

# B E A R D M U T T E R S





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R o s e b u d

# ⇒ FULCRUM

Are Fans Snobs?

SO WHO WOULD WANT AN EMPTY ONE?



In analyzing WARHOON 28 in the pages of TELOS 3 ("Reflections on WARHOON 28"), Creath Thorne appears to have missed the point. Part of this, I think, may be because his article is less an analysis of WARHOON than a disenchanted indictment of fandom. I quote: "...the real reason for fandom's existence...is the immediate and gratifying response it offers us. Be brilliant in your fanzine--and, in a week or two, you'll receive letters telling you that you were, in fact, brilliant. What more could one ask for?" :: "...the whole machine of fandom clanking and whirling run by the fuel of home-still egoboo--not a very efficient machine, but satisfying enough, in a down-home way." :: "In his brilliant (there I go, part of the machine of fandom) essay..."

These toss-offs seem almost to be intended to make us believe Creath is above our silly considerations. But then there is Creath's bitterness making him--the temptation here is to say "blind"--short sighted: "I see WARHOON as an act of homage to a dead past--a past that will never live again..." :: "...the Willies of sixth fandom, who's left behind only faint, bare traces of what the excitement and vitality of his fandom at that time must have been..."

I don't find any of this particularly surprising because Creath wrote an article/column ("The Captain's Tower") for MOTA a couple of years back in which he made his disenchantment known. No argument ensued over Creath's views, not necessarily because they were unavailable but because Terry Hughes did not want to turn his fanzine into a fanlish SFR. (That being the case, one can only wonder why Terry published it--Creath's position on the value of egoboo now being known, it is possible to surmise that he disdained receiving any comments; but Terry's motivation remains something of a mystery.)

I tie these articles together because the attitudes they express really are not far apart. In MOTA, fans are depicted as snobs and elitists. In TELOS, Creath seems to feel that fans don't do nothing but sit around telling each other how brilliant they are. Obviously, people who are involved in such untrained, pointless and undeserved mutual ego message haven't the requisite sensitivity to realize what bums they are. But not to worry: We still have Creath who, every few years or so, will rise like a Phoenix on its ash to reiterate these sentiments--or some very much like them.

If this seems overly sarcastic, I apologize. But these feelings have been festering in me for a long time.

I wrote a rather lengthy reply to "The Captain's Tower." When I learned it would not be printed in MOTA, I decided to use it as the basis for editorial remarks in beardmutterings--back when I still thought I might be putting out a third issue within a reasonable time of moving to this area. My plans for bm went on the shelf, however, and the article languished in my files. By the time I rediscovered it, I felt certain all but a few people would have forgotten the MOTA place. I tried to rewrite it as a general article; I only battled a straw man to an unsatisfying conclusion. Then I tried to do it as a column for Dan Steffan's BOONFARK, but still didn't get into print, because I subsequently misplaced my memorable conclusion--and by the time Dan pointed this out to me, I had forgotten it.

Now it seems--since Creath has been kind enough to furnish a second helping--that bm may once again be the best place for any reply I might care to make.

Let me summarize "The Captain's Tower" for those who've not read it; I will try to be fair--and if Creath feels I've not given his remarks the proper context, the pages of bm are open to him. (The pages of bm are open to him anyway--as they are to all who receive it. TSTs is your fanzine, bubbles.) Creath felt that

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fans had become snobs and elitists, robbing fandom of its genuine good fellowship. Fandom had become a world in which there was a hierarchy, with BNFs at the top and neos at the bottom; in which people took the words BNF and neofan "too seriously" and in which there were people who thought of others as being inferior or superior according to their "status" in fandom. He had had inklings of this, he said, but did not realize to what extent such thinking existed until he attended St. Louiscon--at which, he said, he had a bad time of it, because these truths were brought home to him in a way he could not ignore.

I believe this is an accurate summary of Creath's article.

(One brief aside: I take the words BNF and neofan as seriously as I do any others--which is to say, I think they mean what they mean. A BNF, to me, is someone who has done something admirable and lasting for fandom; who has not only displayed talent but shown, over time, that he (or she) is a Good Person. The word neofan means just what it seems to--a new fan. If some neos behave in ridiculous fashion, it's also true that they are the only potential BNFs. And if any "status" accrues to any of these, it's only because one, by definition, is tied to admirable (at least, subjectively) accomplishments while the other is not.)

While it might make an amusing waste of time to try to number the attacks fans and fandom have sustained for being "in group," "snobbish," and "elitist"--I wouldn't be at all surprised if Sam came forward to inform us that the first such remonstrance occurred in late June of 1926--anyone involved in our community for a few years can tell you these blasts usually come from those who are offended when fandom does not shower them with praises merely because they've condescended to grace us with their presence.

While these attacks are frequent they are, fortunately, just as often humorous--even though perhaps not intended as humor. In the 24 years I've been a fan, I've heard fandom denounced at countless conventions and in far too many fanzine articles--Creath's attack is certainly not the first.

The first time I specifically recall hearing such an argument was in 1957. Some of the people I started corresponding with--including the infamous John W. Thiel--told me older, wiser fan would never mingle with me socially because I was a neofan. I do not recall being particularly dismayed; this may have been because I could not imagine--even though I was a skiffy reader and therefore could put on my disbelief suspenders with the best of fan--any good reason why all the pros & BNFs should desire to sit at my feet to hear my pearls of wisdom upon my first appearance amongst them. The next time I recall hearing such a denunciation was a few years later, when I was (\*b\*tch\*) a member of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. I was led to believe that there were certain Big Name Fans who sneered at the activities of the NFF. In fact, it seemed to me during that period the NFF's sole purpose for being was to prove something or other to these BNFs. I do not, to this day, know exactly what was supposed to be proven nor precisely who we were supposed to be proving it all to--questions which have haunted me on down through the ages.

But Creath is not one of these; it would be unfair to characterize him thus. He has been around in apas for a number of years; I don't recall that he ever published a sparkling genzine but this hardly matters--he has made some sterling contributions to general fanzines and has as much right to consider himself a fanzine fan as anyone I know. He deserves an answer--and he deserves it in a fanzine.

I hope to oblige him here.

The first, the most important, question crying out to





be answered is: Are fans snobs?

And my answer is: Yes, they are.

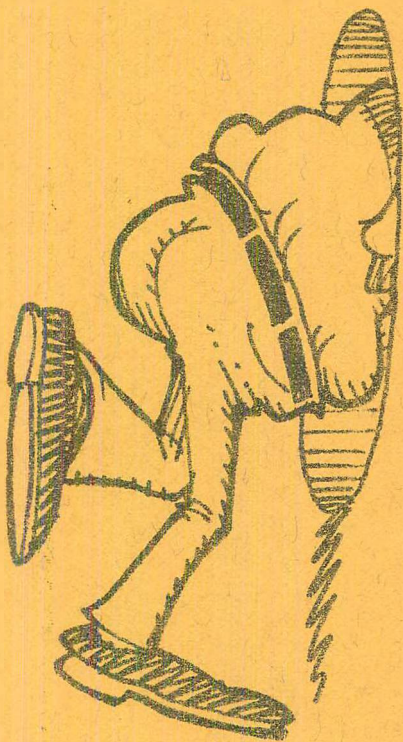
Fans are snobs and elitists. They may not be snobs in the dictionary definition of that word--but they are in the sense that most people have come to accept it: When fans go to conventions or clubs (or participate in fanzines) they are, at least by implication, expressing a preference for the company of other fans. This excludes most of the people in the world.

Fans are elitists. Fans are snobs. All they have to do to conform to the dictionary definition is to believe fans are superior to non-fans. I know people who think this is so because fans tend to test out rather high on IQ tests. But, personally, I don't think fans are slans. IQ tests don't necessarily measure intellectual superiority; while they may be tests of problem-solving ability, they are also word-oriented--and anyone who is enthusiastic about a genre of the written word is (by definition) word-oriented. This gives your average fan a rather important edge, IQ-wise, over your so-called average mundane person. But, of course, the fact that someone can solve problems on paper does not necessarily mean they can solve them in the Real World.

Creath went on at length about the fannish form of snobbery and how he had been a victim of it at St. Louiscon, his first convention. He did so while leaving the impression that he did not harbor any snobbish feelings himself, and although he did not expound a solution to the problem(s) he saw, I don't think it would be unfair to say that his piece was a plea for reform. But at the same time Creath revealed--perhaps unwittingly--that he was also a snob.

Creath said he'd been reluctant to admit he didn't enjoy St. Louiscon; to do so, he mused, "would be unthinkable; it would be the same as admitting that I was an outsider, one incapable of understanding the true nature of fandom, a clod, a mundane who had wandered into the world of fandom by mistake. All of them terrible things; you could never become a 'BNF' with such albatrosses hanging around your neck." He added that he'd gone to St. Louis with high expectations of meeting some of the people he'd come to know in fanzines but those expectations were disappointed because these fans either never appeared or, when they did, it was on some program item where, immediately afterward, they were "secretly sequestered" off to some private room party. And when he recognized a few name badges and tried to introduce himself, he was rebuffed--sometimes so blatantly that, even months afterwards, he could still feel angry whenever he thought about it.

