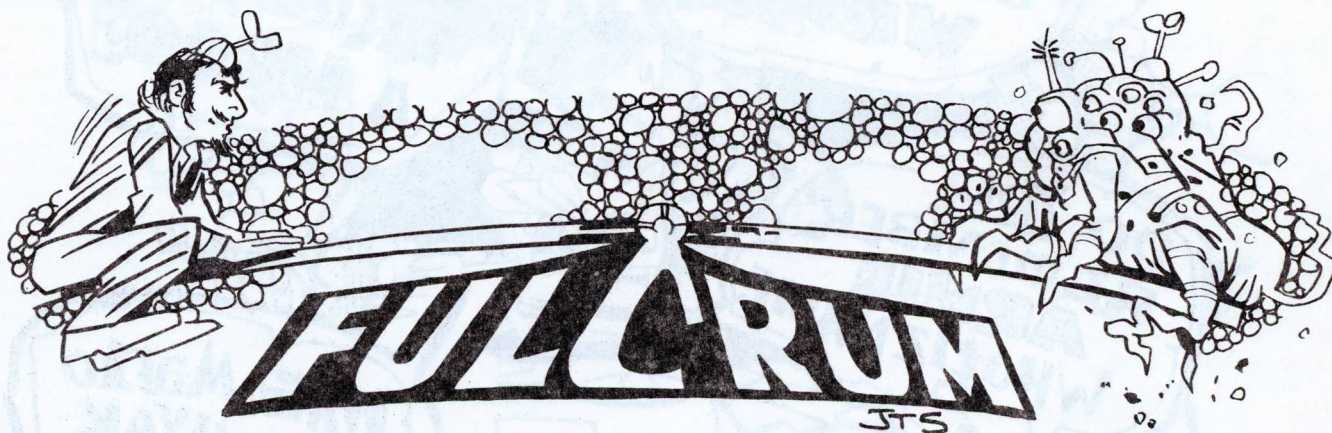


BEARDMUTTERINGS No. 1



beardmutterings No. 1 (in New Jersey, V3N8) is a journal of fannish opinion written published and edited by rich brown (410-61st St., Apt. D4, Brooklyn, NY 11220). Honorary editors: Ted White and Andy Main. Art and logos by Joe Staton, except the back cover which was done by Steve Stiles. *beardmutterings* is distributed to FAPA and is available for trade (by whatever trade policy you devise), letter of comment or love – but not for money. *bm*, as this fanzine is affectionately, perhaps even appropriately, called, is published for response: If I don't get it, you don't get it. One free copy is available to anyone anywhere in the world upon request; future copies will depend mightily on what the recipient does. Those of the opinion that the title of this journal bears too close a resemblance to well-known columns written by Bob Tucker, Poul Anderson and (or) Lon Atkins may feel free to do so as long as they do not mind being stricken from the *bm* mailing list immediately and forever. Mailing labels (hopefully) courtesy of Brian Burley. October 20, 1971.

"My ears are ringing." – Dave Van Arnam
 "Answer them." -- Ted White



The former editor of QUIP, Arnie Katz, with whom I was then co-editing FOCAL POINT, was sitting in my front room, sipping a Pepsi, as we engaged in the game of fourth dimensional mental crifanac (or 'The Sport of BNFs' as it is so often called). As I am sure all of the readers of *beardmutterings* have played this game themselves, I need not explain that the participants, by virtue of their fine high-type minds and their complete understanding of all things fannish, both past and present, are able to chart the course of fandom's future.

Having proven conclusively that the friction-type belt buckle was indeed the thing of the future, and that without doubt the Yobber would maintain its dominance over the lowly Poo (although the exact effect this would have on the Rosenblum and the deadly Habberacker had not yet been determined), Arnie turned to a matter which had been troubling him.

Although not without some prompting on the part of yhos. It went something like this:

"What is it that is troubling you?" I prompted.

"You have correctly surmised," he said to me with his mouth, "that something is indeed troubling me." Following his verbal notation of this fact, he turned to his briefcase and extracted a fanzine from it as a dentist might pull his own tooth. I believe the fanzine was METANOIA, and the fan he was about to quote was Greg Shaw, although my usually infallible memory may well be playing tricks on me. Let's pretend that it's not.

"Listen to this," he said, and he began to quote: "...when VOID folded, the task of carrying on the torch of trufandom fell to John D. Berry and FOOLSCAP."

"That's incorrect," I observed.

Arnie just nodded, as if waiting for me to think it out. It took me just a moment to realize why it was incorrect, which in turn yielded the realization as to why it had Arnie upset. I thought about it for a moment, reliving in my mind's eye those grand and glorious fannish days of yesteryear, where all the snows have gone. In point of fact, when VOID folded, it was not immediately followed by FOOLSCAP. Rather, QUIP, the vulgar & ostentation fannish fanzine, stepped in to fill the, ah, empty space.

QUIP took and expanded from VOID the idea of the many-paged cover, with Ross Chamberlain taking on for QUIP the role that bhob stewart and Steve Stiles played in VOID. Arnie scripted, and Ross drew the Quivvers, as the QUIP covers soon became known.

In point of fact, I don't think John came into fandom (much less published an issue of FOOLSCAP) until QUIP had seen at least five good issues. And when FOOLSCAP first hove on the scene, as I think John Berry himself will admit, the first issues were at best only "promising."

"It appears," I said after this moment's thought, "that you have been written out of fanhistory."

Arnie sighed. "It's not the first time," he said. "I guess I should be used to having my fannish accomplishments overlooked, but I'm not. Now it's my crowning joy. QUIP -- as if I spent those hours toiling over a hot typer, writing the Quivvers and faan-fiction and my editorials, getting contributions out of the best fannish writers still around, all for nothing."

I could do nought but nod understandingly. "Well," I said, "at least your friends -- the people who count -- at least your friends remember," and at this point my eyes may well have glazed over before I continued. "I remember QUIP, Arnie. I remember the-- ah, I remember...hmm. I, uh, I remem--uh. Hmm."

It was this derailing of my train of thought which put me on the track to what I felt was an inescapable conclusion.

Arnie's expression, as a stumbled verbally, approached that of a character in an H.P. Lovecraft novel coming across a fish.

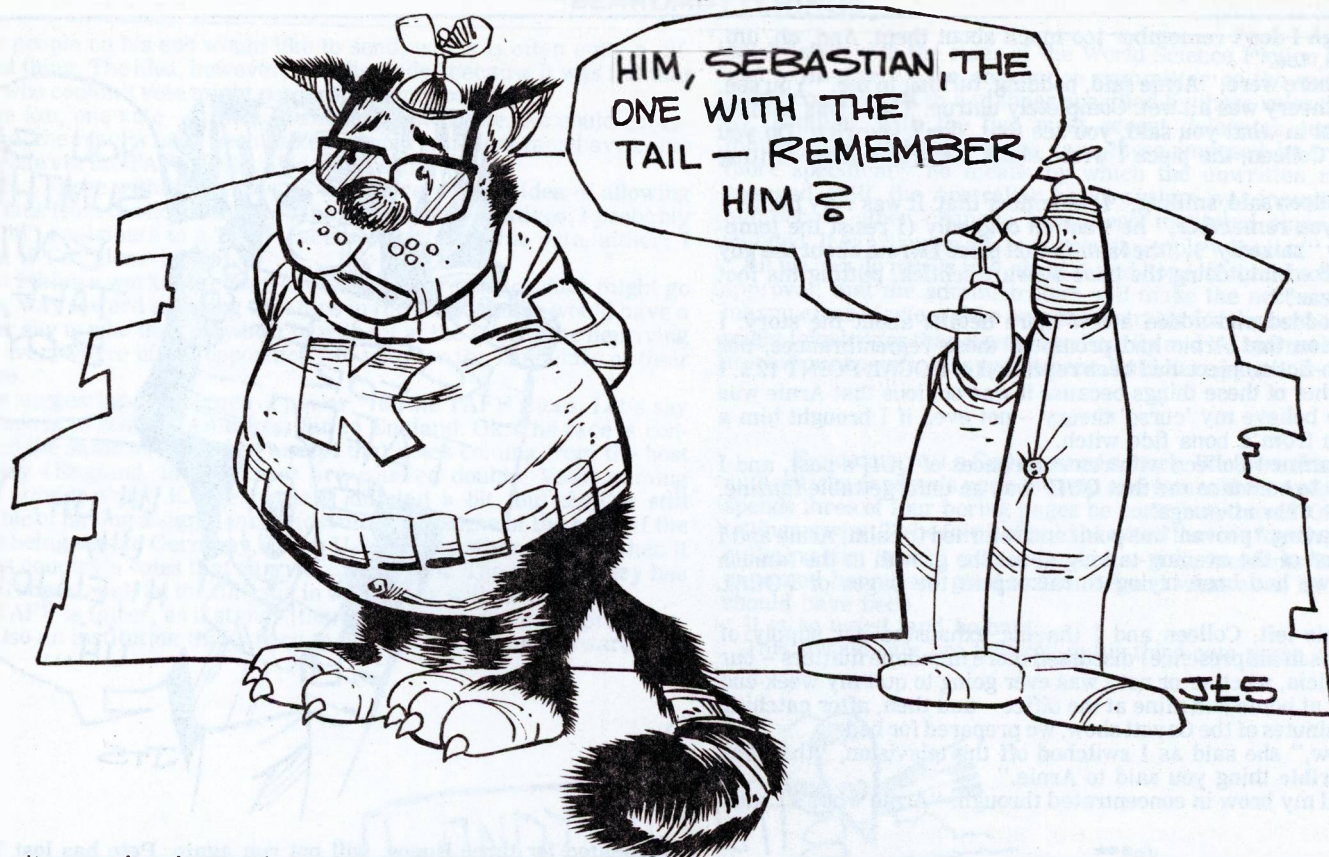
Eying him keenly, to see if he could take the shock, I said, "Arnie, perhaps you're cursed. Perhaps you're doomed to put out an unmemorable fanzine." When I said this, this FOCAL POINT co-editor of mine could only say softly, "Unmemorable?"

