

WOODEN NICKEL

WOODEN NICKEL Volume 1 Number 4 Whole Number 4 is written, produced and directed by Arnie Katz (59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201) on a frenetic schedule for the entertainment of his elite mailing list of 50. This makes the fourth WOODEN NICKEL sent rolling your way in as many weeks. If you'd like to keep them coming when I type a new batch of labels, why don't you write me a letter? If you don't, some eager young fan is going to crowd you out of the select circle, and I'll make cruel jokes at your expense once you've been cast into the outer dark. Today is Aug 3, 1973 and for this issue only, I am tyoing in the nude.

THE NEW ORDER "Where have all the Insurgents gone?" Terry Hughes asked as he. Joyce and I sweltered through a Brooklyn Saturday afternoon. "Where is that satiric wit. that devastating turn of phrase, that trenchant insight, that. that..." He groped for the phrase that would do justice to the now-qiescent insurgent movement.

"That je ne sais quoi?" I offered.

"Yes," he said. "Exactly. Je ne sais quoi. Where is that purifying bath of scalding wit? Oh, where is that deft puncturing of inflated egos that thrilled trufans from coast to coast and border to border, from Brooklyn all the way to the Bronx?"

I wiped away a tear shed for the dear, dead days of 1971, when every week meant a new insurgent fanzine, and every new insurgent fanzine meant another fugghead trampled underfoot. "I'm afraid those days are gone," I replied. "There were just too many of them and too few of us."

"So you've given in," Terry accused. "My hero, my fannish ideal, and now you've sold your trufannish birthright for a mess of crudzines." He moved away from me as though I carried some form of contagion. "How many worthless fan Hugos did they promise you for selling out?" he thundered. "Did they offer you your own coterie of dumpy, overweight slatterns to get you to turn your back on all that is right and good in fandom?"

"I didn't say that," I protested. "We insurgents have just stopped hitting out at random, righting wrongs of fandom the way we used to." I leaned toward the young fan, anxious to share the closely guarded secret of the insurgents with a kindred soul who had come to Brooklyn seeking fannish renewal. "We'll never give up." I whispered. "You must have faith."

"Have faith? How can I have faith when my fannish dreams and aspirations have been shattered by quisling Brooklyn fandom?" Terry buried his face in his hands.

"Now, now don't get carried away." Joyce comforted. "Let Arnie explain." He looked up at the High Priestess of Brooklyn Fandom and, buoyed by the trufannish light in her eyes, dabbed at his eyes with his left sleeve.

"Let me tell you the way it was," I said. "We were all pubbing away like mad, trying to do the kind of fanzines we thought were best and expose those aspects of fandom we felt needed improvement through satire. One day, we realized we were swimming against the tide. We were trying to act like level-headed adults in a fandom where people write lengthy appreciations of their own fanzines abd demand Hugos." I paused, remembering. "At first we were bitter. Yes, bitter unto gafiation. 'Smash them all, the bastards!'," some said, but in the end, cooler heads prevailed. After discussing and debating the issue, we agreed there was only one thing we could do."

"What was that?" Terry asked.

"We adopted the doctrine of passive insurgentism." Terry looked at me quizzically. "We decided that if we attacked everything that was wrong with fandom, however skillfully and humorously, it would be a dreadful bore. Imagine periodicals like POTLATCH, FOCAL POINT and RATS! given over completely to discussions of the sad state of TAFF, the idiocy of worshipping your own fanzine and all the rest! They would no longer be the vehicles of joie de vivre and non pareil divertissement they were in the golden days of ninth fandom. In battling the negative forces in fandom, we would have made ourselves as hate-filled and boring as our objects of scorn."

"I see that," Terry said. "I guess."

"We decided to take the higher and nobler road. We agreed that if there was something stupid, something assinine, something pretenious... in other words, something mundane and Rotarian in fandom, we would simply ignore it."

"Ignore it?"

"Yes, disregard it utterly, and by our ~~inattention~~ encourage it to go elsewhere. That is the lofty principle to which the insurgent movement has dedicated itself the last 12 months.

"Let me give you an example. I got a letter from a fanzine editor, asking me to write an appreciation of his fanzine. He said that I could either deliver this panegyric straight on or write it as though I were penning the words in the late '70's and looking back to the golden age of fandom when wonderful fanzines like his were being published.

"In the old days, there's no question about what I would've done. I would have written a reply so hot it would have singed the mailman's hands when he delivered it." Terry chuckled softly, thinking about the letter that might have been. "But I didn't do that," I said. "The fanned in question is a nice fellow, though prone to grievous excess, so I just ignored his letter completely. The net result was about the same as if I had written a scorcher, but I saved all that energy and fandom was spared yet another cut-and-slash missive."

"I understand!" cried Terry. "I have seen the light!" He looked at me admirer-ingly. "You've found the perfect way to spread the insurgent gospel," he said. "Inevitably, the fuggheads will be worn down by the massed indifference of fannish and insurgent fandom and will cease to exist! Oh, joyful day!"

So we knelt to pray for the return of Willis and practiced ignoring a stack of recent fanzines in the corner.