Creath was hurt in a way in which no one likes to be hurt or see other people hurt. While this must be addressed, to make my point about Creath's snobbishness it is necessary to observe that he was not speaking of having been snubbed by 103% NSFers, Trekkies, hucksters, people in costume (either for the masquerade or the duration of the con), right-wing super-scientist ANALOG readers, monster fans, D&D devotees, clubfans, convention connivers in their smoke-filled rooms, neos, passive sf readers, flying saucer cultists, the Dorsai, war-gamers, comic fans, SCA types or even clods or "mundanes who wandered into the world of fandom by mistake." He was talking about being snubbed by his own kind of fan. Had all fan been equal in Creath's eyes, he could have ignored the





snubs and gone off to enjoy himself with a happy band of filk-singers or a group of Star Warriors. Instead, he admits that he wandered around feeling like a cipher, just another body to fill the convention hall and, in these days of inflated convention attendance fees, the pockets of the convention committee. My point, however, is that Creath had, and expressed, a preference.

I also have preferences. I prefer the company of fans; more specifically, the company of fanzine fans. But in saying this, I am not necessarily indicating that I believe fans are better than mundanes or fanzine fans are better than other kinds of fans (although they are, you know, given this subjective criteria)--only that I generally prefer their company.

As does Creath, obviously.

Or he thought he would, at any rate, before he got hurt.

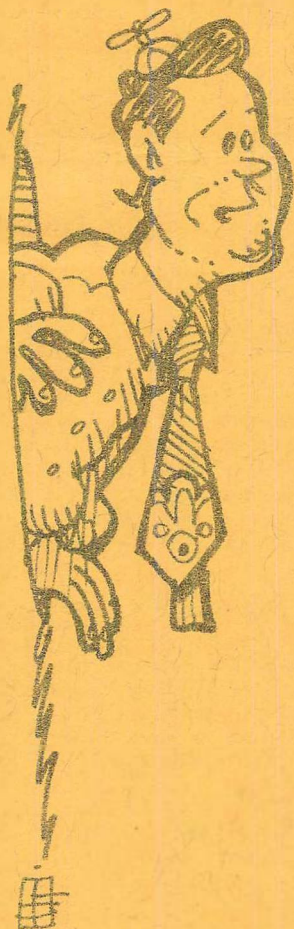
I can understand, even empathize, with that hurt. I don't know who snubbed Creath; I can't very well apologize for it--but I will say I would not have snubbed him, had I been at St. Louis, because I liked his fanzine persona and would have enjoyed trying to find out where the Real Person was in relation to it. But then, I'm an elitist; I go to conventions trying to meet people like Creath--those I've met in fanzine print, with whom I feel I might have something in common and therefore might actually come to like in person--rather than someone who wears Spock ears, a sword and a loin-cloth. And I can live with it.

What is truly annoying is that someone could have told Creath he was only possibly a victim of true snobbery back when this all happened--had Terry been willing to print comments on the article. I mean, this person may have been on his way to a party to which he might not have been entitled to invite anyone--one of those "private parties" Creath looks down on. Inasmuch as only a snob could enjoy such fare, this fan, if he knew Creath's attitude, would not have insulted Creath by inviting him. (This argument is sheer sophistry, to be sure--yet Creath can't have it both ways. Still, let me postpone--for a few paragraphs, at least--my real defense of these parties and the reasons why people who insist on bringing six or seven of their buddies, when only they have been invited, are seldom invited to another.)

While I'm throwing out possibilities: The fan who snubbed Creath may have believed he could find an opportunity to talk to Creath later but been on his way to a program item, or to eat or to see something he felt Creath would not have been interested in. Or he might have been playing the Run-and-Meet game--you know, where at the beginning of a con you're running around trying to find out who all is there and you suddenly realize it's not the lack of people, but all the running around, that has kept you from stopping to talk to them. Since this was Creath's first con, he might not have recognized this phenomenon.

Or, to throw out another possibility: It might have been that Creath, for all the fact that he seems a Nice Person in print, is given to pushing little ducks in the water, proclaiming how he does or doesn't love Jesus and demonstrating how his feet don't match. Did he, perhaps, stand talking with his ear on the kneecap of each person he met? Did he give every femmefan in reaching distance a pinch on the ass and a tweak on the tit? Did he show off his amazing ability to fart, belch and pick his nose at the same time? Did he bore the sox off elephants?

I doubt this was the case--but the point is worth making that there are people you might like in fanzine print who might not automatically win your highest esteem when met in person. As music buffs will tell you, there are a lot of people who love the music of





Beethoven who, were he alive today, would not care to have him as a friend or house guest.

This choosing of friends, though, actually choosing the people you want to spend your time with--as Creath tried (this time unsuccessfully) to do--may well be snobbery. On the other hand, perhaps it's simply not bothering to put up with people who are obviously boring, maladjusted or obnoxious.

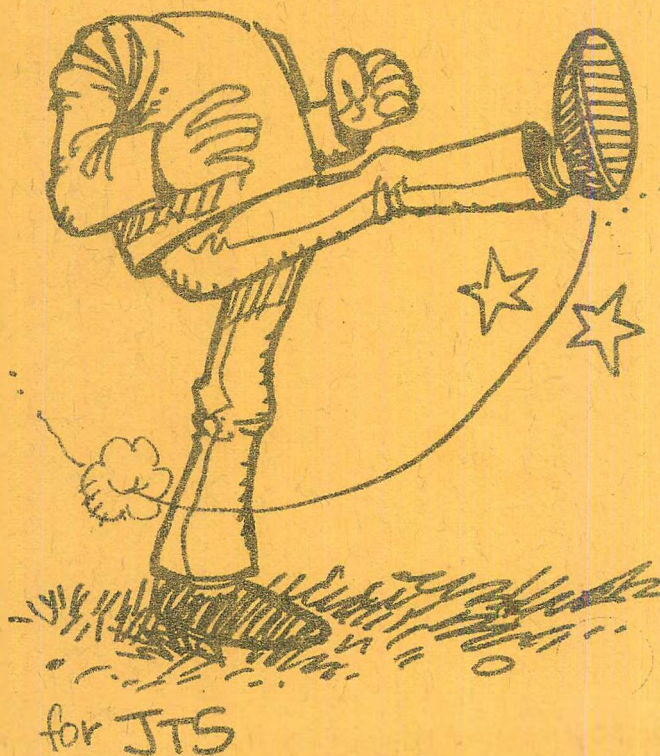
I've said I don't think fans are superior. And that's true--I don't. But the majority of my friends are fans.

Why? Well, I have nothing against people who don't read sf; in fact, I've known several who've never read a word of it who are brilliant and interesting company. But I like to talk about sf--and sf fandom. I enjoy going to conventions. I enjoy writing for and receiving fanzines. I prefer the company of other fans because I've been writing and publishing fanzines, attending conventions and going to clubs for almost two-thirds of my life. Whatever it may seem to Creath, I have a minimum requirement of any person I call a friend--that he (or she) have at least one thing in common with me, beyond such similarities as breathing, bleeding and bowel movements. Without that one thing, we really have nothing to talk about. That point of commonality need not be sf or fandom--but if it is, the person who shares it with me has an edge on becoming one of my friends because these are areas of my life I truly relish since they involve things I do for pleasure. But, being a minimum requirement, the mere fact that someone likes sf or is interested in fandom does not automatically make them my friend.

I've been to quite a number of conventions since my first in 1958; it stands to reason that, unless I had remained a recluse, I would know more people now than I did when I first fell into this avalanche. I see familiar faces when I go to a convention; and, despite the Nasty Bastard image I've maintained, many of those faces belong to people who are friends of mine. Should the entire combined readership of LOCUS and SFER stand up en masse at a con to shout "Snobs!" and "Elitists!" at the top of their lungs, I doubt this would do anything to keep friends from talking to one another.

Why else participate in fanzines? Why else join fan clubs? Why else go to conventions? Why else bother to get out of our paper worlds to meet face to face?

When I came into fandom, at age 14, I was convinced all fans were slans, all fandom one big brotherhood. I believed I had a bond thicker than blood with anyone who read enough sf to call themselves fans of it. That, however, was FIAWOLism, both short-sighted and unreal. Today, 24 years later, when 10,000+ people show up at worldcons and 2000+ may consider themselves part of fanzine fandom, I realize the bond we have is tenuous at best, that some fans are and probably always will be fuggheads and some subfandoms are not my cup of tea. As a result, I do not actively seek out those to whom these subjects may be the be-all and end-all of existence. I may laugh at some of these people, but I don't dislike them--or at least, if I do, it's not merely because their interests are not mine. They are free to laugh



at my antics (that's what I'm here for, bubbles), as I am free to bounce their scorn off my manly chest like so much popcorn.

A few examples of what I mean:

I have nothing against Star Trek except a personal belief that the truly excellent productions of that show can be counted on the fingers of one thumb, with the rest scattered somewhere between mediocre and unexceptional (and only a few that were downright abominable). Having said this, however, I've exhausted my repertoire of S-T conversation. Were I to say much more, I'm certain I could bore the sox off your died-in-the-Klingon-wool Trekkie (which, considering the show, would be harder to do than boring the sox off elephants).

I've studied two styles of karate--Gujo Ruyo and Kyokushinkai (I may have just misspelled both)--but never taken any belts (I did fracture a rib and dislocate my shoulder, however); been a member of the Armed Forces; read almost everything Heinlein has ever written; learned in my salad days in the backwaters of Los Angeles that you should Never Show Steel Unless You Mean To Use It. But I can find better things to do at a con than contemptuously telling other fans how they should behave, challenging people about their name badges, interrupting parties, talking on walkie-talkies and mumbling to myself about how much better the previous convention's Security was than this one's. So much for the Dorsai & their ilk...

