

10202 Belcher
Downey, California, U. S. A.
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Dear Bayd,

A BAS (Number 11) certainly came up to my expectations. I had read and heard Good Opinions of it from Various Sources, and was expecting something in the way of a Superior Fanzine -- and sure enough, it was!

The fact that it seems to be something of an Annual does not detract from my own Good Opinion of the mag, though of course it would be nice to see it issue forth several times per year. But in most cases a regular (and consequently rigorous) schedule tends to wear fan publishers down to a state of apathy, so I would rather see you publish such ish in your own good time, as long as each ish is as jam-packed with quality material as is No. 11.

As for ideas and cartoons in a mag which is more concerned with the ~~mag~~ written word (as is A BAS) I can take 'em or leave 'em. It is restful to the eyes to have the solid type broken with a white patch or illustration here and there, but actually if one wants to rest one's eyes ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ one can always close them, or look at a blank wall, or glance out the window, and then return to the joys of reading.

Needless to say, your Pre, During & Post Salcarn report was the most entertaining and fascinating thing in the ish. Anna seconds me on this, or maybe I second her--as she read it before I did, the mag having arrived when I was at work. For some reason your account of your visit in Seattle re-inspired our desire to attend this year's Westerncon (and visit the area north of here)... Anna has visited there before and has always wanted to return for more sight-seeing, and Traveling Hither & yon appeals to me too. Unfortunately, the state of our finances, to put it delicately, seems to prohibit any such sojourns this year, as well as the house needing painting, repairs, etc., so at the moment we see little hope of attending either the Westerncon or the Detention. We weep. Anna was delighted by your reference to her as "chilled steel" in her "role of Chairman"--no matter how you meant it. She took it as a compliment because, of course, she felt nothing like that inside. Before and during the con tensions were building up for not only did we have a con and its success to worry about, but there was the very evident possibility that the whole thing could be ruined by a Big Hassle. We expected everything from public and violent verbal battles between the two sides of the dispute to possible physical mayhem. After all, critics to the contrary, fans ARE people and when people lose control of their emotions anything can happen. As Chairman she felt the responsibility of guiding the con thru stormy seas resting on her shoulders (which, I assure you, are soft and feminine--but not mushy soft or sickly sweet feminine), and tended to over-react. She had to be firm so that we retained control of the thing, keeping it from getting out of hand. So people on both sides of the dispute, as well as the interested and uninterested "bystanders" felt that she was too firm in some instances, and in certain specific instances she agrees.

As you guessed, she did feel concern for the next person or persons on the program, but takes exception to your phrase "prospective audience melt away." Had they melted away...that is, leave quietly and orderly, ~~xxxx~~ instead of making it such an obvious rush to escape, there would have been no banging of the gavel for order, etc. Well, live and learn. Anna does regret being so "bossy" but she (nor any of us) ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ does not regret taking the firm stand we did.

As for the major participants in both sides of the big feud, Anna says she found them innocuous rather than insidious, and found it difficult to believe that these people could get themselves ~~xxxxxx~~ involved in such a hassle. That they did is perhaps further ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ proof that fans are human...

All in all, your con report was one of the best, and there have been some pretty good ones. I have been interested in obtaining and reading all of them, not just because I was on the committee (though that is reason enough), but because I missed so many of the things that happened (both program and non-program items). Sometimes it is like reading about a con I never attended, despite the veracity of the reporter, and I regret that I spent so much time running around helping keep the show on the road (and no doubt fuss-budgeting more than was necessary) instead of saying to hell with it and joining the happy group in the bar.

All of the other items in the ish were top-notch stuff. I'm almost willing to believe that any one of them appearing in a lesser mag would be considered the top item in that particular ish. Maybe that is going too far in handing out ego-bes but I feel in a generous mood today, and the overall effect of A BAS has not worn off, though it has been at least a week since I read it. Leafing thru No. 11 again, as I write this epistle, I can see some exceptions to the above overall splash of ego-bes. Not that the exceptions are bad or poor or wothavia but perhaps short pieces like Xmas with the Lunarians would not rate Best Item in another mag. A longer, more generally slanted piece (like Derelict-Deregation) would of course meet with the most general approval.

Walt's As Others See Us will, I hope, serve the purpose for which it was intended. Still, there is the strong tendency among fans (assuming all groups of people) to categorize. And no one person fits exactly into the slot assigned them. I know fans who would generally be called "fanzine fans" because they publish, edit, write for, read, illustrate, help mechanically...to repr...fanzines. And these same fans attend cons and are just as "noisy" or extroverted as the "convention fans" who do not have much a hand in the fanzine field. Maybe they are introverts ~~wanting~~ trying to be extroverts (if I may borrow a phrase from Sturgeon who said this about himself at the Norwescon) but the end result is the same.

And there are fans who seem to neatly fit the "convention fan" category in that they attend cons, get involved in the business and politics of same, love to organize or participate in organizations, etc....but they also produce fanzines, not all of which are completely serious. So maybe it shouldn't be hard for us to get ~~to~~ to understand each other. Tolerance is a wonderful thing—as long as it IS tolerance (as opposed to bigotry or preconceived prejudices) and not just being merely patronizing.

Walt's article will be most effective if each individual fan who reads it, goes so with the thought in mind—How does this apply to ME? Not a derisive question but a sincere approach. Like, which am I? Introvert or extrovert? Where have I failed in trying to understand the other guy? Etc. This may seem silly and ~~stupid~~ but it is surprising how many people think they are completely extroverted or completely introverted without bothering to analyse themselves or their actions (and reactions). When they do they discover that things are not always what they seem, themselves included.

I met Alex (or Rich) Kirs at LASFS a couple of weeks ago. He showed up during a showing of color slides by Ratsler. (Fascinating pics too and I don't mean just the nudes. Bill's photos covered a variety of subjects, and I envy his ability and talent as reflected by his photos, illus, sculptures and cartoons.) I didn't get to talk to Alex much—we typed intras at each other—and I'm afraid mine was something less than inspiring. He knew my name ~~rather~~ vaguely and all I could think to write was that I had been Sec'y for the W33 SOLACON and an ex-member of FAPA. I knew he wrote for A BAS but had to admit I had never seen a copy (at that time). That killed that, and Ellick (who was down from Berkely for the thirteenth time in the past year or so), Bju and others kept Alex and the typer happily busy. Eventually he and Ted Johnstone retired to the kitchen to carry on a lengthy conversation (using one of the several typers around LASFS) which for all I know could be a great work for some fanzine. Ted shows great promise as a fan writer (with pre ambitions too) and after having read Alex's column in A BAS I can see how these two might make a good dialogue team. Both are on the key side, and I do not mean this in the "Hollywood" sense.

Harry's report on the preacher's attitude towards space travel indicates that superstition has lost much ground, even in the past couple of decades. More and more the churches are having to bow to the inevitable—that is, that man will progress despite the halts thrown on him. So they have to keep re-interpreting, or ignoring the things that are happening in the world around them. From where I'm sitting, all of the organized Christian (so-called) religions have, beginning with Paul, gotten so far away from the basic teachings of Christ that it is pitiful. I wonder if this is also true of the present day followers of Mohammed, ^Wudha, etc.? Any authorities in the audience?

Wish I had more time to discuss in detail the other items in No. 11 as well as that wonderfully healthy lettercol. Already I can't wait until No. 12....

Best Wishes & Keep Smiling!

Len Moffatt