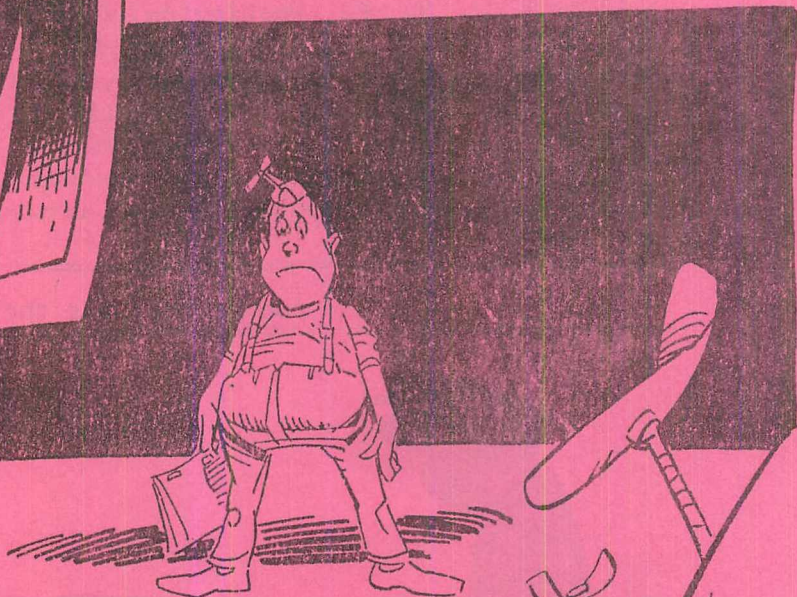
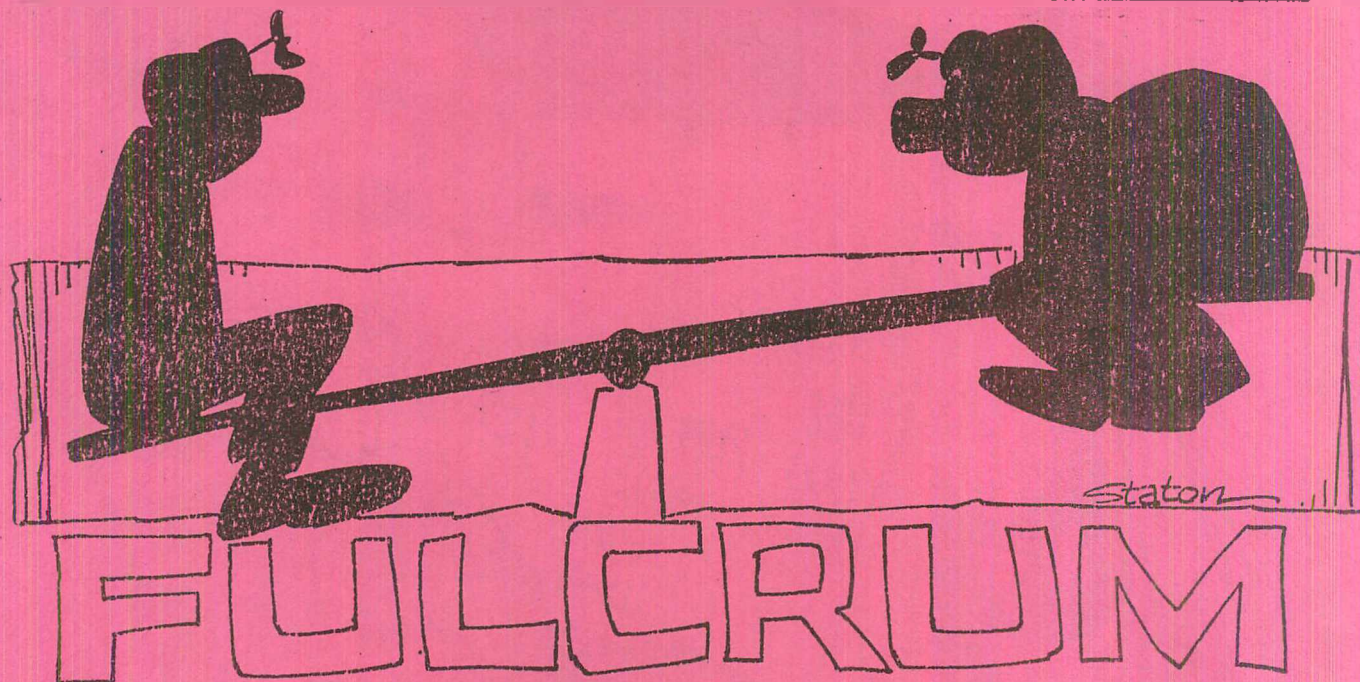


BM



beardmutterings vol. 2, no. 2, whole no. 4 [in New Jersey, vol. 5, no. 34, whole no. 9], March 1983, is edited, published and partially written by rich brown, 1632 19th St. NW, #2, Washington, DC 20009 US&A. Editors emeriti: Ted White and Andy Main bem. beardmutterings is published for love, not money, and thus available only for "the usual," i.e., trades, editorial whim, letters of comment. One free copy is available to anyone anywhere on planet Earth who requests same [extraterrestrial trades via negotiation]--but after that "the usual" applies. Contributions besides LoCs are by solicitation only. Edited daily, published irregularly and irreverantly. © 1983 for the writers and artists.

I had one grunch, but the eggplant over there.



A World Apart?

Ted [White] uses the term 'mundane' (or variants of it) around 30 times in his article [in WARHOON 29]. It appears to be a dismissive term for non-fans, for activities outside fandom, for ideas which it is not thought appropriate for fans to hold or to discuss openly with other fans, at any rate. I am confused, I must admit. Ted has recently expressed a liking for an article I wrote ["Life With The Loonies"], about social work and mental breakdowns. Presumably Ted would see these as 'mundane' activities as I did not do them with fans. Maybe they become fannish if a fan writes about them? But what if I write about them in our social work newsletter, a duplicated magazine run entirely by volunteers, whenever they feel like it, which does not pay its contributors? Have I magically been changed from fannish to mundane overnight? Or does it depend on who reads the article? What if the other fan who works in my office reads the article? Does it suddenly become fannish again? The point I am labouring somewhat is that it is not possible to draw a dividing line between mundane and fannish activities in the way that Ted seems to want to do. They interlink. Fandom is a part of society, just like work, just like marriage. Some bits are distinct, some bits overlap, but it just doesn't work to think

of them as completely separate worlds. Fandom only exists in the form it does because of conditions in wider society. Fandom needs a postal system...duplicating technology...mass literacy, for example.

--Chris Atkinson, in a letter in WARHOON 30

I suppose I should make it clear at the outset that I find the above to be more thought-provoking than arguable--so if you're looking for one of my typical cut-and-thrust pieces, you can move right on by this section. I think the subject--the mundane/fannish dichotomy--is worth discussing because fannish coinages frequently have specific meanings which can, if you don't watch them closely, undergo quick changes--but it's also an area where no one can have All The Answers.

Consider, for a case in point, the acronym "gafia." We all know it means Getting Away From It All--but, originally, it meant to immerse oneself in hypercrifanac (the "all" being gotten away from in that case being the mundane). Since the term was misused practically from the beginning, the present accepted meaning is 180° out of kilter with the original intent. But this just shows how usage and context frequently determine meanings; fandom, in this regard, is no less like Lewis Carroll's Mad Tea Party than the mundane, in that a particular word may mean precisely what the user intends and nothing more.

Since Chris posed her question to Ted, I feel I should say that even a close acquaintance of 25 years does not mean I presume to speak for him. I address the topic because I would like to see it discussed and because I have used similar distinctions myself (including but not limited to my own letter in WARHOON 30)--so I don't think it presumptuous to respond to Chris as though her remarks might have equal application to what I said, particularly since I also regarded "Life With The Loonies" as an excellent piece of fan writing.

I suppose, just to get the ball rolling, we should begin with the obvious--definitions of terms.

"Mundane" is not a fannish coinage, so its definition is available in any competent dictionary. It simply means "commonplace" or "ordinary" and, by that definition, may or may not--depending, again, on context--have negative connotations. In its fannish useage, Chris is correct in her assumption that it tends to be a contrast (one of two, generally, the other being "sercon") to "that-which-is-fannish." In Ted's "The Politics of Fandom" in WARHOON 29, to which she was responding, the word was used primarily to contrast "worldly" values with fannish ones. In my use of the word in WARHOON 30, I meant "commonplace" and "that-which-is-not-fannish," with implied overtones of "dull and boring." If called upon to justify my usage, I would admit this was a subjective evaluation--and what is dull and boring to me might well be the height of delight to Chris, and of course vice-versa. That is, as they say, what makes horse racing.

ART CREDITS

Joe Staton: Cover, pp. 2, 5, 6, 8, 15, 17, 18, 51, 55, 58, 62
 Dan Steffan: pp. 10, 12 Taral: pp. 20, 23 ATom: p. 26
 LeeH: p. 27 William Rotsler: pp. 28, 32, 35, 41, 42, 46, 48
 Ray Nelson: pp. 29, 30, 33, 36, 39, 43, 45 Grant Canfield: pp. 31, 38, 44
 Steve Stiles: Back cover

In fact, I'm willing to grant Chris the point she belabors. I presume we all live in the mundane world--because, on the face of it, it's obvious fandom is not a separate globe in the way that, say, Mars and Venus are. So when we participate in the microcosm--you know, writing and publishing fanzines, going to clubs or conventions, and otherwise socializing with one another--we do it right down here on terra firma. No matter how "high" we may get. (And, knowing Ted as well as I do, I feel it unlikely even he would dispute this point.)

However, the real distinctions between the two have nothing whatsoever to do with the fact that one of these ("fannishness" within fandom) takes place upon and within the context of the other (life here on "Spaceship Terra").

This distinction lies in the realm of ideas: One may, for example, speak of the "art world" and contrast it with the "mundane" without people feeling the slightest need to point out how the art world is not on another planet, or that it is entirely dependent on the mundane for its continued existence. Yet you know perfectly well what people mean when they speak of it. The art world may legitimately define the rest of the world as "mundane," just as we in fandom sometimes do, when making a distinction between such of their values as may contrast with those of the rest of the world.

It would no doubt be perfectly clear to Chris why there might be certain givens, understandings and items of common knowledge or belief in the art world which differ from those in the mundane--e.g., most people do not participate in artistic, literary or intellectual pursuits; they prefer sitting in front of their idiot box to reading, have little appreciation for music or art, accept common prejudices without thinking about them, may think violent solutions preferable to the employment of reason or suasion, and generally find it hard to understand why some people do not wish to be exactly like everybody else.

I'm not saying this is always the case--I'm just saying it is most usually the case. Also, in trying to make a point here, I'm not saying only fans are artists, literary coves, intellectuals or non-conformist, or even all fans are artists, literary coves, intellectuals or non-conformists, nor yet that everyone outside fandom or the art world is subliterate. We are simply making a very general observation, and I'm sure none of us is quite so dense that we need constant reminders about how generalities have exceptions.

So it is, generally speaking, the different value systems which are being described when we contrast "fannish" with "mundane"; I believe, if Chris will but give WARHOON 29 a closer perusal, she will find, as I said earlier, Ted was addressing those differences in the article which prompted her comments.

I don't think I would be too far wrong to observe that fandom, again as a general rule, has an appreciation for wit, artistic talent, intelligence and creativity which--at least in the largest number of cases--is above average. If this were not so, I suspect many of us would find fandom less worthwhile than we do.

In the mundane, while one may appreciate and be involved in these sort of things, one must go against the generally accepted flow to do so. In fandom, or the art world, or other similar isolated interest areas (I'm using but two of many possibilities) the general standards of approval and appreciation flow in the other direction: At least, if our fannish society as a whole can be said to scorn "types" of individuals, it is generally those who fail to use their wit, talent, intelligence and creativity to their fullest--rather than upon those who do simply because they do, as is often the case in the mundane.

Well, so much for a definition of "mundane" as we tend to use it. The distinction should not now be beyond anyone's easy comprehension--but if, after all



this, Chris or anyone else wishes to continue to maintain that fandom and the "real world" are absolutely indistinguishable, I will step aside to let them give WARNOON 30, without explanation, to the first stranger they see walking down the street--so that perhaps, after reading it, he or she can provide a better explanation of What It All Means.

With respect to the points Chris asks about "Life With The Loonies," while few would disagree the events she described therein were far from "commonplace" or "ordinary," I think they might nonetheless concede its treatment could have been mundane or, as I have been using it, dull and boring, simply by depriving it of its personal context.

Her approach could have been determined by the place in which the piece appeared--which in turn would have made it mundane. If you find this hard to follow, just imagine how it could have been deliberately slanted towards, say, the READER'S DIGEST. I'm afraid the flippant title, "Life With the Loonies," would have to be discarded in favor of something a bit more plonking (read: "dignified"). Perhaps "How I Coped With The Devastating Effects of Mental Illness." I don't believe the editors of RD would be ready for Chris' candid account; I think they would instead find it necessary to "edit" the piece into homilies and observations the insight and wit of which would have to be brought down to the level of their average reader--and the result would bear little similarity to "Life With The Loonies" as it appeared in TAPPEN. It might still show a certain facility with the language, but would contain nothing to upset the middle-class businessmen/housewives.

I suspect right about here (if not actually earlier), I may have revealed something of myself and my own definition of mundane. Not that it was all that apparent to me when I first wrote this, but when I sent a draft to Malcolm Edwards (who said he'd save his real response for after the appearance of the

piece in print) he wondered why I had "loaded the dice" so heavily in my favor by choosing the READER'S DIGEST instead of, say, the NEW YORKER.

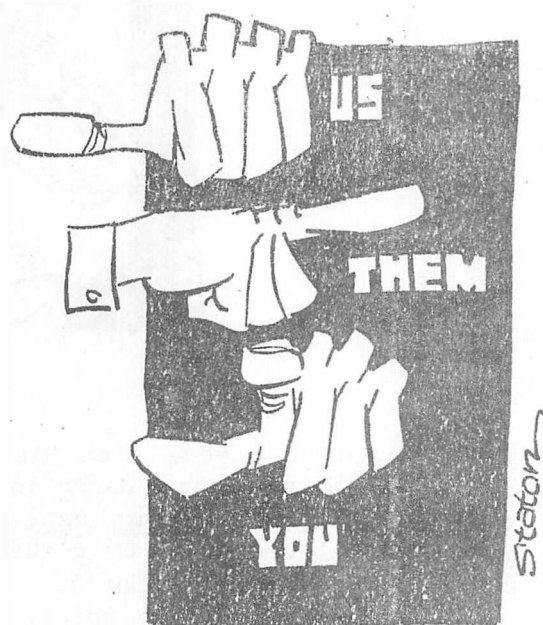
Both my choice, and Malcolm's, may underscore not necessarily different things but two aspects of the same thing when we use the term "mundane." Because what Malcolm really shows here is that, for all that he's a British subject, he might have gotten into the old U.S. Peace Corps before me. At least, I once heard the Peace Corps gave applicants a test in which they were shown an illustration of half a glass of water and asked to describe it. If they said, "It's half full" they were In--but if they replied, "It's half empty" they were Out.

Still, the NEW YORKER has a readership of around half a million, while the READER'S DIGEST claims a worldwide circulation of 31 million. So the latter is read by more mundanes than the former by a factor of 62:1. I can't deny the NEW YORKER is a "mundane" magazine, but I can say the READER'S DIGEST is more mundane. And if "mundane" is not to be a pejorative, in this sense it should follow that "more" mundane is "better." In fact, RD is "better" than the NEW YORKER only by mundane standards, while the latter is only "better" than the former by literary standards. But since I'm talking about fannish standards vs. mundane standards, and not fannish standards vs. literary (or even mundane literary) standards, the choice of the READER'S DIGEST over the NEW YORKER for my example might be the best one after all.

In his letter, Malcolm opined that it was "fandom" and not "fans" one might consider "fairly unique." (A lovely qualification, that.) But I wonder if anyone could seriously believe something even approaching this ratio would hold true among fans--that is, for every fan who regularly reads the NEW YORKER, there would be sixty-two fans who regularly read READER'S DIGEST. Or even that for every fan who regularly reads NEW YORKER, there would be two fans who regularly read READER'S DIGEST. Do you think, if such a gullible person exists, you could point him in my direction so we could put a bet on it? Perhaps give me odds? I wouldn't insist on 62:1--50:1 would be quite sufficient.

Assuming we could not find anyone willing to take such a bet--and I do make such an assumption--to what factor (besides their "uniqueness" of being fans) might we attribute this anomaly, this distinction, this difference between fans and mundanes?

Stepping back for a moment (and patting myself on the head for the telling wit and superb quality of my argument), it occurs to me that howevermuch this may buttress the thrust of what I've been saying here, in fairness I have to admit it does so by sidestepping the valid point Malcolm made--namely, that the NEW YORKER (circulation figures notwithstanding) might also be called a mundane magazine. (At least, one wouldn't call it a science fiction magazine, would



one?) I think I've partly covered this in saying that since "mundane" does not always have a negative meaning (although I myself tend to use it that way), it is necessary to use context to determine its intent.

But for all that, Malcolm's quibble is an excellent one. He might be saying mundanes can't be all that bad if half a million of them read the NEW YORKER, while I may be saying they can't be that good if 31 million of them read the READER'S DIGEST. Is this glass half empty or half full?

But getting back to the question Chris posed somewhat tongue-in-cheek, it turns out that regardless of how one might define mundane, she must be answered with a straight-faced "Yes"--the fact that "Life With The Loonies" was written by a fan, to be read by other fans and published in a fanzine, definitely contributed to it its "fannishness."

There's a distinct problem with just leaving at that, however; "fannishness" has been variously defined. While Charles Burbee was being less than serious when he defined it as "anything two fans do together," that's a pretty good definition--as far as it goes. But going beneath the surface, it seems fannishness, like sf, may be so hard to define that we have to insist it's that thing we point to when we say "fannishness," since there are blanket assumptions here which, as Chris points out, do not seem to cover all the edges.

I can only offer my opinion. It seems to me that Chris' article in a mundane magazine (whether the READER'S DIGEST or the NEW YORKER) would be "different" and thus possibly "mundane" without changing a word. The fact is, whether she actively participates in fanzine fandom or not, because she writes for at least some fanzines she's part of our social mileaux--and we're a bunch of people interested in getting to know each other. I might not recognize her if she came up and gave me a kick in the shins ("Who was that masked fan?")--perhaps just for butting into this argument--but here I sit on another Continent and if someone mentions Chris Atkinson, as is likely to happen, I "know" who she is. I don't know her anywhere near as well as the fans over there with whom she socializes in person--but that's not the point. Put "Life With The Loonies" in the NEW YORKER or the READER'S DIGEST or PLAYBOY or ATLANTIC MONTHLY, and the only thing their readers will come away with are the specific points Chris makes in the article itself. In TAPPEN, fans may very well come away with precisely the same insights but they're viewed somewhat differently because she is One of Us, and we feel something of the implicit privilege she has bestowed on us by sharing her experiences, and finally these things are filed away until they can be brought to bear on what new insight may be provided by "Life With The Loonies Part II" and "Asking For It"--because for fans these personal essays are an on-going process, a part of our getting to know each other. I don't think she (or anyone else) could get that form of appreciation or could expect anything like this kind of response from any mundane magazine.

So it was in large part not her unusual subject matter nor quite the way she reported it but the social context of fandom in which she wrote--the fact that hers was a part of our ongoing attempt, both on paper and in person, to get to know each other and let others know us--which made of "Life With the Loonies" a piece of "fannish" rather than "mundane" writing. Donald West to the contrary notwithstanding, a good fannish piece on any topic provides its own context because the personal essay focuses more on the person doing the writing than the choice of topic. I should think subject matter is almost irrelevant to fannishness--at least, I can think of dozens of fans who have written fannishly about mundane aspects of their lives: Charles Burbee, William Rotsler, Calvin Demmon, Teresa Nielsen Hayden, Avedon Carol, Eric Mayer, etc., &c. And, in fandom--much

more than in the mundane--we are genuinely interested in "knowing" the person writing the personal essay.

To my mind, what nails down "Life With The Loonies" is not merely that it's a personal essay, since this often turns out to be a first-person attempt to describe a happening to an unknown and faceless "them," but a personal essay by a fan directed to a known audience.

We fans did not invent, nor even perfect, the personal essay form; it just happens to bear the largest body of what is considered our best writings. So in most cases it would matter where the piece appeared--and Chris, although she may not have thought so when she first asked, had the right of it: "Life With The Loonies" would undergo the transformations she described, from fannish to non-fannish and back again, depending on where it appeared and who saw it, presumably without changing a single word of what she wrote.

But after saying that, I have to wonder why I think another view could be maintained--that Willis' The Improbable Irish was fannish before it started being serialized in WARHOON, that almost everything James Thurber ever wrote could be described as fannish (even though I'm certain he never heard of our microcosm), or that I have read things in perfectly "mundane" journals and books and magazines which have seemed fannish to me.

It would be easy enough to infer why I might think that's so of the Willis volume--but what about the other stuff? I suppose it's in part because Thurber and these other nominally mundane writers have evoked a fannish response in me--the feeling that they've invited me to take more than a disembodied "objective" part in the experiences they offer to share with me. This seeming fuzziness in my definition may also come about because "fannishness," to my mind, also describes an attitude, a way of looking at things which (hopefully) keeps one from becoming serious to the point of tedium about anything. Apparently I am not the only one who holds such views; one need go no further than Bergeron's discussion with Bob Leman in WARHOON 30 to find a case being made that individuals such as William Blake, Mary Shelley, Lewis Carroll, H. P. Lovecraft, the Brontes, et al., have had, at the very least, a "fannish" turn of mind. At



least, they participated in little literary groups somewhat like fandom and wrote for the more personal entertainment of those groups--much as we fans write our esoteric and in-groupish entertainment for each other.

I might also point out the possibility that not everything which is by/about fans is necessarily fannish--in the same way that not everything which appears in fanzines about science fiction is "sercon." There are fannish pieces attempted and so badly done that I doubt if you could find many fans who would be willing to call them fannish. However, this might simply be a reluctance to use that adjective for anything which is badly done--but, like puns, I suppose the truth is they can be good, bad or indifferent.

I don't care if Chris ascribes a dismissive attitude to me regarding things I've described as mundane--since, as I said at the outset, but may have revealed in my "choice" of the READER'S DIGEST as my example of mundanity, I am generally intentionally so when I use the term. In dismissing such topics, I am expressing a personal conviction that few, if any, fanzine articles have been done on them in a fannishly relevant manner. I think some may be intrinsically uninteresting, and am not particularly bothered that I also hold the almost contradictory belief that there probably is not any topic or idea which could not be written about fannishly--with personal insights which make me care more about the person doing the writing than its nominal topic. So if anyone cares to assume, when I describe something as "mundane" I mean it has failed to take this "fannish" approach, I would not be in the least distressed.

But, to introduce a slightly plaintive note, I think it goes a bit beyond that to interpret Ted's use--and, by extension, my own--as a covert attempt to dictate "ideas...not appropriate for fans to hold or to discuss openly with other fans." I think the absurdity here might best be shown by my hopping up and down and proclaiming furiously how I will continue to hold and espouse these views about the importance of making these distinctions until it is somewhere determined authoritatively that it is actually Chris who must be allowed to dictate which ideas fans should be given the right to hold or discuss openly among other fans....