"I'm not talking about quality," I added quickly, to help dampen the blow. "No one can deny that QUIP was a magnificent fanzine, and I'm not trying to. But this curse, this doom, if it exists, could prevent anyone from remembering anything specific about it in a matter of months. And then, after a while, people would forget that QUIP existed at all." I racked my brain, trying to remember if I had ever thought about QUIP when Arnie hadn't been there to remind me of it. I couldn't, but that didn't prove anything.

"Unmemorable," he said again. "What do you mean, 'unmemorable?'"

He still did not understand.

"Arnie," I said, "I read every issue of QUIP as soon as I received it."



But I can't remember that much about it. All I can remember is the Quivvers, which you picked up and developed from VOID. Oh, I remember that you wrote editorials and faan-fiction, but I don't remember anything specific about them -- I don't remember what they were about. I remember that Warner wrote 'All Our Yesterdays' for QUIP -- but I probably remember that because we've picked up the column for FOCAL POINT, and I can't remember what any of those installments were about. And that's all I remember about QUIP!"

"You're saying I put out a forgettable fanzine?" The initial shock had worn off, but apparently he wasn't hearing all of my explanation. "What does it prove, that you can't remember anything else about QUIP? Your memory was never too good, anyway."

"About most things, maybe, but not about things fannish," I answered firmly. "I read Art Rapp's SPACEWARP nearly 15 years ago. I remember the Morgan Botts stories Rapp wrote, and 'The Great STF Broadcast' which was serialized there. I remember the combined mimeo-hekto covers. I remember the great blow-up. I remember some of the controversies in the letter column and the Laney-Burbee issues."

"I read Lee Hoffman's QUANDRY about 10 years ago," I went on, "but I remember 'The Harp That Once Or Twice,' by Willis, and the contributions not only by the BNFs whose names have survived even to this time -- Tucker, Bloch, Vick -- but material by some of the lesser lights of the time. I remember the varicolor covers, Proxyboo, Ltd., the battle over steam between the Fort Mudge Steam Calliope and English Steam bunch, and 'Who Sawed Courtney's Boat?'"

"It's been quite a while since Fabulous Seattle Fandom folded the first incarnation of CRY OF THE NAMELESS, but I remember the column of prozine reviews by 'Renfrew Pemberton' and illos by 'L. Garcone,' plus the great stuff toward the end by Terry Carr, Carl Brandon and Dean Grennell. I remember Burbee's 'The Night Laney Blushed,' Wally Weber calling Ella Parker a Stupid Clod Of A Woman, the horrible gash he left in Phil Harrell's letter, and 'A Boyd Stood on the Burning Deek'."

Warming to the subject, I went on, "INNUENDO had published most of its issues before VOID fell under Ted White's protective wing, but I remember not only Carl Brandon's serials, 'The Catcher of the Rye' and 'On the Road,' but Terry Carr's fabulous editorials, the J. Wesley Trufan historical covers, 'Quartet for Beanie Props' and the Tower of Bheer Cans to the Moon."

"I could go on."

"It's not true," Arnie said, visibly shaken. "No matter what you say, it's just not true. QUIP, a 'forgettable' fanzine? No, rich. No."

He shook his head sadly, a tear beginning to form in his eye. Rather than be reduced to tears, however, he called out, loudly, "Colleen!"

Colleen, my wife, had earlier displayed her warped sense of values when she had chosen to wash her hair in the bathroom rather than sit at the feet of two trufen while they charted the course of fandom's future. She came out into the living room where we sat.

"Tell rich it isn't true," he said. "Tell me it isn't true."

Not having heard our conversation, Colleen's reply indicated that she did not understand Arnie's request. He explained my theory, closing off with, "I know I never got many letters on QUIP, but it *did* have some of the best material fandom--"

"You keep missing the point, Arnie," I interrupted. "QUIP's 'forgetability' had nothing to do with its quality of lack thereof. It seems obvious to me that it's you -- that is, that you have some sort of doom, some destiny, that allows your fannish accomplishments to be forgotten. You mentioned other instances besides QUIP, remember."

"Colleen," Arnie said in a separate, pleading voice, "You can disprove it. You've read QUIP." Colleen nodded. "Tell him what you remember."

Shrugging, Colleen turned to me. "Well, there were those covers by Ross Chamberlain," she said.

"You see!" Arnie chortled.

"An idea taken from VOID," I explained for the second time. "Your execution, but someone else's idea. Thus exempt from your particular curse."

"Go on," Arnie urged Colleen. He was sortof bouncing up and down where he sat in his nervousness.

"Well," Colleen said, after she'd thought a bit, "there was Harry Warner's column--"

"You see! You see!" Arnie exclaimed.

"I see that she remembers the same things I remember, probably for the same reasons," I said, but there was no stopping Arnie; he again asked Colleen to continue.

"There were your editorials and some fiction about fans that you wrote," she said after a long pause.

"Ahahahahaha! You see?" Arnie said. He laughed, more to himself than to anyone, a sortof crazy little giggle. I couldn't believe that he was really hearing the things Colleen was saying and then saying what he was saying in reply; it seemed more as if he were hearing something else entirely, a verbal recitation of all the find illos and memorable lines from the pages of QUIP, say.

Colleen added, "There was also a short lettercolumn -- usually, I

mean, though I don't remember too much about them. And, uh, um, other things, too."

"Indeed there were," Arnie said, nodding, turning to me. "You see, rich? Your theory was all wet. Completely untrue. There was nothing at all factual in what you said, you see that, don't you rich. Do you remember, Colleen, the piece I wrote about the QUIP letter-writing contest?"

"Yes," Colleen said, smiling, "I remember that. It was very funny."

"And do you remember," he went on doggedly (I resist the temptation to say "katzedly"), "the faan-fiction piece I wrote about the guy who was talked into doing the bhub Stewart schtick, putting his foot behind his ear?"

Colleen nodded and added a few more details about the story. I didn't mention that Arnie had prompted those remembrances, nor that the faan-fiction piece had been reprinted in FOCAL POINT 12.5. I didn't do either of these things because it was obvious that Arnie was not about to believe my 'curse' theory -- not even if I brought him a certification from a bona fide witch.

So Arnie primed Colleen with remembrances of QUIPs past, and I allowed him to convince me that QUIP was an unforgettable fanzine. A quoi bon? Cela m'es egal.

Finally, having "proven" his point and returned to calm, Arnie and I spent the rest of the evening talking about the growth in the fannish movement we had been trying to talk up in the pages of FOCAL POINT.

