

ETTL FIVE

from Jackie Causgrove, 6828 Alpine Avenue, #4, Cincinnati, OH 45236. Available for Letters of Comment, editorial whim, or 66¢ in cash or postage stamps. ETTLE is on a quarterly schedule; thisish Sept. 1985, but due to the Holiday season, nextish most likely won't be sent out until January '86.

The way one reads a fanzine—or say, a magazine—reflects the interest the reader has in the various parts that make up the whole. My habit is to skim an issue until I reach the letter column, read it, then return to the rest of the zine to see what new is being added to whatever it is that forms the personality of the zine to my mind's eye. The Locol forms a bridge between issues; commenting on, reminding one about, what went on before. Locols help set the zine in context, as it were, and aid in uniting a string of issues into a sort of fabric that is different from all others.

Since I read fanzines in that fashion, it makes sense for me to produce a zine in a pattern that suits my reading habits. Therefore I've decided to start off each ETTLE with the comments on the preceding issue. With that ~~new~~ ~~intended~~ policy in mind, let's begin with a segment—the title for which I'm borrowing from an earlier zine I did—called...

FEEDBACK TALK

PAUL SKELTON -- 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 5NW, UNITED KINGDOM.
June 26, 1985

You Rotting Swine, You!!! I said I wasn't going to talk about TAFF, certainly not keeping the pot boiling in fanzines. I only LoCed because you said you were terminating the discussion, so I thought I could give you feedback whilst not giving the mixture another stir. And then you go and publish the fucker!

Well Mom, you certainly stepped back from the specific details in summing up what is wrong with ~~the~~ ~~world~~ fandom today. Dare I suggest that perhaps you stepped too far back? After all, nobody can disagree this time, can they? (Knowing fans, I guess that's a silly question.) However, I doubt that anyone will make the connections required to transfer their actions of recent months into the situation in a manner that casts themselves in a bad light. A good piece, though. Well thought out, well planned, well constructed, and very nicely reasoned -- the sort of piece that requires a lot more behind-the-scenes work than is superficially evident.

Changing the subject -- one word of advice. Don't try typing the lettercolumn heading when your stutter is so bad. I know it can come on when one is under stress.

Take a few deep breaths to calm yourself, type 'Et-tle's Feedback', and get on before they know what's hit them. To get semi-serious for a moment, I do dislike this type of 'Heading By Repetition'. It seems to me it is absolutely, 100% analogous to a record getting stuck in a single groove, well, jumping if you want to be pedantic. When a record does this it drives me round the bend. It irritates me, and I bet it irritates most people. Why is repetitive heading supposed to be different? Maybe you or Rob Hansen could enlighten me, eh?

The most glaring thing I noticed about the letter column was the names of the people in it, or rather the names of the people not in it. I mentioned in a recent letter that what I see as one of the worst effects of all the recent unpleasantness has been a drawing of lines, a taking of sides. Fandom is now made up of various Twiltone Maginot Lines, and the good aspects of fanzine fandom -- the creativity and the good fanzines -- are dying in the NoMan'sLand between them. Fandom is losing its point of focus. You either stand in one camp and see everything from one point of view, or stand in another and see everything from that perspective. There was a delightful (though probably poorly written) story on this theme many years ago in an old ASTOUNDING (if memory serves). To be vibrant and healthy, to get a reasonable worldview, fandom needs these viewpoints in the same camp.

On these lines, I was saddened to hear that [two fanwriters] had both pulled material from WARHOON, and, similarly, [another] had pulled material from HOLIER THAN THOU. When I read of that last, I thought to myself, "Arsehole! Well, if you're going to be so petty, I'll pull my article from your fanzine!" Then I realized what I was thinking, put my brain cell back in, and slunk into the night.

The thing is, with this refusal to accept that other people can hold wildly different opinions from ourselves and still be perfectly sincere, we are sowing the seeds for fandom's destruction, or at least for very lean times. What we are saying is that ego is all important. Sod free exchange of ideas! Sod the right to hold conflicting opinions! Sod ability and creativity! What we are saying is that fandom is all about winning arguments by any means, and not about creativity or ability. The fact is that Dick Bergeron, whether you agree with his recent stances or dis-

agree with them, is an excellent creative fan, publishes a fine fanzine, and anyone who really cares about standards and excellence in one's fanac ought to be proud to appear in his fanzine. You don't have to agree with his every opinion in order to appreciate his qualities, for fuck's sake! What I want from fandom is the option of pursuing my own correspondence as I wish. I will choose and make my own friends. From my own fanzines, I want to see style, flair, ability, interesting concepts, and a free exchange of ideas. I don't want to see squabbling and everyone taking up politically correct stances.