I have nothing--really--against the Society for Creative Anachronisms. I even considered letting my daughter, Alicia, join when she was seven--so she could be with people her own age...





I have never been a Burroughs fan. Any conversation I might have on the subject would only offend a real Burroughs freak; I honestly believe we could both find more profitable usages of our limited convention time than by seeking each other out. Of course, if the Burroughs Bibliophobes ever get started, I would be happy to participate in their "Smart-Smarts" at conventions... Enough, though.

My preferences provide me with a set of rules to go by at conventions. Like any rules, however, they have their exceptions. I generally prefer the company of an sf reader to a non-sf reader. (Or, if you care to back it up one step, a reader to a non-reader.) I generally prefer the company of someone who knows what's happening in our community (such as a club or convention fan) to your run-of-the-mill sf reader; somebody involved in fanzine fandom to someone who merely attends clubs or goes to conventions; someone who is into fan-nish fanzines, rather than your general or sercon fanzine reader. And so on.

And then, of course, there's Dick Eney--fannish fanzine fan, editor & publisher of FANCY II and A SENSE OF FAPA, one-time TAFF winner, all-around good fellow to some and perhaps even a BNF to others. I'd rather talk shop with a plumber than talk to Dick Eney.

Utilizing my preferences as guidelines may not give me the best of all possible worlds, but over the years I've found this better than having no system at all. These rules generally assure me of meeting people I have a fair chance of liking--my main reason for going to conventions. Applying it here, it probably means I'll like Creath--assuming he gives conventions another chance.

Creath's reference to people being "secretly sequestered" is, of course, a slam at the "in-group" by-invitation-only parties which go on at cons. (For those who've been waiting with bated breath, here's the "later" I was talking about earlier on.)

I've been to enough of these parties to know what they are--for me, usually, the highlight of a convention, where I get a chance to renew old acquaintances, converse with people I've grown to consider friends and meet new people. Some are pros; some are BNFs; some are, like me, people who've been around fandom for a number of years. And some, Creath's comments to the contrary notwithstanding, are relatively new fans.

But these are exclusive parties--there's no denying it. People are specifically invited to them.

Yet are they private so we can feel superior to all who are not there?

No.

Are we there so we can later brag to neofen about our "status" in fandom and thus impress them with our superiority?

No.

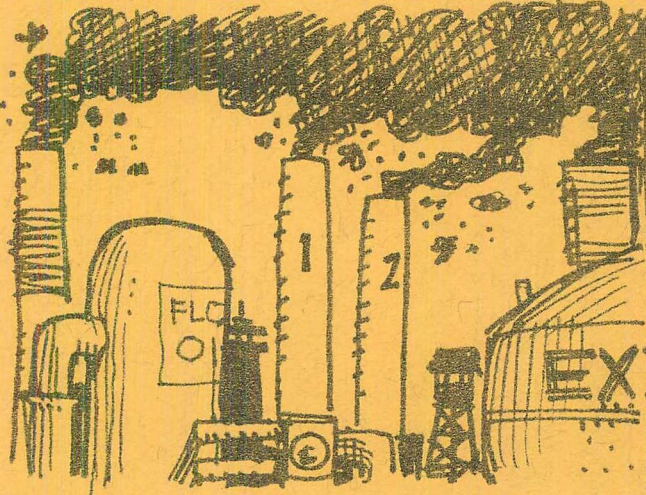
Do we "secretly sequester" ourselves so we can sneer at the 103% N3Fers, laugh at the Trekkies, dump on the Dorsal, look down on the ERB freaks?

No. (These views may be shared by some--but that's not why we get together.)

Why are we there?

We're there because, presumably like everyone else at the con, we came to have fun in amiable



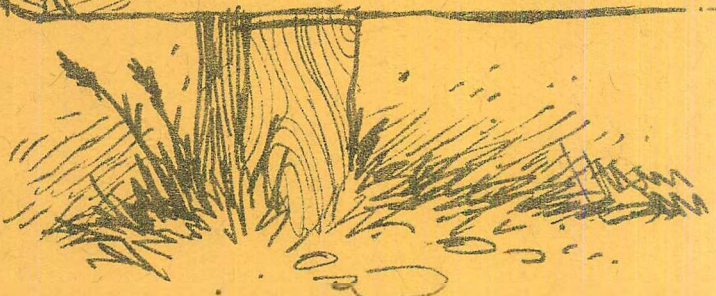


company. But there are more practical reasons for these parties yet: Even in the best of convention hotels, there is limited space in which to hold a decent conversation. People's rooms make up approximately 87.8569134% of that space. That being the case, if you can afford a huge suite and a virtually inexhaustible supply of liquor or similar embellishments, the Open Party scene just might be what you're looking for in the way of an evening's entertainment. On the other hand, if you've only a single or a double --and a limited supply of turn-on goodies--this is probably not the case.

That's why those who've been invited but insist on showing up with all their Good Friends seldom get a second invitation. Not that their friends are necessarily beyond the pale (although that could be an additional reason)--just that both space and supplies are usually limited. So the person who may have snubbed Creath might have been acting out of a not-entirely-distorted sense of courtesy toward his prospective host. I admit Creath's case appears to have been pretty badly handled; but then, I've never been quite silly enough to claim that fans are well-schooled in all the niceties and social graces.

I've been to a few Open Parties I really liked. But not, alas, very many. Simply because they are Open Parties, they're crowded. Take your average convention hotel suite, add 20 people to twice that number already there, and you end up like a New York City subway passenger during rush hour, unable to move, with the decibel level rising above that of a heavy metal rock concert heard from row one--although with much more "white noise." This high static level naturally attracts people who are looking for "lively" parties, which leaves you in an SRO situation with an elbow in your gut each time the person next to you flicks the ashes off his cigarette and onto your trousers. Since no one can possibly shout, much less talk, over all that--what with a dozen people singing folk songs off key with Filthy Pierre in a corner--the people you'd most like to talk to have probably already left. In fact, you wouldn't be there yourself, except that now the doorway is permanently bottlenecked; the best you can hope is that the kid who's been drinking brandy & bourbon like it was ginger ale won't throw up all over your new shoes.

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Sometimes they're not that bad.

After all this 'defense' of the fannish way of doing things, I hope no one will mind if I point out that a problem does exist: Quite simply, while I'm at one of those parties with 10 or 12 good people, there may be as many as 75 or 100 at the con whose company I'd enjoy just as much. Perhaps half that number are off having small parties of their own, but that still leaves anywhere from 35 to 50 people like Creath who are wandering around wondering what's going on and feeling bitter because they're not Part Of It when they should be and perhaps coming to believe that fandom has turned into a group of fraternities within fraternities.

If I thought opening private parties to Creath and his group of woeful wanderers would solve the problem, I might be for it. But, in the first place, I don't see how this could be done short of forcing people to throw only Open Parties--an idea I find repugnant. In the second place, even if some tasteful way could be found to accomplish this desirable result, it would create a worse problem yet. A crowd is a crowd, if I may borrow an old literary device--and a crowd of strangers is bad enough; bearable, perhaps, because you can always excuse yourself and go elsewhere. A crowd of friends would be worse--the crush and discomfort of all concerned would stand between you and the true pleasure of their company.

Now maybe--just maybe--the wanderers should seek each other out and have a few parties of their own. It seems to me that's what I did at the first few conventions I attended. It was nice enough, I thought, to meet and exchange a word or two with some of the pros and people I considered BNFs; but I spent most of my time with people who were my contemporaries, people I had already met and come to like, and was glad of it. Later, some of those contemporaries became BNFs and/or pros. Later still, some of the BNFs I had met and exchanged but a few words with became friends.

But perhaps Creath would consider this no solution at all. It seems to me it might require patience, exerting oneself and putting effort into making new friends. I don't recall that he ever decried any of these as being beneath him, although I remember a thinly disguised sneer at the idea of having to "work your way up." Still, it's been a long time since I read his article.

Let's leave it, then, and go on to TELOS.

It is well nigh unto difficult to perceive precisely what point Creath is trying to make, in that article, about the fannish currency known as egoboo. Does he feel it's bad because the egoboo given out is undeserved? Or that fans are just demonstrating their elite natures because egoboo is given only to those who do things brilliantly? At different times he seems to make both points which, at least to me, would seem to be mutually exclusive.

Anyway, do most fans give out unrestrained and undeserved egoboo? In some cases they may; some fans, after all, are not all that critical. But so what? Those who become known for being all sweetness and light find their praise devalued. And I think it's safe to say that they are the exception rather than the rule. Anyone who has ever published a crudzine or said some-



thing really dumb in fanzine print (and I would unfortunately have to include myself in both these camps) would be forced to acknowledge that the honest answer is that fans don't hand out egoboo which has not been earned.

Is it, then, somehow wrong only to give egoboo where it is deserved (or, in Creath's words, where the item being responded to is "brilliant")? I find it hard to understand why; but perhaps Creath may yet give us the benefit of his insight. Thus far, however, he hasn't.

Or is what's wrong with egoboo perhaps that it makes fans seek the praise of their fellow fan? Is that it? Without too much examination this seems an unexceptionable argument. I suppose some convincing view could be put forth for striving to instill a feeling of disgust, rather than delight, in each other--in fact, Bob Shaw made something like this sort of suggestion in his introduction to "The Fansmanship Lectures," when he said he was bringing the concept of oneupmanship to fandom to 'get rid of this dastardly good fellowship' that so prevades our little community. But BoSh was kidding. Is Creath? Or have I just completely misunderstood Creath's point? I await clarification.

While I feel mild annoyance at some of the implications in Creath's remarks in TELOS, when he says specifically that he sees WARHOON 28 as an act of homage to a dead past and that Willis (in its pages) has left only faint, bare traces of what his fandom was all about, I find myself trying to hold back for fear of being too unkind. Would it, for example, be excessively cutting to say that Creath has a tin ear and should learn how to read? Or that he may have been right about his being "incapable of understanding fandom's true nature"?

As one who was not a part of the era in question, I would have to contend that Mr. Walter Alexander Willis's writings evoke a very vivid picture of what Sixth Fandom was like--particularly in "The Harp Stateside" or early installments of "The Harp That Once Or Twice."

However, had Willis contributed no more to fandom than "The Enchanted Duplicator," that would have been picture enough--because, for all the fact that it had some satirical purposes, "The Enchanted Duplicator" embodied the ideals which made Sixth Fandom the joy that it was: the humor, the joyful spirit, the striving for excellence, the grace, the love, the feeling of family, the realization (to paraphrase what Tom Perry said in WARHOON 28) that true appreciation lies not in dumb admiration but in emulating creativity. And it's all there for anyone who can read, goddammit!

Of course, Creath can read--this is obvious to anyone who's read anything he's written. I guess I'm really not so much angry as bewildered at his apparent inability to understand what has been written.

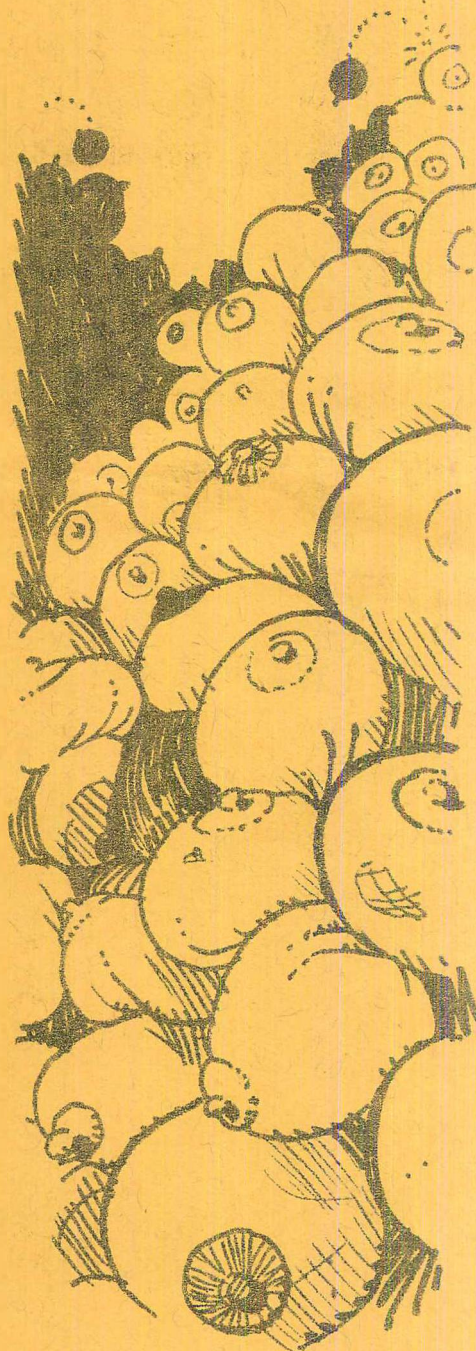
And as for that past being "dead"--pooh! Pooh, I say. Sixth Fandom, the fannish era, has certainly become history. But I do not believe its spirit has died--and I don't think anyone who's read and understood "The Enchanted Duplicator" believes it either.

I admit I also sometimes got disillusioned. Fanzine fandom gets an attack of serconitus or falls into the doldrums, as it has done several times after bitter feuds, because everyone has been so busy attacking every other fan in sight and misplacing their shields of Umor and bristling with bad feeling and invective that they fail to see they're really not Scoring Points against their "enemies" so much as beating the holy crap out of something we all (well, most of us) really love--fandom itself, our adopted family, our home away from home, our little isle.

Willis, in the TELOS lettercolumn, acknowledges a point made in an earlier issue about how "love suffused all of Sixth Fandom." Even though I wasn't around to be a part of Sixth Fandom, I know--not guess, not feel, not imagine--I know that this is a True Thing, here. Love is self-demonstrating. And that love comes thundering through the pages of WARHOON 28 with all the power of a diesel locomotive.

I can feel little more than overwhelming pity for those who lack the perception to see or understand it.

Bitter feuds (such as the Boondoggle) may have done our microcosm harm--but, in doing so, they have also shown us something of the wonder that is the true nature of fandom as it has been and as it can be again. The wonder is that the love Willis has talked about and demonstrated countless times over the nearly 35 years of his remarkable fan career manages to survive.





And it does survive! Through dark times and sundered friendships, despite all the slings and arrows of outraged misfortunates. It's like the road in front of Frodo Baggins' door--it goes ever on and on. I know it does because I've seen it, felt it, touched it and been touched by it. I'm speaking to you from the heart, bubbles--and I tell you in all sincerity that it has been love, not a phony desire to win undeserved praise, that has motivated most of what has been good about fandom.

But the cynicism forced upon O'reath by those snubs he suffered at St. Louiscon may never let him believe that.

More's the pity.

### Sundry Notes

Ordinarily, an issue of beardmutterings would have only written material by me, illustrations by Joe Staton, a back cover by Steve Stiles and letters. While I received about 40 letters on bm 2, I'm not printing any here--the subjects are Old Hat by now. I mean, do you really want to hear about how/why fanzine Hugos don't really go to zines which deserve them because there are too many people voting who receive only SFR and/or LOCUS yet feel qualified to vote? Or how the worldcons are being taken over by more media-oriented fans? Possibly you do--and possibly I'll bring the subjects up again (they are, after all, Traditional). But not for now.

This issue--which appears only a little under eight years after the second--is somewhat different, as you may have already noted. I have taken on a columnist, Ted White, whose "Beyond Egoboo" graces this issue. For another change, my interior illustrations are now by Dan Steffan, although cover and backcover are by the traditional pair (Joe Staton and Steve Stiles, respectively).

And there's a piece by Ted Johnstone, who will always be "Ted" to me although his real name was Dave McDaniel. Ted died a couple of years ago; I wrote a piece about him for Dan Steffan's BOONFARK which some of you may have read.

In rummaging around through old files, I came across this piece, "More Scrimshaw," which was intended to be a filler editorial--if such turned out to be needed--for a fanzine Ted and I were planning to co-edit, titled EXCALIBUR. We never got around to putting it out and I seem to have held on to the piece through various moves over a period of (conservative estimate) 22 years. Keep in mind that Ted was only about 18 when he wrote this, and that it was intended as filler, and you'll probably enjoy it.

There are some other changes as well. The first two issues of bm were computer type-set and photo-offset. They were 17x11, stapled in the middle to bring them down to "standard" 8.5x11.

Some may well say that, in this new incarnation, bm has come down a notch because it is being mimeographed and set on a word-processor. Those people who say this will be condemned and torn down. The mimeo, anyway, is QWERTYUIOPress. The word-processor is a CPT 3000, with print-out on the CPT Rotary IV--if that means anything to anyone.

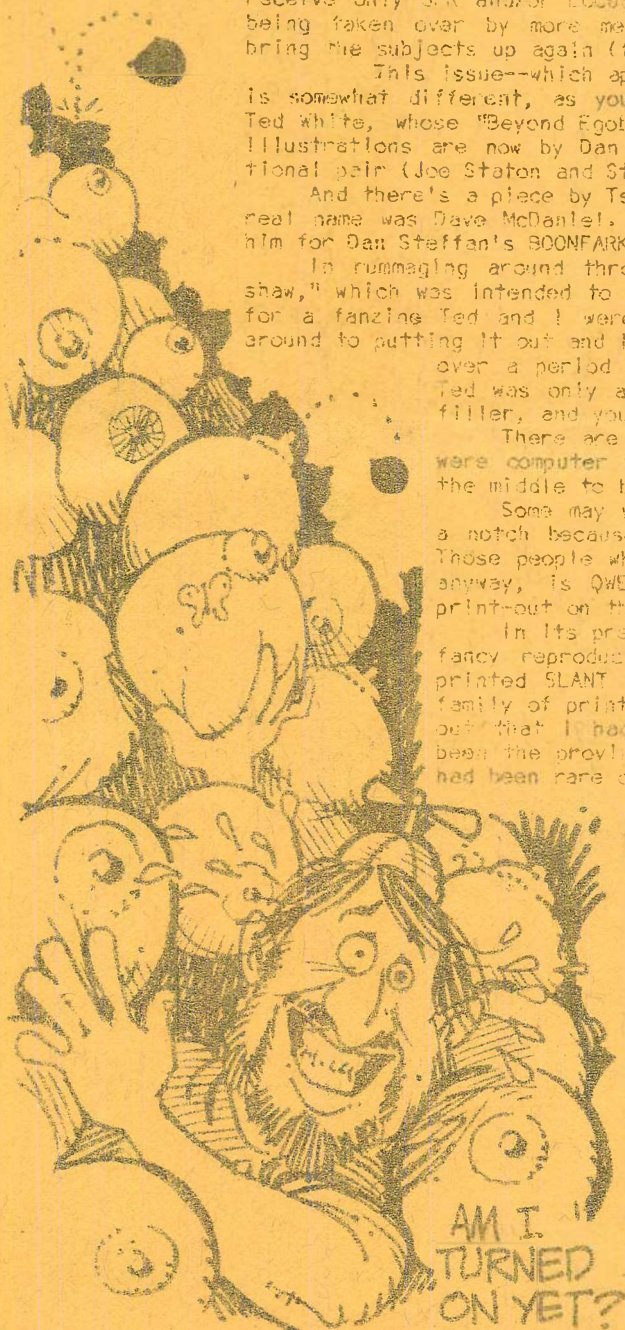
In its previous incarnation, I felt bm was fannish in spite of its fancy reproduction; remembering Willis' oft-misquoted "The about" the printed SLANT which so tickled Rog Phillips (that Willis came from a family of printers and had only reverted to type), I was quick to point out that I had chosen offset as my medium because it had previously been the province of serious fanzines--so little of it, in other words, had been rare or well-done.