When Arnie left, Colleen and I (having exhausted our supply of fannish topics in his presence) discussed more mundane matters -- our little girl, Alicia, whether or not I was ever going to quit my week-end job, her day at home and mine at the office -- and then, after catching the last 10 minutes of the Cavett show, we prepared for bed.

"You know," she said as I switched off the television, "that was really a terrible thing you said to Arnie."

I furrowed my brow in concentrated through. "Arnie who?" I said.

✓□♦♦

The Trans Atlantic Fan Fund -- TAFF -- was founded following the success of the WAW With The Crew in '52 campaign which brought Walt Willis from Northern Ireland to attend the Chicago convention that year. From 1955 to 1971, a total of 15 fans have been brought or sent over the Atlantic via TAFF. In addition, a number of specials funds were successful in that period (mostly to bring fans from outside the U.S. to a convention in this country -- a second one for Willis, and one each for John Berry, Ella Parker, Takumi Shibano and Bob Shaw being the ones that stick in my mind). Thus, counting both, fandom has underwritten the attendance at one convention or another of more than a fan a year since 1955 -- always as a reward for services rendered to one segment, or another, of fandom.

TAFF is now an institution.

Although it was surrounded by some controversy and a bit of bitterness in its formative years and was plagued with money worries initially, TAFF has now become a near-annual event. TAFF is just two years younger than the Hugo awards, and both seem likely to stock around for the foreseeable future.

But as surely as there has been dissatisfaction with the Hugo, so has there been dissatisfaction with TAFF. Simply put, we have sent over a few duds, and received back a few in return.

This receives little discussion in fanzines. The most bitter recrimination during or after a TAFF campaign was hurled over a decade ago, when it was charged that a candidate (not a winner) had been "buying" TAFF votes. But unless it's a matter of such importance, it seems, the unwritten rule is that the best man wins. It's therefore impolite to speak of the outcome of a race as being disappointing.

So I apologize in advance for breaking the unwritten rule. Think me a crass, impolite bastard if you must.

Mario Bosnyak didn't win TAFF in the U.S. The votes from this country, the host country for this year's TAFF delegate, went mostly to Pete Weston. Mario won on the strength of an unusually large number of votes from Germany and Italy -- where he is known and Pete is not. A factor which is not Mario's fault, nor Pete's. Complicating matters this year was the U.K. postal strike, which cut into the number of TAFF votes cast there.

The result was that Mario, who has been to a convention in this country as recently as St. Louiscon (where he left behind a handful of fans who were favorably impressed with him, and about an equal number who apparently disliked him), was our guest at Boston. And I cannot help but wonder how many of the fans who met him were thinking, as I was, that Pete Weston, whose fanzine has been



nominated for three Hugos, will not run again. Pete has lost TAFF twice now, and thus will join the ranks of fans we'll never meet -- regardless of the fact that quite a large number of American fans would prefer to meet him.

I keep telling myself that I don't really feel bitter about this. "You're not feeling bitter about this, brown," I say to myself at odd intervals. But I guess I really am. About the only thing I'm really thankful for is that Arnie Katz and I ignored Charlie Brown's "suggestion" that we let Bob Shaw stand for TAFF again, rather than going ahead with the fund to bring him over.

A simplistic solution to this problem -- assuming people agree that it is a problem -- would be to abolish TAFF altogether and rely only on special funds. Since special funds are initiated for specific individuals, no one who puts money into one is ever disappointed unless the fund fails to reach its goal -- and if it fails to reach its goal, then apparently fandom doesn't care enough to see this particular person rewarded in quite such a grand manner. A bit cruel, perhaps, but perhaps also just.

However, this "solution" has more things wrong with it than the problem it's designed to solve.

For one thing, to my knowledge, the successful special funds have all been one way -- from a foreign country to the U.S. I suspect this is largely because the majority of the money comes from here, with fans being more prone to kick in \$\$ when the TAFF delegate is coming to the U.S. This, for the simple selfish reason that they'd rather meet a fan than send him away. (I have nothing to back this up but my own theory, but I'd be willing to bet that most of TAFF's money comes in when the voting is for a fan coming from overseas, and that in alternate years TAFF is coasting on funds from the previous election. TAFF can send fans both ways because of this, whereas special funds probably could not.)

For another thing, TAFF gets some money because it is an institution -- which a special fund, by its very nature, cannot be. TAFF stands to gain every time a club or convention has excess funds searching for a fannish good deed to do.

Lastly, special funds (in my opinion) should be just that -- special, at odd intervals, when good reason appears to use them.

TAFF already uses the Australian ballot and, unlike the Hugos, demands something (besides money) in the way of voting requirements. This makes TAFF (again, my opinion) considerably fairer than the Hugo.

But what else might be done?

Well, I'm given to understand that Willis' initial idea for TAFF voting was that only fans from the host country would be allowed to vote for the delegate. Thus, the person chosen would be the fan whom most people on the other end would like to see, rather than the fan

most people on his end would like to send, which is often quite a different thing. The idea, however, was discarded because it was felt that fans who couldn't vote might not want to contribute.

One fan, one vote -- a nice, democratic principle. As could be expected, the results have been mixed -- some excellent fans have come and gone via the TAFF route, along with some duds.

Still, I agree with the reasoning that discarded the idea of allowing only fans from the host country to pick the representatives. I probably wouldn't contribute to a TAFF race in which I had no vote, either; I doubt if I'm alone in that.

But I think a workable compromise could be reached which might go a long way toward assuring that fans in the host country would have a larger say in who they play host to without at the same time depriving fans everywhere of the opportunity to vote for the candidate of their choice.

I'm suggesting a "balance of power" for the TAFF races. Let's say the race is to send an American fan to England. Ok. The race is conducted the same as any other except that votes coming from the host country (England, in this case) are counted double. Votes coming from outside the U.K. are perhaps diluted a bit, but they're still capable of having a significant effect on the outcome of the race. If the fan is being sent to Germany, or the U.S., or any other country, then it is that country's votes that carry double weight. The host country has the strongest, but not the full, say in whom they will play host to.

If TAFF is fairer, as it stands, than the Hugo is in voting practices, it's also an institution that's hard to change. The Hugo is awarded in

accordance with the rules of the World Science Fiction Society, subject to change by the convention committee or the membership of world conventions in a manner specified by those rules. TAFF is run by tradition, with the two most recent delegates serving as administrators; it has no rules save those imposed by tradition, and more specifically no means by which the unwritten rules can be changed. Still, the Australian ballot system was inaugurated and a number of other changes have been instituted since TAFF was founded. It can happen again, if enough people want it to.

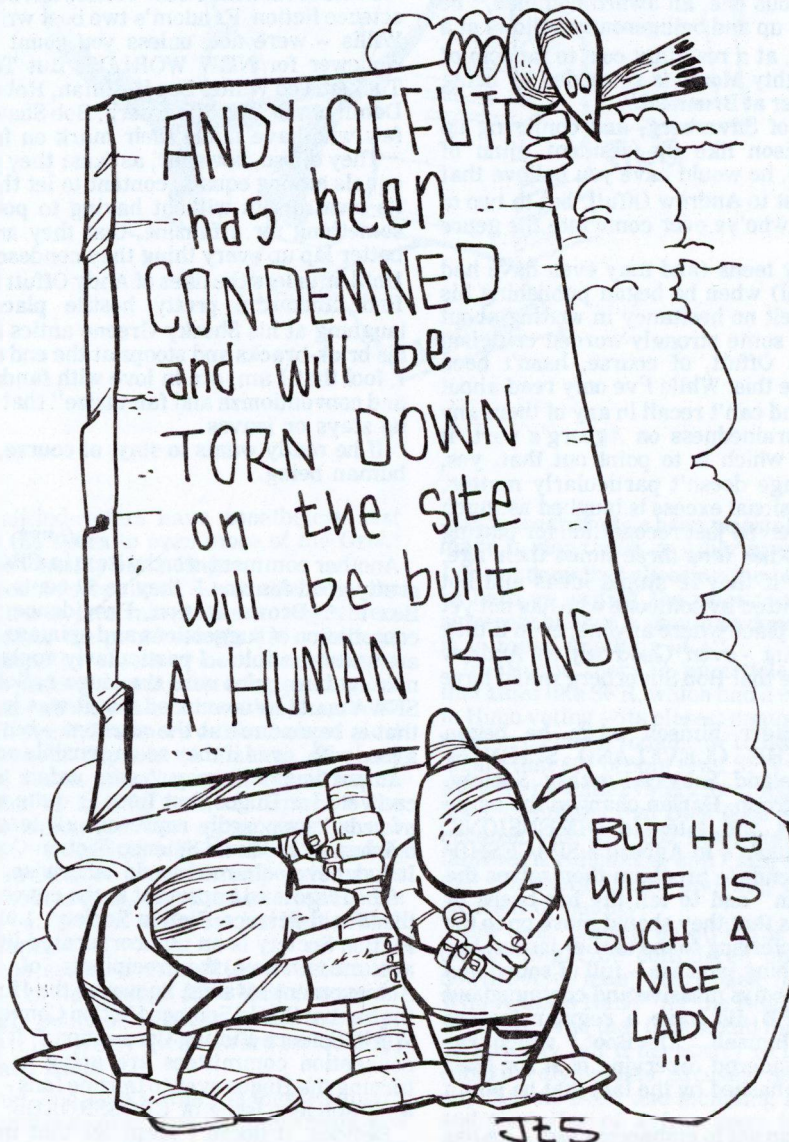
All we can do now is talk about it and hope, if the idea wins general approval, that the administrators will make the necessary changes. Inasmuch as Mario will be an administrator for the next two years, it might take longer than it would ordinarily and if I had not made known at least one specific disappointment. But I have patience.

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Fandom is just a God damned schuck. We have this on no less an authority on fandom's past, present and future than Andy Offutt, who spends three of four boring pages he contributed to CROSSROADS 11 telling us whv. To be fair it should be noted that his fourth page is spent outlining the "good" side of fandom -- i.e., incidents in which fans unnamed have been good to him beyond what even he admits they should have been.

It is so noted, and ho-hum.

This second-rate pro tells us, in his third-rate prose, that fans are



... Mickey Mouse Club dropouts. loudmouthed gumchewingin bright-eyed bushy-tailed jello-brained yo-yos. drooling toddlers (who) graduate from sucking pacifiers to sucking up to (professional) writers in person and bad-reviewing their work on paper. diarrhealarynxed sycophants. dwarves (spitting in the eyes of giant pros). cretins with insufficient judgment (or) critical ability to 'review' Petticoat Junction. mongoloid. gusseted geriatrics. "

And that's only roughly half the names he has for fans, the evildoers and wrongthinkers who have done so much to offend him. Well, now, just what is it that has (let's have a little reverence, here, a little awe, please) P!R!O!F!E!S!S!I!O!N!A!L! W!R!I!T!E!R Andrew J. Offutt so pissed off? Why has he bothered to come down from his elevated position to relieve himself in our midst?

Well, gang, from what I am able to gather from his incredibly muddy prose, it seems one of our own dared to ask him for one of his sacred contributions, which he, from his exalted position above us, magnanimously condescended to do -- and the fan in question then dared to print some lowly person's review which at least hinted that Andrew J. Offutt was not America's answer to William Shakespeare. Thus, his steaming condemnation of fans who "suck up" to pros and then "bad-review" their books.

By implication one can only surmise that Andy Offutt doesn't mind being sucked-up to so long as the suckee gives his books good reviews. This may be a bit more revealing of his attitude than he intended to convey -- or, then again, it could just be his muddy prose again.

The Offutt ire is not saved for his wounded pride alone, he would have us believe: "Fandom is a place where some peanutbutter brained kid with terminal acne can 'review' a book by Silverberg and tell you it isn't as good as the previous one, an award nominee," he says. And later: "A bigmouth stands up and belligerently bellows at a professional acting as a toastmaster, at a resultant cost to fandom of one less ever-available pro. And Mighty Mouth is rewarded by being sent off to a foreign worldcon. To beller at Brunner?"

So, invoking the respected name of Silverberg, and conjuring up (without naming him) Harlan Ellison like the resident djinn of someone's half-forgotten klein bottle, he would have you believe that we are a shoddy pack indeed, not just to Andrew Offutt, but to two of the best and most prolific sf writers who've ever come into the genre and participated in our microcosm.

Robert Silverberg was in his early teens (and may even have had acne, though thankfully not terminal) when he began publishing his fanzine, SPACESHIP, in which he felt no hesitancy in writing about the science fiction field -- including some strongly-worded criticism about science fiction professionals. Offutt, of course, hasn't been around fandom long enough to realize this. While I've only read about a half dozen issues of SPACESHIP and can't recall in any of them any specific incidents of peanutbutter brainedness on Agberg's part, it scarcely matters for my purpose, which is to point out that, yes, fandom is and was a place where age doesn't particularly matter, where youthful exuberance and occasional excess is laughed as much with as at, where teenagers have received just recognition for putting out fanzines five times better than other fans three times their age, and where ideas are put down only if they're stupid ideas and not merely because they happen to be written by someone who has not yet reached their majority. Fandom is a place where anyone, even if they are stupid, can get their ideas into print -- even, Ghod help us, Andrew J. Offutt Himself -- and I'm quite sure that Bob Silverberg would have it no other way.

Harlan Ellison was just a teenager himself when he began publishing the BULLETIN OF THE CLEVELAND SCIENCE-FANTASY SOCIETY for the Cleveland Science-Fantasy Society. Following a row with the Cleveland group, Harlan changed the name to SCIENCE-FANTASY BULLETIN and later to DIMENSIONS. Anyway, an article on numbered fandom's in Agberg's SPACESHIP prompted Harlan and a handful of friends to proclaim themselves the Big Name Fans of "Seventh Fandom" and to tell the has-beens of Sixth Fandom like Hoffman and Willis that they should move on to the elephant's graveyard. SFB, usually referring to the earlier issues, has often been cited as one of the Big Nothing fanzines -- full of sound and fury, but signifying little, they were always massive and contained but few items of any lasting worth. SFB did have a regular feature authored by none other than Harlan himself, "The Boot," which was "awarded" to pros and fans he considered deserving of it for their fuggheadedness and stupidities -- unabashed by the fact that he was a mere brash young fan.

I dredge up these things about Harlan not to embarrass him -- he has long since lived down these antics, which after all took place over 15 years ago, with yeoman service as both fan and pro at countless

conventions and gatherings--but to illustrate the ignorance of Offutt's anger at some teenaged fan (again unnamed) who awarded Harlan the equivalent of a modern-day "Boot."

Then there's the matter of Elliott Shorter "bellowing" at Harlan. Well, now. As I understand it, there was a movie screen broken (at St. Louiscon, I believe) which fans were called upon to pay for. Harlan's powers of persuasion were so great on this occasion that there was more money on hand than was needed to pay for the screen. And, as I'm told, Harlan then decided that the extra money should go to his, Harlan's, pet project, the Clarion Writer's Workshop. At this point Elliott wanted to know (and made loud and clear his desire to know) why Harlan should arbitrarily decide what to do with this money when it was more the fan's present than it was his. To which I can only echo: Why, indeed?

Mind you, Elliott was not my choice as a TAFF representative -- I was actively and loudly, although apparently not too effectively, a supporter of William Rotsler's. And I've had my disagreements with him, in print and out, because he's just as opinionated an s.o.b. as I am, so this is no blanket endorsement of all his views. But he won TAFF, he represented you, and me, at Heicon -- and if he went there and belled at Brunner, and if his reasons were at least as good as for bellowing at Harlan, then I say more power to him!

At any rate, fandom is obviously not all Offutt thinks it should be: A place where fans completely brown-nose pros, bow & scrape for their contributions, praising third-raters beyond their worth or at least saying only nice things about their works. And I, for one, am thankful.

Some of fandom's best writers have also been writers of professional science fiction. Fandom's two best writers -- Charles Burbee and Walt Willis -- were not, unless you count Walt's brief stint as a fanzine reviewer for NEW WORLDS. But Terry Carr is a pro, as is Bob Tucker, Ted White, Lee Hoffman, Robert Bloch, Greg Benford, Calvin Demmon, Robert Silverberg, Bob Shaw, James White -- to name just a few who have made their mark on fandom.