It's supposed to be about enjoying yourself and having fun, isn't it? Anyone who is having fun in the current environment is a very sick person indeed. It didn't ought to be about taking sides. It ought to be about slinging the whole thing into a bin, of saying "Fucking Hell! How on Earth did we get onto this road? Let's go back and get on the right one!" This road is the wrong road for everyone, it is the wrong road for fandom. Let us get the fuck off it. All of us. Now.

The bad things about fandom aren't more important than the good things, are they?

This is not to say that one shouldn't take up ideas and issues that one feels are important, but when one discovers that it is impossible to arrive at a consensus, or to convince others, one should be prepared to put them down again. There will always be those who "...felt that the trees were a bad idea in the first place...", or however Douglas Adams phrased it.

§ Hold on there! Hold on there, I say! What I set down (in ETTLE THREE) was this; "If further comment on TAFF comes in, I will run it of course." Now where do you see the word "terminate" in that sentence? You commented; I ran it. ¶¶ Being human, no one wishes to put themselves in a bad light. To do the opposite, though--put everyone who disagrees with you into a bad light--is all-too-human, too. I wish more people would step back and try to take in the larger view, but I realize that it simply isn't a facet of some people's natures. There are many involved in the brouhaha that I thought of as absolute jerks, so perhaps writing that piece was more for my own benefit than anyone else's. ¶¶ You choose the layout you like for your fanzine, I'll choose what I like for mine. Okay? ¶¶ I haven't noted any death rattle on the part of creativity in fandom lately. Of course I don't what the situation is in the UK, but entertaining fmz continue to show up over here. True, a few folk chose to pull material from other's zines because of their sore feelings, but that's any contributor's right, for whatever reasons. (Of course, when childish reasons are cited then other fans are entitled to snicker...it's nice to read you avoided that path.) ¶¶ Feuds and arguments have amused fandom for ages,

Skel. The closer you are to the center of the storm the less funny you find the situation. Having been close enough to have my hair ruffled by the winds (*coff*), I must admit that even I found more than a few amusing moments during recent months. Yet I certainly don't view myself as being "sick". Tossing out that label was one of the trigger points of this whole mess, after all.... ¶¶ Some people resign themselves to Not Winning more readily than others. And some fans have extremely tenacious memories. Even mild-mannered fen, like Harry Warner Jr. who still is irked about the casting out of a member of FAPA decades ago and belabors the point every bi-month in his zine for that ap, can feel that Principle supercedes Reasonableness on certain issues. While I agree that there usually comes a point when cudgels should be dropped in the name of the Better Good, that point will vary from individual to individual. Where you may quit, where I may quit and where fans X, Y, and Z may quit are apt to be at utterly different places on the line that yet another fan feels is already far too long. §§

MIKE SHOEMAKER -- 2123 Early St., Alexandria, VA
22302. July 21, 1985

Thanks for continuing to send me ETTLE -- I do read them with interest -- even though I haven't located the first 3. The trouble is, if I may quote from a LoC to Dave Locke; "I'm in great sympathy with you... but if I said what I really thought, I'd be afraid of being liable for libel." Also, since I have no interest in TAFF per se, there is even less reason to comment. My interest in ETTLE has stemmed strictly from the observation of character.

Increasing fragmentation and specialization is characteristic of contemporary culture in general, so it's not surprising to see it in fandom. It's inevitable and probably desirable given the burgeoning fannish population. I am much in agreement with Brian Earl Brown's comments on conventions and with most of Dave Yoder's letter. I loved your comment about not expecting an orchestra at a con or camping equipment in the huckster room, because, obviously, both examples are of interests that are close to my heart. But remember how Discon II opened the convention with the Alexandria Bagpipe and Drum Corps? It was wild and weird, but I remember that a lot of fans complained 'what does that have to do with science fiction?'