I must admit I was mildly disappointed when I determined the state of my finances would not permit this new bm to continue in the same medium, although I'm happy to have new contributors. I've made some effort to rearrange my thinking about the medium I'm using here. Over and over, I've told myself that this will make bm even more fannish.

It was not until I started running out a draft of Tai's article on the Rotary IV that I became convinced.

The Rotary IV spits out words at a rate of about 135 per minute; it types so fast, it has to be air-cooled. Although I've probably run several thousand mundane pages off on it in my job as editor/multithrougher/jack-of-all-trades, it was not until I was running off that draft of Ted's piece that I noticed a little sign attached to the side of the printer: "WARNING--Fan Must Be Turned On When Equipment Is Running."

What, I wondered (as I immediately complied), could be more fannish than that?





# TED JOHNSTONE

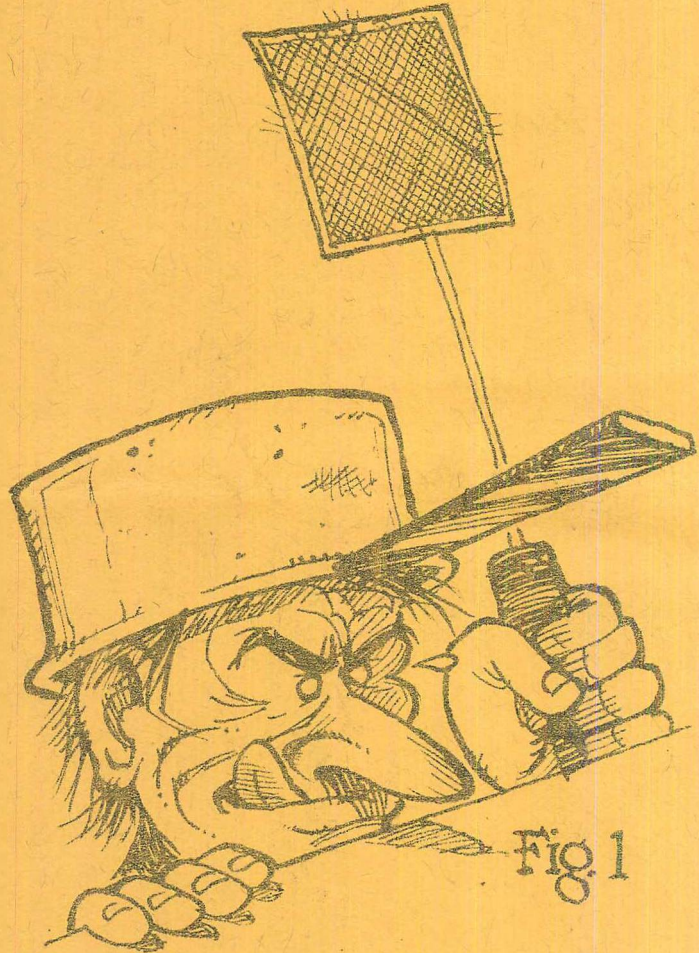
# MORE

Early last summer our back porch was invaded. A family of wasps found a crack in the wall and moved in, along with all their friends and relatives, between the ceiling and the roof, just over the door. I first found out about this one afternoon when I opened the back door, reached for the screen door and suddenly became painfully aware of a huge wasp, sitting on the frame just above the door, regarding me with a baleful stare. I stared back for a moment, then decided on the better part of valor and retired back into the house.

I came back out a moment later, with my standard cure for all small bothers: the fly-swatter. I hoisted it to a ready position--and then saw that my little friend was no longer alone. He had apparently radiod back to Hive Center for a little backing, for there were now three pairs of little beady yellow eyes regarding me from a dominant seat on the frame above the screen door. So I hung up the fly-swatter and went out the front door.

I guess we were just lucky that they never really got organized. They had a firm base, controlling the back porch, but they never formed a definite invasion of the rest of the house. They might have, though, if their preparations had been better. Their mistake was sending out their scouts one at a time. I was on a 24-hour alert, listening for the tell-tale buzz which meant an enemy in the air, and I struck mercilessly. I doubt if more than 25% of them returned to the base. It may seem cruel, but that's war.

Finally, of course, we achieved a truce. They recognized the fact that we could wipe them out completely if we had to, and we could make it uncomfortable for them at any rate. We admitted that they could make it very uncomfortable for us and that it would be rather difficult and expensive to exterminate them. So the terms were finally arrived at--the wasps were awarded the back porch, by right of conquest, and the service porch (a buffer state between their area and the kitchen) was declared no-man's-land. We retained the right of peaceful passage through their territory to reach the carport and the fannex, and the rest of the house by right of prior occupancy and a larger threat. We also had the





# SCRIMS HAW

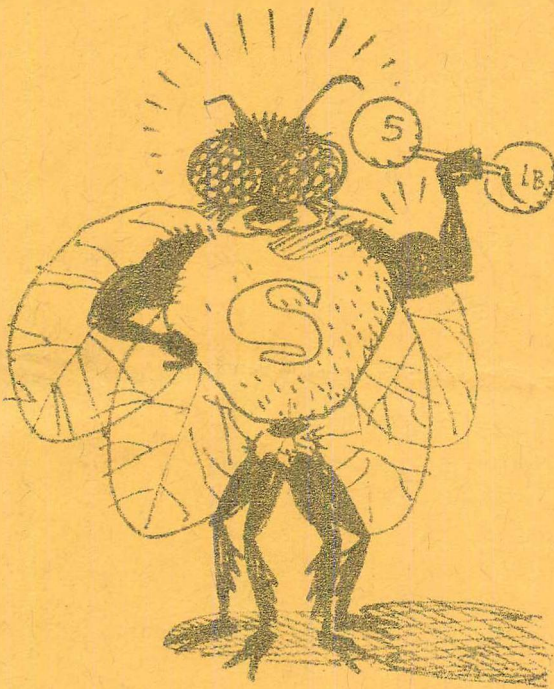


Fig. 2

right to attack any wasps we found in our territory, for execution at our own discretion. In actual practice, the ones who wandered into the kitchen were usually safe, only suffering immediate and careful deportation back to their own area. But the ones who penetrated as far as the dining room, and on rare occasion the living room, were usually clobbered.

On occasion, hungering for a thrill, I might venture to the kitchen, prepared for a hunt. Wasps are really fine sport and rather dangerous when at bay. The usual armament consisted of a loaded zap pistol in my right hand, for instant use, and the swatter clenched in my left in case of a charge. Occasionally I would forego all precautions and venture forth armed only with a dozen rubber bands, carried in a magazine on my thumb, ready to be drawn into action by my fore- or middle-finger and fired with deadly accuracy.

A typical hunt began with the deep, penetrating buzz of a wandering wasp in the kitchen. Armed and ready for the conflict, I would step slowly and cautiously through the center of the doorway from the dining room, get a rough fix on the target with my sonic detection equipment and then zero-in for visual contact. After several minutes of jockeying for a good position, during which time my quarry would shift his location several times, often trying to lose me by stop-

ping his motors, I would loose a volley and as he shot into the air I tracked him, continued firing as I retreated. The goal of the zapping was to knock the target into the sink where he could be disposed of with ease, but about half the time the wasp, maddened by the water, would charge me. Then I had only raw courage and a tattered fly-swatter between myself and two-thirds of an ounce of flying fury. I usually won. I considered having the heads of two of the largest mounted, but decided against it because of the expense. However, I did have photos taken with my foot on the head of one, signifying man triumphant over lesser animals.

Yes, hunting Wasp in the Interior with Zap and Fly-Swatter. There is the real thrill.

--Taj



# BEYOND

"...It's from a young Baltimore fan, one of the STAR\*ROCKETS crowd who are swarming all over the place organizing one another...."