They did so, however, as fans; they participate (or participated) as equals among equals, content to let their fannish output be judged on its own merits without having to point out, every time they write something for a fanzine, that they are byghod pros, and you'd just better lap up every thing they condescend to say to you because of it. Until or unless the likes of Andy Offutt learn this unwritten rule, they'll find fandom a pretty hostile place. He will even find people laughing at his Shecky Greene antics and, when he finishes throwing his brick-bracks and stoops at the end of his tirades to lines like, "And I, fool that I am, am in love with fandom ... let me stay, let me write and conventionize and fan-tasize" that few people really care whether he stays or leaves.

If he really wants to stay, of course, let him learn to behave like a human being.

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Another comment-worthy item in CROSSROADS (which overall is a pretty good fanzine -- they're 50 cents each, 3 for \$1 from Al Snider, Box 2319, Brown Station, Providence, R.I. 02912) is Leon Taylor's compilation of suggestions and opinions on Hugo reform. Most of them are quite sensible -- I particularly applaud the idea of keeping Nebula nominations quiet until the Hugo ballot is set, although just how the SFWA could be convinced that it was in their own best interests to do that is beyond me at the moment -- but there are a few things I can't agree with, even if they seem sensible on the face of them.

In particular, it may "seem unfair that only worldcon members" can vote for Hugos, but Leon is quite wrong when he states that the awards "supposedly represent all fans." The awards represent the opinion of the World Science Fiction Convention membership, period. It has never claimed to do otherwise.

The Hugo is so important to the convention that the very first rule of the World Science Fiction Society, 1.01, states: "The World Science Fiction Society is an unincorporated literary society whose functions are: to choose the recipients of the annual Science Fiction Achievement Awards, known as the Hugos; to choose the location for the annual World Science Fiction Convention; and to attend the annual World Science Fiction Convention." It seems unlikely to me that the convention committees are going to relinquish their first duty by turning the Hugos over to fanzine fans -- an idea suggested by Snider in a subsequent issue of CROSSROADS.

Besides, it doesn't seem all that unreasonable to me that Hugo voters be required, at the very least, to be members of the convention; the problem with the Hugos has almost always been that, even with



this limitation, too many unqualified voters have nonetheless cast ballots. I don't see that opening the doors to even more of the Great Unwashed is going to improve the viability of the Hugos.

In his compilation of other people's opinions, Leon offers us the possibility of an elected committee to determine awards. Regardless of how this might be done -- whether the panel selects the nominees, the winners from stories nominated by others or both the nominees and winners -- it just substitutes picking a committee for picking the actual winners. While I'm dubious about some convention members' ability to choose, say, the best fan artist, I'm more dubious about most members' ability to choose a panel capable of making all those choices. What criteria are we to use in selecting members of such a committee? Popularity? Duration of having read sf? Opinions the would-be panel members have expressed that agree with yours? "Objectivity" -- whatever that is? "Integrity"? Think about it. And if, in the back of your mind, you can think of two or three people whose judgment you'd be comfortable with to pick, say, the best novel of the year, are those the same people you'd want to choose the best artist? The best magazine? The best fanzine?

I would like to see the worldcon set up a committee to determine what is and what is not ethical in "campaigning" for a Hugo, however. As the Hugo becomes increasingly political, it becomes less a freely-given award for quality. The less it is a freely-given award for quality, the more diminished is the award itself.

As somebody or other once said, one man's ethics is another man's Model-T Ford. In the past, a number of practices in Hugo voting and campaigning have been called into question -- club voting, pros plugging for their own works, special interest groups voting en masse --

-- but since there has been no established guidelines, no effort has been made to stop these, or other practices--if, indeed, they are unethical. I do not deny that choosing the panel to write the rules will be almost as hard as writing the rules to try to cover every possibility. But I sincerely believe it should be done, and as soon as possible, if the Hugo is to mean anything at all.

In "Hugos There?", an article I wrote for FOCAL POINT, I noted that zines like SFR, which had a circulation of 1400, had the advantage in Hugo voting -- its closest competitor, circulationwise, LOCUS (with 800), even had a tough row to hoe since the figures by themselves indicate that 600 people read SFR who didn't read LOCUS -- and those 600 were potential voters for the Hugo. But there's no question of ethics here; to suggest that Dick Geis or Charlie Brown should be penalized because 1400 and 800 fans, respectively, have subscribed to their fanzines is ridiculous, and I said as much. I merely, at the time, noted that Numbers Count, and that circulation is not necessarily an indication of quality.

But Geis' placing an ad in the program book plugging SFR's candidacy might be considered unethical. Harlan Ellison was called down, not too many years back, for trumpeting his TV drama "Demon With A Glass Hand" for the Hugo -- and Harlan's excuse, which I tend to accept, was that fans would have only one opportunity to see it and he honestly felt it necessary to let them have the opportunity. That could hardly be Geis' excuse -- SFR attained the highest circulation of any fanzine ever, and including a number of prozine advertisements and the offer of a free copy to any reader of FANTASTIC who requested one, SFR was possibly the most advertised fanzine in fandom's history, too. If you've had the opportunity to subscribe to a fanzine, chances are pretty high that you had a chance to subscribe to

SFR. Geis' ad is at the least blantly unfair to the publishers of other fanzines up for the award. I wish it were possible to say that the ad itself, through negative reaction, was responsible for SFR's losing this year. But this seems not to have been the case.

The convention committee, perhaps with the best intentions in the world, made its membership list available to the editors of the fanzines up for the award. At least, so I have been told. Even if all of the editors were informed personally by the convention committee that the list was available -- and I have no information to say that this was, or was not, the case -- it seems obvious that the person who stood the most to gain from this was the publisher of a small, frequent fanzine. There was only one fanzine of that kind on the list -- LOCUS.

Perhaps LOCUS actually obtained enough votes from people who had seen some or most of the other zines up for the award and thus legitimately won the Hugo it received. I know a number of people who think -- this is not my opinion, but I respect some of the people who hold it -- that LOCUS provides a great service to fandom and does it well. But we'll never know how many of that kind of people cast their ballots for LOCUS and how many voted for it because it was the only fanzine they'd ever seen. Charlie may be proud of the Hugo he bought with sample copies sent to the worldcon membership list -- which, because of size and frequency, only he could afford to do -- but I don't think that he can properly claim that he "won" it.

I think setting up an ethics committee might keep this sort of thing from happening again.

Let me add this, too: I can quite understand why people vie so desperately for these awards. To a professional writer, a Hugo may mean a few hundred bucks extra on his advance or extra sales on his book ("by the Hugo-winning author, John Schmuck"), as well as the prestige of the award itself. Pretty much the same applies in other professional categories, too.

But for a fan, it's prestige alone -- so I ask you, of what value is that prestige if the award goes to the smartest huckster, the craftiest politician, or the dirtiest trickster?

□♦♦♦

At one time I was known as Dr. Gafia. At least, I was portrayed in that role on a number of those QUIP covers I was talking about a few pages back. This title came to me because, in my younger days, I was a gafiating fool.

No. I take that back. In my teens, what I was was an insecure, rather maudlin kid--and fandom was the most marvelous thing that had ever happened to me. It was only natural that every once in a while I would decide that fandom would be better off without me (or vice-versa), so I would send out tearful missives about how I had finally hit the road to total and complete gafia. (snif.) A week or, if I really wanted to feel sorry for myself, a month or so later I would be back on the path to trufandom again.

(There is absolutely no truth to the rumor -- circulated, I suspect, by Boyd Raeburn -- that I issued weekly progress reports to keep the outside world informed as to whether I was currently indulging myself in gafia or hyperfanac. None, in fact.)

The closest I ever came to legitimate gafia was when I decided I wanted to write the Great American Kgnovel (or GAK as I called it in initialese) -- I was out of all forms of fanac for about two years save eight pages annually to maintain my FAPA membership.

I completed the first draft of that novel while I was stationed in Florida in the Air Force. It was only 130 pages long. I began revising it in Florida, kept it up for the two years I spent in Germany, and continued work on it for the first year or so I was in New York. By the seventh revision, it had grown into a 320-page monster.

