

WOODEN NICKEL

WOODEN NICKEL Volume 1 Number 8 Whole Number 8 is available for a kind word, a tender glance from Arnie Katz (59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201) who is still fanning away for the benefit of his list of 50 ghodlike readers. It's August 17, 1973 and I have a new bottle of corflu.

THE GAMESPLAYERS OF BROOKLYN

There was a period during the glory days of the Fanoclasts when many members did little but sit around and play one boardgame or another. Perhaps the Great Wheel has come around again, because there's been an upsurge of interest in games around here lately.

I guess I'm mostly to blame, because it's my burgeoning interest in games which has sucked in most of the locals to a greater or lesser extent. Before I took up with fandom, playing strategy games (or "war games" as you'd probably call them or "conflict simulations" as the pretentious would have it) was my main hobby. I even got into designing and testing them for awhile as a teenager. I'd never foresake mimeo and typewriter for the paper battlefields, but I find it fascinating to match wits over a game.

Joyce and I went to a wargames convention at the Hotel McAlpin in mid-July and enjoyed it more than we'd expected. Contrary to our worst fears, there was little, if any, evidence of fascism, hyper-militarism or general nuttiness. Like the typical sf convention, attendees at the wargames event were about evenly divided between longhaired hippie/freak/bohemians and the straightest-looking guys you'd ever want to meet. The age range in that fandom is roughly the same as in ours, and there were more blacks, fewer women and a virtual absence of the misfits, droolers and other flotsam who gum up the works at the larger stfcons.

The huckster room was refreshing after the mobscenes at Lunacon and the comics con. Individuals displayed their wares on tables lining the perimeter of the large room, and the emphasis was more on laid-back friendliness than on wringing the money from the customers. I got especially pleasant vibes from the large contingent from Simulations Publications (remind me to write about them sometime), now a major factor in the games field. When they found out I wanted one of their games which they'd neglected to bring along to the convention, they insisted on sending someone back to their office to get it for me. Now, the time and trouble probably wasn't worth what they were actually going to make on the game, but they appear to be very neighborly sorts, resembling nothing so much as a fannish fangroup operating a business together.

One amusing aspect of wargames fandom is the territory staked out by the hobby's N3F, Spartan International, Inc. The group's avowed purpose is to raise wargaming to the same level as professional golf (game tournaments already pay winners as much as \$100, which isn't Lee Travino, but....). They wear white shirts with distinctive patches on the sleeves and dark ties. They look like a cross between Cincinnati Fandom dressed up in their bowling shirts and your old cub scout leader. It's truly inspiring to see a Spartan International member in his regalia with 60 lbs. of excess belly hanging over his belt. But in his mind, he's captain of ~~the~~ the guards. N3Fs are the same everywhere.

DICK GEIS POSTCARDS: "You will find this incredible, but I don't recall having heard before, 'I had one once, but the wheels fell off.' Although it applies to me maybe -- I had a ten speed once with wing nuts on the wheels. Some prank-

ster stole the wing nuts and.... I've never used wing nuts since.

"But I don't get to fannish conclaves at all, so the immortal line is still new and wonderful to me. I will, in the event of a fannish attendance one day, use it -- and be cut dead, I suppose. Thus do old fans die." (I read in chronicle, that sometimes newszine Andy Porter swears he is not going to publish, that Ted White got a bicycle recently. I don't know its weiss rak number, so don't ask me. It's not a ten speed, though. A five speed, just five. Ted says five speeds are enough for any man.)

LOREN MACGREGOR PROTESTS "I have nothing good to say about a fanzine that doesn't quote me in the first five issues." (How about a fanzine that doesn't quote you in its first seven issues?)

PAUL NOVITSKI PROGNOSTICATES: "To the experienced eye, WOODEN NICKEL falls into an obvious evolutionary pattern. Each issue has been longer and more elaborate, and it requires only minor effort by a godlike intellect such as mine to extropolate this progression:

"Issue #9 will be four pages long; you will write pages 1 and 3, and Joyce will write pages 2 and 4. You will retitile the fanzine HOT WOODEN HIGH SHIT PAPER. Issue #10 will be the same, except that at least half of it will be consumed by the pox -- poctsarcds of comment. Issue #11 will be 20 pages with artwork by Kinney and Kunkel with articles by Burbee, Shaw, Bloch, Carr, Rotsler and Darrell Schweitzer. Issue #12 will run 400 pages (offset on slick bologna) with four-color egoboo and wrap-around sunglasses. The article will be written by Stan Lem and the illustrations drawn by Jeff Schalles. Issue #13 will be cancelled due to lack of sanity. Issue #14 (June, 1984) will be a one-page mimeoed rapzine composed on stencil by Arnie Katz, Jr." (Don't get your hopes too high for that 1984 edition of WOODEN NICKEL. Even if Joyce and I get to work on the project tonight, the new editor would be about 10 years old.)

BOB SHAW, WHO HAD ONE ONCE,
WRITES FROM ENGLAND: "I was a little surprised that someone with your deep knowledge of fandom did not know the origin of the phrase, 'I had one once, but the wheels fell off.' This is actually a corruption of a phrase I used at a British convention some years ago. As you probably know, a big feature of British cons is that a large fan called Brian Burgess goes around in the small hours selling cold pork pies out of a suitcase. Although these are a useful source of protein to revive fans' energies, a cold pork pie is an uncouth object ill-suited for cramming into sensitive fannish mouths. It occurred to me that we could all get our protein in a pleasanter fashion if I went around selling a stimulating variety of cold meats from a tray. I made one next morning, but probably due to my hangover, it was of very shaky construction. When I tried out the scheme, some of the more delicate meats dropped on the floor and were spoiled, so I gave up. A couple of years later another fan suggested that he should go around the con selling food from a tray. And I said, 'I had one once, but the veals fell off!'" (That's funny, I'd always thought the phrase "I had one once, but the wheels fell off" was a play on something I once said. As you know, I had several co-editors during the 13-issue run of QUIP. I finally got rid of one after the person in question had bamboozled me out of a large chunk of money. I decided to do without co-editors entirely after QUIP #7 and was very happy with the results. However, one day a young fan who had noted the disappearance of the various QUIP kids asked me why I didn't go out and recruit another one to keep up the tradition. I shook my head sadly and said, "I had one once, now the heel's well off."