
THE FANZINE THAT TALKS ABOUT FANS

is written (on the first of a new batch of Heyer "Firstline" stencils from which I hope to see better results) and published monthly by Ted White, 1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, VA 22046, and can be had for The Usual, or donations of 20¢ stamps, but is otherwise Beyond Price. Mimeoed, of course, on the Mighty QWERTYUIOPress, January 14, 1984.

BORING BUSINESS STUFF: Because this fanzine is mailed (domestically) by Bulk Mail (saving me almost 50% on postage), it travels slowly across the country. I visualize its progress being like the ripples spreading out across a pond (when I visualize it at all) and those first LoCs that come in as progress-reports on the extent to which the fanzine (ripoles) has travelled. A local LoC, from Alexis Gilliland, say, might arrive in the week following my mailing of an issue. Letters won't start coming from the West Coast until the third week. (In my mind's eye, I see a Control Room, dominated by a large map that covers one wall. Concentric circles are centered on a spot just six miles west of Washington, D.C. Each circle represents another hundred miles from Ground Zero -- or World PONG Hq, as we once knew it. Each fan on this fanzine's mailing-list is represented by a tiny light bulb which flashes on when this fanzine's current issue reaches him or her or them or it. In my mind's eye I stand before this giant map, watching the daily progress of the tortuously slow mails as the lights in each circle begin to glow. "We've got problems in Pennsylvania, sir," a flunky announces with a sharp salute, and I notice with sudden concern a cluster of nearby lights still unlit, while beyond them Ohio flashes brightly...but I digress....)

About a week after I'd mailed the second issue of this fanzine, copies of the first issue began popping up in my mail. They had bright yellow Post Office stickers on them which provided address-corrections, along with a request for 25¢ each. I paid that sum, wrapped the returned zines with a fresh mailing wrapper, and remailed them, at First Class rates (37¢ for #1 with its accompanying copy of the PONG POLL RESULTS and BLUE MOON #2) to the new address. Total cost, including the original mailing: 73¢. (And, of course, the address-correction went into Lynn Steffan's computer, where the Master List of Trufen is kept.) I was aware that in many cases I'd have to repeat this process when the copies of the second issue which had gone to old addresses were in turn sent back to me. Total cost on those: 56¢ each. In my naivete I figured that the cost of sending copies of #s 1 & 2 to those of you who had failed to notify me of your change of address would be only \$1.29. I was wrong.

One day the mailman handed me a Postal Service Official Envelope ("Penalty for Private Use..." -- you know the bit) and demanded 50¢ for it. Uneasily, I forked over the four bits, took the envelope, and tore it open. Inside were two strips of yellow paper, torn from two copies of the second issue of this fanzine. They had my mailing label plus the P.O.'s bright yellow computer-printed change-of-address stickers.

"What's this?" I cried in vexation. "They've torn up my magazine! I can't remail these things!"

"That's not my problem, buddy," said the mailman (a substitute for my red-bearded regular mailman).

So I called upon my local Postmaster, visiting him in his office. I waved the torn strips in his face. "I can't remail these!" I expostulated.

"Of course not," he replied with a gentle smile. I got the impression that he pitied me. "You didn't pay for return postage on your magazine. You paid only for the address correction."

He pointed with a finger, probably his, at the line below this fanzine's return address. "You see," he told me, "you have 'Address Correction Requested' here. If you want your entire issue back you'll have to put 'Return Postage Guaranteed' on there too."

"That costs more, doesn't it?" I mumbled.

He nodded. Yes, that was definitely pity on his face. "How often do you publish this thing?" he asked.

"Monthly."

"Monthly," he said, musing. "Yes, well I wouldn't bother putting that stuff for address correction and return postage on one more than once every six months or so. It's too much of a bother, otherwise."

"But my readers will want every issue," I said. "If they miss an issue they'll write and demand another copy, and I don't have many extras."

His lip curled, he shrugged, and he turned away, dismissing me as he said, "Well, Mr. White, that's your business, isn't it?"