The problem with the book was not with the book per se but with myself and the goal I had set for it. The goal, I've said, was to write the GAK. But the elements I'd thrown together just didn't mesh to meet that goal. For one thing, the plot was not much. It was about Young People (which meant that Harry Warner would never read my contribution to Western Literature), a college boy and high school girl who fall in love, only of course it all ends in tragedy after many sexy scenes (but, ha, I sneaked the whole thing over on you, didn't I, Harry?). I could have called it "Love Story" and made a fortune, but I called it "Comfort Me With Apples" and only made myself sick. Stylistically, it was a combination of informal rich brown and imitation Salinger, Kerouac and Burbee. (I admit it doesn't sound very appetizing.) And I had, through various stages of revision, added the use of Devices which (I thought at the time) would make it the **Finest Piece of Writing of This Century**. Devices like the use of studied repetition to give normal phrases extra emotional impact, and writing all the love-sex scenes in free verse. Just, as I'm sure you can all see,

what the Western World was waiting for.

But every time I let it sit for a while before coming back to it, I came closer and closer to the realization that it was an ungodly piece of crap. The news, in the latest issue of EGOBOO, that Calvin Demmon has suffered a similar experience makes me feel a little better. But not too much. It has been fully six years since I tried to do anything with "Comfort...", but every once in a while I stumble across some part of it in my files, read a page or two, and shudder. (Presently I'm writing a great science fiction novel in which all the sex scenes are in free verse and utilizing the studied use of repetition to give normal phrases extra emotional impact, which is neither here nor there except to show you all how much I've grown as a writer.)

But before I decided that the book was absolutely dreadful, I began to think of it as a saleable property again. Not as a book. God help us, not as a book, but perhaps as a film. I just recently came across some notes I made for myself, if I ever decided to make the story into a screenplay, and so I'll finish off this already too-long editorial by quoting from them:

"I would like to claim for myself all sorts of Artistic Integrity about phony old Hollywood, but the fact of the matter is that I'm perfectly willing to prostitute my work if I'm paid enough. Let someone else starve for the sake of Art -- I will write a money-making film.

"Having thus armed myself with this philosophy and knowing full well the deserved reputation Hollywood has for mangling what few good properties it manages to pick up (usually quite by accident), it will be necessary to out-gross their grossness, to let them know that I really do want to make money and to prove that I have no qualms about butchering my own work. Therefore, I will cast Elvis Presley in the lead role. Opposite him, as the villain, will be Ricky Nelson. This is because where, in the book, the two fight it out over the girl, in the movie they will sing instead. Here's how I picture the rest of it:

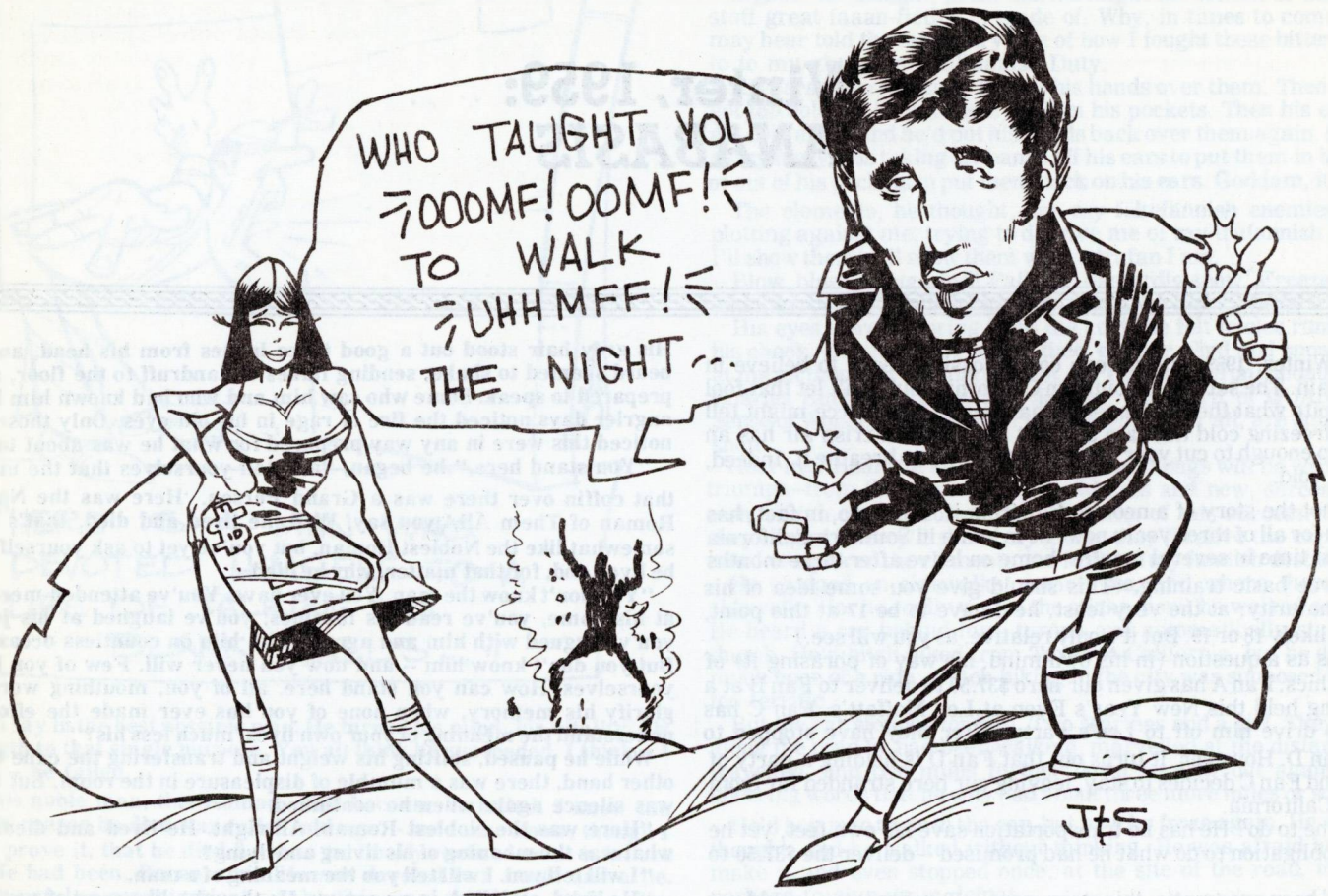
"Gina Lolabrigida is the girl. Of necessity no longer 16 (as in the book), she is the Good Whore. This is old hat, as far as Hollywood is concerned. We've had American whores ("Butterfield 8" and, dubiously, "Breakfast at Tiffany's"), Greek whores ("Never on Sunday"), Chinese whores ("The World of Suzy Wong"), East Indian whores ("The Wind Cannot Read"), Japanese not-quite whores

But what, you ask, about publication schedule, technical data, requests for material, and all the other things you might reasonably expect to find in the editorial?

Not there. Instead, here: I am aiming for a roughly bi-monthly schedule for *beardmutterings*, but until I hit my aim you should consider it irregular. Publication is by multilith with photo typesetting by 4961TL compugraphic (except this, which is IBM composer). Yes, I would like contributions of material, and I will print letters if they're interesting.

For FAPA members, this may, in fact, be for you a postmailing along with Andy Porter's ALGOL, so you may not have any Brian Burley labels to read. The rest of you are encouraged to read yours. A number indicates the last issue of *bm* you will receive unless you Do Something. Letters mean something else again: P, permanent; T, trade; S, sample (and if Andy and I use the Burley labels, F, FAPA member.).

Absolutely no subscriptions accepted. None. All written material in this issue of *beardmutterings* is by the editor, rich brown.



("Sayonara"), and should have had a Negro whore ("The Subteranneans") only Hollywood chickened out and made her French instead. Without variation, they are Good Hearted whores. Not to be totally without innovation, I've just now decided that Gina should be Spanish, just recently up from five years hard work in Tiajuana, now moving into business for herself by working free-lance out of a charming little bordello in the Midwest.

"Elvis plays the part of a Struggling Young Poet (hereinafter to be referred to as the SYP); we have removed the college element, not for any particular reason, just because it differs with the book -- and, at the start of the story, he is a gas station attendant, just one of the guys. Only, as I say, he has this terrific natural ability to write poetry. You, the viewer, are able to tell that he is a SYP because, as he wanders aimlessly from scene to scene, he keeps mumbling to himself in that inimitable Presley mumble, "Who taught you to walk the night?" (However, in my mind's eye, I imagine myself to be directing Elvis, in certain crucial scenes, to deliver this phrase in a throaty, whither-goest-thou, eldrich sort of voice, so as to at least give him a crack at the Academy Award.)

