but the rumor floated that there would be a party in his room at midnight.

Even more people left, and at length only those too wasted to move, and those who owed Bowers money remained.

Finally, when he was the only one remaining, Mike Glicksohn stood on a chair, and said: “Fuck it... let’s get it over with! Here’s...”

BILL BOWERS.”

[Leah Zeldes poked her head in from the hall, and said: “Remember... 20 minutes... not a second more!” Bowers cleared his throat, shifted uncomfortably, and shuffled his disarray of papers]:

AT THE FIRST AUTOCLAVE, Linda Bushyager told me that, some day, I would be fandom's next Bob Tucker. Now Linda had said strange things before, so even at the time I wasn't quite sure what prompted her prediction. And she didn't elaborate...

...but that didn't stop me from speculating:

...it was the night following my watching, in total amazement, as Lynn "any fool can collate" Parks downed, in quick succession, two water-glass-fulls of Vat 69 – straight – and my proclaiming to one and all "My God, what a woman!" This immediately preceding her collapse... and so I spent the remainder of the evening walking this normal-sized person around the HoJo... trying to sober her up. Neither was any small task.

I don't know if Linda witnessed any of that performance, but I seem to recall that her comment to me was made early in the same evening that I was falsely accused of locking Glicksohn out of his room, thus setting in motion a series of events that ended with Mike and Maddog Mark skinnywalking the hotel hallways. Given the timing, I don't think that was the cause of, or the predetermination of, my future fannish status – despite the vile canards that were heaped on my head as a result of the innocuous little incident.

...certainly it was true that I was in Glicksohn's room, and it is equally possible the door was locked and Mike didn't have a key. But the part where I'm quoted as telling him to "go away" seemed abruptly condensed in latter recountings. They conveniently seem to forget the part where I added: "...for fifteen or twenty minutes."

Now I thought this an eminently reasonable request – I, after all, had been the one to pay for her train ticket to the convention –

– and besides, we were only talking.

Thus, all alternatives considered, it just has to be that the impetus behind my being Tuckerized was that I had just finished having had the... err...

a) lack-of-good-taste; b) the balls; c) both... to read Harlan's "tribute" to Mike Glicksohn on the occasion of the latter's 30th birthday... to read it aloud and to an audience containing both minors and Glicksohn, an action which upset the chairman of AutoClave no end. (Leah will be glad to explain that particular bit of esoterica to you. At length.)

Whatever the rationale behind it, I considered Linda "Authorized Conventions" Bushyager's remark flattering at the time. And I still do...

But I'm just as glad that the Original is still around and going strong.

Several reasons – and not just because he writes fun columns for me, or makes brilliant and penetrating speeches in which he does not once reference suave and relevant Friday Night Filler Speakers... ..filler speakers, such as myself.

No, the main reason that I don't aspire to the title of "Tucker of the '80s" is not simply because I like my name the way it is... after all, "Hey, you!" has a certain ring to it.

...it's because I simply cannot stomach Beam's Choice.

Make the nectar-of-choice Bacardi 1873, however, and you definitely have a pretender to the shtick.

...now *that's* Smooth!

Over the years I've tried a variety of approaches to this diminishing time-slot that the committee gives me. (In case you were wondering *why* I get this "honor" each year – it's very simple really: it's a trade-off for my having to introduce Ro Lutz-Nagey for the remainder of my natural life, and possibly thereafter. A very small trade-off, really.)

Let's see... I've done the confessional, done an issue of my fanzine-as-a-speech, as well as other variations-on-a theme – and most of them have been fun. At least for me. (Well, there was the "weapons policy" one, but...)

Searching about for a gimmick mere hours past as you hear/read this, I finally decided to eschew relevance, wit and charm... the trademarks of a Bowers-speech – and simply relate to you a little story I recently discovered in a corked bottle (Bacardi Dark), washed up in my mailbox. Postage due; no return address.

...not an S.F. story, except perhaps of the parallel world sub-genre, and a slightly askew world it is!

It starts now, and goes something like this:

(Readers of the text-version of this 'speech' will now kindly thumb back to Page 1323 of this publication, and once again – starting with "Friday, January 27, 1984:" read through to approximately the words "Bob Tucker ((in Script Caps approximately halfway down Page 1324)), thus saving me the trouble of re-typing all that... Thank you, and we now rejoin the 'speech', as it progresses.)

“ – living, dead, or rusted out – is purely coincidental.

“This is an overview of science fiction fan conventions, an overview based on...”

Ah, but this portion seems to drag a bit – obviously the work of an amateur; so, with your kind permission, we will fast forward to a bit later in the manuscript where, after a deep breath, a sip, we resume the reading... already in progress:

“At the first AutoClave, Linda Bushyager told me that, some day, I would be fandom’s next Bob Tucker. But Linda had said strange things before...”

TIME SHIFT. REALITY ALERT. HI THERE!

One day last fall, for reasons fortunately since forgotten, I happened to glance at a Genuine ConFusion flyer, and suddenly realized something:

(All right, go for it: You try looking at a Genuine ConFusion flyer, and then suddenly realizing something... anything!)

Now I’ve been around a year or two, and know a few people. But I looked at the ConFusion guest list, and realized that I knew all of them fairly well. I also conveniently remembered that I was supposed to “do something” for Friday night, myself.

Wheels meshed, gears spun, sparks landed.

I wrote to Bob Tucker, to Mike Resnick, to Martha Beck, and even to Dick Smith, and said: “Let’s have some fun!”

They all responded, some with only the merest hint of prodding, and said, “Fine, let’s have some fun.”

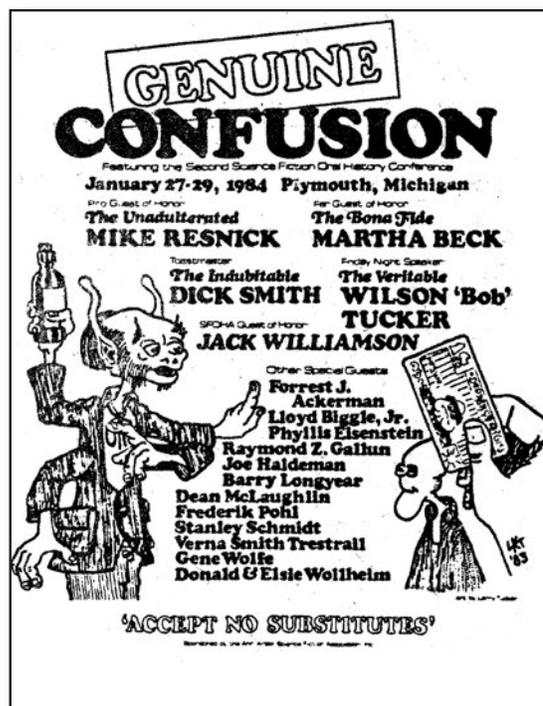
Now in case you feel left out of all this frivolity, I should point out that the fun has indeed taken on substance, if not finesse, in the form of...

Genuine OUTWORLDS!

In preprint form, it contains the text of Bob Tucker’s “overview”, a translation of the preceding interlude, as well as a complete transcript of tomorrow afternoon’s “Will the Real Fan Guest of Honor...?” panel... leading up to Martha Beck’s lengthy Fan Guest of Honor speech.

Oh yes, it also contains the printout of a possible Mike Resnick Guest of Honor speech... which is the reason why, while I can show it to you now... I really can’t show it to you until after Mike has finished talking tomorrow evening...

No matter what the inducement: I will not be compromised... though you’re more than welcome to try!



Unfortunately, through clever programming of the Bowers Fanzine Assembler, it seems that the verso of this gem contains...

Outworlds 37 – the 14th Annish...

...so you’ll have to wait on that also. However, Jackie Causgrove is permitted to tell you how great that portion is.

...and if Mike Resnick doesn’t give the speech that I’ve just spent half my life typing... well, he’ll never read the Walt Willis “interview”...

Did I mention earlier that “They all responded...”? ummm... did I omit a name just now? No, I guess not...

TWO SHOTS, and then we go party:

After enthusiastically responding to the *Genuine Outworlds* idea, even to the extent of phoning long distance to reassure himself that I did, indeed, want him to participate, along with all the really important people, Dick Smith reluctantly had to bow out at the last minute.

I’m saddened by this, but I can well understand his reasons, and I suspect that all the preparation will be worth it when you – all of you – join me at Dick’s party later tonight.

The reason for the party? Well, it seems that all the delay in publishing his fanzine was caused by his constant traveling to Columbus to build a committee for the bid he is chairing... which is of course called CHICON V – in 1988.

He'll probably be coy... he's really rather shy, but *do* ask him about it. Endlessly.

Remember now, that's Room #____, at Midnight. ...and Dick, that'll be \$2.00 for *your* copy of **Genuine OUTWORLDS**...

ONE BLANK EJECTED; one scatter shot upcoming: I'm probably running over, as we say in the convention-speaker biz...

If so, tough. I'll be done in a moment.

Voters in the Annual **File 770** Poll, please take note:

I have the distinct feeling that you have just heard the *last* "Bill Bowers Friday Night at ConFusion Speech."

Now I hasten to add that no one has told me this as a fact, and only Leah has inferred it: "No one in Ann Arbor *knows* you these days," she said with Leah-subtlety.

However, there does seem to be precedence for this conjecture:

I was the Friday Night speaker at Marcon for several years, but when there was a change in command a few years ago... well, their invitation to speak the following year seems to have been lost in the mail... along with the membership refunds from all the years I did speak. Phoenix... now what is the name of their convention? – never did ask me back, even though I thought myself an acceptable warm-up act for Harlan, and my one

Midwestcon performance never did rate an encore. (To this day, I still hear Lou Tabakow's gruff voice telling me: "Once is enough; never do it again!")

It's too early to tell if my string of NASFiC speeches will remain unbroken, but it does seem that there will be a change in command, *here*, next year...

Whether that's good or bad, I don't know; I live in Ohio after all, where everything is constant... and am a member of the CFG, where we don't have elections... for any reason.

I'll be here, and I'll do my duty. Somebody has to introduce Ro...

And I'll enjoy myself in my own esoteric way.

And if the new committee would rather I didn't, take up this space that is, that's fine. Really.

If they ask, though, I'll probably accept.

I've done marginally more foolish things.

If the latter scenario occurs, I'll fret and I'll worry... and I'll put it off until the last minute, before I decide *what* to do...

...and I haven't the faintest idea of what that'll be, except this:

If the committee asks me back, I promise to reveal the name of the lady behind the locked door in Glicksohn's room.

It was a dark and a stormy night, and...

Bill Bowers | 11:20 pm; 1/24/84



...his papers in even more disarray, Bowers shuffles them together to the tune of Glicksohn's snoring, and the sound of projectors being set up for the all-night movies. Sighing, he wakes Mike up... and they head for the con suite.

...morning, Fannish Central Time; one in the afternoon otherwise.

You wake with a start, and realize that you've missed Rusty Hevelin and Denise Parsley Leigh's panel in Plymouth 2, on "How to Enjoy Your First Convention". Not that you were intensely interested in the subject – this was after all, your third con – but you'd promised Denise to come and "support" her... since she always came to your speeches. Ah well, you hadn't missed it by much. Only three hours. (Not as if it were something really important... like your APA-78 deadline, for sure.)

Sitting up, you grab your suddenly aching head.

Dick's Chicon V bidding party must have been a good 'un! Grimacing, you suddenly recall the chili-flavored popcorn... and the lemonade chasers. Dick, you decide, throws a party the same way he publishes a fanzine: all gas, and no delivery...

...too late for breakfast, even if you could handle it; the coffee shop down by the pool was probably closed by now. Perhaps some of the parties tonight will have munchies... just as long as there's no chili... or popcorn.

Up at it... there's still time to make the annually-exciting Fan Guest of Honor "panel" at two, in Plymouth 1.

Fortunately, this year, it is Guest-Narrated by none other than JACKIE CAUSGROVE.

[Fan Guest of Honor "panel" ensues for the next one and a half pages, followed by almost five pages of MIKE RESNICK's Guest of Honor speech.]

...Chairman Nancy Tucker announces a few more parties – it does seem that mythical Toastmaster Dick Smith is, indeed, having another Chicon V bidding party in the room the committee has provided for him; tacky! – and closes with a cautionary "We have most of the hotel, but there are still a few mundanes about... so let's be careful out there..."

...and Rica announces from the floor that it would be appreciated if everyone could clear out of Plymouth 5 as soon as possible, so that they could set up for the ~~Linda Michaels Show~~ art auction.

The con suite is crowded and smoky / the hallways are crowded and smoky / the elevators are crowded.

Mike Resnick watches Carol win at poker, and autographs copies of last ConFusion's program book, as Martha Beck rubs his back. Dick Smith is rumored to have been seen hauling up supplies for his party.

...and Bill Bowers is busily hawking copies of his latest fanzine, saying something about it vaguely having something to do with the proceedings at hand.

And so it goes, on into the night...

...too soon; by far, to checkout time, and good-byes to be made... or avoided.

I'd like to thank BOB TUCKER, MIKE RESNICK, MARTHA BECK, JACKIE CAUSGROVE... and, yes, even DICK SMITH... for humoring me, and making this possible. It goes without saying that it hasn't turned out exactly as visualized, but I've had fun with it, and hope you enjoy this 'tribute' to the best non-CFG-run convention around.

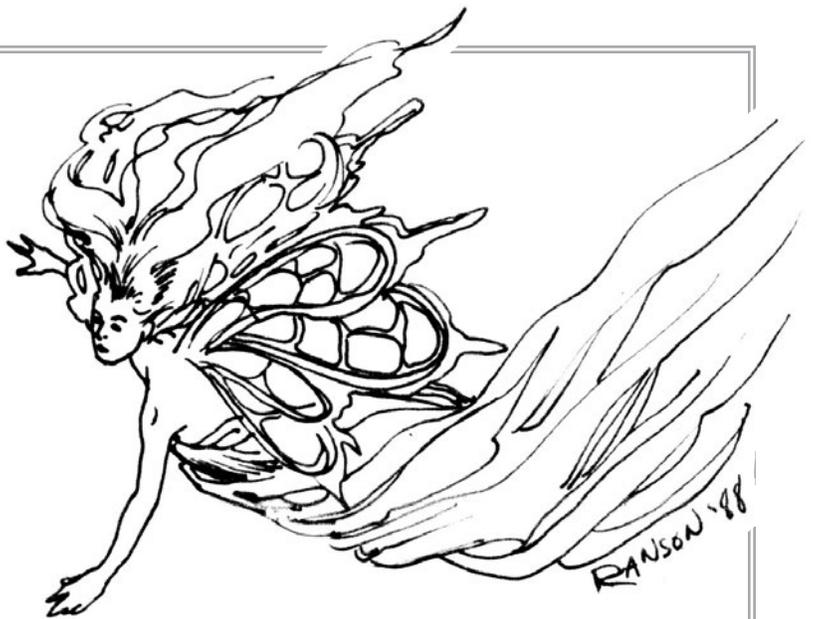
Bill Bowers | 1/26/84

...but soon, soon enough, the circle cycles yet again:

– Friday, January 25, 1985:

...somehow, one more time, you've survived the rigors of January to journey to the Far Frozen North – a.k.a. Michigan – to attend ConFusion...

Digressions... with interludes of space-filling



Outworlds 38 |
April 1984

TODAY IS A SPRING SATURDAY AFTERNOON, a.k.a. April 21, 1984.

The reason I know it's a "Spring" as opposed to a "Winter" afternoon is that it is raining, and not snowing. You'll excuse the obvious, but I've had rather few other frames of reference recently.

Yes, it's been a short while.

Of course there was the inevitable Annish-burn-out factor:

The last page of #37 was run-off by 1:30 ConFusion Friday afternoon, and by 3pm, Jackie, Naomi (last time I ask you for a ride!) Cowan, and I had enough copies collated to set off on the Northern Trek. By dint of some creative driving (I wasn't asleep that long on I-75) we arrived at the Plymouth Hilton with five minutes to spare before my scheduled 8:30 speech... which I made sometime after nine (and which was exactly 19 minutes and 50 seconds long)... and that's my convention report.

The primary reason, though, that this will be a month or two late even by my non-schedule is that immediately after ConFusion we went on a 55-hour work week (except for the five weeks we were on a 60-hour schedule)... and I've done little in the past three months other than get entirely too familiar with my work-mates, support my newest *expensive* hobby (details available from

Dave Locke), and spend time with the reason I ended up in Cincinnati in the first place.

...someday I'll pen the definitive work on cycles, but more to the point, yes, I have thought about all you wonderful, patient people from time to time.

...usually when I was taking advantage of Mike Resnick's generosity in obtaining fixes for my habit, when he would casually (well, casually for Mike) ask how I was progressing on the next issue...

...or when a newly restrained Dave ("I'm coming all the way from California to Midwestcon. If you don't have the LoCs in response to my 'Fanwriter Symposium' there... I'm going to punch your lights out!") Locke would hesitatingly ask if I'd gotten any feedback on his admittedly minor contributions to the Annish.

Having one's benefactors and contributors so close at hand has its advantages...

(Now if I made a remark similar to that at work, Cathy would say "What do you mean by that?"... Jeff would snicker... and Naomi would pretend to be all-knowing. Sorry. I get enough flak about fannish esoterica, without going outside to the real world.)

Bob Tucker simply sent in his next column, in early March... without accompanying note or unwarranted harassment. Thanks, Bob - I knew I could count on you (even if you were the one

responsible for stiffing me onto that eager reporter at ConFusion; at least you had some vaguely alcoholic substance [so that's what Beam's Choice tastes like? – not bad if there's absolutely nothing else around] in your room, some congenial guests... and I had a chance to listen with amusement as Algis Budrys bemoaned the number of times in compiling a recent book, that he had had to type "**Double-colon-no-space-Bill Symposium**"...

Well, I hadn't meant to open with such an extended interlude of trivialities... Probably I'm just unconsciously phasing into mode: I'll be leaving for a CFG meeting in about an hour.

THIS WAS NEVER INTENDED to become the Midwestcon issue of *Outworlds*, but it's rapidly becoming evident that that is what's happening here. I suppose it's a logical development in that a substantial portion of the distribution process of this fanzine occurs at conventions I attend... and Midwestcon will be the first one to fill that criteria since ConFusion. [The last time I had a gap that long between conventions was the period from Octocon 14 ('77) to Marcon 13 ('78); in case you are curious, yes, I *did* have to look that up... but once I did, it was only a flash later that I realized that the same reason (apart from the perennial one of financial brinksmanship) was largely responsible for both sabbaticals from the wonderful world of conventions. History may or may not be cyclic... but there's rather little doubt about my own life. Ah, well.]

Digressions are not to be put aside, but rather negotiated, and so we find ourselves here, more than a week after the last portion was stenciled – and perhaps it's time for a Progress Report:

This entry is dated 5/16/84... the season's last **St. Elsewhere** will be on within the hour... and I have to get up at 4:30... that's a.m.... to trudge off to work.

And I have to clear this stencil in order to use the typer for Other Things.

A week after commencing this issue, we went back to the six-to-six work schedule. The paychecks are nice, but don't seem to go any further than before. (That may be because the number of videotapes I own is rapidly approaching my I.Q. – which is one of the more useful applications I've encountered for the latter number.) I stay up too late; there are far too many people in too small a space at work – and I'm very much people-claustrophobic. I'm totally burnt, totally wired (the

coffee is free at work), and I'm in the middle of a three-week stint of jury duty (merely a sideline). On top of everything else, I've been put in charge of Projects Of My Own – and a number of you out there know how well I cope with Responsibility. And in my copious free time the allergies are having a field day this year: The most succinct, learned medical diagnosis to date? "...you are totally allergic to Cincinnati."

So how was your day?

Don't mind me... that was just a little venting, a little space-filling. Actually, for me (he adds the automatic qualifier), I am doing rather well overall. With the exception of two weekends, I've been on the wagon for over three months – something that has little to do with ConFusion-Saturday-night... or the upcoming anniversary of Spikedom: I'm still attempting to prove things to myself... and probably always will.

...and my father almost died last week. It has never been a "close" relationship... but it did provide a pause for thought. And now this pause is over...

I KEEP MEANING to take some time and do an analysis of the mailing list and determine the actual figures, but for an off-hand guess I'd have to say that less than a quarter of the present mailing list were getting the 'old' *Outworlds* regularly, as it was being published. Time passes: mailing lists change, and so do the fanzines they service. I do sympathize: when I find an author (or director; or musician) who pleases me with their work, time after time, I tend to get a bit upset when they experiment, and go off in a totally off-the-wall direction. After all, I am just as hide-bound as any other science fiction fan. Sameness and repetition of proven formulas have their lure; clarity of vision and consistency of execution are not virtues I necessarily rebel against for rebellion's sake. A lot of the things I "do" make sense when I do them, but not afterwards. A lot of the things I "do" don't make sense even when I do them... As I see it, while there are many variations on the theme, there are only two basic ways to do a fanzine:

a) you do it for others (for a specific audience, on a specific theme, ~~or to win a Hugo~~); or,

b) you do it for yourself. I am constantly amazed that some people like what I do (and am occasionally puzzled when some react more

favorably to a given issue than even I do); I can still be a bit hurt when someone I like, admire, ~~lust after~~ doesn't care for my brand of fanzines, or, even more cruelly, could care less. Life is full of decisions, and I suspect that I made mine concerning what satisfied me in terms of my fanzines a long time ago.

But obviously all of the above is writ in stencil wax, and not stone: by this time next year, it's possible you could have the 'old' **OW** back. Not likely, but...

YOU'RE PROBABLY GOING TO BE SORRY...

But Since You Asked, Dept.:

Naomi is a co-worker, a sometimes-friend/sometimes-mere acquaintance, and a part-time fan. Let's take this in stages:

1) WHY SHE IS A CO-WORKER. Three years ago, less than a month into my present job (when I was still temping... before I sold out & down to go direct), I was called into the office with the manager and two supervisors behind a closed door (always good for total catatonia among the workers). They were bringing in additional help, the agency had submitted Naomi's resume... and mentioned that I had worked with her before. And what did I think of her work? "Fine," I said, neglecting to mention that our total simultaneous job experience consisted of a day & a half, in-house at the agency, during which we probably exchanged a total of ten words.

2) WHY SHE IS A FRIEND. She ~~USED to introduce me to neat women in the local MENSAs group.~~

3) WHY SHE IS A MERE ACQUAINTANCE. Much later that year, one of the lesser luminaries of the local fan group came up to me at a party and mentioned that he knew/had become involved with a friend of mine. "Ah," I said, frantically reviewing my list of friends to determine which one would have the inexcusable bad taste to get involved with someone made famous in **NERG 16** by Steve Leigh. "...and who is that?" "Naomi," he said. I didn't blink, I didn't pause, as I heard myself saying to him: "She's no friend of mine... just a mere acquaintance." (I never jump to conclusions; especially not when I can leap to them.) Time went on and that relationship ebbed and flowed and ebbed again. "But I've read all your fan articles on fannish relationships, and I'm just trying to follow your example," Naomi said to me. "Wrong," I said. "You're not hanging THIS rap on me...!"

All of that is to explain [*the "Yes, Naomi... that's all he does."* *Esoteric Reference*]. The rest is a bit more complicated.

One of the bones of contention in their relationship was that he was going to be a "writer" and therefore needed his space in which to write. But it seems that when he had that space, he was always doing something (or someone) else rather than writing. And during one of the ebbs in their relationship, one Saturday afternoon after work, I drove Naomi to her first convention. Once there, I ~~palmed her off~~ introduced her to ~~one of the lesser~~ a beginning, but selling, writer – the better to enable me to lust after his wife. (Hey! This was when I was still in my adolescence, so give me a break!) Apparently fairly soon into their conversation, he mentioned to Naomi that he was a writer. "Ah", she said brightly, "...and is that ALL you do?"

I really don't see why everyone makes such a big deal about the esoteric asides that I on rare occasion toss into my writings. It's not as if I'm not willing to explain them, when asked directly, you know. Well, maybe not THAT one; but then, that one isn't all that interesting, anyway. Trust me.

4) WHY NAOMI IS A PART-TIME FAN. Primarily because of the responsibilities of parenthood. But I understand, primarily because she has promised to save her daughters for me. R.S.N.

I HAVE TACKED to my kitchen wall a clipping from the January 26, 1981 **Detroit Free Press** headlined: "One Person's Clutter Is Another's Collection". I must admit, as I glance around, to wondering about the validity of the secondary lead, where that story was continued: "There's a deep-seated need for all that clutter." Still, it's reassuring to read such things from youngsters... as well as to read, in **Egoscan 4** (which just arrived today), Ted White saying: "Fanzines? I've never thrown or given away or sold any of the fanzines I've received." True, I probably have fewer mysteries than [*Don D'Ammassa*], and considerably fewer fanzines than Ted (after all, I'm not nearly as old as he; nor been in fandom quite as long)... but both of you have houses, and I a mere three rooms in which to indulge my proclivity toward ~~accumulation~~ collecting...

BILL'S PAGE-

...which would have been more timely in March or April, but...

We surely live in wondrous times. First *Mythologies 15* arrives.

What you have to understand is that I may, even at this late date, admire a fanzine or the work of a particular faned, but there are very few of either that I'm envious of. Even though I don't ever recall having sent a LoC to it, *Mythologies* was one of the few, and I'm glad to see it back. Thanks, Don!

And then the mailbox produced the March 1984 issue of *National Geographic*. Always impressive (moving the dead weight of a box of those suckers is one of the Challenges of Our Time), this one nevertheless freaked me out and gave me a sense of wonder no other inanimate object has provided in too many years... The cover contains the first hologram to be printed by a major magazine; impressively so, also. If you don't get ~~NG shame on you~~ go immediately to your library, or to a friend with more taste, and just hope that their copy hasn't been ripped off. [Let's see, now: the Annish is how many months off?...and if I carefully save my pennies?]

And this, in a scrawled note dated 3/3:

I must be famous again -

I received a call last night, after midnight, from Andy Porter.

"I hear you've revived *Outworlds*..."

Now this would have been 'news' a year ago, but I replied, sleepily:

"...after a fashion... in my own inimitable way..."

"Want to trade?"

"...with what?" I asked, not-so-innocently... having woken up.

"...*Chronicle*."

"...oh, that," I said. "Well, Andy, you see... the club has a sub to it, and I usually get to read it before Cavin buries it, and..."

A few more minutes, and Andy hung up. I had not committed myself; I was proud.

The Story Behind ~~The Cover~~: A few years ago my publishing schedule slowed down and I stopped pubbing Big Important (i.e., lots of pro contributors) Fanzines... and eventually most people cut me off their trade lists. I do it myself, probably quicker than most, so that was cool. But Andy Porter, one who I had traded with, man & boy, did he simply cut me off? No, he sent me a

RENEWAL NOTICE! I was mortified. I may not hold a grudge, but I have a very, very long memory.

Oh... eventually I capitulated and sent Andy a copy of *OW37*. Just to prove to rich brown that I'm not a total asshole, and his newfound faith in me is justified...

...and, since I haven't heard anything, now I'm going to send Andy a renewal notice.

I DO SEEM to get my dander up, once in a rare while. A few years ago I more or less 'disowned' the Cincinnati New Year's Parties that I'd co-founded ~~because they weren't going the way I wanted them to~~. I've had a great time at 'em ever since.

I am mellowing on the possibility of the so-called "Cincinnati Worldcon" bid. I won't work on it, and I won't endorse it... but if you fools want to vote for a Worldcon 15 minutes from my apartment, go right ahead. You should be aware, however, as it is presently put together, it is essentially a Columbus bid, with a sole Cinti front man. But, what the hell; Like I said before... if Phoenix worked (& it did), anything might...

IN THE INTERVENING FOUR DAYS since the last stencil was finished, Jackie's Faithful Gestetner suffered a major nervous breakdown... with less than half this thing run off. Hopefully it will still be out for Midwestcon, though mailed copies won't go out until afterwards... now. *sigh*

...and Hot Rumor has it that the Columbus people dumped/demoted the Cinti Front Man... who, on being informed of this, reportedly said "I have not resigned as Chairman." ...and as of the just completed CFG meeting, the newest scoop is that the bid is for something called "Cinvention 2" (~~probably Lou's been communicating from beyond again~~) - which, if true, would probably radicalize me again. Somewhere, lost in all this, is the fact that 1988 is Cincinnati's Bicentennial, much Ado is planned, and hotel availability & rates will undoubtedly be affected. Stay Tuned for Further Exciting Tales...

[I haven't had this much fun since I was ON a Worldcon Bid...]

6/16/84

Annotating Bowers?

Outworlds 40 | August 1984

MIKE GLICKSOHN writes:

Today being the “official” national holiday of Canada and hence the first day of my nine-week vacation and also the first July long weekend I’ve spent in Toronto since 1974, I thought I’d spend most of it seeing whether or not I can still write the sort of LoCs I used to dash off to **OW** at the drop of an issue. (I mean an **Outworlds**, not **Megen**.) Besides, you hinted less-than-subtly that there’s something in the issue that will strike a chord with me: I hope I recognize it as I read the issue page by page and comment as I go...

Hmmm... I wonder if there’d be any money in my publishing special Annotated **Outworlds** checklists after each of your issues appears? I feel confident that people like Ian Covell and perhaps two or three others would pay handsomely for an

additional insert telling them “The woman on page 1339 is _____”, or “The illegal act referred to on page 1287 is _____”. On the other hand, I’d have to make at least half of it up and who really cares enough to pay for such information anyway? I’ll stick to watching the Blue Jays and leave your title as **The Wizard of Esoterica** unbesmirched.

...What’s not in this issue? Hmmm... the answer is clearly not “restricted comprehensibility”, “typos”, “artwork”, “personal esoterica” or even “outside contributions”. Perhaps it’s “editorial changes”? “Stephen Leigh”? “Leah Zeldes”? and, naturally, “Dave Locke”. There are so many correct answers, how can anybody select just one?

(7/2/84)

BILL BOWERS replies:

*...wrong, oh giver of tests: there may be several acceptable answers, but there is only one “correct” response. Prior to **OW38**, Dave had been present in each of the “new” series of **Outworlds**. (Ironically, I seem to have broken, inadvertently, a lengthy Brad Foster “string” with the publication of **OW39**...)*

*You may well know (you should) who “The woman on page 1339 is _____” but since I am neither present on, nor referenced in the course of page 1287 (and nothing either Dave or Walt brought up is illegal, even in Cincinnati) – I suspect your proposed Annotated **OW** would come up rather short factually...*

*Indeed, Naomi gets **OW**; she even makes occasional noises about responding to it. ~~But then, Naomi has always been more noise than substance.~~ Perhaps, I shall persuade her to stand for TAFF in '87, against Cesar Ignacio Ramos, before the Vast **OW** Readership begins to doubt her reality.*

*As for her ‘friend’, no he doesn’t get **OW**, and she is under oath not to lend her copies to him. As he is one of the two Cincinnati “area” fans who I would not permit to enter my abode (the other is one of the two “locals” (still) on the Cincy in '88 bid), it would be illogical to give him my fanzine. Illogical even for me. And that is why, Mike, even though you used his ‘name’ when you wrote, he became a ‘blank’ when transcribed: It’s not a matter of censorship or even ‘esoterica’ – it’s simply a matter of Good Taste.*

Having just seen you, while pausing for a weekend in the task of moving your words from one shade of blue paper to another, and having had to straighten out your failure to understand a perfectly logical fanzine numbering system, I’m beginning to suspect that part of the problem is that you no longer read my fanzine (even though I read every word of every fanzine you’ve published in say, the last four-&-a-half years) but simply skim them. But that’s okay... most of us are getting older...

*Sure, I’ll write you a letter... When you do something interesting and commentworthy. (I’m not sure which describes your attributing my 17th-published fanzine as *My First*... but I’m reasonably sure it doesn’t fulfill both parts of the conjunction...)*

...my convention for wimpy fanzine fans everywhere...

Outworlds 41 | December 1984

AT CHICON IV, I never did make it to the fan room/area. But in Baltimore, I used the fan area as a daytime 'base'. And in LA, I spent a lot of time way over in a corner of the hotel, around a bend and down a hallway, where the "fan" rooms were located.

I dunno... maybe the Worldcon *is* evolving into a group of related-but-separate "conventions" under one umbrella organization; perhaps that's the only way to deal with the size-factor. To some, the solution is not to go to Worldcons anymore; to me that is not a viable option, but to each his own.

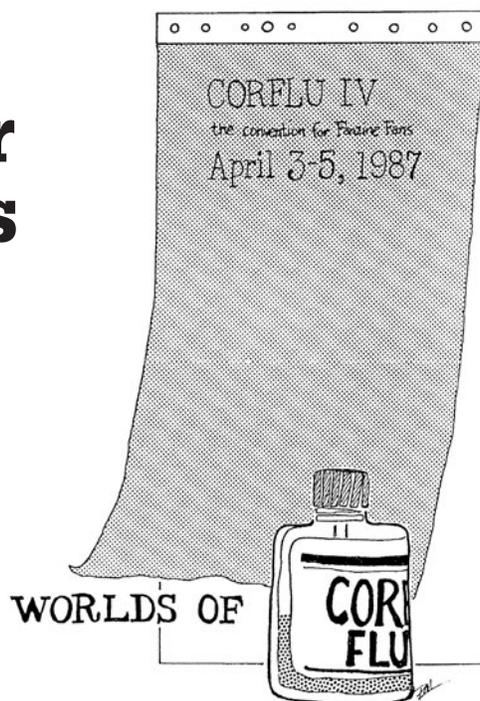
I started out a fanzine fan, and while there may be some discussion as to the clarity of my writing, I seem to have demonstrated some small staying power in that "fandom".

...but a year after first pubbing my ish, I went to my first convention – a Worldcon, and despite this being an off-year (only five; my ghod, what happened?) – in October I went to my 136th convention. And if, today, you were to mention the word "corflu"... a few of my closest friends will think you're talking about one of the strange concoctions served at Worldcon bidding parties...

Two fandoms? At the very least, but I have a foot in both camps... and intend to keep it that way.

But this is not a dissertation on the State of ANY Aspect of Fandom; just a lead-in...

Last January, there was a convention in the Bay Area that called itself "CORFLU: The Convention for Fanzine Fans". Unfortunately, it was scheduled the same weekend as ConFusion. And it wasn't the *first* con for fanzine fans: those of us who were at the first AutoClave still share a special bond unmatched by any con I know of (except possibly Torcon II).



...still, I heard Good Things about Corflu and so shortly before leaving for LA, one night while up at Dave & Jackie's (while graciously helping them lower the level on a bottle of 151 rum), I made a suggestion. Dave, at least, recalls thinking it was a Good Idea. ~~At the time.~~

At LAcon, I ran my burst of inspiration past a number of folks, and most of them thought it was a Very Good Idea.

Corflu 2 will be held Feb. 1-4, 1985, at the Napa Valley Holiday Inn. It's too early to make a definite commitment – that's two months away! – but I really do hope to be there. And if I do make it, well, then, *you* had better be there too!

Corflu 3, rumor has it, will be in Falls Church.

...oh, about my "Idea"? Well, of course...

For the Record, I'm "bidding" for Corflu 4, to be held in Cincinnati... 1987.

Why?

...because it would be fun.

...because it would give Denise Parsley Leigh a "deadline" for getting the next issue of *Graymalkin* out.

...but primarily so that all you fanzine fans who insist on worshipping at my feet at cons... can do so on *your* credit card for a change!

Remember: CORFLU 4: the convention for wimpy fanzine fans everywhere...

Really.

Note: I'm still not mentioning certain names

Outworlds 41 |
December 1984

"...is there any use in my continuing to send you my fanzine?" I asked her. "Do you read them at all?"

"Of course I do," she said. "If only to see if you mention my name."

"Do you *want* me to mention your name? ...you are, after all, the reason I *don't* use names any more."

"I know... sorry about that."

Awkward pause.

"Well, it *wasn't* entirely your fault..."

(At least she doesn't send me postcards from strange faraway places!)

Over the course of seven days in LA, I did not see the con's GoH's once. My "programming" attendance was a round-table discussion where Terry Carr told about the perfect fanzine. I got to see the two I primarily went to see... and a number of other Neat People. I was one of the four to purchase *Fanzines in Theory and Practice*. I had fun.

...and that's my LAcon II conreport.

WE WERE OUT TO DINNER one night at LAcon. After ordering, and before being served, one of the guys in our party amused himself by



running his finger around the rim of the water glass, making it "sing".

He was seated on my left.

She, seated on my right, (perhaps out of nervousness; perhaps out of boredom), attempted to make her water glass do likewise.

With a notable lack of success.

Eventually, I interjected. (Eventually, I always do.)

"...but, you're doing it the same way he is.

Clockwise..."

"So?"

"...he's male."

"...oh!"

Her finger moved counter-clockwise... and at once her water glass sang with crystal clarity.

Everyone laughed, and I felt quite smug... until she kicked me under the table.

...why me?

Ah well, I still won't mention her name...

Even though I now know she still reads my fanzine...

...waiting for me to do so.

from *Outworlds 39*, July 1984

I guess that's what bothers people the most: they can't accept a 'story' without having a label to hang onto it. But that I can understand – I'm always curious myself. I'm a fan... it goes with the territory.

I used names at one point; but once, about six years ago, it backfired. By the time my enthusiastic musings were published... the relationship was over. So now I don't use names. I'm not trying to 'hide' anything; it's simply self-preservation.

But still I WILL write about these things. As I've pointed out before, *Outworlds* (at least in this incarnation) may pose as a fanzine, but in reality it is simply my journal, my diary, my record of my own timeline. Therefore, unless you have at least a minimal interest in me, and what interests me, you're not going to stick around.

The End of the Porch Swing Era

Outworlds 41 | December 1984

A FEW YEARS BACK, in *Energumen*, I recounted Tales of My Front Porch Swing. I haven't mentioned it for a while, and not only because, the past two years, to get to it I would have to go out the side door... and around.

The swing is still out there... but not for long.

With absolutely no slight to any of the women in my life (including all those referenced thish), the most traumatic thing in my life is... moving.

In June, 1977, I moved from a two-bedroom townhouse 200+ miles downstate, and into three rooms at 2468 Harrison Avenue.

In October, 1984, I moved roughly twelve feet... vertically... at 2468 Harrison Avenue.

It is the American Dream to Move Up in the world.

Advantages to the 2nd floor: rooms... with doors; and closets. Deciding argument: the third floor with two rooms, effectively increasing my "space" by 2/3rds.

...and besides, even though I never saw the bedroom until just before I moved... it's the first time I ever moved into a place that was a part of my "history". (But that was Long Ago, and *she* never read fanzines – although she was referenced in *OW31*.)

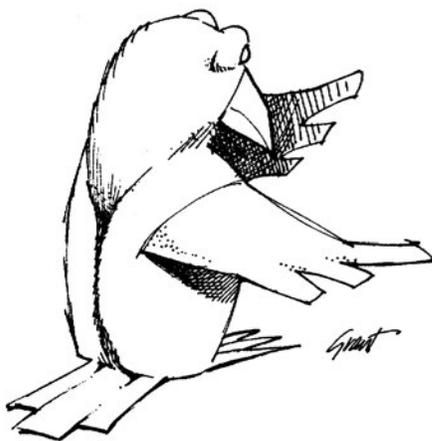
...all of this, for only thirty dollars more/month.

It seemed like a good idea at the time.

The time was before a) I was ~~eried~~ talked into going to Contradiction at the last minute and, b) I ended up with the worst bout of asthma/allergies I've endured in years.

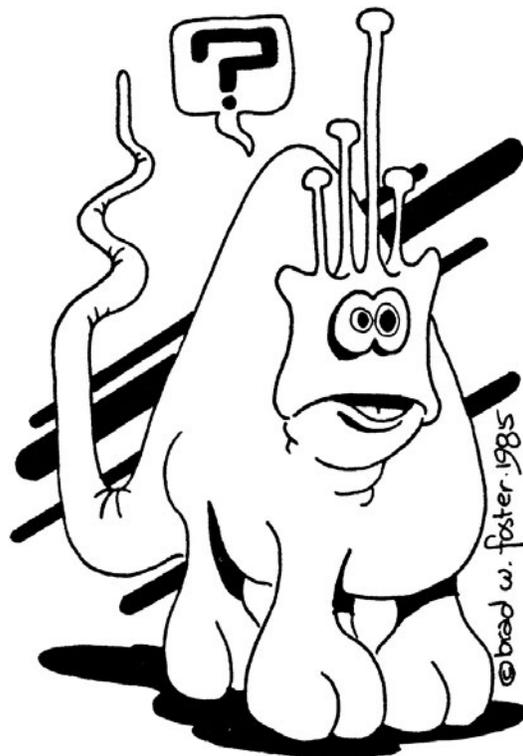
Dave Locke. Greg Jordan. Steve Leigh. Don Carter. Bill Cavin... and the incredible Tanya Carter. Don't believe a word any of them say about the 'state' of my downstairs abode... but without them, I wouldn't be up!

That was all early October. Yesterday (12/1), a young couple moved into a large chunk of my life...
...maybe I should sell them the porch swing.



The Annotated Bowers

Shticks. History. Coping. Volleyball. Some 'bits' play better in the Midwest...



Outworlds 46 | August 1985

(scenario)

August 10th 1985; late

I returned this evening from the annual Cincinnati Fantasy Group Picnic (originated as Bill Cavin's largesse to those CFG members who don't travel to Worldcons/NASFiCs, and partake of the CFG Suite & Booze there; Some of us Do Both, but I at least have the good grace to, on occasion, Voice Guilt about this double-dipping... while doing it). Showered. Went up to the Grill to eat... came back and finished typing up Al Sirois' letter.

...nursing a swollen and very sore right ring finger; not the most important appendage on my body, given my typing technique... but still distracting.

...trying to decide whether to:

- a) commence typing up more LoCs,
- b) start putting together the rest of the issue-at-hand,
- c) more pressingly, start on my title-but-nothing-else-to-date NASFiC speech, or,
- d) simply go to bed and get more than 4 or 5 hours sleep... just to prove that I can still do it.

Welcome to Option e).

Wherein The Author Describes How He Attempted To Impale A Hurling Volleyball On The Tip Of His Finger – And Failed Miserably.

I didn't go to the Picnic last year... but two years ago I impressed some people (and, noticeably, myself) with a display of my heretofore well-hidden athletic prowess... not a world-shaking event; I am both taller and less overweight than the average fan. But the mean age of the others in that particular fannish ritual volleyball game was half of mine, and most of them don't smoke. (Of course I'd spent a fair bit of time that year engaged in the solitary vice of putting a silly basketball through the silly hoop at the end of my silly driveway...)

Two years later and somewhat wiser (the rim is netless, the basketball somewhat deflated) in the ways of the world, but not as Physically Fit, nevertheless when at midafternoon it was suggested that a volleyball game was in order, I, of course, returned to the Field of Honor (even if at a different park; Fannish License). After all, I don't play Trivial Pursuit, and my conversational skills are

less than legendary. The fact that it was 90 plus (humidity also) a mere trifle.

The fact that the instigators of the game were mostly young women, the merest of coincidences.

...and I stove my finger on the first ball over the net, but persevered; and having served its purpose as lead-in, it is hereby retired to throbbing quiescence...

As the game progressed and I began to examine the sum of my knowledge on heat strokes (and besides, who wants to impress Carol Forste anyways), it came my turn to serve.

The first two were successful; basically since the other side was equally as inept as 'my' team, all I had to do was get the ball over the net. As I prepared for my third 'go', I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, that someone was traversing the walkway from the swimhouse to one of the pavilions. My serve ended up going dead toward her... said direction having approximately as much to do with the net and our game... as sequentiality does with Bowers-writings.

Naturally.

Everybody laughed... it was that obvious, and it broke the tension of the tightly-fought game, practiced by teams of crack athletes (we weren't keeping score).

Then Joel Zakem said, from across the net, "— but she's too *old* for you, Bill."

I should have known better. I always should have known better... I inquired:

"She's obviously over thirteen," he said...

Almost 10 years ago, when I was in hot pursuit of someone who was half of my then age, my then good friend Ro Nagey (one night, after a couple of drinks) said to Roger Bryant: "...did you know that Bowers was into fucking pre-pubescent girls?"

He was, of course, Being Cute... but a bit of the friendship died with that comment:

I was 32 ten years ago; she was the youngest person I've been involved with. Ever... and she was definitely pubescent.

Shticks. History. Coping.

...and that was as far as I got *that* night, ten days ago. And now I am left with this day, and only to the bottom of this column (probably fortuitously For All Of Us) to finish up.

Joel was "just being cute" also, and I didn't take it as being malicious or vengeful based

on what Joel knows of my life... whereas Ro, by the nature of our relationship at the time, Knew More... and therefore had much more the capability to hurt... Now then, "being cute" with my foibles and predilections is Certainly Allowable; after all, if I can't 'take it', I'll have to take back a third of what I say, corflu out half of what I write, and retract *everything* I say about Naomi in these pages... I am a Public Performer: by doing this fanzine, by writing of the things I care about, by engaging in Public Displays of Affection... my right to 'privacy' is less than if I didn't Do These Things.

...but that doesn't mean that certain subjects aren't more sensitive than others.

I like women. A lot. My best friends are women.

My building of my own self-image was a slow process. Still not invincible, where I'm at today was accomplished with the help of a number of special women. Some of whom I've been involved with sexually, but am not any more. Some of whom the possibility has never come up. Some of whom I have 'hopes' for, but...

And yet, I do sometimes wonder...

Why is it, other than the 'first', I've never been involved with anyone older than myself? Why is it that when, rationalizing the failure of my marriage, the fact that she was six years younger than I figured prominently... and in the intervening eleven years (let's not quibble about mere months...), everyone I've been involved with is a decade my junior? Usually more.

I do think about these things. I have a theory of Why This Is So for every day I've been alive. I worry about it. But not overmuch.

As I keep saying... I just don't "card" people... Shtick? Of course.

History? I have some: Ellison-numbers, no... but more than my wildest adolescent fantasies.

Coping? I do, you know.

So. Why this? Now?

Maybe I am Coming of Age. Maybe I'm trying to communicate with one special person. Maybe I'm just spacefilling. Probably a combination... and more.

The "waiting-for-Megen" routine...

The "older than thirteen" across-the-net comments.

The... Well, it occurred to me that some 'bits' play better in the Midwest than, possibly, elsewhere...

For the Record: While flirting with S.Y.T.s is a lot of fun, I do prefer women. After all, I never *did* catch that sixteen-year-old. ~~Although there were the two seventeen'ers later on.~~

Somehow I have the feeling that John W. Campbell, Jr. never had to write an 'editorial' quite like

this. But then, he probably never knew any of the women I've known...

I do know for a fact that he never played a CFG volleyball game with Joel Zakem. And Carol Forste...

His loss...

Bill Bowers, 8/20/85

from the Lettercol *Outworlds 53 | December 1987*

JOEL ZAKEM comments:

*I was a little surprised to find **Outworlds 46** in my mailbox. I hadn't responded to the last few issues, and I figured I'd have to purchase a copy the next time I saw you. Then I read "The Annotated Bowers".*

Well, it's one way to ensure a letter from me.

I have no doubt that your recollection of the events at the CFG picnic is correct (more than a month later, the day seems a little fuzzy to me) and I have no doubt that I am responsible for the remark attributed to me. It sounds like something I'd say but, believe me, I would not have said it if I thought you would take offense.

I apologize for the remark, even though, as you concluded, it was simply an attempt to be "cute". I would have apologized at the picnic if I had been aware of your displeasure at my attempt at "cuteness". Since you chose (if my recollection is correct) to say nothing at the picnic, although you had ample opportunity, either publicly or privately to tell me how you felt, this apology may be somewhat late. Nevertheless, I hope you realize that I intended no maliciousness.

However, since you used my remark as a basis for your editorial, I would like to attempt to explain some of the reasons behind the remark.

*Although I was an **Outworlds** subscriber and may have talked with you at a con somewhere, the first time I "met" you was on the day you moved to Cincinnati. Since then, although we were never what you could call great friends, we have spent some time together... at CFG meetings, parties, driving to and from cons, etc. During that time, however, I never felt as if I really "knew" Bill Bowers, at least from personal contact.*

But combining the fact that we live in the same area with what I read in your publications gave me what I thought was a certain familiarity with the individual named Bill Bowers. In fact, sometimes I felt that I may have had an advantage, as living in the Cincinnati area allowed me to interpret some of your more esoteric references, especially those concerning some of your "mystery women". You were right, however, in alleging that I don't "know" you.

The same thing can also be said in reverse, though. I don't think Bill Bowers "knows" Joel Zakem. And unlike you, I don't publish a fanzine to help make things clearer.

My fannish experiences are a lot different from yours. I've generally kept on the sidelines rather than entering the center of the arena. Still, I don't see myself giving up my fannish lifestyle, such as it is. If nothing else, I've met some of my closest friends through fandom and I've had a few, as you put it, involvements directly attributed to fandom (although not Ellison-

numbers, or even Bowers-numbers – sorry, being “cute” again). I’ve also met a large number of people who I would like to know better, but because of my shyness or insecurity, I’ve never really gotten to know.

One of these people is Bill Bowers.

I think some of my previous letters might have mentioned this, but I have always admired Bill Bowers, the Fan. He has accomplished many things that I would have liked to do. On a more personal note, as you might have noticed, I’ve had more than a passing interest in some of your “mystery women”. And I guess, what I’m trying to say is, I’ve always been a bit jealous of you, Bill.

In many ways, I guess the “cute” remark grew out of this jealousy. It probably does not change things, but I felt that an explanation was in order. Once again, I meant no offense, at least on a conscious level, and I’ll try to watch myself in the future.

At the same time, I found myself feeling a little hurt after reading the editorial. It’s not that it was unfair to me, or even unwarranted. Maybe I’m too sensitive, but I don’t want to lose what friendship we have. Not that I’m suggesting that you never use me as a starting point in your ramblings again. At the risk of sounding cute, it may be one of the few ways I could become a fannish legend or something.

[September 17, 1985]

BILL BOWERS replies:

A lot of the Burning Issues of **Outworlds**, circa 1985, are no longer even embers. Given that, and in an effort to generate this issue in a pitch large enough for you to read it, the Editorial Commentary will probably be minimal.

All of which is prelude to acknowledging that I have as of this moment had exactly two years and two months since the date on Joel’s letter... to figure out just “how” to “answer” him...

Eh, Joel... can I get back to you a bit later...?

I just reread that ‘editorial’ for the first time in two years; it’s not my best work, but it seems to say still what I was trying to say at the time. I used you, Joel (and your ‘comment’), as a set-up to something I probably would have tried to say anyway; it just made it simpler for me.

The fact that it elicited such an open letter from you was an unexpected result, but that was not the intent of the exercise; nor was it meant to embarrass you – if I hadn’t thought you would still be speaking to me afterward, I wouldn’t have used your name, but would have concocted some other gambit.

Thanks for your response, Joel... and I really don’t think you need me to help you become a “fannish legend or something”! The speech you came up with in such a short span of time to fulfill your GoHship at Corflu was certainly better than anything I’ve ever done in a timeframe that condensed. [I still hope it sees print someday. Ironic, isn’t it, that it is being ‘held up’ in the household of someone who was specifically referenced – but not by name – in that long-ago **OW46** editorial...!] Indeed, Naomi gets **OW**; she even makes occasional noises about responding to it. ~~But then, Naomi has always been more noise than substance.~~ Perhaps, I shall persuade her to stand for TAFF in ‘87, against Cesar Ignacio Ramos, before the Vast **OW** Readership begins to doubt her reality.



...well, no, I didn't end up collating **OW46** on the plane, but...

...the 'speech', however ("You've heard the title; now read the rest.") was finally started the Thursday before Lone Star Con, segment-continued here & at work thereafter, *Flair*-continued on the flight... and finally 'completed' in an Austin kitchen 24 hours before its delivery... to a Vast Audience of 20 of my friends... and Karen, who had been 'drug along'... but who, nevertheless was still speaking to me when she left Monday (after having – Sunday night – fallen asleep on my bed... along with six or seven of my even closer... but B*O*R*I*N*G... friends. And Ray Thompson.)

What we have here, now, is basically a transcript of 37 pages of Notes [plus 11-B thru 11-E]. The Originals are on Display in the Archives (at the moment that pile... over there in that corner) – so you'll just have to accept that, other than massaging scrawled lines into vaguely-paragraph format, and cleaning up typos (while surely creating new ones) – this is a more-or-less accurate recounting of what I 'said' in Palmer Auditorium, Friday afternoon, August 30, 1985.

...there was no audio record; there will be no Videos of this one... and the memories of those in attendance are suspect, unless they agree with what I write here...

Trust me.

[9/21/85]

1985 NASFiC Speech

Still Practicing After All These Years

Outworlds 47 | October 1985

[8/22/85; 7:40pm]

I thought I'd asked for an *afternoon* slot... but obviously I forgot to specify "Fannish Time". I mean this 'thirteen hundred' nonsense is fine for devotees of all-night fandom... but for the rest of us it's just a shade past breakfast... and only neofans and hucksters are about, I fear.

I also recall asking for *Saturday* afternoon... but this is probably just as well: ~~it gets it out of the way early~~ ...err... it gives us a chance at a Golden Opportunity – convention programming that actually starts on time...

...but if I didn't complain, my name wouldn't be Bill Bowers.

...and if I were to start at the beginning... but no, I NEVER do that!

It is tempting to start with the End... but that would be non-sequential, unfair, and self-defeating... and I am rarely more than any two of those three at a given time.

...and so, for the sake of simplicity (that, and a sudden lack of opening gambits), let's start right about here with, uniquely, the title:

**"BILL BOWERS' SECOND SEQUENTIAL
POST-IGUANACON NASFiC SPEECH"**

subtitled:

"Still Practicing, After All These Years"

and further modified:

"A Tradition"

That last part, now was *not* in the version I furnished for the program listing, but rather a last-minute add-on...

And that, in itself, may be traditional: I can't even type out my name twice in a row...without adding a different descriptor each time.

TRADITIONS...

...so, what's a 'tradition'?

The Dictionary At Hand – WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD
DICTIONARY OF THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE: SECOND
COLLEGE EDITION – says that the word means:

1. *orig.*, a surrender or betrayal.
2. a) the handing down orally of stories, beliefs, customs, etc., from generation to generation.
b) a story, belief, custom, proverb, etc., handed down this way.
3. a long-established custom or practice that has the effect of an unwritten law; specif., any of the usages of a school of art or literature handed down through the generations and generally observed.

...as well as a 4th and 5th assembling of words that have no relevance to anything in the Known Universe except, just possibly, white mice and the Rosicrucians.

Now this is all very fine, and possibly educational – but never having been one to let the facts get in the way of what I'm trying to say...

...in other words, I grabbed the word out of thin air without bothering to look it up first...

...what we are going with today is *Option #6*:

"A Tradition – a Fannish Tradition – is what I point at when I say the word."

Now I'm not at all certain whether fannish traditions are "created"... "predetermined"... or simply the out-takes of fans too creative to smof.

I do know that some attempts at 'creating' traditions simply haven't worked:

For instance, at AutoClave One (the *first* convention for fanzine fans: an obligatory, de rigueur pointing out with Wimpy Zone Pride) – in the course of events, it was discovered that the doors to the Art Show could not be locked for overnight security.

Innovatively – instead of simply grounding a gopher or two there all night – the committee simply kept the Art Show open... all night; both nights – and virtually everyone at the con wandered in, at one time or another... and made *NAME BADGES!!!*

...not me; I was too busy keeping Mike Glicksohn out of his own room – but the fans kept on making up more badges... and, furthermore... kept *buying* the bloody things at the art auctions...

But when "BADGECON" was *programmed* at the following AutoClave (and, I believe, attempted at, at least one other convention)... well, it just wasn't the same...

It was an event, a happening... and it was definitely fannish: but it didn't become a Tradition...

So, do acceptable "traditions" require a certain degree of spontaneity both in the conception and the maintenance phases...?

Not necessarily.

Take for example the way I could – without an undue amount of egotism – append to the title of this *QUOTE* speech *UNQUOTE*... the descriptor: "A Tradition".

[8/25; 10:30 pm]

Flashback: This weekend, 1976...

...but Saturday night; late:... and as I wandered into the Phoenix bidding suite, Diane Drutowski said to me: "We won... congratulations...!"

...slightly confused – for the first time in my life – I responded: "That's nice... (pause)... for what?"

"You mean..." she said, "they didn't ask you...?"

For those of you who haven't been around forever... Phoenix had just won the 1978 Worldcon...

...and had announced that *I* was to be their Fan Guest of Honor.

...which was nice, flattering, and, well – well-deserved – except... no one had gotten around to asking me if I'd *like* to do this little thing...

I should point out right about here that this is a prime example of *non-traditional* fannish behavior: to the best of my knowledge, every other Worldcon Guest of Honor – fan or pro – (as well as those at most other cons) since the beginning of Time, or Tucker... has been *ASKED* before having their name announced in a thousand flyers...

...probably my sole claim to fannish uniqueness: but just as well, that... *Had* Greg & Curt gotten around to asking beforehand... just think, over the past nine years I'd have had nothing to write, or speak, about – except, oh, skiffy, my days as a keypuncher for the U.S. Air Force... or my relationships with nameless femmefans.

...how boring... and how potentially embarrassing!

Speaking of my "speaking"...

Shortly after Big MAC... realizing that in two short years I would have to make a speech, in front of Harlan, God, and who-knows-else... my friend, Leah Zeldes (as she was known in those days) arbitrarily decided that my speechifying needed some... err... "work".

Leah made this presumptuous presumption, on the sole basis of my One (count 'em) and only previous Public Appearance...

...at the previous January's ConFusion where I thought things had gone rather well: I ascended the stage, sat on a chair... and descended the stage 45 minutes later... without remembering a thing in-between...

Leah decided that my Technique needed work, and initiated the Bill Bowers Practice Speeches... booking me into conventions Far and Wide...

As I recall now, this consisted of the following two Marcons, one AutoClave, and a repeat of the second Marcon speech at the 1978 Midwestcon.

Well-practiced, Labor Day Sunday, 1978... I stood in front of Harlan, God, and twelve hundred to two thousand (depending on who you talk to) and made quote "The Best Worldcon Fan Guest of Honor Speech Made By A Tall Person In A Caftan" unquote & Copyright © by Ro Lutz-Nagey...

...and if anyone has any idea at all of where I can obtain copies of the video and/or audio recordings of the Moment In My Life... I'd be most appreciative.

(After all, as George R.R. Martin & Mike Glicksohn [five weeks ago at Rivercon] said, endlessly, of their mutually favorite Pro Guest of Honor... there's no use having a Public Forum... if you don't *Use It*. Endlessly.)

[Had to do that: After all, George did mention me in his Rivercon speech.]

Segueing back to the conclusion of this *introductory* portion – Hey! Don't yell at me...

THEY gave me an hour-slot! –

...and having realized a long time ago that Fannish Perfection is something attainable ONLY in my fanzines...

...I kept right on Practicing my Speeches: Mostly at Marcons and ConFusions...

I even did one at the last NASFiC – God, that was six years ago: no wonder the furriners have been getting restless...!

...and when there weren't enough conventions... I titled my column for Denise Parsley Leigh's *Graymalkin* – "Bill Bowers' 'This Is Not A Speech'"... and kept on going...

(Say... mother-of-Megen... just *when* is the next installment due...?)

...slow though I am to pick up on hints – I specialize in dismissing the obvious as being

relevant – I still can't help noticing that... while it hasn't been quite as long as the last *Graymalkin*... it HAS been 19 months since my last... public... Speech.

Furthermore... and this is a subject of somewhat greater concern... do you realize that I've had to pay my own way to every convention [well, there *was* that thing in Toronto, 1980, but...] I've attended *since* Iggy? That was in 1978... and 77 conventions ago...

Hey, guys... just because I'm Incredibly Important... and *have* been a Guest of Honor at a *Worldcon*... doesn't mean that I wouldn't be willing to stoop to being Fan Guest of Honor at YOUR convention...

...rates are reasonable... and I can be.

...and, if you twist my arm, I'll even make a speech.

...or, if you'd rather I didn't –

But that'll cost you slightly more.

What the Hell... this *too* is Fannish Tradition – after all, it worked for Asimov's first Hugo...

Having thus firmly established that Bill Bowers Speeches are indeed Traditional (without appending any pejorative 'good' or 'bad' labels to same)... and Should Be Continued... let's... just for fun... and to tweak a few presumptions... let's briefly tilt at some five or six fannish 'traditions'... at least as seen from a slightly 'askew' point of view –

THE IMPETUS FOR THE "TRADITIONAL" thrust of this – I needed something to peg it on... came about at this year's Midwestcon:

On Saturday afternoon, the Chairman – a certain Mr. Wimpy Cave-In – approached me and said that it had been pointed out to him that a Certain Individual had not paid the registration fee...

...and What Should We Do About It?

I made Inquiries... being a Member of The Committee (at least I think I am) and was eventually told that the fan had been given a ride to the convention, would not have been there otherwise... and was too Poor & Poverty Stricken to pay the \$10.

...but, but..., I said to the fan's apologists... you just *don't go* to cons you can't afford to pay at least the membership fee at...

"...it's... ..it's... *traditional!*" I sputtered.

I really did.

...say that.

...but perhaps I didn't actually sputter; just inarticulated...

Hey, I can relate, you know: I used to be Poor & Poverty-stricken... before I became middle-incomed & thoroughly debt-ridden...

I mean, like, this here is the 142nd skiffy convention I've attended... and *I* have always paid my way... even though I've received a few rebates for Having Spoken here & having Panelled there (except from Marcons).

...well. Truth In Advertising, Part Two... says that statement is not entirely true:

I did not pay to attend Fan Fair III, in 1975 – I stayed at Glicksohn's apartment, we commuted... and never went to the Con Suite or any Official Function...

...and at ConClave a few years back [*what year* was it, Denise, when *she* turned 18...?]¹ we arrove late Friday night, I was sick, and by the time I got Up & About Saturday afternoon, registration was closed... Nevertheless, I sought out & Offered...

The Chair said: "Registration is closed, we have enough to make a go & so have a happy...".

Steve Simmons is a Nice Person... even if I did vote against his bid & for this Faraway Place two years ago this weekend.

I also didn't pay memberships at the ConFusion I Guested at, nor the two cons I was Toastmaster at... and didn't 'master anything. (Of course, the second one I didn't even attend... but let's not quibble.)

And, come to think of it, I guess I didn't pay a membership fee – in cash – for Iguacon.

...so, are you going to call me a liar for five conventions... 5 out of 142...?²

It is my belief that most cons are not LAcon II – most conventions do need your membership fees. Most cons are run... and risked... by fans no more well-off than you; many times, less...

Nothing terribly heavy here... There *are* Circumstances, and if you can cut a deal with the concom by offering to gopher, run registration, whatever, before you show up... fine... Whatever works: I've done it – as an attendee... and as a

con co-chairman. [... I have it... written here in red Flair pen on yellow paper earlier this month: "After all, what is clout for, anyway?"]

Just remember: Most conventions are run... and financed... by fans just as strapped for cash as you or I... I know you're going to find that hard to believe, but in this one instance, you are just going to have to Trust Me.

Somewhat later the Individual-Who-Did-Not-Pay-The-Midwestcon-Membership approached me.

"I understand you've been questioning my not paying the registration fee...?"

"Not me..." I said – and pointed the fan (he said, non-gender-specifically) in the direction of Mr. Cave-in.

THE SECOND TOPIC – according to my 'outline', is the subject of "Fan Funds". However, valor being slightly akin to discretion... I've decided to save that 'til last. This way you can leave... or wait it out: we'll see who of you are Wise... and those of you who are simply here for the Cheap Thrills...

Names *will* be taken.

In the meantime, let's have at something slightly safer, and certainly non-relevant here, this weekend.

...the throwing of Cons against one another...

[8/26; 10:45pm]

NOW AS I UNDERSTAND IT –

I am much too young to remember myself, you know – this is a relatively recent state...

...in that not so very long ago, we were lucky to have as much as ONE convention a weekend... and some months... now this is *not* fantasy... there were NONE...!

I can't help but wonder what fans did with all their discretionary income in those days of yore...

...maybe... do you suppose?... they did the unpardonable – and published... *shudder*... fanzines...? But that's the next & Third Tradition... and so back to the Conventional Scene...

1 ...well, I *wrote* the parenthetical remark – but I didn't *say* it; must be getting chicken in me old age.

2 There was a quibble; naturally. Not five minutes after I'd finished, Leah said: "... but you didn't pay memberships at the ConFusions you were at *after* being GoH."² I *had* thought of this when rereading what I'd written, before 'speaking' – but it seemed a minor point. Also: for several years the CFG 'assessed' members a \$15 annual fee... the only visible benefit of which was we got to attend Midwestcon & Octocon 'free'... Then there is the matter of 7 SpaceCons at which I've not paid a formal membership... but, hey!, who's counting...?

Given the odds – no matter what weekend you pick – there is likely to be another convention the *same* weekend – somewhere in the World.

...trouble is... sometimes the world seems to have shrunk:

...as in 1984 when Rivercon ended up opposite SpaceCon... I was less than thrilled... we are tied to a specific date... and it required a number of people to Make Choices...

...though a couple of fans stretched reason to the breaking point:

The Thursday before that two-con conflict, Bill Cavin drove the two hours from Cincinnati to Louisville to attend Rivercon's pre-con party; Friday – he drove Joel Zakem the two hours back to Cincinnati... picked up the pony keg of beer... and drove the two hours on to SpaceCon...

Sunday, Bill & Joel drove the four hours back to Louisville for *their* dead dog party...

Now this type of behavior hasn't been seen in the Midwest since Michael Harper was in his heyday, but... say, do you think this is the reason Cavin is getting to be Fan Guest of Honor at all these conventions... and nobody asks *me* anymore...? Truly, something to ponder on...

These things do happen; in our case there's no hard feelings, and most of "us" went to Rivercon this year... and some of them may come to SpaceCon next year...

...but there's always been one weekend a year that's... well... sort of 'sacred'.

I was, again, less than thrilled – I was perturbed – when at LAcon II a year ago, 4 or 5 fans came up to me and asked why I was *there* (obviously they don't read my fanzine) instead of at my convention back in Wapakoneta.

...and at least two of them were kidding.

Now, my Good & Dear Friend – Mr. Michael Glicksohn – will not attend NASFiCs because he will *not* QUOTE "...attend a convention scheduled opposite a Worldcon." UNQUOTE.

The next time you see Mr. Glicksohn, you might ask him where he was last year, the very same weekend I was attending the Worldcon for Mysterious Reasons. He might tell you that he was at a party... but that "party" charged a membership fee and, for at least a portion of the weekend, displayed a "WELCOME SPACECON" legend on the marquee of a small Holiday Inn...

...my bloody hotel!

I have never attended a convention scheduled opposite a Worldcon. Last weekend I was home, running off a silly fanzine... and belatedly starting on this silly speech.

I suppose those people putting on that thing in Milwaukee this weekend have their good reasons... I mean, I read *File 770*, too... but I can't help but wonder...

[8/28; a.m.]

Still – *this* isn't what prompted me to tackle this sub-topic...

Most of you will have heard of a convention called Corflu – the Convention for Fanzine Fans...

Well, I went to the second one earlier this year – and enjoyed myself very much...

And, since it is my intention to bid for the 4th Corflu – I made some inquiries: into the Rules & Regulations... and the developing *traditions* of Corflus...

Now the reason I, and a number of others, didn't attend the *first* Corflu... is that it was scheduled the same weekend as one of the largest [and at the time, most popular] Midwestern conventions.

Among others, I talked to Ted White – who was there representing the unopposed Falls Church bid for Corflu 3. Ted told me that they hadn't finalized a date at that time – but they were thinking of March... and, they would *Quote* "*Make every effort not to go up against any other regularly scheduled con.*" *Unquote*.

In June I received Corflu 3's initial 'fanzine' – noted the February 1986 date... and said that I'd send in the membership fee real soon now...

...and then, a week or two later, at Midwestcon, I overheard someone talking about Corflu – and its being scheduled against Boskone...

I dunno... It's not likely to present any conflict for me: I enjoyed the one Boskone I attended – as much as any East Coast con I've been to – and I'd probably go to more... but only if I could afford to fly... But it may make some of those located between the D.C. area and Boston Make A Choice...

Barring major life changes, I'm going to Corflu 3 – I'm still bidding for #4, you know – and will enjoy myself with some Good People who at least nominally share one of my major interests –

...but I can't help but notice that I haven't been "promoting" Corflu 3 quite as much as I'd planned.

I'm sure that Ted and rich brown had just as good a reason as the people in Milwaukee – but I haven't read it in **File 770** yet.³

Still – if I *do* get Corflu 4, in 1987 – I guess it behooves me to be very, very careful in picking out a weekend for it!

I tell you, it wasn't like this in the old days...
...the Traditions... they are crumbling about us.

...DID I SAY A NASTY WORD up there?

Fanzines...?

You know what a fanzine is, don't you? It's what I point at when I say...

They were my entry into fandom... and I'm still practicing at them, too, after all these years...

I'll put 'em down, skim most of the ones that come in... and once a decade write a letter of comment.

But they are one of the things that I do and, rumor has it, one of the two things I do best.

Speechmaking, I hate to disillusion you, is not the second. [Quite possibly, procrastination is...]

...but there's one thing that's burned me for as long as I've been doing the things, and it is a few fans who will say:

"Fanzines should be available to fans for free...; I've NEVER paid for a fanzine!"

Well, I *have*, off and on, for almost 25 years... It wasn't that long ago that I subscribed to a number of fanzines. And even now, I still pay for **File 770**... [Tho I'm getting my money's worth today...]

It is true, as it should be, that most fanzines – including my own – are readily available for means other than cash...

I've traded with Dick Geis' little thing for almost twenty years, and while I used to pay for **Yandro**, I haven't for a decade... and still get every issue hot-off-the-press.

The trade/barter/favor/whatever system that makes up fandom is wonderful... and it works...

...but saying that you've NEVER PAID for a fanzine is *not* traditional... and it does not mean that you are a Trufan...

All it means is that you are cheap...

...and probably go to conventions without paying the membership fee...

NOW THAT'S A RATHER HARSH STATEMENT...

...but it's one I'll sign my name to... both here, and when it appears in print.

You know... I wonder about some things –

Things like... at what juncture in history and for what reason – generals stopped leading their armies... and began *sending* them into battle?

Little ironies like: How can someone be against abortion... but in favor of capital punishment?

...or vice-versa?

Things like why Lyndon Johnson ended up doing precisely what Barry Goldwater campaigned on...

Things like how Ronald Reagan has freed exactly the same number of hostages Jimmy Carter did...

I wonder about some things...

Like just *when* it became fashionable in fandom to do things in the name of fanac... and then *forget* to sign your name to them...

Hoaxes are a 'Tradition' – in every sense of the word – in fandom. And that's as it should be: they are a form of creative expression, and can be a lot of fun...

But some things are not hoaxes: some things are someone (or someones) beating-off to, it appears, even a score... or perhaps a lack of a 'score'.

When you are an opinionated person – and *express* your opinions – you have to assume that others will express *their* opinions of *your* opinions in return.

This holds true whether your name is Harlan Ellison – or Leah Zeldes Smith...

...and the catch is that you're going to get some of that response in the form of ridicule and abuse. You don't *have* to like it – you *will* wonder how someone can so completely misunderstand your *intentions* – but you're going to have to expect it. Ridicule and abuse are as 'fannish' – and as *traditional* – as egoboo and accolades...

...as long as the source of the ridicule and abuse is *acknowledged*.

Now, Leah, I've thought about this for some time... and have come to the conclusion that your wedding *was* a Quote "Fannish Event" Unquote.

In my opinion.

³ After returning home, I reread **DESK SET GAZETTE One** for the first time since its arrival in June... and I see they do "explain" their choice of weekends... but Bill Cavin is the only person around here who gets 'holidays' like President's Day. And they say they're not opposite "... any other con a fanzine fan might want to attend." Gee, you mean there are NO fanzine fans left in NESFA-land? I still think it was a bad move...

Not because some fans were in it – but for the simple fact that you sent Mike Glycer an invitation to it...

Now some of us in the Midwest who were around when Glycer went to school in Ohio are quite aware of certain of Mike's prejudices – and how they are reflected in his pages. They are not subtle.

Be that as it may... until someone in the Midwest has the gumption and get-up-and-go to do something similar – or until someone in Texas uninvolves herself enough from NASFiC-saving so she can pub her ish – **File 770** is the *only* regularly scheduled game we've got – and in spite of its known shortcomings and foibles... it's a lot better than nothing...

...but one thing *is* traditional, Leah... and you should have known: when you send anything to a faneditor – and in particular to a newszine editor...

...not to mention a newszine editor you had provoked on another matter –
...anything...

...and you do not “DNQ/DNP” it – it *is* fair game.
Fannish traditionally, speaking.

[8/28; 9:50am]

Yes, I thought Mike's “Report” on the wedding was a bit *much* – two pages – but it must have been a slow news month... or perhaps he hadn't gotten any phone calls from Columbusites [past or present] for awhile...

But in the end, Mike didn't do anything you shouldn't have expected him to do. You may not like what he does – but he *is* consistent... in itself a rarity in fandom.

...but as for his “sources” – unnamed – well, we've determined what I think of that practice... but in this case, it wasn't that hard to figure out who they were, was it now?

I mean, when the ‘report’ contained a direct quote – something about traditionalism, now that I think of it – and that quote was heard in the original context by four fans, and –

Well, I didn't write or call Mike – and you know who the other three were... So...

The fact that the Quote was entirely mis-attributed as to the source – when printed – is, in retrospect, ironically the most amusing part of the entire thing...

...but then – I've never said **File 770** was *accurate*... just regular.

...as for the other thing – which I will not dignify by naming: I can only say that it made the entire “Topic A” brouhaha seem like a benchmark in fan-nish behavior & fellowship...

Your wedding had its problems... but none insurmountable – I was there – and neither it, nor you & Dick – deserved *this*.

...my contempt for those who generated that piece of crap... words of more syllables fail me... I guess I'd be just as happy ~~in my ignorance~~ if I never know who did it...

I'd really hate to be disillusioned.

You see – I've known Harlan for over 20 years – and I've known Leah for over ten...

They are two people – and here comes the understatement of my – and possibly your – life... who are very firm in their convictions...

...but the one thing I can't help but having noticed over the course of my acquaintanceship with Harlan, and my friendship with Leah – is this:

No matter how unpopular their stances... no matter how, at times, wrong-headed they were (believe me, *I know!*)... neither has ever, to my knowledge, failed to state what they believe, nor to acknowledge *whatever* it is they have done to implement those beliefs.

They have accepted the responsibility for what they do –

...and have been willing to *sign their name to their lives*...

– and that is something I admire in people... and try to emulate in my own imperfect way.

The Practice Sessions are not restricted to speeches.

[Leah – I really didn't mean to get into your personal life to this extent...

...but then, *you are* the one who gave me an hour to fill...]

ACCORDING TO THE “OUTLINE”, the next topic is, simply: – naming “names”.

I wonder what perverse urge was in its ascendancy when I wrote *that*...?

It is a topic on which I have had things to say – ...but some things are, I guess, better restricted to fanzines.

...don't you just *hate* it... when people do things like that?

BE THAT AS IT MAY –

It's Showtime:

The first topic on the outline, but the last for today –

...gee, there's this many of you left? Vultures!

– is again two words:

Fan Funds.

(*deep breath*) [it sez here in parentheses]

[8/28; 7pm/Delta]

The past year has not been fandom's finest hour.

I chose to sit it out... as much as possible for someone who knew most of the principals (on both sides)... as much as possible for someone who had *friends on all sides*.

I sat it out for a variety of reasons:

a) I had other things to do.

b) I had been through something all-too-similar in the mid-sixties. (Perhaps this is what caused Eric Lindsay to refer to it as my "world-weary" bypassing of the melee.)

c) I'm basically chicken. I saw early on that while indeed there were issues to be raised & points to be made – that the stakes were too high and the points too blunt – to be worth risking *any* friendship over...

And –

d) The longer I go this fannish road, the more I have to peg my fanac – at least the public portion of it – to the words of the immortal Buck Coulson: "If it ain't fun... *fuck it!*"

...and none of Topic A was fun. For me.

Oh, changes *have* been wrought: as a former TAFF winner, I received a phone call last week from Teresa Nielsen Hayden... to discuss the consensus that she, Patrick, and a large number of previous TAFF winners were coming to. We talked, I made a few suggestions... and soon enough we'll see the results in printed form...

And some will like them... and some will not... this is the Tradition of Fandom... and this is the way it should be: as long as the likes & dislikes are confined to the issues – and not the likers or dislikers...

...silly me!

I dunno... maybe it *will* be a better world by having a more efficient... a more codified TAFF.

But at the cost of what has wrought it? I remain unconvinced.

At one point... after discussing and while simply chatting, Teresa broke in and said: "My God!... you actually *talk* with ellipses!"

I like that.

I'm only sorry that it took all of what went into prompting Teresa's call... for her to find that out.

We each have our own fandom; this is a given.

My fandom is a total anarchy... in which things get done... and goals are achieved... but not terribly efficiently.

[*As I write these words, the plane is in its descent to Dallas/Ft. Worth – and at this particular time the last thing I need is a rational reason for being in this space at this time...or a written-out set of instructions for getting here.*]

My fandom is not terribly tidy – and it has more than a few bugs in the system.

– but if I want "organization", I'll go elsewhere.

End of Sermon –

[8/29; noon]

BEGINNING OF FAN FUNDS: PART TWO:

...where it gets personal.

There *are* traditions where fan funds are concerned – but such traditions, as with life-forms and concoms, are mutable.

One of the traditions used to be that when someone stood for a fan fund – they were *asked* to do so. This is one tradition that, to my knowledge – is still about 50% valid; or am I being optimistic?

Another tradition... I suppose unwritten – is that once one has won a fan fund, one doesn't run again...
...you probably see where I'm going... but how to get there...?

One assumption: That Britain *did* indeed win the 1987 Worldcon last weekend. [It did.]

Now I've subtly mentioned that I *did* "win" TAFF once: in actuality it was a *co-win*. I did *not* go... but a TAFF-delegate *did* go to Britain that year.

My reasons for not going seemed, at the time, valid – but if anyone has a problem with that... I have no problem with them. Really... (I'll just never speak to them again.)

...and I was prepared to be cool: But when I've already read – again, in the most recent *File 770* (I think I should get a free sub from Mike, after all this positive publicity) – that 3 or 4 fans are already standing for the 1987 TAFF race...

Well.

The 1987 Worldcon – wherever it is – will mark the 25th anniversary of my *first* SF convention... and I'd sort of like to go to it... wherever it is.

In other words, if someone really twisted my arm... oh, about *this* far...

I could probably be persuaded to stand for TAFF. Again.

We'll see.

And if all of this *should* come about, well, I understand that the candidate is to provide a platform...

Mine... if only to prove indicative of the seriousness with which I am approaching all of this – will probably include a brief listing of my fannish credits and, as a tag line, the clincher that no other known candidate could match...

And that is that I'm the only one who has shared convention rooms – albeit not at the

same time – with *both* Avedon Carol and Jackie Causgrove, survived... and count both as friends.

I suppose there will be a NASFiC in 1987 also [*there will be; in Phoenix, of all places!*] – and if I don't go to England... or possibly even if I do –

But, even if no one there asks for *THE THIRD SEQUENTIAL*...

...well, *should* the Columbinatti bid succeed [given that Cincinnati is a separate City-State] – it is my present intention to bid for the 1988 NASFiC... to be held in Columbus, Ohio.

In any event, you'll probably be hearing from me again – in this context or another... even if you do manage to avoid my fanzines!

Thank you...

BILL BOWERS § Austin, Texas § 8/29/85

Predetermination?

Outworlds 47 | October 1985

I DON'T ACCEPT phone calls from Jackie Causgrove anymore.

...every time I do, it ends up costing me a hundred bucks. Or more.

Usually it's because something's On Sale at Quill. Usually. This issue was to have been out for Contradiction, last weekend. On Friday, 27 Sept., Jackie called to tell me that the mimeo we'd acquired earlier this year had... blown up. We are now the proud owners of a 'newer' used Gestetner – for only \$200. I'll see it for the first time this afternoon. Meanwhile, Dave is wondering what to do with the two former mimeos...

But Jackie's crowning achievement is this: On my return from Austin, she presented me with a clipped newspaper advert... To keep it short:

Leah Zeldes Smith has a Sears Electronic Communicator. Dave & Jackie: a Communicator 2... and now, for \$20 *less* than the '2' cost last fall – I sit in front of my TV/VCR (à la Don D'Amassa) with an Electronic Communicator 3... with full-line correction ~~except on stencil~~... centering... Right Margin Flush... computer

compatible (for only \$200 more)... and with six print wheels... but – DAMNIT!... *no italic*...

The Selectric – and *its* 14 elements – remains in the bedroom.

...future issues will probably be typographically B*U*S*Y; but I'll have fun!

It was arguably the most foolish thing I've done ~~so far~~ in 1985. But I was overdue: the Selectric was purchased in the Summer of 1969...

Interestingly enough, in the interim between ordering this machine... and picking it up, I received a postcard from someone who was instrumental in that 1969 purchase:

"Please remove me from your mailing list. I am no longer interested in receiving your fanzine."

Despite this, and Everything Else this year, late one night in a modest house in Niagara Falls, I stated, with some firmness that, no, I do not believe in predetermination...

...but I must admit that my evidence for this thesis is less than empirical.

My Fanposal

Outworlds 47 | October 1985



IF SOMEONE came up to you, and offered you a slot on a future space shuttle mission... would you be at all interested?

...if so – if you had a chance at something you'd only dreamed about/never thought possible in your lifetime – added to it the factors of getting to spend a week in relative luxury *and* with your friends, all for a rather staggering initial outlay (until you get around to considering what it will get you) on your part... would you go for it?

Okay, now that we've established just *what kind of a fan you are* – let's not dicker over the price: Would you *work* for something like this...?

There's been a dearth of innocuous f*u*n things in fandom recently... at least from where I perceive.

...and just when I run across something that I think is neat-keen, if a bit outlandish, 'they' go and try to take it away from me. Not the actuality (that is iffy, and a ways off in any event)... but some seem reluctant to grant me even the *possibility* that at last there exists a Worldcon bid... the mere *concept* of which is crazy enough to appeal to the flights of whimsy and imagination that drew me to science fiction in the first place.

You know me: I always take the easy way out, and these days I'll retreat and sidestep simultaneously to avoid *shudder* Fan Politics – but in this case I think I'll have to register A Protest. [Probably not logical, but hopefully mild; unless/until one 1988 bid is forced off the Atlanta ballot.]

According to **File 770:55**: "Two of the four publicized 1988 bidders filed their official papers through Aussiecon 2, St. Louis and 'Bermuda Triangle in '88'."

I heard at Lone Star Con that the New Orleans folks got their papers in 'late' but they'd been 'accepted' anyways... ~~nevermind~~... No word here on the status of the misnamed Cincinnati in '88 bid... but then, can you really expect a bid that can't get it together enough to bridge the hundred miles

between their committee and their reluctant 'host' city capable of dealing with mere paperwork...? (An unnecessary Editorial Intrusion, perhaps... they do seem to be trying...)

DATELINE AUSTIN, Labor Day Weekend, 1985: ...which 1988 Worldcon bidders stopped the... err... 'leader' of an SF club, and reputedly offered him, if they won, a 'free' suite for his club at the 1988 Worldcon – if, in the meantime, he would urge some of the more vocal critics in his club opposing their bid to, in effect... 'Cool It'. [No Names Were Offered..., but in the meantime, if Mike & Carol Resnick and Dave Locke could kindly control their laughter...]

Hey gang... it's only fanac. We all Do Our Thing, and I suppose it's only inevitable that there is a segment of fandom that will cream at the drop of a Site Selection Ballot, but then I do some pretty strange things with my Labor Day Weekends myself: of the past 24, I spent one-&-a-half in the Philippines, one here in Cincinnati, one at a Wilcon, two at NASFiCs... and fourteen at Worldcons; the remaining four were Long Ago... unremembered...

As far as I now know, I'll be in Atlanta next year... and I'd really like to go to Britain in 1987. I have no objection to going to Boston in 1989... and I retain the hope that someone ~~anyone~~ in the Pacific Northwest will bid for 1990 – but if not, I suppose I can find my way back to LA one more time...

As for 1988... I've been to St. Louis in the Summer. Thank you very much.

I live in Cincinnati in the Summer. Thank you very much.

...and my *concept* of New Orleans in the Summer is the same... only moister. *sigh*

Sounds like a good time of the year for a cruise to *me*...!

I am not on the Bermuda Triangle In '88 bid committee; I was not asked. Had I been, they would have gotten the same answer someone else got just last weekend (concerning a later year): "I don't do those things anymore..." (Tho, perhaps, in the '90s... when Cincinnati's Convention Center might finally be completed...)

None of this is Official, nor has it been cleared/checked with anyone else. Just me...

I spent a fair amount of time, two nights in Austin, at the Cruisecon party ~~across the river~~. I stationed myself next to the punch bowl: the punch and the company were both pleasant.

...and, as fans wandered in, either because they'd heard about the punch, or simply because it was "a party", asked what it Was All About... and had it explained:

...it's been too long since I've seen that many pairs of eyes literally light up at an idea... and the merest possibility that it might come to pass.

...who back there mentioned Sense of Wonder?... you? Come on aboard!

...it was about this point in the proceedings that I began hearing, there and about, that even though the appropriate paperwork had been filed and accepted by the required time... the Powers That Be decided the Bermuda bid should be removed from Atlanta's ballot.

...some little thing about Rules & Regulations.

Little in the way of names were attached to these "Powers", but it was inferred that they were mainly NESFAns and...

Well, a couple of names were put forth: Bruce Pelz and Craig Miller had, I was told, declared the Bermuda bid to be "elitist".

Now while Bruce might call me that, I have time-in-grade on Craig. Nevertheless, I *am* an elitist – even if the bid isn't – pure and simple: I've paid my dues.

...now I don't know from Rules & Regulations. Well, I do... and, yes, I do understand that when dealing with the Big Bucks that Worldcons have become, certain parameters do have to be established. But when someone Plays The Game, incorporates & fills out the Forms... and then is prejudged invalid on the basis of a technicality...

I don't know of anyone asking for preferential treatment for the Bermuda bid... just, at this stage it be allowed on the ballot... and let the bid that the fans want most win.

...and as for the canard that the cruise would be out of the range of the average fan: as near as I can figure, it'll be remarkably close to what it cost me, in 1984, to spend a week in southern California... and attend LAcon II. Nevertheless, since NESFA is known for its organizational prowess, and the LAcon folks have all this leftover cash to distribute "for the good of fandom"... and *should* the Bermuda bid win in a fair test of the fan ballot box – perhaps the two groups could get together... and *make* the cruise affordable to "the average fan". All it'd take is a little positive thinking. ~~For a change.~~

I don't know about you, but I'd like the *chance* to take that boat ride!

Bill 10/13

from *Xenolith Three*, December 20, 1979

A listing: Lunacon; Midwestcon 30; Archon III; SpaceCon; Northamericon; PgHlange 11; Windycon 6; Octocon 16; ConClave 4; Icon 4; and Chambanacon 9... which latter marks #82 on the gradually expanding list of conventions attended. True, it doesn't quite match the projected list that ended **X:Two**, but in the case of Westercon... for once I exercised Fiscal Responsibility (something I definitely don't make a habit of)... and missing both Minicon and Disclave was entirely Tabakow's Fault. Pass it on.

The additions are another story; several, actually.

No, no formal convention report(s) this time; even if I were to attempt a bland summary of those eleven "weekends", and were I at all successful in conveying what happened to me at them... you would be in for a case of sensory overload I really don't want to have to respond to.

Besides, none of them was bland.

And several remain to be summarized.

I only "gave up" on conventions twice this year.

It has been a Very Good Year.

“Outworlds 48.5”: Contradiction 6 Fan GoH Speech Fanac sideways...

Outworlds 49 | April 2, 1987

I WAS GOING TO DO something different...
...and start off with the title.

*** ...in nine “speeches” [and one ‘Not A
Speech’] I seem to have used up most of the open-
ing gimmicks/gambits. At least the obvious ones.

Still, I have this notion, you see. Given that I
am attending more conventions... than publishing
issues of fanzines... I can foresee the day when
the two numbers briefly match.

Let’s pick a number.
...say at 150. Each.

Which leads to this scenario of... while I am
handing out my 150th fanzine, at my 150th con-
vention, it will include a transcript of the ‘Speech’
that I will deliver at that convention.

My 150th.

By that time, I may actually get around to
starting one with the title, but in the meantime,
I have a lot of catching up to do. And we might as
well start with this, Number Eleven... otherwise
known as...

...err... Actually... this... here... today... is slightly
more than my Eleventh Public Humiliation; even if
I’m unsure of the actual number, it is still far short
of three digits.

That ‘opening’ was excerpted from something
I wrote in early 1980: It was published in a minor
fanzine – **Graymalkin**, I believe the title was –
just before my 86th convention... and shortly after
having published my 106th fanzine...

For some reason, after returning from the LA
Worldcon in 1984, I thought of this exercise in
numerology... and carefully crafted a plan, a publi-
cation/attendance schedule designed to culminate
at something called Confederation – over Labor
Day weekend. 1986.

Dateline: October 4, 1986.

A Progress Report:

Ten Months ago I published my 145th fanzine.
The Atlanta Worldcon was my 149th convention.
oops!

This left me with two choices of how I could spend
the month of September, 1986:

I could publish 5 fanzines.
...or I could simply declare it all Close Enough
For Fanac... and say...

WELCOME TO MY 150th SCIENCE FICTION
CONVENTION!

...and that’s really not too many... considering
I’m only 25.

...Fannish Digital Time.

Now, then, we all know why George Martin is a
Guest here...

...well, perhaps that is a presumption.

Just in case there are still some of you who
are still uncertain of WHO... or WHAT... George
Martin *is* – we will pause momentarily while you
turn to the appropriate page in your Program
Book – Page 10 – and read the brilliant and witty
in-depth profile of George therein. Offhand, I don’t
recall who wrote it... but whoever it was, the pro-
filer is certainly a master of tact, discretion... and
stonewalling...

Ahhh... Are we all back now?

As I was saying... we *all* know why George
Martin is a Guest here...

...but one or two of you might just be wondering
who I am – and just what the hell *I’m* doing here...

...rather presumptuous of those of you so
wondering, I must say...

Still, although I certainly know *who* I am... I too on occasion wonder just what the hell I'm *doing* here...

So let's muddle through this together...

It's possible that I'm here because I'm someone that Linda Michaels looks up to...

...but if that were the only criteria... at least 90% of you would be up here with me!

So I suspect that it has something to do with the fact that I *QUOTE* do *UNQUOTE* fanzines... and have done so for some time, and with some frequency.

Why... I just published an issue. Only ten months ago!

...and I'm going to do another one.

Real Soon Now.

Now you all know *what* a fanzine is... right?

For the few of you who don't... we'll pause briefly... while you dig out your program books again...

...no, I guess that won't work – this time.

I'd try to describe what a fanzine is... but by the time I finished... we could all have gone home... and *published* one.

In the beginning, what defines a fanzine has *nothing* at all to do with –

¶ Method of reproduction.

¶ Frequency of publication.

¶ Size: Either dimensionally or number of pages.

or

¶ The exact method of data entry.

I have seen fanzines done with hectograph – and ones super-slick offset with full-color covers – but most of those generated over the past 56 years have been mimeographed [and that is still the

method I'm most comfortable with: it *feels* right] even though there are an increasing number of fanzines produced using office copiers...

But there have always been variations: in the '40s Bob Tucker did a vinyl... i.e., record/fanzine.

More recently, Larry No Relation Tucker has been issuing a series of audio cassette “electric talking” fanzines... and he has gone on to a videotaped fanzine – the third issue of which came out this spring.

Why, there have even been two (that I know of) “live” fanzines, complete with cover, articles and illustrations – presented at conventions.

My ultimate ambition is to “publish” the very first holographic fanzine.

...but, in the meantime, next spring I'll be “publishing” a ‘Live’ fanzine... which will be recorded, videotaped, and transcribed for post-con cassette, video, and printed editions.

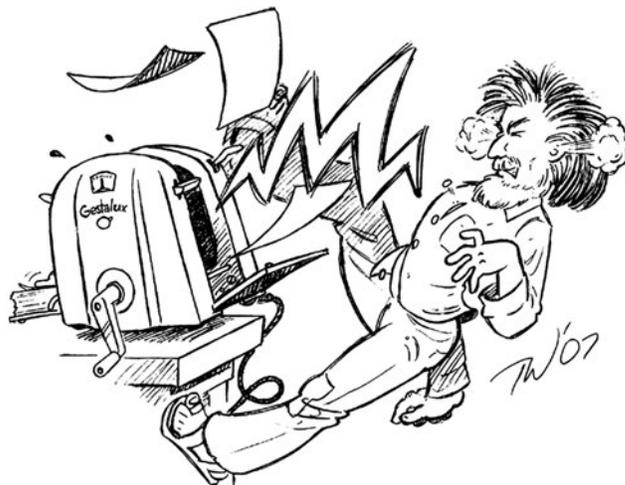
Four versions – same issue number; the same basic material – but four variations...

But that still doesn't define “what” a fanzine *is*...

Contents... that which is being reproduced and distributed – no matter what the format – do, I suppose, more precisely establish the parameters that separate a fanzine from other genres of publishing.

In the beginning [They tell me: Even I'm not that old!] fanzines were essentially ‘Little Magazines’, complete with formal covers... and the contents were primarily concerned with science fiction – either critically with reviews and articles – or by publishing (usually bad) amateur science fiction stories.

There *are* a few of this type still around, but they are in the minority.



Now... a fanzine may not even *mention* science fiction – for years at a time.

The contents may be entirely editor-written, or contain the musings of SF Pros... and, once in a while a transcript of one of George R.R. Martin's convention Guest of Honor speeches...

Me?

Well..., I've published the big, fancy, pretentious/pro-laden fanzines... and that made me fannish-famous – and lost me 8 Hugos.

And I may do it again some day...

But now... Well, as I said a month ago – on a panel in Atlanta – the *type* of fanzine that I publish is one that... had the first fanzine I ever received been one of mine... I doubt if I would have gone back for more.

It *is* rather personal: – with some outside contributors – but done primarily for my own amusement.

“Restricted Accessibility” is a term that was leveled at my fanwriting – and therefore at my fanzines – and I suppose it's true of my life as well.

This is not by design...

...but it is by intent.

I *started* doing fanzines because I was a very shy kid and it was the best way I knew of communicating. I kept doing it, bigger and fancier, until people began noticing *me* – which was really neat. This is “Egoboo” – the currency of fandom.

But eventually the fanzines got so big and fancy that they were “work” – and eventually more people were responding to me and to what I was doing – than I could respond to in kind.

So I phased out, for a while.

...after a time, I started getting ‘lonely’ – and the mailbox was not quite as full as previously – so I started doing fanzines again... Small and simple, at first – but...

And so it went.

And so it goes –

In a letter, Linda suggested that I might *QUOTE* like to speak on the history, make-up, function or somesuch of fanzines *UNQUOTE*.

I suspect she suggested this to avoid having me speak on fannish politics – or my sex life – but I don't think she understood the complexity of what she asked – or my skill in evading the issue.

Let's just say that fanzines can be a lot of fun.

And everyone should – just as I say about marriage... everyone should try one, once in their life – Just don't make a religion out of it.

A long time ago, a very wise person – albeit a Canadian – said that fanzines are the art of the possible vs. the impossible dream.

As far as I know, it's been almost as long since Peter Gill has *done* a fanzine – but perhaps he is still dreaming the dream?

What is a fanzine?

Very simple, really.

A fanzine is what I mean when I say the word – because, as with art – I may not know what I *like* – but I know what is *good*.

...and that's *why* I'm here.

...even though that's not the *WHY* of *what* I am...

You see... Joe and Linda originally asked me to be the *TOASTMASTER* of this convention. I was flattered... but though I am not one to nitpick (I do that for a living) – I did feel compelled to point out that since, at least at the Contradictions I'd attended – they didn't have their Guests of Honor make speeches...

...it would tend to render the title “Toastmaster” rather non-functionary...

“Fine,” said Joe. “You can be Fan Guest of Honor.”

Somewhere along the line – I think it was in July when I received the “Official Contradiction Letter” from Linda stating, among other things, that I would make *QUOTE* A speech of NO MORE (PLEASE!) than ½-hour or so duration following the luncheon *UNQUOTE* – that I began to suspect that *this* year the Guest of Honor would be making a speech.

You know... *had* I remained “Toastmaster”, I could have done two things:

1) introduced George in considerably less time than this has taken... simply by pausing while you turn to Page 10 in your Program Book;

2) ...and besides – I could have used the time spent writing this... done a fanzine instead – and *shown* you what one was.

But that would've been too simple. For all of us!

You know... this time... I was going to do something different – ...and finish up with the ‘title’.

Ah, well... maybe next time...

Let's pick a number. Say... 200?

Thanks for listening...

BILL BOWERS
[Contradiction 6; 10/4/86]

A Fanzine for Corflu IV

Outworlds 49 | April 1987

2/23/86

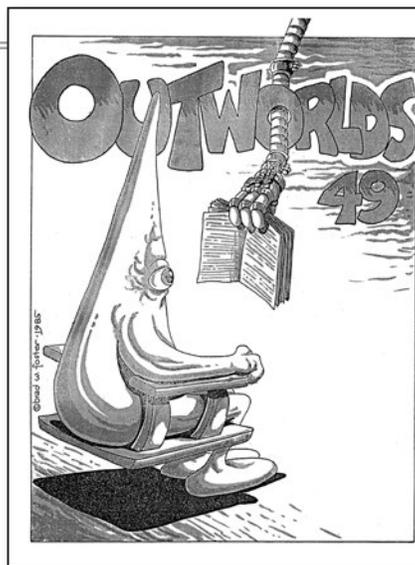
...and when it came to be Thursday night, February 13th... late... I was tempted to at the least insert a stencil... and tap out a date and perhaps a sentence or two – simply so that I could tell the inquiring *minds* hordes at Corflu 3 the following day that, indeed, I was working on an issue... After all... despite my years of experience, not to mention my well-honed social graces and legendary conversational abilities... I still find it easier to approach a convention with a new issue in hand; something both to hide behind, and to use as an opening gambit... depending on circumstances and inclination...

4/2/87

...and so it went... and so it is – except that this time I have just a bit more to do... than to merely get to a Corflu. 'My' Corflu starts in less than 24 hours (one could say it has already commenced; I have a living room full of visiting fans... watching me make a fool of myself on videotape. That too will happen again this weekend!). I have a lot to do still... but hopefully it will be fun... and then I can...

It has been a year: the move [note the CoA]; the third mimeo self-destructing; a job both rewarding and less than; a lot of videos; new 'toys' [a Canon FC-25 copier... and one still in a box until next week]... and a convention to do. I would like to thank those who supported me for TAFF... and the Contributors for their patience... during the sabbatical...

Right now I'm enthused about fanzine publishing again... so I have to guard against saying rash things...



However, *Outworlds* is back: Next issue will contain a transcript of the *Live OW* at Corflu; *OW51* will catch up on LoCs from before... and then... Well, as long as I have fun it will continue... in one form if not the other...

In less than a week, as I write, *Outworlds 50* will be 'out' – as a 'Live Fanzine', delivered at Corflu IV. But not all of you will be there; I realize that, and I'm considerate – so there will be a post-con, *printed* transcript/Corflu scrapbook version of *Outworlds 50*. But that alone, will not capture the essence of what some of you will miss... so there will also be audio cassette and videotape Editions of *Outworlds 50*. Collect the set!

The *printed* (\$3) and *audio* (\$5 at cons; \$6.50 by mail) Editions will be available from me...

...and I will 'edit', but Larry Tucker will videotape, produce... and distribute the *video Outworlds 50*. He can 'handle' both Beta, and the format that is the choice of the majority who elected Ronald Reagan. Larry's 'terms': For tape exchange, blank tape should be accompanied by \$2.50 for postage & handling. Otherwise, \$10 in person, or \$12.50, including postage and handling.

Although the 'Live' version will undoubtedly be longer, all the rehearsals and the off-Corflu run notwithstanding, I plan to edit it down to 90 minutes for the cassette versions. The Printed Version will be whatever it takes...

Health & wealth permitting, I hope to have all three post-Corflu editions out *before* Midwestcon 38, the last weekend in June. No 'promises' though... I've learned my lesson. For the moment... you *do* believe me?!?

Time Lapse Memories

Outworlds 51 | Summer 1987

“...it was ten years ago, today...”

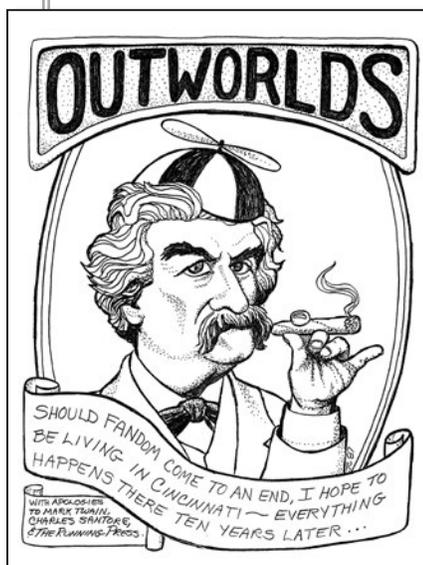
In a Far Ago & a Long Away Time... in a stuffed U-Haul truck towing a battered Mustang... I moved to Cincinnati.

June 20, 1977.

The following weekend I attended Midwestcon; I don't recall what I did, but my cat introduced herself to Denise Parsley Leigh.

That same Midwestcon was Steve & Denise's Very First Convention.

*Shortly before I did, the Resnicks and Bill Cavin moved to Cincinnati. A while later, Jackie Causgrove and Dave Locke posted a Cincinnati CoA; and the third time around Sandra Jordan decided to stay... having recruited Greg in the process... [...but **none** of this was my Fault; it goes without saying.]*



Ten Years After...

It's been interesting: for me, and probably for you, even if not always for the same reasons.

Sadly, some of those integral to the Cincinnati-I-Moved-To – Lou, Dale, Bea – are no longer here.

*I really don't need any more “Projects” (I'm still sorting out my life after the move... and I'm too far behind in the production of **Outworlds 50** as it is) but it occurred to me that it might be Fun to Celebrate my Tenth Anniversary in CinSanity by putting out an issue of **OW** for Midwestcon. That I've done before, but this one would have a slight twist: although most of you have written/drawn for me over the years... I haven't done an issue totally comprised of “Cincinnati Contributors”. It might be fun.*

I'm not angling for items about me, the CFG, Cincinnati, or whatever specifically... just whatever you might feel like doing.

THAT IS EXCERPTED from a letter I sent out a month ago. Today is June 14, 1987. A week from yesterday is the Parsleighs' CFG meeting... and my actual anniversary; and two weeks from two days ago is Midwestcon 38... **OW50: The Audio** has yet to be started; **OW50: The Transcript** is still In Progress. However, **OW50: The Video [Special Colorized Edition]** is finished: Larry sent me an 'approval' copy... and though even I grew tired of looking at/listening to Me... it turned out rather well... and will be Out at Midwestcon.

In Hand for this: Frank gave me a disc with his contribution at the last CFG meeting. Joel's fanciful tale was also generated on *his* Amstrad... but he sent hard-copy from Far Off Louisville.

Later today I will take the current Bowers Vehicle... a '78 Buick that was purchased by Lou Tabakow from Marge Schott [esoteric reference for... Well, shortly after I moved to Cincinnati, I received a scrawled postcard from Kentucky saying, in effect: “Ever since you moved to Cincinnati... the Reds have been losing. I hate you. s/ Love, andy”.] This is the very same Buick

in which I rode sixteen hours to a Lunacon, with Lou Tabakow and Suzi Stefl talking to each other... the very same Buick in which I rode sixteen hours *back* from that Lunacon with Lou Tabakow and Suzi Stefl *not talking* to each other, except through me. (And, you know, after eight or nine years, I'm still not sure which leg of the trip was the most enjoyable...) However, I didn't buy the car from Lou, but from Dave and Jackie... and I have Orders to pass it on to Sandy and Greg when I'm thru with it: by then it ought to be in a condition to match some of their previous modes of transportation!

...as I was saying, before I was so rudely interrupted by time-lapse memories, later today I will be making my Appointed Rounds. First, to the Parsleighs, where Steve has kindly outputted their contributions, to the proper column-width, on his Mac. Then on to Dave and Jackie's...

Jackie called me at 12:30 this morning to say that the cover was finished. I asked about the status of Dave's wordifying of Al's cartoons. "It's on paper," she said. I must say that Mr. Dave, the very same Dave Locke who wrote the article in **OW49**, seems singularly reluctant to enter the electronic age of fanac. But Jackie "volunteered" to transfer Dave's typescript to disc... so I'll take this disc along, and we'll zap Mr. Dave into the twentieth century anyway...!

And, sometime in the next day or two, I'll go over to the Jordans... and transfer their contributions, from *their* Amstrad.

Welcome to desktop publishing, Cincinnati-style. Ten months (electronically) behind the rest of fandom, but...

...as soon as we convince Mr. Cavin that the CFG's 'priorities' should be changed from picnics and Worldcon party suites... toward such necessities as modems, laser-printers, and fax-machines...

It's all Walt Willis' fault.

Suddenly it is late afternoon, Friday, June 26th... and I'm sure that (even with Cavin's promptness in signing Hotel Contracts) Midwestcon 38 is well

underway. And I'll get up there some time this evening, even if not quite as early as I'd planned.

I finished up 'running off' (at 8 copies a minute, I detect the need for a new euphemism here) an initial print-run of 60 copies of **OW50** at 3 a.m. this morning. Today I've collated those, and ran off 40 copies of most of this... as a 'down payment' for distribution at the Party tomorrow night: the one apparently prompted by my letter – to celebrate Steve & Denise's, Joel's, Frank's, and my respective 'anniversaries'. I might make it to that!

...as I was going out for breakfast this morning, and as I was going down the slight grade out of this place... and as the brakes faded to the floorboard – I decided that intense fanac is one thing... but this was something that I should do something about...first. Three hours and \$75 later... the fanac is still here, and so am I.

Which does prove something: Ten years ago, I probably would have put off the brakes till Monday... and gone conventioning anyways. Isn't progress wonderful?

(Say Greg... Sandy... About this neato car...!)

I really want to thank all the locals for coming through and helping me Celebrate. This issue, in spite of drawing some time/energy away from the production of the preceding issue... has gone together rather nicely, and I'm pleased with it.

– and, after The Bobs concert Sunday afternoon, the next couple of weeks will be devoted to completing the copy-runs and mailing these two issues, and 'mastering' the audio edition of **OW50**. Then... well, I have this neat Brad Foster cover for **52**... and a couple of ideas to play with, based on what I've learned about my New Toys here...

It hasn't always been Ups, but I can safely say that my just-past Decade has been the best of my life... and, those of you who have been a part of my Cincinnati years – not all of whom live here: Thanks!

I don't know what the future holds, but I have no immediate plans to leave the area. But then, again... (Please hold down the cheering!)

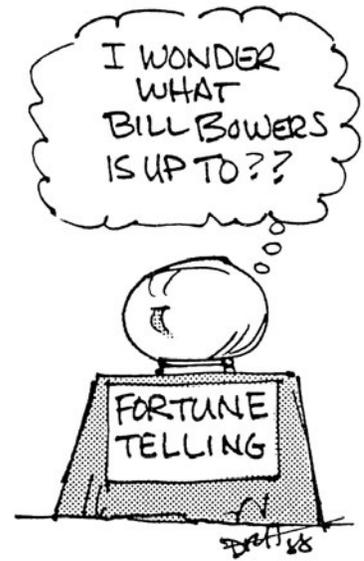
Bill Bowers; 6/26/87



Dreams / Schemes / Plans:

But Only One Big Project At A Time!

Outworlds 58 | September 1988



8/31/88:

Well, since I today received ***Impressions From The Ditto Masters 3***, with the relevant hotel information ~~at last~~, and since a glance at the calendar reveals the astonishing fact that we leave for Toronto three weeks from tomorrow (I'd made plane reservations for myself and Lynda a couple of weeks ago as an article of faith; Mike had, after all, assured me there *would* be a Ditto!), I'd best get with it if I'm going to take this issue along.

(In theory, I've a three-day weekend coming up; but the overtime on the "new" job started today, and I've really no choice, fiscally-speaking, but to work Saturday if the opportunity presents itself. Ah well, I work... not "better"... just do *work* under deadline pressure-itis...)

Despite the fact that I was here, last year also... it is going to seem strange to be "home" Labor Day weekend. But, as I've said more than once over the past year in these pages (although some of you apparently weren't paying attention!), once I made the decision to attend both the Seattle Corflu and the Toronto Ditto this year... that pretty much eliminated the possibility of my going to New Orleans. So I've transferred my membership to Steve Leigh and ~~made him promise to write something for the Annish~~. I'll regret the missed opportunity to meet Brad Foster, David Thayer, others... to see friends too rarely encountered... and I'll regret not seeing the astonishment of many when a friend who is not-a-hoax (ask Dick and Nicki Lynch!) shows up at her first con in

twelve years! [Yes, I *should* be in New Orleans: Not only did I meet that friend at Torcon 2, but this weekend will also mark the 15th Anniversary of my initial encounter with one (the infamous one) of my "mystery" women; I will undoubtedly Hear About my absence!]

But choices always have to be made... and while I can now dream of attending the Minneapolis Corflu, the Boston Worldcon, and the San Francisco Ditto in 1989, that is all far off, and well past Octocon, ConFusion, and Sercon 3 (for which I am, incidentally, doing the "publications").

In the meantime: The Doc Lowndes Collection is well in progress, and perhaps I'll have a tentative publication date and an "advance order" price for you next time. And the Annish is shaping up nicely (including a contribution I'm inordinately pleased to have the opportunity of presenting, courtesy of one of the contributors to this issue). I keep busy.

But all of that is talk of issues future...

Ironically, once I jelled the idea of doing the Lowndes Collection, the second thought that came to mind was that the Second Volume of ***The Incomplete Tucker*** is long overdue! Perhaps, if no one else takes the hint (and if Bob is willing), I could probably be persuaded. But not until Doc's "book" is out. I too have lots of dreams / schemes / plans... but one at a time on "projects" of this magnitude!

1988 – A Good Year...

Outworlds 59 | October 1988

NOT THAT LONG AGO (a little over a month), or far away (Page 1908), I said: “Barring major health or financial reversal, there will be one more issue this calendar year.”

When I said that I neither expected *Outworlds 59* to be quite this slim... nor to be out quite this soon. But then, who am I to determine the course of this humble fanzine?

1988 has been a Good Year, overall, for me and, I think, an excellent year for *OW*. This slender “ending” should not be construed as a slackening of interest on my part, nor is it indicative of a belated effort to get the *OW* fiscal house in order [existing subscriptions will be extended an issue] – but rather read it as a vehicle to frame the Annual Index... and as a Progress Report/Announcement:

Those of you who have followed the canon of my “writings” for any appreciable length of time will already know that “moving” is, arguably, the least favorite thing in my life that I have, voluntarily, done more than once. I do not like even the thought of it; the actuality of it is traumatic. I cannot put it any other way.

When I moved from the vintage 2468 Harrison to the, by comparison, palatial 1874 Sunset #56 – I said that I felt I had only one more “move” left in me... and that would be years off. So why... after a mere two years, is there a different address [*in the colophon*]?

It is not because I wish to invalidate your filing cards/computer listings/address books; I may be that mischievous, but I am definitely not that energetic! Nor is it because I am dissatisfied with my current surroundings... nor that I’ve finally sorted the kipple out to such an extent that a next move would be “organized”. I’ve had Good Intentions... but then the “cassette” version of *Outworlds 50* still remains unedited on videotape, and *OW27.5* resides in three boxes of unedited letters.

~~It is, of course, because of a woman!~~

Karol Brown is a local fan, who is also a nurse. She is not the woman who is causing this move... but

Karol is to blame. Almost precisely three years ago Karol was discoursing on the joy of sf conventions at the nursing home she was then working at... when one of the other nurses said something to the effect of: “...conventions... science fiction... do you know Bill Bowers...?” Karol, bless her subtle soul, acknowledged that she did indeed know me. And my life hasn’t been the same since!

Several years earlier, when I inhabited the lower floor of 2468 Harrison, the 2nd floor apartment (which I eventually moved to) contained a very attractive woman. Despite her belief, I am somewhat shy than some would have me, so it was some time before I eventually spoke to her. We spent some pleasant times together back then, but things didn’t work out. Still, when Karol told me of her “discovering” Lynda I knew I wanted to see her again. Very much so. And I was overjoyed when she agreed to see me again.

Her name is Lynda Burgoyne. She is my friend... she is special... and I hope that most of you will get the chance to meet her.

This is a big step for both of us. I won’t speak for her, but it’s been fifteen years since I’ve lived with someone else. I’m aware that I’m going to have to modify some of the routines/habits I’ve formed over those years, and that it won’t always be easy – but Lynda means a great deal to me – so I’m going to give it my best...

The LoCs on *OW58* are coming in [including two of the most unique I’ve ever gotten], and I’m looking forward to surprising you with the next issue. But given the time and expense of combining two households, I’m reluctant to make firm deadlines. I do hope to get *Outworlds 60* out in the original January/February timeframe... And, although the move will not hasten the schedule... I still plan on having the Doc Lowndes “collection” out early next year. In the meantime, I’d best get packing... Where did all this stuff come from, anyway...!

...see you in a couple of months.

Bill | 10/26/88



Dear Bill,

Your challenge to see if a nine-digit zip code alone would bring a LOC to you has succeeded in prying one out of me. I've got to hand it to you -- I'm one of the worst Letter of Comment writers in fandom's history, so congratulations are due you for coming up with something so off-the-wall to make me put words to paper for something other than a fanzine.

Anyway, I guess I knew Don C. Thompson maybe a little better than you, even if about the only time we ever ran into each other was at a world con room party. We didn't hear until late January that he had died from the melanoma; by then we had received a fanzine from him, sent a Mimosa back to him, and written him a letter ^{of comment, and} telling him not to give up, dammit! There were reports just a week or so ago of new treatments, using bioengineered white blood cells, for exactly the type of metastasized melanoma he had. If this had happened to him only one year later, medical science might have progressed to the stage where he could have survived!

I'll miss him... Best, Dick Lynch

tell me she'd had (the day before) laser surgery to clear out a duct and relieve the pressure behind one eye... so that she could have laser surgery to remove the cataracts. She sounded rather casual about it all.

Think about it. She was born in 1910. I wasn't born in 1910, and while I understand the "theory" of lasers I know Don Carter, I doubt if I could be casual about getting Up Close & Personal with one...

She also mentioned that, pending loan approval & "inspections", the family house has been sold.

I've been accused of hanging onto Memories & the Past too long.

...perhaps it's time to take that particular key off the keychain.

...now if I still had my Sears Communicator 3 (I still have the symbol printwheel for it), or even the Selectric (I) (I have the symbol 'ball' for it)... about now I would utilize a leftward pointing arrow to direct your attention to something you've already (would have, given this layout) read...

It's not impossible, albeit highly unlikely, that anyone getting this issue didn't receive **X34**, but... here, let me take you off the hook... given that my memory is sometimes suspect: In **X34** I speculated on the momentous realization that the last four digits of my ZIP+4 matched my POBox# and that, in theory, anything addressed to that sequence of nine numbers... *should* reach me. Mr. Lynch (of the **Mimosa-Lynchii**) has, obviously, lent credence to this rather far-fetched theory. I am amazed!

Then again, that send-up was less far-fetched than my LifeStory of the Past Year has proven to be...

"...I am following your advice -- Another Aerogramme has been sent -- same time as this one -- with the address 'Bill Bowers, 45258-0174, U.S.A. -- and we will see if it arrives in your PO Box -- is that enough dashes in the one sentence, dash it'"

That, from **Roger Weddall**, in an Aerogramme dated '12-3-91' (funny people, these Southerners) and received last Saturday, March 23rd, 1991.

Or, at least that's the day I got up to the POBox; that is a story for another page...

As of this moment, I don't have the second; but thanks, Roger, for humoring me!

3/29/91

Let's get the Newest Traumas Out...

1] ON FRIDAY, March 8th at 6pm, after a 10-hour day (it was the first week of overtime since October... and I was beginning to feel good about the chances of making Corflu *and* being able to print **OW60**) I came out of work to feed the car its quota of oil -- and it wouldn't start. Two hours later the tow truck showed up, and noon the next day I got the verdict: a thrown rod *and* the timing belt...

The infamous Tabakow-Causgrove/Locke-Bowers 1978 Buick Century is no more; I had it junked. I really had no choice. *sigh* It served me well: I bought it, with 60,000 on it, from Dave & Jackie in November, 1982 -- and it came within

a hundred miles of 170,000 before giving it up... I've managed a ride to work, and the bus stop is in front of the house. The POBox is inconvenient (twice a week I "trek"), but I'm managing. So far!

2] **bank•rupt•cy**; *n., pl. -cies*
1. *the state or an instance of being bankrupt.*
2. *complete failure; ruin; destitution.*

...so it sez.

The "criminal" part of all this is what *hurts*; it always will. But at least it is essentially "over"... as long as I don't do anything untoward between now and October [...by the time I get to Ditto!]

This, now, is rapidly becoming tedious. I've never been fiscally conservative – but I've always, in the end, paid my bills. I bought her & the kids a lot, I didn't stop her from using the cards (even when I could) because I wanted, first, her happiness... later, a few moments of peace. I screwed up; I'm less "proud" of this situation than the other (*there I know* that, while not without 'sin' myself, I was "wronged"...) ...but it won't go away.

The week following the Feb. 5th hearing I sent my lawyer all the requisite paperwork. Again. *This* past Monday I'm informed by his secretary that she is in the process of typing up the new "declaration" for forwarding to the Trustee. Tuesday, from my lawyer, I received a "bill" for \$200... on top of the \$870 (that she & I agreed to last spring; *I* paid) quoted. He may get it, but he's not at the top of my "list" any more.

I'm off today (Good Friday) without pay; I requested the Trustee go thru the house today, so I don't "lose" more work; no such luck. It's supposed to be "discharged" April 11. Tell me yet another

one... [I'm on the last one of the copier cartridges I had refilled two years ago; use it or lose it...? I'm using it...]

3] I WENT TO FILL OUT my Federal Tax return a couple of weeks ago. Although it seems a bit anticlimactic, I have to file as "married filing separately". I was chugging right along until I came to the proviso that, if "she" was itemizing... *I* could not claim the Standard Deduction. I stopped there. This week... I went on: *if* she did itemize... *I* owe the IRS \$2,105. Even if she didn't, I owe \$1,349. (There goes another car anytime soon.) I've been advised (by an IRS auditor) that I should file with the deduction, send a token payment & a letter *explaining*... and ask for a "payment plan". And I haven't even got to the *state* return. And so it goes on!

Not a Trauma Dept:

...without the use of this typer (Leah; Dick... Thank you!) to amuse myself – self-servingly – I might not have made it this far. Maybe, by the time it gets to "print" it does appear that I'm "handling" it all. And, I guess, I am... in my own way. I don't want to cry on your shoulder(s); I do know that, in time, It Will All Be Over. It's just that it doesn't seem any closer to being so than when last I "wrote" you. It just drags on... and on... and on...

The hell with it: *I will* get **OW60** out; *I will* get to Corflu to see some of you... *Then* I'll deal with the rest of this shit.



Post-It® Notes from FAFIA

Outworlds 60 | April 1991

...fade in:

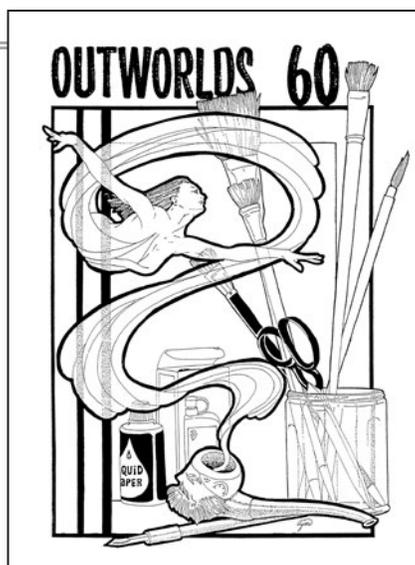
On the 29th of March, 1988, after highly recommending it, “she” managed to get me to sit down and watch a tape of **Fatal Attraction**. Not a bad movie, really, but basically unrealistic; there’s no way, I probably said to myself, that any marginally intelligent guy could let himself end up in a situation like that.

Fast forward. A year later when, in the heat of one of our Discussions I “thanked” her for having made me watch that particular movie – “because It was ‘helping me’ to ‘understand’ her” – she got very offensive. I’m not quite sure *what* she threw at me on that particular occasion; I know it wasn’t the time that she threw the compact disc player at me, and I don’t think it was one of the two or three occasions on which a carving knife came whizzing past my ear. More than likely it was a drinking glass. We went through a *lot* of drinking glasses.

[*Freeze frame.* And, yes, my comment probably prompted that particular salvo. I’ve never said that I didn’t participate fully in the *verbal* aspects of our contretemps. Although, as memory serves, I didn’t “initiate” most of them... or “win” any.]

On the 19th of February – this year – on a double-bill with **Postcards from the Edge**, I saw **Misery**. Now she never crushed my ankles (a few bruises, sore ribs, a few facial cuts from when she slapped my glasses off my face...), but for eighteen months I was as much a prisoner... as was James Caan.

In the early 1980’s, before she went away, she was (confusingly; flatteringly; intimidatingly... my Number One Fan... as she was again, once she had reestablished contact in 1986. Up until we were married in 1989. Then: She forbade me to call/see my friends... including the ones who, for three years, she had claimed to enjoy the company of... The



phone number was changed so that no one could contact me (she relented once; I gave the number to a few... and then Denise called... or Jackie called... or Naomi called... and the number was changed again). She got home before I did and went through the mail. If there was anything fannish she would call me at work, pick a fight, and then hang up on me. If the return address on any of that mail was from (other than my mother) a woman, it was automatically torn up before I returned home. (A postcard from Dave Locke “accusing” me of having put up barbed wire on the front yard to keep my friends out became a recurring “topic” for a full year; before that she had “liked” Dave. ~~Jackie was the one she couldn’t stand.~~)

I put up with all this, and more, because: I knew she was insecure (and I knew/know insecurity well), because I couldn’t lie when I told her I wasn’t in contact with “those people”... and because I cared for her and the kids.

No, she didn’t break my legs; but she strove to change whatever it is that defines me as being “me” and she damn near broke my spirit... and that is what shames me most.

(A few days earlier [2/16/91] I had journeyed over to Sandra and Greg Jordan’s to watch a tape of **War of the Roses**... leaving, I commented: I wasn’t sure what that movie would do for *their* marriage, but as for me, having lived the “book”, I was surprisingly dispassionate about the movie. If a bit nostalgic...)

[3/30/91]

...fade (crawling) back:

Bill Bowers. There’s a name to provoke “nostalgia” in certain *discerning* select fannish circles. That’s me... and I’ve been “away” for a while –

let's refer to it as "The Interregnum" (that being the most succinct dictionary-friendly analogy I can think of...).

I've been away – but now I'm back. Thanks to a considerable amount of help from my friends... and now I am faced with "explaining" what Bill Bowers (has been) Up To for a couple of years to three distinct (yet-roughly-equal) segments of the readership of this humble pretentious fanzine.

There are those of you who were receiving **Outworlds** on a regular basis up through issues **58/59** in late 1988, yet haven't heard a word from me since.

There are those of you whose name/work I've run across in the fanzines I've received in the past couple of months... and your words/art intrigued me – combined with those who used to get **OW** earlier on, but were "dropped" for some "reason" like ~~nonresponse~~, but of whom I said (rummaging through the card file): "I'd like ____ to know..."

...and there are those of you who are "local", or who've seen the small issues of **Xenolith** I've ejected (I wanted to say 'ejected'; but it doesn't seem to be a word...) since last September. To you, much of the following (distilled essence of **Xenolith**; think about it) will be all too familiar... and if you want to skip on to Skel's column, I won't blame you. (Though I might manage a new twist, as well as a slightly deeper 'dig' this time around).

(transition):

What follows has absolutely no place in a general-circulation science fiction fanzine. I know the rules; I was "fanning" before most of them were passed. Yet, within the past two years, the one time I was "permitted" to publish, I had something I wrote for one of my own fanzines "censored"... for the first time in nearly thirty years of fanzine publishing. *That* will not happen again; ever. *This* is, in part, an admitted over-reaction to that instance.

I know the "rules"; in most areas of life. Or so you'd think.

I know I did.

This: not a disclaimer; just a word.

There are those who will read these words who have health problems considerably more serious than my own. There are those of you who've had financial reversals of your own. And there are those of you who have also suffered the loss of a parent or a loved one.

...and there are those of you, I know now, who have also suffered a "loss" that has nothing to do with death. Except the death of love and caring.

I am, unfortunately, not alone... But I'm the one writing this:

This is, simply, within the confines of My Publication... My Story. "His-story"; not her-story; admittedly. Vindictive and self-serving? Inevitable, I fear. For it is still Not Over...

4/1/91:

It was a date chosen by work schedules, not by planning – but I swore I'd never be ashamed of "our" Anniversary date. Today would be... *is*, on paper... our Second.

I'm not going to say a word.

...you probably shouldn't, either.

(maybe by next year)

4/12/91:

I've been procrastinating, waiting for *anything* to be Resolved, waiting for the "right" words. Neither seems to be at hand, and now all that remains between getting this issue printed & out is money... and these next three pages...

I've deliberately locked myself into a finite space; otherwise I suspect I'd go on... and on...

This then is the condensed, defanged, and the dispassionate Version. Yes.

I moved to Cincinnati, into the first floor of 2468 Harrison, in June, 1977. A year or so later, *she* moved into the 2nd floor of 2468 Harrison. A year or two later we became involved. A year later she moved out without a word of explanation.

June, maybe July. 1985. Her sister called; *she* wanted to talk to me. Fine. She'd gotten married; it wasn't going well... said she'd call again.

October; next call. She'd decided to move out, wanted to see me, but not until she was "out". Fine.

More calls... and the reason for her leaving me came out: she had stopped taking the pill (not telling me) and had become pregnant. Now, after 3 or 4 years, she said it was "mine". I believed her.

"So," I said, stunned, "why didn't you tell me?"

"I didn't want to tie you down..."

In the early '80s I would not have been happy about parenthood, and I honestly don't know how I would have "handled" it. She never did understand that, though I might have proven to be a total cad, it was my *right* to have known at the time, and not in retrospect... years later. (That was a "clue"...)

She married a guy who convinced her that otherwise she'd "lose" the other kids (tho she was off welfare and working by then) and had a miscarriage, lifting furniture during the move away from me.

A few more calls.

Silence from November '85 until April, 1986.

We met at a restaurant. We were both extremely nervous – but agreed we'd like to see each other... She *had* moved out but was paranoid about her to-be-ex following us. I suggested she meet me downtown the following Friday evening, at the Clarion... at a local sf convention. Cinclave. April 25, 1986.

April 1986 until mid-November, 1988. We saw each other, and we didn't. She would "go away"; so would I. But, on my initiative, we always got back together. She was finally divorced, six months after she'd told me she was. I paid for it. (That *should* have been a "clue".)

At times I paid her rent. My friends helped her move; I paid the deposit... the utilities, etc.

Fall, 1988. Others in her apartment building were receiving eviction notices; she was convinced they were shutting it down & she'd be next. In the same timeframe I happened to be talking to Tanya Carter... and discovered that her father had moved in with her & Don; and his house was sitting vacant.

And so, in the middle of the night I asked her: "How would you and the kids like to move in with me?" She later said those were the most wonderful words she'd ever heard. (She, later, said a lot of things.)

The weekend before Thanksgiving 1988 when "together" we moved into 4651 Glenway – apart from all I'd bought her & the kids – she owed me \$5000.

I *knew* she was emotional.

I *knew* she was insecure/jealous.

I *knew* she was even more fiscally irresponsible than I was.

...at least I thought I "knew" all this.

Two weeks after we moved in, I was "laid off" for five weeks. The beginning of 1990... I was "out" for twelve weeks. This did not "help".

When I was laid off from Kenner in Dec. 1987, I didn't go back to temping by design. But that's what happened and, when I do work, I make a decent wage. She also worked. In the end, it was not enough...

May 4, 1990. We saw the bankruptcy lawyer. When, halfway through, he said that if she'd used the credit cards, even if they were in my name... she was also responsible... she walked out. I finished up as best I could, and when the papers finally came I told her I'd take it on in my name... For whatever reason, she signed. Later... I had "made" her...

Late June. She had two weeks vacation; I ended up out-of-work again. The same two weeks.

The first week... went well enough, but came the weekend... something happened and she took off with the kids for two days, and went through \$700. It was not the first time she'd taken off and depleted the bank balance. Later, every time, she was "sorry" – but the money never went back in to cover the rent.

The hearing before the Trustee. Friday: 7/13.

I tried. I really did. But when he kept pressing as to how we'd ended up This Deep... I finally capitulated: "...mostly, since the marriage..."

Which is the truth, but: Wrong Thing To Say.

She blew up. Literally. It was *all* the fault of Mr. Bowers & the debts he'd brought to the marriage. She produced my hotel bill for the 1986 Atlanta Worldcon; admittedly substantial, but long ago paid. She went on. And on. At last "our" lawyer said: "Mrs. Bowers... as your attorney it is my considered advice that you should shut up. This is not divorce court."

Again, true. Again, not a wise thing to say...

As a result of her tirade I was required to produce a ton of documentation, and the "discharge date" was delayed from 9/11 until 12/11/90. A meeting in early November was canceled by my lawyer; the "discharge" was postponed until 2/11/91. In the meantime she retained another bankruptcy lawyer, while I paid off the \$870 owed the one "we" retained... and she filed an amended declaration in January – total fiction. I saw the Trustee, with "my" lawyer, Feb. 5th. He said he wasn't going to "deny" the bankruptcy – but reserved the right to sell off what he could... of what

she left me. And set a new discharge date of 4/11. My lawyer wants an additional \$200, didn't get around to filing my amended return until last week... and today is 4/13... and I still don't know what I'm going to "lose" out of *this* portion of the Traumas...

The Feature Attraction:

The period following the July hearing was... tense. On Monday, July 23, I dropped the kids at the babysitter, took her to work... and went on to a job I'd just started June 25th. She didn't come home that night. This wasn't without precedent; what was – was this time I made no attempt to find her.

Sunday night/Monday morning, following, 1 a.m.: She called, waking me up. Said she and the kids were "coming home". I said "fine." 1:30 a.m. She called back; said something about a restraining order – I said "whatever"... and she hung up. I ended up staying up all night and went on to work in the morning.

At 5 in the afternoon I was paged to the front office... two Cinti cops... something about "domestic violence"... I had to go with them... Back to my board, packed-up, clocked-out, put the briefcase in the car – and got into the back of the squad car. The door-locks clicked.

Booking. Fingerprints. Mugshots. No supper. All night with 15 others in a concrete holding cell, lights on / air-conditioning on full-blast. Perhaps two hours sleep; perhaps not.

Tuesday morning, 7/31/90: Breakfast. 5 minutes with a public defender who said he'd ask for bond and a continuance. 9:30 a.m.: I was put in line in a small interconnecting room, my name was "called" in Courtroom A, I took no more than ten steps to stand next to my lawyer, facing the judge. Six feet on the other side of the lawyer she was standing; she wouldn't look at me. I heard a case number, a date of August 6... and "five thousand bond; no 10%". That's all I heard. I was taken out, required to sign a paper I didn't have time to read, later taken up for processing, and by noon to a cell-block. I waited in line 2½ hours to use the phone; called Tanya... "\$5000/no 10%"...

It was a long day. Eventually assigned to another cell-block, given a bunk, one more phone call, and maybe 6 hours sleep.

Wednesday. Tanya found out, as did I, that the 10% *could* be used. I was "out" early afternoon. At no point was I read my rights, or told the specifics

of the charges. The paper I signed unread turned out to be the restraining order. Tanya took me back to get my car and, more at a "loss" than any other point in my life, I called Bill Cavin. Even though there'd been no contact for 18 months, he & Cokie took me in & put up with me the month it took me to get back in the house that she had pretty well stripped. Fannish friends; thanks a lot. I won't forget...

On Aug. 10th, I was served with divorce papers; at work. The "Trial" was September 5. The judge said that I was "guilty"...

...guilty of bad taste and poor judgment, yes; but nothing else. Nevertheless, the sentencing was set for October 17.

With a lot of help... I went to Ditto III. I needed that...!

I was sentenced to 180 days (suspended), one year probation, a \$280 fine... and ordered to attend the AMEND "education & discussion" seminar. Cost: \$120; results...? I haven't hit anyone... Still.

I wanted to appeal so bad I could taste it; I was persuaded I didn't have a chance... and I promised myself Corflu & Ditto for the money it would've cost... never said I wasn't self-Indulgent; just passive!

She cleaned me out pretty good; probably would have taken the rest if Tanya hadn't "shown up" unexpectedly. I have, for the moment, my books, my cassettes, the microwave, the copier(!), & the kids' clothes... She won't proceed with the divorce until the bankruptcy is "settled". It isn't... so I still have no idea of what, if anything, I'll get back, in terms of "my" furniture, electronics, CDs, videos, etc. etc.

I have a TV borrowed from Cavin; I have some furniture borrowed from Dave & Jackie, I have box springs & a mattress from Tanya's garage, I have my father's 20-year-old "stereo"... and I have this typewriter, lent by Dick & Leah. It permits me to bitch & moan on paper; it keeps me amused...

While "waiting" I've made a dedicated effort to catch up. Then the car died [pg. 1986]. No problem; the bus stop is right out front. I found out I owe the Feds \$1,349 more in income tax; sigh. Still, I'm a bit proud of the fact I paid the April rent, in full, on time... first time in a long time! I keep trying...!

On Wednesday, April 3rd, the day after I sent in my check for the Corflu air-ticket, I was told that Friday, the 5th, would be my last day of work.

I could have canceled the Corflu tickets; I didn't. I'm on the last page of an *Outworlds* I've "promised" would be "out" for Corflu... and I've neither a job, nor credit cards, nor savings, with which to print it. But I *will*, even though it'll be a minimal print run – with a second "run"... later. (*Hate* doing it, but.)

I do what I have to do. Don't we all?

So... And how's your life going?

I'm not angling for sympathy; the sidebar quotes on the previous pages are a fraction of the "support" I've received. I *do* know that you're out there!

I don't want much.

I do want to be able to keep the house. We put a lot into it, I like it... but I still don't know...

I want to publish my fancy pretentious fanzines, see my friends when I can, get cable back, and simply not worry about lawyers, courts, fines, taxes, etc.

I just want it all to be over. It ain't yet... ..but it will be. Someday. I have to believe that!

...and I want to be able to write about other things. After this:

Back in August, Cavin mentioned that (long ago) I'd said it'd taken me more than a year to "get over" my first divorce... and that he expected it would be likewise, this time. Wrong, I said: in this case, the emotion ended before the relationship did. Which makes it "simpler", even if it never is all that simple...

I do know that I *won't* be applying for membership in F.H.F. this time. (I don't believe I did.)

4/16/91:

...and, yes, I keep going back and rereading the last few pages – wanting to rewrite once again (to write more; to write less; to write with more heat, to write with even less passion), but it's there, and it'll have to do... for this time out.

I never pictured myself as being cut out for fatherhood... but, against all odds, I did grow to love the younger kids. They've turned 12 & 13 in the interim; I was their 2nd *step*-father (~~there'll be more~~), and *they* are the ones who'll "lose" the most.

I spent a lot of years convinced my own father wasn't much good at the job, but before his death in Feb. '90, I did come to realize that he'd done the

best he could. If I insist on asking that you accept that from me... I can't expect more from others... (The cruelest thing "she" ever did was the day of my father's funeral... *That* I'll never forgive.)

My (now) 81-year-old mother, battling a detached retina & cataracts, is in the process of selling the family home we moved into, October, 1954. I guess I'll have to learn a new phone number... and take the key off my chain that's been there 35 years. *sigh*

Life does go on; mine will too!

Thanks to rides, crash space & arm-twisting, I made it to Ditto, Octocon, and ConFusion. For those, and for the caring, the words, and the support:

Leah & Dick; Patty & Gary; Mike; Pat; Sandy & Greg; Dave & Jackie; (the 'original') Linda; Jeanne; Skel & Cas; Naomi & Chris; Steve & Denise; Bill C.; Wm B.; Roger & Pat; Irene & Wayne; Richard; Sheryl; Michael W.; everyone who wrote/called/cared. Thanks!

THE ISSUE AT HAND:

...is obviously a combination of catharsis/something to do/something for you... I'm a bit rusty, and it shows in the gutters; the copier (if I get to keep it) needs an overhaul, as it seems to distort the masters; the material is both 'old' and 'new'... but it has all gone together to form yet another issue of the longest-running "active" genzline... (Think about it...)

The first 'major' article I wrote for my Very First Fanzine had to do with my perception of the 'perfect' prozine. I'm inordinately proud of having the opportunity of presenting SaM's Slice of History – and appreciate his patience in the interim!

My apologies to Skel, Billy, & Dave Haugh for the unseemly delay; I hope the wait was worth it...

Mr. Tucker is, as always, vintage...

...and I just had to make Jeanne "NoMercy" B a 'columnist', to keep the lettercol within bounds!

With the exceptions of Mr. Rotsler & Mr. Haugh – I've pretty well depleted my art files... Help!

Enjoy. Write/draw/call/pay... but please respond – because, no matter what happens from here on out, there *will* be an *OW61*...

– Bill Bowers | 4/16/91

I will do my fanzines...

Xenolith 36.5 | August 1991



IT IS NOW 4:30 on the afternoon of July 19th. I worked half a day today... completing twelve and a half days in a row without one off. However, I don't have to worry about days off for a while:

The "project" I've spent six weeks doing the engineering drawings for (a child's adjustable booster seat, to be out from Evenflo by the end of the year – for those of you who can't control the breeding instincts) is finished.

...and I'm out of work again.

Six weeks "on" after nine "out" doesn't equate, but what am I to do: I've retyped my resume, I'm looking... and I won't turn down any offer.

Despite my ability to impress Bill Breiding with my employment track record (I will, defensively, point out that I was employed ~~partially by the USAF~~ from July 5th, 1961 until just before I moved to Cinti in June, 1977 *without* a layoff; but he does have a point since, in spite of the 7½ years "direct" in Toyland) – I don't take these things lightly.

I get one more paycheck, which ought to cover August's medical payment... but as of the First I'll again be 2½ months "behind" on the rent.

At least I now have "transportation" with which to have a bit more flexibility in job-seeking. At Midwestcon (which was nostalgic & enjoyable, thank you!) Denise and Steve Leigh "gave" me their 1983 ~~Datsun~~ Nissan Sentra: "Pay us when you can... ~~we know it won't be soon!~~"

True, it has 124,000 miles on it and, between insurance, plates/title, and some necessary repairs it's already cost me \$500 – and I'd already purchased July's bus pass – but it is sort of nice to have "wheels" for the first time (CaVan time excluded) since March 8th.

Friendship certainly is a wonderful thing. Thanks, Steve & Denise...!

I do notice, though, that I'm not getting nearly as much reading done, sans bus.

Speaking of October: one way or the other ["the ever dreaming Bowers": I like that!] I'll be attending Ditto 4 (after all, I should be "off probation" as of Ditto Friday!) – and taking along copies of *OW62*. I'm not sure exactly how I'll manage this – and the concept is already being downsized – but my first fanzine was dated September 1961... and I'll be damned if I'm going to pass up the opportunity to "mark" my 30th "anniversary".

Several of you receiving this have "promised": you know who you are! The rest of you are welcome, too. Deadline: Labor Day weekend. Whether I make it to Chicon (another story), or not.

It makes little sense to the world at large, and I do tend to over-commit (especially in terms of un-employment – which is another reason to get this out... *now*)... and even I take their importance with a rather large grain... – but I will do my fanzines.

It's what I do... as opposed to what I have to "do", in all too many instances.

I've cut a "deal" with the IRS to pay them off at \$100/month, starting next week. And, I know I've said it before, but now that it seems I'll have "time" again, I'm going to find out just *what* is going on with the bankruptcy. I grow weary of this shit of not knowing... anything.

I do have something to "do" in the next week, something I've deliberately been "avoiding": clearing "her" detritus out of the master bedroom which, along with the kids' room, I haven't even opened the door(s) to in at least six months. But there's a good possibility I'll be getting a roommate:

a classmate of my brother's as well as being a friend of my brother-in-law (even tho I've never met him), and someone who has just gone thru a divorce of his own – is being transferred from Florida to Cincinnati and needs a place to stay for a couple of months while getting settled.

I really like my privacy. But having some help with the rent certainly won't hurt.

This FLAP "deadline" is August . Which marks the one-year anniversary of my "getting out of jail." Yes.

...and tomorrow will be my (someone who should know... had to ask) 48th birthday. Isn't that a trip!

I'm going to "sleep in" for the first time since the 6th. And the plans are that tomorrow afternoon I'll be taking (their car died) Greg and Sandy over to the Brew House to listen to Al Curry & Co., and to Have A Few. Yesterday was Sandy's birthday. Not her 48th. Tomorrow night Greg will cook, and we'll watch videos at their place. No matter what, it'll beat the hell out of my last two birthdays!

On that note:

– Bill Bowers ■ 6:50 pm ■ 7/19/91

from *Outworlds 62*, January 1992

"...numbers: we have a few..."

Way back in September, when I "pasted-up" the [up-to-date list of "MyPubs"], it was, indeed, my intent to at least partially Annotate the Listing. Of course, way back in September, I was also anticipating finishing up *Outworlds 63*, along about now!