Well, yes and no. In the ensuing weeks I've received xeroxed postcards showing the address area of a previous issue of this fanzine, the address-correction sticker plainly affixed, the whole thing reduced by half -- for 25¢. Sometimes there are several, and they come in envelopes marked "Official Business," and I fork over 50¢ or 75¢. Worse, sometimes I miss my mailman and he leaves a little pink slip in my mailbox. Then I have to go down to the Post Office the next day and stand in line. I thought the lines would end after Christmas, but they didn't. They got longer. I have no idea why, but lots of people appear to be clutching little pink slips. But I don't think they all put out fanzines.

What this means to you, Friends, is that beginning this issue, on a trial basis, I'm guaranteeing return postage so that I'll get the whole issue back. I may even remail it to you.

But I'd really appreciate a change-of-address notification from you -- and it'd be nice if you sent me some stamps to cover all the additional postage I've spent getting your zines to you when you didn't bother to notify me. (I'm not talking about you, Robbie & Marty -- I just didn't think it would take so long for the issue to reach you; I thought it would get to you before your address changed.)

: If it seems to me that not only have you moved without letting me know, but that you probably aren't interested in this fanzine, I shall just not remail the issue. In fact, I didn't bother remailing several copies of #2 to marginal types -- who will now never know why they got only #1. Unless you tell them.

TAFF: This fanzine supports Rob Hansen for TAFF. That won't surprise those of you who've already perused the TAFF Ballot enclosed with this issue and noted that I am one of Rob's nominators. (I really wish I'd had a chance to rewrite Rob's platform, though.)..

That does not mean that I wouldn't be glad of the opportunity to meet D. West, if he instead won. But I do wonder a bit about a fan who first ridicules the idea of anthologizing his fanwriting and less than a year later is hawking copies of that anthology for ten bucks a copy, fifteen after December 31, 1983, and who had to be dragged, protesting all the way, into a TAFF nomination. Nonetheless I sent West my ten bucks.

But my feeling is that West's publicly-expressed contempt for American fans is unlikely to lead him into much fannish socializing -- in contrast

to Hansen. (But what would happen if West did win, and while morosely wandering through LACon came abruptly face to face with Barry Malzberg? Would there be a brilliant flash of light and then only a charred area in a hotel corridor to mark the eventful spot? Or could the universe somehow accomodate the presence face to face of two such men, each given to a morose stance, the stance of a Man of Letters who has seen too much of the frailties of the Human Condition, at once accepting and cynical, each bound to science fiction and soul searching sentences like this one? Perhaps this is, in the end, something Fan is Not Meant To Know....)

Rob Hansen is someone I look forward to meeting far more -- and not just on account of all the nice things Avedon has said about him, either. He puts out my favorite British fanzine, EPSILON, of which the latest issue as I write this is #15. Why, just last night I bumped into Avedon at a WSFA meeting. "How'd you like the new EPSILON?" I asked her, making the usual fannish small-talk amid the hustle and bustle of club fans eagerly debating whether the WSFA should give ConStellation a thousand bucks (see the Next Story). And Avedon, this demure, dignified woman, that Avedon, seized me by my lapels and climbed halfway up me, crying "The new EPSILON? The new EPSILON?! I haven't gotten it yet! Where is it? Show it to me!" And of course I did, but that is Another Story, and one you won't read here, I can assure you.

Rest assured.

But what about Rob Hansen? you're asking me. In addition to putting out my favorite Brit fanzine, Rob sends many copies to the U.S., evincing a TransAtlantic attitude which contrasts with the insularity of much of Brit fandom. In fact, Rob's attitude towards fandom itself strikes me as ideal (by which I suppose it matches mine, or at least my ideals): He appreciates the family ties which bind together all English-speaking fans, the basic community that transcends national boundaries. He doesn't ignore local fannish issues and concerns in Britain (the reverse, in fact: he has considered them at length in EPSILON), but he deals with them in context, and that context is fandom as a whole.

He's also a good fanartist.

And having read Rob's reports on past conventions he's been to, I look forward not only to his presense at LACon, but his subsequent writeup.

CONSTELLATION: The 1956 NyCon 2 was the first Worldcon to be put on by an incorporated body. And on its last day Lester del Rey rose from the assembled audience and informed us all that the Con was in debt to the tune of over a thousand dollars. \$750 of that represented the one hundred \$7.50 rubber-chicken banquet seats that Dave Kyle over-guaranteed. The rest -- a figure in dispute -- was owed to the Air Force for a missing display doll (space-suited). So Lester passed the hat. We didn't want to see the WSFS Inc. go bankrupt, did we? We didn't want to besmirch the Godd Name of the Worldcon, did we? Let's dig deep, everybody. Let's bail Dave Kyle out. Let's forget that one of the prime selling points for incorporating the Worldcon, cited only months earlier by Kyle, was that it would protect individuals on the Committee (or the membership at large) from any financial loss incurred by the Con. Well, the more things change -- as Papa Hugo was wont to observe upon the drop of an F&SF bacover -- the more they stay the same.

"Dear Member," sez a letter recently received from ConStellation (perhaps you got one too); "We hope that you had a good time at ConStellation -- our goal was to throw a fantastic party for 7000 of our most intimate friends."

"Unfortunately, we are now faced with a major problem and we need your help. While we did our best to put on an enjoyable convention, we failed to put on a profitable one. We lost a lot of money, and we need to raise

another \$40,000 to cover our deficit. The only way we can do this is through your help and generosity. No major science fiction convention has ever had to declare bankruptcy. We don't know what the impact of such an event would be on other conventions; it is only with your help that we can all avoid finding out."

How about that? Roll that paragraph (or so) around in your mind for a bit, mentally munch that pitch until you've digested its full implications. I'll wait.

Right. Sure they did their best to put on an enjoyable convention. That's why everyone I know who worked on it felt hassled, lied to, and taken advantage of. Wotta party, huh? But they were so incompetant that for the first time since 1956, a Worldcon lost money! (How much is also in dispute; this letter asks for \$40,000 but our next correspondent says it's more like \$69,000. And how could they lose money when no Worldcon in recent memory has lost money? Mike Glyer's speculation in FILE 770, which strikes me as sensible, is that they over-estimated the number of walk-in members they'd get -- despite which ConStellation had the largest membership of any Worldcon ever. They counted on an unprecedented number of walk-ins, at the highest fee ever, in order to break even. No other Worldcon has ever done this; most have treated the walk-in-membership money as the "profit," the icing on the cake. And it ought to go without saying -- but obviously didn't -- that no Worldcon should ever base its budget on guestimates of walk-in attendance. But I did say they were incompetant, didn't I?)

Now they are appealing to our "generosity," both individually as members of ConStellation, and from our clubs as well. Well, I don't feel awfully generous toward a Con which, in its incompetancy, neglected to sign contracts with its hotels until less than six months before the Con, and thereby could do nothing to stop the hotels from raising their rates 50%. That cost me \$100. Well, that's one hundred dollars ConStellation can't get from me, isn't it?

Then, the subtle threat: "No major science fiction convention has ever had to declare bankruptcy. We don't know what the impact of such an event would be on other conventions...."

Sure we do. We know that it would have little or no bad effects. It might prompt subsequent concons to be more realistic in their budgets and management. Ghod knows Dave Kyle's banquet fiasco had a profound effect on the post-1956 Worldcons, none of which over-guaranteed anything. But the hotels have known for the past thirty years exactly how each Worldcon has performed, and how well they themselves fared (in terms of rooms rented, banquets, etc.). They also know that each Worldcon is the product of a separate group (usually incorporated -- ConStellation is a "non-profit" corporation, no joke). It's hard to imagine any way in which a ConStellation bankruptcy and default would impact on future "major science fiction conventions," and this threat is an empty one.

On the other hand, the possibility of a bailout of ConStellation by fandom is a genuine threat to the financial stability of future Worldcons. If fandom pays off ConStellation's debts it will send a dangerous message to the committees of Worldcons-to-come: Don't worry, it'll be taken care of. Incompetance is rewarded; you don't have to worry about fucking up.

Andy Porter, in SFC, brings up the subject of the Worldcon Emergency Fund, started in 1969 to deal with a torn movie screen. The Fund "seems, according to those looking for its pot of gold, to have found a permanent home with Denvention, the 1981 Worldcon. The few thousand dollars still in the bank -- Denvention co-chair Susanne Carnivale was unclear on the actual amount, nor is it clear why the money was not passed on to subsequent worldcons upon conclusion of Denvention's operation -- will be forwarded to ConStellation." (January, 1984) Thus the fruits of previous.

Worldcons are eaten by ConStellation. Well, I guess they would regard it as an emergency....

Alexis Gilliland provides more details:

"The Worldcon Deficit...ah yes. At the last WSFA meeting Mike Walsh stood up and explained. The actual debt appears to be in the neighborhood of \$69,000, when you include everything. The figures publicly announced do not include the \$1000 loaned to the bid by WSFA and the other \$1000 loaned by BSFS, which the con committee has forgiven itself. (Gee, fellas, it looks like we can't pay you back. Sorry about that.) Walsh then asked the WSFA to kick in another \$1000 to help pay off the outstanding bills.

"What was BSFS doing? Waiting to see what WSFA did. What did WSFA do? Well, in actual fact, nothing...effectively Walsh's non-motion was tabled until the first meeting in January, at which time the con committee will have an idea of how close they'll be to breaking even. If they are going belly-up anyway, I see no point in throwing good money after bad." Subsequently, I'm told, BSFS agreed to give the con money, while WSFA at its first January meeting again decided to do nothing until informed about how and where the money would be spent. For instance, the DiamondVision screen has yet to be paid for, and that's \$15,000 right there.

Alexis continues: "When I asked what we'd get for our ~~\$\$\$~~, the answer seemed to be that unless we kicked in, no Worldcon Bid from the Washington Area could ever again show its face to any self-respecting hotel. In the interests of moving right along, I let it pass, but that is a crock of unmitigated bullshit. If the hotels were not aware that each Worldcon is separately incorporated, it is damn well time they found out." Agreed. But why should Washington Area hotels give a faint damn about something that occurred in Baltimore? And, anyway, I'm under the impression that the ConStellation hotels made out like bandits and have no cause for complaints. But I'm interrupting Alexis, who goes on to say, "When I pointed out that Discon II /the 1974 D.C. Worldcon/ didn't share its profits, Alan Huff got violently angry. And, yes, Discon II repaid its loans, and paid back anything you had a receipt for, but they didn't share the profit they made with the club. But a loss, now...." Um, what did they do with the profits, then? Was a financial report ever issued for Discon II?

"Anyway," Alexis points out, "the decisive screw-up, in my opinion, was the failure to sign up the hotels at the promised rates. Ted Mannekin was hotel liason, on the strength of his work with Unicon (a series of bad jobs, from which he apparently learned nothing) plus the fact that he had ties with the Baltimore business community. If the rates had been \$40 to \$50, as originally promised, the con might well have pulled 7500 people.

"The decisive organizational failure was the decentralization of spending authority. Shirley Avery, the treasurer, was reduced to writing checks for what the 'Department Heads' had authorized."

Still and all, Alexis admits, "I had a good time at the con, spending a lot more time in the fan lounge than in the SWFA suite...which was way the hell and gone over in Aberdeen /Maryland/ or somewhere." (Actually it was in the Hilton, but don't get me started on the SWFA suite....)

I expect the real reason the ConStellation Committee doesn't want to see the con go into bankruptcy is that there's still a lot of left-over booty from the con, like the copying machine ConStellation bought, which they'd hate to see liquidated by a bankruptcy court. I wonder if a quick-thinking creditor will seize the computer before it passes into other hands. I hear a buyer has been lined up. The deficit has been widely publicized; it can be only a matter of time before a creditor catches on and acts.