"At the end of the picture, when he has either Won Out over All or been Defeated by Fate (I've not yet decided which), he sings a song, "Who Taught You To Walk The Night?" (Incidentally, I see I haven't mentioned it before, but the title of the picture has been changed from "Comfort Me With Apples" to "Who Taught You To Walk The Night?"")

"What happens is that Elvis becomes emotionally involved with Gina because, even though she is a prostitute and, much worse, a liar, alcoholic, extortionist, murderess and horse thief, she is basically good inside.

"Um.

"Besides, he doesn't realize that she's a liar.

"All is well until he asks her, "Who taught you to walk the night?" She gets pretty upset about this and they have an argument. The emotional static does her no good, but it inspires him to write a poem

which is immediately published in one of the most respected journals.

"Naturally, he becomes world famous over night (we know how it is with these poets); he makes wads and wads of money and starts throwing Swank Cocktail Parties instead of living in his coldwater flat with Gina, thereby selling out his artistic muse to capitalistic decadence.

"It is at one of these parties that he meets an Older Woman (played, I should think, by Ingrid Bergman) and forgets all about Gina. She (Gina) appears to take this well, despite the fact that she has helped him through his lean years. She leaves with the cheery words, "Well, it's been a business doing pleasure with you," and goes home to try to commit suicide. However, Elvis comes in at the last minute and turns off the gas; Ricky Nelson sings a song.

"Paul Newman, who plays the part of Elvis' itinerant tramp father, comes on at this point with tears in his eyes. He has a fairly long monologue during which he Speaks Up (shaking his clenched fists at the skies) about Injustice in the world. This is the first time he has appeared in the feature. Well, God strikes him down with lightning and we don't see him again until the end of the picture -- a slightly charred individual, gesticulating wildly at the skies and crying out about Injustice. Elvis, when he sees him, wants to know, "Who taught him to walk the night?"

"At this point, Gina contracts a rare form of venereal disease, known as halitosis, and Elvis, who has been studying surgery in his spare time, undertakes to cure her."

That was as far as I was able to make myself go on the screen treatment for my GAK, which I legitimately gafiated to finish. Not that I minded, even then when I thought it was great, the changes that I would have to make. But the way I figured it was this: I couldn't go any further until Hollywood made a definite offer and I had an opportunity to judge whether the happy or tragic ending was currently in vogue. Certainly, I could have gone to the trouble of working out alternate endings -- but that, you know, would have been a tragic waste of my valuable time.

Winter, 1959: ANABASIS

It is Winter, 1959, and no one could possibly learn to believe in Spring again. The setting is Southern California, but don't let that fool you -- despite what the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce might tell you, it is freezing cold this late at night and the cold crisp air has an edge sharp enough to cut your lungs when you try to breathe it. Indeed, it is very cold.

This is not the story of a neofan. Far from it. Our hero, in fact, has been a fan for all of three years now; he is home in Southern California for the first time in several months, home on leave after three months of Air Force basic training. (This should give you some idea of his relative maturity; at the very least, he'd have to be 17 at this point, and more likely 18 or 19. But it's only relative, as you will see.)

It begins as a question (in his own mind, his way of phrasing it) of fannish ethics. Fan A has given our hero \$37.50 to deliver to Fan B at a party being held this New Year's Even at Len Moffatt's. Fan C has offered to drive him off to Len's party, after they have stopped to pick up Fan D. However, it turns out that Fan D is holding a party of his own, and Fan C decides to stay, leaving our hero stranded far from Downey, California.

What is he to do? He has no transportation save his own feet, yet he feels this obligation to do what he had promised -- deliver the \$37.50 to Fan B.

If he had been pragmatic, this story, nearly 13 years later, would not be unfolding before your very eyes. But it is. It is.

Our hero is not completely stupid. It takes several glasses of Thunderbird wine to convince him, and much thinking about 'duty,' a subject the Air Force has spent some time and several thousand dollars drumming into him. He asks directions from yet another person (Fan E), and without another word slips out the door.

He walks determinedly down the avenue, turning at the main street he was told to turn at. Four blocks, six blocks, ten blocks, twenty. He's dressed in Air Force wool, but it doesn't really insulate him against this kind of chill. The warmth of the wine begins to evaporate as the cold winds blow, he begins to think that perhaps this is not such a good idea, after all, but still he continues to trudge on. One foot in front of the other, onward, as cars rush by, catching him in their even colder wakes.

Despite having directions, he really has no idea where he is going; he's never been to the Moffatt's before, and this part of Southern California is not really his part of Southern California.

But, hands in pockets to protect them from the cold, he continues on. He's walked at least two miles now, knows there are maybe 10 or 12 miles left to walk. It's getting on close to midnight, now, and every breath is an icy pain.

His ears are ringing. (He does not answer them.) His hands are numb. His breath come billowing out into the clear dark night like cigarette smoke, but he is not smoking. Sometimes it makes him feel better if he lets his teeth chatter, but mostly he couldn't stop them from doing so if he wanted to. It is quite cold and getting colder.

To distract himself from the cold, he begins to compose a piece of faan-fiction in his mind. It goes something like this:

Djinn Faine and Bjo wept openly. The others struggled to contain their tears. "Yes," someone said, in response to the last funeral oration, "yes." Others nodded sagely or bit their lower lips.

"No," a voice said. All heads turned.

rich brown was standing, his hand on his cane. "No," he said again.

His grey hair stood out a good three inches from his head, and his beard seemed to shake, sending flakes of dandruff to the floor, as he prepared to speak. Some who saw him and who had known him in his angrier days noticed the fire of rage in his old eyes. Only those who noticed this were in any way prepared for what he was about to say.

"You stand here," he began, "and tell yourselves that the man in that coffin over there was a Grand Person. 'Here was the Noblest Roman of Them All,' you say. Well, he lived and died, that's true, somewhat like the Noblest Roman, but you've yet to ask yourself why he lived and, for that matter, why he died.

"You don't know the man. You ever have. You've attended meetings at his home, you've read his fanzines, you've laughed at his jokes, you've argued with him and agreed with him on countless occasions. But you don't know him -- and now you never will. Few of you know yourselves. How can you stand here, all of you, mouthing words to glorify his memory, when none of you has ever made the effort to understand the meaning of your own lives, much less his?"

While he paused, shifting his weight and transferring the cane to his other hand, there was a mumble of displeasure in the room. But there was silence again when he continued.

"Here was the Noblest Roman. All right. He lived and died. But what was the meaning of his living and dying?"

"I will tell you. I will tell you the meaning of a man.

"He lived, and died, in a vacuum. He thought, like most of you, that in his fanac -- which took up most of his time -- he would find not just immortality but meaningful communication with like-minded individuals. He never found out that meaningful communication is an impossibility in this microcosm. All fannish communication is one-sided: Everyone connected with the microcosm is busy expressing their own opinions -- so they read the opinions of others, not because they want to know what others think, but because they're looking for material to spark the empty containers they call their minds.

"Here is the Noblest Roman. He learned the Burbee catechism. He read Terry Carr and Carl Brandon and Zeke Fiorelli. He couldn't open his mouth without getting a belly-laugh out of the whole bunch of you -- though you'd heard the line a hundred times -- or causing you to stop and pretend to think, although the matter, or one very much like it, had been discussed a hundred times before in fanzines and at cons.

"He thought better of himself than he did of any of you, and if you've got the guts to admit it, you think better of yourselves than you did of him. He, like you, was the victim of a misunderstanding: He thought he was doing something worthwhile, meaningful, lasting every time he sat down to typer and stencil. He thought he was expressing his own opinions to people who were interested in what his opinions were. The poor bastard. The pitiful Noble Roman.

"Ok. Then here is a man who devoted himself to a life of talking to blank walls. Here is a man who devoted his life to nothing. Here is a man who said the same things you've all said, only he said it, sometimes, better. But all of you, as you progress through the microcosm, will eventually be able to say it better still. For what purpose? To what end? To no purpose and no end; 'til eventually you realize that you've done everything everyone else has done and try to do something new. And you'll struggle and strive to make one new thought, one original idea, clear to your fellow fan. And be laughed at. Or, like him, you'll realize nothing and continue in the same pattern, in the same rut.