As you know, I've never been a con fan. I don't even go to Disclave anymore. I've skipped the last two because none of my old friends come anymore -- Mike Wood is dead, most of the old N.Y. fans moved west, the Canadians don't come down anymore, Ned Brooks goes to another con which switched its date. Even before I stopped going, however, the decline of the huckster rooms was appalling. You know, huckster rooms used to be places where fans -- not professional booksellers for the most part -- sold used books,

duplicates, or things they no longer wanted, at reasonable, or even bargain, prices. It used to be a great place to meet people and talk books -- my favorite place at a con. The last time I went (83 Disclave) there were about 3 tables with used paperbacks and hardcovers, one table with outrageously priced rarities, half a dozen professional booksellers (god-damned virtual franchises from big retail stores) selling new stuff at retail prices, and the rest of the room was filled with armorers, trinket sellers, rug merchants, etc. The place was a joke. It's not even possible anymore for a casual fanish dealer to get a table, for the full-time professionals drive up the prices. Moreover, it appears that huckster rooms are now sold out in advance, even before convention flyers are circulated.

I've always appreciated the Disclave film programs enormously. A film program does not necessarily have to attract hordes of media fans. The trick is to present a completely esoteric program. This is what film buff Kim Weston did for years at Disclave, and it was great! But the powers that be finally relieved him of the position because of the grumbling from the media fans ("Beauty and the Beast --duh. What's dat...a monster movie?").

Since I've published just 14 issues of THE SHADOW-LINE in the last 10 years, I think I should address Brian Earl Brown's question "if they're small and still infrequent, what's the point to them?" The point is the present something of interest to a select audience, a worthwhile goal however infrequent the schedule. The point is not to make a mark on "fandom", to reach a wide audience, to be timely, or any of the other usual goals associated with fanzines, which are all too often filled with trivial chatter and padding. For a long time now my guiding light has been a splendid quote from Epicurus: "I am writing this not for the eyes of the many, but for yours alone: for each of us is audience enough for the other." Such an attitude is well-suited to coping with the modern expansion and fragmentation of fandom. The trick is to find a comfortable niche -- a circle of friends with like interests -- and to hell with the rest of fandom. This does not necessarily lead to stagnation in a fanzine. I've always had a circulation of about 70. I get a few new requests every year. I always honor them and send along a note explaining that if the zine is of little interest to please tell me to drop them -- no hard feelings, since I don't expect nor want everyone's approval. I can't afford deadwood in the form of uninterested readers. Some new readers stay on and some disappear. Since I occasionally drop an old reader or two, the circulation remains stable while very gradually changing its composition.

§ I have fond memories of that thrilling opening to DISCON II's masquerade, and wondered at the time about the complaints that there was no SF/F content

in a bagpipe band. They were being used to set a level of excitement in an audience which was to view some spectacular and innovative costumes done by fans. Their appearance brought nearly the entire audience to their feet in cheering, and set virtually every pulse apounding. Since it wasn't a scheduled program item, merely a diverting introduction to one--which had more than enough SF/F content in itself--that served its purpose well, I thought the complaints were out of line. The whole thing only lasted 15 or twenty minutes, and delighted far more fans than it annoyed. ¶¶ What I saw BEB as referring to were zines which attempt to fill the niche of a genzine, substituting frequency for size; not zines which have always been small and infrequent. There are audiences for specialized interests which flit around the edges of SF/F. Your more-or-less scholarly attitudes about films and literature are shared by a sufficient number of other fans to make TSL a viable zine despite its infrequent schedule. The material in its pages doesn't 'date', as say the material in EITLE would. It's a bit like the relationship between THE WILSON QUARTERLY and, say, TIME MAGAZINE. The former is deep and sedate, the latter fast-paced and frothy, though each will publish exceptions to their usual fare. There are readers enough to satisfy the publishers of both--they may even share some of the same readership--and enough variation in available material to satisfy the readers; assuming you've patience enough to look. ¶¶ I don't share your attitude toward the 'rest of fandom'. While we each find our own niche, or niches, within the larger group, to sit back and say "to hell with the rest" seems a mite contemptuous. My own view is more along the lines of; "You go your way and I'll go mine-- but I'm keeping a wary eye out lest your way adversely affect mine." §§

MILT STEVENS -- 7234 Capps Avenue, Reseda, CA 91335.
August 24, 1985

In the discussion of fanzine ensmallment in EITLE FOUR, it would seem that apas are an almost ideal solution. If you join three apas, you can be in contact with a hundred people with far less work and expense than a comparable genzine would take. That may explain why there are ten times as many apa fans as there were in the Forties while there may be only three times as many genzine fans.

The fact that they are so much easier undoubtedly explains their larger growth. After all, the inability to string three coherent paragraphs together isn't as much of a disadvantage in apas as it would be in genzine fandom. In some apas, particularly local apas, this encourages downright sloppiness. Or at least, that's what I'd call circulating a hand-written, dittoed publication of any sort. Local apas have been having an impact as indicated by the Hugo nominations of Tom Digby. Tom Digby is a clever writer who has

circulated almost all of his material in local apas.

I've never thought much about the division between fanzine fans and convention fans. I suppose that in cities with large clubs the two groups tend to get together more. However, the media fans are a different matter entirely. Apparently they also have fanzine fans and convention fans amongst their faceless hordes.

I've sometimes wondered how much inactivity it would take to have your fanzine fan credentials revoked. It seem to be something like being an AIDS victim, or a communist; once you've done it you're stuck with it. But are people like Forrie Ackerman, Ed Wood, and Harlan Ellison still fanzine fans in some respect? Do you suppose they've found a cure for it?

Thinking about the divisions in fandom, it just occurred to me that in LASFS all of the fanzine fans are card players but none of them are FRP gamers. There are more FRP gamers in LASFS at the moment than there are card players. I suppose that since both fanzine fanac and FRP gaming can be very time consuming they tend to become mutually exclusive. Or it might be that you can gossip while playing cards but not while FRP gaming. Another apparent linking of interests seems to be that the computer types tend to be sercon reader-collectors. It might be interesting to do a statistical analysis of fandom to see which interests tend to link together. Then you could really tailor conventions with a lot more precision.

§ Apas certainly have their place in fandom, and as is the case with any form of fanac, they have their strengths and their weaknesses. The existence of deadlines aids many a faned (me included), and the limitation of membership aids in expenses incurred (although many apazines go out to more readers than just the apa roster would indicate). It seems that the more frequent an apa is, the more 'sloppy' its contributions can get. But even so, there are well-planned, well-executed apazines that would stand up to any criteria, save circulation, used for genzines. There are sloppily done genzines as well. For the fan who's main aim in doing a zine is communication, apas seem to be ideal in virtually every respect, but they do tend to encourage a certain inbred tone to them, because the faned is essentially addressing the same audience each issue. A genzine, on the other hand, has to go out and seek an audience of its own, and depend on that audience for input. ¶ Compared to most metropolitan areas, Cincinnati fandom is small (but then Cincy isn't a particularly large metropolitan area). I'd guess half of the 30 or 40 locals play some sort of card games--Poker and Euchre being the most prevalent. There are perhaps only a quarter of that number who play FRP games, and I only know one of those who is also involved in fanzines (he also plays cards, though not as often as FRP games). A bit less than half the card

players either are involved with fanzines or were in the past (I count as involvement the producing of, contributing to, or reading of with oral feedback). With that one exception, the FRPers couldn't care less about fanzines. As for computer enthusiasts; there aren't enough of them in Cincy to draw any conclusions from, although of the few who do have computers, or use them in their work, all are heavy readers and collectors. Only one of them is what I'd consider as a 'hacker', and he's also a computer engineer, so perhaps that label isn't really valid. He also is a sometime card player, so the distinctions begin to get confused. §§

ERIC LINDSAY -- C/O P.O. Box 42, Lynnhem, ACT 2602
AUSTRALIA. July 24, 1985

Thanks for EITLE FOUR. Your dispassionate historical approach seems sensible to me (that is, I tend to agree). I suspect you are correct in saying that fans remain neos for up to five years now (although it obviously depends more than a little on the talent or energy the person brings to fandom, and, as you say, on the discrimination of the people doing the accepting of the new fan).

I've mentioned in locs to others that I suspect that much of the TAFF feuding occurred because of a general lack of communication between various mutually exclusive groups of fans, including UK fanzine fandom and Midwest convention fandom. The 'barbarian' term seems more than appropriate; after all, I gather it was originally applied by the Greeks, who meant by it anyone who didn't speak their own language.

Whatever happened to Ruth Berman? I seem to recall some interesting material from her. (Entirely aside from Robert Bloch opening Torcon with Trekkie insults ...oops, no, come to think of it, he said "Ladies, Gentlemen, and Canadians" then. Must have been some other con...)