Well, it's not my problem. And it's not yours, either. It's solely the problem of the ConStellation Committee, and I for one feel no generosity toward them.

Let them bankrupt!

FANHIST- Or,
ORY DEPT Was
Jo-

soph Nicholas
Born 25 Years
Too Late?

In this fan-
zine's first de-
parture from its
Keep It Simple,
No Art format,
a clipping is
presented from
a 1958 Dallas
News. The con
(the name of
which escapes
me) was notable
for the fact
that in addit-
ion to the four
luminaries de-
picted here, at-
tendees includ-
ed both Greg
Benford and Kent
Moomaw. Kent
sent me the
clipping only
about a month
before he killed
himself on his
18th birthday.

Fandom has-
n't really
changed that
much, has it?



-Dallas News Staff Photo.

NOT FROM MARS, BUT BIG D

Science fiction writers Marion Bradley
and F. J. Ackerman examine the mas-
querade ball makeup of Dallas fans

Pat Edwards, 17, with the purple ink
all over his face, and Randy Brown,
17. (Story, Section 4, Page 1)

JON SWEET & THE BULLIES: I was visiting Wally ("the Snake") Mind the
other day, as I occasionally do. "Hey, Ted,"
Wally said at one point, "are you still hung up on the topic of 'Worm-
boys'?" He was a little beligerant, but I couldn't tell if that was his
natural beligerance or a beligerance related to the term, "wormboy." Wal-
ly hates to be reminded that he's really not the snake he likes to think
he is.

"Not really," I said. "But that reminds me that Bruce Arthurs wrote
to tell me that Deborah Laake's original article on Wormboys first ap-
peared in 'NEW TIMES, the local /Phoenix/ weekly alternative paper...it
got more reaction from readers here than anything else NEW TIMES has ever
printed. Most of it from men, and most of it negative. In fact, "Worm-
boys" won a journalism award," Bruce said."

"I hate it when you do that," Wally snarled.

"Do what?"

"Quote things like that, with quotes inside quotes. It mixes me up."
He flexed his body and then neatly tied it in a square knot.

"I hadn't realized that 'Wormboys' didn't originate in D.C.'s CITY PA-
PER until I got that letter from Bruce," I remarked. "But, you know what,
Wally? This whole thing reminds me of a boy I knew in high school...."

"Uh-oh," Wally said. "Is this another one of your stories?"

"Yup. I call it 'Jon Sweet & The Bullies'."

Wally unknotted himself and said, "Just a minute. I want to get comfortable for this."

"Ummm, well," I said, "when I was in tenth grade one of my classmates was a scrawny kid named Jon Sweet. He was your classic wormboy. All the school bullies picked on him. He was a perpetual victim. And whenever some bully picked on him, he'd squeal. Oh, he whined a lot anyway -- 'Do I hafta.' that sort of thing -- but when one of the beefier bullies had him backed up against a locker and sweating with fear, he'd squeal. It was like you took his normal whine up three or four octaves. Like a stuck pig."

"I've never heard a pig squeal," Wally interjected. "Have you?"

"No," I said, "but it's one of those writer-cliches that everyone understands. I've heard rabbits squeal, though, and that's a terrible sound. Jon sounded a lot like a squealing rabbit, now that I consider it."

"Well, anyway, here I am, maybe fifteen years old, wearing glasses, a science fiction fan, a loner -- you know the type. I sympathized with poor ol' Jon Sweet, as one underdog to another. One of Jon's major antagonists, Rodney Phillips, a porcine jerk who, I'm glad to say, ended up a used-car salesman, used to pick on me, too. He didn't punch me or anything, but he was consistently verbally nasty. So I felt this kinship with Jon even though he did whine and squeal."