"Here he lies, your Noble Roman, your BNF's BNF, your living legend. He put every ounce of energy into trying to say what he felt he



had to say in the best possible way. He turned his mind, his vitality, his strength to that single purpose. You all think he succeeded. I think -- I know -- he failed.

"This noble man, this Roman, died because he failed. I know the official reason he died was called 'old age' -- but I also know, though I can't prove it, that he died because he finally realized what a failure his life had been. Because his life was devoted to a fraud and a lie. 'Meaningful communication' -- hah! This man, this fool ... this noble, noble Roman, finally learned the emptiness of words."

rich brown turned then and began to make his way out of the room, looking neither to the left nor the right until he reached the doorway. At the door, he turned to give the room, and the people in it, one last look of rage.

"Fandom is just a goddamn hobby," he said.

Ted Johnstone walked to the center of the room, his beer can in his hand, while the others sat in stunned silence. He took a swig of beer, the last in the can, and savored those few drops. Then he laughed the laugh that was known from coast to coast.

"Well, rich brown has gafiated," he said.

"Again," he added.

Our hero savored the story, much as Ted Johnstone had savored the last few drops of beer at the end of it, and hoped he'd be able to remember some details so as to get it down on paper. How had that speech gone? "Here is the Noblest..." Oh, well. He particularly liked the ending, which saved it from being 'pushy' faaan-fiction. Ghod, he hated pushy faaan-fiction.

Writing it in his head had made the cold bearable for a while, but now it came back with a vengeance. God, he thought, damn. God. Damn. It's. Cold.

He'd walked, perhaps, eight miles by now. Or maybe only six. It was hard to tell. He walked on, and the night was perfectly clear: Even the glaring lights of the suburbs around him did not diminish the silver ice of glowing crystals that were stars, sprinkled individually across the early morning sky. The cold itself began to insulate him from the night-time noises. His knees began to chaff on the wool of his uniform as he continued to walk, and he felt as if the cold had penetrated to the core of his brain. He walked on, and the minutes walked with him, throwing themselves before his feet.

With great effort he brought his mind back to fandom to distract himself for his discomfort. He filled his head with fannish thoughts as pure as the snow that was now beginning to fall.

The March of the True Fan, he thought. Take a God Damned True Fan to do what I'm doing. Maybe I am, at that. Making this Great

Fannish Trek: Not rain nor sleet nor snow nor cold nor the gnashing of shorts shall stop the True Fan from making his appointed rounds. Rah! Rah! Rah Rah Rah!

Bighod, he thought, great stories might be written of this. It's the stuff great faaan-fiction is made of. Why, in times to come, neofans may hear told the legendary tale of how I fought these bitter elements to to my ghoddam TruFannish Duty.

His ears were freezing. He put his hands over them. Then his hands got too cold, so he put them back in his pockets. Then his ears would get cold again and he'd put his hands back over them again. So it went, every few yards taking his hands off his ears to put them in his pockets or out of his pockets to put them back on his ears. Goddam, it was cold.

The elements, he thought, are my fakefannish enemies. They're plotting against me, trying to deprive me of my trufannish glory. But I'll show them! I'll show them what a trufan I am.

Blow, blow, biting wind! Fall, fall dastardly snow! Freeze my bones and marrow, but I will not give in. This is the march of the trufan!

His eyes were watering from the cold; he felt icicles running down his cheek. He thought: I conjur thee, o bitter wind and snow, to throw at me all thou wilt -- it matters not, for I will travel on, undaunted. I am Charles Burbee, Walt Willis, Jophan, the Spirit of QUANDRY, the Sense of Wonder of the neofan -- while you, after all, are only wind and snow.

Hear me! Hear me now, wind and snow. Songs will be written of my triumph--from this time forward, old fans and new, sercon and fannish, at fan club or convention, will sing of this success. Each time they sing of it, they'll share my glory, they'll relive the experience of how I conquered the elements and fulfilled my fannish destiny!

He trudged on sidewalks, sometimes, and where there were no sidewalks (for he really was in the sticks, now) he walked on the road. He heard a car behind him, turned and automatically stuck out his thumb. He'd hitch-hiked from Texas to California, but he didn't have much hope of a ride -- hitch-hiking in the city was supposed to be none too terrific.

But the car stopped for him. Two Marines and a girl. They took him along the road he had been walking, marvelled at the distance he had travelled, and two miles further down let him out again with the cheering words that he only had about three more miles or so to go.

He'd begun to thaw in the car, but now he froze again. He walked, he thought, and he walked without thinking. He was afraid he wouldn't make it and even stopped once, at the site of the road, to rest and perhaps to give up in defeat.

No, no, he thought.

March of the trufan. Beat the bitter elements. All of that. Can't let Jophan down now, can we?

He managed to get back up, on his feet, and somehow managed to walk again. Just a short but cold cold cold while later he discovered -- O, Lordy! -- he was coming in to Downey.

Almost got it, he thought. Glory in my grasp. Just hang on to it, is all. What would Burbee do? What would Willis?

He found a phone booth, looked up Len Moffatt's number in the directory. His hands were so numb that he had trouble getting his fingers in the dial. He got Len on the phone, but stubbornly refused to let himself mention that he was coming on foot -- that would be cheating. He got fresh directions; he was only "five minutes away" by car, which meant maybe another half hour on foot.

Never mind, he thought. I'll make it.

The snow began to fall more heavily. His knees were rubbed ragged from the rough wool of his uniform. He ached from both cold and exhaustion. But he continued to walk, to think, and to walk. He imagined arriving at Moffatt's, delivering the \$32.50, and then expiring on the doorstep. It would seem to be the fannish thing to do. Then someone could perhaps rush out to give a speech over his prostrate body. "Here is the Noblest Roman..."

At last he came to the street Len had told him to turn South on, turned South on it; reached the street Len lived on, at last, and trudged wearily down it; and at long last reached Len's home.

It was 4:30 a.m. Most of the party had broken up. Fan B, who was to have been the recipient of the thirty-two goddamn dollars and fifty fucking cents, had left early, a bit before midnight -- about the same time our hero was leaving the home of Fan D.

Rick Sneary drove our hero into Los Angeles where he could catch a bus home to Pasadena. They talked as Rick drove, but our hero's heart was not in the conversation. Over and over, as relentlessly as the snow that had buffeted him and the wind that had battered him, he thought of the march of the trufan and the defeat of the bitter elements and how fate had intervened at the very last minute to keep him from becoming a living legend in his own time.

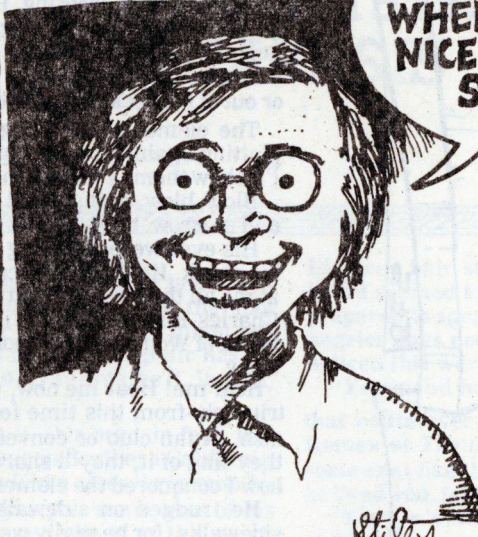
THE RIDE NEWSTLASTER

STATION LATER OBSERVED:

JOE STATON, YOUNG
FAN CARTOONIST
FROM TENN. (OR KENTUCKY)
DID INJURY TO HIS
BEST FINGER WHILE
FOOLING AROUND WITH
S. STILES' ICE BOX.
SWOONING, YOUNG
STATON WAS
TAKEN TO A LOCAL
HOSPITAL WHERE HE
WAS REFUSED TREAT-
MENT ON GENERAL
SUSPICION.



FIGURE 1.



WHY SETTLE
FOR FLIES
WHEN I CAN GET
NICE BIG JUICY
SPIDERS?

beardmutterings

rich brown
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Apt. D4
Brooklyn, NY 11220

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