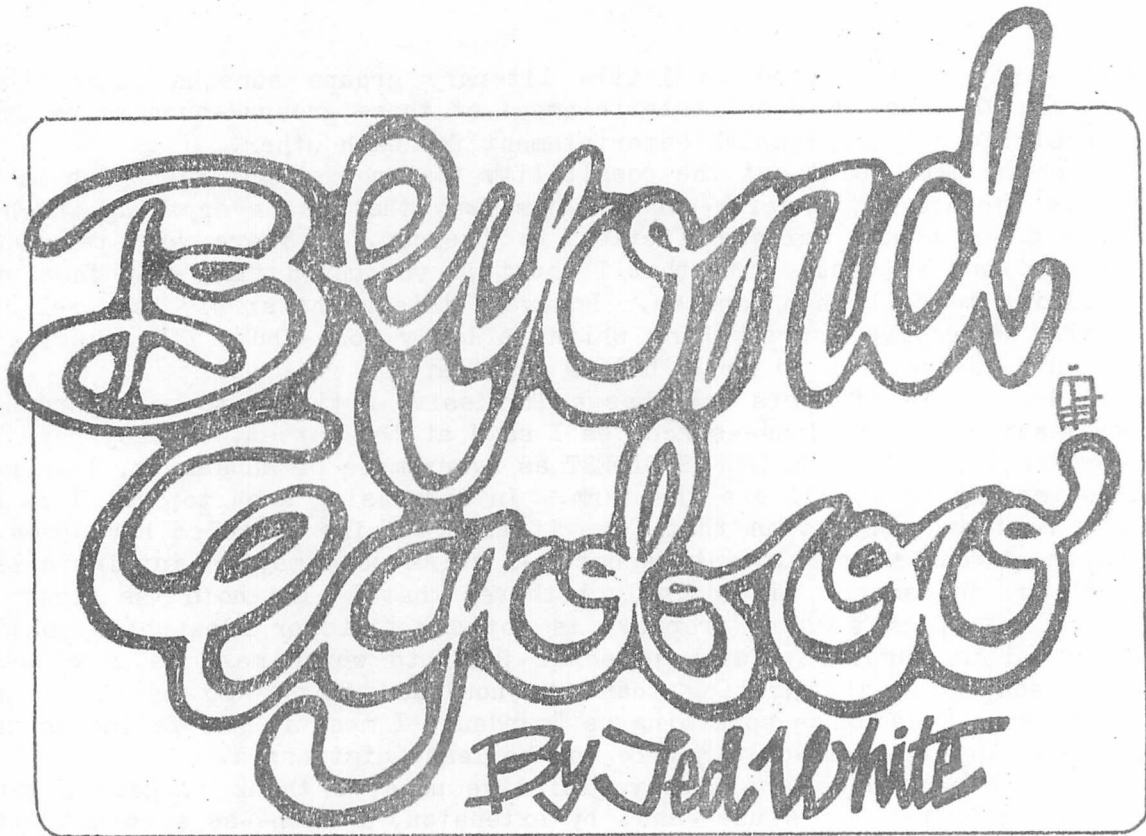
I think what makes her comment ironic, if not downright inappropriate, is that it was the sercon element importing mundane values into fandom, which Ted was in part describing--the Sam Moscovitz's and Ed Wood's--who tried to say there was a "one-and-only" topic we should talk about in our fanzines (sf), while fannish fans maintained that, since the subject of sf is every topic under this or any other sun, fans in their writings should not be constrained by limitations narrower than the genre we profess to enjoy.

The Unveiling of SBOF

I really suppose, in at least one respect, we were foolish--by which I mean, simply, our tendency to believe our secrecy could last forever. As I suppose this rather bald statement could easily impress you as being just so much gibberish, perhaps I should quickly explain that I am speaking here of the behavior of that highly select, powerful, enigmatic and, yes, secretive group known as the Society of Boring Old Farts, a.k.a., the Secret Bastards of Fandom.

The SBOF, as it is called, should not be confused in any way with the SMOFs. SMOFs (or "Secret Masters of Fandom") are only people who think they Run Things here in the microcosm. It need hardly be pointed out to anyone above the intelligence of an oyster that the SMOF suited the purposes of SBOF while

[Continued on page 15]



Beyond Egoboo

By Ted White

In the last instalment of this column (beardmutterings 3) I described meeting Raleigh Evans Multog, the retarded editor of the crudzine STAR*ROCKETS. Only a month or two after that column was published--wouldn't you know it?--I turned up a photo of Raleigh. Would have been perfect for that column. Instead, we see it here. Better late than never, and besides which it should reproduce more cleanly this issue.

I hadn't intended to make this column a series of fifties reminiscences--yet another chapter in the ultimate autobiography which Bergeron calls "White on White"--but several circumstances, not the greatest of which was my discovery of Raleigh's photo, have prodded me into making this instalment a continuation of sorts to the last.

One of those circumstances was that I was in error in my last instalment, when I said, "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..." I had forgotten an entire incident which took place later in 1955, in June I think. What reminded me of it was a piece I'd written about it for my FAPazine, NULL-F #4, dated "Spring" 1956, which I recently turned up and reread.

Then too, there's Terry Hughes, who wrote the editor of this esteemed journal and said of my column, "He portrays Multog in a sympathetic light and explains that Multog was retarded. ... At the same time Ted White goes on to thoroughly villify George Wetzel. John Hitchcock evidently found something in Wetzel he found to be a redeeming quality but Ted never gets around to saying what that was. He only states Wetzel's faults, which seem most numerous." It appears that Terry thinks that I erred in giving only Multog a balanced treatment. If so, he is wrong. I gave no one a "balanced" treatment; I simply described the people involved as I saw them.



I suppose a comment like Terry's is possible, now, simply because George Wetzel's infamy has grown faded and forgotten. Easily the most disliked fan of the fifties, George Wetzel was the first person to be thrown off the FAPA waitinglist (after previous FAPA officials had "misplaced" him from the list and he'd reapplied under his own name and two or three pseudonyms as well just to play it safe)--and for good cause.

George Wetzel was a "poison-pen" letter writer. He delighted in writing letters in other people's names, going even to the extent of getting them mailed in the city lived in by the person whose name he'd used. One of his

little games was to write to two fans, writing to each in the other's name. These letters were always insulting and scurilous, and if taken at face value guaranteed to set the recipients off into an explosive feud. (Sometimes George worked a variation on this: he wrote letters, in the names of the two participants of an existing feud, to those participants. He did this to Harlan Ellison and Joe Semanovich--with whom Harlan was feuding in 1953--among others. This involved having one letter mailed from New York City and the other from Cleveland. George went to the trouble to do this, making use of innocent third-parties who had little idea of what was going on.)

But that was just good clean fun next to George's other letters. These went to government officials, usually (but not always) in the Post Office or FBI. Upon taking dislike to a letter Dean Grennell had in a Georgina Ellis fanzine, WENDIGO (which George felt insulted Gina's delicate feminine sensibilities), Wetzel complained to Customs authorities (WENDIGO was a Canadian fanzine), the FBI (whom he told that Grennell, ex of the Air Force, was a "draft dodger"), and the Post Office (who, acting on his complaint that Dean used the mails for obscenity, began opening all of Dean's mail). This appeared to be Wetzel's ace-in-the-hole tactic: when people got mad at him he "turned 'em in" to every government authority he could think of.

Bear in mind that this was in the mid-fifties, a time when Joseph McCarthy and the House UnAmerican Activities Committee were terrorizing the country. It could be very unpleasant to turn up on one of those government lists, and names got onto those lists via letters like Wetzel's. Several fans of the era worked for the government and required security clearances. A letter from Wetzel could cause those fans real trouble--and they knew it quite well.

Ultimately, in the late fifties, after Wetzel had begun writing letters under various identities he had assumed, supporting his, George Wetzel's, case--but they were so transparently his, from the messy typing to the paranoid raving which was a dead giveaway--fandom simply turned its back on him. He was ostracized, completely ignored, his letters unanswered, his name dropped from all mailing lists. Only one other fan has ever been given similar treatment, and

that was Gertrude M. Carr, whom fans of the same period did not forgive for her campaign of malice against Walt Willis (she apparently held against him his "unAmerican"ness, and Gertrude was also something of a bigot--she was one of the few fans to join the John Birch Society--but in every other respect she was a far more decent human being than Wetzel and does not deserve to keep him close company in the fanhistories).

I think fandom finally decided that in George Wetzel it was nursing a viper to its breast, and that Wetzel was an unstable, unpredictable, and thus even more dangerous viper, who had to be cast away before he struck again.

What, then, were his redeeming qualities? How had he managed to stick around for more than ten years?

George was, I am sure, mentally unbalanced. He was also the product of Baltimore's slums, strongly bigoted about race and religion. But he was not stupid. He had the intelligence to do long and painstaking research. He was a Lovecraft bibliophile before it was fashionable to be one (the early forties) and still apparently has a good reputation in that misbegotten field. His serious pieces for John Hitchcock's UMBRA, which I described here last issue, were fascinating and well-researched and documented. I'm sure John hoped to encourage that side of Wetzel.

But ultimately even John Hitchcock gave up.

Here's how it happened:

In late June of 1955 I was living at my present address but as a seventeen-year-old in his parents' house. Larry Stark, who was one of the protagonists of my last column, was living in our house for the summer; he had a job in Washington, D.C. With my mother's approval, I invited John Magnus and John Hitchcock to drive over from Baltimore for a Sunday dinner at my house.

When the two Johns pulled up in Magnus's Ford, I was dismayed to



(ARTIST'S NOTE: Yes I know this isn't the same car that Ted mentions in his column, but I had to improvise. I'd intended to visit our local library to do the necessary research to accurately draw the exact model described, but I couldn't go because--uh--we had a real bad snow storm--yeah, yeah, that's it, sure, a terrible snow storm--and my dog ate my sketches, and, and... Well, anyway, I had to make up a 50ish looking car to illustrate this great moment in fanhistory. I hope you aren't too disappointed--but I do think it looks kinda like something from the 50s, sorta. If you squint... uh. I'm sorry.)

signed, THE ARTIST

see George Wetzel in the back seat. My mother, who had not counted on an extra place at the already crowded dinner table, was probably even more dismayed. But George was on his best behavior. He was polite, friendly, and helpful after dinner with the dishes, doing his best to make up for the inconvenience he'd caused.

It was still only mid-afternoon once dinner was over and cleaned up after, so we decided to drive into Washington and browse several bookstores which were open. This occurred largely without event, the five of us (Magnus, Hitchcock, Wetzel, Stark and me) just fitting into the two-door Ford. (I found a lot of forties AMAZINGS and FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, and some thirties bedsheet-sized GHOST STORIES, for prices that would only make you weep if I could recall them....)

The drive back was a different story.

First Wetzel started making cracks about all the blacks in D.C. "They'll drive all the white people out, damn them," George said. (By then well over 50% of D.C.'s population was black; it eventually went up to over 70%.)

That prompted Magnus to point out a group of whites at another corner. "They'll drive all the black people out, damn them," John said, accurately mimicking Wetzel's words and tone.

Wetzel then told us that the New York Fanarchists were filthy Commies, and drifted into a general condemnation of Communism and Russia.

After Wetzel had babbled for a bit Larry Stark calmly said, "But you're wrong," and proceeded to tell him where he was wrong and why he was wrong. Larry spoke dispassionately and from a good knowledge of the facts. Wetzel was blathering on about how the Russians had done nothing in World War Two; Stark recited the actual list of their accomplishments.

Subsequently Wetzel, in his version of this conversation, stated, "Stark said to me why are the russians villains now when they were our allies during the war" (strictly sic). Here are some other things Wetzel wrote about the same subject: Dave Mason "found out of my anti-Commie sentiments from Larry Stark who is a famatical pro-Commie..." ... "I date the smear from Mason as immediately after a rather hot discussion I had with Larry Stark in D.C. in the summer of 1955." ... "Stark and Ellison, and Mason, and Ron Smith and Silverberg form a little circle of their own in New York. Hence Mason picked up my anti-commie views from Stark, who also told him my anti-Negro view (which Magnus needled me into giving that same day as Hitchcock and White will tell you)." ... "...I date very definitely Mason's smear with my anti-commie views told Stark." These quotes come from two letters (totaling 12 pages!) printed in G.M. Carr's GEMZINE.

The thread of paranoia which runs through those quotes should be obvious to anyone, but for those of you who know nothing of fifties fandom I should point out that the "little circle of their own" came as a complete surprise to Stark (who lived in New Brunswick, New Jersey, went to Rutgers, and knew only Silverberg of the other "members," and him only by correspondence), Ellison (who had just moved to New York City that year to become a pro), Mason (who was a dedicated anarchist and whose friends included Bill Donaho, Karl Olsen and Dick Ellington--a very different circle), Smith (who with his wife published the photo-offset INSIDE and emigrated to Australia in the late fifties), and Silverberg (who had by then succeeded in selling professionally and was phasing out his fanac, and who shared an apartment with Ellison). None of these people were Communists or even Sympathizers, although all were more or less liberal in their politics and some were left-wing antagonists of the Communists. Wetzel

was too innocent of any real knowledge about left-wing politics to be aware of that. To him, as to McCarthy, if you weren't with him, you were a Commie or a "pro-Commie." I don't recall the nature of Dave Mason's "smear" against Wetzel, but likely enough it was simply a response which properly identified Wetzel's activities. To Wetzel any response to his own smears, any attempt to pin the blame on him for the letters he signed other people's names to, any rejoinder to his bigotry, was a "smear" against him which could only be motivated by the Communist leanings or sympathies of his attacker.

I imagine Stark argued against Wetzel in that car ride back from D.C. at least in part because he didn't like George or didn't like the tone of what George was saying. Wetzel, claiming that "Commies are brutal bastards," provoked Stark into a mild assertion that Russians were as human as the next person. And so it went, Magnus, Hitchcock and I occasionally chiming in to support Stark with various "for instance"s from time to time until we were back at my house once again.

We were at that point still in a good mood, no one having taken Wetzel's arguments very seriously (and little realizing how seriously he'd taken Stark's opposition).

Then George asked me if there were a mailbox nearby. It seems he had this letter he wanted to be mailed with a Falls Church postmark on it. I was at that time the only fan who lived in or near Falls Church, so I asked to see the letter, which was still unsealed.

It was one of Wetzel's poison-pen letters, this one addressed to Harlan Ellison. In this letter Wetzel followed his usual line of reasoning where Harlan was concerned. First stating that since Harlan's name was "Harlem" (because George thought it cute to always write it that way), he must be a "damned NiggerLover," the letter continued in what Wetzel regarded as a humorous vein, full of threats and vilifications. It was unsigned. I thought it was a sick letter, the sicker because Wetzel showed it to me, chortling as he did so about how funny it would be to see "that little twerp" when he read it, never considering for a moment that I might not share his glee.

I should have torn it up, but I didn't, simply because it would have been futile--Wetzel would just have written another. What I did do was to direct George to a mailbox two blocks away, outside the city of Falls Church, where it would get an Arlington County postmark.

That, I think, was the last time I saw George until the mid-seventies. However, it was not the last I'd hear of him. In the six months which followed that Sunday afternoon, George was a busy man writing letters everywhere. The two G.M. Carr printed were typical; equally typically, no one else gave his ravings the prominence she did. I assume their shared hatred for Commies initially biased Gertrude in George's favor.

Let the last word here come from John Hitchcock, he who found redeeming qualities in Wetzel...for a while. In a letter to me, written for publication in NULL-F #4, John said:

"I have discontinued my and UMBRA's relations with one Wetzel-fan...his constant and extremely personal attacks and counter-attacks on several thoroughly innocent figures in fandom make him an undesirable element in UMBRA; hence, his forthcoming comic selection in Um 13 will be his last appearance there. Although I am still convinced that he can write well, his nearly slanderous vilifications and accusations have eclipsed

the other side of him, to the extent that thoroughly serious or pleasantly humorous msg. under his authorship are automatically excluded from UMBRA, and will probably in the future be rejected for the same reasons from other fanzines using his material.

"His attacks themselves usually have no observable foundation except his very vivid imagination. Provocation for a feud is quite slight, as far as I myself can see. And, if this letter is published, I'd like to warn whoever reads it to take everything Wetzel says about other fans with a large brick of salt. I can't defend Ellison or Mason, his old standing targets, but I can say that I don't see any cause for his accusations against Boggs or Silverberg, to take two examples. And lately I've heard him, in our conversations, take exception with Larry Stark. Quite probably Larry will serve as his newest public target, so I'd like to reassure you beforehand that Larry has no observable subversive affiliations or intentions, as George has been muttering, but rather is one of the nicest fellows it's been my fortune to meet, in fandom or outside. Don't let anything Wetzel may say against Stark influence you in any way. His conclusions are based upon imagined relationships existing only as a mechanism in his psychology, whereas mine are based on a year-long, fruitful, and happy close acquaintance with Larry himself."

I hope the foregoing has provided the balanced look at George Wetzel that Terry Hughes was looking for.

--Ted White



FULCRUM [Continued from page 9]

simultaneously providing a source of lively amusement. Nor is it hard to see, after I point it out, why the SMOF have been allowed to publicly maintain this self-delusion without challenge--i.e., it has diverted attention from the real truth we SBOFs have wished to keep concealed.

For the SBOF, it must be said, have been devoted to exerting fannish influence which has amounted to absolute dictatorial control over fanzine fandom--a reign of terror which has dissected quivering neofen who dared bring New Ideas into the microcosm, covered heretics who refused to bow at the Holy Shrine of Sixth Fandom with obloquy, and gener-

ally run out of fandom on a rail anyone who has exercised any independence of mind by refusing to swear loyalty on a copy of THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR and/or otherwise failing to conform without question to our arbitrary dictates. Publication of this article will, of course, end those grand glorious days of Power and Influence forever and provide the death blow to the Golden Age we have engendered--but, the way I look at it, easy come, easy go.

Please forgive me as I wipe away a nostalgic tear--but, you see, in the G.O. Days (as we SBOFs constantly refer to them), it did not take a great deal to make the neos in fandom Toe The Line--indeed, a simple letter on SBOF stationery usually won that trick.

Most often, this took only a few lines.

"Your zine," the letter would say, "does not meet our Exacting Standards. Henceforth you will either (a) submit all material for approval to us before publication or (b) cease publication immediately." (No doubt, before this revelation, you thought neos perceptive enough to realize the crudity of their endeavors and voluntarily stop publishing. More fool you.)

At the outset of the SBOF program, I do not think so much as a single neo had an inkling of the truth. Otherwise, I feel certain, we would have never been able to indulge in so much of this Sixth Fandom Cultural Imperialism you've been hearing so much about. And hearing so much about. Why do I feel I should repeat that?

Now I would not have you believe, from this, that we held these neos in contempt. (We did, of course, hold them in contempt--but I would not have you believe it.) In truth, they could hardly be blamed for feeling a shiver of trepidation run right down their trouser leg as they beheld the names which were printed on the left-hand side of that stationery under the "Board of Directors" heading.

This was simply a case of using their fannish inexperience to make them shackle themselves--since the list was designed to contain the name of at least one fan they thought a Big Name Fan. Being new to the microcosm, they of course would know too little of its anarchistic nature to realize they were being taken in; what gave us the power to accomplish our devious purposes was simply their impression that such highly respected fen (whose opinions must be thought to carry much weight in the microcosm) had given implicit approval to the dictates contained in these letters.

Now you could, from this, infer how we might have been easily detected--so I'd best explain this simply was not the case. While it's true our letterhead listed top-notch, respected and talented fen as Board members, this was so only provided these fen were also old fans and tired--which is to say, those who would be unlikely to answer a query, even if some neo should get wise, become suspicious or decide for any reason to try to check us out. In this respect, our manner of operation was very nearly foolproof.

The real SBOF Board met each year at the World Convention. I cannot name names nor deny absolutely that anyone was a member. This is not from reluctance but simply because it was a Tradition to come to Board meetings masked--for it has not been unheard of in our microcosm that secrets are often betrayed out of vindictiveness or spite, and true SBOFs are nothing if not wise in the ways of fandom. And, anyway, it was a Tradition--I mean, after all!

Perhaps, if you attended Chicon IV, you saw our scarlet letter (without realizing it) tacked on the bulletin board, giving the Board's meeting place--"Jim: Just arrived. Who are these nuts? /s/ Boris, #123." While this must have inconvenienced whoever was actually in room 123 (I suspect they could have

been inundated with irate phonecalls), it served SBOF's purpose of informing Board members the meeting was being held this year in room 321. I need hardly point out--need I?--that SBOFs, being unknown to each other, and being secretive and careful, cannot communicate via fanzines. As for any inconvenience involved, it certainly should go without saying that SBOFs are not, for the most part, put out by any inconvenience accruing to anyone other than themselves.

I'm sure most of you are well aware of how difficult it is to get fans to agree on anything--I mean, it's in the nature of some of us to argue that the sky is pink, not blue. So it will no doubt come as a surprise to learn there was never any problem among SBOFs in reaching a consensus at those Board meetings on actions which had to be carried out.

"Look at this!" a Board member only had to say. The offending fanzine would then be passed from hand to hand--usually grasped distastefully at the corner, between thumb and forefinger, and allowed to dangle like a condemned man on the gallows--and usually, too, with a look of condescension which was nonetheless totally devoid of real pity.

"Not the slightest similarity to HYPHEN, QUANDRY, VOID or INNUENDO," one Board member would say.

"Sadly lacking in nostalgic articles about the G.O. Days," another would add with evident distaste.

"Feh! Electrostencilled illos! Blecchhh!"

"Great Ghul! There's stuff in here about--dare one say it?--science fiction!"

"And look here--a criticism of Willis! Why hasn't someone done something to make this fool sign the fan-nish Loyalty Oath?"

"Mais ou sont les neiges d'atan?"

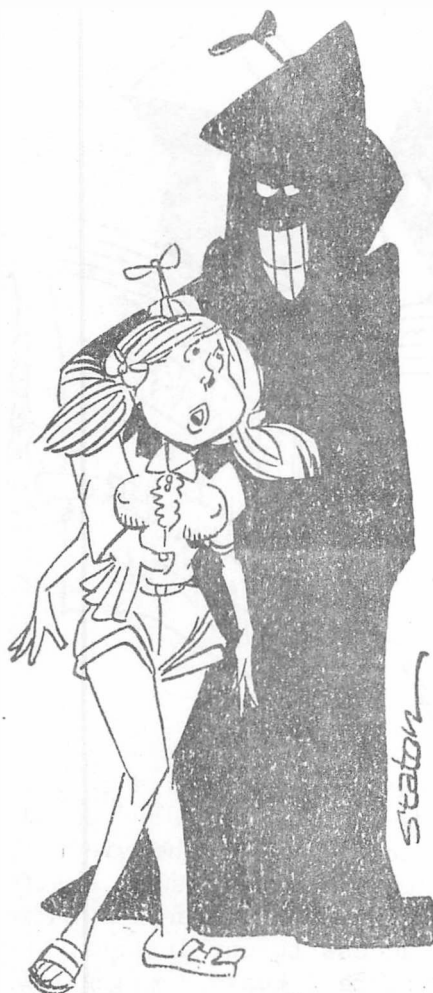
"Just look at this! A totally new idea!" (horrified shudders, gasps and groans)

The time for judgment being deemed appropriate, the vote would then be taken. It was nearly always unanimous--the offending new editor would be condemned and torn down and, if truly Out of Step, an all-night luncheonette would be built on the site.

What's truly sad about all this is, we probably could have continued thus indefinitely--had our secrecy not been threatened. I think our secrecy may have first been breached by a few SBOFs who took to wielding their power in quite a new way. On the same letterhead, they would write attractive new femme-fans, ordering them to

report to Branch Headquarters (i.e., that SBOF's home address) to "test out Charles Burbee's theory--that anything two fans do together is fannish." I'm not faulting these SBOFs, I hasten to add, since by definition anything a SBOF may choose to do is Above Reproach. No, it's only that I'm a bit miffed because the idea did not occur to me first--or at least before the secret (rather than these attractive new femme-fans) stood in such immediate danger of being compromised....

I may face a severe dressing down at the next Board meeting just for writing this...assuming they can figure out which mask I'm hiding behind (SBOFs being, by nature, reluctant to Abandon Tradition). While this is unlikely, perhaps,



just in case, I should address a few points to other SBOFs who may be in this reading audience. Well, the game only had to be a foot to get Sherlock Holmes involved, and this particular game we've been playing is at least a yard. By which I guess I simply mean it would not take a Sherlock Holmes to figure out that where there's smoke, there's a good indication a fire must be nearby.