"So I befriended Jon. I'd go visit him at his house, where I discovered that his parents were divorced and he was living with his mother. His father had left a wine cellar in the basement, and we used to sneak down there and tipple the wine, feeling very daring about it."

"But it was hard to maintain our friendship, because I pitied him so much. And you know how easy it is for pity to turn into contempt. It was hard to keep from feeling contemptuous of Jon. He had the same effect on everyone, even the teachers. I have a vivid memory of an incident that occurred in gym class once. We were sitting around listening to a health lecture or something and the Coach got mad at Jon for some reason. Jon was sitting right in front, so the Coach just off and kicked him. He kicked Jon right in the shin, hard enough to break the skin. And Jon squealed. He squealed 'Ow!' and then 'Why'd you do that?' and then 'Ow, that hurts!' I don't remember what the Coach said, but that was a sort of prototypical incident. I can't think of another student struck by a teacher in that school."

"Then one day I discovered that Jon had been stealing -- from me. He'd taken little things, boy things, like a Zippo lighter I'd had for years, a three-color ball-point pen, some comics. He'd come over to visit, we'd spend an hour or two in my room, and when he left something from my room went with him. I didn't realize what was happening -- my room was pretty cluttered and easy to lose things in anyway -- until he slipped up and left my Zippo lighter sitting out in plain sight in his room where I saw it."

"What'd you do?" Wally asked, looking a bit less bored.

"I grabbed him by his arm, roughly, and demanded to know how my lighter had gotten there. I'd been looking for it and he knew that. I'd been looking for weeks. So he whined that this wasn't my lighter, it was a different lighter that he'd found somewhere else, and he'd been thinking of giving it to me and telling me it was mine and he'd found it for me, but now I was treating him so badly.... Unfortunately, for him, the lighter had my TW initials scratched onto it, the cross-bar of the T on the left stroke of the W, something I'd done years earlier. So I shook him and prompted him to reveal a dresser drawer in which I found some more of my things. He couldn't recall which comics he'd taken, so I grabbed his whole lot -- maybe two dozen -- to punish him. All the while, he's squealing and whining."

"Well, as you can imagine, I was pretty disgusted with Jon Sweet, and I stopped spending time away from school with him. It dawned on me that perhaps he deserved the treatment he got.

"Once, earlier, he'd confessed to me that his name had originally been 'John' but that he'd dropped the Silent H. In 1953 spelling one's name 'Jon' was quite an affectation, and it seemed to act as a goad to the bullies. I recall Rodney Phillips taunting him with "Oh, Jon..." and giving 'Jon' a peculiar vocal twist that mocked it. It was a 'sissy name' as far as they were concerned, and Jon of course was a sissy by almost any definition. But to have hung a 'sissy' affectation around his own neck...?"

"Then too, the bullies loved Jon's squeals. They bullied him in order to produce his squeals. So why'd Jon keep on squealing?"

"He was compulsive?" Wally asked.

"I think he enjoyed his relationship with the bullies, in some perverse way," I said. "It got him attention. He'd grown up without a father for much of his life, and these jocks and bullies supplied something for him that maybe he could have gotten in a healthier way from a father. I dunno. But he was certainly the ultimate Wormboy of my experience."

"So what'd you learn from the experience?" Wally asked. "What's the point, the moral, of this story?"

"I'm not sure. Maybe that, after empathizing first with Jon, I came eventually to see his bullies' point of view and to appreciate it to a degree. Or maybe it's that I felt Jon bringing out the bully in me eventually and I didn't like that much. I dunno, really...."

"Changing the subject back to fandom," Wally said, "have you noticed the way Brian Earl Brown has been sniping at you lately? I was reading the latest OUTWORLDS, and there right in the middle of Brian's letter was another attack on PONG. He didn't think most of it could 'stand the "test of time"' -- now you've got me doing quotes inside quotes, dammit! -- and he said the writing in PONG was just 'apa-natter -- in style, in tone, in skill.' Well, I don't know about you and Dan, but my stuff in PONG was better than that! I am one offended snake, lemme tell ya! But I know he wasn't talking about my stuff. It's like how in his STICKY QUARTERS he lambasts your SIKANDER piece as bad writing -- as if he'd be able to tell! And he says he's not printing the letters he got on Taral's piece about PONG because everybody must be bored with the topic by now."

