

WOODEN NICKEL

WOODEN NICKEL Volume 1 Number 11 Whole Number 11 is Arnie Katz (59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201) still publishing away to beat the band for the benefit of his favorite bunch of fifty readers. Letters of comment are the fuel which powers the good ship WOODEN NICKEL, so why not write me one? September 1, 1973 is the date, high noon is the time and here it comes, again.

STATUS-TITIAN Status-seekers we always have with us. If you put three people in a room, within ten minutes one will have found a way to exalt himself above the other two. The quest for status can be as direct as running for president of the Elks or as subtle as officers in the mainland Chinese army sporting a breast pocket full of pens to distinguish them from the average foot-slogger.

Fandom, that repository for bruised egos and stunted lives, is not exempt from strivings for rank and privilege. In the mid 1960's, a few New York fans thought it was oh-so-cute to lace their conversations with obscure references to sf pros that practically forced listeners to ask for clarification. Instant status was gained with replies like, "Bobbikins? Why all Heinlein's friends call him Bobbikins!" This was a masterful double stroke, at once implying that the status-seeker was a friend of Heinlein and that he was privy to knowledge denied ordinary fans.

This method of currying status was abandoned, because it had the unfortunate habit of backfiring on the perpetrator. A whole evening's worth of status points could evaporate for someone unlucky enough to say, "Terrence? I thought everyone knew that was Terry Carr's real name!"

Opening every conversation with a list of people recently spoken to on the phone replaced simple name-dropping as the favorite status game. The practitioners of this status stratagem usually included in their listing anyone to whom they'd talked in the previous five years, plus anyone they thought might possibly have called while they were on the phone. It proved just as unsatisfactory as name-dropping. There was too much chance the listener would call the bluff or -- horror of horrors! -- that he had chatted with some celebrity more recently than the status coveter.

It was at this juncture that the classic status ploy of the late 1960's and early 1970's emerged. It was devastatingly simple. All you had to do was not wear your nametag at conventions. Those without tags got a status point for each person who got their names right on the first try and five points for every convention event they attended without being stopped by the sergeant-at-arms.

The heyday of this method is past now. For one thing, everyone's doing it, which is a real status-destroyer and, for another, those beefy fans at meeting-room doors have been replaced by cold-eyed guards who could care less if your fanzine finished third in the Hugo voting of 1968.

A dedicated status-seeker will not be deterred by changes in fashion, and those who attended the Torcon II were firsthand witnesses to the birth of an entirely new status ploy. According to letters I've received from noted status mavens, the "in crowd" has gone for complete plastic surgery this year. Do you remember that tall, blond,

handsome fellow with the waist-length hair? That was actually a well known BAREA fan-publisher who used the proceeds from his publication to get the complete job. Were you caught with a "Hi, Ted!" jangling in your mouth like a bunch of loose teeth before you realized it was actually Milt Stevens? With this new vogue, you're going to have to tread carefully at conventions, lest you spend an hour with some dolt fixed up to look like Mike Glicksohn.

I'm feeling pretty left out of this new movement, because I don't have enough money to look like anyone but me. But I've begun saving all the bread I'm making on WOODEN NICKEL, and I hope to be ready to blossom out at the Discon II as Calvin W. *Biff* Demmon. Only Perhaps Not. (Did I get that right, Calvin?)

RETURN TO WATERCON If you've been waiting for the feedback from my Watercon I article in WOODEN NICKEL #2, you can quit waiting. There isn't going to be any feedback, at least not in print. I just wanted to take this opportunity to inform the seven convention chairmen who wrote me in response to that piece that their secrets are safe with me and those gifts are much appreciated.

SO CLOSE, YET SO VERY FAR AWAY Since it's hard to act completely blase while doing a fanzine a week, I guess it's no secret that I've regained some of my interest in fandom this summer. Liberal applications of egoboo have such a marvelous effect on tired fans! I knew after the Lunacon I wasn't going to Toronto, but as our enthusiasm grew, Joyce and I found ourselves wishing we were going after all.

Things came to a head at last Friday's Insurgent meeting. Though a few regulars had already left for Canada to get a head start on the festivities, Jay Kinney, Frank Lunney and Dan Steffan were in town for a visit. The more the three of them talked about Torcon, the more Joyce, Bill, Charl and I wanted to go.

All of a sudden, there we were figuring away like mad to find some means of making the trip after all. I even got as far as making plane reservations for Joyce and me (I have an air card to defer payment). We all came down to earth with a thump when I realized that the Katzes and Kunkels both had rent due. Joyce and I couldn't have made the trip even if we'd slept on the floor kindly offered by Jay, Dan and Frank and eaten nothing but Fritos for the whole weekend.

So the Insurgent stay-at-homes -- Bill and Charlene Kunkel, Ross Chamberlain, Joy Sennet, Chris Couch and his lady Claudia and Joyce and me -- are getting together tonight to sit around, exchange stimulating quips and try to burn down the Royal York with ESP.

DAVE EMERSON SAYS: "How does one go about tyoing in the nude? I have a vague impression that it's some new kind of perversion, but I don't know how to tyo. Please send detailed instructions, lavishly illustrated with photographs of live models, in a plain brown wrapper." (I've checked with WOODEN NICKEL's legal staff and they all agree that I can't explain how to tyo in the nude (or even how to tyo in a Rubber Suit for that matter) without making myself liable to criminal prosecution. Let's just say that tyoing in the nude is foreplay to oublishing.)

A PREDICAMENT "I have about five lines left in this issue," I said to Joyce after I finished typing the last section. "What should I do with them?"

"Why don't you just leave them blank to show that you aren't a slave to convention," she suggested. So that's what I'm going to do.