--Walt Willis, "The Harp That Once  
or Twice," OOPSLA! 13, May 1954

"...It was while I was tearing up a copy of STAR\*ROCKETS, the precious lifeblood of that master spirit Raleigh Evans Multog. I had almost rent it in twain when I noticed the name of Bob Shaw. At that time, and indeed to some extent during his entire career, Bob had been under what amounted to exclusive contract to me. It was not so much that I jealously hid his light under my bushel [Shaw's column in HYPHEN was called "The Glass Bushel"], though I admit I did not go about proclaiming his availability, so much that everything he wrote he showed to me first and I promptly published it: and since he seldom engaged in correspondence other fanzine editors sensibly and ethically assumed he was a SLANT/HYPHEN property. The exceptions were those too naive to know better, and when one of these stupidly asked for material, Bob innocently and helpfully complied. The result was that the work of one who many people including myself consider to be the greatest fan writer of all time appeared not only in fanzines like STAR\*ROCKETS the illiteracy of which was alleviated to some extent by its almost complete illegibility, but in fanzines which were never really published at all, like Ken Potter's first efforts which were handwritten and intended to be passed from hand to hand..."

--Walt Willis, "The Harp That Once  
or Twice," WARHOON 23, May 1968

# EGOBOO







As I remember it, STAR\*ROCKETS was none too neatly mimeoed on thin white paper. Some issues were mimeoed only on one side of each sheet of paper. There was little sense of format or organization. Titles and headings were traced from the kind of cardboard letter-stencils which were then available at places which sold school notebook paper (rather than from mimeo lettering guides). Most of the editor-written material was on the same level of coherence and in the same style as the letter I quoted above, and the rest was--with one exception--little better. The exception was Bob Shaw's contribution, obtained, apparently, by Multog's innocent solicitation and probably without Shaw's knowledge of the nature of STAR\*ROCKETS. I recall being surprised to see it in STAR\*ROCKETS, but my memory of the piece stops there.

What I--and the rest of fandom--did not then know was that Raleigh Evans Multog was "exceptional," or, to put it bluntly, retarded. He attended a special school for the exceptional up into his early twenties, and it was in one class there that he met John Hitchcock. John too was "exceptional" but in quite a different way: he was abnormally bright. Although John shared a class with Raleigh, he was more than ten years Raleigh's junior, and he left that school to begin Johns Hopkins University at the age of fourteen, graduating with honors at eighteen.

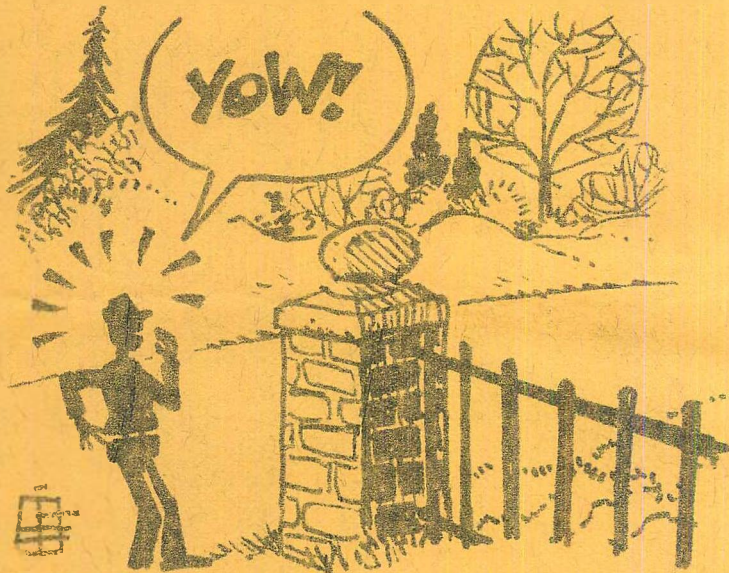
However, Raleigh and John became friends and Raleigh introduced John to fandom. (It was John who wrote the very neoish letter quoted by Willis as exactly the sort of letter one should not write, although Willis did not name Hitchcock in his OOPSLA! column.)

In the late summer of 1954 the young west-coast hotshot fan Peter J. Vorzimer sent an invitation to thirteen of his peers in fandom to start a new apa. Pete made his selection of invitees from various geographical groupings and solicited both Hitchcock and Multog, apparently regarding them as a matched set, although nothing in Multog's fanac indicated his suitability for the group. He also invited Larry Stark, Bob Stewart, and myself since, although we were geographically widely spread, we had become known as tight friends with our own three-way correspondence as well as co-editorship of the EC fanzine, POTRZEBIE. (Only one fan on Vorzimer's list--Ron Ellick--declined the invitation, leaving twelve of us, plus Pete, so he decided to christen the thirteen of us "The Cult," a name which still survives, or so I'm told, even today.)

Thus it was that I was drawn into much closer communication with Multog and Hitchcock through the new apa, and it was inevitable that sooner or later we'd meet face to face.

In the pre-expressway era it took several hours to drive from Northern Virginia (outside Washington DC) to Baltimore although DC and Baltimore are only about thirty miles apart. However, when Larry Stark made plans to come down from New Brunswick, New Jersey, to visit me over his college vacation in early 1955, we began planning a trip to Baltimore as well.

In a letter dated January 6th, 1955, after nattering for most of a page, Raleigh told me, "If you get to Baltimore try to get here on a Sunday. I am off on Saturday once a month, and am off on Thursday from work every week. But Sun-

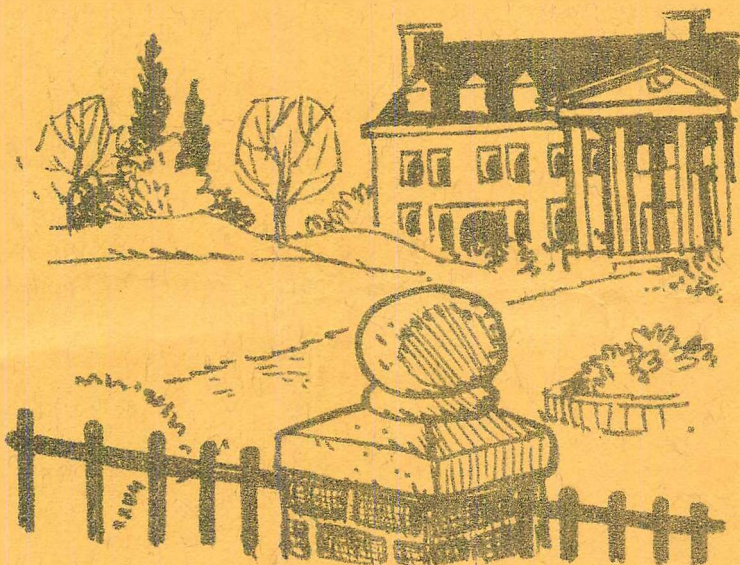




day is the best time for visiting."

In his next letter, dated January 14th, Raleigh began with "So far as I know I'm off on Saturday the 29th, so maybe you boys could make it over then. ...John can give you the best directions as to how to get out to our places. I have all my fanzines filed away in folders in my new filing cabinet, so maybe you all could meet out here...though Hitchcock does have a bigger house." That last turned out to be an understatement.

Larry was then a grad student at Rutgers, and five or six years older than I was. His visit was to be the first of many. We had been corresponding intensely and we became closer friends once we met. Larry lived with me and my family the summers of both 1955 and 1956, working in DC and co-editing STELLAR with me. As I've remarked elsewhere, I was something of an anti-intellectual in those days. My favorite reading matter was Doc Savage. Larry took me to movies, plays, art galleries and museums, and did his best to intellectually stimulate me while giving me the basis for forming a more knowledgeable taste. In many respects Larry was my guide, my mentor, and it was he who started me thinking about actually writing (rather than fan-nattering, which was all I'd aspired to until then).



Another of my early friends to whom I introduced Larry was Fred von Bernewitz. Fred lived in Maryland directly across DC from Falls Church. We first "met" though a mutual interest in comics. Fred and I communicated largely by phone and occasionally by letter, not meeting face to face until more than a year after we'd first made contact. I believe that first contact occurred when he was twelve and I was thirteen, although my memory is a bit vague now. (Whatever, Fred remains, of all my old friends, my oldest with whom I've stayed in contact, and we still get together every now and then.) Once I was old enough

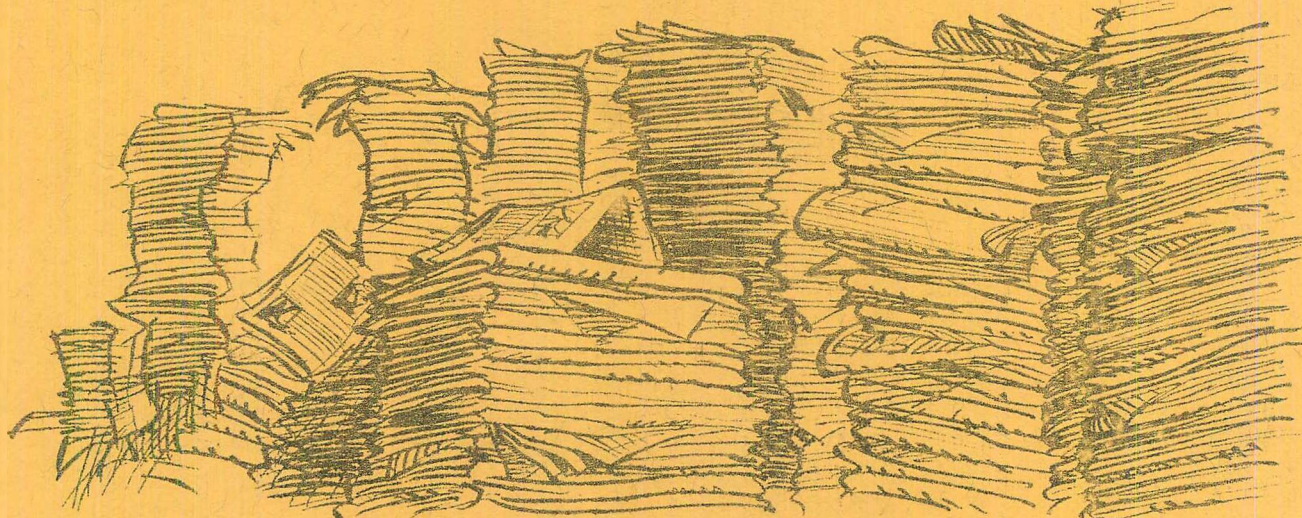
(fourteen) to have a motor scooter I started visiting him (an epic journey then), and Fred went on to become both a well-known EC fan (author and publisher of the EC CHECKLISTS, the descendants of which are still in print) and a fringe sf fan who attended occasional WSFA meetings and contributed art to various local fanzines.

Saturday, January 29, 1955, I borrowed my mother's 1954 Hudson Jet and set out with Larry Stark to pick up Fred. Each knew of the other, but it was their first meeting. From Fred's we took the then brand-new Baltimore-Washington Parkway to Baltimore.

John Hitchcock lived in Catonsville, a suburb of Baltimore, in an area called Eden Terrace. The neighborhood was one of private streets with one or two mansions per block. It was named after Anthony Eden, a British Prime Minister whose wife or family or ancestors had once lived there.

The Hitchcocks lived in one of the mansions, a vast three-storey house of forty or fifty rooms. It had been vacant for ten years or so before they bought it, and had achieved a local reputation as a haunted house. It was a trifle shabby and poorly maintained. The Hitchcocks were naturopaths and vegetarians--I subsequently came to despise meals there because Mrs. Hitchcock served "meat





substitute" veggie-patties and similar stuff which I found unpalatable--and John's father was a legally-blind doctor of homeopathic medicine.

John, a bit short, stocky, with straight dark hair and a wide grin, greeted us enthusiastically. He was then either thirteen or fourteen (I was shortly to turn seventeen), and although intellectually precocious he was otherwise a typical kid of that age. He ushered us inside, where we met his mother (who greeted us cheerfully), and took us on a brief tour of the house. I remember little about the house itself, but I recall the Hitchcocks rented rooms on the third floor to three or four rather odd men, and that they had rooms on the ground floor which were entirely filled (floor to ceiling, wall to wall) with stacked newspapers. When one room was full they closed it off and began filling the next. I have no idea why.

Once the tour was accomplished Fred, Larry and I took John back to the car and drove to Sudbrook Park, near Pikesville (another suburb of Baltimore) to the house where Raleigh Evans Multog lived with his parents.

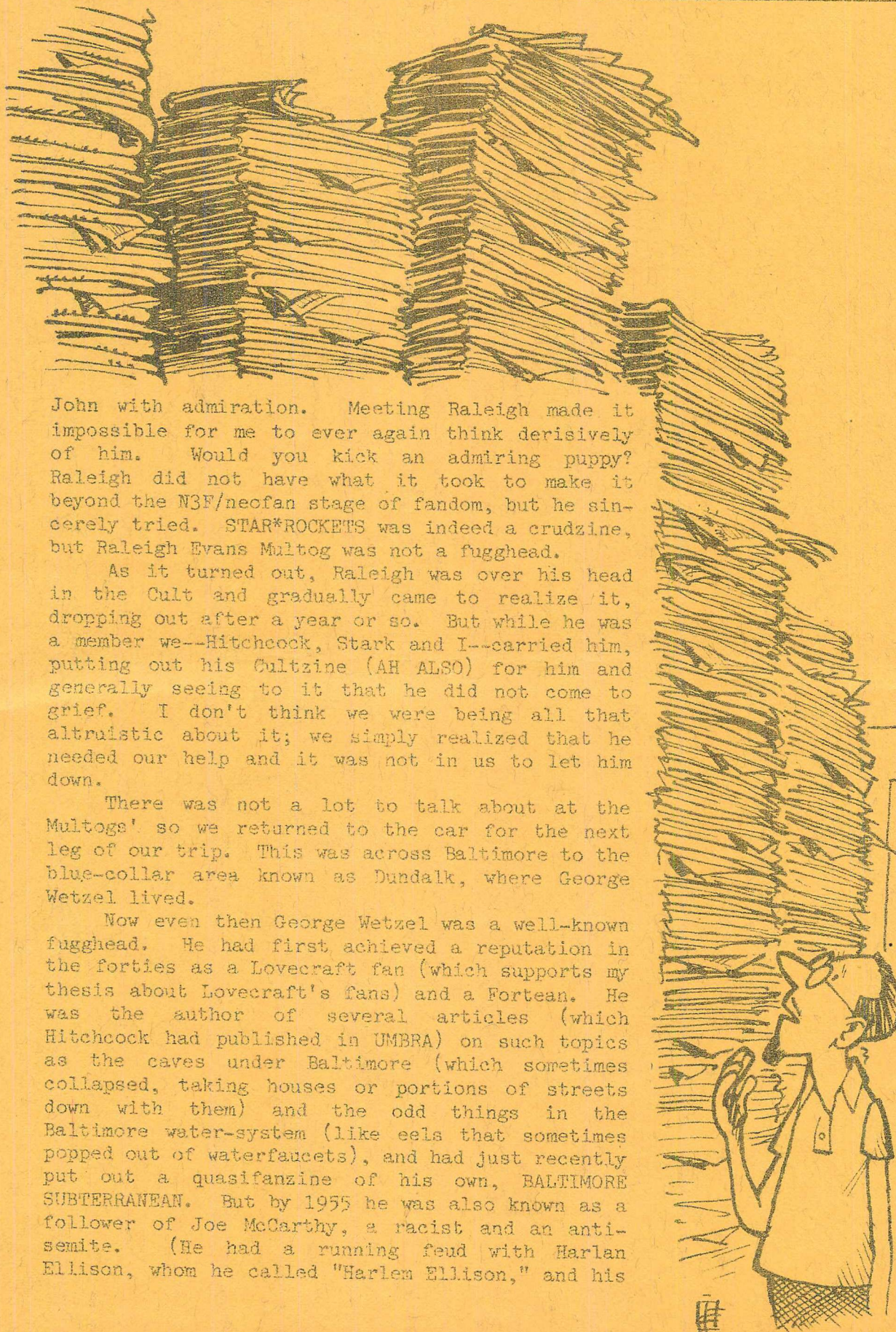
The Multog abode at 7 Greenwood Road was a neat brick house more typical to the suburbs. Raleigh's mother answered the door, invited us in, and called Raleigh, who met us that Saturday afternoon dressed in neatly creased pants, a white shirt with a tie, and a pullover sweater-vest. Although he was older than any of us (even Stark), he seemed curiously youthful in his innocence and naivete. He was very pleased to meet us and immediately conducted us to his room.

It was the neatest, most impeccably organized room I have ever seen. Absolutely nothing was out of place. He had file cabinets neatly filled with his fanzines, his correspondence, and his prozines. (I'd never seen prozines stored that way before--when the drawer was open their spines stared up at one from neat rows that filled each file drawer.) His typer was neatly centered on his desk. The desk's cubbyholes had been precisely allocated their pencils, rubber bands, paper clips, staples, address stamps, etc.

My first thought, as Raleigh proudly displayed and explained the arrangement of his room, was one of envy. I didn't envy what he had--I envied him the organization, the neatness. My own room was messy beyond belief in comparison--comics, books and magazines were stacked everywhere, already overflowing the available shelf space. Then I considered what Hitchcock had told us on the way over about Raleigh's background--his "exceptionality." Then I understood the neatly organized room better and my envy was replaced by pity.

Raleigh was not obviously retarded. He did not say "Duh," and he betrayed his problem only by implication. He spoke earnestly. He obviously looked up to





John with admiration. Meeting Raleigh made it impossible for me to ever again think derisively of him. Would you kick an admiring puppy? Raleigh did not have what it took to make it beyond the NSF/neofan stage of fandom, but he sincerely tried. STAR\*ROCKETS was indeed a crudzine, but Raleigh Evans Multog was not a fugghead.

As it turned out, Raleigh was over his head in the Cult and gradually came to realize it, dropping out after a year or so. But while he was a member we--Hitchcock, Stark and I--carried him, putting out his Cultzine (AH ALSO) for him and generally seeing to it that he did not come to grief. I don't think we were being all that altruistic about it; we simply realized that he needed our help and it was not in us to let him down.

There was not a lot to talk about at the Multogs' so we returned to the car for the next leg of our trip. This was across Baltimore to the blue-collar area known as Dundalk, where George Wetzel lived.

Now even then George Wetzel was a well-known fugghead. He had first achieved a reputation in the forties as a Lovecraft fan (which supports my thesis about Lovecraft's fans) and a Fortean. He was the author of several articles (which Hitchcock had published in UMBRA) on such topics as the caves under Baltimore (which sometimes collapsed, taking houses or portions of streets down with them) and the odd things in the Baltimore water-system (like eels that sometimes popped out of waterfaucets), and had just recently put out a quasifanzine of his own, BALTIMORE SUBTERRANEAN. But by 1955 he was also known as a follower of Joe McCarthy, a racist and an anti-semitite. (He had a running feud with Harlan Ellison, whom he called "Harlem Ellison," and his



idea of a clever attack was to argue that with a name like "Harlem" Ellison must be "a niggerlover." He also once accused Larry Stark, Bob Silverberg, Harlan and the late Dave Mason of being members of a "communist cell.")

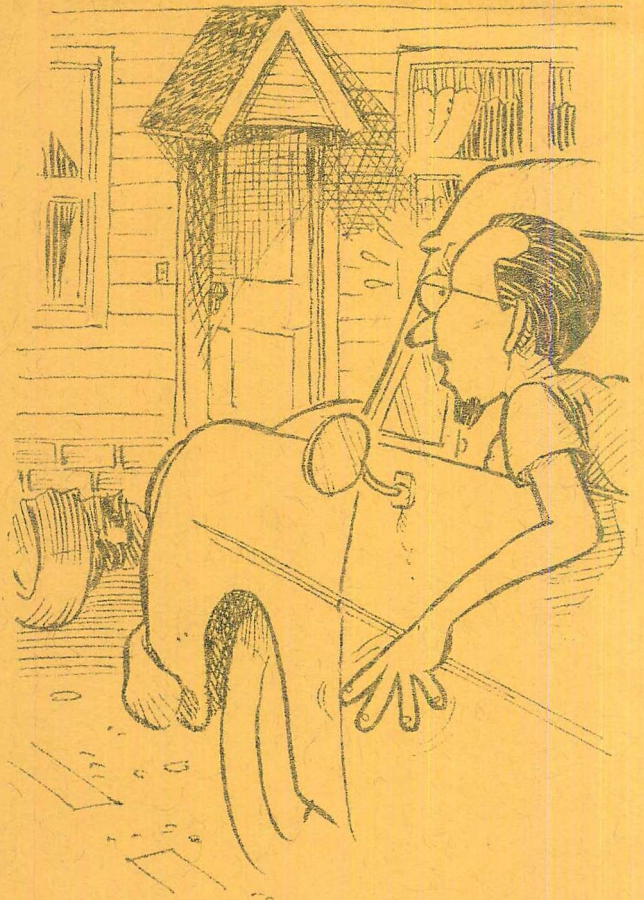
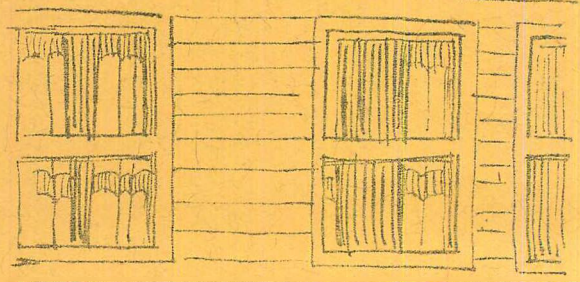
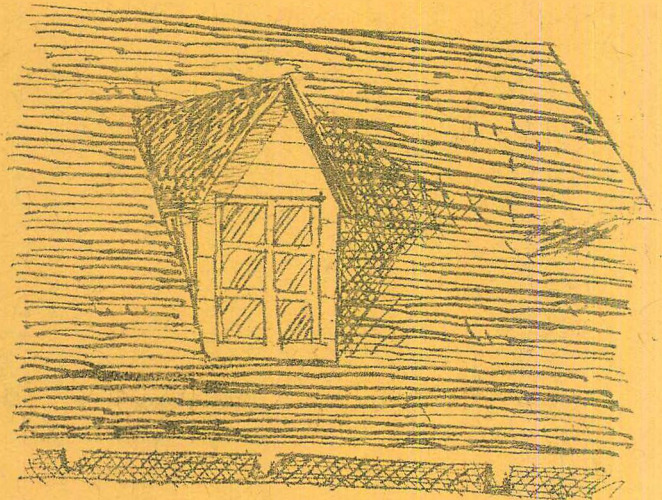
I didn't like Wetzel, by reputation, but John insisted that we visit him because John felt that George had other redeeming virtues and with help might transcend his bigotry. Then too, there weren't as many fans around in those days and as a fan Wetzel was considered "in the family" albeit perhaps deserving of being kept locked up in the attic.

I have met George Wetzel only twice in my life. The first time was that Saturday in 1955. The second time was in the mid-seventies, when George approached me after a panel I'd been on at a local convention to reintroduce himself. I found neither occasion unpleasant, but I kept both as brief as politeness allowed.

Wetzel lived in an area I would characterize as a slum, and he greeted us warmly, his smile revealing few teeth. John told me later that George had in his childhood been forced to go to a dentist who was sadistically painful, and as a result skipped his appointments. When he was drafted during WW2, an Army dentist took one look at his rotting teeth and pulled out most of them. But before dentures could be made for George the Army decided he was unsuitable for service and gave him a psychological discharge. (A few years later Wetzel took to writing letters to the FBI and other government agencies denouncing people like Dean Grennell for having been "draft dodgers" while he had proudly served his country.)

We didn't spend long with Wetzel. Although he was a pleasant enough host and cracked only a few jokes about Ellison (about whom it was even then popular to make jokes) I disliked him on principle and felt uneasy in his company. (A year or two later, after Wetzel had published several viciously deranged attacks on a wide variety of unsuspecting fans, accusing them of everything from traitorous communism to pornography, John gave up on his mission to improve George, admitting failure.)

After returning John to his house,





Fred, Larry and I drove back to Falls Church for a late dinner. I suspect my mother was grateful to see both us and the car still all in one piece.

That was the begining of an era for me. For the next three years I made frequent trips to Baltimore to visit John (often for the weekend) and John occasionally made the trip to DC for the Sunday night WSFA meetings. John Magnus returned from Oberlin College to live in Baltimore, and he joined our group. And one summer afternoon the two Johns showed up at my house with another guy in tow named Richard Wingate who deserves a column of his own, for he was to have a profound influence on my life in the latter part of the fifties.

In 1956 construction was started on the Baltimore Beltway and the Catonsville interchange was mapped to go right through Eden Terrace. I first knew of this on an evening when I drove over to visit Hitchcock. When I turned off the main street into John's street, I found, half a block up the street, a large house blocking the way. It was sitting in the middle of the road, obviously in the process of being moved but left there for the night. I had to back my car up and find the rear way around through Eden Terrace to the Hitchcocks'. When I got there John told me the news. Their house and land had been condemned by right of Emminent Domain and they were being forced to move into Baltimore. Although I came to know their small row house (on University Boulevard between Johns Hopkins and the municipal stadium from which one could hear the crowd roaring on summer nights) much better, I always wondered what the demolition of their old house was like and what happened to those roomsfull of old newspapers.

Eventually I moved to Baltimore--initially because I'd met a girl there whom I dated on weekends, but she gave me a quick brushoff once I was living there and could see her more often--where I stayed for about a year before moving to New York City.

But I saw little more of Raleigh Evans Multog and indeed that first visit may have been our only face to face meeting--his personality was so passive that if I ever visited him again no memory of it remains now. Within a year or so Raleigh had gaffiated, perhaps overwhelmed by the pressures fandom exerted upon him, perhaps hurt by the negoboo STAR\*ROCKETS had earned for him, perhaps simply unable to keep up with his peers who, as teenagers, had briefly crossed his orbit before going beyond his own limits.

Until now his only lasting notice has been in Willis's "Harp"s, republished in WARHOON 28 and thus embedded in the amber of fannish history. I wanted to round that picture out a bit.

--Ted White

"...I should explain that LeeH was my very first fannish granddaughter. Memory isn't all that keen but I think it started in Chicago about 30 years ago as we were touring a museum; one of the display cases contained a replica of a 1920ish family living room, and there was Pa standing with a newspaper in his hand while the family gathered around. I sort of turned myself upside down to read the newspaper drooping from his hands, and read the lead story that said Lindberg had flown solo across the sea. That jolted me somewhat and I exclaimed that that wasn't history--I remembered the flight as only yesterday. As usual, I'd forgotten that my companion \*wasn't born yet.\* LeeH looked at me in a kind of awe-struck amazement and said something like, 'Gee, grandpa, what was it like?' She's been my granddaughter ever since."

--Bob Tucker



Steve Stiles, Baltimore's top fan cartoonist, here, readers! I'm taking this unusual opportunity to get a few things off my chest. Now, obviously this isn't the original caption for this illo; the original went "Is..is it something else, Hydrx?" Something, get it? Well, that went over like a lead balloon. Hey, I can't be on the money every time! Maybe a few of you are thinking I'm burned out; maybe I am. Maybe.

I think I'm entitled to a few clunkers. I've been doing this stuff for quite a few years, long before this fad for unicorns, winged nymphs, and cute robots came along, and I plan on being around long after this fetish for cheap sensationalism and Freudian symbols is dead and buried. And good riddance Unicorns! I mean, we as intellectuals go way beyond that. It all starts with Star Wars probably and my idea of real science fiction. true fannishness is so over. Unicorns! Blah! Kill those damned things!