"That figures," I said. "He probably didn't like what the letters said. Taral told me that Brown was unhappy that his piece wasn't more negatively slanted."

"Didn't he used to write you guys kissy letters about PONG?"

"Sure did. On nearly every issue. Little did we realize how unpleasant Brian really found our zippy li'l fmz. I gather he's making up for that now."

"But doesn't it grind you, Ted? Doesn't it bug you that every time you open a fanzine, there's Brian Earl Brown creebing about you or about PONG?"

"Well, at least he's off his Sixth Fandom Fandom kick," I pointed out. "That's an improvement."

"Aw, come on, Ted," Wally persisted. "Don't you want to do something? Don't you want to step on him like you'd step on a cockroach? Make him go squish?"

"Well," I said, "I think we ought to consider why he's doing it...."

"Shit," Wally said, "you know how that goes over these days! You'll just be accused of inferring motives again."

"Well," I pointed out, "Brian has been sniping at us on one pretext or another for two years, now. Logic does not dissuade him. Nor do appeals to him as a human being. But when I opined, in Skel's THE ZINE THAT HAS NO NAME #3, that Brian was jealous of our fannish accomplishments, it must've struck a deep nerve, because Brian went crazy at that point. Remember, that

was when he took a long letter I'd written him and quoted a few fragments from sentences completely out of context in order to make it look like I'd said things I hadn't really said. Really sneaky, that."

"Yeah, and then he took your bit about him being jealous and tried to turn it around on you, to prove that you were jealous of him!"

"No doubt he thought that a clever rejoinder," I said.

"Yeah, but it was kinda dumb," Wally said. "I mean, how does that excuse all the attacks he'd been writing on Sixth Fandom Fandom?"

"Consistency of logic is not one of Brian's strong suits," I said.

"No, but the consistency of his efforts to put you down certainly is!"

"That ties in with what I was going to say," I exclaimed. "Why is Brian Earl Brown doing this?"

"Okay, then," Wally said, "why?"

"Attention," I said. "He wants attention, and he knows that one way to get it is to be an irritant."

"You're saying that Brian Earl Brown, a well-known 'Fat American twerp,' has been jabbing at you in order to get attention?"

"Sure. Just as Jon Sweet wanted the bullies' attention. Maybe not consciously, but he is trying to provoke a return attack."

"What will that accomplish?"

"A number of things. One thing is attention, on the level of 'I don't care what you say about me, so long as you spell my name right.' 'Space in fanzines like this one, devoted to him. Another is that he wants to feel morally justified, and if he squeals loudly enough he hopes that I'll paste him a good one, and that'll prove him right about me. If he behaves like a good victim, he'll prove I'm a bully."

"And that's why you refuse to step on him like a bug, huh?"

"Look," I told Wally, "even when I stopped sympathizing with Jon Sweet, even when I started sympathizing with his bullies, I didn't want to become a bully myself. I think Brian is a sneaky, covert, whining little jerk, but I refuse to play his self-reinforcing little game. By now people are starting to notice that he sounds like a stuck record, endlessly repeating himself, endlessly trying to provoke me. Sooner or later Brian will discover that he's painted himself into a corner, that he's created a picture of himself in most people's minds that is hardly flattering. I'm content to wait and let him do himself damage without adding any blows of my own."

"Wotta fucking saint you are, Ted," Wally said.