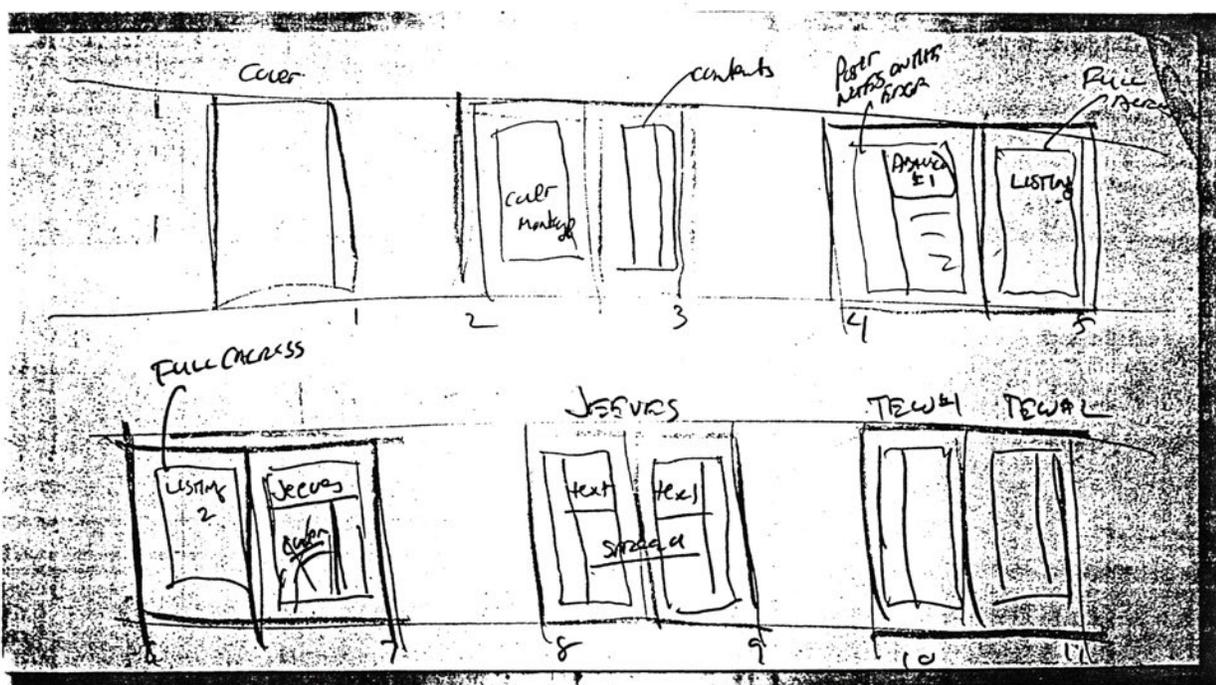
In some ways, it... my Published Canon, cries out for explanation/rationalization [WHY did I "count" that!; WHY did I forget to "number" the Bathurst coloring book...] – if only for myself... against the day I publish a 50th Anniversary "issue".

I doubt that anyone, other than myself – the Coulsons & Warner, followed by Jeeves, Rotsler & Tucker, were sent a majority – has "seen" every one of those zines. That's probably just as well!

But. All things considered, I am in retrospect Pleased. If never satisfied...

The More That Things Remain The Same:

...way back in August, one day at work, I freehanded an initial "concept" of how this issue would lay out. For your amusement:



Fandom & Friendship is Eternal

Xenolith 36.75 | August 25, 1991

I FEEL GUILTY – the response to the “idea” was positive – but there are simply other things I want to do, need to do, just as much: **OW29.5**; the Doc Lowndes “Collection”; and on, and on. And, in my time-honed manner of doing what I want to do, as opposed to what I said I’d do, I’ve already started “playing” with formats for **OW62**... the material is starting to jell [2 Columns were at the POBox today]; it’s arguably going to be the most “eclectic” issue yet... and it’s less than 2 months to Ditto!

The **X**: subs were appreciated. In more ways than one: at one point, a couple of weeks ago, I was “borrowing” against the kitty to eat, while awaiting the unemployment check. I will be returning those subs, with my thanks, with this. (I still “need” help to get **OW** out, but I won’t arbitrarily reassign these monies.)

I really hope that Linda Blanchard does do her “version”.

The distribution of this effort is going to take some time: I’ll take some with me to Chicago this weekend, and the remainder will go out with letters/notes thereafter. But, while I have your attention, an Update:

I wasn’t “out” quite as long, this time. But, undoubtedly aggravated by an extended bout with the asthma/allergies/Cincinnati Crud, I was “down” to an extent unmatched since last Fall & all of that. I know I have my friends, and I know that, in the end, this will all pass, but sometimes it just seems...

And, yet...

Just when things seemed the darkest: On the afternoon of the Monday [8/12] beginning my 4th week Out, I received a call, telling me to “report” at 7am the next morning... to the same place that had laid me off... back in April. I didn’t quibble.

...and later, late that night, I received a call from the “original” editor of **Outworlds**.

But that is, definitely, Another Story.

I worked four 9-hour days that first week. I worked five 10-hour days last week, and the schedule is the same for this week. I’m tired, wasted, still “sickly”... and, yes, I do realize that I “owe” you a letter... but I’m not complaining. No way!

I have no idea how long it’s for, and again, it’s not the Cure. But it sure does help!

...no new ~~Lynnda~~ Elvis Sightings to report, but I’ve been talking to the bankruptcy lawyer’s secretary 3 or 4 times a week for the past month. Today, now, I am informed that it is *still* the Trustee’s intent to come thru the house... to see what of what she left me he can sell off... Real Soon Now. *sigh*

Anything I might say is moderated by the fact that Joel will eventually see this...

But... Fandom & Friendship is Eternal: Last week I received a package containing a note [“An anonymous gift from one of your friends”] and a copy of **Warhoon 28**. Whoever you are: Thank you & I’ll treasure it always. In the meantime, if the fuckin’ lawyer doesn’t sell it off, I’ll pass on the copy I already have... It’s faanac.

And, not only will I be in Chicago... but it looks as if I’ll be able to “add” Chicon V to my List.

Sunday evening, after I’d stopped further up this page, I received a call from Laurie Mann informing me that a “consortium” of fans were purchasing a transferred Membership to be put into my name...

...now I don’t know from “anonymii” and “consortii”, but I know enough to feel, momentarily, humbled!

I do know myself well enough to know that, someday, somewhen, someform... there will be a **Xenolith 37**. It may, or may not be “about” fanzines... but it’ll certainly be “about” me!

...as ever, the same:

BILL BOWERS [August 1991]

Post-It® Notes / all in a column

Outworlds 65 | February 1993



AS LIFE GOES ON: I managed to get *OW63* out by Ditto, in my carefully crafted way of staying up endless hours and making myself sick. [So what's new/old, he said, having left the New Year's Eve party early, sick... and having "skipped" the one last night...]

Sunday afternoon; Ditto: Art had so foolishly agreed to tote some stuff "home", and as I went to lift my ditto (how ironic) from the table to carry it out to his car... well, Mister-everything-but-back-trouble can say that no longer.

The next morning, early: The Final Divorce thingee: "Mr. Bowers is a member of this science fiction group... they put on conventions... and he pockets the profits..."

That Thursday night I flew to New Orleans – the first time since military days I flew without a con at the end – and I'd love to go back... when I have any degree of mobility at all.

I've been in pain before: I had double-pneumonia, I almost drowned, I've hyperventilated more than once... and I've even pulled muscles (~~shut up!~~) before. But never have I been in such pain, for so long: it's only been the past three weeks that I've been able to move about without wincing.

(Someday... I'm going to use that ditto.)

The divorce papers came in early November listing That Which I Was To Get Back.

I waited. I went upstate to visit my mother for Thanksgiving. I waited.

I was making "plans" to buy a 24-pin printer, even though I still owe friends.

Dec. 3rd: Her lawyer called. I could "pick up" My Stuff Saturday the 5th.

Tanya, Sean and Art went in. I didn't, I held the outside door... but I had to sign a receipt (sight unseen) before they were permitted to tote anything out.

What I Got Back: The quilt and pillows my mother had made before losing her sight; the floral arrangement from my father's funeral; two VCRs; two TVs (the "good" one had had the power cord cut and speakers ripped out); approximately half the video tapes; 100 CDs (but neither of the CD players, one of which had been a birthday "gift" from her-to-me); the two typewriters; the Amstrad (it powers up but the printer won't work); the Kaypro One; [no software or data disks for either computer]...

What I *didn't* Get Back: Yes... I *do* have a "list"...

Oh. I *did* get my little daisy-wheel printer back, and once Don Carter extracted a foreign chunk of "metal" and replaced the broken-off knob...: Prelim results next page.

So endeth the marriage from hell.

Oh, it'll nag and irritate for years, but at least the scab is forming... and if I don't scratch at it *too* much...

For now: I've all sorts of grandiose plans/hopes/dreams for 1993. My Life Goes On. May yours be equally hopeful!

...so, until the 23rd (*gasp*) Annish: Take Care...

– Bill | 1/2/93

Post-It® Notes On The Cutting Edge

Outworlds 66 | May 18, 1993

SOMEDAY AGAIN I'll put together a tightly kerned, lavishly illustrated, graphically slick package – if only to prove to Andy Porter that those '70s *Outworlds* weren't an aberration generated by Some Other Bill Bowers.

Soon.

In the meantime, herewith is an even more cut-'n-pasted issue than has been the recent norm. But then... I've been cut-'n-stapled a bit myself, since we last “spoke”!

Foolish me. I'd thought that with the divorce finally finalized, with what was destined to be returned of the marriage spoils collected, and with my back seemingly on the mend... I thought that things were Looking Up to such an extent that, on Saturday the 2nd of January, I “ended” the mini-editorial of *OW65* on this (for me) blatantly optimistic note:

“For now: I've all sorts of grandiose plans/hopes/dreams for 1993. My Life Goes On. May yours be equally hopeful!”

Foolish me. My life did indeed go on... after a fashion... beginning that very same day.

No, I didn't make it to ConFusion this year, but had I... the “speech” I was scheduled to “deliver” would have inevitably been titled something along the lines of “...I Know I Backed Into This World – (I was a breech baby) – And I've Certainly Never Hesitated In Giving My All For My Fanzine... But Somehow My 'Life Manual' Has Recently Been Turned Bassakwards...”

Or: Those who speculated on my lack of “backbone” when I remained determinedly “neutral” in fannish feuds past... were more “right” than they or I could ever have imagined.

I'd left the Sims' New Year's Eve party pre-midnight because of an asthma attack and I skipped the Friday night party, to recoup and to continue the final prep on *OW65*. By Saturday morning, when in a mad rush I wrote a one-column “editorial” and final-printed the Contents Page, before dropping off the issue's “masters” at the copy shop pre-noon (on my way to the POBox & Perkins) – I was mainly just Tired. But with a sense of satisfaction at having, indeed, Pubbed My Ish. The one precious moment in the “process” of fanzine publishing, Bowers Style.

Foolish me. By the time I picked up the print run at six that evening, the (almost forgotten) back pain had returned (albeit higher up than previously) with such vehemence that I was barely able to carry the carton into the house. But I did. And I made it to the Parsleighs' New Year's End Party that evening – after all, I'd *promised* Dave Rowe his contributor's copy – on sheer willpower. [Translation: Stupidity.]

[...and, yes, the bacover was *not* innovative Bowers Layout, but a copyshop fuck-up: had I been at all capable of driving back up to have it re-run... Instead, I cried, ranted, moaned... and decided



to live with it. It wasn't the first time... So. There. Truth in Publishing 101.]

I took off work early the following Monday to go to the doctor but waited until the following Saturday (to avoid missing more work) before going to the lab for x-rays. Early the following week they were deciphered, and it turned out that I had not one, but *two* compression-fractures in two different vertebrae. The one was essentially "healed"; obviously it was the end-result of lifting the ditto... back at Ditto, in October (even though it hadn't been detected on the initial, November, set of x-rays). The second fracture, though... Well, the first made sense, at least in retrospect: I knew as soon as it happened that I'd lifted something too heavy... but I'd been "careful" (all right; totally paranoid) thereafter. So *what* caused the second fracture?

Nothing so easily definable, but as nearly as can be determined it was the culmination of spending the better part of five days during the Christmas "break" and then three more over New Year's... hunched over the dining room table... cutting & pasting-up my ish.

So... have you hugged your *Outworlds* lately...?

There was an underlying "reason", it seems. On the 19th of January I went in for a "bone density" scan (interesting, that, in that I was positioned so that I could watch... over my shoulder... as my skeletal infrastructure appeared – line by line – on a monitor). "Loss" of density in my spine. This, apparently, the direct result of 10 years on Prednisone – a multi-use drug initially prescribed by a dermatologist, but continued because it is the most effective legal control on the asthma I'd found.

Now, I find out there are, apparently, other "options" available... but I (foolishly) continue on the Prednisone: It *works*, and shortness of breath is oft-times a more immediate concern than non-visible (no matter how painful) lack of backbone. I am not always as logical as I might self-delude.

In the meantime, as January progressed, I went to work, and gimped around. The doctor put me on a three-month medication (\$118 outlay) that was/is supposed to at least stop, if not reverse, the spinal degeneration. And I was religiously (if unenthusiastically) following that regime – even going out and buying a pill-crusher to deal with the mother-sized suckers – laced with liberal doses of Voltaren to control the (self-diagnosed) continuing back pains.

I maintained. I "skipped" Rubicon, even though it is close and I'd "promised" Jodie... because of Saturday overtime at work: The New Improved Fiscally Responsible Bowers. Yes.

On Saturday, February 13th, even though I still "owe" friends ~~and the IRS~~, I finally felt financially "secure" enough to purchase a compact disc player. [Neither of the two previously in residence here had been "returned"... but I had a hundred discs, that *had* been, sitting on a shelf...] I set it up that afternoon, played Clapton's "Unplugged" and a couple of others, had a bowl of tomato soup as supper while TV-watching... took a Voltaren... and went to bed about midnight.

About 2 a.m. – here things get hazy and, almost three months later time-clarity is even more nebulous – I was up, in the bathroom... doubled over.

Yes, I've had P*A*I*N before... Having to literally take five minutes getting out of bed in late October to mid-November was not fun. I'd even had an "upset" stomach or a dozen before... but never, ever... anything this intense before. Somewhere between 2:30 and 3:00 (time didn't stand still; it was an eternity ~~longer than my most recent marriage~~), still reluctant to make a total fool out of myself (and "aware" that no matter what, going to the Emergency Room would entail a \$75 co-pay)... But: ...when none of the home remedies had made even the slightest dent in the pain and I was totally incapable of straightening to a vertical position... I (reluctantly) woke Art up and had him call 911. I wasn't even capable of that simple task. The wait seemed interminable, but the paramedics were here in perhaps five minutes, half-carried me downstairs, and hoisted me ("...please, *please* be careful of my *back*...") onto a stretcher... and trundled me across the snow-covered front yard into the ambulance and off to the Emergency Room.

I remember snatches... but mostly just the pain. Laying in a curtained alcove in the hospital... waiting for "them" to make it all Go Away. Again, an (even longer) Eternity... but they contacted my Primary Care Physician... and I was toted (IV, frigid cold & all) to his base hospital about, I'd guess, 7:30 a.m. There I was bundled into a bed, poked and prodded, until mid-afternoon that wonderful Valentine's Day. The surgeon assigned to me showed up and said "You can't ~~lay~~ stay here... we're transferring you to another hospital."

Integral Sidebar: I pay Vast Sums monthly to belong to an HMO that "contracts" with less than

half the local hospitals to provide care to its members. I *knew* I wouldn't be permitted to stay at the closest hospital... the one with the Emergency Room. I was even conscious enough to *know* that the initial transfer was to a "non-covered" hospital... but, Hey!... I was just along for the ride.

Another Very Cold ride in a Very Cold ambulance... another room, another bed. In less than twelve hours.

Continued poking, prodding, blood tests, x-rays... and constant pain, phasing in and out. I was finally operated on Monday night the 15th. I'd been told it was scheduled for Four, but it was Six-Thirty before they came for me; that didn't help. But they were Good: I remember being wheeled into the operating room and the painful transfer to the table... but nothing thereafter until I awoke a couple of hours later, in "my" room, in "my" bed... with varying diameter tubes intruding into and out of my body, in numbers and locations we won't talk of here.

It was only then that I was told that what I'd "experienced", in layman's terms, was a "perforated duodenal ulcer".

...and it was only after I'd been "out" a couple of weeks that one of my plenitude of doctors told me that the mortality rate for those with as severe a case as I'd had... is in the neighborhood of 50%.

And here I'd initially thought it was food poisoning, from the tomato soup.

[In retrospect, a.k.a. Self-Diagnosis 101, it seems that much of the January pain I attributed to the back was more internalized... and I have no doubt that the Voltaren – not a play drug – was what kicked the ulcer into overdrive.]

I spent ten days in the hospital(s), before the surgeon came by at noon on the 23rd, and said he was "releasing" me. But he had the last laugh.

I had been complaining about being sent home with the sillyassed drainage tube still protruding from my mid-valley, but he assured me – removing two staples, that it would "come out" in a week or two, in its Own Good Time. He left. I called Roger. I got up and started to get dressed... and the damned tube popped out, and a gush of appetizingly-colored fluid spewed out of my mid-section. I panicked. I shoved the tube back in, and when the call button didn't magically produce a nurse, I went out into the hall, clutching my suddenly precious tube, until a nurse came and put me back to bed, took my tube, gave me a towel to

hold over the opening, and told me to Stay There... until they could get hold of the Doctor. Who'd left the hospital. Eventually, when contacted, his diagnosis – "It must have been time...". They slapped a massive pressure bandage on me and told me I was still released. Despite my sudden lack of interest in leaving...

I've had pain, yes, but I honestly can't recall having been so bloody *scared* at any point since I almost drowned in Basic, back in '64. In retrospect (something I specialize in) it has its amusing side, but by the time I was home I was still so hyper that, despite my best intent I lit up a cigarette. It's an excuse, but fanzine publishing isn't the only "crutch" I seem to be afflicted with.

Roger showed up while I was in bed with my security towel, and toted me home. Or what was left of me; the first time I was weighed, later that week, I discovered I'd "lost" thirty-five pounds! (And yes, despite the skeptics, I had (again, courtesy of the Prednisone) built up an "excess" of waist-poundage... but not thirty-five pounds worth!)

As of a doctor's visit on May 7th, I'd only gained back 2½ pounds. I like fitting into clothes again, but this is ridiculous.

The Fannish "Network" is, truly, awe-inspiring. Art came to the emergency room and later he, Tanya & Don tracked me through the sundry hospitals to deliver essentials. Art also called the Parsleighs, and Denise contacted my sister, as well as setting in motion a rather incredible phone chain: She called Mike... who called Linda & Joe... who called Sheryl... who called Peggy... who called Paula-Ann... who sent me a packet of New Orleans ~~junk~~ trinkets addressed to "Mr. Ulcer"...

To *all* those who called & sent cards – my eternal thanks.

In particular, inadequately, I wouldn't have made it through without Art, who not only remembered to let my cat out of the oven before I got home, but who proved to be a much better ~~and more ethical~~ "nurse" than the one I'd been married to.

...nor without the unstinting friendship of Dave Locke who not only took me to endless doctor's appointments but who, on his first visit here after I Got Out... completely rearranged my living room (at my direction)... so that he could have a place to sit & chat. (I was *Impressed*; he's not all that much younger than I...)

I "lost" three weeks of work. In the nine I've been "back"... I've managed to put in one "full" week of all the available hours. The remainder have been foreshortened, by the inevitable "recovery" process... and by a new succession of doctor's visits & outpatient tests.

For, you see, there is (always!) more...

[My predilections in fanzine layout might make more sense if you realize that sometimes I view my *life* as a sidebar...]

One side effect of the surgery & cut stomach nerves is that my digestive system is completely outta whack... and once home I developed what some of my more less-diplomatic women friends refer to as "morning sickness": the first thing I did on arising every morning... was to throw up. As a result of this I was sent to a Gastroenterologist, who placed me on a new (Very Expensive) regime of pills... that does seem to be doing the job.

But early on in the process this guy talked me (he's smooth!) into something that made me long for my drainage tube: an arcane form of torture called an "endoscopy".

Those who have shared meals with me over the years know that I have had a predisposition for "choking" frequently. I always blamed the hiatal hernia. (I owe it an apology.) Some of you can vaguely imagine how thrilled I was with the mere concept of having a tube shoved down my throat.

It wasn't "supposed" to... but it hurt like bloody hell, even after the doctor switched to the smallest scope he had. As usual, there was a "reason". I have a stricture, apparently congenital, in my upper esophagus... and *that* was further constricted by a web. *sigh* I've had the procedure twice now, and I'll probably require it periodically the remainder of my life... but at least, knock on Kaypro... I'm not choking anymore.

...about that dinner, now...

[You should be able to swallow pills, now, he said. Right, I said. I still chew or crush them; a fifty year "block" isn't overcome by mere facts...]

I still "tire" easily. "They" say it will take time. I think it is, indeed, "time" – but my body doesn't seem to listen to me much...

I've done little other than work, watch too much TV, read... and feel regret at my seeming inability to return communications to those who care... and whom I care about. These few micro-elite words buried in a generally-circulated fanzine are woefully inadequate but I do cherish my friends... more than I can ever convey.

I've spent every bit of "spare" energy I've been given over the past month – carefully spreading out the paste-up sessions – on this issue. It is of necessity the most graphically "simple" of the current run, and it *has* been "work" – but there is some really neat material, commencing on the next page... and I think you'll enjoy it...

I'd really hoped to include the LoCs on **OW65**, and I still have on hand material for a very substantial issue... as soon as I can!

I mentioned, earlier, "all sorts of grandiose plans/hopes/dreams for 1993". One was to attend Corflu and that, car & body willing, is at least probable, as of the moment.

...another was to spend at least a week pre-Worldcon visiting friends in the Bay Area. That has, suddenly, become very unlikely.

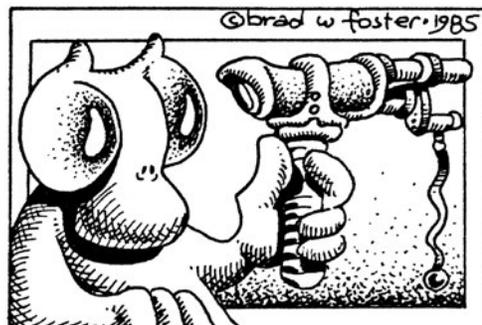
A third was to have my friends paid off, and be out of debt by the end of the year. Possible; still... but not a sure bet.

...and a Fourth Goal was to publish an issue of **Outworlds** sans any mention of personal "trauma".

Did someone say something about "– the ever dreaming Bowers"?

That I are.

Bill [5/10/93]



Post-It® Notes From Across the Span of Years...

Outworlds 67 | June 1997

06/17/97

As I was saying... before I was so rudely interrupted by reality:

The reason for, the rationale behind this particular issue, is simple – and known to many of you.

Briefly: June of 1977 – the week before Midwestcon – I moved to Cincinnati from northern Ohio. It was, at the time, the single biggest “gamble” in my life: emotionally and fiscally. In retrospect, it still is.

In June of 1987, to mark the 10th Anniversary of that Significant Event, I published a special issue of *Outworlds* [#51]... with a slight blurring of the line, everyone contributing was a “Cincinnati” fan. That was so much fun that, five years later, I did it again. *Outworlds 64* [June 1992] contained many repeat offenders.

So soon, yet again. These past five years have passed with blinding speed, and yet there were stretches where my life, if not the clock, was seemingly full tilt in reverse. But I *have* survived (with more than a little help from my friends) and here we are once more:

There are some *strange* things in the issue at hand, but one commonality binds it together: all of the contributors have more than a tenuous association with Cincinnati Fandom and the Cincinnati Fantasy Group. My Thanks to all of them for Coming Through... and my particular thanks to Frank – for actually beating the *deadline*!

It's been an *interesting* twenty years. Regrets? Yes, a few. But that initial “move” is not one of them.

Cincinnati is my Home, now. And likely to be so for the foreseeable future...

NOW THEN:

The last time a majority of you *heard* from me directly was with the arrival of *Outworlds 66*. That issue was dated May... 1993. (You can do the math.)

*I used to wonder how someone could just simply stop publishing. After all, for more than thirty years... thru traumas (real and imagined) and marriages (real and...)... I managed to publish SOMETHING every year. Hell, I was even credited with co-editing/publishing an issue of **Double:Bill** during the eighteen months I spent in the P.I. No doubt about it: I was thoroughly convinced that no matter what travails Life threw at me, thru the *Good Times & the Bad*... I would somehow manage to Pub My Ish.*

*The last issue of **Outworlds** was dated 5/18/93. Half of the run remains uncollated, and the number of copies mailed out is less than that. Later that (same) year I managed a (two)-page **Xenolith 37** for FLAP 8(4).*

(...) It's been a while.

***flaf** • **NINE**; 5/11/96 (for FLAP 100)*

Relax. I'm not going to render a blow-by-blow of the last four years. Local friends have endured along with me; a minority of the mailing list have endured through a couple of apazines... and I'm not at all certain that either my psyche nor atrophied typing skills are up to the task in any event.

Still, I'm not at all certain that it is totally fair to so many of you to have simply dropped out without a word and then re-emerge four years later, as if nothing had happened. Enough has. And not only to me.

Therefore: as briefly and dispassionately as I know how:

THE “EDITORIAL” in *OW66* depicted my continuing “back” troubles and the wonderful episode of the exploding perforated duodenal ulcer.

I ended the issue with a note to the effect that I had just been “laid-off”. Two weeks before the Madison Corflu.

Unmentioned in that note, which was written on the Sunday following the Friday lay-off, was the fact that as I was preparing for that last day of work, I coughed and felt/heard something ‘pop’ as I was shaving. I didn’t think too much about it but, by the time I made it to work, the pain in my side was – to put it mildly – acute. I somehow made it through the morning until, taking off my last half day of work, I went to have x-rays taken. Monday... they called with the results: I’d fractured two ribs. Coughing... only me.

Somehow I managed the drive to that Corflu and, despite the constant pain, I’m glad I did. The drive back was, however, the *longest* trip of my life.

The highlights of the remainder of ’93 were there, but were few. The lack of work tore me down and eventually the doctor put me on an anxiety-reliever and then a full-blown anti-depressant. They must have worked; I got up in the morning. Occasionally my friends would drag me out, or I would drag myself out to see my friends. But I became increasingly self-isolated, progressing well on the path to becoming a total hermit. I was not a happy camper.

1993 ended/1994 started with the usual round of Floating New Year’s Parties (one of my few lasting legacies to Cincinnati fandom). My life revolved around bi-weekly unemployment checks, doctor’s visits – and ever more frequent vet’s visits. In May, with the unemployment benefits coming to an end, I visited the County Human Services department, and applied for welfare. Not my proudest moment.

I was “approved”. On Friday, June 3rd, 1994, I received my final unemployment check. I was not looking forward with anticipation to the future.

But. The following Monday I received a call from the agency that had secured most of my temp jobs. Would I be “interested” in going back to the Toy Company where I’d worked from ’81 until the Big Lay-off in December ’87? Silly question.

A call back: I was to start that very Wednesday, the 8th.

I then *made* the most difficult phone call of my life, setting up an appointment.

Tuesday.

I made a final trip to the vet.

I went cross-town to pick up my \$112 in food stamps.

I came home to prepare myself, not only for the physical effort of going back to work after thirteen months – but for the much more difficult task of simply living with myself.

...even though the surrounding wordage will be postdated – today happens to be the 6th of June, 1997. Therefore, it seems to me apropos to reprint the following, verbatim:

In June of 1977 I packed my Hopes, Dreams & Kipple into a U-Haul-It truck and, towing the Mustang II containing my Responsibility, I moved to Cincinnati.

I’ve been thinking about, dreading this “section” ever since deciding to do this issue. This will be the hardest thing I’ve attempted to put into words since X:7.

...it will be the most difficult tale I’ve ever told... while stone sober.

Whatever comes out will, I know, be totally inadequate. But I have to try.

Late December, 1976. In the Far North...

Leah was visiting. She’d made “threats”; I didn’t think she was serious. I came home from work one day, opened the front door and, looking into the kitchen, spotted a bowl on the floor. And a small ball of fluff.

“Oh, shit!” was my reaction. Without quasi-quotes.

“Its name is Bill Bowers’ Responsibility,” she said. “The intent is to keep you home, so that you can publish fanzines... rather than going to all these conventions.”

Nice try, Leah.

Less than a week later, I took the kitten to Cincinnati, to the precursor of the Floating New Year’s Parties.

Less than a month after the gifting, I took her to ConFusion... and, a little later, to a Kublacon. (I still have “her” namebadges from both.)

I found that having a kitten at a convention was a great way of (*picking up women*) getting attention.

A little while later she made The Move with me. As if she had a choice.

When I first took her to a vet, I said that her name was “X”; I really didn’t want to “explain”.

But she rapidly became simply ‘Sponse. To me and to everyone who was a part of my life. (Though she did have a habit of actively

disdaining women who were more than superficial visitors. Strange.)

I went to an epic number of conventions. Without her. But she was always there when I returned. She was there. Through everything.

And when, in the mid-'80s I moved to Sunset and an apartment that didn't permit "pets", I arranged to board her out. I even paid Cat Support.

That situation was a factor a couple of years later when I moved into *this* house with the woman who was boarding her. It certainly wasn't 'Sponse's fault.

And when I gained re-entry to the house, after having been locked-up/out for a month, I found that 'Sponse was still here. Starved, but still here. We commiserated together and I used her as the lead-in to my first fanzine after The Traumas.

Forward to 1993. The Year of My Depression. Toward the end of the year 'Sponse began to get sick with increasing frequency. She threw up and refused to eat anything but soft foods. Finally, in November, I took her to the vet... where she was, by then, known well as 'Sponse – the cat the nurse had to put on the padded gloves to handle.

The diagnosis was kidney failure.

He gave her a fluid-shot, recommended a special food, and basically tried to communicate to me that there was no hope. I didn't want to hear that.

'93 faded into '94 and the deterioration accelerated. The frequency of the vet visits accelerated as well. She seemed to "rally" after each injection. But for increasing shorter periods of time.

Becca offered support, both over the phone and by making the long trip over here more than once.

Denise commiserated; she had gone through the same thing with the Parsleighs' cat.

DaveL understood; he'd had to put "his" cat to sleep.

Spring faded into early Summer.

It came to a point where I had to carry her up and down the stairs. She couldn't even make it "up" to the bed in which I slept; I sleep on a box spring & mattress on the floor.

The vet advised... But I refused to even consider...

I was being selfish. I was putting my feelings ahead of her physical condition. I knew it but I couldn't do otherwise.

Taking care of 'Sponse was my "job", I joked.

That June Monday. When I was "offered" the job. When the call-back confirmed it – I made The Call. And scheduled an appointment with the vet the following day.

Tuesday morning. June 7, 1994.

I gathered My Responsibility up into my arms and carried her to the car. I drove the fifteen minutes to the vet. He said that the process would involve two shots and there would be no pain on her part. He gave her the first shot, and said that I could hold her while she went to sleep. He and the nurse left the room.

She started convulsing. In my arms.

I died a thousand deaths.

I screamed...

They came back.

This *never* happened. I was assured. It didn't matter. It had happened.

He placed 'Sponse on the table and gave her the second shot. She stopped convulsing.

A fighter to the end.

They left me alone with her. Again.

I didn't hold her, but I petted her and said my Goodbyes. I cried.

I left and went to pick up my food stamp allotment.

I didn't see as if I had a choice. I couldn't pass up the job. But I couldn't leave her home while I worked. I didn't allow myself time to think. I made the decision and carried it out. You do what you gotta do.

I had another choice to make.

I live in a rented house. I have no plans to move soon, but I couldn't see just burying her in the back yard. I certainly couldn't let the vet "dispose" of her.

I had her cremated. The little urn sits on the mantle, along with her collar and a handful of sympathy cards.

I was going to say it's not a shrine but, damnit, I guess it is. Not every day, but every once in a while I glance over at the visible reminder of what was, if nothing else, the one constant in my life for close to two decades.

I do miss My Responsibility. Still.

Some say that I should get another kitten. I refuse to even consider it. Not at least, until I can assure some degree of certitude for my own future.

Art got a kitten last fall. It's not The Same. But it does help.

Leah. Thanks for the Gift of a lifetime.

And that's about all I feel like writing. Today.

Xenolith 38 | 7/28/96

GOING BACK TO WORK after thirteen months off was a trip... an endurance test, physically and emotionally. I was sent in under an 89-day "contract"... so that I wouldn't have to take the mandatory drug test. They decided to "extend" me. I took the test; passed. How boring!

Healthwise, I maintained. The allergies/asthma flared... and subsided.

The osteoporosis was another matter. Leaning over a drafting board is not conducive to a pain-free back. Finally, in October of '94 I was "referred" to one of the leading bone specialists in Cincinnati. She prodded and poked, took x-rays and put me on a year-long series of shots. She apologized because all the research on osteoporosis has been concentrated on women. For a couple of weeks I went in daily, after work, to have the shot administered. Eventually I worked up enough nerve to accept sample vials and a prescription for syringes – and started giving myself the shots. Fun. Real fun.

...and it was during that first office visit that I found out that I had "lost" five inches of height. I *should* have known something was going on: I was having to use a footstool to access the bookshelves and changing a light bulb had become an exercise in total frustration.

I still think of myself as being six foot two. But I'm not.

I am indeed making humble penance for all the "short jokes" I perpetrated over the years.

INEVITABLY 1994 blended into 1995 which in turn blended more-or-less seamlessly into 1996. Maintaining might not be the most exciting life-style, but it has its own set of *rewards*.

After a year of the shot, the doctor – to my vast relief – put me on a pill instead – Fosamax. Again, one that's only been tested on postmenopausal women who are over sixty. In early '96 I had a second bone-scan and the bone mass in my spine seemed to have stabilized. As long as I'm careful in what I do [I'm under strict orders not to lift anything exceeding ten pounds; paranoia is the operative course of action here] I rarely have pain.

There were continuing mini-crises at work, and a total lack of any sense of security – but I kept on going in, and they kept on paying me.

I read a lot. I watched even more TV. Plus endless movies-on-tape.

Via the Sims' Express, I attended the Nashville Corflu. Dave Locke and I made a one-day trip to

Louisville/Rivercon to visit the Tacketts. Other than that, it was (as usual) Midwestcon & Octocon, the occasional CFG meeting, and biweekly trips cross-town to the Causgrove-Locke Video Central.

...and in September, I did something I hadn't done in more than twenty years: I went back to night school. To take two terms in AutoCAD 13, one of the industry standards in computer-assisted drafting. It's something I should have done long ago... The school *experience* was an, well, an *experience*, but I survived with a 4.0 for the first term and a 3.5 for the second. Six weeks ago they finally gave me a computer at work – loaded with AutoCAD 12 – which means I can't do half of what I was taught... Nevertheless, I now spend my days tunnel-visioned with eyestrain, but at least I don't have a backache from bending over a drafting board.

I may inch my way into the latter days of the 20th Century yet.

EENTER 1997.

In March I journeyed out to the Bay Area Corflu. It was a fiscal indulgence, but I hadn't been out to Northern California since Corflu 2. In 1985. That's far too long an absence.

Despite the fact that I increasingly travel "less well" these days, I enjoyed myself thoroughly.

Thanks, Jeanne.

...and Patty & Gary.

Everyone.

TWO DAYS AFTER returning from Corflu, I had an appointment with a Brand New Doctor [to add to my collection]. For nearly a year my eyes had been watering to such an extent that they literally splattered the inside of my glasses. This was not only irritating, but potentially dangerous while driving. So I went to an ophthalmologist.

The diagnosis: My lower eyelids had "pulled away" to such an extent that the tear drainage system could no longer function. And, while I was there, she noticed that the *upper* lids were drooping. I was shrouded in a hood and instructed to press the "trigger" whenever I saw a dot on the screen; it turned out that nearly a third of my vision was being obscured. I was given a choice: I could have the lower lids operated on, and wait to deal with the uppers until later. Nonsense, I said, with total fake bravado: Let's go for The Works, all at once.

The operation was scheduled for May.

(Looking at my little list of medications taken, the Doctor opined that the conditions were probably the result of extensive use of Prednisone. You know. The same wonderful pill that tore up my back!)

A week later, I had an appointment with the bone doctor, to go over the results of the bone-scan I'd had just before Corflu.

Ooohs.

Whereas the scan after the year on the shots had shown some slight *gain* in bone density, the results after a year on the pills were less positive. In fact, the results were downright negative, showing a marked degradation. So now, while I'm still on the pills, a nasal (newly on the market) spray has been added to the mix.

Have Drugs. Will Travel. Carefully.

May 8th. A Thursday.

Art took me to the Hospital. Roger picked me up. I stayed overnight at Dave & Jackie's.

...in between: The Doctor is four foot eleven; I'd joked that she'd need a catwalk on which to operate from. I won't joke anymore: the "three-hour" operation took four. And, since it was classified "outpatient"... I wasn't... I was heavily sedated, but I remember more than I wish.

Having the operation done on a Thursday, I was supposed to be able to return to work the following Monday. That was the Theory, and a major scheduling factor under the No-Go-To-Work, No-Get-Paid dictum. It didn't work out quite that way. I missed the entire following week. [That would have paid for this issue, and quite possibly the next...]

I had major swelling, but the major setback was continual blurring. In fact, it hasn't been until this past week, five weeks later, that I've been able to read with any degree of comfort. Given my total addiction to things visually accessible, and considering what happened to my Mother when she had the stroke five years ago – it was all a bit scary. And depressing.

I had a checkup visit with the Doctor this morning [6/18].

Things are going well enough that I scheduled an appointment for an eye exam for new glasses in three weeks. She also mentioned, in passing, that I have the beginning of cataracts, but it's too soon to do anything about *them*. *sigh*

So. The next time you see me, you may notice that I'm shorter. But you'll also note that I'm considerably brighter-eyed than I've been in years. For whatever that's worth!

I MENTIONED I've been reading a lot (for me) these past few years. I've also mentioned, elsewhere, that, whenever possible, I like to assemble as much of an author's canon as possible, or at least all of a "series" before starting in...

I started reading **THE MOVING TARGET**, the first in Ross Macdonald's Lew Archer series, on the flight out to Corflu – March 13th.

I chugged along.

I started **THE BLUE HAMMER**, the nineteenth (and final) book in the series, just before the operation, the seventh of May. Thanks to the blurry vision, I haven't been able to finish it. Although I probably could now. If it weren't for trying to crunch this issue out for Midwestcon...

Don't be surprised if you see me at the convention – with a book in my hand.

T EN DAYS AGO I "celebrated" the beginning of the fourth year on my 90-day job.

This week there was a major lay-off/restructuring. As far as I know, I'm still there. One of the engineers pointed out that we contract workers were beneath the radar screen; i.e., not on any organizational chart. Maybe, these days, I am more "secure" than I would be if I had a Real Job. Wouldn't that be ironic?

And that, Dear Reader, is the rest of the story... since last time.

P ERHAPS IT'S THE BEGINNING of Yet Another Tradition, but in the last All-Cincinnati Issue, I urged your attendance at Ditto V, the following October.

Well... Roger & Pat Sims, I, Bill Cavin and the CFG would like to invite you to attend Ditto X. Once again, it will be combined with Octocon (the local relaxacon), and held in Cincinnati the weekend of October 24-26. The venue is a Best Western (also the home of Midwestcon, this year), room rates are \$63 for one to four per room. Early registration for the con is \$20 until 9/10; \$25 thereafter and at the door. Supporting memberships in Ditto are \$5. [Make all checks payable to **Pat Sims**.] If you haven't received a flyer and need more information, contact myself or the Sims.

Please consider it. What with Corflu being in England next year, and my pronounced reluctance to travel to anything other *than* Corflus & Dittos... if you want to see me, this may be your best bet.

Then again, come in spite of that!

06/21/97

Frank, Joel, Steve, and Denise were all present in the two preceding editions of this "series", and I really appreciate that.

But there are two names *not listed* with the "contributors" at the end of this section – without whose "contributions" this issue would not have been possible.

Jackie Causgrove. Dave Locke.

Those with long memories will recall that **OW66** was produced on a Kaypro 10 and printed out on a dot-matrix printer. Eventually the printer, which was a "loaner", Went Away. I used that as an excuse (one of many) for not Pubbing My Ish... until just over a year ago when, in a burst of enthusiasm following Dave's "persuading" me to sit down at Jackie's computer [to crank out a one-pager for FLAP's 100th Mailing] – I bought an HP DeskJet 600. I linked it to the Kaypro and, with considerable fiddling by Don Carter, managed to get it to "print". But I was less than thrilled – the output was erratic, to put it mildly – and although I managed to get out two apazines (and endless Lists), I literally dreaded the prospect of trying to produce *this* issue on that combo...

In fact, if I'd had a *working* typewriter...

Jackie got a new computer in December, 1995. Since then, other than FLAP duties, the *old* system has basically sat.

Two weeks ago tonight, after a crash course in defragging and other esoteric arts from Dave, I toted home the old system (along with a 24-pin dot-matrix printer – not yet hooked up – and a *ton* of continuous-form paper).

All on Permanent Loan. From Jackie.

As per usual, Don Carter has been invaluable in helping me set it up.

So now you know who to blame.

For this, and for ever so much more in the way of Friendship since the early '70s, This Issue is For Jackie...

This is an IBM clone, a 486-33; and that's about all I know about *that*. I'm on an accelerated Learning Curve, both here and at work, and it's fun. But draining. I'm "working" in Word in a version of Works for Windows [3.11; I think]. And yesterday I skimmed the "Publisher" manual: As I said on the phone, to Dave – if Roger can master this shit, so can I!

A day of virtually nonstop fiddling later, everything you see, surrounding this "dated" entry has been formatted. Already there are aspects that don't appeal – but considering that this issue has been in essence created in less than two weeks [and that I've promised to Have It Out for Midwestcon, this upcoming weekend] – well, not too shabby. Is it?

I'm actually looking forward to seeing what I can Do. Given time.

I know better than to promise, but I really hope to have another issue out by year's end. We'll see, but in the meantime I can accept material (in appropriate formats) on disk; either 3½" or 5¼". And, possibly, in yet another format.

I've been cheerfully ignoring some of the broader aspects of the Information Superhighway, but Dave has called my bluff: He has come up with a *free* e-mail service that doesn't require a separate phone line. Once I've recovered from this, I'll probably take advantage of it.

...so, when you send along your hard copy LoC on thish, you might include your e-mail address, against that day.

Chris will be amused.

THE FUTURE...?

Inevitably "economics" (i.e., continued employment) looms as a large counterweight against my Continuing Dreams. Those thirteen months out of work traumatized me. I still owe money to friends and relatives from that period; I'm not forgetting that. I still have seven car payments left; I can't ignore that... and so forth.

And yet, I *want* to get back to some sort of regularity in publishing **Outworlds**.

At one point Rusty was making noises about starting a "fund" to help me publish **OW**; at the time I was a bit aghast at the idea. Now? I probably wouldn't be insulted.

I really appreciate those who've kept me on their Mailing Lists over the past four years, with absolutely no response from me.

My own Mailing List is hopelessly jumbled – I'm still not sure I sent out all of the **OW66's** "owed". The print run this time is guesstimated, based more on what I can afford, than anything else. It will probably be smaller, next time.

Enough of all that. Despite the fact I'm so wasted I'm seeing double at the moment... *this* has been fun!

Let me know if you agree.

My undying appreciation and thanks to those who put up with me, and to those who have helped me put up with myself. It can't be easy, sometimes...

Bill Bowers [11:30pm; 06/21/97]



One Editorial, Spanning 1992–1997

Outworlds 29.5 |
December 1997

from page 2

2/14/92

...*this* one, then, was never Announced... nor Promised, back then. Nor did I allocate a “block” of Reserved Page Numbers toward its eventual appearance. Its physical place is “between” **Outworlds 28/29**... and **Outworlds 31**. Its place in time is somewhat more nebulous.

In any event, it is now Permitted – Mr. Glicksohn – that you may “bind” your run of the '70s **Outworlds**.

An Historical Setting:

Toward the End of the '70s “run” of **Outworlds** – the big/fancy/contentious ones – the Lettercolumn was set aside. Not through a lack of interest; simply a lack of space... and, as always, money. I’d “reserved” a 40-page gap between **OW27** and **OW28/29**; but a gap is what it remained. Still, for fifteen years – through four major moves, Trials/Tribulations/Traumas – I managed to hang onto three boxes containing an unsorted mass of correspondence. It wasn’t of Major Concern, and there were vast periods of time and shifting interests that made it seem unlikely... but I always *knew* that One Day I’d go back, and bring some semblance of a conclusion to the '70s version.

Last year, I took a month “out”, and typed up the 40-pages that came to be **Outworlds 27.5**. It was fun; it was tedious. It was nostalgic; it was potentially embarrassing – to me, as well as others. But it was done... and the reaction, overall, was – if with some askance – favorable.



Still, there remained two boxes... unopened. One is labeled **OW27** + Poll. The other... **OW28/29**. We’re going to do something about that. Now.

I have no idea of how long it will take, nor how many pages it will encompass. But, when done, it will serve, if nothing else, to remove a mild irritant from the Neat & Ordered Way in which I approach fanzine publishing.

As with **27.5**, the “editing” will be capricious and then some: What, here in 1992, intrigues, or amuses me. Again, although I am not above “tweaking” those still around [see, here, the “Cover”], none of this is done with the intent of embarrassing anyone, or of reawakening old wounds. We were *all* much younger in 1976... and none of you included was more so than I!

In some weird way, it is appropriate that I do this, now. **Outworlds 28/29** was published in October, 1976. That, fifteen years after my Very First Fanzine. And I’ve just finished a massive **Outworlds 62**, to “mark” a slightly belated 30-year “celebration” of that momentous event.

OW28/29 was tagged “My Publication #90”. This, it seems, will be #180.

...at least *something* in my life Adds Up!

from page 27

3/9/92

I may, or I may not, have “learned” a few things over the intervening 16+ years since **Outworlds 27** was published. It could be argued either way; I’ve had most of those arguments with myself.

...still, I don't *recall* perpetrating any "egoboo polls" in that timespan.

I ran several in *Outworlds*, *The Early Years*. To me, they were another form of feedback, a potential added bit of "return" for the Contributors... as well as a means of providing me with a, well, "overview" of how *Outworlds* was coming across. Plus, while I bitched when consolidating, it amused me.

One of the fringe effects of The Big Days, when I was advertising, was that some of those who acquired several issues in one envelope, would send me LoCs commenting on the entire package. Since, no matter how disjointed in the execution, I've always considered this fanzine to be "greater" than the sum of its individual issues, I was obviously a sucker for these multi-page "reviews". To me, with the earlier issues long since produced and gone on from, it was a sense of timebinding.

The egoboo polls produced a similar input, even though most of the respondees had received the issues as they were published... over a span of time. Maybe I'll do more; maybe I won't. The future is not defined.

Still, when I dove into the '70s Archives in 1991... I'd *completely* forgotten about the one that follows:

THE 1974/1975 OUTWORLDS EGBOOO POLL [Covering Issues 19, 20, 21/22, 23, 24, 25 & 26]

This is designed to give me an overview of the past two years...and to give some well-deserved egoboo (the only payment they get) to my contributors. PLEASE DO NOT complete this unless you've received & read ALL of the issues in question. Some things (don't I know!) are hard to categorize; when in doubt, check the Tabax(s) furnished with OW26. In my lexicon, "best" equals "my favorite", not what I'm "supposed" to think the best. Act accordingly, in voting your favorites. DEADLINE: April 30, 1976. Results in OW28.

BEST SINGLE ISSUE: # 29 [Yes, "sigh", OW 21/22 counts as a single issue.]

BEST COLUMNIST: Jane Smith [Over the span of two years; I also disqualify myself.]

BEST SINGLE INSTALLMENT OF A COLUMN: Column Month Blatherings Issue #29

BEST ARTICLE 1) One Hundred Ways To Breast Feed Your Cat
(list article, author, issue) 2) THE BLACK HOPE IN HARRY WARNER'S ARTIC
3) American Report, Admiral Burt #29

BEST UNCLASSIFIABLE PROSE ITEM: Hot Sizes For Chimpanzees

BEST VERSE/POEM: THE TOAD who caught A CO'OB

BEST LETTERBACK: 1) Jessica S. 2) Jessica S. 3) Jessica S.

Which writer (other than me!) was most "valuable" overall to OW?: Hairy Warner's Day

What was the single WORST Prose item?: Transcript of Jello Commercial

ARTWORLDS

MOST VALUABLE/BEST ARTIST over the span of eight issues: Yeschitta Sam

BEST "SERIOUS" ARTIST: Bill R. BEST "HUMOROUS" ARTIST: Steve F.

BEST COVER (artist, issue, & whether front or back): my grandmother's guilt

BEST FULL-PAGE ILLU other than a cover: The map of Mike G's hat

BEST "SPOT" ILLUSTRATION: 1) "SPOT" the dog?
2) SPOT
3) on the Indian woman's face head

Illustrations that shouldn't have been printed: 1) The Clean Ones
2) The Dirty Ones 3) The Safe Ones

Your favorite Mike Glicksohn and/or Harry Warner cartoon: (G) Hairy Warner

What one item/person/group of things/etc., not covered above, is deserving of merit or thanks (be specific): my father's lucky random

Do you like lettercolumns? Yes Do you like loong lettercolumns? Yes

Realizing that OW is obviously your favorite fanzine, which is next? SIM make

Do you intend to stick it out & get the fanzine I do after OW? Yeah Why? why not?

I have a title selected, but what do you suggest it be called? OVERCROWD or CRY

If I were to dig deep enough, I could probably unearth a virgin copy of the 1974/1975 Egoboo Poll "form". But one is not immediately at hand and so, to give you an idea of what we're getting into here I thought I'd simply reproduce the response of a Typical *Outworlds* Reader in the mid '70s.

As with anything fannish, some took it seriously; others, less so. Some truncated; some elaborated, on the form, or in additional letter-form. A couple of spin-offs will follow the tally, and I'll intersperse the other commentary as I go. I'm not going to spend an inordinate amount of time here; but I'll amuse myself!

from page 40

3/19/92

Now then. I suppose it is vaguely possible, in a Fannish World, that someone else would devote a month of their life in the '90s... to publishing a LoColumn from the '70s. However, spending the better part of a week & a half on compiling a "Poll"...? I presume that even I have done marginally more "silly" things... but, once I got into it, and... [Extended Unemployment will do that to you, I guess.]

Some of the "data" is now totally irrelevant/trivial. Other portions may prove of some value to Future Fannish Historians... but not *this* one! I've purposely held off on making Latter Day Interpretations... But, should any of this provoke... well, it's possible I may publish reactions in future *OWs*, circa the '90s. Maybe.

from page 44

3/21/92

...in the "last issue" [well - 27.5; and that, now, almost a year ago... here in the future '90s] there ran the "unearthed" Si Stricklen LoC, inarguably one of the T*O*P (what? Ten? Five? ...less?) Letters of Comment I've ever received... and then, *now*, in "this box", I (re)discovered Robert Runte's epic LoC. No, not in the same league with the Stricklen but, still, awe-inspiring enough to once again (not that the remainder of the "Contents" aren't sufficient!) make me wonder What If - had I not sidestepped in the late '70s...

But I did what I did, and until that future date when we access that Alternate Bowers World where I did the *sensible* Thing (sorry; slipped into fantasyland there, briefly), we will have to settle

Assorted results from the 1974/1975 Outworlds Egoboo Poll, Issues 19 thru 26

3rd "best" SPOT illustration - GRANT CANFIELD ["Interface-spread"; OW19 - PGS 736-737]:

INTERFACE
Letters & Keywords



...a fairly substantial pile of letters of comment are in hand; we'll start out with those on OW 19...and with a little less (and some heavy editing) go to some of the early ones in OW 19. One 'real' for this year...in addition to getting 'real' a regular schedule, is to get the majority of L&K on a given issue...printed in the following way. Remember please:

is completely correct. So in your constant that the most important ingredients in a fanzine is the editor, and your wanting to avoid selfish feelings and controversy for its own sake. Well, it's almost all true and I can't say much more than simply congratulations on a well thought-out and well written piece!

...while reading our bound sets of

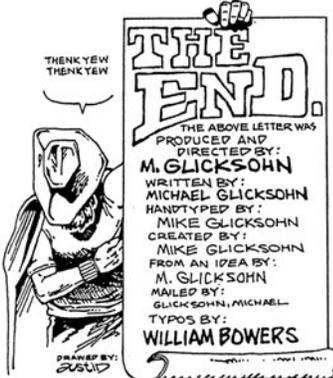


tinking philosophy as I've seen any fan give anywhere. As much as I'd love to cheer and call you pretentious, but I sympathize with you fully, even though I don't share your particular conception of fanzines. Only you can know how close you're come to your original conception, or how much that conception has been melted by what you've done or ... do ... do ...

find it), and my first impression was that Frank Denton was the publisher of Outworlds. I feel justified in being so blunt, since you set the example in your review of Mike's 77th. Granted, that issue looked ugly, and the manuscript, from the concealment of the editor's name to the treatment of the title, are terrible-but, he is some as those he had adopted on other occasions. In his journal with Neil Stevens, carried on in the pages of Outworlds and in Outworlds 77, he argued as if the dispute was only about the exact words used. But what he omitted, completely ignoring the fact that Stevens' journal had been concerned with the implications of his words, and the conclusions drawn from them, and the exact words which had been used.

...you agreed over with per-

...the "favorite" Mike Glicksohn cartoon: TERRY AUSTIN • OW24 • p.935



THE END.

THE ABOVE LETTER WAS PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY: **M. GLICKSOHN**

WRITTEN BY: **MICHAEL GLICKSOHN**

HANDTYPED BY: **MIKE GLICKSOHN**

CREATED BY: **MIKE GLICKSOHN**

FROM AN IDEA BY: **M. GLICKSOHN**

MAILED BY: **GLICKSOHN, MICHAEL**

TYPOS BY: **WILLIAM BOWERS**

DRANK BY: **SUSAN**



GREAT MOMENTS IN FANNISH HISTORY

NO. 6

BILL BOWERS RELEASES OUTWORLDS AS A 165 PAGE JIG-SAW PUZZLE.



GRAFANEDICA
a fanzine ABOUT fanzines:one

...you agreed over with per-

Best "SPOT" illustration: TERRY AUSTIN • OW 24 • page 905

2nd "Best" SPOT illustration - JIM SHILL - OW20 • p. 761

- BEST SINGLE ISSUE :**
- OUTWORLDS 21/22 - 14 votes
 - OUTWORLDS 19 - 7 votes
 - OUTWORLDS 26 - 7 votes
 - OUTWORLDS 20 - 6 votes
 - OUTWORLDS 24 - 5 votes
 - OUTWORLDS 23 - 3 votes
 - OUTWORLDS 25 - 2 votes

...FROM OW 21: the 2nd "best" ARTICLE "PLUS" "BEST" FULL-PAGE ILLU STRAT FROM A COVER, BY GRANT CANFIELD



OUTWORLDS
DOUBLE ISSUE

\$1.50

PAUL ANDERSON
ROBERT AM LOWMEDES
ANDREW J OFFUTT
JERRY ROURNELLE
SUSAN WOOD

THE EXCORIATOR
BY ERIC

I WANT YOU



JODIE OFFUTT

We've Come A Long Way,



Baby!

...and this, in response to "how many fanzines do you SUBSCRIBE to":

"One. Can't remember its name and it never did come out; supposed to be a fnz about fnzs edited by one William L. Bowers, whoever he was." [Date Kote]

for idle regrets, nostalgia... and timebinding to the nth degree. On with it:

The initial scan of the *Outworlds 28/29* "box" suggests that it is not quite as densely "packed" as have been the previous two. (At least I don't seem to have run another Poll!). In some ways that's not surprising. Now. That issue was published at the height of one of the more (even for me) emotional years of my life. The distribution – though to the best of memory, eventually completed – was sporadic. And given what I was going through/where I *seven!* months later ended up "going to" [here; Cincinnati], the feedback to those who did respond was even less than my never-adequate "norm".

It's a shame; it was one hell of an issue.

Now I can do naught but Go On: At this precise moment the nature/substance of what you will be seeing before you as "X"-number more pages is as much a mystery to me – as it is to you. In many ways I look forward to this continuing rediscovery and, I know, will be vaguely disappointed when the last letter is excerpted in these pages.

Yet. I know too, that there will be a palatable sense of sheer relief, after I have at last "buried" this particular, personal, monkey-on-my-back. Come with me then, along one Last Trip Down '70s Lane...:

[...]

from page 47

11/16/97

Well, since no one "knows" that I'm "doing" this... I suppose that there has been no irreversible Harm done...

The last "current" date herein, on Page 44, was 3/21/92.

Today is Sunday, November 16, 1997.

As I recall, somewhere in that early 1992 time-frame, the local copy center had a half-price *sale*, so I went ahead and had the masters completed to that date printed – and 125 sets of said pages have resided in a box, ever since.

I really meant to Get Back to finishing this up a bit sooner than now. But now seems to be the time.

In the interim there have been extended bouts of unemployment, continuing crises in terms of Health & Wealth. In other words, Bowers Status Quo. I even went, for the fourth time since 1961, a

couple of years without publishing *anything*. But, given 3-plus years of employment, having been *gifted* with a neat new-to-me publishing toy this summer (by Jackie Causgrove), and having had relatively stable if not *great* health for a while – in a burst of enthusiasm I've "revived" *Outworlds*. Yet again.

And, given that rampant enthusiasm, I'm determined to Get This Out by year's end.

Besides, I can't wait for the reaction of the Cover *Artist*!

from page 56

12/14/97

In ever so many ways, it was a "simpler" time. Both twenty-one years ago, when *Outworlds 28/29* was published... and five and a half years ago, when the first three quarters of "this" was published.

I suppose I'm not alone in being a creature of "enthusiasms" – in continual flux in terms of direction and intensity. And I *know* I'm not alone (although some of my friends "hide" it better than others) in never, ever, feeling totally "secure":

A month ago, when I started this section, I was riding a crest of optimism, job-wise, if not health-wise.

Today, Sunday, December 14, 1997 – I *could* finish up these last fourteen masters, and have them printed tomorrow, and start getting this bloody thing out by Tuesday. Instead, I spent the weekend worrying (a practice I have raised to an "artform"): Tomorrow, Rumor has it, there will be yet another bloodbath at work.

I'm not paranoid, you understand; nor particularly superstitious: Just because Monday, December 14th – 1987 was the date on which I was laid-off from the same company that now employs me in a "contract" position – is, I'm sure, strictly coincidental. Right.

So I'll wait... and print out the final master of this and the next page tomorrow night. And, no matter what, we'll Go On from there.

from page 57

On page 2 of this particular publication, I stated: "...*this* one, then, was never Announced... nor Promised, back then."

I really should go back and “read” the referenced issues before making such blanket statements.

Hidden in the back regions [page 1165] of *OW28/29*, this:

“Yes, there will be one more fractional issue – containing the comments received on *this* issue, the poll results, and the Index to Volume Seven. Tentatively titled *Outworlds: EPILOGUE*, it will be out *sometime* in the Spring.”

Ah, well. Probably the only time in history I’ve “promised” an Issue, and not delivered on time. Then again, maybe not.

Obviously the “pro” incarnation never happened. There were a lot of reasons; few are relevant now. In a life filled with upheavals, the ’76/’77 time-frame was particularly one of “Changes” for me – the most obvious one being that I have now lived in Cincinnati for over twenty years. It is now, more than where I was born and raised, My Home.

I’m still “proud” of the seven-year run of the Seventies *Outworlds* – from the simple mimeoed beginnings to the ostentatious offset Big Circulation finale. But the smaller, often fast-paced Eighties “run” were, with the exception of *OW59*, a lot more F*U*N for me. The Nineties Incarnation, birthed in the aftermath of Total Trauma, have had Moments – but a three-year *gap* between *66* & *67* sort of threw a crimp into the sense of continuity.

Still, the acquisition of desktop publishing capabilities this past summer – thanks to the generosity of Jackie Causgrove & Dave Locke – has, obviously, reinvigorated me, one more time.

I suppose, at My Age, I really should Grow Up. But I guess I have to “accept” it: Publishing fanzines is What I Do. No matter what happens tomorrow, I’ll find some way to Pub My Ish. Eventually. Every time I do Take A Break, I *know* that I’ll eventually resurface.

The ones whom it is not “fair” to is not me, but the Contributors. With a certain degree of humble-

ness I am continually flattered that talented people are willing to write and draw for me. And the only “payment” I can offer them, besides my Thanks (and doing the best I can “by” their contributions) – is to publish the “feedback” – their ego-boo – to their contributions in a timely manner.

I honestly believe that The Lettercolumn is the most important part of any genzine. And that that lettercolumn should be a continuing “conversation”, flowing from issue to issue. If not seamlessly, at least with some degree of continuity.

Believing this, and accomplishing this, are, obviously, two different things. However, don’t give up on me. I offer this issue as proof that, sooner or later, I *will* get your Egoboo to you!

There are an inordinate amount of typos in the first section. And I can’t help but speculate on What I Could Have Done with the Poll Results, had I this “system” back in ’92...

To those of you – whom I haven’t had any contact with since the late ’70s – that I manage to Track Down, this:

The current “incarnation” isn’t quite the same. It’s a lot less contentious, and, probably, a lot more “faanish”. It certainly has a fraction of the past circulation. I’m having a lot more fun with it.

I wish I could send you all a copy of the Current Issue with this, but economics forbid. However, if you are motivated to respond to this, I’ll be glad to send you a *sample* of What I Do. Now.

I’d love to have you Back.

Bill Bowers; 12/14/19 1:00 PM

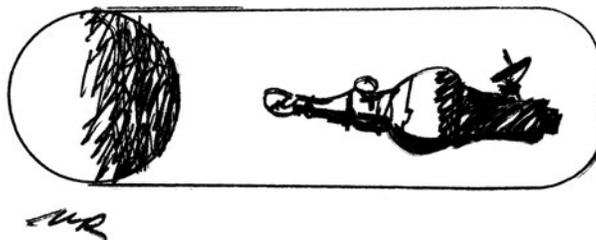
Monday: Absolutely “nothing” happened at work today. The New Rumor is Wednesday. This is bogus; the issue Goes Out...! Enjoy.

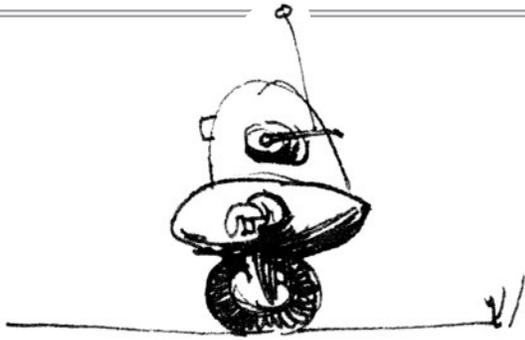
from page 60

This is (still) My Publication #180

Start Date: 2/14/92

Publication Date: 12/16/97





Looking Back...

A Meandering Autobiography, with Mysteries

Xenolith 42 | February 10, 1999

AS YOU MIGHT SURMISE, based on the Issue Number affixed, this fanzine title has had a bit of “history” – prior to this, its first FAPA appearance.

June, 1977. I’d chucked a job with fifteen years seniority, and had moved from upstate Ohio to Cincinnati – “for Love”, and other reasons. The previous fall I’d published *Outworlds 28/29*; the last of the fancy offset, pro-driven issues. In many ways, *OW* had succeeded; in many ways it hadn’t. Financially, even though I’ve never been an astute businessperson, it was essentially breaking even. I even announced grandiose plans to Go Pro. Emotionally, it was another story – even apart from the emotions that led me to move. Even though that last issue was (as I now conveniently recall) rather controversy-free, I was thoroughly burnt-out from too many years, too many tears, over the animosity that had taken over my fanzine. So, even though I didn’t formally announce it – most faneds don’t – I effectively “killed” *Outworlds* with that issue.

But I’ve never escaped the dread Having to Pub My Ish disease (and I hope I never do). By the fall of 1977, without employment, and without the love that had brought me here, it was time. But not for a genzine.

Xenolith 1, 10 pages, was dated 10/17/77; it had outside material, but was essentially a personalzine. Over the course of the next year, the fanzine

became really personal – and *X:7* [10/22/78] was comprised in large part by the belated publication of arguably the most intense piece of writing I’ve ever permitted anyone else to see. Time for re-trenching, and in January 1979 – announcing one of those innocuous Editorial Changes that I was legend for during the ’70s – I relaunched the title with the publication of *Xenolith One* [“Second Series”]. 42 pages, with a print run of 700, it was a genzine: filled with left-over *OW* material, and meant to “fulfill” the remaining *OW* subscriptions. *X:One & Two* still remain two of my own favorites – at least design-wise – of all my fanzines. However, by April 1980, *X:Four* was a mere twelve pages, and was produced in a hotel room [yet another story to tell, sometime] in deepest Indiana, where I was on assignment for several months, commuting home to Cincinnati, and visiting Chicago, on alternate weekends. Back to retooling.

Xenolith 13 [well, if you insist: there were seven issues in the first run; four in the second. That makes eleven. The “*Epilogue*” that was published in between became, in retrospect, the twelfth issue.] was published in June, 1980 [the “Third Series”] and, despite occasional outside bylines it has remained, essentially, a personalzine slash apazine ever since. Well, there was *Xenolith 15*, which was never a fanzine; it was a speech, delivered at the 1981 ConFusion, later printed in *X:16*. In 1983 I “revived” *Outworlds* [with Issue 31;

OW30 was, yes, you Are Correct, yet another ConFusion “speech”, and later that year, **Xenolith** became my apazine for The Fannish Little Amateur Press [FLAP] – and I spent the remainder of the ‘80s publishing fairly frequent issues of both titles.

Then came The Marriage From Hell. And when I came out the other end of that tunnel, **X:32** [9/30/90] became my gateway back to fandom, my friends, the world.

So, some would ask, even though I’m still a member of FLAP, why am I transferring this title – here, to FAPA? Wouldn’t it be more logical, more “tidy”, to start off my FAPA tenure with a brand-spanking-new Title? Well, yes; but that’s simply not the way I’ve ever published my fanzines: as much as I admire, as much as I envy clarity and consistency of “vision”, it is simply not something I seem to be able to implement. To me fanzines are organic: they are living, and therefore evolving/mutating entities. And though I persist on mapping out the future course of some of my “titles”, there are always off-ramps and back roads that draw me off the straight and narrow.

As to just what Xenolith is [and you can take the title as literally as you wish] (...) It is, among other things, a letter-substitute, a place to run stuff I love which just doesn't 'fit' in OW, something to keep getting the few fanzines I really want, an outlet, an intake (...), a vehicle to preclude Cinti from being known exclusively as Quantum-country, something to hand to friends at cons, or to send to friends I don't see often enough, an egotrip, a crying-towel, a testament of joys, an excuse/or a reason for doing/not doing certain things... You know, it's just another damn fanzine.

But it's my damn fanzine!

Such was the Initial Policy, back in October, 1977.

More than two decades later, the “policy” behind this title is still all of those things. And perhaps a bit more. I, surprise, have all sorts of grandiose Plans careening about my brain; and yet, conversely, more than ever I want to Keep It Simple, in this incarnation.

We shall see.

My “history” in maintaining apa memberships has not, over the decades, been one of unblemished success.

Early on, I joined the N3F’s N’APA; twice. For a period of time (along with a handful of other sf

fans) I was a member of the mundane NAPA. For that august organization, I had two small letter-press pamphlets printed for me, under the “**Silver Dusk**” title. That was momentarily fun until I naively printed an Earl Evers story, and forgot to instruct the printer (who should have probably known better, he being a long-time member) to insert the asterisks where Earl used the term “f**k”. This was circa 1962, and the grief I received for that dampened my enthusiasm.

In 1966 I took a position on the FAPA waiting list. [Does anyone here now remember waiting lists?] At that time it was taking, I believe, more than five years to attain membership, so there was in place a “waiting room”, Shadow FAPA. So, while stationed at an Air Force base, near deepest, darkest Belton, Missouri, I sent 10 stencils off to Dave Van Arnam in NYC, for inclusion in Shadow FAPA. The title said that it was **Outworlds 1**. Sometime later I sent off another 16 stencils to Dave; that was the last I saw of them. [For a long time, I “blamed” Dave; more recently, it seems the odds are that they were simply Lost in the Mail.]

Sometime in 1971 I finally was Invited into FAPA. But by that time the re-launched genzine incarnation of **OW** was consuming my time and my passion. I stayed in FAPA a couple of years, franking through issues of **OW**, but I never produced a specific FAPazine. I sometimes wonder what course my Fannish Life might have taken, had that “original” Second Issue seen mimeo ink.

Also in 1971, gung-ho with anticipation of attending Aussiecon, I published **Project 75.1** for ANZAPA 18. There was never a “point 2” issue, and I not only didn’t make Aussiecon, nor Aussiecon 2... but I’ll also be Looking On From Afar *this* year. *sigh*

In the mid-’70s I was spending a lot of time in Michigan, so it was only natural that I was sucked into MISHAP. The first issue of the creatively titled **Father William’s MISHAPventures** appeared in May, 1976. The 9th, and final, issue was published the following May, just prior to my Move to Cincinnati. The publication immediately prior to that was **Azapatite 1** – my one contribution to AZAPA. [Which was not ANZAPA!]

...and, at some point in that timeframe, I was invited to membership in APA-50, but, at the last minute, declined. Yet Another Story...

In late ‘79, I was invited to join something called the Fannish Little Amateur Press, which

Dave Locke & Jackie Causgrove were proposing, in far off California – but passed. A year later they were living in Cincinnati, and eventually wore me down, with gentle persuasion, and dire threats. My first FLAP-specific zine was for FLAP 12, September 1981: **BILL BOWERS' Meaningful Relationships 1**. They just don't make fanzine titles like that, any longer! Looking at The List, it seems I only had Six **Meaningful Relationships**, but I'm still a member of that apa, even after all these years.

I "survived" – running through issues of **Xenolith**, and an alternate title – **flaf** (a.k.a. "Fannish Little Amateur Fanzine"), and by being "carried" on a couple of extended periods of "Medical Leave". But, mainly, I survived because the OEs were a twenty-minute drive 'cross town; i.e., I didn't have to *mail* the bloody things.

[It's not quite as simple now: Dave had to give up the OEs a couple of years ago, when Jackie first was diagnosed as terminal. Still, with the new OE in the depths of that timesink called Indiana, I have managed...]

Last October, I joined the mystery apa, DAPA-EM. ...shortly after I cleverly enticed Robert Lichtman into re-inviting me into FAPA.

It's been a Long Road, but I'm really glad to be here. And, despite this inauspicious last-minute rush to save my ~~ass~~ membership, I really hope to stick around this time. And to Contribute to the discourse.

I know a lot of you here; but others on the roster are new to me. This will change, in time, but in the meantime, for those who don't know me (and a few who think they do <g>), I'm going to recycle a bit of my Self-Introduction to the mystery apa I mentioned above:

Although I think of myself (don't we all?) as being Forever Young, I find that no longer am I so chronologically: I was born in 1943, to parents who were 32 when they married, 33 when I was born. Both of my parents only attained a 6th-grade education: my father went to work in the coal mines of southern Ohio very early, and my mother, reared in the "Pennsylvania Dutch" milieu, was "apprenticed" to various Mennonite families as a pre-teenager.

We are all, I know, the product of our upbringing... as tempered by what we, personally, do with that upbringing.

My mother was (and is; she is now 88, and though legally blind, still living on her own) the most loving and caring individual I've ever known.

My father, who died shortly after his 80th birthday in 1990, was – to put it with a dispassion I probably couldn't have carried off ten years ago – simply not cut out to be a parent. (And is a large reason why I early on made the conscious decision not to become a parent myself.) Perhaps his most lasting "impact" on me was, however, not of his own free choice: When I was seven years old, he suffered a nervous breakdown, and was sent to a sanitarium, where he was administered electronic shock treatments. I wasn't quite aware of all the ramifications at the time, but one thing I knew for certain: the man who Went In was *not* the Same Man who Came Out six months later. It was at that point that, young as I was, I decided that I would never ever "lose control" to the extent that "they" could do something similar to me.

It hasn't always made my life "easy" – for me or for those who know me, I gather – but it is definitely one of the prime ingredients in the chaotic stew that has become the "me" of late 1998.

Another, and possibly "equal" prime factor occurred simultaneously: While my father was institutionalized, they finally figured out why I was having "trouble" at school, and I got my first pair of eyeglasses. (I'm not big on "malebonding" organizations, but the local Lions club paid for that first pair, and they still have my gratitude...)

The Third Major Influence on my life took a bit longer to come to fruition, rather than being directly attributable to a single event-in-time. I was reared (and I used that word, as opposed to raised, deliberately) in a fundamentalist fire 'n' brimstone (you will be Damned to Eternal Hell if you so much as *breathe* heavily...) environment: it would probably be shorter by far to list the things that weren't forbidden, than those that were. Comics were verboten; I saw one film **Julius Caesar** on a junior-high field trip, the *only* film I saw prior to high school graduation – and it goes without saying that television was the Box of The Devil.

I've spent the succeeding years watching interminable movies, with no critical faculties whatsoever, wasted countless more hours on mindless TV

shows – and have produced some rather “fancy” fanzines, in my time. And I fear blindness more than I fear anything else.

Oh, it wasn't a totally “bad” childhood. We never had much, but we always had a roof over our heads, always had clothes on our back... and always had enough to eat. Others have had it far worse, and I know that.

Mayhaps in different circumstances I wouldn't have been – well my line has always been that I would have been voted the shyest kid in my high school class... *had anyone even noticed I was there* – quite so withdrawn, but I was. I retreated into The World(s) of Books.

I had the facility of being able to “pass” with flying colors virtually any “test” that was thrust at me in school. (I rapidly found out, once I was thrust into the Real World, that the “knowledge” required to ace hypothetical by-rrote quizzes... didn't mean I knew a damn thing about Life!) As a Junior and Senior I don't recall ever having to take home a textbook to study. Instead, once a week I would walk the six miles to the nearest public library, tote home the eight books I was permitted to borrow – and proceeded to “escape” a late '50s/early '60s “world” that I didn't understand at all.

Maybe it was inevitable, but the books in which I “lost myself” were, by and large, science fiction.

There are a lot of perhaps Very Good Reasons why “escapism” is not something to recommend as a Way of Life – but, with a smidgen of hyperbole, “science fiction” – and more directly “science fiction fandom” – saved my life. Over the decades I have managed, often awkwardly, often painfully, to learn to “cope” with The Real World. I've learned to play the game, at least well enough to get by.

...but, when times get tough, the friends I've made through the years (primarily) through sf fandom are the ones I can count on.

Perhaps later, if anyone is interested, I'll “go into” My Wonderful Fannish Career – but not to-day, if I've any hope of getting this in the mail.

Suffice it to say that I published my first fanzine – it was published on a flat-bed Hectograph purchased mail order from Sears – in the fall of 1961, the year I graduated high school. I attended my first sf convention (a less than one thousand attendance Worldcon) in Chicago over Labor Day

weekend, 1962. A couple of months ago – despite *still* being incredibly shy in person, I attended my 196th convention. More recently I published my Two Hundredth (more-or-less) fanzine: a 130,000-word-plus, 150-page “brick”.

At this stage I suspect that, one way or the other, I'll be attending sf cons, and publishing fanzines in various forums, for as long as I live. It seems to be what I Do.

It's really strange that it took me so very long to come to mysteries. [In life, as well as in these pages!]

If you think about it, there's always been an overlap between the sf and mystery “fields”, in terms of authors, and many fans who simultaneously enjoy both genres. [Though there will always be differences in perspective: I will always think of Anthony Boucher first as having been a founding editor of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, for one example.]

I dabbled over the years – I read the Travis McGee novels in sequence as they were published – but somehow never got “hooked”...

Until the early part of this decade. Perhaps it was simply Time, perhaps I was “directed” to mysteries by other factors in my life (I'm more than certain that some pundits could have a field day with the fact that my immersion in “murder mysteries” came in the wake of the acrimonious [Understatement 101] break-up of my second marriage) – but whatever the reason(s), I had the sheer pleasure of “discovering” Hammett, Chandler, & Crew late in life. I'll forever regret having not have encountered them much earlier. Then again, had I done so, perhaps I might have burned out long ago; certainly I wouldn't have appreciated the sheer story-telling mastery of those long-ago writers.

As is not unusual with my approach to life, when I *do* encounter something New & Neat, I tend to overcompensate. I'm not sure I'd recommend it as the ideal approach, but I must say that reading the entire “Archer” canon in sequence, back-to-back-to-back (and, later, doing the same with the “Scudder” novels) was an educational experience in total immersion with the author, as well as with the character. But don't ask me specifics: I find no shame in saying that I read fiction for pleasure, for, yes, that ole “escapism”, even after all these years. I envy those who recall every

possible plot device, or even minor characters' names and pedigrees, but I'm simply not that kind of reader:

I recall whether I enjoyed a book... and whether I want to seek out further examples of the same author's work.

There doesn't seem to be any lack of candidates!

...written for a slightly different audience, but perhaps somewhat germane here. Any missing links I'm sure will be filled in eventually.

Writing about myself is what I do most easily.

In response to Tom Sadler's **Wizards from Space V1N5**, FAPA Mailing Number 245 – November 1998:

I am still intrigued by [...] your closing comments: "Can you picture it – McDonald's, Burger King, KMart, Wal-Mart, GMC, etc. on a planet dozens of light years distant. What an appalling thought for the unfortunate natives of that planet."

You see, for seventeen months (back in 1967–68) I lived in an alien world that might as well have been light years distant in physical terms, because it was certainly that far removed from anything a boy from small-town Ohio had previously experienced outside the worlds of print science fiction. During that period I was stationed at Clark Air Force Base, on the island of Luzon, in the *quote* Republic *unquote* of the Philippines.

It was certainly a defining period of my life. Not only for simply being So Far From Home, but because of the politics of what sent me there, and the Life Experiences – some Good; some not – that marked my tenure. Someday, someday... I will (I must) revisit that Far World. Since I haunted the base photo lab, I certainly have the photographic material to "illustrate" it: shots of the town outside the base, Angeles City... a city of 5,000 bars, and 15,000 registered prostitutes. The cock-fights; to the death. The still-recalled-with-disbelief Good Friday pagan-Catholic procession, with participants flailing themselves until the blood literally streamed down their backs...

I did a lot of growing up there and once came as close to death as possible (through my own stupidity) – and I Came Home with a rampant case of cynicism that took me years to get past. But

I came home with an unending reserve of good memories, also.

Now is not going to be that Revisit, except for this brief footnote. No matter how far off the beaten path I ventured... and some of the places I ended up didn't even *have* paths – there were always Coca-Cola signs. No Pepsi signs; just Coke.

...and once, I took a bus trip from Clark, roughly 75 miles inland, to Olongopo, where the Navy base at Subic Bay was located. The bus was a third/ another-world artifact in itself, crowded with passengers transporting packages of flora and fauna, and atop the bus was strapped a cage containing a couple of piglets. The road, while mainly paved, was certainly not a highway, following the contours of least resistance through hilly terrain.

And, roughly halfway to our destination, and as I recall no more than half a mile from where the road skirted a stream with women doing their laundry – in the middle of nowhere, with not a village (or, indeed, any other structure) in sight – there rose the Golden Arches of a McDonald's.

This was a year before the 20th of July, 1969 – but I still remain convinced that somewhere on the Far Side of the Moon there has to be a McDonald's. With a Coke sign, just around the crater...

Although I've been a compulsive, obsessive reader for close to fifty years, what I know from formal grammar is what they attempted to drill into me in High School English, and obviously failed. I think I have, I know I have, managed to become better in my attempts to "communicate" over the years, but it has largely been a self-taught process, and one that is sprinkled with instances of downright perversity: "Hell no, I'm **not** going to do it **that** way – no matter what They Say!". I rarely write formal, structured articles/essays any more; it's not that I don't want to – simply that I'm fragmented into far too many timesinks as it is.

I admire those who can dash off a coherent riff, apparently at first-draft speed, on lucid memories of Life's Experiences – virtual or not. I attempt, with varying degrees of success, to write something I might enjoy reading rather than space-fill – but it's not always easy. I spend a much greater proportion of my available time thinking of what I **want** to write... than actually writing it down.

All this is, of course, not the stuff of which a "Style Book" is constructed, except in my personal

idiom. My own personal Style Book, at least as regards to fanzine publication, was not so much formed as evolved, over nearly forty years. I published a version of it in a recent *Outworlds*, so I won't repeat it here; besides, in truth, the application of Mine Own Rules is somewhat inconsistent.

I must admit that my own Style Book took a giant leap forward – or backward, depending on your percepts – when I purchased a Selectric typewriter, in 1969. I am also quite aware – it has been Pointed Out to me, that I over-indulge in Rampant Capitalization – but I chose to view this as a foible, rather than a mortal sin against grammar. I also, independently, long ago adopted the practice of, when a sentence ends with quoted material, the end-period goes outside that final quote mark – unless it is an integral part of the quoted material. Some things just make sense.

Perhaps what I'm best known for is exceeding any one person's quota of ellipses. I dunno... back when I briefly tried to write saleable fiction my stories invariably had 50- to several-hundred-word prologues – before the title. I didn't consider this affectation – after all, nothing in my life-experience started out coldly, clearly, with a "title" – but, needless to say, I never sold any skiffy. [Although I came Real Close, once; but that's another digression best put off today.]

I've tried to be a bit more circumspect in recent years (seemingly having replaced the triple-dots with en and em dashes), but for whatever reason, ellipses always seemed to be a part of the way I viewed the world, and, of necessity, a tool for me in attempting to communicate with it. I can't remember the first instance I used them, but I can vividly recall when, kindly, Terry Carr Pointed Out to me that, if one ended a sentence with an ellipse, one should append a final, fourth, "period" to said sentence.

It's strange what one recalls, and what one doesn't, in terms of fannish experience. Take long distance phone calls, for example. Of course there are phone calls, and then there are phone calls. I mean I had a series of phone conversations with Harlan, in the '70s and, again, recently. And they, certainly, are a Memorable Experience. But there have been two fannish phone calls forever etched in my memory:

In the early '70s, in a phone conversation with Jackie [then Franke] Causgrove, we both ended up using the word "eclectic". From the beginning, I

sub-titled *Outworlds* "the eclectic fanzine" – but, before that conversation I'd never actually vocalized the word. Or heard it spoken by another. I instantly knew that I'd met a kindred soul; something that the years proved time and time again. And I still miss her at unexpected moments.

About ten years ago, in the course of a phone conversation with Teresa and Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Teresa paused and said of me, to Patrick: "My God, he actually talks with ellipses..."

I like that...

IN THE EARLY DAYS of this [*Xenolith*] title, and, also, even earlier, with *Outworlds* – I went through an endless series of "Series". Never for anything quite as prosaic as having "lost track of where I was in the numbering system"; that would have been logical. No, I always knew where I was, numerically; as to where I was in terms of "direction", or even emotion, ah, there was the rub.

With *OW*, I started out with Roman numerals, but the final issue of Volume One was published as *Outworlds Six*. Later, *Outworlds Eight* was followed by the "fractional" issues, *8.5* and *8.75*. They were followed by Issues *3.1* thru *3.5*, in which "series" the "3" indicated the "Volume" number. Additionally, *OW3.1* was, in actuality, the Tenth issue; there was never a Ninth *Outworlds*. It was at that point, for reasons now 25-years-lost, that I decided to "add in" to the mix the 1966 Shadow FAPA "original" *Outworlds* – but that, as we say, is Yet Another Story.

Since *OW15*, January 1973, other than two belated decimalized all-LoCs issues, I have maintained – even through multi-year gaps in publication – a "straight" numerical designation for that fanzine, and am currently working "at" *OW71*.

Well, truth be told, there was one additional kicker: "*Outworlds 30*" was a speech. It was later printed in an issue of *Xenolith*, and then once more in (a revived) *OW31*... but, no matter how hard you look in the Memory Hole, you'll never find a fanzine entity labeled *Outworlds 30*...

Xenolith went through similar, if fewer, perambulations, and despite a brief decimal diversion this decade, has remained numerically-logical – despite considerable twists in format, direction and distribution. All of this Made Sense at the time; but as one who does "Index" his own publications, I have, indeed, lived to rue the day(s)...

Bill [February 1999]

Imagining the Revival of All Night Fandom

Xenolith 43 | May 11, 1999

From the Lettercol:

LINDA BUSHYAGER comments:

*Thanks for the **Xenolith**. I was prepared to make several comments as I read, when I got to your shocking last line about Buck Coulson's death. That came out of the blue... a real horror to read at the end of a nice zine. It seems like he couldn't have been that old even. I guess since my parents are still living at 78 and most of my aunts, uncles, grandparents, great grandparents all died in their late 70s or 80s or even 90s, and since we always hear about how people are now dying later and later, I expect that most people are going to be OLD when they die – in their 70s at least.*

In my mind there are exceptions for accidents or sudden dreaded diseases, but I keep thinking that most of us are going to make it into our 70s, and maybe even 80s. But unfortunately I guess that is somewhat wishful thinking, or at least overlooks the horrible fact of life that many people just don't make it that far.

Far too many fans/friends seem to be slipping away all too early. I was just at Boskone a week or so ago and heard about another fan who died in his 40s. What's going on? But I guess we know – fandom is aging and one by one we are all going. When Mike Wood died a number of years ago I got the picture of the afterlife (for fans) as one massive party with bits and pieces of great hotels from the past where you could wander from a Baycon suite into a Nycon III room into the Midwestcon pool party and so on forever, with all the best of fandom and fannishness preserved. I'd like to think of Buck sitting on a couch with Rotsler right now as Vince Clarke wanders in to chat. I hope the afterlife is like that...



BILL BOWERS replies:

I knew that Buck's health was not the best over the past few years, but nevertheless, in my mind, he was firmly fixed as one of the indestructible ones which made the news all that more shocking.

I do, Linda, like your concept of the 'afterlife': I can even see a revival of All Night Fandom, reinstigated by Jackie and Joni... And Lou Tabakow pontificating over there, in the center of the room.

from *Xenolith 18*, September 15, 1981

So, in the 60 or so months since MyPub#87 (not recounting it) – (or this), the total seems to be 25/26 “fanzines”, totaling 353 pages – for a monthly average of 5.88 pages. Obviously, “down”... but then we all knew that beforehand.

And while acknowledging that a goodly percentage of the first ten years, was coedited/published – and various other factors that prevent making nice simple blanket statements for the purists (such as my occasionally creative issue-numbering systems) I still seem to come up with the following:

In twenty years, one hundred plus issues totaling 2,939 pages... a monthly average of 12.25 pages.

Others have published more; others have published with regularity – of vision and of schedule. But this is what I have done, and I am pleased...

I'm pleased that despite 18 months overseas, and emotional & financial upheavals aplenty, I have managed to publish something in each of the twenty years;

And I'm pleased that I've published at least 1,500 pages of material that I would have no hesitancy in republishing today.

...yet all of this is only the merest beginning.

I may get sidetracked at times, but I've yet to tire of doing fanzines!

By the Numbers

Xenolith 44 | February 16, 2000

BACK IN NOVEMBER, in *Ansible 148*, Dave Langford wrote:

*“NUMEROLOGY. As the world prepares to go barmy over the arrival of a year ending in multiple zeroes, can it be coincidence that **Interzone 150** and **Ansible 150** are scheduled to appear in December and January respectively, while my low-circulation **Cloud Chamber** is poised on the very brink of issue 100? After consulting various oracles, auguries, entrails and bottles, I can confidently predict that I have no idea.”*

Ah, the temptation to play the Numbers Game!

And, as anyone who knows me at all can testify, it is a temptation I rarely resist.

I mean, not all that long ago – although long enough – I made an unseemly display of self-gratification, by publishing a 150-page *Outworlds 70* as my 200th (more-or-less) fanzine. It was the least I could do, after all.

And even less long ago, shortly after the arrival of that *Ansible*, I belatedly realized that the convention I was about to set off to (through the generosity of some Fine Fans) – OryCon 21 – would, in fact, mark my 200th sf convention attended. (More-or-less.)

Numerology has a long and honored tradition in science fiction, as well as in fandom. Asimov published at least two Opuses with three-digits ending in a double-zero. There was a story titled

“The Nine Billion Names of God”, and even Thomas Disch played the numbers game – albeit not in an even fashion. There was also that Kubrick film.

My own personal favorite numerological tie-in occurred back in December, 1960 when, in the 100th issue of the British *New Worlds*, Brian Aldiss had a story titled “Old Hundredth”. I haven't re-read the story since then, and thus have no idea of whether or not it was a “good” story, but the concept was one of those fun things.

Several times over the years I speculated on the possibility that, while attending my X-numbered convention, I'd be able to hand out an identically numbered (in terms of total publications) fanzine. That never quite came to fruition, but I did come close on a couple of occasions. Since the odds are now, between four “real” apas, and a genzine, that I'll be publishing more fanzines per year than conventions attended, the scenario is now very unlikely to ever come to pass. But it would have been neat. (I'm so easily amused.)

A little while back, the mystery apa I enjoy so much – DAPA-Em – celebrated its 150th Mailing. And while it's been A While, it was Dave Locke sitting me down at this very computer – then Jackie's – back in May 1996, and forcing me to contribute to FLAP 100, that got me back into fanzine publishing after a two-year sabbatical.

Sometimes “numbers” are Good.

Bill [February 2000]

For A Breath, I Scurry...

Xenolith 44 | February 16, 2000

OKAY, I have to admit it: I had to go back and re-read the last issue, to see where we were last May, when last I issued this title.

And on doing so, I find that – for once – I avoided going into the Trials & Tribulations that dominate My Life. You should be so lucky, again.

A recap, all too familiar to perhaps a third of you, but for the “benefit” of those not online, or those who are but who don’t frequent The Three Fannish Lists, where I hang out far too often.

I was laid off from my last job, early May, 1998. I went through the six months of unemployment compensation, and a large portion of my carefully hoarded savings, and, by May, 1999, things were beginning to get a bit worrisome. I honestly tried my best to find employment; but I did turn down a couple of possibles that would have required re-locating out of town, and one that would have entailed over an hour’s commute each way. All the while my “health”, never spectacular, was deteriorating. So, on June 2nd, I applied for Social Security Disability Benefits.

It was a step I took with some reluctance. Just as when, on a couple of out-of-work spells back in the late '70s, when I first moved to Cincinnati, I didn't apply for Unemployment Compensation (until it was pointed out to me that, like it or not, I was in effect paying for it when employed) – to me doing so was the equivalent of Giving Up. Twasn't the way I was brung up. But, with less than subtle “pressure” from my friends, and then likewise “You’ve got to do this” advice from two of my bevy of Doctors, I capitulated.

I was finally “awarded” the coverage in October – quite speedily compared to what it used to be, I hear. The diagnosis of the client doctor the SS powers-that-be sent me to... to, I guess, check up on the data/tests supplied by my doctors: “There’s no way in hell they can turn you down!”

I survived until that point by, shudder, living off a credit card, and through being treated to a lot of meals (and a couple of loans) by local friends, and by conducting an e-mail “auction” of fannish kipple. I received a sizable “back-pay” as part of the process – enough to pay off all my personal debts, and even enough to “cover” the credit card, though I have yet to take the money from my checking to pay it off entirely. Money in the bank, and all that.

Still, I now have a monthly income – on the third Wednesday of each month, the Magic Governmental Gremlins deposit a stipend directly into my checking account – one that essentially covers rent, utilities, food, and that’s about it. A modest sense of security, if not one of Security, if you follow. I have to accept certain realities, such as when the car “goes”, it’s unlikely I’ll be able to replace it. But then, there is a bus stop right in front of the house, and Cincinnati’s public transit is adequate. (As long as I can make it out the door!)

In fact, things wouldn't be too bad but for one troubling glitch: By the vagaries of Policy, one is not eligible for Medicare for two years after having been placed on Disability Status. (In my case, that was November, 1998.) My COBRA coverage, from my last job, ran out the end of last month. I make too much (!) on Disability to be eligible for Medicaid, and the premium for a private coverage plan would be close to half my monthly “income”. So I am, it seems, without medical insurance until November. A bit scary, but I stocked up on prescriptions, and my two primary specialists have promised to treat me for “free” [I may look askance at U.S. medical ‘policy’, but I have some really terrific doctors] – so, I guess, I’ll just go for it...

As to the why of why I’m “disabled”, well, the osteoporosis, while essentially “under control”, is not something that gets any better. I’m so careful

as to what I lift, and reach for, that it probably appears totally ridiculous to a galactic observer. Still, I occasionally “aggravate” the back, and continually “pull muscles”, as I gimp through life. Not fun; but I’m still mobile... and so many others have it so much worse.

But the primary reason I’m now, in essence, A Full Time Fan – once an unobtainable dream, now reality, but at what “price”? – is summed up in a word I dreaded uttering to myself, let alone others, long after I knew...

Emphysema.

Not a pretty word. Not a pretty disease. To a certain extent, “treatable”, but certainly not a “curable” condition. As of a series of tests a couple of months ago I don’t have cancer, lung or otherwise, but I did experience a weight loss down to a barely three-digit level (from which I’ve marginally bounced back). The primary effect, thus far, is a diminishing amount of fortitude: I’ve never been the most energetic soul around, but now I have to take far too many “breaks”, even from something such as typing, to re-group. It’s all a matter of pacing; it’s all a matter of sheer stubbornness. That, at least, I do excel at.

Not that Life is a total downer. Once again, here and worldwide – literally – I have found what a rewarding experience it is to be a part of science fiction fandom. Most of my closest friends – although some would now disclaim the term “fan” – were first found in fandom. And the kindness, and sheer generosity of those I’d describe as more “acquaintances” than “friends” has been totally astounding.

Those who participated in my “auction”. Those (mainly Seattle-based) who, for to me unfathomable reasons, paid my way to Portland for OryCon, and who totally overwhelmed me with Care & Support there, and afterwards in Seattle. And those, when I came back from that November trip totally psyched and determined to attend the Seattle Corflu the first weekend in March, donated neat stuff and then paid ridiculous prices for fanzines, sufficient to pay my way back to Seattle.

No, it’s not a perfect world. And fandom is no more, nor no less, “perfect” than the world-at-large. But don’t ever try to tell me that it isn’t a very special place to be.

Strangely, despite All This, I’m not “depressed”. I went through that in the early '90s; believe me, I

know the routine. What I am is frustrated with my inability to accomplish anything near what I want to, what I “need” to... And I feel totally the fool when I find myself unable to fulfill promises made.

So much to do. Fanzines to publish. (That, after all, is What I Do. That, after all, is My Legacy.) Letters to write, friendships to cherish and nurture, books to read (so many), videotapes to watch, e-mails to answer... It’s not as if I’ve a chance to become bored with life, you know.

I am, slowly, having to come to terms with my own mortality. That’s not easy; but sometimes I suspect it’s easier for me, than for a few of my friends.

I do know this much: I will not go quietly into the good, long night. I’m much too stubborn, and cantankerous, to simply fade away.

Deal with it!

I started out with a drafting apprenticeship, straight out of high school. [It was with a defense contractor, with in-house classes. Other than that, for nearly six months as I waited for a security clearance, I wasn’t permitted to do anything else. I’d never before even experimented, but that was when I began smoking. Which, of course, has led inevitably to at least half of my current health “problems”. I definitely “owe” them.]

I made several alternate career choices – more lateral than vertical moves – over the years – and spent the last 15 years of my working time primarily as a checker. A “checker”, you ask? Well, when I was a flunky drafter, there was this idiot who looked at my drawings, and told me that I’d screwed up. As a checker I became that idiot.

Still I’ve always considered myself a mechanical drafter, and go back to an era in which that was a craft, not a job description. Over the past dozen years I found time and again that because one had a knowledge of CAD programs didn’t necessarily mean that one could draw worth shit.

Sort of like the advent of DTP, which has only proved once again that a badly-designed fanzine is still a badly-designed fanzine, only more so, when produced on a computer.

[Fellow fannish drafters included the late ATom and Buck Coulson, as well as Rob Hansen. Any others out there?]

Bill [February 2000]



My Life As a Hanging... whatever!

Xenolith 45 | May 7, 2001

IT WAS MY INTENT to regale you with a blow-by-blow yet-another-blow Account of my Adventures in MedicineLand since February, 2000, but time- and space-constraints will spare you. This is made a bit more awkward in that many of you, particularly those online, have heard the story in excruciating Detail, whereas others, if noticing at all, may have assumed that I'd simply Went Away, again.

It probably would have been preferable, had that been true!

In March of last year, I went back to Seattle, for Corflu. It was a hassle, but well worth it: I enjoyed myself totally... and came back on a Fannish High. Then, as near as I can trace it back, around the beginning of May I started feeling poorly, and I kept feeling progressively more so – but without medical insurance was reluctant to 'check it out' – and, by the time of Midwestcon (at the end of June), well, I only made it up to the con for an hour Friday evening, and managed to last perhaps 3 hours Saturday, before bailing out. And yet I had absolutely no idea of just what was 'wrong', why I was in total misery.

**alert* New Pain Story; no waiting!*

On Thursday evening [the 29th] following MWC I thought I might have to call Dave Locke [Warning: esoteric Local Allusion] and have him bring me his copy of Stephen King's *INSOMNIA* to read. In the hospital.

I'd had a pre-scheduled appointment with my pulmonary doctor that Thursday afternoon. Within 20 minutes of my arrival he had me being wheelchaired from the medical office tower a Vast Distance to the Emergency Room at Christ Hospital. Got there about 3 p.m.; left there around 9:30 p.m.

To 'breviate the hours: After blood tests, and X-rays, it was determined that the reason I was unable to give them a urine "sample" was that I had at least 3 bladder stones. Two were floating nicely; one wasn't. It had lodged in the Outtake Valve. One catheter inserted, and instantly (per the nurse) out came over two liters... [Which explains why, although I hadn't been eating, I had "gained" weight, when on the scales in the doctor's office.]

Such a relief!

There was some talk of keeping me overnight, but eventually they sent me home w/catheter still in, and a "leg bag". I had an appointment with a urologist the following Monday morning, to see what my options were. I was really hoping it didn't involve surgery. Amusing, my delusions, eh wot?

The Office Call was \$90. I didn't know what the Emergency Room tab would be. (It ended up being close to a grand.) Add in pre-op tests. And the surgery... I had no idea of what all this would cost, sans medical insurance – but I knew it Would Not Be Good.

I was miserable: it was a drag, that catheter; the leg edema flared anew... and I was petrified about financial repercussions.

But when the Darkness is deepest: With some new knowledge, and having nothing to lose, in early July I had Art drive me over to the Cincinnati VA Hospital. I showed the woman in the mini Eligibility Office my USAF Discharge form, and 'proof' of (not!) Income. Literally in less than five minutes... having keyed a few things into her computer, but with no phone calls, meetings, whatever – she told me I was, indeed, Eligible for medical coverage/care (everything but Dental) under VA Guidelines. As long as I go to a VA facility, there is No Charge. With one exception: I pay \$2 for each month's allotment of each of my

meds. There's a few of those, but they mail refills, and it beats what many have to pay!

I told Art, coming out that day: "I now believe in miracles!"

I made it to The Last Rivercon, even tho I had to be wheelchaired about (due to the edema), and in early August the VA surgeon blasted the offending stones to smithereens... An overnight stay, and I was good to go. As it were.

Just when The Darkness seemed to be lifting...

Toward the end of August, and into September, I kept getting weaker and weaker – but I wasn't 'sick', as such. I shouldn't have, but the tickets were paid for by an auction of donated fanzines – and I *wanted* to see my friends – so I went to the Dallas Ditto... When the return flight arrove Monday night at Dayton, Bill Cavin picked me up, and drove me home. Whereupon I collapsed in the living room recliner, where I slept, and from which I barely budged the following day... I simply had no strength.

Finally, Wednesday morning – September 27 – I came to my senses, and had Art drive me to the VA Emergency Room.

I next saw this house on Monday. *November 27th.*

They called it "pulmonary edema". There were mucho tests, and they scared me constantly with "possible causes", but on Friday 10/13 I was transferred from the Hospital, to a nursing home/rehab facility... less than two miles from here.

Thank God for RNs. One literally saved my life, by standing up to a proto-Doctor! Apart from that, I Have Tales to Tell – and will so tell – of those two months, but that will come in time.

A wing and a prayer, but temporary Medicaid paid the Rehab megabill, and tho I was still weak, I was ever so glad to Get Home.

I survived December. And, although it still ain't Easy, I make do – I have a Support System here that is incredible.

Bill [May 2001]





Here's Lookin' At You;

or, What I Did on My Summer Vacation...

Xenolith 46 | March 31, 2002

YOU KNOW, it is more than slightly surreal to lie flat on one's back – for, as I later found out, an hour and a half ('cutting time') – with one's arms strapped down, as well as forehead, nested but with the Very Hard Object under the neck, so that despite the current configuration of my upper body I was positioned such that my 'gaze' would be straight up, in an initially Very Cold room, which after a (requested) couple of blankets, plus a heating pad rapidly became sweltering – awake – but with head shrouded with some material translucent enough that I could detect vague movement with my Good Eye –

...all the while hearing, with much too much clarity, these two Voices inches above my head:

Talk of "wounds" and "cutting" and "scalpels", of "tucking" and "folding" and "extracting", requests for added fluid... And the Older Surgeon telling the Younger Surgeon that she was being "too aggressive", and an occasional "Here, let me show you how to do that..." – followed by a switch of channels in the speakers above my immobilized head. Reassuring, that.

I know what I expected, what I most dreaded, and I don't know how they accomplished it – probably shouldn't ask, for future (possible) repeats – but I

Did Not *see* anything approaching my "bad eye"; there was no sense of having vision, and then losing it. And while my body sweated, and my throat and mouth went dry, and even tho I eventually asked them to kick the 'air' from two liters up to three, that was probably more a matter of establishing that, "Hey, I'm *still* here!", rather than any pressing Need... And thru it All, pre-op (with a gallon of 'drops' to "soften" the eye), throughout the entire Procedure, and post-op, there was not a single twinge of anything that could be labeled *pain*.

Discomfort. Uneasiness. Mild panic attacks as certain verbal "exchanges" were made above my head. There was, yes, the inconvenience of the patch, the being ever-so-careful, and what Wondering – they *said* it went well; but I spent two years in Missouri – from about 9:30 am Tuesday morning until 11:15 this – Wednesday – morning, wondering if I really would have Sight...

I do. A bit blurry at times, but definitely, noticeably Better. (I was told today, after it was all over, that they didn't even attempt to give me 20/20, or to make the (New) Left Eye far-sighted, when the Right Eye is, definitely, near-sighted – because to do such would give me double vision. At this stage I'm not arguing.)

The One Other Thing They Didn't Tell Me was that the patch, and the protective cup they sent me home with yesterday, would protrude to an extent that I couldn't get my glasses on over it. After an abortive attempt at perching them Ben-Franklin-like on the end of my nose I gave up, and last night "listened" to the blur of TV news, and spent (probably) far too much time with my eye about a foot from this monitor, reading email. And I took naps, and eventually slept, virtually sitting up... so as as not to risk tossing and turning, and dislodging Da Patch.

Now it is done.

And I want to thank so many of you for your caring, concern, advice, reassuring anecdotes –

and patience – as this all came to pass. I'll never manage to acknowledge my appreciation individually; but it is there.

[And, yeah, when time comes to "do" the other eye – not an immediate prospect, I've been assured – I'll still be totally wired. But, perhaps, a little less so than this time!]

Tomorrow I resume *The Rest of My Life*.

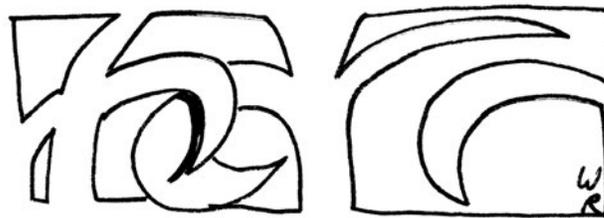
There are decisions to be made, phone calls, whatever, as well as other Health Concerns. Lots of stuff, fannish and otherwise to catch up on.

But this was a Biggie.

Tonight I veg.

That, now, I have a post-grad degree in...

Bill Bowers [Wednesday, August 1, 2001]



from *Xenolith 48*, July 20, 2002

Ah, the Muehlebach. I first encountered it the year previously, at one of my more memorable conventions, BYOBcon 5. It was there that the late Joni Stopa, along with my Official Red Herring, saved me from an East-Coast-based Fate Worse than...; also, where Sunday morning, a very subdued Harlan came up to several of us at breakfast with the news of Vaughn Bode's death. But, most significantly (fannishly), for me, was the Sunday night party in a suite where at an open window the GoldDust Twins, and Bill Cavin (not to mention Lou Tabakow), were hanging out, kibitzing the hookers on the street below. Despite the fact I'd been attending Midwestcons since 1963, this was my first (conscious) experience with a CFG Suite. In the main room of that suite, the once & future Legendary Fannish Strip-Hangman Game was taking place.

I think it was, it probably was, Gale Burnick-inspired. A couple of participants will remain anonymous, since they probably wouldn't want to be reminded, but one of the Couch boys was very goshwowish; despite multiple wrong answers, Jack Chalker did not lose, since no one wanted to see Jack naked... and Phyllis Eisenstein, clad in a one-piece jump-suit, did not lose a single round.

Mike Glicksohn ended up with one sock.

[No, I don't recall which foot; I'll wager he doesn't, either.]

I don't recall photos being taken.

Be that as it may, I was fairly familiar with the environs even earlier than that: In the 1966/67 time frame, an incredible number of Your Defenders would pile into a VW Bug at the AFBase southeast of KC, on the way to hang out in the bars and the clubs in the same neighborhood as the Muehlebach. Memory has (probably just as well) smoothed the vividness into tonal impressions, but there was this one stripper, you see, who has forever imprinted her rendition of "Wild Thing" on my decrepit mind...

So the hotel is gone, eh?

I wonder about the monstrosity in St. Louis, which, at an Archon 15 years after St. Louiscon, was still Not Fun?

I do know that Clark AFB, my home for 17 months in the Philippines, has been completely leveled...

...as has been this diversion.

Beware the Ides of Wednesday

Xenolith 46 | March 31, 2002

BEWARE THE IDES OF WEDNESDAY. The 13th. After having finally conceded that, no, I *wasn't* going to make the February FAPA Mailing – when it *arrived* on the 4th...

[Not that, you understand, I really *had* to get my 8 pages in prior to the May Mailing – FAPA's minac is, I submit, a bit *too* deceptive – but, as I might have mentioned a time or three before, this incarnation of **X** wasn't meant to be an Annual...]

...I'd finally gotten down to some Serious Work on tweaking [some would possibly look askance were I to employ the "editing" descriptor] the LoCs for this Issue. I should have known: for a month (well, more...) I'd been ignoring the 4-digit number followed by "IMMINENT HARD DRIVE FAILURE" that greeted me in stark-white-letters-on-black-screen every time I booted up. Persistence, opting for F1, and a fair number of time-consuming system scans ensued, but I fanaced on; there was no way I could "afford" to do otherwise, after all.

On the morning of March 14 the Computer Ghods arbitrarily decided that the adjective "imminent" should become past-tense. I could still manage certain tasks, but enough had frozen up that it was evident, even to me, that It Was Time. I shut it down before everything was blown and, since I'd clipped a \$20-off coupon, I called PC On Call; I am sure most major cities have something similar – techs in a fleet of vans who make House Calls to small businesses... and crips who can't get out. It was Saturday the 16th before they could get someone out – but I lucked out, and got a friendly young guy only a year out of college with an IT degree. He was here well over five hours, but only "charged" for three-and-a-half-hours. Still that, plus the new hard drive (down-sized from 30- to 20-gig, but that is more than enuf, for me), and boosting the RAM from an anemic 64k to 256k... totaled up to half of my monthly stipend.

Scary, but the kid managed to **save** (most) of my data, and also pulled the hard drive from

the "old" Jackie-designed/Don-Carter-upgraded PC, the one with a dead Power switch, and saved the non-program data from that to a folder, here, (titled "Old PC", strangely enough) – which I'm still mining...

This, now, was Ghood, with two "inconveniences":

1) Since the transfer from old hard drive to new was done via DOS, **all** of my epic-length descriptors (text, and the zillions of magazine cover scans I've 'collected') were, of course, truncated into 8-character DOS strings, complete with not-helpful tildes. How so inconsiderate of DOS, don't you think?

...and 2): About the parenthetical "most", above: my (ahem!) tendency to Save/Retain everything, yes, extends to copious amounts of email. I have... had... this elaborate tree of Eudora folders, folders-within-folders, folders-within-folders-within-folders – get the idea? All automatically arranged in alphabetical order, depending on the "name" I'd assigned each. Well, I have a feeling the old hard drive had a major "episode" (I've become very attuned to medical terms, over the past few years) about halfway down that email tree. For instance, all my personal correspondence, innovatively filed under "People" had disappeared. The break occurred just South of "MyZines". Well, actually, somewhere *in* the MyZines folder.

The "Outworlds" sub-folder survived.

The "Xenolith" sub-folder did not.

If I were inclined to believe in Portents, and Signs!

As it is, I *think* I'd previously managed to save all the formal LoCs as safe .txt files.

We shall see...

Of course, there was a BackStory to that upbeat missive, above. With me, there almost always is...

The surgery was performed on July 31, 2001. A Tuesday.

It had originally been Scheduled for the preceding Tuesday (Tuesdays being the only day the VA Hospital did cataract surgery), but early in July I received a call from my Doc, saying there had been a cancellation and, if I wished, they could do it a week earlier.

I'd waited long enough: "Yes. Please!"

They schedule three surgeries each Tuesday: for 7 AM; 9 AM, and 11 AM.

I don't recall what my original cut-time had been, but on the 17th, it was set for the last, 11, with me having to show up two hours preceding.

Monday evening, July 16th. Somewhere between 9 and 10 p.m., trying to watch TV... but wired like I'd never been wired before – this was my E*Y*E they were going to cut into, after all... the phone rang.

It was my little Doc, and I swear she was almost crying, but the Staff Surgeon was sick, and they were going to have to cancel the three Tuesday surgeries... but they'd definitely "do" me the following week.

Woosh. (The sound of me suddenly deflating; pissed... but simultaneously "relieved".)

I called the next day, and was given the 9 a.m. slot on the 24th.

That would be my Original Date, if you are following along on your Pocket Program Guide.

I took the Access bus over, got there around 6:30 a.m., hung out downstairs, postponing the inevitable, before getting up to the Waiting Room, and dialing the duty nurse, around 7.

The waiting room was fairly full – they do perform other-type surgeries, plus it serviced the ICU – so it took me a while to grasp the fact that the family of Cataract Kid #1 – who had been given the 7 a.m. slot – were still there.

They were still there at 8.

...and, by golly, even as it approached 9. My time.

Finally the Rest of the Story emerged: They had inserted the initial needle in his eye, and then found that the magic electronic microscope-gizmo, you know, what they used to SEE what they were doing, was malfunctioning.

Wonderful.

Eventually they extricated the poor guy, and sent him home. But told me to stick around.

About 11 my little Doc came to the waiting room, knelt beside where I was sitting, said the manufacturer's tech still hadn't made it, he might get it fixed by noon, did I want to stick around...

they'd already sent CK #3 home... or do it the following week?

Hmmm... Wait for the possibility that the most crucial machine *might* get fixed that day, with a Doc who was probably as frazzled as I... or go through it all again, a week later.

I called my ride home.

She, the Doctor, was young, intense, obviously dedicated, and well aware of the high-wire act my emotions were attempting without a net, so she offered me the choice of the three time slots available, for the 31st.

I took Door #1 – 7 AM – and, yes, all went smoothly.

[The BackStory's BackStory: Had that fallen through, I don't know what I'd have done. I almost had to have it done on the 31st since, in a stroke of total luck, effective August 1st I was going into a Medicaid HMO (one that does cost me, but which provides the home care I didn't qualify for under VA guidelines) – and once in that, I had to go to their Docs. They did let me go to the VA for the follow-ups; otherwise I would have been back to Square One... waiting who knows how many more months, for the surgery.]

And you wonder why I sometimes get the distinct feeling that I'm bouncing back and forth between several different alternate worlds?

I don't need no steenk'n SF...

I've got MyLife!

Had this been issued at any earlier point betwixt now and last May 7th, it would have been rife with the Crises-of-the-Day. Sure, there are continued crises – I'm well into the third week of the most prolonged asthma flare-up/attack I've experienced in years, exacerbated, I'm sure, by the amount of money that I had to put into this Toy – but the crises come and the crises go, and comes a time when they are more history than crisis... at which point it is time to meander on...

I don't mean to make light of it – I haven't gotten rid of any of the underlying ailments – and I do appreciate the concern and support you so generously heap on me... when I dump on you. Still, I grew up with far too many Woe Is Me hypochondriacs, to want to play that tune when I don't have to.

However, next time...?

Bill [March 30, 2002]

Speaking of 'Stamina'

Xenolith 48 | July 20, 2002

NO MAJOR PAIN STORIES, this time. Sorry. Life lurches from mini-crisis to mini-crisis, but when the inevitable Query comes, "How are you?", I can answer, honestly, "...for me, not bad." Still – the total frustration that comes of not having the stamina to accomplish even a fraction of what I "need" to do, nevermind that which – silly me – I *want* to do. But things have been worse; a lot!

Speaking of 'stamina':

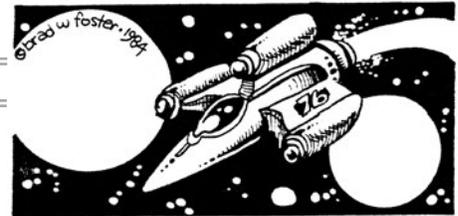
Thanks to the Frankmobile, I managed to make it to Midwestcon 53, both Friday and Saturday evenings. And, once there, I enjoyed myself thoroughly. But the sheer effort required to get up and 'out' is requiring an ever-greater expenditure of energy.

It's unlikely that I'll make it to another convention prior to MWC54, next June. My very first sf

con was the 1962 Chicago Worldcon; my second, the 1963 MWC. I won't be in San Jose this Labor Day but, hmmm, June 1963 until June 2003...

I'm really tempted to "announce" that MWC54 will be my Very Last Convention. I mean, Skel & Cas are booking their flight this Monday, and I have a totally silly (tentative) "commitment" from Eric Lindsay, in the deepest OutBack... So, why not?

Despite trying to pass all these years, I'm still a lot more comfortable behind a keyboard. And, if I should manage a convention or two after that, well, *when* was The Who's Final Tour? 1982, '83? What say? Can I expect you? *Bill [July 20, 2002]*



Downsizing Woes

Neither Rain, Noir Murder 3 | July 20, 2003

NOT ONLY do I have a Limited Budget (a term always more of a concept than it should be, to me), but I'm supposed to be downsizing the already impressive amount of Printed Matter which has taken up residence here, prepping for A Move. Not adding to it.

It's all sf fandom's fault, going back to early 1961, when, in response to a review in the penultimate issue of *Fantastic Universe*, I sent off, to far Indiana, a dime and a nickel, taped to a 3x5 index card... requesting a copy of *Yandro*. Two days later – the mail was that fast, then – I received a postcard in return, stating: "Well, it's a quarter now. But we'll send you one anyway..." And within a week, *Yandro 97* – mimeographed on dog-vomit yellow Twil-tone – came into my world.

Thus my introduction to Robert "Buck" Coulson, and, in self-defined history, my official entry into

fandom. The fact that, while unlikely, I may well still have that postcard, only hints at the challenge facing me over the remainder of this year. I mean [apart from the fanzines, magazines, and Other Collections] I do still have, and can even locate, the very first books I ever bought (in 1959) – two 35¢ Isaac Asimov sf/detective Bantam paperbacks. [At the time a Big Thing: purchased with carefully hoarded 'lunch money'; even then I had my priorities straight!] And while a few have been lost, or ruined, and while I did do a major pass-on to the Friends of the Library about four years ago... I have never deliberately thrown away a book in those 44 years.

You begin to see my problem?

Arrgh!

Bill [July 20, 2003]

from *Neither Rain, Noir Murder 3*, July 20, 2003

A week ago, I took the plunge, and turned in my notice that I would be turning in my notice that I would be moving in the foreseeable future. Something not at the top of things I *want* to do, but rapidly approaching #1 on the Must Do List – both for economic and health reasons. And, as of today, I'm now eligible for what is euphemistically called 'Senior Housing': *not*, so far, 'assisted living', but city-owned apartments where the rent/utilities are capped at a percentage of my S.S. Income. For a packrat, going from a house I've rented for fourteen years, to a one-bedroom apartment is going to be... 'educational'! The goal is to do it before Thanksgiving. Wish me luck! [I'm tired just thinking about it!]

One thing to do at the new abode: Set up things so that I can spread out the Mailing, and do actual Mailing Comments!

MyLife These Days...

A wee bit crowded, but could be a lot worse...



Xenolith 50 | February 10, 2005

AND, IF *Xenolith 1* was the first fanzine – and it was – that I published after moving to Cincinnati, mid-1977... this, it seems, will be the first fanzine published 'from' my fourth abode in the fair City. What – even more significantly – it celebrates is that, in all likelihood, this has been my last 'voluntary' move.

There is simply no way to summarize MyLife from April 2003 [X:49] thru today in a page or even ten... even if I had the energy, even if my body decided to behave itself for a while [I fell – first time in years – on January 3rd, and while nothing was broken, I did bang up my right (aka, the typing one...) shoulder pretty good]. Gradually getting past *that*, this past Monday [the 7th] somehow I managed to Hurt Myself again: I didn't fall, but my lower back/spine... well the pain is excruciating when I attempt to get up or sit down. Everything else has come and gone, but this is the first time in *years* I've had back trouble... The revisited memories are not pleasant, but this too, will pass...

Some of the details are recounted in *NR*, *NM*, but in October 2003 I moved from a house I'd rented for 15 years (longer than I'd ever resided in one place), and even with a housemate and considering what That Woman had made off with, had pretty well filled... to a one-bedroom apartment.

I had the movers four times over 3 months, and that doesn't include endless car-loads. My new abode is labeled "Booth Residence" and, as you may suspect, is a Good Deed HUD-facility of the Salvation Army. All things considered, I really lucked out. It's just a wee bit crowded, and I do have a 10x10 storage locker pretty well filled half a mile away...

Life could be a lot worse.

Last April, my brother (who lives in Florida), while visiting "Home" upstate, drove down here the 200+ miles, picked me (and my life support equipment) up, and drove me up to see my Mother (for the first time in four years). By then she was in a nursing home, and obviously "winding down" – not unexpected since (legally blind since 1992) she'd experienced A Lot in her 94 years. She recognized me, and seemed to enjoy my visit, as did I. I spent two nights at my sister's new home, and then she and my brother-in-law drove me back down... [I was never that close to my siblings growing up... but, obviously, I'm extremely blessed at this point in my life.]

All this became even more "sweet", when my Mother died September 8th. As far as we know, all through her declining years, she never suffered any great pain: she just, gradually, shut down...

and decided it was Time. As was certainly her right, which doesn't make dealing with the reality any easier.

You know, in this age of daily Obits of people one "knows", I've been extremely lucky. Susan Wood was the first person I genuinely cared for to go (far too soon), but between then, and Jackie's death in 1998 was a good long stretch.

These days...

...the odds are that Ditto 13 (Dallas; 2000) will retain its status as my Last out-of-town convention. There are moments, admittedly, when I am sorely tempted (this year's Bay Area Corflu, in particular), and could probably get there. But I can crash 'n' burn so rapidly, so unexpectedly, that I simply can't risk it – either for my own sanity, or that of those who'd have to deal with me. I'm dependent more than enough as it is, on the help and patience of friends here. I literally hate to ask for help doing things that I've done – albeit, not always gracefully – all my life. But, obviously, I've learned to do so...

There are Moments of Madness – fortunately brief – when I speculate on 'fronting' another

Corflu or Ditto here in Cincinnati. Even though the local "fanzine fans" base is minimal, I (immodestly) am confident that I could "persuade" enough out-of-towners to make it so. But what if I would choose that particular weekend to bottom out...?

I miss seeing my friends. But you'll probably have to do the leg work. Anytime – with a bit of notice... But if you need an excuse, there is always Midwestcon, you know. Always the last full weekend in June, and details are readily available at <http://www.cfg.org/> ...

...at least think about it, eh wot?

So much more... Some things important, some not. But, for this moment – given my stamina and the impending FAPA Deadline – this will have to suffice for the 50th...

Respond mightily, and it just *may* 'encourage' me to get the next Issue out in less than two years!

Next time I'll comment on your Comments on this issue's Comment Hooks. Perhaps...

– Bill [February 10, 2005]



“MyPublications”

<i>MyPub</i>	<i>Zine</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Pages</i>	<i>Copies</i>	<i>Notes</i>
01	ABANICO 1	September 1961	16	70	hecto
02	ABANICO 2	November 1961	16	150	mimeo [by Art Hayes]
03	SAP [aka: Abanico 3]	December 1961	4	60	hecto; N'APA
04	ABANICO 4	1962	6	60	hecto; N'APA
05	STAR*DUST 1	April 1962	50	250	offset [by Lynn Hickman]
06	SILVER DUSK 1	June 1962	12	300	letterpress; NAPA
07	SILVER DUSK 2	August 1962	16	500	letterpress; NAPA
08	ABANICO 5	September 1962	6	60	mimeo; N'APA
<i>[all D:B's co-edited w/Bill Mallardi]</i>					
09	DOUBLE-BILL 1	October 1962	34	125	mimeo
10	DOUBLE-BILL 2	December 1962	44	150	mimeo
11	DOUBLE-BILL 3	February 1963	34	150	mimeo
12	TIGHTBEAM 18	March 1963	22	300+	mimeo [for N3F w/Mallardi]
13	DOUBLE-BILL 4	April 1963	32	175	mimeo
14	DOUBLE-BILL 5	June 1963	42	175	mimeo
15	DOUBLE-BILL 6	August 1963	42	175	mimeo
16	DOUBLE-BILL 7	October 1963	100	250	mimeo
17	BAYTA 1	December 1963	10	60	mimeo; N'APA
18	DOUBLE-BILL 8	January 1964	76	250	mimeo
19	BAYTA 2	March 1964	8	60	mimeo; N'APA
20	DOUBLE:BILL 9	June 1964	80	250	mimeo
21	DOUBLE:BILL 10	August 1964	48	225	mimeo
22	DOUBLE:BILL 11	Oct./Nov. 1964	46	225	mimeo
23	DOUBLE:BILL 12	April/May 1965	44	200	mimeo
24	DOUBLE:BILL 13	September 1965	54	225	mimeo
25	DOUBLE:BILL 14	April 1966	38	200	mimeo
26	OUTWORLDS 1	Summer 1966	10	150	mimeo; for Shadow FAPA Mailing 17
27	DOUBLE:BILL 15	September 1966	56	250	mimeo
--	OUTWORLDS 2	November 1966	16	--	---- [...a long story!]
28	DOUBLE:BILL 16	February 1967	52	225	mimeo
29	DOUBLE:BILL 17	[1967]	38		mimeo [by Mallardi/mailed with:]
30	DOUBLE:BILL 18	'3/4/1968'	52		mimeo [mailed October 1968]
31	DOUBLE:BILL 19	January 1969	54		mimeo
32	NEOSFScene 5	February 1969	4	(30)	mimeo; clubzine [w/Mallardi]
33	NEOSFScene 6	March 1969	4	(30)	mimeo
34	NEOSFScene 7	April 1969	2	(30)	mimeo
35	DOUBLE:BILL 20	June 1969	60		mimeo
36	DOUBLE:BILL 21	Fall 1969	100		offset
37	THE DOUBLE:BILL SYMPOSIUM	September 1969	116		offset [6¼ X 8½]
38	OUTWORLDS I	January 1970	26	312	mimeo
39	OUTWORLDS II	March 1970	34	315	mimeo
40	OUTWORLDS III	May 1970	30	300	mimeo
41	OUTWORLDS IV	July 1970	40	503	offset; 3-color
42	OUTWORLDS V	Sept./Oct. 1970	46		mimeo

43	OUTWORLDS Six	1971	32		offset
44	OUTWORLDS:YEAR ONE		12		mimeo [Egoboo Poll results]
--	OUTWORLDS INDEX: YEAR ONE		4		mimeo
45	OUTWORLDS Seven	Spring 1971	50		mimeo; for FAPA
--	OUTWORLDS' INWORDS		14		mimeo [w/OW Eight]
46	OUTWORLDS Eight	June 1971	40		mimeo; for FAPA
47	PROJECT 75.1	August 1971	6	(60)	mimeo; for ANZAPA 18
48	OUTWORLDS 8.5		6		mimeo ['adult' "Beer Mutterings"]
49	OUTWORLDS 8.75		16		mimeo [lettercol + INDEX]
50	OUTWORLDS 3.1	January 1972	24		mimeo; for FAPA
51	OUTWORLDS 3.2		24		mimeo
52	OUTWORLDS 3.3		24		mimeo
53	OUTWORLDS 3.4	August 1972	28		mimeo; for FAPA
54	OUTWORLDS 3.5	November 1972	40	295	mimeo
55	INWORLDS 1	January 1973	4	135	mimeo
56	INWORLDS 2	February 1973	8	168	mimeo
57	OUTWORLDS 15	January 1973	90	223	mimeo; finished 2/24/73
58	"The Lizard Speaks", by Billy Wolfenbarger				[30-pg. insert in OW15; +50 copy overrun]
59	INWORLDS 3	March 1973	8	119	mimeo
60	INWORLDS 4	April 1973	10	182	mimeo
61	INWORLDS 5	June 1973	10	175	mimeo
62	"Mae Strelkov's Friends"		2	(400)	mimeo; auction sheet; legal-size
63	OUTWORLDS 16	June 1973	48	299	mimeo
64	INWORLDS 6	June 1973	6	188	mimeo
65	INWORLDS 7	July 1973	8	155	mimeo; legal-size
66	INWORLDS 8	July 1973	8	171	mimeo; legal-size
67	"...a Synopsis"	(August 1973)	2		mimeo; 'editorial policy'
68	OUTWORLDS 17	August 1973	38	341	mimeo
69	INWORLDS 9	August 1973	6	398	mimeo
70	OUTWORLDS 18	October 1973	36	378	mimeo; 1/2-legal/center-stapled
--	The OUTWORLDS INDEX: YEAR FOUR		2		mimeo
71	INWORLDS 10	December 1973	4	(1000)	offset
72	OUTWORLDS 19	1st Quarter 1974	44	(1500)	offset; FAPA
73	INWORLDS 11		2	(750)	offset
74	OUTWORLDS 20	2nd Quarter 1974	36	(1500)	offset; FAPA
75	OUTWORLDS 21	3rd Quarter 1974	32	(1500)	offset [distributed w/OW22]
76	OUTWORLDS 22	4th Quarter 1974	40	(1500)	offset
82	OUTWORLDS: THE FIRST FIVE YEARS		4		offset [annotated Index]
77	OUTWORLDS 23	1st Quarter 1975	36	(1000)	offset
78	OUTWORLDS 24	2nd Quarter 1975	32	(1000)	offset; FAPA
79	INWORLDS 15		2	(750)	offset
80	OUTWORLDS 25	3rd Quarter 1975	40	(800)	multilith
81	OUTWORLDS 26	4th Quarter 1975	36	(1000)	offset
83	OUTWORLDS 27	1st Quarter 1976	44	(1000)	offset
84	FATHER WILLIAM'S MISHAPventures 1	May 1976	4	110	offset; for MISHAP 16
85	MISHAPventures 2	June 1976	4	104	offset; for MISHAP 17
86	MISHAPventures 3	July 1976	2	(150)	mimeo; w/6pg. Prelude; MISHAP 18/MINNEAPA 76
87	...ACTUALLY, I'M ONLY 15...	August 1976	4	(150)	offset; MyPub; FAPA 156/MISHAP 20
88	MISHAPventures 4	August 1976	2	112	offset; MISHAP 19
89	MISHAPventures 5	September 1976	2	(100)	mimeo; MISHAP 20

--	OTHER PLACES, OTHER TIMES	September 1976	28		offset; [by Randy Bathurst] [w/Ro Lutz-Nagey]
90	OUTWORLDS 28/29	10/13/1976	68	(1100)	offset
91	MISHAPventures 6	12/02/1976	2	(150)	mimeo; MISHAP 23 & AZAPA
92	MISHAPventures 7	01/06/1977	3	(80)	ditto; MISHAP 24
93	MISHAPventures 8	01/24/1977	2	(70)	ditto; MISHAP 25
94	AZapatite 1	02/09/1977	2		mimeo; AZAPA 22
95	MISHAPventures 9	05/03/1977	2		mimeo; MISHAP 28
<i>[...here be the move to Cincinnati; June, 1977]</i>					
96	XENOLITH 1	10/17/1977	10	192	offset
97	XENOLITH 2	12/23/1977	10	153	offset
98	XENOLITH 3	01/27/1978	12	147	mimeo
99	XENOLITH 4	04/06/1978	12	127	mimeo
100	XENOLITH 5	06/20/1978	12	167	mimeo
101	XENOLITH 6	07/18/1978	2	(150)	mimeo
102	XENOLITH 7	10/22/1978	10	163	offset
103	XENOLITH: EPILOGUE	01/09/1979	10	(120)	offset
104	XENOLITH ONE	01/08/1979	42	(700)	offset ['Second Series']
105	XENOLITH TWO	03/25/1979	36	(500)	offset
106	XENOLITH THREE	01/10/1980	38	(400)	offset
107	XENOLITH FOUR	04/24/1980	12	(300)	[w/'OUTWORLDS 30: The Speech']
108	XENOLITH: THE INDEX	06/13/1980	2		mimeo
109	XENOLITH 13	06/13/1980	10		mimeo ['Third Series']
110	XENOLITH 14	10/11/1980	20		mimeo
111	XENOLITH 15	[a speech at ConFusion, 01/21/81; printed in:]			
112	XENOLITH 16	02/19/1981	24		mimeo
113	XENOLITH 17	03/21/1981	12		mimeo
114	XENOLITH 18	09/17/1981	2		mimeo [MyPub listing]
115	BILL BOWERS' Meaningful Relationships 1	09/26/1981	2		mimeo; for FLAP 12
116	XENOLITH 19	10/07/1981	16		mimeo
117	Meaningful Relationships 2	12/03/1981	2		mimeo; for FLAP
118	Meaningful Relationships 3	02/07/1982	8		mimeo; for FLAP
119	Meaningful Relationships 4	04/04/1982	4		mimeo; for FLAP
120	Meaningful Relationships 5	06/04/1982	4		mimeo; for FLAP
121	XENOLITH TWENTY	06/21/1982	16		mimeo
122	Meaningful Relationships 6	07/30/1982	2		mimeo; for FLAP
123	XENOLITH 21	10/02/1982	14		mimeo
--	OUTWORLDS 30	[a speech; ConFusion 1/17/1980; printed in XENOLITH:FOUR & OUTWORLDS 31]			
125	OUTWORLDS 31	01/24/1983	24		mimeo
124	XENOLITH 22	02/02/1983	4		mimeo [started 11/15/1982]
126	OUTWORLDS 32	03/09/1983	12		mimeo
127	XENOLITH 23	05/03/1983	2		mimeo
128	OUTWORLDS 33	06/22/1983	22		mimeo
129	XENOLITH 24	08/05/1983	2		mimeo; for FLAP 23
130	OUTWORLDS 34	08/28/1983	24		mimeo
131	XENOLITH 25	09/24/1983	2		mimeo; for FLAP 24
132	OUTWORLDS 35	10/10/1983	12		mimeo
133	OUTWORLDS 36	12/26/1983	12		offset
134	OUTWORLDS 37	01/12/1984	62		mimeo
135	OUTWORLDS 38	06/16/1984	46		mimeo
136	OUTWORLDS 39	07/10/1984	12		mimeo

137	OUTWORLDS 40	08/25/1984	24		mimeo
138	OUTWORLDS 41	12/03/1984	24		mimeo
139	OUTWORLDS 42	12/27/1984	12		mimeo
140	OUTWORLDS 43	01/24/1985	60		mimeo
141	OUTWORLDS 44	06/22/1985	12		mimeo
142	OUTWORLDS 45	07/19/1985	24		mimeo
143	OUTWORLDS 46	08/21/1985	28		mimeo
144	OUTWORLDS 47	10/13/1985	12		mimeo
145	OUTWORLDS 48	12/31/1985	20		mimeo
146	WORLDS OF CORFLU 1	1986	2		mimeo
147	WORLDS OF CORFLU 2	1986	2		copier
148	WORLDS OF CORFLU 3	1987	2		copier
149	OUTWORLDS 49	04/02/1987	28		copier
150	OUTWORLDS 50	06/25/1987	40		copier + 'Live' & Video Editions
151	OUTWORLDS 51	06/26/1987	18		copier [10th Anniv All-Cincy Ish]
152	OUTWORLDS 52	09/25/1987	24		copier
153	OUTWORLDS 53	12/07/1987	30	120	copier
154	OUTWORLDS 54	01/10/1988	28		copier
155	XENOLITH 26	02/04/1988	4		copier; for FLAP 50
156	XENOLITH 27	02/23/1988	8		copier; for FLAP 51
157	OUTWORLDS 55	03/25/1988	34	130	copier
158	XENOLITH 28	05/16/1988	8		copier; for FLAP 52
159	OUTWORLDS 56	06/18/1988	30	130	copier
160	OUTWORLDS 57	07/22/1988	28	150	copier
161	XENOLITH 29	08/04/1988	8		copier; for FLAP 53 [MyPub]
162	OUTWORLDS 58	09/18/1988	40		commercial copier [c/c]
163	XENOLITH 30	10/06/1988	2		copier; for FLAP 54
164	OUTWORLDS 59	10/26/1988	6		copier
165	XENOLITH 31	05/29/1989	3		copier; for FLAP 58 ['Censored'/2 'versions']
166	XENOLITH 32	09/30/1990	6		copier; for FLAP 66 [The Return]
167	SINGULAR QUOTE-MARKS	10/22/1990	2		ditto; for DITTO 3 combazine
168	XENOLITH 33	12/05/1990	6		copier; for FLAP 67
169	XENOLITH 34	02/07/1991	10		copier; for FLAP 68
170	XENOLITH 35	03/29/1991	6	88	copier; for FLAP 69
171	OUTWORLDS 60	04/16/1991	60	140	c/c
172	XENOLITH 36	05/14/1991	10	71	copier; for FLAP 70
173	OUTWORLDS 27.5	05/27/1991	40		c/c; late lettercol: file after #83
174	OUTWORLDS 61	06/25/1991	46	150	c/c
175	XENOLITH 36.5	07/19/1991	8	70	c/c; for FLAP 71
176	XENOLITH 36.75	08/27/1991	2	70	for FLAP 72
177	flaf [] ONE	12/02/1991	2		for FLAP 73
178	OUTWORLDS 62	01/20/1992	120		c/c [MyPub Listing]
179	flaf [] TWO	02/05/1992	2	50	for FLAP 74
180	OUTWORLDS 29.5	12/16/1997	60	125	c/c; late lettercol: -after #90
181	flaf [] THREE	04/04/1992	2	50	for FLAP 75
181a	DITTO V.One [p.r.]	05/07/1992	4		[w/Roger & Pat Sims]
182	flaf [] FOUR	05/23/1992	2	50	for FLAP 76
183	OUTWORLDS 64	06/21/1992	40	(175)	c/c [15th Anniv. All-Cincy Issue]
184	flaf [] FIVE	07/26/1992	2	50	for FLAP 77
185	flaf [] SIX	10/04/1992	2	50	for FLAP 78

186	OUTWORLDS 63	10/18/1992	72	(150)	c/c
186a	DITTO V Program Book	10--/1992	4		[w/Roger & Pat Sims]
187	flaf [] SEVEN	11/29/1992	2	50	for FLAP 79
188	OUTWORLDS 65	01/02/1993	40	(150)	c/c
189	flaf [] EIGHT	04/03/1993	2	80	for FLAP 81
190	OUTWORLDS 66	05/18/1993	40	(175)	c/c
191	XENOLITH 37	10/03/1993	2		copier; for FLAP 84
192	flaf [] NINE	05/11/1996	1		Jackie's printer/for FLAP 100
193	XENOLITH 38	08/11/1996	20	80	c/c; for FLAP 101
194	XENOLITH 39	03/01/1997	10	70	c/c; for FLAP 103
195	OUTWORLDS 67	06/22/1997	26	175	c/c [20th Anniv. All-Cincy Issue]
196	XENOLITH 40	07/30/1997	8	60	c/c; for FLAP 105
197	OUTWORLDS 68	10/17/1997	68	175	c/c
198	XENOLITH 41	03/07/1998	4	60	c/c; for FLAP 107
199	OUTWORLDS 69	05/05/1998	84	175	c/c
200	OUTWORLDS 70	08/29/1998	150	199	c/c
201	flaf [] TEN	08/31/1998	2	50	c/c; for FLAP 109
202	The Fan in My Grave	11/19/1998	6	60	c/c; for DAPA-Em 144
203	XENOLITH 42	02/10/1999	8	101	for FAPA 246
	203e:1 eXENOLITH 42	02/20/1999	38kb	[-]	ASCII text Version
	203e:2 eXENOLITH 42	02/20/1999	241kb	[281]	Word97 Version
	203e:3 eXENOLITH 42	02/20/1999	432kb	[15]	Word 6.0 Version
	203e:4 eXENOLITH 42	07--/1999	54kb	[54]	.pdf Version
204	flaf [] ELEVEN	03/09/1999	2	50	for FLAP 111
205	The Fan in My Grave 2	03/17/1999	4	60	for DAPA-Em 146
206	XENOLITH 43	05/11/1999	8	10	for FAPA 247
	206e:1 eXENOLITH 43	05/16/1999	42kb	[66]	ASCII text Version
	206e:2 eXENOLITH 43	05/17/1999	529kb	[32]	Word 6.0 Version
	206e:3 eXENOLITH 43	07--/1999	104kb	[]	.pdf Version
207	The Fan in My Grave 3	07/14/1999	4	60	for DAPA-Em 148
208	flaf [] TWELVE	09/01/1999	2	40	for FLAP 113
209	The Fan in My Grave 4	11/11/1999	4	60	for DAPA-Em 150
210	Precursor	11/11/1999	4	50	for APA-50 142
211	XENOLITH 44	02/10/2000	8	101	for FAPA 250
	211e:1 eXENOLITH 44	02/16/2000	415kb	[-]	ASCII text Version
	211e:2 eXENOLITH 44	02/16/2000	43kb	[-]	MSWord Version
	211e:3 eXENOLITH 44	--	111kb	[]	.pdf Version
212	The Fan in My Grave 5	06/02/2000	4	60	for DAPA-Em 153
	212e:1 Grave 5	06/03/2000	22kb	[46]	ASCII text Version
	212e:2 Grave 5	06/03/2000	71kb	[31]	MSWord Version
213	The Fan in My Grave 6	07/12/2000	2	60	for DAPA-Em 154
	213e:1 Grave 6	07/12/2000	15kb	[46]	ASCII text Version
	213e:2 Grave 6	07/12/2000	62kb	[31]	MSWord Version
214	...son-of-a-Grave	01/15/2001	4	60	for DAPA-Em 157
215	XENOLITH 45	05/07/2001	8	130	for FAPA 255 & DAPA-Em 159
	215e:1 eXENOLITH 45		68kb	[-]	ASCII text Version
	215e:2 eXENOLITH 45		120kb	[-]	MSWord Version
	215e:3 eXENOLITH 45		90kb	[-]	.pdf Version
216	XENOLITH 46	03/31/2002	8	75	for FAPA 259
	216e:1 eXENOLITH 46		65kb	[63]	text Version

	216e:2 eXENOLITH 46		285kb	[34]	MSWord Version
	216e:3 eXENOLITH 46		74kb	[10]	.rtf Version
	216e:4 eXENOLITH 46		142kb	[76]	.pdf Version
217	XENOLITH 47	04/15/2002	4	70	for DAPA-Em 165
	217e:1 eXENOLITH 47		31kb	[63]	text Version
	217e:2 eXENOLITH 47		283kb	[34]	MSWord Version
	217e:3 eXENOLITH 47		37kb	[10]	.rtf Version
	217e:4 eXENOLITH 47		119kb	[76]	.pdf Version
218	XENOLITH 48	07/20/2002	6	75	for FAPA 260
	218e:1 eXENOLITH 48		43kb	[63]	text Version
	218e:2 eXENOLITH 48		295kb	[34]	MSWord Version
	218e:3 eXENOLITH 48		43kb	[76]	.pdf Version
	218e:4 eXENOLITH 48		49kb	[10]	.rtf Version
219	Neither Rain, Noir Murder... 01	11/26/2002	8	[40]	for DAPA-Em 168
	219e:1 eNOIR MURDER 01		136kb		MSWord Version
	219e:2 eNOIR MURDER 01		110kb		.pdf Version
	219e:3 eNOIR MURDER 01		68kb		.rtf Version
	219e:4 eNOIR MURDER 01		61kb		.txt Version
220	Neither Rain, Noir Murder... 02	03/17/2003	6	[40]	for DAPA-Em 170
	220e:1 eNOIR MURDER 02		812kb		MSWord Version
	220e:2 eNOIR MURDER 02		122kb		.pdf Version
	220e:3 eNOIR MURDER 02		27kb		.rtf Version
	220e:4 eNOIR MURDER 02		23kb		.txt Version
221	XENOLITH 49	04/10/2003	10		for FAPA
	221e:1 eXENOLITH 49		70kb	[]	text Version
	221e:2 eXENOLITH 49		278kb	[]	MSWord Version
	221e:3 eXENOLITH 49		107kb	[]	.pdf Version
	221e:4 eXENOLITH 49		80kb	[]	.rtf Version
222	Neither Rain, Noir Murder... 03	07/20/2003	4		for DAPA-Em 172
223					
224	Neither Rain, Noir Murder... 04	3/24/2004	4		for DAPA-Em 176
225	Neither Rain, Noir Murder... 05	7/22/2004	4		for DAPA-Em 178
226-b	XENOLITH 50	2/10/2005	10		for FAPA 270
227	OUTWORLDS 71	11/11/2020	214	--	print-on-demand; published with Afterworlds

Compiled from *Outworlds 70*, *Xenolith 49*, *Xenolith 49.5*, *Xenolith 50*, and fanac.org.



from *Outworlds 70*, August 1998

The latest version of the Total (this isn't databased) weighs in at 4814 Pages. Sometimes I think it should have been more; other times I wonder – can I ever justify even this stack of paper? There are items that should have been “numbered” which aren't; a couple that are, that shouldn't have been. Others, I suspect primarily apahacks, have much more impressive Total Publication Numbers. Some of you have generated far more total Pages. I don't even speculate on the lifestyle I could lead, had I a portion of the cash outlay represented by that List. But I wouldn't trade it for any amount: It is My Small Mark on the World.

REMEMBERED, AND NEVER FORGOTTEN

Decades come, decades pass
through the zones of years
into limitless infinity;
flashes of good friend Bill Bowers
in print, in face to face, eyes
into eyes fine soul.

In all forms
Bill's humble generosity;
his fandom family holds him sweet and dear.
He said he'd always wanted a life like mine;
yet the grass isn't always greener;
thank God his pains are gone!

We're cosmic pals
seeking the same road home.

-Billy Wolfenbarger





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LoCs & Comments

*Wm. Breiding will be publishing the Final Locs on **Outworlds 71 / Afterworlds** in a final issue of **InWorlds**. It will be produced as a print-on-demand zine and will go to all LoCcers/WAHFs. For completists who don't LoC, it will available for purchase from Amazon. There is no timeline for publication date, but Wm. says he'll likely wrap it up in a fairly timely manner after **OW71** has been published ("maybe six months?"). Please send your LoCs and comments to both InWorlds20@gmail.com and outworlds2020@gmail.com.*
