

WOODEN NICKEL

WOODEN NICKEL Volume 1 Number 14 Whole Number 14 is offered for the amusement of fifty perceptive and witty people by Arnie Katz (59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201). Today is September 21, 1973, a day like all days except that I am doing WOODEN NICKEL.

CEASE AND DESIST The white flag is flapping in the breeze outside the livingroom window of apartment 6B. I surrender unconditionally. I yield completely to superior forces. "Uncle!" I cry plaintively. If you can find it in your hearts to let Joyce keep her kitty and permit me my stylus and favorite lettering guide, I'll go quietly.

Like most catastrophes, this one crept upon me stealthily, gaining inch by imperceptible inch until it overwhelmed me. Now I come before you, the pitiable hulk of a once-proud fan begging for mercy. What caused this terrible transformation, I cannot say, but I shall always remember the way it began.

It was one of those broiling New York summer days. I was drained from the heat, but glad to be home again as I withdrew the three or four letters on WOODEN NICKEL from the mailbox.

One of the day's letters was from Aljo Svoboda. Near the bottom of the page, evidently signalling that he had run out of inspiration, Aljo typed, "WOODEN NICKEL (or is that WOODEN PICKLE...?)." A week earlier, Dave Emerson had written to suggest that if this fanzine ever slopped over onto a second sheet I could retitile it WOODEN DIME. Aljo's comment was a couple of notches below Dave's on the wit scale, but Aljo is a nice guy, so I bannished it from my mind.

Apart from a reference to "WOODNIK" in Norm Clarke's letter, things were quiet for the next week or so. But on September 10th (a day that will live in infamy), I got a letter from Grant Canfield. Getting a letter from Grant Canfield is not necessarily bad in itself and, in fact, many have gone on to lead happy, productive lives after receiving a letter from him. The only trouble is that I'm not sure if I'm one of those fortunates or if I've taken the first step toward joining the other group of Canfield letter recipients residing in funny farms from coast to coast. Inside of a page, Grant managed to refer to this fan-mag as "WOODEN NIPPLES", "WOULDN'T NIBBLE", "WICKEN NOODLE" and even "WOODEN NICKLE".

September 10th was nothing to September 11th. A handwritten note from Mike Glicksohn included the phrase "COPPER PENNY" and Ed Cagle contributed "LEATHER DOLLAR", "FLANNEL DUCAT", and "MUSLIN RUPEE" in the course of an otherwise interesting letter of comment.

I can't stand the pressure, the suspense. If fans who name their creations things that sound like UMMANABUMMA (pardon, the Hugo-winning UMMANAGUMMA) and KWACKALAKWACKA have started hooting and jeering at an elegant name like WOODEN NICKEL, what may I expect from such non-parel fanzine-namers as Ted White, Terry Carr, Lee Hoffman and Bob Tucker? With the world (or at least that part of it for which I have address labels) gone mad, what new horrors can I expect to pop out of the mailbox at me in the coming days?

It has come down to this: I've developed that dread fan disease, mailophobia. I can't pass my mailbox without breaking out into a cold sweat. My hands tremble uncontrollably

when I try to fit the key into the box lock, and dizziness and nausea overwhelm me whenever Joyce suggests that I go downstairs to pick up the mail. What if Bob Shaw writes to commend the latest issue of TIN TUPPENCE? What am I going to do if Burbee Himself post-cards a few words on GLASS PESO? I've got Joyce screening the mail now, and I think I can make it if the rest of you will get a grip on yourselves and go back to calling this fanmag WOUNDED KNUCKLE just like always.

BOYD RAE BURN EXCLAIMS: "WOODEN NICKEL was quite a surprise. I had sent you some money and of course you immediately gafiated, but apparently the spell has now worn off. At least I've learned How to Keep Arnie Katz Out of Fandom. I am toying with the thought of selling this secret for Vast Sums." {It's funny, I remember opening your letter, taking out the dollar and then...nothing. That was Dec. 1971, I think.}

"I was astounded to see you use the term 'voldesfan'. I coined it umpty ump years ago, and although I think Tucker listed it in the Neofan's Guide, it never did get much usage even at the time." {If the mere mention of "voldesfan" thrilled you, how would you like me to work the term into a snappy slogan for WOODEN NICKEL such as QUANDRY's "the fake fan's almanac"? How about "WOODEN NICKEL, the voldesfan's veda"?}

FRANK LUNNEY REMEMBERS: "I've just recovered from sickness undoubtedly brought on by the convention. The cure was eating 10 Pepto Bismol tablets in four hours, taking a few healthy swigs of Pepto Bismol liquid and getting drunk on Dewar's Scotch. The original illness was caused by overindulgence in brownies and banana bread and similar oily articles, but the germination of my sicko week-and-a-half sprang from the first night of the Torcon.

"Grant Canfield called up our room ('we' being the Torcon Traveling Companions; Lunney, Steffan and Kinney). It was dinner time, he said, and off we went to Ye Olde Spaghetti Factory. It's a good place, he said. I seem to recall Cathy Canfield wending her way to her room sans Grant immediately after returning to the hotel, but I'm not sure what purgative activities she engaged in there.

"To the basic morass of spaghetti was added the next ingredient. As we walked in the door of the hotel, a flimsy piece of humanity presented itself to me as Mike Couch, and after ascertaining that he was, indeed, very stoned, learned that the dispenser of these holy fumes had planted himself on a couch at the back of the main mezzanine. Mike walked into an elevator before I could quiz him further. The grand individual sitting on Mike's namesake turned out to be none other than Steve Shucart, freshly returned from Afghanistan. The slavering marijuanophiles returned to our room where Steve lavished gobs of hash oil on our quivering systems.

"The twins of rotten Italian food and hash oil might have passed through my system unhindered, if it weren't for the final catalytic duo: Seagram's and Canadian Club. Not intensely interested in Jim Turner's Puke Etiquette, I muttered 'Oh shit' rather than 'Hurray' when those strands of spaghetti started tickling the back of my throat, and I lunged for the toilet. A couple of minutes later I passed out on the floor. It turns out that a couple of more minutes later John Berry came in and took half the bed. I didn't find that out until the next morning when I awoke to find eight people sleeping in that single room. Heh heh." {Frank, it gives me great pleasure, as editor and publisher of WOODEN NICKEL, the hedonist's haggadah, to designate you as Fannish Hedonist of the Month. Seldom has an award been more richly deserved. Congratulations, Frank, on a job well done.}