REACTIONS: One of the reasons this issue is running an extra two pages (aside from my usual verbosity) is so that I can squeeze a few letters in. Terry Carr writes, "I like your spiffy little fanzine even though it's a bit scruffy, actually. What I mean, I mean there are no cartoons or even lettering guide work; it's all type, pages and pages of solid type, and it looks like one of those British fanzines put out by people who begrudge their beer money to the cost of extra pages caused by anything like graphic niceties. They like to chuckle pityingly at us ill-educated Yanks who can't seem to stand nothing but reading matter: 'Bloody hell, how do you reckon those sods ever manage to read any Real Books?' They've got a point there, actually, but I still have a sneaking suspicion there'd be more art in Britzines if pubs came on the National Welfare."

"Well, that's neither here nor there. egoscan demonstrates that John D. Berry isn't the only U.S. faneditor who's willing to let his fanzine stand or fall strictly on the strength of the written material, and yours does stand rather well. Show me a fan who's too unsure of himself to compose in the stick and I'll show you one who'll end up working till the small hours at night silk-screening decorations for his pages. (Wait till you see what I say about you when I write to Bergeron.)"

"You misinterpreted my reaction if you really thought I was 'insulted'

when I heard the ConStellation committee decided against inviting me as Fan Guest of Honor because it might seem to ignore my Big Name Pro status. Actually I was more like appalled, and somewhat amused...at the very idea that I'm a Big Name Pro, for one thing. Tell it to the publishers; better yet, tell it to their sales reps. But even granting that I've been around as a pro for twenty years and have my name on over sixty books, a few of which I actually wrote, the revelation that there are people on con committees who haven't noticed that someone can be a pro without ceasing to be a fan roused my sense of wonder." Terry, Terry, open your eyes! There are people on Worldcon committees these days who have never read a fanzine and think "fandom" is people like them, while "prodom" is anyone whose name has appeared in professional print. Remember the Denvention committee's "Who's Willis?"? Most of the members of ConStellation's Steering Committee would probably ask the same question. These people know that any Real Pro would be insulted to be considered Just A Fan. (At least they know you're a pro; my professional career was Before Their Time....)

Terry continues, as though I'd not interrupted him: "I was at Orycon last month, where I got to know Craig Miller -- he and I were among a bunch of people sitting on the floor in the hall outside the consuite the last night, laughing and joking and generally being manic -- and I suddenly remembered that you had solemnly advised me to 'get the word out to con committee people that you don't mind being recognized as a fan, Terry.' So since Craig's a bonafide SMOF I did as you said; I told him to pay no attention to the FTELTHY PRO badge I happened to have on at the time (Tucker had given it to me), that I was really honestly a fan, and if some desperate committee in England or Yugoslavia or Japan needed a Fan Guest of Honor and thought of inviting me and paying my way, I wouldn't sneer at them. Why. I'd probably even go to Texas or Seattle. Craig nodded thoughtfully and I suppose even now the networks of SMOFdom are buzzing with the news that Terry Carr is begging for the chance to be Fan GoH somewhere, anywhere. You see, I always take your advice, in order that one day I may get what I deserve." (11037 Broadway Terrace, Oakland, CA 94611)

I Also Heard From: Sam Wagar ("It's unfortunate that, for me, this issue was overshadowed by the sheer ballbreaking joy of Mr. Steffan's remarks on Taral's view of PONG."), Gary Hubbard, Ron Salomon (several times), Robert (or maybe Bob) Lichtman ("...wondering if there are any 'implications' to your parenthetical digression about when I 'was "Bob" to his friends'..."), Bill Patterson ("I want you to know that I wrote Bergeron remarking my delight at his vivid serigraphs."), Harry Warner ("I wanted to tell you, in case you hadn't heard: George Wetzel is dead."), Jeanne Bowman ("Gosh, if Avedon Carol's paying to get into your pants, I guess I'd better do some LoC so I can keep you in my bed."), and Tom Weber ("Perhaps you should add a new category in this year's PONG Poll for best poll....").

"Flame is feeting...."

egoscan 3 / New Decade Productions Inc.
1014 N. Tuckahoe St.
Falls Church, VA 22046



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Joe D. Siclari
4599 N.W. 5th Avenue
Boca Raton, FL 33431

RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED