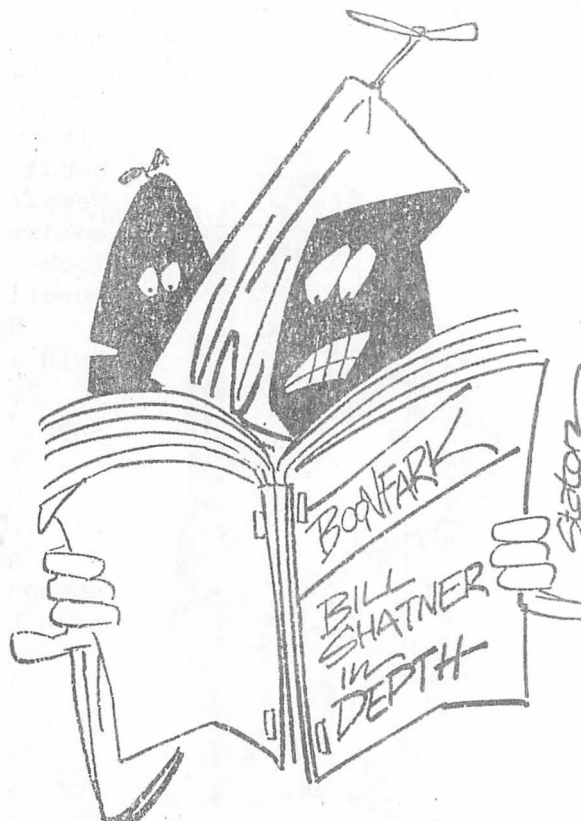
What am I talking about? What do I mean?

Well, in the past few years, fandom has been invaded by some lively firebrands--Joseph Nicholas, Donald West, Dave Locke, Chris Priest, Brian Earl Brown, Marty Cantor, to name a few--who have been falling all over themselves and each other to View With Alarm and point to that smoke.

We SBOFs have made gallant, and very nearly convincing, efforts to make this appear just so much hot air. But, in my opinion, we made one unforgiveable error--and thus perhaps deserve the sorry state we have been reduced to: Namely, we forgot the factor in the fannish psyche which provided us so much of our power in the first place--that fans are somewhat paranoid by nature and therefore prone to give credence to ideas which hint that someone, somewhere, is Plotting Against Them. As a result, the number of fannish Wrong Thinkers and Troublemakers has been on the rise. That being the case, it's really just a matter of time before the whole truth comes out. So, this way, by taking the time to Admit All in this article, I can at least get a little egoboo out of it.

If this is not enough to save me from being stripped of my beanie, I would ask my fellow SBOFs to give some small consideration to the fact that the above-named firebrands have obviously seen our letters. The editorials, columns and articles they have addressed to this topic are filled with references to them--at least, since the views they claim they have observed (and against which they have taken up such a strong defensive stance) cannot be substantiated by anything which has appeared in fanzine print, it stands to reason they must have had access to our letters. I do not for a moment believe they could have ended up at a real Board meeting (since they could hardly begin to guess our Secret Hand-Shake) or made it all up out of wholecloth. I mean, really, that seems a bit far-fetched. And I would point out that, if they have access to and can bring our incriminating letters to light, they can expose our perfidity to fandom at large--so our cause is doomed anyway. Which, to me, simply means I might just as well get my egoboo out of it.

Actually, one other--rather frightening, actually--possibility has occurred to me. If these firebrands did not learn our Secret Hand-Shake, and if they did not make up these allegations out of wholecloth, and if they do not have access to our incriminating letters, then it seems to me that finally, after all these



years, Claude Degler has been proven right--fans really are slans. I think all we really need to do, to see if this is the correct possibility, is to check out Messrs. Nicholas, West, Locke, Priest, Brown and Cantor, at the next convention they attend, to make sure they really do have tendrils in their hair. And if that turns out to be the case, why, I need only point out to the other members of the SBOF Board that our cause was doomed in any event.

So perhaps, regardless of the circumstances, the Board will not find fault with me on that score.

But what they (and perhaps many others in fandom as well) may tend to blame me for is what must be the inevitable result of these admissions--when the fans we have bullied and brow-beaten for so long come to realize SBOF is a cheat, an illusion and a hollow fraud and, from that, deduce how easily they may elude our domination simply by refusing to be dominated any longer.

When Richard Bergeron devotes future issues of WARHOON to arcane studies of H. P. Lovecraft, as he would have done long ago but for our suasion, I can easily envision how the blame will fall on me. When Dan Steffan fills the next BOONFARK with that 96-pp. appreciation of Captain Kirk which we've worked so hard to keep him from printing, a cause-and-effect relationship will be seen between it and the revelations of this article. When Malcolm Edwards throws off our shackles by way of making TAPPEN the U.K. counterpart of SFR, I will no doubt be compared to Judas Iscariot, and I will certainly be vilified when the Neilsen Haydens abandon the silly mode we forced on them in favor of giving LOCUS some real competition in reporting all the spiffy new releases just out from Ace and DAW. When Greg Pickersgill realizes he is no longer tied to providing critical fannish insights but rather is perfectly free to fill his fanzine with blow-by-blow accounts of the Dungeons & Dragons games he's been involved with of late, it will not be his lapse in tastes but this expose which will be held responsible. When Ted White stops printing all that dreary fannish stuff in GAMBIT to make room for those short academic sf book reviews from a feminist perspective he has wanted to print and John Berry turns WING WINDOW into a thick quarterly journal devoted to the life and works of T. O'Connor Sloane without fear of SBOF reprisals, how will I possibly be able to dodge the out-flang fingerbone of fannish scorn?

So it seems quite likely I may be made to suffer for this--at least for a time. I won't do so silently, of course, since I've never done that, and I'll keep pointing out--until I've finally lived this down--how Bergeron, Steffan, Edwards, the Neilsen Haydens, Pickersgill, White and Berry would have learned the Truth eventually anyhow.

Oh, sure, I admit it was all fun while it lasted. But it was, you know, just too good to last.

The Sin of Omission

I had some strange delays in getting this bm into your hands and I think you deserve a bit of explanation--even though, since I have no "set" schedule, the delay may not have been all that obvious to you.

At Terry Hughes' suggestion, per his letter this issue, I was going to re-print Creath Thorne's "From The Captain's Tower" column from MOTA #6. I didn't think it necessary when Terry first suggested it--but subsequently when Creath said he felt my summary last issue was "inaccurate," I felt an obligation to do

[Continued on p. 25]

"I'm just a collector" is an expression that many of you have heard. No one starts off dealing. But once on that first high that comes from the felty texture of twiltone and the discovery of your name in print, there is no getting off until the insatiable beaver on your back has robbed you of your dignity, principles and self-control. The first harmless looking issue of a Brian Earl Brown apazine arriving in its postmailed brown-paper wrapper will rush you pellmell to...



Divorce: "Honey, either those 89 boxes of moldering fanzines leave the house or I do!"
"Will you be all right at your mother's, dear?"

Insanity: "...six, seven, eight, eight point five, *giggle* eight point seven five, three point one, three point two, three point three, three point four, three point five, hahahaha... FIFTEEN!" (Trails off into hysterical laughter.)

Genocide: "Dear Editor,
"I'm writing to try and egg those two fannish nincompoops on. I think they are expressing the true fannish spirit, that of pettiness and backbiting. If it weren't for such silly and stupid exchanges as these, fandom as we know it would not survive. When was the last time you boys stepped back and had a good laugh at yourselves? Me and my friends laugh at you all the time. Maybe you guys should develop a social life..."

"Yours,

"Joe"

Masturbation: *bang, bang* "Are you in there still? You've been in there half an hour with those fanzines!" *bang, bang* "What are you doing in there with those Collins and Wallers and Bodes..."

...and then, finally, to support your uncontrollable habit.... Well, let me start from the beginning.

A lurid red copy of RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY propositioned me early in 1971. I read it on the premise that it couldn't hurt me only this once, and of course I was

hooked. Soon I had a boxful of fanzines and was publishing one of my own. From a single box of mediocre tradezines, my stash expanded out from under the bed into stolen plastic milk crates. That I graduated from ordinary street traffic --PREHENSILE, WoFAN, MAYA, KARASS--into hard core collecting was due to meeting the first real collector I knew.

His name was Bob Allen and he had been collecting fanzines for several years without giving himself away. Then he got religion, perhaps, and renounced his vice by offering his fanzines for sale in YANDRO. No one followed up for almost a year. I remember seeing his ad, but thinking as neos do that this sort of thing belonged to another world that I wasn't yet a part of, I didn't respond. Months later I got in touch with Bob Allen after browsing through that YANDRO again and seeing his ad a second time. He was right in Toronto and had sold little in the interim. On an appointed day I brought two friends along who also had the bug. It was firmly understood that I had first pick but even second choice was choice indeed! We scored heavily on copies of SPACEWARP, LIGHTHOUSE, CONFUSION, D'JOURNAL, a First Worldcon Memory Book, and even a mint copy of DISCOVERY OF THE FUTURE. What we didn't know was that this was only a taste.

My first heavy deal was with Ethel Lindsay, who sold me more than a couple of hundred dollars of HYPHENS, QUANDRYs, RETRIBUTIONS, APORRHETAS, HABAKKUKs, OOPSLA's, GRUES, VOIDS, PANACs and half of the rest of the litany of great old fanzines.

I scored another hit with an unsorted box of '40s material that was being sold like nickel and dime bags by a negligent dealer. An arrangement was reached to sell me the whole thing for \$15. Ninety percent of it had no other distinction than being old, but lost among the crudzines was AH, SWEET IDIOCY.

Next I gobbled up Bill Grant's collection. After he died in 1977 or 78, his effects were sold to a dealer who was supplying me and I had the opportunity of adding the most nearly complete collection of Canadian zines of the past to my own. That was not all. To stoke the furnace of greed there were more HYPHENS, more QUANDRYs, two HARP STATESIDES, an ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR, SPACESHIPs, OOPSLA's, and embarrassing riches of CAN FANs. One unassuming bag of unsorted pages I paid \$5 for yielded 15 uncollated, unnumbered copies of CAN FAN's big anniversary issue--a numbered edition limited to 125. There was a tremendous amount of chaff as well, but I was a "completist" now and had no discrimination.

I began scrounging for any handout and excavating through the piles of shit left on neofans' room tables for copies of SHAMBLES, RUNE and AMORE DE COSMOS. Two ENERGUMENS turned up at Autoclave. A GRANFALLOON and TOMORROW AND...s were found in a pile on the floor at Bakka. Terry Hughes took pity and gave me TITLES he didn't want. I had no shame that I was taking zines out of the hands of neos--I had a collection to feed and I was ruthless.

Then I began hanging out with questionable people "in the trade." At a Fanoclasts meeting a swarthy looking man with thick glasses whispered to me, "Feelthy fanzines, meester?" and that's how I met Arnie Katz. Arnie introduced me to Bill Kunkle and they both laid some heavy ones on me--copies of RATS!, QUIP, TANDEM, CIPHER and FOCAL POINT that they kept specially to corrupt the unsuspecting. Thereafter I became a regular "user" of SWOON and FOUR STAR EXTRA.

The biggest deal of all was made with Linda Bushyager. She was quitting the habit and arranged with Victoria Vayne and myself to dispose of her entire collection. She was given \$400 fast money and a cut of any street trafficking we did with her goods. Whereupon she retired to a small casino in Atlantic City and bought into the motion picture business on the sly.... Linda thought her-

self well quit of her collecting but Victoria and I--co-inheritors of her DOUBLE:BILLS, OUTWORLDS, STARLINGS, WARHOONS, WASTE PAPERS, BEABOHEMAS, RANDOMS, SYNDROMES, PHANTASMAGORIAS, CANTICLES FOR LEIBOWITZ, KRATOPHANYs, KWALHIOQUAS, BEARDMUTTERINGS, ALGOLs and PLACEBOs--never wondered at our luck. We hardly even quibbled over the spoils.

Time passed unnoticed behind a twiltone veil and all that registered was the need for ever-increasing fixes of pernicious paper opium. New-made friends were supplying me--LeZOMBIES and CHANTICLEERS from Schirm, a Pavlat-Evans Index from Bruce Pelz. My habit began to outstrip my ability to satisfy it when Bruce offered me a full run of XEROs that I couldn't forget, at a price I couldn't meet. Then a run of HOT SHIT escaped me...

This would have happened again and again if I hadn't found the solution that so many other fanzine junkies have found. Less attractive (and potent) items from the Bushyager collection were sold to raise money for the rest. An assortment of Trekzines, almost impressive in spite of what they were, exchanged hands this way for an aggregate \$75. Many long nights of mindless pleasure reading NOPE or INNUENDO could be bought for that sort of money. I realized that the best way to be an addict is to deal on the side.

I sold a few duplicate zines to test the water. Then I made a big sale to a Swedish fan who paid an astonishing amount of money, over \$100. Dealing could become lucrative in its own right. I confidently placed a notice in the N3F TRADER to sell a large number of old Neffer publications. I demanded \$100 and got an immediate cash offer. Emboldened, I culled my collection for other saleable and superfluous items. A full quarter of the six to eight thousand items I had collected had no interest to other than a sercon fan or a completist. I happily abandoned those suddenly unstrategic positions and offered the freed material to Toronto's Spaced Out Library for \$1,000. Half to my surprise the SOL asked for a list of what I had, to present to its budgeters for approval. Only a couple of years before, I had been complaining about big-time dealers and their exorbitant prices, and now I was making it in the big time myself.

The final sorry chapter to this story begins with rich brown. Victoria and I scored heavily off rich before Victoria went down. We took home from the Disclave where we made the deal the usual assortment of QUIPs, EGOBOOs and the like. Later some of the material I had from rich was taken from me by Victoria. She took some of the debt I owed rich with it, laying the grounds for the confusion that lasted for more than two years afterward. Eventually a settlement was reached. Victoria bought from rich when rich was kicking the habit. Now Victoria was kicking the habit, but rich had the itch again. So rich reacquired some of his old zines from her, and the ledger was closed. Between the two of them, that is.

My part in the affair is more complicated, and less innocent. As I said not long ago, I resold some of rich's zines to Victoria. Then I independently reinvented the traditional dealer's device of not paying the wholesaler. Rich dealt with this in the traditional way too. A couple of his boys came around to remind me. They pointed out that my shoes were looking worn and that Boss-rich had a very durable pair he'd be happy to lend me if I was hard up for cash. I told them no, it was very kind of Boss, but as a matter of fact I had recently come into some money and was just writing a check for him when they called. Between businessmen, no problem presents lasting difficulty.

I wasn't finished in my business dealings with rich just yet. Victoria had been busted and could only arrange her affairs through representation. Somehow I became her proxy in dealing with rich despite the obvious conflict of inter-

ests. Her collection was sold to "Alan," a local, for a flat \$400--the same price as Linda's, you remember. My cut for handling the collection came to a few odd issues of SEAMONSTERS, STOP BREAKING DOWNS and TWILL DDUs. Their absence from my collection and presence in Victoria's was a sore point with me. Representing her to rich and "Alan" gave me the opportunity I'd been waiting for to remove these nettles from her collection, as it were.

But no, I still wasn't through with rich. Like The Sting, or some improbable Mission Impossible plot, the deal began to take on Prisoneresque ramifications. To make clear the intrigues within intrigues, we must step back for a wider view.

¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶

I was driver on a trip I took with two other fans to The World Fantasy Con. On the way back from the con the two with me planned to drop in on an out-of-the-way place which we shall call "Bessboro," home of "Gottbuchs."

Gottbuchs is one of the prominent figures in fantasy and science fiction dealing. His store has much in common with the basement that is my abode. Chiefly cinder blocks and a cement floor. Where the two differ is in the particulars of lighting, cleanliness, order and space--Gottbuchs' basement is as bright and roomy a subterranean chez as mine is a gloomy hole. The basement first greeted us with a framed Powers. It was filled with shelves holding orderly small press editions and hardcover firsts. There are few paperbacks or

items of any great age or scarcity and rarely more than three or four copies of any title. This shouldn't have been surprising. The stock as it was must have been worth a not-too-small fortune--more than most collections are worth, in fact. In business, keeping capital investment to a minimum is generally thought a Good Thing.

A couple of years earlier, before I had come to see the point of view of the dealer, I had written to Gottbuchs complaining about extortionist prices. Gottbuchs was gracious about receiving my company in spite of this. In fact, he offered me a run of an unrenovated corner where he kept the very fanzines whose prices I had criticized.

They were stacked alphabetically but not sorted in detail.

Shortly after I began, we were leaving soon, and I had to look through the rest of the material too quickly to savor the thrill. I managed to be thorough, at least, and turned up everything of interest before being hustled out the door. I didn't know what Gottbuchs wanted for them as I sorted through the zines. All I could do was put the best ones on the top of each pile where I could pick them



up the moment I knew what I could afford. Gottbuchs was a clever one, though. He wouldn't set a price but threw my own doctrine back at me. "Pay whatever you think fair," he said. Greed flowed through me, an insatiable hunger for nearly everything there. But then he said, "I have to see what you want before you can have it, though. Some I want to keep for my next catalog." Visions faded in my head of taking back boxes of WARHOONS, QUANDRYs, SPACEWAYS and VoMs for next to nothing... Glumly I skimmed off the top of each pile and passed them to Gottbuchs for judgment.

To my surprise and delight, he was quite generous. (Crafty Gottbuchs!) He passed copies of GRANFALLOON, MOTA and STARLING back to me with only a glance at their tables of content. That way he let me take home the QUANDRYs, the LIGHTHOUSE, the SHAGGYs, the SPACESHIP, the ENTROPY, the RATS!, the FOCAL POINTs, the ENERGUMEN, the WARHOON, the PSYCHOTICS, all the Canadian zines I found for my bibliography, the mimeo OUTWORLDS, the CARANDAITHs and many other much-sought-after zines. He held out on a few. Some SPACEWAYS, DOUBLE:BILLs and LeBEAVERS which by his withholding I wanted more than all the rest... Then he brought a box and packed all the fanzines in it that he'd let me take because they were unprofitable to catalog.

All I could think of while going out the door, though, were the SPACEWAYS, DOUBLE:BILLs and LeBEAVERS...

Clever Gottbuchs. He knew it too.

~~~~~

As a matter of fact, few of the zines I picked weren't already safe at home in my collection. There were only about a dozen items in all the hundreds Gottbuchs had to offer that I needed to make the collection more complete. In my mind I had formed the rationale that I would at least "rescue" all that I could from the mercenary's grasp.

To that end I carried off my box of RATAPLANs, AMORs, et al. Gottbuchs knew it, and by holding out on the LeBEV's and other zines he saw I wanted, he knew that he could get back every cent I made by "rescuing" what he normally had no buyers for. And so, by dealing with a professional, I was no longer dealing to beat the game--from then on my dealing would no more be an option than my collecting was. Thus the amateur is always outwitted in the end.

In losing my soul to Gottbuchs, I perforce steal the souls of others. Rich brown left me an opening. Along with the zines from Victoria I included bait--a list of more zines that I have for sale. When he reads it, his mouth will water in reflex at the D'JOURNAL, the APORRHETA, the ASP, the CHANTICLEER and the WENDIGO I can let him have oh-so-reasonably. Then I'll have him, as Gottbuchs has me.

But rich is an easy conquest, his will already ruined by a hard-riding beaver on his back.

Better to corrupt the innocent. I sent the same list to two unsuspecting souls in Edmonton who have dallied around the edge of the collecting hell long enough. It is time for them to fall, in a word. In the mail soon, Robert and Mike will get a copy of a hard-to-get Canadian zine from the glory days of Ottawa fandom in the late '60s. ...compliments of their friendly neighborhood pusher.

The first one is always free.

--Taral Wayne



# FULCRUM

[Continued from p. 19]

so. Fair is fair--I offered him the space when I wrote that editorial if he felt I misstated his views, and said so again when I responded to him. But since I felt he wished to keep his contact with me brief, I said I would assume his approval (saving him the necessity of a reply) unless I heard otherwise from him. This was, approximately, last June.

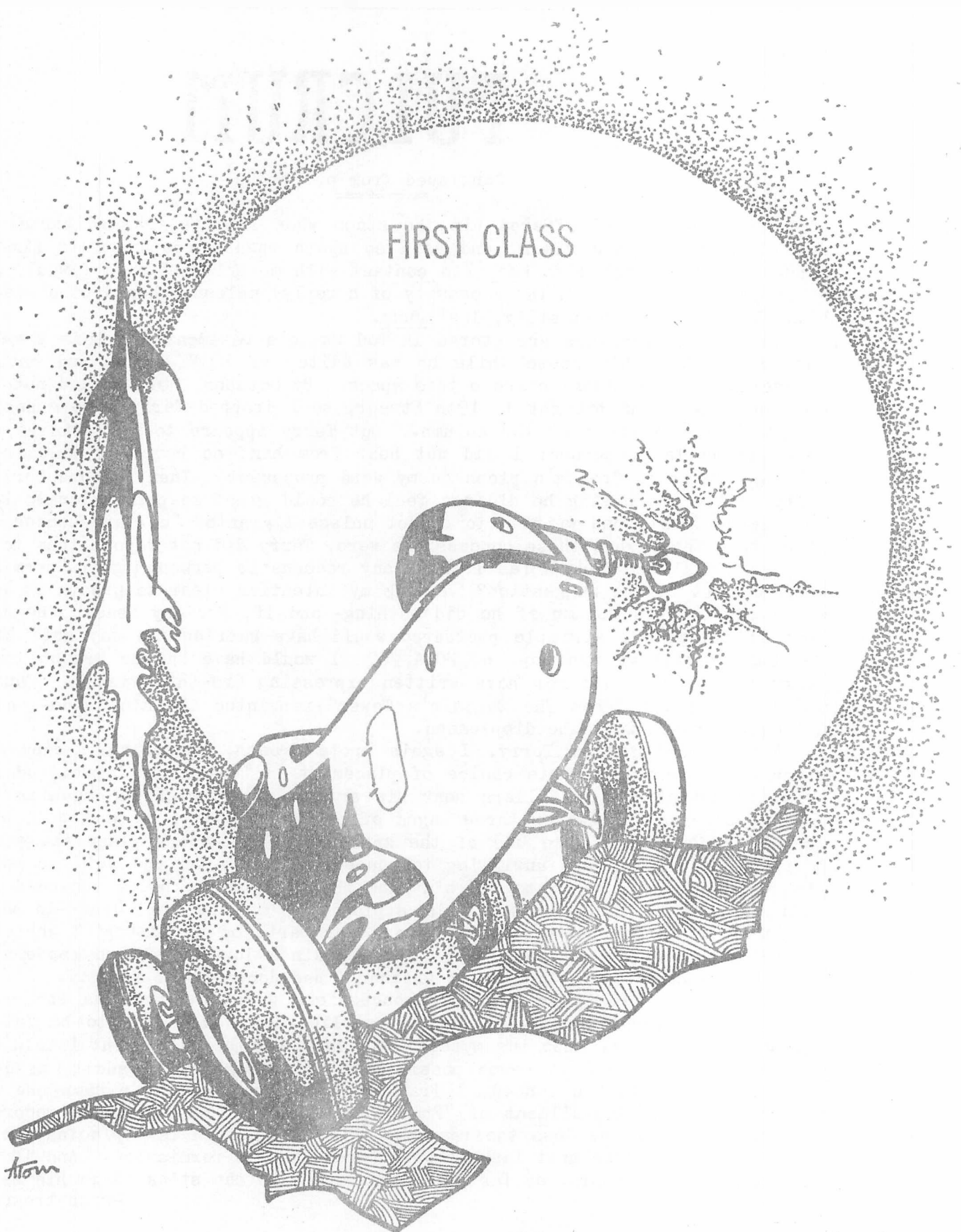
Many of my fanzines are stored in Ted White's basement. I left them there when I lived in his house while he was editor of HEAVY METAL and have been remiss in bringing them to share this space. By October, MOTA #6 had not turned up among the items brought to 19th Street, so I dropped Terry a note asking if he could send a xerox of the column. But Terry appears to be fasia as far as local fanac is concerned; I did not hear from him, so borrowed Dan Steffan's copy and recorded Creath's piece on my word processor. Then, before Christmas, Terry replied by saying he did not feel he could grant me permission to reprint the piece--Creath had written to object unless I granted "certain concessions." If he told Terry what these concessions were, Terry did not report them to me.

What if I had assumed (as I think any reasonable person might) "permission" was implicit in the suggestion? I made my intention clear to Creath in June; I would reprint his column if he did nothing--and if, for any reason, he did not want it reprinted, a simple pactsarcd would have sufficed to say so. What if I'd come across my own copy of MOTA #6? I would have had no reason to write Terry and Terry would not have written expressing Creath's wishes. Thus, you would have found "From The Captain's Tower" reprinted in this issue--and I do not doubt Creath would be displeased.

After hearing from Terry, I again wrote Creath, enclosing a copy of his piece and offering him his choice of placement in the issue; I promised not to print illustrations or fillers near his article which might be counter to his points, offered him two or three pages of prolog/epilog if he wished to clarify what he had said or make use of the space to help readers place the piece in perspective. All I was unwilling to concede, I said, was my right to speak my mind in my fanzine; and, to let him know what that might be, I included a section from my editorial--which this explanation is now replacing--in which I reprinted my "innaccurate" summary and other parts of my editorial where I had quoted things Creath said in "From The Captain's Tower," all so readers could make their own determination as to whether I had done Creath a dirty.

I have no idea if he feels my concessions were not generous enough--only that, after several months, he has not replied. I would like to be fair, but not to the extent of muzzling myself. As this was the only point I told Creath was "not negotiable," it seems possible he may disagree. I admit, aside from the delay all this has caused, I frankly don't give much of a damn one way or the other. That installment of "From The Captain's Tower" remains recorded on my word processor, as does the response this explanation is replacing, and both will see print in the next issue should I receive his permission. And if that's not good enough for him, as far as I'm concerned he can stick it in his ear.

--rich brown, 1983



Creath Throne (7537 Walnut, Kansas City, MO 64114) reports receipt of bm with my editorial on his essays for MOTA and TELOS:

The MOTA column was not based primarily on my bad experiences at St. Louiscon (as you suggest in your inaccurate summary) but rather was an attempt to sum up nearly 10 years in fandom. What I saw in much of fandom was snobbery for the sake of snobbery, and I didn't like it.

My article in TELOS was not meant to be an attack on fandom. The point of the article, rather, was that Bergeron, like many of us, was in search of things past. I see WARHOON 28 as a brilliant artifact thrown off in that continuing search.

Terry Hughes (6205 Wilson Blvd., #102, Falls Church, VA 22044) takes issue with my remark that his motivation for not publishing comments on Creath's column "remains something of a mystery":

Now I'm always happy to solve a mystery and will happily oblige you in this case, although this is hardly a situation where a magnifying glass and fingerprint case are required. It only takes a little thought to determine my motivation. "The Captain's Tower" was the first column to appear in MOTA, beginning as it did in my second issue and going on to appear in the third, fourth and sixth issues. It was my understanding that the very notion of a column implied a columnist would be able to write on any topic he/she might choose without editorial interference. I assumed that if an editor found one installment of the column particularly offensive, then the editor could either refuse to print that installment and at the same time permanently drop the column on the same ethical grounds, or else print the installment and then, in the same (or subsequent) issue, the editor could express disagreement with the column. Of course, I was very new to this fanzine editing business at that time and perhaps older fannish hands disagree with my concept of what a column means. It's been years since a true column appeared in MOTA but if I ever choose to have another columnist, he/she will have that selfsame freedom. Since I

never questioned Creath's decision to write about reverse balloon molds, sheep, Freddy the Pig, John D. MacDonald or Boy's Life, I certainly would never question Creath's decision to write about fandom. MOTA, after all, was a fanzine.

That should solve the mystery of my motivation in publishing that installment of "The Captain's Tower" and it hardly seems to be such a great mystery.

Now as to the matter of why I never published the reactions generated by that installment of Creath's column, there are a few reasons for my decision but a primary one requires some consideration of the calendar. To begin with, that installment of Creath's column appeared in MOTA #6 which was published very late in August 1972 and mailed out that September. So, as you can now calculate, that column did not appear "a couple of years back" as you wrote but rather virtually 10 years ago. Doesn't 10 years seem like an awfully damn long time to you, rich? MOTA #7 didn't appear until July 1974, some two years later, and I certainly didn't think fans would have a clear memory of a piece that appeared two years before (no matter how controversial it might have been). It would also help if you realize that I had viewed fanzine activity as something done rather frequently. [Editorial insert: At this point Terry cites his fanzine activity of the early 1970s--better than bi-monthly publication of MOTA up to #6, the biweekly HIGH TIMES with Chris Couch and his APA 45 activity to demon-

strate his point. Consider the point granted.--rwb] I think that's a pretty productive period even by fannish standards and might help you understand why I considered the two-year lull as a Very Long Time back then. So when I did the lettercolumn of MOTA #7, I only printed five letters in heavily edited form so they would "work" without fresh knowledge of what had been in MOTA #6 two years earlier. So, as you can see, part of my motivation had to do with my concern about a two-year time lag. I imagine similar considerations were the reason you had no lettercolumn in bm 3, your second issue having appeared some 10 years earlier. It should not surprise you that I would not pursue this old matter when you yourself did not print the reactions to beardmutterings 2 which was far more controversial than MOTA #6, and more controversial by design at that.

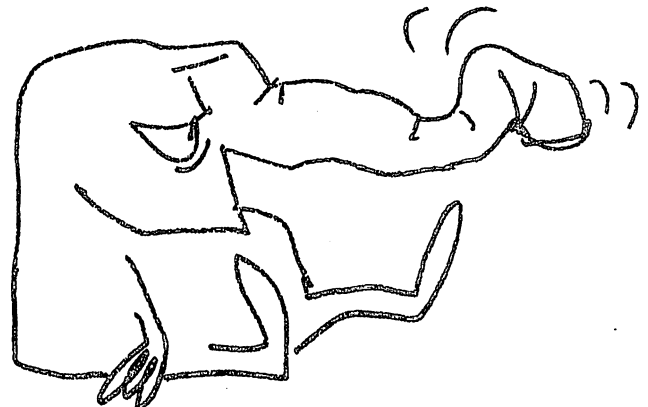
At the time I did MOTA #6, I fully intended to devote a portion of #7's letter column to a discussion of the points raised in Creath's column. This is quite clear from what I wrote in my editorial for MOTA #6. Let me quote my final paragraph of that editorial:

"(READ THIS BIT AFTER YOU'VE READ CREATH'S COLUMN!) I don't want to influence the response on what Creath has said, so I'll wait until the letters come in before I give my views. I agree with some things he wrote and disagree with others. For instance I think people are very friendly at cons; and in various situations I think degrees of exclusionism certainly is sensible--I am 'guilty' of that myself. But I'll save all this for next issue."

As you can see, I was my usual decisive self. \*sigh\*

The letters came in while I was travelling around so it was some time before I had a full sense of the reaction. The readers' response could be divided into four groups: Those who felt (1) fandom was not elitist, (2) fandom was elitist and that it was damn good to be so, (3) Creath was right on in his views, and (4) fandom was far worse than Creath had described it as being. The bulk of the responses fell into the first two categories. The most "interesting" letter I got was both lengthy and controversial; it was also marked DNQ. Prior to my move East, I had selected what letters I would use and how I would use them. Then I began to think about how long it had been since MOTA #6 came out. I had read enough fanzines by that time to realize this was not the first time such a discussion had taken place. For some of the people involved it would be an old argument revived. At last I came to realize I wasn't really enjoying it; I have generally found fanzines which discuss fandom seriously (as if it were a matter of great import) to be interesting but that was in part because I only had to invest half an hour in reading them. Actually doing a fanzine takes weeks of work and, to my way of thinking, that kind of effort is only warranted for those things I find interesting or enjoyable. I simply didn't want to do a serious fanzine. If I had wanted to be serious in my fanzine, I could have found any number of things far more worthy of serious attention than fandom.

The bottom line, rich, is I decided not to publish the reactions





to the final installment of "The Captain's Tower" (nor the reactions to the reactions that would have come about). It may have been unfair to Creath. It may have been unfair to those fans who sent me their serious, well-thought letters. It was in my opinion the best course for me to take.

I was more than a little surprised that you felt you could adequately summarize Creath's four-page article in one brief paragraph. In such a summary something is lost. I think I can give a better summary in just one sentence: The idea of fandom is far better than the reality of fandom. However, if you are going to devote nine micro-elite pages to a discussion of a piece which appeared in a fanzine 10 years ago (and a fanzine which had a small circulation, at that), then you are being less than honest with your readers by offering such a brief summary. Why not reprint Creath's original column (with his permission of course)? By eliminating some of the accompany artwork in this issue you would have sufficient space to reprint it in micro-elite form.

The most disturbing thing was on p. 9 when, in referring to Creath's column, you wrote: "It's been a long time since I read his article." My god, rich, did you write that whole piece without ever re-reading the piece you were attacking? How long ago did you read it? How can you possibly pretend to give a fair summary when you did not even bother to re-read the original article? It appeared in 1972, rich, 1972. How about the TELOS article of his--did you re-read it? That issue was dated November 1980 so it's already been 16-17 months since that piece appeared. That's still a long enough period to warrant a second reading. You didn't even bother to give a summary of the TELOS piece, no doubt feeling it had appeared recently enough to be fresh in everyone's mind. I wonder if you even gave Creath's TELOS piece a fair reading when you first came across it or if your obvious extreme displeasure with his earlier piece in MOTA so prejudiced your attitude that you only read for the effect you wanted it to have?

The essence of the argument over "The Captain's Tower" is Creath asserts fandom is an elitist organization and maintains this is a bad thing while you concur that fandom is elitist but view this as a good thing. So you agree fandom is elitist but each view it in a different qualitative fashion. It comes down to one's own view of elitism and one's own experience with elitism and fandom. It's a matter of degree or at least one's perception of the degree of elitism.



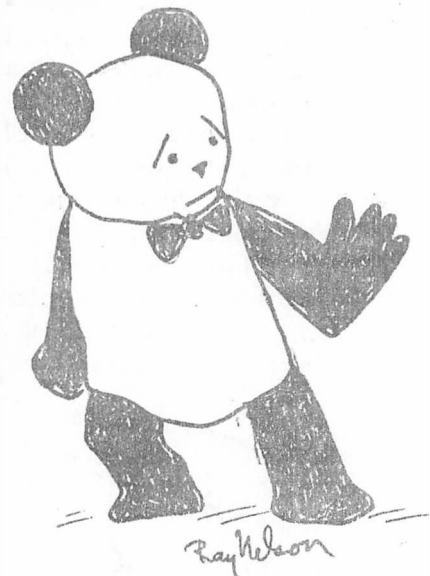
On page 5 you wrote: "What is truly annoying is that someone could have told Creath he was only possibly a victim of true snobbery when this all happened--had Terry been willing to print comments on the article." At the time of St. Louiscon (1969), Creath was around 20 years old--old enough and intelligent enough to know if he was being overtly snubbed. He was there. Years later you sit at your typewriter and toss off a number of possibilities about what might have happened to make him feel snubbed. Come on now, you're just stabbing in the dark. Do you really think you are the first person to suggest these possibilities to Creath? Some of us did discuss the convention afterwards. Furthermore, Creath could have very well come up with similar possible explanations on his own, but he was there and only he knows what all had to be factored in before any such explanation could be deemed possible. What I find "truly annoying" is that you think a letter column in a

fanzine would have made Creath strike his head with his palm and cry, "Oh, is that all there was to it?"!

St. Louiscon was my first convention and my reaction was quite different. However, it is important to remember Creath was a reasonably well known fan with a firm footing in the history of fandom as seen through fanzines and other fans, while I was totally unknown with very little exposure to fandom. Our expectations were quite different to begin with and our experiences differed. He went to meet people he'd had paper contact with and was expecting a really good time; I went not quite knowing what to expect and hoping to hear real science fiction authors talk about their work ("Where do they get those ideas?").

I really can't remember any truly bad experiences at the con, other than a number of periods of boredom--but hell, if I didn't have someone to talk to, I could always go to the programming or films. The good experiences are many. I remember standing in the registration area trying to decide what to do when this older man came up and began a casual conversation with me. I glanced at his namebadge and saw he was Jack Williamson ("Jack Williamson is talking to me!!!" was racing through my head). Then James Gunn walked up and joined in. Wow! I was fortunate that I knew some people at the convention: Creath Thorne, Lesleigh Luttrell and Hank Luttrell, and so met several people through them. Those fans never made me feel snubbed or unwanted (I remember Don Fitch being particularly nice whenever I ran into him after meeting him through Creath and having a good initial conversation) but then again I didn't expect to be the center of attention or to be a really active participant in all conversations. I was generally happy to have my existence acknowledged. Of course I didn't try to force myself to interrupt conversations or to otherwise demand attention (at least, as I recall it at this later date). I also didn't play tag-along all that much (again as I remember it); I fended for myself quite a bit but knew I had friends to fall back on. I was generally happy with whomever I happened to be speaking to as long as the person was interesting--my name was unknown to everyone and most of theirs were unknown to me, so I didn't have to bother with preconceptions.

I remember enjoying a number of open parties--imagine people offering free drinks and asking for my support in determining the site of a future worldcon!--and a few closed parties. One evening I was sitting in a hallway with three or four other fans who had been unsuccessful in finding an open party and so were having a nice conversation while building our energy levels before going off in search of one. Then two guys came down the hallway to the room across from where we were seated. They opened the door, looked us over and invited us in. They hadn't found a party either and decided to have one of their own. They weren't bidding for anything and did not know any of us by name (nor we them). All I remember is they were fans from Rockville (or Rockford), Illinois and they had a supply of Michelob. So it went. At St. Louiscon I was exposed to the artwork of Vaughn Bode and got him to autograph a poster of his I bought. I was asked to watch the artshow money box by Bjo Trimble (whose name meant nothing to me) for a



brief spell. I saw Harlan Ellison and Harry Harrison go at it hammer and tongs (so to speak) and in my ignorance thought this was the first time such a thing had happened and that I was witnessing an historic event. Even though I did meet some jerks there, I viewed fandom as a huge friendly family unit, or better yet a tribe.

I have been to many conventions since then and, as I gained awareness of others and they of me, I also became more aware of feet of clay (not to mention heads of clay). I saw new fans who were so fawning in their manner as to be incredibly repulsive and to practically invite abuse. I saw older fans cruelly insult other fans not just because they merited it but because there was an audience and the name fans wanted to show off. I've seen fans snubbed to their faces and heard fans slandered when they weren't present. I've been snubbed and have snubbed others. So it goes. I've seen justified snubs and totally unjustified snubs. There are some beautiful people in fandom and there are some real shits.

One's view of fandom depends on one's own experiences within it, naturally enough. Creath's column did not deal solely with his own experiences but also with an overview of fandom. He dealt with such matters as invitational conventions and secret apas--matters which you ignore in your response. He questioned just how far elitism should be carried. It is food for thought. Why does so much fannish humor consist of ridiculing others? Can you imagine fandom without putdowns? Were all the individuals and/or groups being demeaned in this issue of beardmutterings really necessary? Were the put downs in any issue of MOTA really necessary?



Seriously, rich, I thought Ted's column for you this time fit very nicely into this whole discussion. He gives an insight to Raleigh Evans Multog, a fan whom even Walt Willis singled out for ridicule (as clearly shown by Ted's choice selection of paragraphs to reprint). He portrays Multog in a sympathetic light and explains that Multog was retarded. This news must make anyone who poked fun at Multog feel very proud. At the same time, he goes on to thoroughly villify George Wetzel. John Hitchcock evidently found something of a redeeming nature in Wetzel but Ted never gets around to saying what it was. He only states Wetzel's faults, which seem most numerous. Would it have been better to simply ignore Wetzel or is it better to bring up his actions from the 1950s once more now in 1982? Ted White obviously decided on the

latter course. Multog and Wetzel make for an interesting contrast, in more than one way.

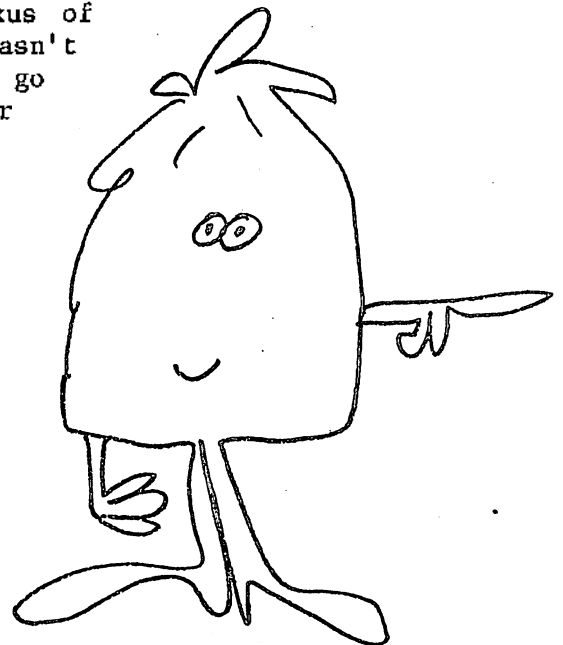
I think you missed the point of "Reflections on WARHOON 28." You seem to regard his piece as an attack on Sixth Fandom and on Walter Willis. This can be quickly dispelled with a pertinent quotation from the article: "Oh, [WARHOON 28]'s good enough, all right (in fact, "The Harp Stateside" and some of the later columns of the Harp--for me the high points of the volume--are good enough to stand with the work of the very best essayists of our time), but a ghost of fandom past haunts the volume." That is not faint praise for Willis' writing but rather quite a tribute.

What seems to have set you off was when Creath wrote, "I see WARHOON 28 as an act of homage to a dead past--a past that will never live again, not even within the stately blue pages of WARHOON." You violently disagree and maintain the spirit of Sixth Fandom has not died. It's obvious from reading Creath's

article and your response that you aren't really talking about the same thing. Perhaps you need to define your terms. It seems clear you are speaking about the spirit of Sixth Fandom which refers to a particular attitude and also to a certain type of nostalgia. That sense of nostalgia for you and for me and for the hundreds of other fans who were not actually part of Sixth Fandom is at heart false nostalgia. We read about it, we've read the fanzines of the time (at least some of them), and we talked to fans who were part of it, but we never really experienced it. Creath was making the point that that fandom existed at one time and no longer exists and he's right. It was something that existed for a certain length of time but the magic interaction of personalities and time could only last for so long and then some people dropped out and others dropped in and the times in which they lived and fanned changed. People married, or divorced, or feuded and the world spun around. Creath says Sixth Fandom died and you object. Maybe you object to the word "died." Maybe it would be more appropriate to say that Sixth Fandom evolved...or mutated. The fanzines of Sixth Fandom are no longer being published and the fans of that time are no longer active in the same way they were then and the world is not the same that it was then. The fans who were active then and are active now are a part of this fandom; only their earlier selves are part of Sixth Fandom. I think a disservice of sorts is being done to the fans of that time. By dwelling so much on Sixth Fandom, it just may be that fans of today are trying to force those fans to be preserved in amber rather than acknowledging their growth and development. To make an example, take Bob Shaw. He was an integral part of Sixth Fandom, truly one of its bright lights. He was a fine writer for fanzines. I happen to think Bob is a better writer today than he was then. He knows more about the craft of writing and it shows. In addition, he has become a featured speaker at sf cons because that is another art he has come to master. On top of this has been his growth over the years in the field of science fiction so that he now also goes to conventions as a prominent author. There is no reason for the fans of today to ask them to give up having been part of Sixth Fandom, but there is also no reason to ask them to give up being what they are today.

As Creath wrote: "...so much of what makes fandom worthwhile belongs to that one particular nexus of time and can never really be recovered." And wasn't it Thomas Wolfe who told us that we could never go home again? Towner Hall no longer exists, nor does the Nunnery, nor (in my case) does the Missouri Science Fiction Association. The memory of those times still exist for those who were part of them, and those of us who weren't but have read about them may have a feeling of that false nostalgia--but those days are gone and will not come again. Eating at the Algonquin Hotel in New York will not make one part of the Round Table of the 1920s and using green mimeograph paper will not turn a fanzine into HYPHEN.

In case I am not making myself clear, I have another example. My favorite fanzine--not the best fanzine but my favorite fanzine--was HOT SHIT, that





weekly effort of John D. Berry and Calvin W. "Biff" Demmon. It had funny stories, crazy letters and an interaction with my own life no other fanzine has had and I don't think any other fanzine can have the same effect. I have let other fans read my copies but, while they were amused, their reactions were never as intense as my own. Over the years I have thought about this and it is clear to me that there is no way to recapture the anticipation I had while waiting for each issue (or if there would be a next issue), the way I wondered which part (if any) would be used from my last letter, the way I wondered what the next reference to the Jack Tar Hotel would be, and the way I wondered what new adventure John would have on his next North Beach Night. There have been frequent fanzines since then, none of which created that same feeling within my fannish heart. It was not just the anticipation or just the personalities involved or just the physical locations of the participants or the brand of staples used. It was the mesh of all these things and more. For me the "spirit" of HOT SHIT is not dead, but HOT SHIT is dead and the fandom in which HOT SHIT appeared is dead.

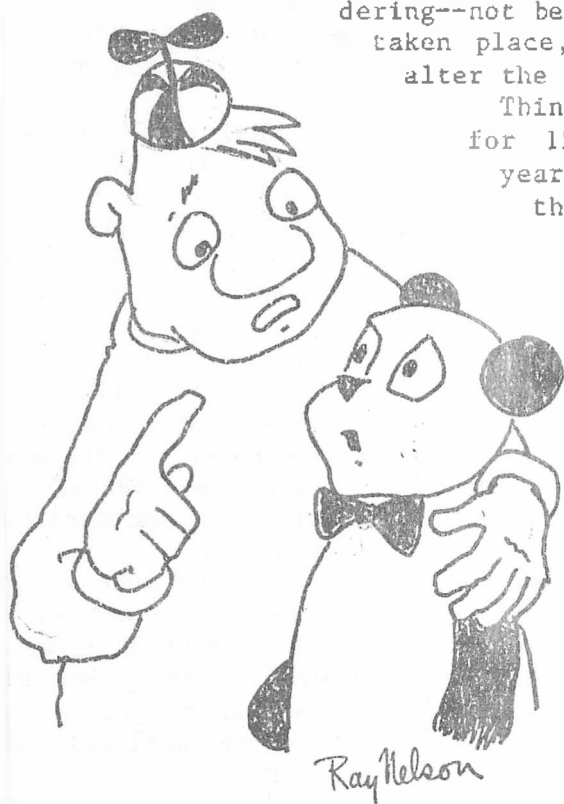
You completely missed Creath's thrust with that article. He asked why WARHOON 28 was called WARHOON 28 and not WALTER A. WILLIS: A RETROSPECTIVE. Other collections of a fan's work have been titled, variously, THE WILLIS PAPERS, THE BEST OF THE BUSHEL [Bob Shaw], THE BEDSIDE FASSBIENDER [T. Bruce Yerke], THE INCOMPLEAT BURBEE, THE REALLY INCOMPLEAT TUCKER, THE INCOMPLEAT TERRY CARR, THE EXPURGATED BOOB STEWART and THE ATOM ANTHOLOGY. This excellent publication was called WARHOON 28; Creath asked why and explored the question. Towards the end of his article, Creath asked: "Had Bergeron not taken up such a work of homage, we might have had, say, 15 further issues of WARHOON--and who knows what the presence of a truly excellent fanzine like WARHOON through the 70s might have done for fandom?" That's a big question and one worth pondering--not because pondering the point will alter what has taken place, but because pondering such a question may alter the course of our future actions.

Think about it: Would you have traded WARHOON 28 for 15 issues of WARHOON interspersed over the years gone by? There is no guarantee, of course, that it is an either/or situation. Maybe there would not have been those 15 issues whether or not there was a WARHOON 28.

It's also possible that Bergeron could have done both those 15 issues and the special project. Then again, he could have done neither. We can only play with the cards we are dealt, after all, but we can use our own judgment on how to play the hand.

Anne Laurie Logan (Box 191, E. Lansing, MI 48823) explains why she can't honestly say she enjoyed bm 3:

It does seem you and Createh Thorne are talking at cross-purposes. (I did not see Creath's original protest but did read--and rather approve--Thorne's review in TELOS.) Creath seems to be saying he



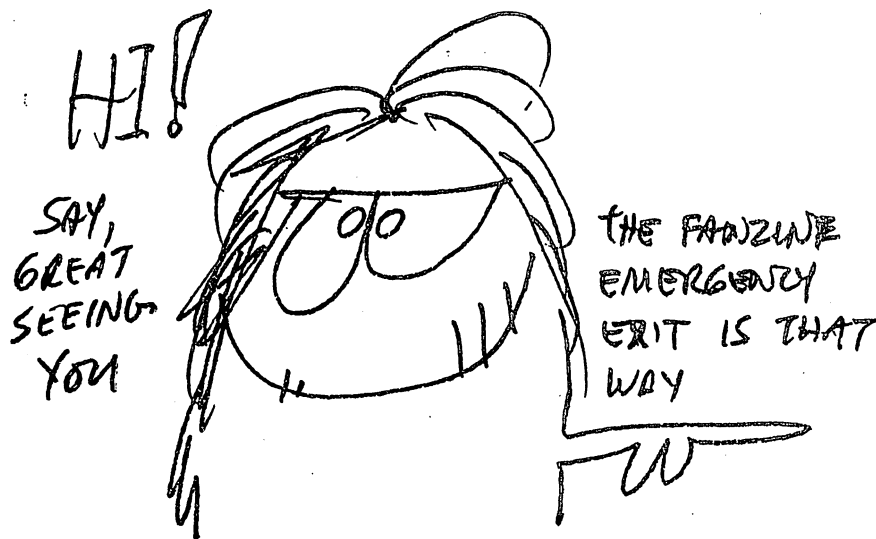
didn't find Sixth fandom nearly as "warm" and "creative" and "loving" as did its founders, particularly Willis. You reply, at length (rather too great a length, imho), that: "...Even though I wasn't around to be a part of Sixth Fandom I know--not guess, not feel, not imagine--I know that this a True 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..."

These statements are not, however, mutually exclusive. Yes, I have read WARHOON 28 and agree there is a great deal of "love," or at least an enormous and apparently reciprocated affection and esteem, expressed in its pages both by Willis and his collaborators. I did not feel compelled to try and seek out any of this variety of fannish "love" on my own or for my fanzine. I do not believe, actually, I would be successful if I did try to "plug in" to the particular circle of fanzine fandom where fans like rich brown and Ted White and Dan Steffan and Patrick Nielsen-Hayden and Dick Bergeron are attempting to resurrect a modernized form of Sixth Fandom. It's a Fine Thing in its own way and I wish the participants much joy of their endeavors; but that's not my way of writing and it's not my kind of fannishness. My sympathies lie with Creath Thorne; I first heard of fanzine fandom when I was a new-make Trekkie back in 1973. Lunacon '73 was my first "real" fannish con, and as I walked down a corridor on Saturday afternoon in my E-Man t-shirt and my Mr. Spock photobutton, one of the Truefans along the wall muttered in a stage whisper, "Ghod! Who lets these people in?!?"... So, since I didn't need to stand around and be abused by these self-appointed guardians of fannish purity when there were plenty of Trek-cons, SCAcons and comix cons where I would be welcome, I scrupulously avoided True-Heart Fandom for almost five more years. If a particularly crafty fan hadn't gone out of his way to lure me back by introducing me to A WOMEN'S APA, I'd be avoiding fanzine fandom still. Nor, I agree, would I be much missed in "your" fandom, even if I gafiated today.

Let's try out an analogy here. I have read a great deal of C. S. Lewis' fiction and rather enjoyed most of it. However, I do not feel that Lewis is within seven grades of being as good as his dear friend and co-worker Tolkien; nor does my appreciation for Lewis convince me Charles William's work is worth the trees that died to print it. And Lewis' obviously sincere and deeply-felt Anglicanism, which suffuses all his fiction, does not so impress me that I have ever wished to become an Episcopalian myself.

Similarly, I enjoyed reading the Willish but I don't think it was the "best" humour I've ever read--or even the best fannish humour. Enjoying Willis' writing, and Shaw's fannish articles, have not convinced me that Ted White or Dick Bergeron are Really Funny fannish writers. Nor does my enjoyment of WAW's work imbue me with any great desire to see my own small fannish ecological niche "returned to its roots" in a spurious imitation of the transient combination of persons, places and events that sparked the Glorious Sixth...

I'll go even further: I have known as many as six people in my life who have been actual, practising Christians--people who tried to live by a set of precepts I could connect with the teachings of Jesus Christ as presented in the New Testament. In American today, and on the MSU campus where I work, there are a great many "fundamentalist Christians"--people who believe rock music, sex education, pantsuits for women, Communism, homosexuality, wives who will not submit to their husbands, drug abuse, uppity Negroes, pacifism, the anti-nuclear movement, and fluoridated water are the work--and the tools--of a personified



Anti-Christ who is out to destroy what they persist in referring to as "our great Christian nation." These fundamentalists are loud in their convictions that only by getting rid of rock'n'roll records, premarital and extra-marital sex, "women's liberation," etc., and returning to "the faith of our fathers" will we (they) be able to halt the spread of murder, rape, divorce, abortion, unemployment, lack of respect for our appointed leaders and all the related symp-

toms of spiritual breakdown and moral rot. Self-appointed "spokesmen" for these fundamentalist viewpoints stand out on the main campus crossroads and harangue the crowds, urging them to give up their weak and sinful habits and to seek the joy of submission and the grace of Our Lord God. Their associates write many letters to the campus paper urging that homosexuals, non-Christians and other unrighteous minorities be "put in their place" and kept off the editorial pages. It is not possible for non-believers to "reason" with these persons, since "reason" is not a virtue in their canons. When told that sexual "perverts" and non-Christians are guaranteed certain freedoms by the laws of the campus, of the state or of the nation, the fundamentalists reply that the laws are non-Christian and therefore not applicable to their "moral" arguments. When asked for reasons to support their limited worldview, they refer back to "God's word" as interpreted by their preferred leaders. If one believes firmly enough in an omnipotent God whose "word" is the whole of the Revealed Truth, then any statements which do not acknowledge that God as omnipotent and his word as whole, complete, all-encompassing and not subject to reinterpretation or the vagaries of translation are either irrelevant or "sinful." The fundamentalists look back into a past they remember as being peaceful, fruitful and very pleasant to live through; they recall a time when people lived and died in the same small towns, when divorce was unthinkable, when old people lived with their younger relations, when crime was limited and limitable and criminals could be spotted by their cranial ridges or their bad heredity...a time when, they say, "any boy could grow up to be President."

Non-fundamentalists looking at the same nostalgic history recall that small towns nurtured small minds and narrow ambitions, that not all families were happy and not all old people were loved, and that being an ambitious woman or black or "foreigner" or Jew or Catholic in a society that rewarded ambition only in white males from a certain social stratum was not very peaceful, fruitful or pleasant. But, by the standards of the fundamentalists, lack of success, personal unhappiness and wrongful ambition are all signs of "sin" or at least of a lack of grace. It is an argument that neither side can "win," because they are speaking of two completely different and non-compatible philosophies.

Thus, you look at Sixth Fandom and see "love," good friendships, a striving

after quality in print and High Fannishness in person, happy times, a belief in and respect for "standards" and small private parties at cons where one could know and be known to all the fans who "counted." I look at the same period and see self-satisfied middle-class parochialism and the knowledge that I would have been "accepted" in that fandom only as (a) a Girlfriend or (b) a Token Woman (neither of them roles I am either good at, or happy in). Your small and intimate parties look, from an outsider's perspective, like closed and cliquish celebrations of your severely limited universe. Neither of these viewpoints can be settled as Right or Wrong, since they are based on two very different and incompatible theories of What Fandom Should Be Like.

Jeanne Gomoll (2018 Jenifer St., Madison, WI 53704) has a Better Way:

Thanks much for the latest issue of beardmutterings. It comes too late, unfortunately, to tell Ted Johnstone about recent military advances in the area of anti-wasp technology.

Really, if he had known about the new improved method for killing them, he might never have had to concede the back porch to the Enemy--for certainly the fly swatter has now gone the way of long bows, knightly armor, cudgels and naives. It is conceivable, now, to wipe out the dastardly wasp In Our Lifetime, if it were not for environmentalists who would no doubt object. Still, it is now possible for our homes and/or castles to



be free of that awful pest that flies as if it has been drinking too much so one never knows, really, where to swat next before it's too late.

What is this new discovery, you ask? Well, actually, it's not exactly new, although it is a new use of a familiar item. The secret weapon, you see, is spray starch. You know, the stuff which some people spray on shirt cuffs and collars (or so I'm told they do; you'd never catch me using it that way, much less using an iron--if god had intended us to iron clothes, she'd never have given us permanent press is what I say).

But anyway, you spray a spurt of starch at the hovering killer--and the cans usually have a pretty wide spray, so you don't have to worry about missing--and instantly its wings are coated with the stuff, which immediately hardens and causes the buzzing thing to plummet to the ground. No waiting around for insect repellent to slowly affect its nervous system (and repel its furious dive-bombing anger). No more fear of doing yourself in with deadly fumes of the insect repellent stuff. (I hate wasps so much I used to empty about a whole can of repellent per wasp, more or less killing them by drowning them, spraying until they simply stopped buzzing and moving at all. My apartment would be foggy for hours afterward and my lungs took at least that long to recover.) No, it takes only one spurt of spray starch and the wasp is instantly immobilized. At that

point one can pick it up with a newspaper or spatula and dispose of it in the toilet or sink. Or, if one is particularly wary (or angry), one can step on and squash the thing right there and then. Or, if Ted had known about the method in time, he might have been able to add a few more layers of the spray starch and realized an economic method of mounting not only the head but the whole corpse of one or more wasps for a hunting display.

Someone should tell the manufacturers of spray starch about this use of their product. I'm sure it would have a larger market than the one they presently aim for, though I suppose the ad would be a bit bizarre... "Buy it now... Combination spray starch and wasp-killer...!"

Perhaps this news won't be too late for other wasp haters in your readership. If so, please feel free to publicize the hint, though be advised that it hasn't been checked out of Consumer Reports or Good Housekeeping.

Avedon Carol (4409 Woodfield Rd., Kensington, MD 20895) has a message of love:

The thing that affected me most, I think, was Ted's piece--for some reason I feel it is his most effective job of calling up the feeling of comradeship we neos have been told characterized fandom in the '50s. It certainly presents a nicer, more merciful Ted White than has been seen in print lately. Even now, he wants to tell people that Multog was not a fugghead.

When I first encountered fandom, Dolly Gilliland told me about how Phyllis Berg "practically ran WSFA meetings from her deathbed" as she was dying of a horrible degenerative disease, and I remember thinking how nice it was to have a little world where people didn't have to be stranded alone under such circumstances. I think it's great that there was a place where, for a while at least, Raleigh Evans Multog could be "not a fugghead." Even to mean old Ted White.

"I'm speaking from the heart, bubbies--and I tell you in all sincerity that it has been love...that has motivated most of what has been good about fandom." Yeah, that's what I mean.

Steve Miller (56 Lower Gate Ct., Owings Mills, MD 21117) reports a "peak" of local fannish activity, having received three fanzines in two days, two of which contained articles by Ted White:

Ted's "Beyond Egoboo" was fascinating for me, though I'm not really of that era--when Ted was driving around to Multog's house, I was busy getting ready to go to kindergarten or first grade, I suppose--but because he really manages to touch his subject a bit. I wonder how many strange zines have resulted from people who were literally not very capable of acting their age?

George Wetzel I've met on a number of occasions; he lives in the Glyndon/-Reistertown/Owings Mills axis somewhere and used to be a regular at the Reistertown Library when I was working there as a security guard-cum-babysitter in the mid-'70s. I played chess against him (he preferred to play the kids) when he was head of the local chess club but he dropped the club when too many of the kids started beating him. Then I ran into him again when he was busy with a "feed the starving animals" drive one winter. I don't know if he remembers me or not; the last time I saw him in a local market he walked past as though I didn't exist. He also showed up at one of the lectures I gave at a local library but left when I refused to discuss Lovecraft with him...strange fellow.

By the way, I also checked with UMBC's fanzine collection; I thought they might have a copy of STAR\*ROCKETS, since they have so many of the '50s zines. No one there could find a copy (I don't even remember seeing a copy when I was there) so I guess that means there's an 80 percent chance that they don't have



it. They very well may have some of Multog's Cult stuff, since one faculty member at UMBC is a former Cult member who donated material to the collection.

Rick Sneary (2962 Santa Ana St., South Gate, CA 90280) says he can hardly believe ninth fandom has been reborn and is publishing again (he thought the Nielsen-Haydens had been doing it with computer simulations):

I think you make too much of Creath's complaint, though it would be interesting to know what were the real problems for his not communicating. But his complaint is an old one which has bothered fandom as long as I can remember, and not limited to cons alone. I've heard the same thing said about LASFS meetings. It is no news that it happens but the cause is open to a lot of speculation.

It is my feeling that fans are not so much snobbish as they are clannish. And, despite the way they may have behaved, it was commonly felt that fans of our day were basically shy...especially about meeting other people. It was easier and safer to stay within your own little clan...and while you might admit you were not really much better than everyone else, your clan meant more to you than any other. Even within Trufandom fans will hold to their local clan. How many times have you heard or seen a fan travel across country to attend a con, and then spend most of his time with people he sees every week at home?

When I went to cons I didn't want to spend it all with my good buddies from home, so I'd strike out on my own. The result was more than once that I ended up eating alone or wandering the halls late at night looking for someone I knew. In the old days--back in the '50s--this wouldn't be so bad. I'd know half the people there, at least by name, but nowadays--great ghu...with 5,000 faces pushing through the halls, how would I ever find anyone I knew?

Creath's complaint isn't caused by deliberate snobbery. Depending on how active he had been up to that time, there were probably lots of fans who would have liked to talk to him--if they found him and didn't feel they had something more interesting to do. For Foo's sake, no one says fans have to like you...that's up to you to do.

You are also right about Willis and Sixth Fandom. I hadn't thought of the key factor as being Love, but that is about it...a Love of each other and fandom. And the wonder is that probably not more than a dozen people were responsible for it. Willis and Hoffman, mainly, set the tone, and the rest followed along. In my view, it was fandom's finest hour. But the nice thing is that it isn't all gone, though the harshly critical and mean spirited may have a louder voice. I read a letter by Hoffman in a fanzine just last month. It read like a cool wind on a hot and smoggy day. While she was writing to object to something said in the previous issue, it was done with such reason and good humor that it could hardly offend. And wrangling of such as you and I sound like poor stuff, without style.

I would disagree with you that the change in fandom results from bad feelings about the Boondoggle. We who were there still have our scars and grudges, but much of fandom was not 'alive' then and, like young people today, have no memory of the great war. I suspect that it is more likely that roughness and ill will we still see in fandom is a reflection of our times--and the age-old problem of fandom attracting egotistical and intolerant individuals. --They were there in Sixth Fandom, but Willis and company were able to quiet them with a soft voice.



Richard A. Lupoff (3208 Claremont Ave., Berkeley, CA 94705) enjoyed the whole issue (in varying degrees and in different ways) including my long essay with which he largely agreed, but:

I think you may have indulged in a bit of an exercise in overkill. I.e., you were pretty damned convincing. And you stated your case well. Even eloquently.

But, chee, you sure went on. And on. And on. After a while it was almost like reading a Heinlein novel. Of the era when he would tell a good story, bring it to its logical and dramatic and emotional conclusion --and then ramble on for another 75 pages of anticlimax. Before I commit the same sin, I'll stop. At least for this subject. But--poor Creath Thorne!

Ted White's reminiscences of early days in fandom were fascinating--and touching. Especially the section devoted to Raleigh Evans Multog.

Wow, footprints in the sands of time!

When I was a neo, I was familiar with the name Raleigh Evans Multog. It even sounded science fictional to me--most of the kids I knew had names like George Johnson\* or Gerald Bregman.\*\*

But--Raleigh Evans Multog--zowie!

And I remember hearing of Multog's fanzine STAR\*ROCKETS, but I never saw a copy. At least not that I remember. The first few fanzines I ever saw were SLANT, QUANDRY, COSMAG/-S.F.DIGEST, and OOPSLA! Quite a lineup!

But about Multog--I was struck by what a fine story that might make. A longish short story or novelle, or even a (very) short novel. Something like LOVE STORY. Huh!

Poor Raleigh. Mildly retarded fella in his early 20s falls in with a hobby group of kids a decade younger than he. At first he's more advanced than they are. He's looked up to, lionized. He's a celebrity. (A BNF?!)

But as the youngsters grow and learn and advance, he doesn't. After a couple of years they've caught up with him. Then they continue to advance, and slowly the poor fella's left behind. Until finally they abandon him, move on; he drops out of their orbit...fade out.

Or maybe don't fade out. What happens to our tragic hero? Does he find a new group of 13-year-olds to attach himself to? But remember--he's about 30, this time. And if he keeps cycling through this relationship, he's going to be 36 next time; over 40 the time after, and pushing 50 the time after that!

Shades of John Wayne Gasey!

Come of think of it, where is Raleigh Evans Multog today? What kind of life does he lead? Does he still read SF? Does he keep his treasured file of STAR\*ROCKETS? Or does he ever think about science fiction or fandom at all? Has the whole incident faded out of his consciousness?

Well--it's Ted's yarn! I hope he writes it and I hope he sells it. It could be better than Flowers for Algernon (in my opinion) specifically because it doesn't have the element of fantasy (i.e., brain surgery to "cure" retardation) that the Keyes book had.

\* A real kid. No relation to George Clayton Johnson.

\*\* Another real kid.



Douglas Barbour (10808 - 75 Avenue, Edmondton, Alberta, Canada T6E 1K2) says he thinks he agrees with my response to Creath and tells us about his first con, TorCon II:

I was in town so went down to it, but I wasn't staying at the hotel. I enjoyed the panels and stuff (as an academic interested in sf & f, I really do enjoy hearing people who know something about it talk about it), but I only knew a few names, the Glicksohns and a couple of others. I kept trying to connect with people but they were too busy, or at parties I didn't know about. I felt a bit sad about that, but then it was a BIG con and how do you just run into someone in all that people-filled space? I learned something there: go to smaller cons.

At the few other cons I have gone to I have had a good time and naturally enough sought out those people I know from fanzines and from meeting who seem to me to be the people I would most enjoy talking to. They know others and thus do the lines of interaction stretch even further. I am not a Tru Fan, it seems, but I like a lot of people I've met in fandom. I started late, so I was never gung ho about it so much as interested to talk to people who like sf; indeed, I am sercon I guess, but no one seems to mind too much.

Ted White's piece was strangely moving almost. I won't ask that final question: are all fans "exceptional" and poor Multog only not quite enough or in the right direction? No, I won't ask that.

John Berry (525 19th Ave. East, Seattle, WA 98112) thought my article was a good exposition of my thoughts on the nature of fans and fandom but I may have misinterpreted Creath and turned him into a straw man:

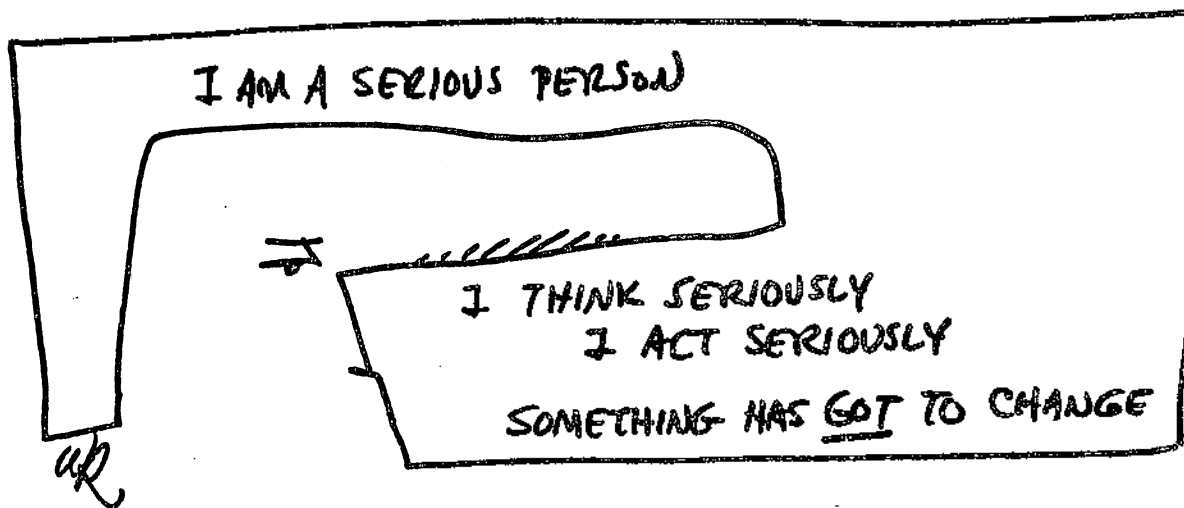
I don't remember his article in MOTA very well and there's no way I can look it up easily, so I'm left with the impression that you brooded on the subject for an awful long time and then read the Creath Thorne of 1969 into the Creath Thorne who later wrote about Wrhn 28 in TELOS. I did reread his TELOS article after reading your piece, and it struck me as pretty sensible and well thought out. The main point I would challenge him on is the assumption that something is only worthwhile when it's happening. You challenge him on that point but you surrounded it with an immense structure of reasoning and attempted psychoanalysis that obscured the point and completely hid the real Creath Thorne. Even the quotes you used in your first paragraph seemed not to support the motivations you attributed to Creath, and when I reread the whole piece (his, I mean) I found no disenchantment with fandom, and no claim that egoboo was cheap or useless. The last line you quoted, about "the fuel of home-still egoboo," seemed to me like a bit of irony that Creath threw in to comment on himself, not the disdainful sarcasm you took it as.

I enjoyed the Ted Johnstone bit; it may have been intended as filler, but it was good filler.

I enjoyed Ted White's article, too, but I was waiting for him to tie all three of its threads together in the end. I realize on rereading, especially on noting the two opening quotes, that the piece was intended to be basically about Raleigh Evans Multog, but while I was reading it I was impressed with the structure of the article: the three divergent sorts of fans visited on the same one-day trip. I thought Ted was going to make that juxtaposition the point of the article, and I expected more at the end about what it all meant to him, either at the time or now, twenty-seven years later. Instead it sort of peters out; Ted moves to Baltimore, and that's all, folks. (Why, it's almost enough to make

me believe that Joseph Nicholas is right, that it's the interpretation that lends meaning to fanhistory. But let's not get carried away, here.)

There's only one honest-to-God checkmark in my copy of beardmutterings, and that's by your remarks about a crowd of friends being worse than a crowd of strangers. When I made the checkmark I think I was thinking about how my ideal of a fannish party is one where all the people are friends or people you like to talk to, but they're scattered around a small house or a large hotel suite or something in sufficient numbers that there are a lot of small conversations to choose from. But I was visualizing this in enough space that it wasn't crowded (thinking, actually, of a party I once attended in St. Louis that achieved this feeling); in the usual packed con hotel party it would be unbearable. Hell, it is unbearable; I've been at parties like that. The configuration of the room and the density of population have a lot to do with it, though; it's not just the number of people. Unless your ideal is a party small enough for one conversation.



Steve Stiles (3003 Ellerslie Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218) offers his insights:

I read your editorial with a great deal of attention and interest, mulling over the issues you and Creath have raised here, weighing these issues and taking their measure; width, height and--conversely--depth as well (for what is depth but height turned upside down and inserted in a hole?).

Are fans slobs? And my answer in this is in agreement with yours; yes, perhaps some fans are slob>s, sometimes.

Naturally the most well-known slob in fandom was Claude Degler, a fan active in the early '40s as the founder of something called the Cosmic Circle--a union of all persons everywhere who had a cosmic outlook, which seems to be an ambition which stretches all the way into schizophrenia. But Degler was far more notorious as a slob in his personal sanitary habits. If Laney and others can be believed, Degler never seemed to bathe, preferring instead to gradually acquire a slate-grey layer of filth alternating with green swatches of mold and old cheese fuzz. Toilet tissue hung from the backs of his trouser legs, while more than two pizza rinds adhered to the front of a shirt which seemed to move and shift as if with a life of its own--an effect which seemed even more awful on

days with no breeze. He wore no shoes; shoeless, his socks acquire a leather-like consistency in time and were known to stun dogs. He never tightened the lids of the urine jars in his coat pockets, which ruined many of the cigarette butts there. His unique personality had a charm of its own, however, and many people agreed he had a sense of humor.

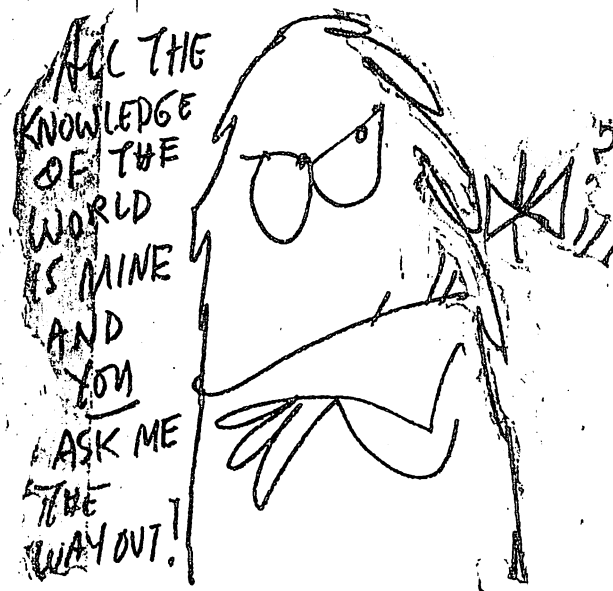
Degler was unique, though. Most fans are not slobs in their personal hygiene; they tend to be more slovenly when it comes to their living quarters. The most common fan slob is the collector, or accumulator, of books, magazines, fanzines; just about anything that constitutes printed material. My old roommate Michael Walsh, Chairman of the 1983 Constellation Worldcon, is an accumulator; it was fascinating to notice that what would start out as a small pile of Scientific Americans would usually wind up edging Mike and I out of the front living room. Fortunately, it was a big house. Gafiated fan Walter Breen usually kept all his printed material gathered in uneven piles around, under and in a huge grand piano that occupied the center of a very small living room; to enter it you had to edge through a narrow channel along one wall. And then there was Kevin Langdon, originator of the sleazy "Langdon Chart" (detailing all the sexual linkups in fandom of the late '60s); Kevin messed up Walter's apartment.

This is the common fan slob, and a type I can empathize with, excepting the anal compulsives; they are incredibly interested in the written word, is all--their sense of wonder prevents them from discarding what too many people easily ignore.

Then there are the other slobs in fandom; slobs who never empty the three cat boxes in the kitchen, slobs who leave their prozine collection laying about on every floor of their rooms, sometimes mixed in with old diapers, sanitary napkins and chicken bones (you think I'm kidding, don't you?), the fans who left two-month-old cans of organic garbage in the middle of their living rooms--in August! Many of these were interesting, intelligent, likeable people!

But above all, they were slobs.

Ted's ruminations about Baltimore fans of the '50s were interesting, moreso since Baltimore is my adopted city, and I hope I can persuade him to write something more along those lines for my wife's oneshot fnz, Bsfan. It occurs to me that I first began hearing about Baltimore scenes from Ted when I was a teenager and barely aware of anything beyond Manhattan. While I was sorting out my fanzine collection recently I came across The Conservative, a fanzine by none other than George Wetzel. I no longer remember how I got it, although it might've been through Madel. The fanzine was mailed from Dundalk and addressed to Helen Wesson, then living in Japan. It is, however controversial, virtually unreadable; the mimeography is faint when not blurred or overinked, and his writing style is turgid and rambling. Harlan is also referred to as "Ellislum" and "Nalreh Nozzile" (which must have really gotten his goat!). Dave Mason as "Masonabitchky." This is all too rambling and illegible to try to guess exactly what was the source of his feud with Ellison; he seemed convinced that Ellison was a





lecher and kleptomaniac, probably taking some humorous bits of Harlan's at face value. The rest of the fanzine is given over to red-baiting, and the admission of being a segregationist. To be fair, Wetzel spent a few pages strenuously denying he was an antisemite, citing a supposed friendship with Bloch and Jewish inlaws. So much for The Conservative ("Devoted to the Exposure of Science Fiction Communists and Harlem Ellison Fandom").

Bill Patterson (537 Jones St., #9943, San Francisco, CA 94102) says he's getting tired of the snobbish run of comments that seem to be coming out of the woodpulp these days:

I mean, Geez. Everybody has known these things--all perfectly true and valid points--for years and years and years. How is it they've suddenly become part of the top froth of fannish consciousness? I mean, ultimately all one can say about fandom is that everybody is doing what he's interested in doing, right? The conclusion to be drawn is that there are a lot of people doing different things, and that those doing similar things tend to congregate. I tend to think the binding force of fandom is the fact that virtually anyone we meet there can be expected to have a common stock of images drawn from the literature, but that's neither here nor there. There is so little substance to this criticism that it almost doesn't bear remarking, let alone discussing at length. And what substance there is seems unreasonable--one simply can't, on a personal, individual basis, accommodate what you call FIAWOLism at large conventions--it would absorb infinite time and contravene the reason you trek 3000 miles to a convention. FIAWOLism can be accommodated in local, club fandoms.

The point you raise about fandom being "suffused with love" (funny, how mere use of the term "suffused" will turn perfectly serviceable prose a bright hue of purple...) is perfectly valid and needs to be said more frequently. We tend to forget those peak experiences in the midst of the snidery which is common coin in fandom. But, shucks, folks, that's what it's all about, ain't it? We can applaud Fred Pohl (LACon, 1972) when he talks about the family of fandom and then go on to qualify the statement indefinitely--but it remains fundamentally true, nonetheless, for all the qualifications you tack onto the end. The caboose is not the train.

Ted White seems to be doing a lot of "fleshing out" of the fleeting references which have appeared elsewhere, and for this I am grateful. This kind of thoughtful recherches du temps perdue (ou sont les neiges d'antan?) is very needful. And it will, no doubt, provide Good Stuff for a future compendium of White's fanwritings.

Eric Mayer (1771 Ridge Rd. East, Rochester, NY 14622) found my editorial interesting but wonders, since he doesn't attend conventions, if he's qualified to offer any useful views:

I don't think it's a bad thing to wallow in egoboo from time to time. I don't think it's a bad thing to give it out without much reservation. Over the last year I've tried to be a bit more stinting in praise

while loccing. Perhaps I've been influenced by the British cut and thrust



school of loccking. But I've noticed, as my critical letters appear in print, I feel kindof bad about them, even though agreeing with them still. The fact is I enjoy getting fanzines. Not just good fanzines, but fanzines in general; I like my mailbox filled with the things. I have never thrown one away because I don't think that would be right, considering that someone took the effort to put it out and mail it to me. Sure, some fanzines have pretty weak material, or are badly duplicated. But I do believe that if there was no other choice I'd prefer getting crudzines to nothing at all. So any criticism I level at fanzines is relative. Why not give some egoboo? As an editor, you can tell how well an article or issue goes over, even though you get nothing but egoboo. There are degrees. Anybody too dense to notice that fact will be too dense to take note of vicious criticism anyway. (Take note, maybe, but not benefit by it.)

Nope. I don't see anything wrong with us trading egoboo. If we don't basically like fanzines, we wouldn't be here.

Finally, I want to note my appreciation for Ted White's column. He's added yet another distinct fan character to the annals of history. Good stuff indeed.

Gary Hubbard (4622 Green Acre, Kalinazoo, MI 49009) remembers  
bm from a long time ago:

I've been away from fandom for too long a time to know who Creath Throne is or what's bugging him, but not so long a time as to be unable to enjoy your marvelous article, "Are Fans Snobs?" You must really love fandom to write about it like that. I stand in awe of you, rich brown. My own feelings about fandom are considerably less passionate. But I found your article inspiring; it was like discovering fandom anew.

On the subject of first conventions, I remember the first I ever attended; it was Cleveland and the year was 1966. I had been in the Army for a couple of years and was home on leave--home being Detroit. I'd corresponded with a few neophytes like myself and had even written (gasp) fan fiction for a crudzine or two. I had also attended a meeting of the Misfits where I met the first, and only, pros I have ever had the nerve to talk to--Dean McLaughlin and Calvin Knox. I also met Howard Devore, who sold me some books at twice what they were worth.

So anyway, I figured as long as I was home on leave, I'd see if the Misfits were still having meetings. I called up Howard, renewed his acquaintance and asked if the Misfits were having a meeting. Howard replied that they weren't because everybody was going to the Worldcon in Cleveland. He suggested that I go, too. Well...you're probably going to think me naive but I was dumbstruck by the idea. I had heard about the Worldcon, of course, but to me it was like the Queen's Ball. It was a far-off, wonderful party where the creme of fannish society and prodrom mingled glamorously. It never occurred to me that an ordinary mortal such as I would be allowed in at one. But now here was Howard Devore telling me all I had to do was go to the hotel, plunk down my five bucks and I was in.

It was a revelation.

So I decided to go. There was still a matter of transportation, however. Detroit and Cleveland are not within walking distance of each other and I didn't have a car. But my brother did, so I talked him into providing the transportation. This took some doing because my brother is the very antithesis of the



science fiction fan; he doesn't even read. To Ron, a book is useful for steady-ing a wobbly table. I had to tell him that fandom was a good place to get laid to get him to come along.

I won't go into great detail about the convention. As a matter of fact, I don't think I can; it's been 18 years, after all, and my memory of it isn't so good. But I recall that I wandered around gawking at everything and everyone in sight. I took in the art show. I listened to the panel discussions. Finally, I ended up in the N3F Hospitality Room where I ran into Nate Bucklin and another neo. And we spent the rest of the con being neos. My brother met a waitress who worked in the hotel snack bar.

All in all, I had a pretty good time at my first convention. No one invited me to a room party; I didn't meet any BNFs, but I didn't know about that stuff back then so I didn't miss it. Ignorance is Blissh.

It seems to me that there are two kinds of fannish writing: writing about fandom and writing about fans in their relationship with the mundane world. Ted

White's "Beyond Egoboo" is a fine example of the former and Ted Johnstone's "More Scrimshaw" is a good example of the latter. Of the two types, I prefer the second. Daring tales of fans in conflict with man and nature, that's what I like about fannish writing. That's what lured me away from sercon in the first place...and I'm a pretty sercon guy.



Al Sirois (385 Norton St., New Haven, CT 06511) feels 2+ beers leaves him unfit for fiction writing but admirably suited for fanwriting:

I read your lengthy essay in reply to Creath Thorne with interest. I am not acquainted with either of you (not that that matters) but after nine years in fandom I have some opinions of my own about snobbishness and the like.

Item: I am a snob, if you please. I like to think I have a brain and some talent, and dumb people piss me off. Fandom has dumb people in it, friends.

Item: I have my eccentricities. I never said I was normal! I am tolerant, in the main, of the eccentricities of others...so in fandom, I expect tolerance of mine. I ignore people I don't care to know...and people who don't care to know me, ignore me. Suits me. I would hazard the guess that Creath, and you, are rather like me with respect to this attitude. In other words, we have enough self-confidence not to be crushed when we are ignored. Fandom is full of ass-kissers who like to be associated with Big Name Fans and pros. Okay, that's cool. Me, I like hanging out with fanartists. Fuck egalitarianism. They are my peers, man.

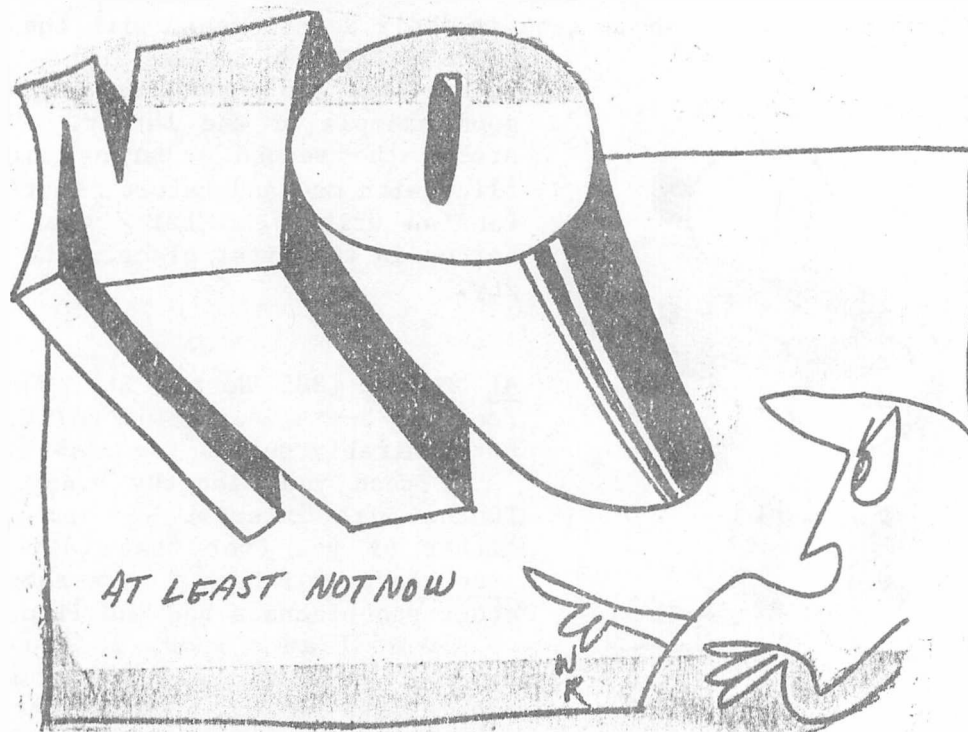
Item: At my first con, I had a terrific time. I didn't know anyone when I walked into the con suite at Disclave in 1973, down in the Sheraton-Washington, but within 10 minutes I knew three people—including a man I'm still in (occasional) touch with. Creath just had a bumner, that's all. Fandom is not Great Expectations...nor is life. I'm at a point where oral sex is the high point of my existence. I mean, can Fandom offer that? As a matter of fact, it

can, and has, and I'm a better person for it...but this is beside the point. Which might be, "you get what you pay for."

I used to feel intimidated about opining that Willis (not to pick on him, I'm using the word "willis" [let's not use the cap 'W'] as a noun, I guess, indicating any chunk of Old Stuff) didn't set my heart afire. Now, I don't care if anyone thinks I'm a jerk. I am a jerk. I've accepted it...now others can do the same. Stuff like "Catcher in the Rye" arouses less interest in me than does a new issue of STARLING or an issue of RUNE. (Hah, got you there, didn't I?) I don't think "The Good Defective Agency" is very funny. So sue me.

If fandom chooses to ostracize me because of this attitude, so be it. It won't! Factions of it might, but if anyone is small enough to write me off because I can't dig that one's trip, well, too bad.

All of which is to say, Creath Thorne, don't let the nastards grind you down. Or the bastards, for that metter...or matter.



Art Widner (231 Courtney Lane, Orinda, CA 94563) likes the layout, the grouping of type blocks around the artwork and wishes more fen would go and do likewise:

In fact, I'm going to steal a couple of ideas for YHOS. However, the diagonal columns on p4&5 seemed to me to be overdoing it a bit. Showoff.

While I agree 99% (I never agree with anything 100%--there's no reason for it, it's just my policy) with your editorial, it cdv profited by being boiled down 25%. Don't do as I do; do as I say.

Hell doth have a fury greater than a woman scorned, and that is the fury of a snob who has been snubbed. Whether Creath fits that description or not, I think there are some around who do, including yhos at one time. When I started going to cons again, with the memories of the first five dancing like sugar-plums in my head, I suffered a rude awakening. Not only did people not know who I was, they cdntv cared less if they did. I was stereotyped as both BOF & neo, altho not at the same time. \*sigh\* I almost went off & cried in my bheer, like

Thorne, but I'm glad that I just hitched up my pants & started "working my way up" again. It's been fun, & still is.

The most amusing incident occurred after I had recovered from the initial hurt. (After all, there were Alva Rogers, Dick Lupoff, Fred Pohl & others who not only talked to me, but talked to me like I was a person instead of a relic.) Altho I had soon become disenchanted with N3F shortly after I helped found it, I decided I'd go to the N3F room on the theory that poor fan's egoboo was better than none. I was welcomed warmly, but as a raw recruit (by those who were little more than rookies themselves!) rather than an Elder Ghod who had returned from On High to Bestow His Blessings.

I kept a straight face & started asking questions like how long had the org been going, who started it & so on. They hadn't the foggiest. They were nice, earnest people, & I only disentangled myself with some difficulty.

Later (all this didn't happen at the same con) I sneaked in to a SFWA suite on the coattails of Poul Anderson, & sat down beside damon knight & Kate Wilhelm. We hadn't seen each other for nearly 40 years, & I was shocked at "how old he'd gotten." Nobody said anything for a long time. Finally, I said, "The last time I saw you was nearly 40 years ago in Central Park."

Damon gave a little start at that, & peered at another set of white whiskers, trying to fathom who lay behind them. He gave up & peered at my name badge. He chuckled then, & turned to Kate. "Kate," he said, "I'd like you to meet the guy who helped me to form the dumbest organization in fandom." Things went better after that.

Ted White on Multog was not only the usual fascinating anecdote, but a lovely example of another side to the coin of your editorial. Too many fen, I think, are prone to slap the convenient label "fugghead" on anyone they don't like at first glance, or who makes a couple of neoish mistakes, or whose IQ may be a couple of points lower (or in some cases, higher) than theirs. It needed to be said, & I hope it gets wide circulation. Thanks to both of you.

Norman Hollyn (178 Spring St., New York, NY 10012) enjoyed my editorial, despite the fact that there seems to be an awful lot of soul-searching on the Meaning of Fandom going down in this area these days:

I think one of the key points you made was why you were not upset to have Thiel tell you that BNFs wouldn't associate with you. I quote: "...I could not imagine...any good reason why all the pros and BNFs should desire to sit at my feet to hear my pearls of wisdom upon my first appearance among them." What separates the true BNFs from the blow-hards, in fact, is that attitude. There are those self-appointed fans (neos and BNFs) who cannot imagine why anyone would not want to sit at their feet and listen to them. Frankly, I tire of that sort of stuff very fast. There was one fan who would attend local meetings (back when I was actually fanning) to pontificate about all of his pet subjects. He knew more than anyone else about almost any topic you could care to talk about and quite a few that you didn't. In some circles, I was told, this man was a BNF. Actually, it didn't make any difference to me--I found him to be a tiresome bore who found his voice alone more interesting than when it was coupled with another in conversation.

Now, you may say that this attitude is more understandable in an old fan, tired and whatever, than in a neo. Perhaps. Loud self-centered people who know nothing about what they are being loud about, I suppose, are more difficult than loud, self-centered people who sometimes do know. But, ultimately, fandom was



always a people sport for me more than a school. As a result, I found both types of bores to be...well, boorish.

So, while I disagree with your definition of what a snob/elitist is (seeking the company of some people over others doesn't seem to me snobbish so much as downright human and a defense against sensory overload) I can certainly agree with your basic point that people need to seek out friends who can share things with them. Feeling lost at a few conventions is no surprise, especially today; staying lost at a few conventions was always rather difficult for me. In short, there are few groups of people who can't be met if you try and if you share enough similarities to be their friends (just as they need to fill some of yours in order to be your friend). That's what your comments about wanderers at cons searching each other out and making their own parties meant to me; eventually, after I did enough wandering and searching, I found there wasn't enough time for all of the parties I wanted to go to and could. Finding fan contacts at conventions is only a subset of the act of finding friends.

Which brings me back to the question of unrestrained egoboo from fan to fan. I find that there are two types of friends in this world--those who support their friends and those who feel that being friends with someone gives them license to treat the other worse than they would a stranger. In my life, a member of the latter category of friend quickly drops into the new category of "ex-friend." So, do fans give each other egoboo? Yes, of course. If they're friends. Is it unrestrained? That depends. What seems unrestrained to an outside observer may not seem so from one friend to another. So, unless we are going to turn fandom from a group of people/friends with similar interests into a society of literary critics, we are going to have Creath's problem forever.

Harry Warner (423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740), says there's little in my long analysis of the Creath Throne article that he disagrees with:

I remember Creath as a generally pleasant and intelligent fan in his fanzine manifestation. But there seems to be a problem every so often for an active fan attending a large con. One of the big names in fandom when I was a neofan, John Chapman Miske, gaffed immediately after going to a con and reacting badly to an episode there. Richard Bergeron is the prime example of a fan who wasn't happy at a con but reacted differently, confining himself henceforward to fanzine fandom and never again being active in any form of face-to-face fandom. I'm probably the most celebrated example of the fanzine fan who attended cons

once in a while for some years and then stopped going: in my case, nothing in particular discouraged me and my recent abstention from cons has been motivated by a combination of factors, some of them mundane, some of them fannish.

But Creath's own particular reaction to the St. Louiscon seems different. Many neofans have expressed their unhappiness over the difficulty of feeling acceptance at their first cons but they've persevered. I think it's wrong to assume there is anything distinctive or different about fandom when



it creates the conditions at a con which Creath disliked. It's nothing but the fannish version of what happens in most major social situations in the mundane world. Almost every young person who transfers from one school to another or enters a new school upon reaching middle school or high school age faces exactly the same problem as the neofan at his first con. It's a complicated assortment of cliques and social layers in the schools for the students and too much intelligence or pimples on the face or parental insistence on wearing certain garments can complicate the new student's built-in problems of making friends and finding a place in one of the hierarchies. Churches are notorious for their congregational structure, usually separated by wealth and length of membership and compatibility with the heads of the various church organizations. Anyone who decides to become active in politics and starts at the city or township or county level will encounter more problems than the neofan at a worldcon because there are more specific honors and privileges in the Young Democratic Club or the Women's Republican Organization for the established members to covet and the newcomer always represents potential competition for those plums.

Fandom is better than mundania in a few ways but not in that particular way. I would be in Chicago at this moment instead of at my home if I found cons the utopia they represent to some fans. But I was lucky in that I didn't attend my first con until I had been in fandom long enough to know what to expect there, and I was prepared for the fact that everything didn't stop dead in its tracks in tribute to my arrival and no line of fans fighting for the honor of meeting me formed in the hotel lobby and stretched far down Broad Street or whatever Philadelphia thoroughfare that Phillycon's hotel may have abutted.

Ted White's memories are fascinating. Almost everything in them was new to me, since I was semi-gafiated at the time most of the described events were happening. I don't think I had any contact with Raleigh Evans Multog or received any of his fanzines. Norman G. Wansborough, who was probably a close counterpart of Raleigh on the other side of the Atlantic, came into my orbit a few years later. Curiously, even though Ted describes himself as sloppy and disorganized with his possessions at the time, I remember a visit from him and his first wife not long after the events described here, during which Ted looked half-sick when he saw my shelves of lp recordings. He asked me in disbelief why I had put them away like that. Sylvia explained that Ted was always careful to keep the spines in an exactly even row, while I allowed my jackets to create a jagged appearance to the eye, to make it easier to pull out the one I wanted, something like the trick of letting the carbon paper protrude a quarter-inch on one side of the paper surrounding it, so it can be quickly removed when the page has been typed.

Jim Meadows (PO Box 1227, Pekin, IL 61554) says he felt rather removed from my editorial:

For all your disagreement, you and Creath Thorne have one thing in common... you've both been part of a fannish community that I've never met except on paper. A few vivid living breathing personalities can make even the small world seem very important and worth arguing about. However, from where I sit, rather distant from all these fans I seem to know but have never met, these arguments on whether fans are snobs are sort of insubstantial. I don't think fans are all snobs, or all anything for that matter. If I did think they were all snobs, I wouldn't hang around for years telling them so. Who needs it? I'd just leave. But, on the other side of the matter, why spend so much space arguing that we aren't all snobs? This criticism of fans as being a bunch of nasty people is

not new with Creath; I've seen it before from other fans, embittered from bad personal experiences with fellow fans. It usually comes out in a big noise just before gafiation.

The question before us here is not if all fans are this or that. Personal reactions to fandom are too varied to make such a simplistic generalization stick. We might ask, however, why some fans grow embittered with their peers and some do not. Are their experiences different or is it their reaction that differs, the set of attitudes and range of maturity they brought with them to fandom? What about the people who leave fandom quietly? Maybe some of them don't feel it's elitist enough...

Marty Cantor (5263 Riverton Ave. #1, N. Hollywood, CA 91601) must have spies everywhere:

Pretending to expose the secrets of SBOF, eh? Whilst I've known about SBOF for a long time, I've only recently completed my own investigation into this clandestine organisation. I thought my "cover" as a firebrand remarkably effective; no SBOF ever suspected I was anything but a wrong-headed screamer or penetrated my disguise to discover the incompetent nerd hiding under the loud exterior. Knowing the sad fate of all those who've tried to pry into your secrets whilst pretending to be SBOFs, I cleverly adopted the strategem of concealing myself in plain sight by being vociferously fuggheaded--and thus, not fitting the spy stereotype, was never thought to be a spy. And it worked! I really did get away with it! And now, after your tame expose, no power on earth can prevent me fr

WAHF: An unsigned postcard (from Baltimore) saying: "Oh. Never mind." :: Robert Bloch thanked me for sending a legible edition, said he thought my editorial was right on and Ted's column was fine, and with bm for inspiration he might some day write a legible postcard. :: RAY NELSON says bm "confirmed my opinion that you are just the kind of elitist snob I am willing to associate with." Likewise, Ray. :: BRUCE TOWNLEY (along with several others whose letters I've printed without including their comments to the same effect) felt the best thing about bm 3 was Steve's bacover. :: RICHARD BRUNING wants to know, "Can someone tell me why I got beardmutterings #3, by rich brown of Washington, D.C., but which was sent from New Decade Prod. in Falls Church, Va., and had all this interesting writing, some of it from years ago but especially wonderful Dan Steffan illos..." Of course someone can tell him why he got beardmutterings #3, by rich brown of Washington, D.C., but which was sent from New Decade Prod. in Falls Church, Va., and had all this interesting writing, some of it from years ago but especially wonderful Dan Steffan illos... He received beardmutterings #3 from rich brown of Washington, D.C., because he was on Dan Steffan's mailing list, which was loaned to rich brown shortly before bm 3 was mailed out so rich brown would have names and addresses of pipples to whom he could send all that interesting writing, some of it from years ago but especially wonderful Dan Steffan illos; and bm (at least U.S. copies) was sent from New Decade Prod. in Falls Church, Va., because New Decade Prod. in Falls Church, Va., is the corporate name of Ted White's record company, which happens to own the mailing permit with which bm was mailed at Vastly Reduced Rates and the Post Awful requires persons using a mailing permit always to mail from the same address. Any more questions, Richard? :: BRUCE D. ARTHURS, who wonders if "status" might be defined by snobbery, decides that's unclear, says there could be levels of "status" in fandom defined by personal preference (e.g., he could feel an increase

in status by receiving bm or, conversely, I could feel an increase in mine for receiving his LoC), then realizes he may be getting "status" and "egoboo" confused, since status involves how other people see one. Bruce then asks, "Okay, how do other people judge my/your/someone's worthiness?" but concludes the subject's "a bit deep for me at the moment" and says "it would help if I figured out for sure what I wanted to say before I put it down on paper." I'll buy that. :: RICHARD BERGERON, mostly to the effect that I made a few boobos in my layouts (which others, fortunately, have missed, so why should I point them out?). :: GREGG CALKINS, mostly to the effect that my layouts were just great (which I would print, except I seem to have mislaid his letter somewhere). :: MEL WHITE, wondering if the vice squad will get him if he sends me "love, not money." (Just slip it in a plain brown envelope, Mel.) :: DAVID STEAVER, whose letter arrived just after I had completely "dummied" this issue.



I feel responsible for confusing Creath Thorne, Terry Hughes and John Berry, all of whom felt I missed the point of Creath's TELOS essay. Terry and John, who thought I might have read attitudes of the MOTA piece into the one in TELOS, seemed most convincing--until I realized they had not told me anything I had not understood when I wrote my editorial. I was not addressing that essay's thrust, but I can see how one could think I was, since I described it as "less an analy-

## LEVERAGE

sis of WARHOON than a disenchanted indictment of fandom." I doubt Creath, Terry or John are saying The Point of the essay was its only point--at least, I hope they're not such sapskulls. But Terry was right that I did not try to summarize the TELOS article--so I've let them Explain All at somewhat tedious length; I may not need it but perhaps readers who did not see the piece in TELOS do.

The pieces had different thrusts--in MOTA, a disenchanted indictment of fandom's "snobbishness"; in TELOS, a reaction to Bergeron's "continuing search of things past" in WARHOON 28. Yet I believed and believe they were written from the same viewpoint; at least, I saw some of the bitterness first evident in the MOTA piece in the essay on WARHOON, and it was to that bitterness--rather than The Point--to which I addressed my remarks. Or so, at least, I thought.

Creath Thorne: Be happy to quibble with The Point of your TELOS essay. Terry thinks you were echoing Thomas Wolfe's "we can't go home again," so I'll see your Wolfe and raise you T. S. Elliot's "Time past and time future are forever present." The two are not mutually exclusive; we cannot participate in past events but we can "experience" them--we are what we have been and what we are in the process of becoming. I think this "answers" your question of whether, since WARHOON 28 was outside what may be directly experienced via immediate partici-

pation, it had meaning or practical use. Willis' evocation of the experience has both--besides being vastly entertaining. As to how relevant that past may be to our present, I can show it best by quoting Willis on this very topic--whose remarks were made 27 years ago in the Feb. 1956 issue of FANHISTORY:

Once upon a time...well, just over two years ago if we have to be specific...fandom was a dark and howling wasteland through which roamed savage hoards proclaiming themselves, with weird guttural cries, to be something called "Seventh Fandom." These strange creatures are now extinct and perhaps it is worth considering possible reasons as to why they perished so ignobly. There are, of course, the statements of the last two surviving leaders--one to the effect that they succumbed to compound fractures to the groin inflicted by the knee-cap of mad dogs, and the other to the effect that they were all an elaborate hoax--but I think we can disregard these as being anatomically and logically impossible, respectively. No, the real reason they died, it seems to me, was that like the mule they had neither pride of ancestry nor hope of posterity.

To assure its continuance in the present, fandom must preserve its link with the past. I think it was one Jack Speer who first pointed out that at any one time fandom depends for its existence on a mere handful of people, and if these were to leave simultaneously fandom could perish. This very nearly happened in 1953, and it's up to us to do what we can to assure it doesn't happen again. Like any other civilisation, fandom depends on timebinding--the passing on from generation to generation of accumulated knowledge and experience--and this present series of fanhistories is an example I'm proud to be associated with. Incidentally, all of this may seem pretty highflown talk for a little old thing like sf fandom, but I subscribe to the Burbee-Ashworth dictum that "Fandom is a Goddamn good hobby," and I'm ready to go to a lot of trouble to preserve it. Just as a game is only enjoyable if you play it according to the rules, so any pleasure like fandom is worth taking seriously within its own limitations. This is not to say that the game or the pleasure has any intrinsic importance outside itself: though it could be argued that anything that gives pleasure is pretty damned important.

You think my summary was "inaccurate" because you drew from your total fan experience rather than "primarily" on what happened at St. Louiscon--as you say I said, although a diligent search failed to uncover where I was supposed to have made this assertion. I said you "had inklings of [these snobbish attitudes], but did not realize to what extent such thinking existed" until you attended St. Louiscon. Reprinting the piece would show which of us was correct.

I wonder what you mean by "snobbery for the sake of snobbery." My Webster's defines snobbery as "snobbish character or conduct," or "an instance of snobbery," which is no help, but a snob is "one who blatantly imitates, fawningly admires or vulgarly seeks association with those he regards as superior or one who tends to rebuff, avoid or ignore those he regards as inferior." (Let's forget the archaic use--I'm relatively certain you weren't upset by a preponderance of cobblers in our midst.) But "snobbery for the sake of snobbery" would seem to imply there was some other possible reason for snobbery--and that it



might have your approval, if done for reasons other than its own sake. This being the case, it seems more likely you were talking about cobblers...

Some fans blatantly imitate, fawningly admire and vulgarly seek association with those they think superior and rebuff, avoid and ignore those they think inferior; I pity their limitations but see nothing wrong with assuming one's friends are "better" (in some respects) than those who are not. I realize my friends are "better" only subjectively--because they have revealed something to which I respond positively. The failing of the majority of those Others out there may simply be that we really don't know them and, for that reason, have no notion whether we share tastes and/or can be friends with them. There may also be, of course, some whom we may not like without actually disliking (with whom we know we have no common ground) or dislike (because attitudes they hold are anathema--bigots, or snobs, or fill-in-your-own). Do you not feel in any way "superior" to a bigot? A snob? I admit I find it hard to believe a bigot might be superior to me; yet it is quite probable that some bigot, somewhere, in some way, must be. In choosing to believe I am generally superior (and that my friends are generally superior) to bigots, I am indulging in elitism--not snobbery. Thus do I choose to indulge myself--and say to hell with those who don't like it. It seems likely, as Bill Patterson, Norman Hollyn and Harry Warner point out, that the same factors are at work in nearly any group--be they fans or Rotarians, feminists or Marxists or members of the American Legion. A group is "better" than others insofar as it meets needs of individual members--nothing more. Fandom, thanks largely to Claude Degler, has reason to question the extremes of this attitude--the idea that Fans Are Slans has drawn a belly-laugh which has rumbled through fandom for over four decades. But fans are people subject to the rule and perhaps, as Rick Sneary opines, more clannish than most. They may laugh at the idea that they and their friends are slans, but accept another which says their fannish friends are somewhat "better" than those who are not; they may even, finding a ready acceptance and some mutualities of taste in the microcosm, believe fans are generally "better" than mundanes. This is a matter of the values used in choosing friends. If you were in WWII, Korea, or Vietnam, and this was important to you and you have stories only appreciated by others who've Been There, and you like to drink at a bar without paying bar prices, the American Legion could have some appeal for you--and the people you meet there are likely to seem "better" than those you meet on the street. I see nothing intrinsically wrong with this attitude; it is one I hold, albeit for different reasons, about fans and fandom.

Your expectations at St. Louiscon were that you would be accepted among fans with whom you identified; I don't think they were unreasonable, but they were elitist for reasons I've already cited. Since you choose to ignore them the first time I tried to bring them to your attention, I reasonably assume you would do so if I repeated them. I will not further waste your time or mine.

Terry Hughes: From what you say, your decision not to publish comments was that you felt the passage of time made the topic obscure. I could say two years really wasn't a very long time--in terms of the change it represented in your mailing list, were half the readers "new" by that point? 25%? 10%? 5%? But truth is, this is Monday-morning quarterbacking at its worst. I can make the entirely irrelevant point, from my high and loftily removed position, that I may not have done the same--but so what? Obviously, you did not make the decision lightly--and to the extent that I implied otherwise, I apologize.

Your definition of what a column means is good--but there is one other thing which any fanzine contributor might reasonably hope for beyond freedom to speak

his/her mind, and that is egoboo/response. I might reject Ted's "Beyond Egoboo" if he devoted it to jazz; I recognize him as an authority on the subject, but it's not one which interests me very much nor one I care to discuss at length in what is, after all, my fanzine. But if I did publish it, I'd feel honor-bound to print (or let Ted see) the comments it received--because the freedom to express one's opinions is virtually meaningless without it. Egoboo is the coin of our realm, usually the only payment a fan gets for his/her efforts. When you're published in PLAYBOY, ESQUIRE or THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY, you can laugh all the way to the bank if your creations get no comments--but response, both egoboo and negoboo, constitutes the only good reason for contributing to fanzines. You know this, since you admit your decision "may have been unfair" to Creath and those who took time to respond. I know via further correspondence Creath has since seen the response his piece got via an "egoboo express," but had he not, the column he took the trouble to write would have been a rose petal tossed down the Grand Canyon--and he would still be waiting to hear the echo had I not addressed the subject here. Not to mince words, it would have been a waste of his time, since he would not have received payment. You wrestled with the problem, other concerns over-rode it; I can see that. Especially if, had you printed responses, you say you might soon have been publishing a fanzine which bored you to tears--leaving me to infer you may have ceased regular publication earlier than you did. I can only sigh and agree you took the best course. I can't bring myself to say it was the right one--but in making this distinction I am perhaps only saying it's a great pity we could not have had our cake and eaten it too.

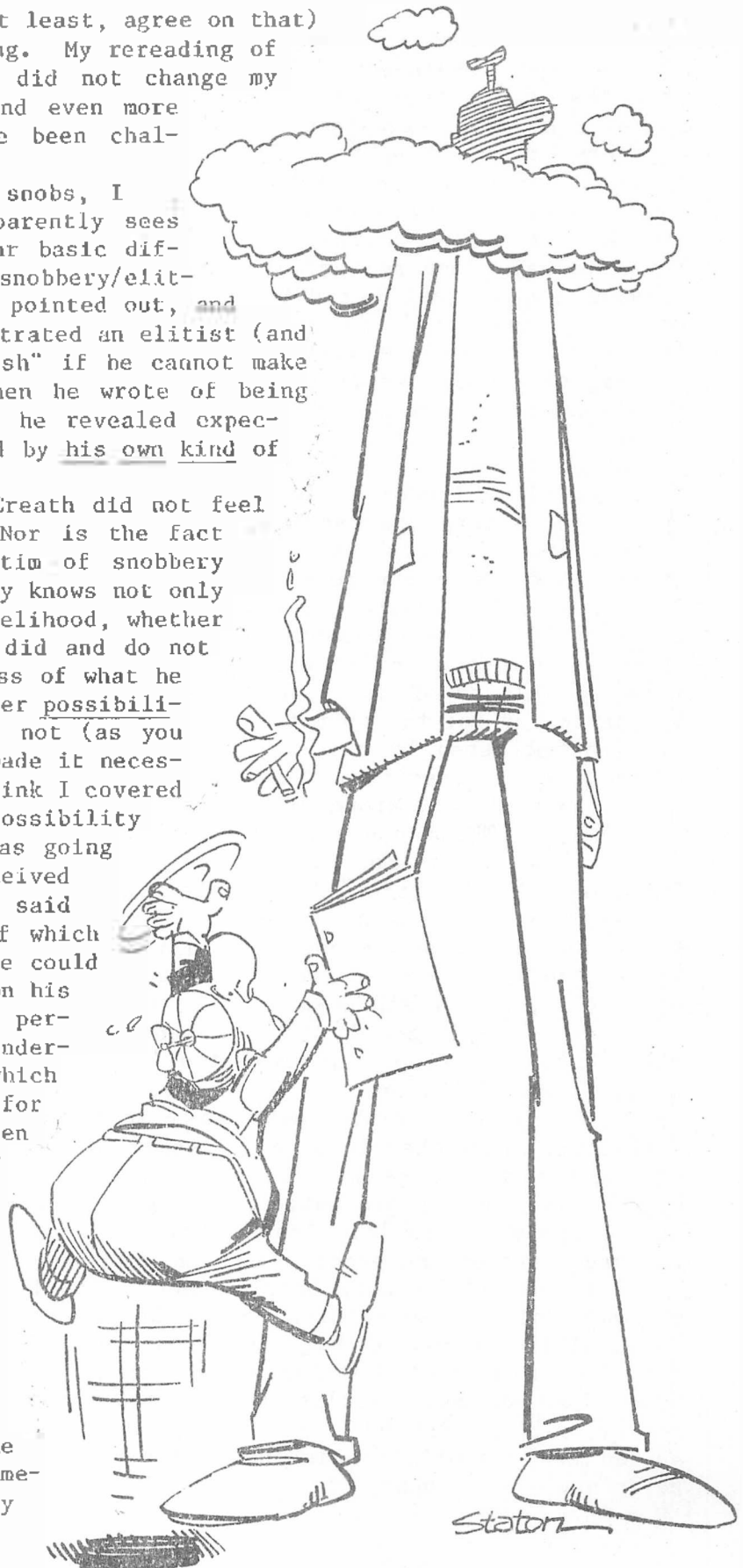
The difference between my decision not to publish response bm 2 got 10 years ago and your decision not to publish the response Creath's column received after nearly two years is (doing it in my head) a little more than eight years--or, putting it another way, one is five times more than the other. As bm 2 was mostly self-written, the person who wrote the major portion of it (me) did see the response.

As I indicated, my editorial was taken from an article I had written for Dan Steffan's BOONFARK, which in turn was based on my original letter of comment to you. So in effect it was written by two rich brown's--one responding while the column was still fresh in mind, another who could say it had been "a long time" since he read it. I wanted to address Creath's specific arguments, rather than hypothetical ones, and did so when his TELOS essay echoed feelings from his MOTA article; I brought up ideas expressed in both to present my own views and provide springboards for comment. I feel the subject deserved to be discussed--and while I'm willing to accept as valid your reasons for not wanting the controversy in MOTA, my reasons for giving Creath the response he never received there seem to me to be equally so--however long it may have been in coming. So even before I had "From The Captain's Tower" to reprint, I felt my summary was reasonably accurate--because it was written in 1973, Terry, 1973--or shortly after I read it. I know any summary is going to lose something; one could accurately summarize The Catcher in the Rye as the story of a sensitive kid kicked out of school who spends a night in New York City before going home to admit it to his parents--and totally fail to communicate the meaning of the book. I don't think I did that to Creath; nor did I put words in his mouth or twist the meaning of what he said. Yes, he touched points I did not address--secret apas being but one. I may have mentioned them in my original draft; but in part this was left out because I was working without the "memorable ending" which had been misplaced (cf. bm 3, p. 2) and in part because, in making revisions and updating points, I realized I was being too long-winded (Anne Laurie Logan, Dick Lupoff,

John Berry and Art Widner, at least, agree on that) and thus had to cut something. My rereading of "From The Captain's Tower" did not change my opinion--if anything, I found even more silliness which should have been challenged.

Creath thinks fans are snobs, I think them elitists; he apparently sees no distinction. I guess our basic difference is whether we think snobbery/elitism a good or bad thing. I pointed out, and do again, that Creath demonstrated an elitist (and he may read that as "snobbish" if he cannot make this distinction) nature when he wrote of being snubbed at St. Louis--since he revealed expectations of not being snubbed by his own kind of fan.

\*sigh\* I did not say Creath did not feel snubbed at St. Louiscon. Nor is the fact that he felt he was a victim of snobbery open to debate. He obviously knows not only what he felt but, in all likelihood, whether he was overtly snubbed. I did and do not deny this; I said, regardless of what he felt happened, there are other possibilities. The fact that I was not (as you point out) at St. Louiscon made it necessary to consider them. I think I covered a wide range--from the possibility that he misperceived what was going on to the one that he perceived it correctly. I also said extenuating circumstances of which he might not have been aware could have led to misconceptions on his part; that he could have perceived it right without understanding the real reasons (which includes his being snubbed for some other reason) and even that, since I don't know Creath, this may have happened because he was a dork (as unlikely as this seems). If his reaction here is any indication, Creath did not strike his head upon reading bm 3 and cry out, "Oh, is that all there was to it?" I can't imagine why he might, unless I hit on something he had not previously



considered--a remote possibility. But possible, however remote. Had you allowed the controversy to run its course (as I suggested), it is possible whoever snubbed Creath--someone who, I think you must admit, also may have known what "had to be factored in before any such explanation could be deemed possible"--might have explained their reasons, which might not have involved the snobbery Creath thought it did. It might have been one of the possibilities outlined--or not. In which case he could very well strike his head with his palm and cry out that phrase, no matter how "truly annoying" you might find it to be. It's also possible the person(s) who snubbed Creath could have come forth to say, "You're perfectly right, Creath-baby, I snubbed you at St. Louis because I'm a great big BNF and you're just a punky little neo and therefore obviously inferior." We don't know--the controversy did not run its course--but the possibilities are virtually limitless, are they not? Since they are, and I'm trying to discuss some of Creath's generalities in a specific way and some of his specifics in a general way, I must give some consideration to them--must I not?

Since I don't feel "nostalgia" for Sixth Fandom, I don't think what I do feel for Sixth Fandom is false. I urge you to speak for yourself when you say those who've read the fanzines of the time and talked to fans who were part of it have never "really" experienced it. Perhaps you mean they cannot participate in it. But see my comments on this to Creath.

I have said elsewhere I would not care to see a recreation of Sixth Fandom--not even by the participants--but maintain our past is not dead since it influences what we are and/or will be. The spirit of Sixth Fandom lives on in the improved talents of those who have the wit and perception to learn from and be influenced by it; the spirit of HOT SHIT lives on in much of what has been written and published by one of our more talented humorists--a fellow named Terry Hughes, to be specific. And if you can't see that, Terry, I think there's something seriously wrong with your perceptions.

Creath's TELOS essay was not an attack on Sixth Fandom or Willis, but the "tribute" you quote has elements of left-handed praise on both ends (WARHOON is "good enough, all right" and "a ghost of fandom past haunts the volume")--and I do feel the questions he posed were answered in the pages of WARHOON 28. Nor do I think I "completely missed Creath's thrust." It's worth discussing, but a red herring unless those surrounding attitudes are taken into consideration, and neither you nor Creath seem to wish to do so. Well, what the hell.

I was non-plussed by your comment on Ted's column asking if it would have been "better to simply ignore Wetzel" rather than bring up his 1950s actions in 1982. I see Ted's piece as essentially a memoir or personal history--an honest attempt to portray real events early in his fan career. These did not occur in a vacuum, since they involved not only Ted but other people who were there. If he's going to ignore Wetzel, why not Multog? Why not Wetzel and Multog and Magnus? Why not ignore Wetzel, Multog, Magnus and Hitchcock? Why not...but you see, perhaps, where this leads. On the other hand, why ignore any of the fans who were part of the events he is talking about?

I agree it's a pity people didn't know Multog was retarded--the knowledge may have made them gentler, since Raleigh never harmed anyone--but I do not think Willis need feel bad about what he said. He made rather obvious remarks (in the sense that I think many fans agreed with him) about the quality of Raleigh's fanzine. Willis has praised things deserving it--but think what a hollow tribute that would be had he earlier said much the same, out of some misguided and essentially dishonest attempt to be kind, about Multog! The "dis-advantage" of honesty to people like Raleigh must be weighed against that

advantage to others--by which I mean one is judged in fandom by what one says and how intelligently, entertainingly and/or well, rather than how "old" (mentally or physically) one may be. This was one of the things I liked about fandom as a neo and it remains one of the most appealing aspects to me as a BOF. Egoboo is generally an honest coin--but it takes effort to earn. Sadly, honest criticism in fandom, which I find refreshing, is brutal to the retarded. But an analogy can be made with an argument against censorship: While there might be some things children should not read or see, it does not follow that adults should be kept from reading or seeing them for that reason. The world is full of people who will tell you what you want to hear; I prefer this little utopia of ours, wherein we are encouraged to say what we really think. Even if--and sometimes especially because--this may mean some fans may disagree with what I say. For those who would prefer it otherwise, let them check out mundane ajay--where the prose is almost universally bland and no one ever says anything critical about anyone else. I dare say there's a cause-and-effect factor involved.

You may think Wetzel is as worthy of our sympathies; I doubt it. He was a sick individual whose bigotry wasn't the worst thing about him. Most agreed he had the right to say what he felt in the microcosm, and however much I despise the ideas he espoused, I agree with the principal.

But the right to hold an unpopular opinion does not mean people cannot dislike you for holding it--merely that they have no right to force you to hold a more popular one. It was not until George started writing poison pen letters to fans' employers--and "turning them in" to government agencies when they disagreed with him--that a consensus was reached on ignoring him out of fandom. Perhaps if fandom were truly utopian, it would be wholly comprised of individuals with the necessary wisdom to provide the likes of Wetzel the professional help they need--but as it isn't, I think the best solution was achieved.

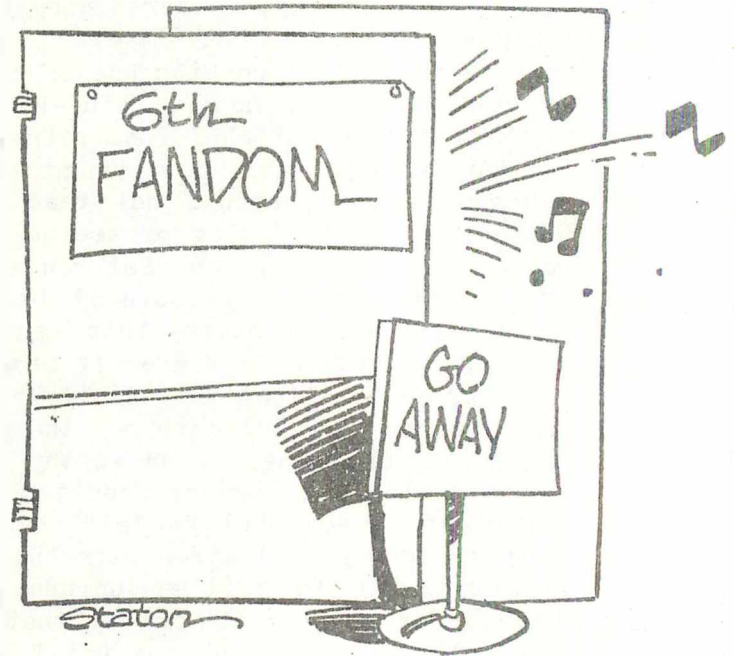
As for bringing it up in the 1980s, since Wetzel was at a Balticon as recently as four or five years back, is still somewhat active in Lovecraft fandom and pops up to be seen by people in present-day fandom (see Steve Miller's letter), it might be a service to tell them about his past; if they thereafter get involved with him, and suffer consequences thereby, then at least they've been warned.

Nor can I believe you were reading closely when you say Ted never got around to saying what Hitchcock "evidently found" to like in Wetzel. Ted cited his reputation as a Fortean and Lovecraft fan and mentioned articles which Hitchcock published in UMBRA on "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 published a quasifanzine of his own, BALTIMORE SUBTERRANEAN." Those articles were as well written and researched as a good newspaper article on the same subject might have been--and constituted both what Hitchcock "saw" in Wetzel and his attempt to show fandom George's "redeaming virtues" by which he might, with help, transcend his bigotry. It is, I think, undisputable that this attempt was in vain.

You wonder if put-down humor is necessary. I'm tempted to take your question--"Were all the individuals and/or groups being demeaned in this issue of beardmutterings really necessary?"--literally and answer, "No, all the individuals and/or groups demeaned are not really necessary--which is why I demeaned them." But while I also have some misgivings, most of the time I feel we would be more overrun with dorks than we are should we choose to forego this particular safety valve. Yes, satire has a Social Purpose--it pokes fun at people who take themselves too seriously. (Perhaps I'm due for a shot?)



Anne Laurie Logan: Your letter seems a curious mixture of horseshit and ignorance: "I look at the same period [Sixth fandom] and see self-satisfied middle-class parochialism and the knowledge that I would have been 'accepted' in that fandom only as (a) a Girlfriend or (b) a Token Woman (neither of them roles I am either good at, or happy in)." Fans of the late '40s/early '50s were hardly middle-class or parochial in their attitudes, as is evident from what they wrote in their fanzines; you don't need a psychology degree to see they were mostly shy, introverted, word-oriented, thinking piddle. They were isolated because they did not accept (and frequently sneered at) middle-class values. However, my real question is where you come by the knowledge(?) you wouldn't have been "accepted" in that fandom except in those roles? Your tendency to believe your own preconceptions seem a likely source. The



facts belie your contention; Lee Hoffman, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Georgina Ellis and Nan Share were BNFs of the period who did not fit the roles; they won fan-nish esteem by demonstrating talents and abilities in writing for and publishing fanzines, not because they were someone's girlfriend or a woman in a largely male society. Now perhaps it is true that you don't have the necessary talent, or don't feel you do, and therefore have reason to believe the only way you could have been accepted would have been to take on one of those roles. But I put it to you: Is this one of fandom's shortcomings or one of your own?

Certainly there are enough Trekcons, SCAcons and comix cons (plus others you didn't mention) where people may feel comfortable spending their time in costume, in fantasy role-playing games, in chasing "celebrities" and watching the 11,286th showing of "Amok Time," and all the other charming things they do. I know their cons are not my cup of tea--they make no concessions to trufandom and I see no reason why they should--but I feel this blade should cut two ways. Yet if someone suggests we cut Trek, SCA or comix-related programming from our worldcons--which are, after all, put on by a self-described "literary society"--we're accused of separatism, elitism, parochialism, etc., in wanting to keep the Trekkies/SCAers and/or comix fans out. Bullshit. They have a perfect right to program or not to program for us and we have a perfect right to program or not to program for them.

Your point about appreciating C.S. Lewis but not being inclined to become an Episcopalian is well-taken but I would ask--since you don't think the Willish is the 'best' humor (or even best fan humor) you've read--what you think is? I won't dispute a matter of tastes, but having said you think you know something better, I'd sincerely like to know what it might be. If I agree, you would be doing me a favor, and if not you would be giving me an insight into the workings of your rumored sense of humor.

My sense of humor got a workout when you went on at length (too great a



length, imho) about "fundamentalist Christians" only to make a minor comparison with Sixth Fandom and/or people in present-day fandom influenced by it. "Thus, you look at Sixth Fandom and see 'love,' good friendships, a striving after quality in print and High Fannishness in person, happy times, a belief in and respect for 'standards,' and small private parties at cons where one could know and be known to all the fans who 'counted.' ... Your small and intimate parties look, from an outsider's perspective, like closed and cliquish celebrations of your severely limited universe." You mangle my view--again the result of your tendency to believe what you wish, unhampered by facts. I said nothing about a belief in and respect for standards or holding parties for everyone who "counted." While I can't help what private parties may look like to outsiders, since they're not held either for their exclusion or benefit, I frankly don't give a damn.

One of your lines seems unintentionally revealing: "I have known as many as six people in my life who have been actual, practising Christians--people who tried to live by a set of precepts I could connect with the teachings of Jesus Christ as presented in the New Testament." So your definition of "practising Christian" is people who try to live by a set of precepts you can connect with the teachings of J.C. as presented in the NT? Is that not as presumptuous as the fundamentalists you were complaining about? They think Catholics aren't Christians because they don't live by a set of precepts they can connect with the teachings of J.C. as presented in the NT--their version of the NT, anyway. As an agnostic, I can posit the existence of a Christian God--in which case "actual, practising Christians" are those whom that God recognizes as being so. Those who feel others must first fit their definition before they can make that claim--be they fundamentalists or Anne Lorie Logan--presume to speak for that God. I fail to see why this as an objectionable practice for fundamentalists if it is not equally so when you do it. Or is this what is known as "hypocrisy"?

Of more amusement is that your analogy is easier to apply to your hobby-horse, feminism, than fandom. If you would relate to fandom as an outsider, try this "outsider's" view: Fundamentalists and feminists both believe they are Right and that the answer to the problems they see is to force their views on everyone, whether they agree with them or not, by making them the law of the land. I am unaware of any such desire in fandom. Feminists and fundamentalists believe in the right to dictate what others may see or read--and while for different reasons, they end up censoring the same things. (The only censorship in fandom of which I am aware took place at the instigation of feminists who, apparently like your fundamentalists, are either not aware certain freedoms are allowed by the laws of the nation and the traditions of fandom, or think these freedoms are not applicable to their "moral" arguments.) Feminists and fundamentalists have codefied (albeit different) views of human sexuality, think the parameters may not be stretched by individual choice and condemn on moralistic grounds anyone whose sexual practices differ from those they would "allow." Fandom has no codefied view of sexuality. Feminists and fundamentalists wish to convert those who do not presently accept their viewpoint; fandom, as it is constituted, has no point of view, would laugh (if it had one) at the idea of converting the world to it or, in any event, would tolerate such conversions only by use of sweet reason. No fundamentalist or feminist of whom I am aware has ever championed the rights of people who disagree with them to disagree; fans have done so consistantly and frequently. Et bloody cetera.

Enjoying Willis and Shaw has not convinced you "Ted White or Dick Bergeron are Really Funny fannish writers." Both have displayed wit in things they've written, but you may not appreciate them. Yet, as neither has consciously tried

to be primarily a Really Funny fannish writer, it's hardly a wonder that reading two different people should fail to convince you they are what those others have tried to be but Dick and Ted have not. You appear to confuse expressed admiration for a desire to emulate. Enjoying Willis and Shaw isn't likely to convince me you're a Really Funny fannish writer, either. So?

Jeanne Gomoll: As for environmentalists who might interfere with the plan to Wipe Out the Wasp in Our Lifetime, I can immediately imagine yet another legitimate use for spray starch...not too different from your own.

Rick Sneary: I don't deny that Creath could have been a victim of snobbery. But since he has not said who did what, it's difficult to determine how seriously the charge should be taken. Had LeeH or Bob Tucker said something to him along the lines of, "Get out of my way, you grubby little neo," that might be one thing--but I doubt anything like this was the case and find it more likely that the snobbery, and the snub(s), came from someone with an overinflated opinion of him/herself, possibly even someone Creath thought had fandom's high regard. I doubt if Creath can be made to see this, however.

I admit I went on at length--but I also cut something from my editorial last issue which I now wish I'd left in. I made the point that I like people who read; people who read sf; people who are involved in sf clubs or go to conventions; people in fanzine fandom; people in fannish fanzine fandom, in something of an ascending order--and then said it was by no means absolute by citing a fannish fanzine fan I didn't particularly like. But I cut where I went on to make the corresponding point that I have genuinely liked some individuals who have been involved in these "other" fandoms as well--Bjo, who is probably the preeminent Trekkie these days; Dave Van Arnham, who was a big ERB fan; John D. Berry, who came to us out of monster fandom; Michael Dobson, who has helped get even me into Dungeons & Dragons [blush, blush], etc. I like them--not necessarily in spite of these things, but certainly not specifically because of them, either.

I have also gone to conventions, struck out on my own and ended up eating alone or walking the halls looking for someone I knew--or at least could get to know. If this has had limited success, I'm sure it's because I'm so stuck up--we BOFs could not possibly be shy, you know. Yet I've met a few strangers and been able to strike up conversations, so I try to keep up the practice--as anyone who has ever gone to a con with me can attest. That's not the primary reason I go to cons; the most interesting conversations there, for me, are with people I know but have not seen for a while, with whom I do not need to "break the ice" as with strangers. But I keep trying, frequently leaving good friends and perfectly fine parties behind, and usually end up alone and unable to reestablish contact. I have to wonder, sometimes, why I bother. I suppose it's so I can come home and enjoy reading about what snobs we fans are.

We're elitists to the extent that we prefer to share time with those with whom we have at least something in common. If we express a preference for the company of fans, we implicitly exclude the majority of the people in the world. If this is snobbery, elitism or clannishness, all right, it's snobbery, elitism or clannishness and so what?

I guess we disagree about the effects of the Boondoggle, although I did not mean to imply it was the sole (but rather, a major) factor in changes in fandom. Fandom was undergoing a resurgence at the time and, true to form, Willis did try to provide a cool wind on that hot and smoggy day. But the "bad vibes" continued, because those of us who were involved could only see the blows we were

striking for Our Side against our foes--not the harm we were doing to the fabric of the microcosm. So many of the gentler voices gaffiated or retired to friendlier small apas. I think, despite scattered attempts to carry on the torch of trufandom, it fell--and came close to sputtering out. There were certainly other factors--some coming into fandom whose sole experience with sf was Star Trek or Star Wars, who are not word-oriented people impressed by the ideas or writing in sf but visually-oriented types who enjoy nifty "special effects." Then too, SFR, while it may not be my kind of fanzine, is quite readable and often entertaining. Since nothing happens in a vacuum and SFR (and other similar efforts) was about the only kind of zine new fans could see, it was little wonder they were the ones they wanted to emulate when the urge to publish struck them.

I may give the impression that I blame them for being influenced in this way, but nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed, with so many fannish fans gaffiated or nursing wounds in these small apas, trufandom did not offer a real choice. I believe Bergeron--when he published the Willis issue of WARHOON--may have picked up the torch and given it a fresh dose of oil.

Dick Lupoff: Ted says he'll leave that longish short story, novellette or short novel for you. Perhaps his column in this issue will provide you some more background.

I think I "Gerberized" in my editorial. Speaking of whom, do you happen to recall just what his "explanation" was?

Doug Barbour: You may choose to identify yourself how you will, but I think you've erred. The words "fannish" and "sercon" have connotations beyond their literal meanings. "Sercon" derives from the words "serious" and "conscientious" (or "constructive"), while "fannish" means "of or pertaining to fans and fandom." (Although see my editorial here; it can be more complex than that.) In any event, this is being literal without considering the connotations--and while you seem to grasp the deeper meaning of "fannish," you do not appear to do the same for "sercon."

As generally used in fanzine fandom, sercon refers to those who think fans and fandom should have a Mission--say, to Impress Upon the Rest of the World the Importance of (a) SF as Literature, (b) Science as the Means to Save the World, or perhaps (c) the Necessity of Continued Exploration of Outer Space--and thus sercon fans feel things which are unnecessary to, interfere with or detract from this Mission (such as talking about things other than Topic A, getting to know each other as people and/or friends, "too much" emphasis on enjoying oneself and/or laughing a lot) is a frivolous waste of time which should be frowned upon, discouraged or possibly banned altogether.

In this sense, fannish is the antithesis of sercon--because fannish fans are in fandom for the friendships they've made here, believe even sf is subject to Sturgeon's Law ("90% of everything is crap"), that there are topics of discussion which are every bit as interesting--or perhaps even more interesting--than just how one hack differs from another, and laugh at attempts to organize them into effective groups to espouse the religion of sf or science and/or space exploration. Some fannish fans may no longer read, talk about or enjoy sf--but it does not follow (except in the minds of some sercon fans) that fannish fandom frowns upon reading, talking about or enjoying sf, or even upon its individual members taking on or espousing any number of Good Causes. Perhaps a simpler distinction is that fannish fans have a sense of humor, while sercon fans do not. Thus, it is possible to have a sense of humor and be serious and/or

conscientious/constructive about sf or fandom (which is essentially a fannish attitude) but not to have a sense of humor and also be sercon about sf or fandom.

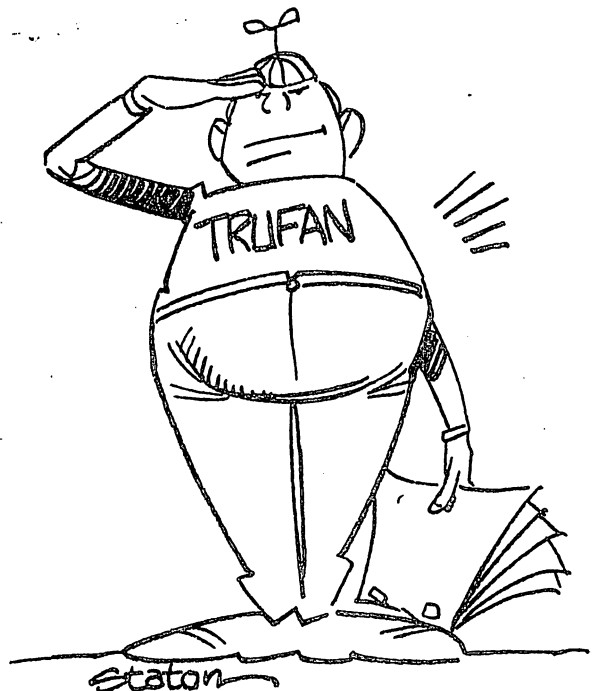
So the difference is greater than one between those who have an "academic" interest in sf and "enjoy" panels vs. those who do not. No sercon fan worthy of the name, responding to the last bm, could admit a desire to connect with people at cons or even say, "I like a lot of people I've met in fandom." To be truly sercon, you not only have to capitalized the "S" in "serious" but decry the fact that I had wasted my time (and yours) by sending you a zine which talked about fans and fandom, instead of devoting that space to serious reviews which, if read by a non-fan, would impress them with the fact that reading sf may be the sole hope of western civilization as we know it. You would have to View With Alarm the fact that I, and many of my friends, do not have an academic interest in sf or enjoy panels as much as you do--instead of accepting as natural that different people have different tastes. And while you might be able to say fans no longer devoted to the furtherance of your particular Holy Cause might be a little "off," you would not have your tongue in cheek--and you certainly would not be able to imply that possibly "all" fans might be That Way. So I'm sorry, sirrah, but if this letter is any indication, you don't fit my definition of "sercon."

There is also the distinction to be made between being sercon and getting sercon. But these too may become apparent with time.

John Berry: You think Creath's bit about the fuel of home-still egoboo was intended as self-directed irony? Perhaps. Or was it more like: 'Hey, folks, don't blame me if you get hit by the lash--after all [shuffling of feet], I'm trying to make a whipping boy of myself.' I addressed the "accidental" lash, if it was, because it seemed possible (in light of the MOTA piece) that it too was intentional.

But I felt Creath's put-down of egoboo was shown by another 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?" This is (and was, last issue) quoted from the TELOS piece; how is it that you do not see its relevance to the underlying attitudes of the MOTA column?

I don't dislike parties because they're so small they have only one conversation--nor do I dislike them if they're so big they have more than one; I've enjoyed both. You're right that it's not merely the number of people involved; I said ambiance was the primary consideration but available space was an important if not almost equal factor. Given choice, I would take the party large enough to have more than one conversation, since if there's only one there's a chance it might not interest me. But I'd rather be at a party with only one



conversation than one which was so congested that the "many" conversations turned into unintelligible babble.

Steve Stiles: Upon receipt of your letter, I immediately dispatched a note saying (in effect): "No, no, Steve, I was talking about snobs, not slobs."

Thus far, many moons later, this altruistic attempt to keep you from looking like an ass, and possibly getting yourself run out of fandom on a rail as a result, has gone unanswered--unless that unsigned postcard mentioned in the WAHF...

Your description of the house you shared with Mike Walsh sounds like the Piebald Palace I shared with Mike McInerny. You may recall that both Mike and I also collected things--not just books and magazines and newspapers but interesting things like old popsickle sticks, beer cans & the like, which were placed in precarious piles which tended to fall over, leaving visitors an ever-thinning isle through which they had to make their increasingly difficult way (as difficult, say, as getting through this sentence). Ah, memories...

Bill Patterson: I couldn't begin to list the times I've heard fandom decried as snobbish and/or elitist. To reply to most of these would be as fruitful as responding to someone who's convinced the faults of the world may be blamed upon the International Jewish Banking Conspiracy--you can't change their mind if they want to hold an absurd view and you give credance to it by taking it seriously enough to argue. Yet if an international Jewish banker gets up and starts going on about the IJBC, perhaps someone who knows better should try to straighten him out--even if "everyone" may have known the truth from the Year One. (It might also be said that if everyone knew it, the IJB would not get up and start going on about it.) There's a rough parallel here, since Creath was an active and, in my opinion, respected fanzine fan for close to 10 years when he wrote the column. If he didn't know these "perfectly true and valid points," others with less experience in the microcosm might not either.

But I agree with much of what you say--most people in fandom are doing what they want and with a lot of people doing different things, those doing similar things tend to congregate. It's not elitism or snobbery which "excludes" the majority of the people in the world from our activities but the fact that they don't give diddly squat for them.

"I tend to think that the binding force of fandom is the fact that virtually anyone we meet there can be expected to have a common stock of images drawn from the literature..." Uh, you qualified your statement ("virtually anyone") but to keep up my Image as a fringe-fan baiter, I'd point out that by and large media pipple--Trekkies, Star Warriors & the like--really have little or no exposure to the literature and therefore lack that common stock of images.

Eric Mayer: I don't agree with you--or Norman Hollyn, for that matter--on ego-boo and criticism. If I want unrestrained praise for every effort I've made, I'd be better off sending it to my mother than a bunch of ornery opinionated fans. Although I wouldn't have to send it to her--just tell her about it and she'd give me all the empty praise my little heart could desire. A pity, perhaps, that I can't be so easily gratified.

As a neo, through my first five or six years of activity, my fanzines and writing were roundly criticized. I don't think I was hurt by the experience; I think the reverse is true.

But then, for all my other faults, I could be honest enough about my efforts to realize I was being critized for ineptitude rather than rationalizing it away

as something else--because I was Challenging the Accepted Way, or because I Refused to KowTow the the BNFs, for example.

Gary Hubbard: I seem "passionate" about fandom? Well, I guess so. Maybe. I think the friends I've made here, the good times I've had at conventions and club meetings and parties, the pleasure of reading fanzines by people who write and draw for the sheer joy of creation, and the exchange of ideas which goes on in our microcosm are all worthy recipients of my affections. Beats the hell out of mouse-fucking, for sure.

Al Sirois: Personally, I wish you'd not used "willis" as a noun to mean what you meant. But--no big deal.

Fanzine fandom has ostracized few individuals in its more than half-Century existence--and when and where it has, it has been for more reason than merely because they held an unpopular view.

So I doubt, as you do, that fandom will ostracize you--even though you do demonstrate, in preferring RUNE to "The Catcher in the Rye," the stories of the GDA and material by Willis, a total lack of taste and good sense. But that, I figure, is your problem.

I share your general view, however; I ignore people I don't care to know and am not at all put out if people who do not wish to know me do the same to me. But I don't think (as you seem to) this is a view which Creath shares.

Art Widner: I stand in awe of pipple (like you and Redd Boggs, back when he was doing SKY HOOK) who manually justify margins.

Since I use a word-processor, my effort involves writing the word "JUSTIFIED" on my "control page" (a page which "tells" the smart little machine how and what to print). The diagonal columns on p4&5 of the last bm, which you admired, had to be done line by line--but that is nothing compared with the effort you put into an issue of YHOS.

So while I sincerely appreciate your egoboo, honesty compels me to say it's rather like praising color ditto work as though it were color mimeo; while the former can look good, it's accomplished in one run by using different colored carbons on a single master, where most color mimeography requires a separate run for each color which has to be lined up with precision. While both should be praised if well done, it's necessary to maintain a sense of proportion and realize one is inherently more difficult than the other and thus temper the praise accordingly.

Your anecdote about your visit to the N3F hospitality room is amusing but not surprising. I was twice a member of N3F, the second time after I had been active in club and fanzine fandom for about 10 years. On both occasions I received letters from the N3F Welcoming Committee which "welcomed" me to fandom...

Poor damon knight. First the N3F, then the SFWA. Some pipple never learn.

Norman Hollyn: See my comments to Eric Mayer about egoboo and criticism; I don't think unrestrained egoboo from fan to fan is a Good Thing.

As for friends who offer support vs. those who "feel that being friends with someone gives them license to treat the other worse than they would a stranger," I may or may not agree--depending on what you really mean.

Ted White is one of my best and longest-term friends; he's also honest enough to be one of my severist critics. I appreciate this because we can all be so short-sighted we can't see the forest because the damned trees are in the



way--in which case honest criticism can point out how the trees comprise the forest. If the criticism Misses The Point, it can be ignored. Ted's criticisms (in my case) have, from time to time, been tempered with praise--and naturally enough, I appreciate that, too.

But because of his criticism, I feel I can appreciate his praise more--since he knows I can take his criticism, I feel his praise must be real; if he likes something of mine, it's because he sees something in it to enjoy and not because he's a friend of mine or because for some unfathomable reason he is trying to butter me up with meaningless praise.

I grant there are those who are capable of going overboard and feel friendship gives them license to treat their friends like home-made shit... who then cannot understand why they have become "ex-friends." But all in all, I'd rather have a friendship based on honesty than unrestrained (and therefore meaningless) egoboo and support.

Since I find it easier to express points of disagreement rather than those of agreement, let me say I totally agree with your other comments--most particularly where you point out that tiresome bores are tiresome bores, be they BNF or neo. In fact, I could even argue that it's much worse in a BNF, since if they earned that title, as they should, they should also know better.

Harry Warner: I doubt Richard Bergeron's objection to "face-to-face" fandom is quite the same as Creath's. Creath speaks of snubs and being ignored; I've seen nothing from Bergeron which would indicate anything like the same attitude. I gather there are several reasons he joins you in general hermitude, including the (misguided, I think, but who am I to gainsay him?) belief that a lot of face-to-face fanac might burn him out and the conviction that he cannot be as polished in person as he is on the printed page. Creath's reaction, initially, reminded me most of a character who rode away on a High Horse in THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR.

I know of several fans--and Bergeron may be one--who do not so much object to contacts with other fans as they do to contacts with groups of other fans. It relates back to what I was saying to John Berry about crowds; there are some people who can enjoy themselves well enough in a conversation with one or two or three others but who cannot find the same enjoyment in the same conversation if it expands to 10 or 12 or 15 people. I don't necessarily share this view, but I can certainly understand the sentiment.

Marty Cantor: Phew! That's what I call a close call. You came within a hair's breath of getting your expose of SBOF into print here--but fortunately you forgot that all fan eds keep a trusty ax around to chop pipples off their mailing lists. Mine, alas, is rather rusty--but, ragged and bloody though the blow may have been, it was Necessary. Else, all fandom would be plunged into war...

---

"Give me a fulcrum, leverage and a place to stand  
and I will move the world."--Archimedes

---

Okay, EdCo, Do Your Thing:



