



Hand-drawn scribbles and wavy lines at the bottom of the page, possibly representing ground or a signature.

A I T T O I

AS I THINK OF IT in preparing TITLE #55 - Date started this: July 25, 1976

On 7/13 Rick Dey sent me a whole flock of xeroxed photos taken at AutoClave. He says I can send back those I'd like original photographs of. There have been quite a number of good reports of that con, and because of the number of Titlers present you may see AutoClave notes/photos in T for a few months yet.

Rick Dey on 7/15 sent a 3 cassette program entitled by Rick "Volumes I-III of Donn Brazier Idle Chit-Chat & Low-Brow Music Appreciation Project". Vol I is "Good Time Music"; Vol II is "Rock Bands & Orchestras"; Vol III is "Silly Stuff". Fascinating. In itself and for the labor Rick devoted to it. My ego is properly boosted.

What has happened to Denis Quane? His last NOTES here was #14 received Dec. 23, 1975 and his last letter came 1/9. He didn't respond to an article I sent him 2/4 (he usually does) and then my letter sent on Apr. 19.

I wondered, too, what had happened to Wayne Jones after AutoClave. Then on July 22 & 24 I received two cards he sent from "camp" where he says he's having a pretty good time despite being "stranded in a mundane place."

When William Wilson Goodson took off for Malaysia as a cog in the Peace Corps, I thought I'd heard the last of him, unfortunately. But not so--- here's an aerogramme of 7/23 with news about the country. His address is No. 11, Jalan 2112, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.

Did you see Paula Smith's copyrighted ballad of AutoClave One? Twelve verses to be sung to the tune of Tom Lehrer's "Ricketty Tickety Tin". Write her at 507 Locust St, Kalamazoo, MI 49007 and ask for a copy of UFFIZIXMEGER with the ballad.

Dr. Fredric Wertham sends a note with the parenthetical note: "Don't forget you read it first in Title!" The note concerns the

current news about the children hijacked from the bus in California. "Terrorists and violent acts are regarded too much in isolation. When the 26 children were hijacked, no reporter nor commentator mentioned that this is a definite new phase of terrorism (the mass kidnapping of children). Early this year in Djibouti three armed gunmen hijacked 21 children aged 9 to 12 from a schoolbus. Terrorism will never be prevented unless we take notice of what actually happens in different places."

Does anyone have a TITLE #51 they'd care to give or sell to Bruce Arthurs? It never arrived; and I have none left. His address is 920 N. 82, H-201, Scottsdale, AZ, 85257. If he doesn't get one it'll spoil his complete run.

Jeff Hecht sent me a xerox of an article by a Robert J. Hezzelwood entitled "Sub-Atomic Vibrations". The author subtitles the short copyrighted work as "The Intersection between Physics and Metaphysics." Possibly Jeff was prompted to send this because of Barbek's piece about time. It was interesting, but substitutes, mostly by analogy, one unproved notion of reality for another. Instead of some ultimate and basic particle (beyond the electron etc.), Hezzelwood postulates a basic unit of ultimate energy. Various forms of energy and matter are built up from this basic energy unit by increasing its vibration or "spin". Granting that these energy "hunks" might be altered abnormally to the usual physical pattern of the universe, Hezzelwood draws some science-fictional type ideas about such things as the Bermuda Triangle, etc. Any physics major want to read it?

Before I ran the photo of "Victoria Vayne" --accepted in good faith-- the cat was out of the bag. Taral Wayne Macdonald who sent the photo convinced me I should run

it anyway or I'd spoil some inner-circle joke planned for AutoClave. And about time I revealed that the photo was not of Victoria. Many readers (male) had already fallen in love with her picture. Well, it would be no disappointment to meet Victoria in person because, in my estimation, she is really better looking than the hoax photo (of some unknown out of Taral's file). Victoria has taken all this in her stride, but in a letter of July 29 she says: "I think the time has come for the joke to end, and a word in T to that effect would be muchly appreciated."

Listened to Ray Bradbury being interviewed by Dr. Paul Saltman, Univ. Ca. San Diego. on educational TV. Some quotes I jotted down: "Go with your enthusiasm and never believe you're wrong." "Educate yourself in all arts for the bits and pieces you need to fill in the large metaphor." "Enjoy! If you don't, get out!" "Get rid of your anger in stories." "Write about wonderful individuals acting at the top of their ability-- not just group action." "First thing in the morning I word-associate for 10 minutes at the typewriter-- experiment!" "Don't look straight at any thing, glance at it out of the corner of your eyes." "You may wait for years before the hummingbird comes back if you miss it the first time."

You know of course that 473
 Now add the digits -291
 that would make each $\underline{\hspace{1cm}}$
 digit of the 291 equal 182
 a 9. Thus, $473+708=1181$. Take the
 first (1) and add it to the last to arrive
 at the answer 182. Fun?

Sometimes do you ever get the feeling that the universe is against fanatic? This morning, Sat. 7/31, I was going to the museum and run off some unfilled quota on the Xerox machine. But--- Were this an electric typewriter I wouldn't be typing now, for the power in the neighborhood is off. It went off at 3:30 a.m. when the storm moved through. It's after 12-noon and the technology of the electric company has not risen to the occasion. The museum, about 11 miles away, probably isn't out of power, so why didn't I go anyway? Because when I got up and looked out the bedroom window I saw a rather calamitous sight which would require my attention. A huge

softmaple tree limb, about twenty-five ft long had broken off and fallen exactly on top of my rows of tomato and green pepper plants. All the stakes were bent over. And it has taken me all morning to trim and the limb & branches to get the thing off my plants, then survey the damage and tie up the broken stems. Then I called my son Mike to come over and get his frozen provisions out of our freezer. Ghod knows what will happen to all the rest of our stuff in there. But Mike & his wife Mary Ann brought over my week-old grand-daughter, so I had another look at the fourth grandchild-- 2 boys and 2 girls now spread between three of my children. And what about the Olympics? The finals of boxing, the track and field.... Guess I'll have to get up early Monday & run off some FARRAGO pages at the museum before the troops arrive. And doing this now without any light but from the window is difficult for my old eyes.

Time flies on...Into August now (the 4th) and T-54 is all done and being readied for the mail...Don't exactly know what to do with this "fanzine" Claire Beck sent me... called KOOKIE COMICS, and has no porn (as I half expected, not that Claire is involved, but the zine resembles some quick underground format). What it has is some rather feeble jokes/cartoons, and is perhaps a commentary from Claire about the humor found in TITLE...? Next week I'll be on two weeks of my month's vacation... intend to go back to Palo Duro Canyon in Texas and get washed away.... The other day Mike Fix dropped in at the office. He is a wheel in the St. Louis SF Soc which meets at Wash. University. Mike teaches at some of the Community Colleges, and I was unaware that he had been coming to the museum every month in his capacity as Pres of the Eastern Missouri Paleontological Society....

I might go to another con this year..it's fairly close (Iowa City) but the drawing card for me is that Mike Glicksohn is fan guest of honor. This is ICON 2 to be held Novemeber 5-7; to register, with \$5, write S.F.L.I.S., P.O.Box 710, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240. Unless the filming of DUNE interferes, Frank Herbert will be pro GoH. Mark Moore at the above address can give you more information. There'll be 14 huckster tables organized by Rusty Hevelin. Sounds like this will be a good one; ought to draw from Minneapolis, Chicago & Beacher.

Well, I'm back from a 2-week vacation in a Texas canyon-- been back at work 3 days and today the 25th of August Rick Wilber dropped in, Paul Walker called, and sometime this week (or next?) Jackie Franke will be stopping by on the way to MAC. I had a table full of mail from eleven deliveries: 57 letters & cards, 16 zines, 2 packages, and all kinds of enclosures in the above mentioned letters. Like two fannish pencil/pens, 29 photographs, electrostenciled art, money. The packages contained a beer can, empty, and candy kisses from Myrtle Beach...now who went through Myrtle Beach? Dare I eat the kisses?

The September ANALOG has an article by a Titler-- Jeff Hecht. I'd been waiting to see Jeff's article on lasers-- and the only reason I bought the zine. Congrats, Jeff!

Read two novels during my camping trip! THE STOCHASTIC MAN and THE FLESH IN THE FURNACE. Both kept my interest. The first because of the statistical talk but as a whole the book was disappointing because the 'hero' couldn't break the futility of it all. The second because the 'hero' was a rather convincing moron and the villain a mean, mean blue-eyed blonde small 'devil'.

In reading LADY LUCK by Warren Weaver I had trouble with a problem #4, and could not justify the answer as given in the book. Hank Heath said the book's answer was a misprint, so I wrote Mr. Weaver-- who graciously replied. In my review in an earlier TITLE of his book SCENE OF CHANGES I waxed enthusiastic about him; I was reinforced with his genuine kindness and goodwill.

I have here a letter from Lee Nisbet, the Executive Director of The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. It's a reply to my note to him about the recent TITLE experiment in astrology. They pub THE ZETETIC, a newsletter edited by Dr. Truzzi, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Mich 48197. Nisbet turned my letter over to the Committee for action.

At my son's highschool baccalaureate service we were all given a booklet for response readings, etc. The whole thing was a metaphor on salt. Yes, salt! For instance, as one of the 'people' I had to read this aloud: "Salty people need each other." Then the graduates said: "A long time ago Christians secretly gathered in

cellars." Then as 'people' I choked in laughter over my next response, which was: "Salt cellars." Now, that's religion!

The Mystery Fan Photo--- Eric Mayer tried to read the name off the diploma behind the fan's desk. Said he couldn't read it. However, maybe it's subliminal, because Eric got the right answer. I have it on good authority that the fan is D. Gary Grady. Jodie Offutt, even if Ed Cagle had been correct, your answer is hereby disqualified because of incomplete listing of your qualifications. Gil Gaier's measurement was 42 inches. Mike Bracken sent another picture of his dog. Eric, you can expect the 15¢ some Tuesday.

All profits to go to DUFF from the sale of Mike Glicksohn's THE HAT GOES HOME-- his Aussiecon report. Won't go to his regular mailing list-- must send one dollar. You get 38 pages, 6 inserts, 5 pasted in souvenirs, illustrated by 15 fanartists. And only 165 copies. No, one less, I've just sent my dollar!

Ben Indick is having a benefit book sale with proceeds going to Dirk Mosig's fund to get a suitable tombstone for H.P. Lovecraft. I intend to use Ben's listing as a protective cover for FARRAGO #3. But if you don't get the Big F, and you have a yen to pick up fantasy or SF cheap while aiding a cause, write Ben for his listing: 428 Sagamore Ave, Teaneck, NJ 07666

The little drawing of the man screaming out of his ears in T-54 was done by Randy Fuller; sorry I forgot to credit it.....

Randy Reichardt is moving from Winnipeg to Edmonton, and may not be able to LoC as customary, but wants to receive fanzines and will try to respond. His CoA is not presently at hand....

But here are two at hand: Jane Fisher, PO Box 19525, Raleigh, NC 27609....

Mike Bracken, E-3 Village Circle, Edwardsville, Ill 62025.

A postcard from Richard Brandt is written in purple prose! Seems that TCU gives away pens in the school color (purple)-- Richard has a budget of \$250 to pick three films a year for some college activity or other. His CcA is Box 29501, Ft.Worth, TX 76129.

Don Ayres knows me well; he challenged me to read his latest LoC-- written on a page of Reynold's Wrap! He caused me to spend 2 hours in various experimental ideas, one of which included spraying with deodorant!

Sept 9..I'm far behind with this ish--too many great fannish happenings cutting into typewriter/lunch time. Pays to stay home from Worldcons. Very flattering to me to have so many fans stop off to & from K.C. or call.

First event was the Barbecon-- the hurry-up barbeque necessitated by the arrival of about 14 fans Wed.night the day before MAC was to begin. I knew that Wally & Jackie Franke were coming in; what I didn't know was that Dave Rowe (England) and Eric Lindsay (Australia) had fomented an "international conspiracy" with exchanges of maps to my house & devious plans! Those two arrived at 11:30 a.m. and told me the news, with just enough time for us to visit a grocery store & get the makings for the barbeque-- their treat! Titlers dropping in, besides the aforementioned, were Ned Brooks and Gene Wolfe. Four or so fans from Toronto, another from Australia, and various other USA ports represented made the gathering international, if not wholly Titlish. Lester Boutillier called on the phone that night from downtown St.Louis, too tired to find his way out to Des Peres.

From the con Gil Gaier called, and one night Don C. Thompson and Alyson Abramowitz called to give me the Hugo winners. Eric Lindsay was in on that call as well. Tim Marion called late one night-- just passing through. Leah Zeldes and Larry Downes called from the airport with 10 minutes between planes going home. Today, Celia Tiffany (my associate from SIRRUISH days) and Laurine White visited the museum and trekked to the Title office. And somebody I must know but can't recall at the moment, dropped off two Minnesota rocks for me Saturday at the museum. The note left with the rocks appears to be signed only R & S. The guard says the rocks were brought in by a slim, good-lookin' gal about 22 years old. Gee, and I wasn't at the place that day!

Someone organized a multi-signature postcard from the con-- even signed by Claud (sic) Degler and Donn Brazier. What, no Ed Cagle? Thankyou Gene, Bruce, Ro, Gil, Rusty, Don, Susan, Andy, Fred, Victoria, Karen, Carolyn, Allan, & Roy, and Mike.

Guess the Hugo winners will appear all over the place, and since this is my last page for AITOI, I'll just mention the one which makes the FAAN Awards a necessity: Best Fan Writer- Richard Geis. Let's move on to the winners of the Hogu Awards, received today from Steve Beatty (CoA, 303 Welch #6, Ames, Iowa 50010).

1. DeRoach Award for everyday putridity-- Larry Downes
2. Aristotle Award for supreme putridity Diane Drutowski
3. Best Hoax Apa- Mishap
4. Biggest Fugghead -- Sheryl Smith
5. Best Hoax Fanzine -- IMPLOSION from Leah Zeldes (never published) And she is holding an article I wrote, when?, 2 years ago?
6. Most obscure fanzine-- ALGOL (Andy Porter)
7. Best Professional Hoax -- Gerald R. Ford.
8. Best Amateur Hoax-- Leah Zeldes.
9. Best Pro Hoax Literature-- DHALGREN
13. Best Gafiation -- Tony Cvetko
14. The Rose Hogu for devotion to fanac-- Donn Brazier. Who?
15. Best Fannish Pet -- Mike Bracken's dog. Yeah!
16. Best Hoax Convention-- SF Expo
22. Free-for-all -- 'Nauseating little-girlisms' (coined by Brett Cox.)

Add to the fanzine count! Fredric Wertham sends a note that TREXIN-DEX lists and describes over 200 Star Trek fanzines.

Donald E. Ayres (who's he?) has a byline in L.A.PANORAMA (July 15-28) under the title "Weekend at West-ercon". Good piece, Don; and now you and Rick Wilber have both done \$\$\$\$ conpieces!

Ben Gelman writing in THE SOUTHERN ILLINOISAN mentions extensively a letter he received from Bill Bliss about Martian 2BG as "common rock images" used by Shaver & Palmer. Gelman gives good space to Bliss' fanzine THE EARTH GAZETTE, which, if you like 'crazy Bill', you ought to get. Address: 422 Wilmot, Chillicothe, Ill. 61523. Bill's fanzine is dated April 2, 2288 and reveals the news of the time-- all of it comically wild.

Another clip from an Illinois news paper tells mostly about Mike Bracken & some about Rick Wilber; TITLE is mentioned. In a future Big-T, I intend to xerox the clip and make Bracken's dog (not-mentioned!) jealous.

See you later.....

would help sell books. During my years in Limbo, when I first saw a SF book emblazoned as a Hugo Award Winner, I knew big changes had come to fandom.

In the midst of Limbo, I spied a SF paperback on a rack in a grocery store. I stopped dead in my tracks and stared at it with wild surmise as on a peak in Darian as shopping carts swerved around me, honking peevishly. We never dreamed in 1955 that 20 years later SF would be so popular that it could be sold in grocery stores.

I remember a nighttime street in Philadelphia. Lloyd Arthur Eshback had recently started FANTASY PRESS. He told us he had a print run of 1000. On the train home, we were filled with confidence. One thousand was just the beginning; from there on, it would soar upwards-- why print runs might even reach 2,000! And now, 30 years later, along comes Gardner Dozois who complained in a recent ALGOL that paperback SF 'rarely sells more than 100,000 copies.' A 100,000 copies! The mind falls fainting away!

I read that one in ten books published today is SF or fantasy. 25 years ago that would have been 1 in 1000. I remember a time, 1944, when no SF or fantasy books were published.

Everything has grown since 1950. Jackie Franke describes a crowd of 200 at a regional con as the 'unique enjoyment of a small con.' Would you like to know what a regional con was like in 1950. First, there were few of them. Only half a dozen during the year: New York City, Philadelphia, one in New Jersey, and maybe two on the West Coast. Nor would they last 2-4 days. Indeed, they lasted only a half day, the program beginning at 1:00, featuring speakers like L. Sprague de Camp and Willy Ley. The attendance would be about 40, and we'd all congratulate the concom on the large turn-out. By five o'clock we'd be going to supper; I seem to recall we tended towards Chinese food. So, as for Jackie

Franke-- see here, Missy, a small regional con is one with 20 attendees, and all from very local area.

Fanzine activity has also increased 10-fold. Donn Brazier listed more than 300 fanzine editors of 1975. And this was compiled just from zines he had himself received. IN 1945 there were only 30 or so fanzines. Lee Hoffman says in 1950-1955 there were less than 100 acti-fans, and Brazier's 1975 list of artists, loccers and writers was over 1,500.

Harry Warner writes in LOCUS that 1950 saw an upsurge in fanac. That year saw the first issue of Lee Hoffman's QUANDRY, the fanzine of the era. Everyone who was a trufan subscribed. Yesterday, I asked Lee what her circulation was. She replied 'two-hundred and fifty'.

OUTWORLDS has a press run of 1,000. LOCUS has 6,000 subscribers and ALGOL a press run of 5,000.

What is the size of today's fandom? Add to Brazier's 1,500 fanzinefans all the confans, clubfans, etc. And last year the membership of the SFWA was over 500, and Ted White complains of a ghetto.

So prodom has increased. In 1946 there were about two-dozen SF authors, except for an occasional Huxley, all SF was written by these few. And the trufans knew them. Who can even remember 500 names, let alone meet them?

The composition of fandom has changed while it has grown in size. In 1946, boys outnumbered girls by at least 10 to 1, more likely 20 to 1. By 1963, Porter tells me, the ratio was 9 to 1. Since then there has been a revolution. The latest fan polls show women are now one-fourth of fandom. Will this trend continue? In five more years will it be three females for every male? And thirty years from now will it be 9 to 1 the other way?

Changes in individual fans, too... I met Bob Tucker in 1950. At that

time, he had glossy black hair. By 1960 I noticed his hair was turning gray at the edges. He must be completely gray by now. When I first met him he seemed very old to me. Golly! He must have been nearly 40. In those days I couldn't imagine that the day would come when I would be almost 40. That I would be 40. That (sob!) I would be over 40. God, but these kids have some nasty shocks in store for them!

The relation of Fandom to its environment has also changed. In 1940 the second industrial revolution had not begun. Robots, computers, TV, atomic energy, space ships were either inconceivable or would be put down as fantasy by any respected authority. This affected how people viewed the typical SF story.

The master symbol of SF was the space ship. My two eyes have seen a space ship in all its fiery glory. It was a night time moon shot - the last one, I believe. I watched the preliminaries on TV. When the ship was launched, I went out into the night and looked North. I soon noticed a large bank of clouds tinged with orange. Was that the ship? Would a space ship light a whole quarter of the sky? Perhaps it was just the light from Palm Beach? No! There was a streak of orange light rising through the sky! The exhaust was the same color orange always shown on covers of PLANET COMICS and THRILLING WONDER STORIES. John W. Campbell had been wrong. ASTOUNDING had always shown spaceships giving off a blue-white light, like an acetylene torch. As I watched, the trail gave off a spark just like the illos of Flash Gordon. This whole scene was of great satisfaction to me.

In the old times, say about 1950, after a meeting of the Washington(DC) SF Society, we would ask each other if we would see space travel in our lifetimes. I believed in it intellectually but not emotionally. What about you, Bob Tucker, did you think in 1950 you would live to see a moon shot? Robert Lowndes, did you really expect TV and atomic energy in 1940?

I remember when I first became convinced space travel was coming soon. It must have been 1960. On a street corner in Washington, DC, was a large magazine store with many technical magazines. I saw a journal for the air frame and missile manufacturers. Its cover was a close-up photo of the moon. I knew! I fairly danced down the street. "We are going to the moon, we are going to the moon," I sang in my mind. I looked closely into the dead eyes of passing mundanes. "You don't know it, but we're going to the moon," I told them silently.

Then space flight was achieved. My attitude changed. Now plumbers and C.P.A.'s and bus drivers and lawyers were talking space travel. It made it all seem rather vulgar. I liked things better when we fans were the only true believers, keepers of the flame, acolytes.

The first Worldcon I attended was Philcon in 1947. By now you have read the Midamerican Progress Report and know the attendance at Philcon was a miniscule 200. No one at that time thought it was a tiny con. I heard on every hand satisfaction at the large turnout. Nor did anyone think cons would grow vastly larger over the years. They have increased not ten fold, but twenty fold. The Con committee is planning for four overflow hotels! "The mind falls fainting away."

By now you know how loosely organized a con was in the late 40's. They were literally improvised as they went along. The '76 con has an elaborate organization chart. Do you hear that Rosco! An organization chart! John Millard, in M.P.R.#4, says: "We could think of cons as

(concluded on back page mailer)

BIOYA 2 June 1976
David Moyer, 630 Shadywood Dr
Perkasie, PA 18944

GRYPHON #1 June ? 1976
Denny Bowden, 917 Tracy St.
Daytona Beach, FL 32017

Editorially written, "I
Wanted to Bury the VW
When It Died", seems of
great interest to the
likes of Bill Bliss and
other automobile con-
traption artists.

HARBINGER 3 Summer 1976
Reed S. Andrus, 1717 Blaine Ave
Salt Lake City, Utah 84108

A class publication with
good writing (horribly
compressed at the right)
from JR and SR Andrussss
— keep the zine in mind
when voting FAAN Awards
in 1977, various categor-
ies.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE MONOLITH
-- SHADOW 57 for short May, 76
Etic L. Larsen, 4012 Colby Dr
Raleigh, NC 27609

PARENTHESIS 11, May 1976
Frank Balazs, 19 High St.
Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

Frank could have loaded
that last sentence with
more 'flag' words-- can
you?

DILEMMA 11 April 1976
Jackie Franke, Box 51-A,
RR 2, Beecher, Ill 60401

From a reply to a LoC
from Eric Lindsay

DON-O-SAUR 45 April 1976
Don C. Thompson, 7498 Canosa
Court, Westminster, CO 80030

Don, it depends on who &
what is revealed-- certain
writers resemble garbage
sacks better left closed.

"QUESTION: If you were going to write the world's
worst science fiction novel, what would the opening
paragraph of your book be?" ((Send any 'openings'
directly to David.))

"..all I had to do ((to start the VW)) was crawl un-
der the car with a screw driver and short out the
starter and then it'd crank right over. ... So I de-
signed a starter system... I stretched a curtain rod
hanger across the bottom of the starter and wired it
into place. Then I tied a long piece of twine to the
curtain rod and tied the twine to the rear bumper on
the passenger side. I could then just tug at the
twine and the engine would crank just as nice as you
please. ... Now that one ((with nobody in the car))
got a few funny looks from gas station attendants."

" 'Dad, have you ever considered the possible exist-
ence of Absolute Good and Absolute Evil?'

'Absolutely,' my pater too familias replied, his
eyes glued to the latest issue of THE WALL STREET
JOURNAL...

'Hey, I'm serious. SALEM'S LOT beats THE NIGHT
STALKER hands down...It's set in modern times...much
more effective than any other vampire novel I've....'

'--- the guy who works nights at the supermarket
and likes to bite late shoppers on the neck...the
NIGHT STOCKER...goes crazy around the cranberry juice
aisle...'"

"I never found anyone who could express the far away
starflight planet landing exploration spaceship glory
road scientist's lab time machine Halloween midnight
dragon slaying rocket spacesuit feeling except as
neat. ... I might better express that neat feeling as
'nostalgia for the future'."

"As I get more zines than I care to take time to read,
I have to skim/select...fan-fiction zines get short
shift... When I first started this game, I just could
not understand Buck Coulson's attitude. Now I do...
Now, folks, jump on me for that! Or howzabout this
one: federally supported red communists coming into
your home to kill your puppy dogs!"

"I can appreciate your thoughts on the wanting, yet-
not-wanting friends. If you don't have any, they
can't hurt you any, right? It's a line of reasoning
I subconsciously followed through high school and part
of my later years; at least until I realized that
while getting hurt was a risk...the possible pain
didn't remotely match the pleasure gained by giving
and receiving honest affection. It's been said that
fandom attracts loners, but I believe it keeps re-
formed loners."

"Not everyone is comfortable with highly personal,
deeply emotional subjects. I'm quite sure that it's
embarrassing for some people just to read some of the
personal, emotional things that I write, and the very
thought of a reply in the same tone or style is simp-
ly out of the question."

BATHROOM CON

Stuart Gilson

Last weekend I had the good fortune to attend what is possibly Winnipeg's most enjoyable regional, a truly faanish gathering that in recent years has been affectionately called "Bathroom Con". Its existence has never been widely publicized, as the concom has wished to keep attendance figures down; as this year's successful con amply demonstrated, however, their attitude was all for the best. Keeping in mind an old adage from Don Quixote, "All will come out in the washing", the concom performed nobly, and are to be congratulated for the success with which everything was staged, all within the confines of the upstairs bathroom of my own place of residence. Things were a bit crowded from time to time, but any serious accidents were averted through both plain good luck and the presence of the Delsey, a security group who wandered about the con area dressed in distinctive uniforms modelled off of Dickson's creations of same name.

Through the first night of the con, most attending fen gathered in the party suite, conveniently located in the soap dish above a bathtub filled to the brim with bheer and soft drinks. Everyone's thirst was therefore provided for, though later on it became difficult to draw refreshment from the tub when some unidentified troublemaker poured a case of lime jello in (fortunately, the Delsey were present to restrain the cad, but not before the damage was done). Aside from this one unpleasant incident and the unsightly presence of a ring around the bathtub, everything afterwards ran smoothly and I enjoyed many friendly conversations with other fen.

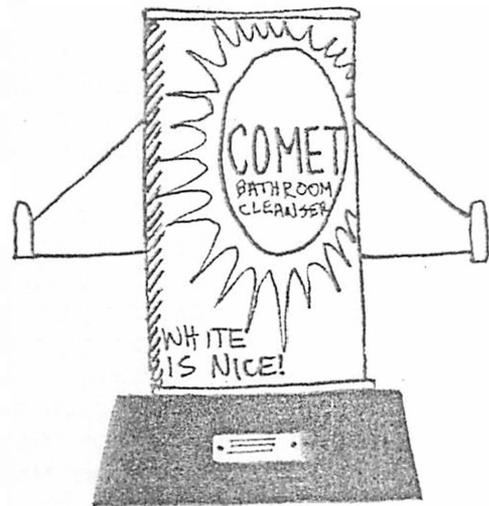
Eventually I tired of the partysuite, and so retreated to the south side of the flush toilet where Bruce Townley and myself attempted to pub an inpromptu fanzine on a roll of toilet paper. Just when it started to take form, however, the idea fell through when a small, thickly bewiskered chap wearing an Aussie hat flushed the uncollated sheets down the toilet, condemning us as sinners and singing temperance songs. Shocked as we were by this display of rude behavior, my co-editor and I were quick to take vengeance by forcibly stuffing the villian up a half used tube of shaving cream, where he'll likely remain until called into service by a razor.

My plans for a fanzine squelched, little remained to be taken in other than the masquerade which was about to commence; donning my costume (I was to go as a bar of soap; unoriginal, I know, but always a sure standby) I made my way to the medicine cabinet where the costume judging was to be held. The elaborateness of the costumes was incredible, many of which must of demanded long hours of preparation; I did not envy the judges. After long deliberation, however, two winners were chosen; one of the lucky fans had dressed up as the Dainty Bowl Man, and the other as the Ajax White Knight (though he was nearly disqualified when he accidentally lanced one of the judges).

The beginning of the final day of the con saw an interesting panel discussion, "The effect of soap on science-fiction", headed by a group of well scrubbed professionals whose names I failed to learn. I'm afraid to report little of any worth was accomplished, for the talk soon digressed into an uninteresting lesson on how to effectively wash behind the ears; this was the only incidence of poor planning on the part of the concom.

In contrast, I'm happy to say, the banquet was a huge success; the food was unaccountably palatable, and the after dinner speeches were both interesting and insightful, especially Brad Parks' excellent talk on designing bathroom floor tiles. A bit of humour was also injected into the proceedings when one particularly animated fan, Tub Tucker, would periodically take a deep drink from a jug of Clorox and flush the toilet to the unanimous cry of "Smoooooooooooooth!" And difficult as it is to believe, Tucker's stomach had to be pumped only three times during the whole con.

After these formalities had concluded, the big moment of the night arrived: the "Comets" were awarded as achievement awards for excellence in cleanliness. These are rapidly becoming the most prestigious symbols of accomplishment in the field; the solemnity of the occasion, then, was reflected in the pregnant silence of the audience. The award for best novel went by unanimous vote to Stanislaw Lem's Memoirs Found in a Bathtub, though honorary mention was given to its two closest competitors, Long's Rim of the Unknown and L. Ron Hubbard's Ole Doc Magnesia. After the thunderous applause subsided, Bob Bloch went up front to receive a special Comet for his shower scene in Psycho; precedent was again broken when another special Comet was given to Chip Delany for Dhalgren as the novel most likely to replace the catalogue (country dwellers will best understand that one). The Comet for best dramatic presentation went to the Japanese monster film, Flusho, and the best fanzine Comet went to PORCELAIN. In all, none of the winners were especially surprizing, and all were deserving of their awards.



THE COMET

Parties took up the rest of the night, and lasted well into the wee hours; before retiring, most fen eventually collected around a group of filk singers and joined in on a rousing course, though I didn't perform at my best since I've always been most mellow-voiced while taking a shower. That failed, however, to detract from the enjoyment of the moment.

Almost anyway you look at it, Bathroom Con was a marvelous success; the enthusiasm it generated makes me hope the concom decides to put on further specialized regionals. I know I shall make a point of being there.



Weird Tales

The Unique Magazine



DWARF PEARL FISH

Cynolebias nigripinnis

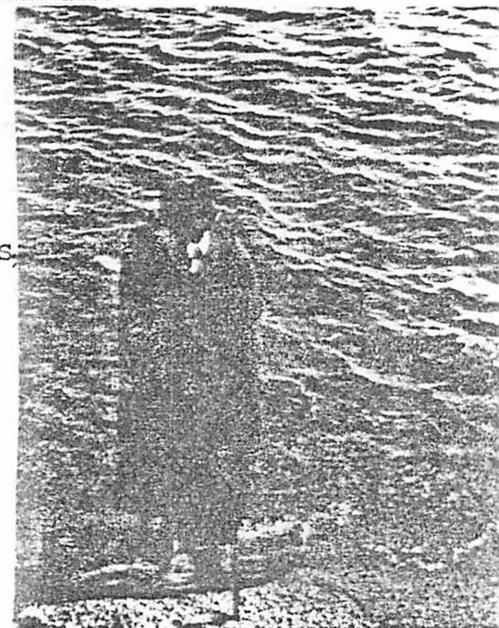


2/21

Jessica Amanda Salmonson
Post Office Box 89517
Zenith, Washington 98188
United States of Amerika

Dear Donn:

I don't suppose Don Ayres cares, but note: Among the pets I've cared for in captivity can be found: asian vine snakes, red rat snakes, yellow rat snake, indigo snake, spilotes rat snake, eight foot Indian python, baby reticulated pythons, garters, gopher snakes, Florida king snake. Most of these were tame, except the Indian python, a dark-phase harder to tame than the light phase. I sold it cheap to someone who later succeeded in mating it, though the eggs didn't hatch. Also: tegus, iguanas, basibisk, ~~xxxx~~ blue-tongued skinks from Australia, collared lizards, Clark's swifts, alligator lizards, solomon island ~~xxxxxxx~~ prehinsile tailed skinks, racing lizards, a three foot monitor lizard raised from a hatchling, and others, some successfully mated in captivity, and babies reared to adulthood. And, my favorites: european fire salamanders, northwest seal salamanders, mud puppies, western toads, clawed frogs, rough skinned newts, spotted salamanders, marbled salamander, pacific giant salamander in perminant larval stage, and other nifty amphibians. I also had several turtles and tortoises, including a tortoise from Russia, and ~~xx~~ a spiney asian turtle that looked like a cog-wheel. I haven't been into herpetology for a couple years now, life too hectic, but one day I hope to set up a breeding colony of some rare lizard (perhaps sllomon isle skinks, they're lovely) and keep various salamanders, sirens, amphiuma. Will never go over-board with every snake, turtle, lizard or salamander I can get my hands on, though. Had an asian crocodile too, but it rapidly outgrew my fascilities and I gave it to ~~xx~~ a zoo. Last I heard, my Australian skinks were living in the Dallas zoo (they're an endangered species), and my corn snakes which I successfully ~~xxxx~~ mated and raised the babies, reside in the London zoo.



Weird Tales

The Unique Magazine

840 N. Michigan Avenue

Chicago, Illinois.

My major experience with a bully was in elementary school. A girl named Cathy pushed me in a mud puddle. She was always beating other kids up, including some boys twice her size. I wish I knew what became of her. Someone suggested recently she is married and living in Eastern Washington with a couple tough little kids. I hope not. I'd rather think she grew up to be a together, adjusted dyke.

I used to collect insects to feed my reptiles and amphibians. Once I looked under a board and found a nest of rats instead. Caught them and fed them to my snakes. (Tried to raise one as a pet, but too high strung. Fed it to my monitor lizard eventually.) Callous?

Tara-Wayne gives rather an aloof, indifferent view of pro-writers. I've never been overawed by a pro; there are a couple I MIGHT be overawed with were I to meet them, but probably they'd be instantly humanized upon the meeting, so I'm not sure. I've not been indifferent either, though. Harold Warner Munn is a dear friend; I hadn't read all of MERLIN'S RING until after I met him. I love him first as a person, and consider some of his fantasy to be the best of the genre, a human and sentimental touch to the grimmest of horrors he might create. F.M. Busby was "just a fan" for years, and still a fan at heart I'm certain. I think he ~~writes~~ writes excellent short stories. His two novels are bad. He personally is one of the best people I know. I correspond regularly with Marion Bradley and Joanna Russ, two more different women could not be imagined, both beautiful and interesting and important to me. I trust, when eventually we meet in person, I'll know who they are---~~sometimes a letter-persona is quite different than the live-person,~~ so I could find them strangers, but I think not. E. Hoffmann Price is another regular correspondent, his letters running to 15 typewritten pages, even the margins filled. He has taught me a lot, enriched my life a lot, and I couldn't begin to explain in how many and what ways. I met Larry Niven feetingly, introduced by Elinor Busby, and he asked me for an autograph in a copy of FANTASY & TERROR, which suggests a personality not out to overshadow everybody else's ego (as I understand many sf super-stars strive to do, Gerrold in particular). My feeling about pro writers has been, thus far, that they usually merit as much admiration as can possibly be given, as people, with the extremes of dislike, disinterest and adulation all being ill-aimed.

Autoclame must have been marvelous. Feel like a shepard?

Thine,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'ESU' or similar, with a large flourish underneath.

BONFIRE ONE

About 24 miles south of Amarillo, right smack in the panhandle plains, a huge crack cuts deeply and unexpectedly. The hole is 1,100 feet deep, down which my guests hairpin precipitously to the bottom of Palo Duro Canyon. Almost at the bottom, on a flat gravelly plateau surrounded by huge boulders & slabs falling off to the lower dried-up riverbed, we gather in a bonfire circle. I throw more mesquite and a sizable juniper log on the fire, the flames shooting high and casting weird dancers on the towering north canyon wall that lurches over the group. A brisk and gusty wind sends sparks upward toward a clear, Milkyway sky. Stars glitter.

Jodie tosses the wrapper from a Twinkie into the fire where it blazes and disappears. She lays aside her crayons and her State Park Coloring Book. A coyote giggles with a yip-yip-yip in the distance, the canyon funneling the sound hurried along by the wind. The snapping of fliptops comes to a momentary halt as we shiver at the eerie sound. Ben's mop of red hair is threatening to blow away, and Mike has removed his hat which he now holds firmly in his lap. Don D'Amassa is stretched out, feet toward the fire, a paperback in his hand, the wind flipping the pages as he reads. Harry has his back to the fire and the wind, soft slippers on his feet. Jackie kneels over the cooler to select a cold drink, slacks protecting her knees from the gritty gravel.

I am sitting on a flat rock, a can of beer in my hand and a cigar in my mouth. The cigar is burning on the bias because of the wind. Jodie (and endorsed by Jacie) says thank Ghod Brazier you're down wind. I reply that they might at least have done the same prayer/oath for Harry's old bedroom slippers.

You all know why you're here, I say. You all placed in the 1975 FAAN Awards as the best loccers. Sam, who'll be a little bit late, was high up on the TITLE survey of most frequent loccers. I guess you'd all rather loc than love, eh?

Are you kidding, a voice says in an accent of sorts but possibly only caused by the filtering through more hair than man was ever meant to have. The muffled voice continues, we loc to love more! There's a murmur, or is it just the wind through the

A symposium on what makes a good loc, the whole thing somewhat fictionized. Based on letters solicited from award winning loccers and Sam Long. Direct quotes from letters are in quotation marks. Donn Brazier called the party. His guests are:

Don D'Amassa
Jackie Franke
Mike Glicksohn

Ben Indick
Sam Long
Jodie Offutt
Harry Warner, Jr.

mesquite?

Ben says, "When receiving, writing and loccing zines ceases to be fun, perhaps the reader should take up needlepoint."

Dryly, unsmiling, Don agrees, "After all, this is supposed to be fun."

Jackie disclaims, "Like SF, a good loc is something I recognize when I see it, but once I try to define the separate qualities that make up an interesting loc, the entirety takes on a misty, nebulous quality that refuses to solidify enough to be examined closely."

"And there are exceptions to everything," says Jodie.

"And all you really fine loccers make me feel like a stick in the mud -- and all of you type better than I do!" This from Ben who's now holding down his red mop with both hands.

Mike says, "And I've not been well lately."

Harry takes off a slipper and scratches his foot; so I puff a little harder on my cigar. He says, "And I feel better equipped to contribute on how to write lots of locs than good ones."

Everyone looks at Don D'Amassa, awaiting his disclaimer. He says thoughtfully, "I'm approaching this both as a writer and reader of locs, and as an editor. Few locs, including my own, contain every good attribute. Nor should they. But I think the better locs contain most."

I stir the fire a bit. I say that we agree there is such an animal, and that a good loc is interesting. But what makes it interesting, I say.

There's a pause as thoughts are pulled together. Jackie says won't someone kick it off, it's too nebulous for her at the

moment.

Ben says, "Interest derives from acute and knowledgeable discussion, from good clear writing (or good stylized but comprehensible writing), and from specificity. A perfunctory loc indicates the zine reviewed was uninteresting or that the reviewer is."

Harry says he'd like to respond to Ben's point about a perfunctory loc. "It would be easy to dash off one or two paragraphs per fanzine for a few weeks. But such an abbreviated loc seems to say that there was little in the fanzine worth commenting on or that its contents didn't interest me."

"Harry," says Jodie, "your leisurely reminiscences touched off by something you've read in a zine are beloved, interesting and informative."

I can see Harry's toes squirming, and Ben doesn't help when he says, "No one can mistake a Warner loc for that of anyone else." Ben's eyes twinkle in the flicker of the fire. "Nor the open and sometimes sly style of yours, Jodie. Your style is that of a lazy whip suddenly cracking. A good loc should be the signature of the loccer. However, a good loccer should shake his style up a bit too, to avoid type-casting to the point of boredom."

Jodie admits throwing a rose to Harry and begs to be a little long-winded as she characterizes the locs of the others at the bonfire. "Ben, you usually write something short, funny, and personal -- often a pun. Mike, your detailed critiques, covering everything from layout to letter column are valued and sought by faneds. And, Jackie, you'll usually zoom in on a single topic that touches off a wealth of opinions and experiences with great clarity. And Sam Long's comments include some fascinating piece of cultural information or tidbit of etymology. And, Don, you never know about your letters. Sometimes they're scholarly offerings about a writer or genre. Another letter might contain an opinion, backed by well-thought-out reasons. The next one might contain an account of some horribly drawn-out comedy-of-errors experience that happened to you, too outlandish to be true but too bizarre to be made up."

Jodie, you're nice, I say, but let's get back to Ben's 'perfunctory'-- how long should a loc be? Everybody got enough to drink, I ask.

Ben-- "I prefer moderate length to either a tome or a snapper."

Harry-- "Longer than a brief note, but a mistake to go on and on, page after page, about just one item in the fanzine. I try to fill two pages."

Don-- "Be concise. If it takes eight pages, then write eight pages. Don't write twenty pages. If it takes a single sentence, then write a single sentence."

Jodie-- "I think the best locs are the shorter ones. I usually try for short letters. With shorter letters I can also respond to more fanzines. I'd like to see everybody try to get everything said on a postcard. It would force the writer to think tighter--" Mike interrupts with a remark that Scotch might help one get a little tighter. But Jodie continues, "-- so as not to waste words. And postcards save money. And the editor can publish more locs."

Harry warns everyone that there's a risk in an abbreviated loc. Just as he's reminding everyone what he had said earlier, a dark figure comes out of the shadows into the light of the fire. Hey! Here's Sam everyone exclaims. I welcome him and say he got here at just the right time because we were discussing how long a loc should be. The coyote laughed in the distance.

Sam sits down and says, "They need not be long or involved -- just a few words on a card or small letter will do." See says Jodie, agreeing. "The chief thing is to show interest," Sam continues. He went to the cooler, pulled out a can and flipped the top. "You know I'm rather fasia right now, and haven't been nearly the letter-hack I was just a few months ago. Getting married, even to a fan, does that to one."

Wait until a family comes along, I say, and you'll see what real fasion is. But I steer them all back to Ben's use of the terms 'good clear writing' and 'specificity'. Which one should we talk about first?

Mike says he guesses he meant both of those things. "As long as the loc says something, and says it well, it'll be a good loc. A loc should have content, be about something, not just an exercise in stringing words together. Locs should be written because the writer thinks he has something to say, some ideas to communicate. Writing a loc just to get the next issue of a fanzine produces locs that

read as if they were written just to get the next issue of a fanzine. They get WAH-Fed, rightfully so. If the content is strong enough, mere grammatical competence will suffice. But if the writer has a flair for words and style, a better loc will result."

I suggest that, just like Mike's feathered hat, it's sometimes difficult to separate style from content.

Don D'Amassa momentarily closes the paperback he's reading and says that in regard to style, "Good grammar and coherency go without saying. Strive for informality because we're all friends here."

Mike Glicksohn says, "Most fans enjoy puns, word-play, and creative use of language but it takes considerable skill to do this sort of thing well."

Ben nodded his head, almost losing the handhold on his hair. "I'm distressingly aware that my own locs are rarely classics. I glance at them with embarrassment, wishing they had more style, more grace, more elegance. However, with a lot of zines to loc, one can only devote a relatively brief time to each."

Don says, "Keep a sense of proportion and a sense of humor. Don't take yourself too seriously. A little bit of humor never hurts."

Mike agrees, "The best locs leaven their serious content with some entertainment so imagination is definitely an ingredient."

Ben Indick says, "Humor is important, and sometimes satire is correct. Once, to loc a zappingly intellectual article by Eli Cohen in his fine Kratophany, I wrote a gee-uh-duhhh dum dum loc, and I think it was good counterpoint." Ben got up to get another beverage. "I'll sometimes put in a hasty drawing and two zines recently endeared themselves to me by using the drawings within my locs."

I slapped Ben on the back as he went back to sit down. "You've even had some of your drawings to TITLE used as covers, and what do you mean, hasty? They're always clever and boldly stated ideas-- any faned would be nuts not to use them somewhere."

Don nods over at Harry and says, "Illustrate from personal experience," indicating that Harry Warner does. "We tend to write best about things we know well and feel strongly about. Be cautious, though, not to repeat stories that have become cliches. It's not useful to repeat yet another yarn

of a postal clerk refusing to allow fanzines to be mailed as books, UNLESS it involves something like his insistence that there is no such thing as bookrate."

Well, I say, we're getting into the edge of content....

Jackie Franke jumps in, "Communication is the essential, I suppose, and that's a highly individual thing."

"Yes, a loc can be many things," says Ben.

Jackie continues with a nod of agreement, "A loc can communicate to the faned, for instance, yet be of so highly a personal nature that it would be incomprehensible, boring, or irrelevant to the reader. So it won't get printed. A loc also can have very little personal meaning to the faned, yet communicate so well with the readership that it is given a prime position in the letter column. In both cases the mutual quality is communication."

"Obviously," says Jodie Offutt, "different things make good locs."

Mike states about the same feeling. "As to what the content of a good loc should be, that depends entirely on the loccer and the fanzine being locced. So it makes no sense to outline anything in the way of guidelines."

Ben says that some guidelines are possible. "In well-established and adult zines, one discusses the articles-- the work itself and not the zine is the subject. Why one agrees or disagrees with it, likes or dislikes it."

Mike slapped his hat on his knee. "But a loc isn't just a list of 'I liked X', and 'I thought Y sucked'."

Ben explains what he meant. "The merit and stature of the zine is not at question."

We seem to agree, I say, that different zines might require locs with different content.

Sam Long says, "Even the most abject crudzine ought to get a postcard at the very least, aying 'thanks for sending me your zine'."

Okay, that's one level of content-- a short, simple acknowledgement. I say this while regretfully tossing my cigar butt into the fire.

Ben gives more explanation. "In the case of a zine by a young or inexperienced ed-

itor, locking is more of a critical approach with constructive aims in mind. If one feels he has something to offer which may be helpful to a tyro, it must be offered."

Ben, you're some kind of guy, I offer. And despite a slight blush, he continues: "My view is that the least crudzine of all represented some work and love on the part of the creator, and the recipient must respect this. Not that he cannot be severe in his criticism, but it should have an end in mind of helpfulness."

"Fans keep criticizing me for being too kind in my locs," Harry follows, "particularly those that go to neofans."

I admire Harry, and I say so. Though everyone at the bonfire knows it, I repeat it: Harry locs all fanzines, bad, good, and indifferent. Harry says he has in the past it's true, but how long can he keep up his pace. Somebody says that Harry can't slack off-- he's an institution. I mention a little song that uses Harry as a punchline which Fred Moss submitted to FARRAGO. I ask him, outside of your being that kind of nice fellow, do you have any special reason for locking all zines?

"Every dreadful fanzine," Harry replies, "is sure to produce at least a couple of devastating, withering locs from other people and a loc from me which accentuates the positive just might help persuade the editor to keep trying."

I light up another cigar to the accompaniment of wind-whipped groans. But I'm excited-- Harry has just given me a topic for BONFIRE Number Two... "persuade the editor to keep trying...??" What for? Is fanzine fandom worthwhile? Is it worth the drop-off of prozine reading, the neglect of family & friends, straining the eyes over typos?

My thoughts are interrupted by Ben who has a tendency to speak in bons mots. "Patronizing, condescending criticism is out of place. It causes pain and accomplishes no good. I have discovered that there is no circumstance where something of useful critical import cannot be offered."

Harry disclaims, "Actually I've been harsh enough on occasion to get myself permanently cut from the editor's mailing list."

A chorus of Oh-no's.... I say that I find that hard to believe about Harry, and Ben, too for that matter. But just how far does a loccer go in criticizing repro, layout,

and all the rest?

Don D'Amassa says, "It is far better to say 'I think your repro needs to be improved, specifically you need a new typewriter, more organized format' than to say 'your repro is hopeless, your talent as an editor is non-existent, and your intelligence is open to question.' Make use of constructive rather than destructive criticism."

When someone says 'like, it stinks' there is a chuckle or two. I'm sure all of us faneds here have been stung with a 'it stinks', I say, but what do you say about this, Ben?

"Bad repro is not a matter for Jovian scorn. It should be noted, but in terms of future betterment..."

Jodie interrupts with a who-took-my-red-crayon? When asked how she could see to color in the dark, she replies that the picture is a free-form.

Ben continues, "I recently received several zines with more misspellings than I've ever seen; far beyond mere typos, these were simply carelessness and reflected a certain disinterest in the proprieties of language. At the same time, an undeniable verve was present, with an obvious effort to produce an interesting and attractive zine..."

Someone butts in with a so-what-did-you-do-ol'-redhead?

"...My loc consisted of a barrage of hopefully humorous references to the errors, followed by a leavening of appreciation for the editor's motives in pubbing. His reply indicated he had accepted my criticism (and his letter had as many errors!) without anger. To such, one sighs and urges concentration on what he has to say and resignation to his eyeball-jabbers. After all, in pro writing, this is what gives editors and proofreaders work."

Don nods sagely. "Be fair. If a seven-year old faned puts out a terrible first issue, you should tell him that it's terrible, but don't rub it in."

Harry Warner says, "I try not to lecture on basics like grammar, spelling, makeup, and reproduction. If the text is hard to comprehend because of near-illiterate typing, I complain. But I feel that the faned knew as soon as he had run off the pages how faint the repro was on page 7, so why should I bring it up again weeks later in a loc?"

"On the other hand," says Don, "don't be gushy. Praise administered without restraint loses its value. But if something is really outstanding, say so. A little ego-boo doesn't cost you anything, and it's good for the receiver. Spread it around, but not too thick. Give credit where it is deserved."

I ask if a loccer should comment on everything-- or pick out a few items to concentrate on?

Don jumps in, "Not necessary to comment on everything. It is far better to comment well on as little as a single article rather than making unadorned statements like 'I enjoyed Brazier's piece' or 'I didn't like D'Amassa's cover!'"

I gently object. "A few shotgun locs are pleasant for me as a faned, though. I'm thinking of Rose Hogue in particular--she may be the only loccer out of a hundred to even mention some little item in Title that I wanted the readers to notice. I love her for all her little tidbits-- much of which, to be truthful, don't get into the zine, but which make my efforts worthwhile."

"Personally," says Jackie Franke, "I like to skim through an issue after I've read it and pick out the items to which I had some sort of reaction-- positive or negative. Though if negative, I seldom mention it unless it was very strongly so. The zine has to say something to me, first, then I can respond. It's about the same with my inter-personal relations. I'm incapable of initiating conversation, and I cannot react to just anything another person says. It has to strike some sort of responsive chord in me before I can utter a word."

Don gives a piece of advice: "Contribute, don't recapitulate. A statement such as 'I really agree with Mike Glicksohn's opinion of Scotch' should not stand alone, but should be buttressed by the unique perspective of the loccer. For example, 'I agree with Mike's opinion of Scotch, though I prefer it mixed with catsup'."

Jodie says, "Good letters go through two drafts: handwritten on notebook paper as you read a zine and then typed for better, more concise wording."

Sam Long agrees. "Take notes as you read. I find this helps me when I write the loc later, though I don't always do this."

Does anyone ever loc a loc, I ask.

Ben says, "I generally don't, unless there is an important point at stake. However, I

realize that many fans enjoy this sort of round-robin, and I would not condemn it. Indeed, I have often been on record as being uninterested in lettercols at all. However, I do read them, and I am aware that for numerous fans the Lettercol is priority reading."

Harry goes even further. "I see nothing wrong in going far afield. I often launch into remarks only vaguely related to the zine's contents, prefaced by magic words like 'This reminds me of....' or 'I remember one time long ago when...'"

I laugh because I've received such locs from Harry. And enjoyed them, even if I guessed at the time that the issue failed to supply Harry with many comment hooks.

"I agree with Harry," Ben says and goes on to say, "A loc can bring up new subjects or even just ramble on. I am often very personal. For example, I might interpolate that at this moment I heard a gurgling in the kitchen which indicated that I had not left the sink outlet open while the dishwasher was on, and water had reached the level of the sinktop; it could only be remedied by plunging my hand into burning hot water to release the plug (while dashing my hand into cold water to relieve the pain) resulting in a hand as red as my head. Locs should not be determined burriers into the zine at all times, and such a personal break can be both human and amusing. Note, too, that I used a reference to myself which is fairly well known -- my red head. Uh, there's more purpose than madness to doing a loc...."

Actually, I say, it was a long time before I knew you had a red head, Ben, and why it's so valued in fannish circles I have no idea. But getting back to locs, should all fanzines be locced, and are there any kinds of zines difficult to loc?

"As I said earlier," Sam says, "even the most abject crudzine ought to get a postcard of acknowledgement."

"I make one exception," Ben adds. "When I have a subscription, I may allow my money to speak for me. This may seem unfair, but it means that I feel toward the zine as I do toward a prozine or book, which I rarely respond to other than emotionally. I often break the rule anyway. When I can, I will respond with a zine of my own-- one of my apazines, as a courtesy."

There's one kind of thing I find hard to loc, says Jackie Franke, as she explains: "If an article is so complete that addition is impossible for me, I wind up with a smile and a nod of agreement and a blank sheet of paper. And that's it. The fault is mine, not the writer's, but there's not much I can do about it."

"The hardest fanzines for me to loc are those which contain little other than brief reviews," says Harry Warner. "Or those which turn over most of their space to long articles on hackneyed topics like how Heinlein's opinions can be found in his novels, or the unfair treatment of heroines in prozine stories. It is partly my fault because I've been around so long. I've read every conceivable shade of opinion on the overworked topics and I've stopped reading most of the newly published SF. I have the feeling that I've been through this a score of times before when I read that more attention should be paid to the awful increase in population in the US. And when I read those brief reviews, I know it may be years before I read enough of the stories reviewed to permit me to comment sensibly."

"Sometimes," says Jodie, "if I get too wound up in a letter about a particular subject, I'll turn it into a column and send it to the fanzine instead of the loc."

Harry says, "Is it cricket to write an article for a fanzine which expands on something I'd stated briefly in a letter section? If I write about 300 locs per year, and cover a half-dozen topics in each loc, I probably say a few sentences about more than a thousand matters per year."

I suggest that professionals do it all the time, and at least you, Harry, wouldn't have to write the same topic over and over.

Sam says he has to go, but adds, "The secret of writing locs is to sit down and get your ideas on paper right away, and don't put it

off-- be prompt."

We all say so-long to Sam Long, and I say it's getting late, the Big Dipper almost 90° further along its giant swing around the North Star. But has anyone anything else?

Jodie says, "Often the best locs are created by a good fanned who knows, instinctively or with practice, how to cull, correct and cut. And I love segmented letter columns too, although I know it's one hell of a lot of work for the editor." In the dark, since I couldn't quite see her eyes, I fondly hoped she was looking straight at me. Sometimes I get praised for shredding locs; other times I fear I lose a few readers as a result of my heavy axe.

Harry says, "I hope this doesn't handicap me when I try to write some more locs-- like the centipede who confused himself by trying to explain to someone how he walked."

And fell into a ditch, I say. Jodie and Jackie both express distaste at the image-- just before sleeping bag time.

Shall we call it a night, and crawl into---

Jodie and Jackie shout, don't say *crawl*!

-- our sleeping bags? Mike, I say, are you still here?

Mike Glicksohn says that he thinks he's getting sick again. It's just that I've been sitting here all this time thinking of mixing Scotch and catsup, he says.

Don D'Amassa asks if it's okay if he reads by the light of the fire awhile-- he has two more books to finish. Harry's already in his sleeping bag, slippers carefully placed on a stone. There's a chorus of goodnights. Ben asks if the morning sun will burn his head.

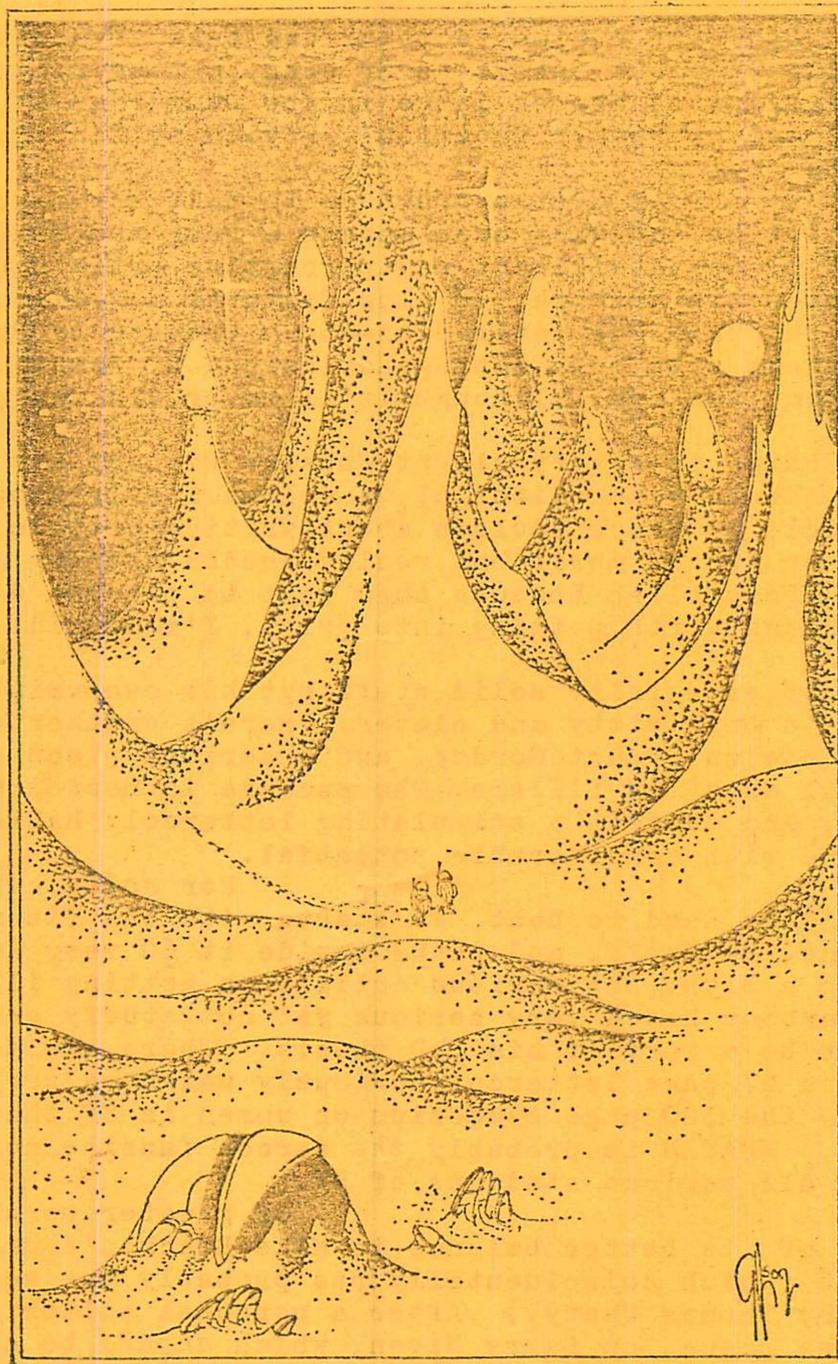
How will we know, someone says.

THE END

When you
are asked
DO YOU READ
FARRAGO,
are you go-
ing to reply
WHAT???????

FARRAGO
is a de-
lightful
salad....

The real
cover is
on gorgeous
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FARRAGO is
Barbek Braz-
ier's pres-
tige quart-
erly.....

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tance to change, plus other serious articles on oil shortages, Robert Aickman and Poul Anderson. More than half the issue is a very heavy lettercol discussing the last two topics of Don's editorials, courage and competition, with many other topics lightly touched on. For those interested in serious and intelligent discussions, MYTHOLOGIES is *the* place to go.

A fine personalzine is Bruce Pelz's PROFANITY #12, also one of the nicest looking mimeozines around. Ten pages of diary about fan happenings in Los Angeles, a con report and a few letters make for a light but delightful read. It helps to know a bit about LASFS, but if you enjoy good personal, anecdotal writing, you'll enjoy Bruce.

Carl Bennett's SCINTILLATION #3.3 is another excellent personalzine, this time with fine offset printing and good graphics. Carl has columns, however, from Paul Walker on music and John Shirley on how to write like an absolute fugghead in a desperate effort to gain fannish attention. An interesting lettercol and a rather self-pitying piece by Phil Dick about the abject poverty he lives in are also here, and there's a brilliant spoof on ODYSSEY [*The prozine, not Randy Fuller's fanzine.*] by Carl, called IDIOCY complete with cover, story and fake ads that shows more effort and care than most fans ever put into their zines. Highly recommended for numerous reasons.

Bill Breiding's STARFIRE wants to be a big classy fanzine but doesn't really know how. With #7, Bill has gone offset, but he still can't spell, or use the English language all that well. (What sort of SF fan misspells "Shardik" throughout an entire review?) The contents of STARFIRE are widely varied, but most of it does not really appeal to me; that's a very subjective reaction, but I don't go for what I consider artsy pretentiousness in much of what Bill pubs. There's a lot of good art, though, some good fanzine reviews, an interview with George Barr, reviews and critiques, so if the sort of material Dale Donaldson and Bill Wolfenbarger write appeals to you, maybe STARFIRE is for you. It has enormous potential, that's for certain.

I'm now caught up on fan obligations for the first time in about a year. I think I'm going to take a vacation! Tomorrow maybe I'll go see a movie and thank the government for having a national holiday... no mail delivery.... and no fanzines!!

[Mike's column received August 6, 1976, and due to space shortage I had to leave out his paragraph about Ethel Lindsay's 71st issue of SCOTT-ISHE, an "English institution".]

DIEHARD, TONY CVETKO, 29415 Parkwood Dr, Wickliffe OH 44092. Usual or 75¢

ECLIPSE, MARK SHARPE, 10262 John Jay Apt D, Indianapolis IN 46236. U or 50¢

HARBINGER, REED ANDRUS, 1717 Blaine Ave, Salt Lake City UT 84108. U or 1.25

KHATRU, Jeff Smith, 1339 Weldon Ave, Baltimore MD 21211. 1.25 or contrib

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MYTHOLOGIES, Don D'Amassa, 19 Angell Dr, E Providence RI 02914. U/1.00

PROFANITY, Bruce Pelz, 15931 Kalisher St, Granada Hills CA 91344. U/25¢

SCINTILLATION, Carl Bennett, Box 8502, Portland OR 97207. Usual or 1.25

STARFIRE, Bill Breiding, 151 Arkansas St, San Francisco CA 94107. U/1.50

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TITLE #55 October, 1976
Editor: Donn Brazier
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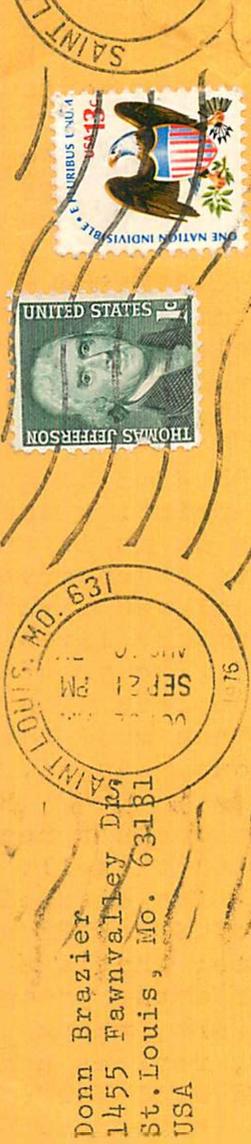
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THE FAN FROM THE TIME MACHINE
(continued)

show business." In the late '40's
they were more like family reunions.
He goes on to say, "In the early
days, convention members helped to
provide their own programming, but
this is not true today." The trend
set in long ago. In 1955, Mari Wolf
wrote in the prozine, IMAGINATION,
"More and more programs are being
put on for fans, but no longer so
much by fans. Fan participation in
the program seems to grow less each
year."

Mari also noted the loneliness of
the neofan: "...younger fans come to
see people, both pros and fans, and
if everyone vanishes (to private
rooms) the young fan is likely to
feel left out indeed." Her solut-
ion? Not one neofan room, but sever-
al rooms, open all night, where BNFs
and pros could hold parties and the
neo meet them all. It took the Worl-
dcon committees 21 years to meet
this need. Rosco! Aren't we swift on
the uptake!

Commercial people, as almost put on
SF EXPO '76, already put on StarTrek
conventions. What is their attitude
towards fan cons? Albert Schuster,
promoter, holds that the principal
purpose of the "trekkie cons" must
be "to make (exploit) the series
commercially." I think it was Linda
Bushyager who reported that fandom
was divided 50-50 about SF EXPO and
no one seemed very excited about it.
Things would have been different in
1950. Fandom would have been indig-
nant. Fanzines would have urged a



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boycott. I think we can say today's
fandom is more passive than that
of 25 years ago.

I remember, or think I do, two
speeches from the '47 Philcon. One
by Willy Ley predicted a future oil
shortage. He said gasoline might
go as high as a dollar a gallon. A
pro writer (Lester del Rey?) pre-
dicted a world population explos-
ion. Both these topics took the
mundane news media by surprise 4
or 5 years ago. Philcon scooped
them all by a quarter of a century.
Attend Worldcons and be 25 years
ahead of the times!

I could go on for another 1,000
words-- let me end on a triviality
--astraw in the wind. Many faneds
reply on quick letter forms. Bill
Bowers' is by the Quill Corp. This
was unthinkable in 1950.

THE END