I'm painfully aware that Harry Warner Jr. is having trouble with reading reduced type fanzines, such as I always produce (for reasons of costs). I must see if I can do a full-size print out for Harry in the future (after all, sooner or later I'll run out of Rotsler cartoons avowing that I'm in a mess because I don't have a Warner loc in a particular issue).

I'm sure that Brian Earl Brown is correct in asserting that fanzine fandom (especially in the USA) has shrunk. Even given my not-very-active status these days, I'm sure there were once many more fanzines, even generally and not restricted to US ones. I wonder how much of this is economics. I seem to recall having much larger mailing lists myself in the past, and even my present 350 is managed only by running my zine through various apas, and also because Jean [Weber] subsidises it by letting me run mine with hers for mailing, so I only have to send out perhaps 75 or so at full postage costs.

I agree about Worldcon fees; I'd rather spend the money on mimeo supplies, especially as most aspects of the Worldcon are increasingly remote from my own interests.

§ Faneds who use computers to produce their zines, and those who type out their material in a Pica typeface, to shoot down to a smaller size, could accommodate those fans, like Harry, with failing eyesight by sending such fan large-type editions of their zines. Those who work directly on master, mimeo or ditto, however, have a Problem. While I view with sympathy the struggles some fan go through in order to read small print (my eyes ain't what they were, either), there's not much I can do about it. Retyping an entire fanzine in Pica is far more work than I'm willing to do. Perhaps if I had access to an enlarging photocopier.... ¶¶ While I, too, suspect that the number of genzines has dropped in recent times, I wouldn't be surprised if there were actually more fanzines than ever being produced. The difficulty is that many zines are sent to such a small readership that there's no way they can become 'known'. Too many segments of fandom operate only within their own circles and are never heard of beyond those circles. ¶¶ Mimeo supplies are the least of my fanzine expenses. I can purchase enough supplies for under \$100 to go for a year; it costs almost the same simply to mail out one issue. The imbalance between production costs and distribution costs, if continued in the same direction it's been going, will make fanzines a Rich Fans Hobby. Alas. §§

ROBERT BLOCH -- 2111 Sunset Crest Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90046. June 25, 1985

Just back from a GoH stint at a con in Milwaukee, but before I climb the mountain of mail waiting for me here I must thank you for ETILE FOUR. Enjoyed your editorial essay on fan-feuding, which has many perceptive points. Ruth Berman's 1974 piece was new to me -- just hope that since then she has developed a sense of humor, for her own sake. There were a lot of STAR TREK fans at this con, 11 years later: I did a one-hour interview on the program, a lot of it focussing on STAR TREK, and used the term "Trekkies" many times without being lynched; they knew I was joking, not jabbing. Oversensitivity inspired overreaction, which sometimes leads to overkill. That's a fan-feud problem too, but time tends to mellow us all, thank heaven.

§ Ruth has, and always has had, a sense of humor; but she was addressing a matter -- fannish discrimination -- that she did not find funny in the least. That 1974 piece was written in response to the pervasiveness of using "Trekkie" as a put-down for anyone who showed interest in the TV series. Back then, picking on Trekkies was the Thing To Do, much as picking on "Mediafen" (or medidiots, as I've heard them referred to) is currently acceptable in

certain fannish circles (if not actually encouraged). In the mid-70s, even within STrekdom itself, there were attempts to differentiate between the Screaming-Mimi teeny-boppers and the more seriously inclined, and generally more adult, fans. "Trekkies" were the shriekers; "Trekkers" were the more sedate ones. But since fandom at large chose "trekkie" as the term-of-choice to describe any ST fan, the struggle switched to simply make that term more acceptable, less insulting. It has lost a lot of the disapprobation it used to carry, and I wouldn't be surprised if the same thing doesn't happen with Mediafen in the future. Familiarity doesn't always breed contempt; sometimes it brings toleration. Remember when saying "Colored" was being polite and using "Black" was an insult? ¶¶ I had to chuckle while I was retyping Ruth's article and reached the part about the lack of egoboo having driven Trek-inspired material out of costume balls and art shows. It's obvious Ruth was not omniscient on that point (though it is one prediction I would not have minded coming to pass). §§

ROBERT LICHTMAN -- P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442.
July 12, 1985

With your movement away from discussion only of TAFF, ETILE's becoming a more interesting and engaging fanzine. Like you say in the back pages of #3, my interest in fandom, too, has been in the area of interaction, whether on paper or in person. Unlike you, I came into fandom during a period of intense "fannishness" in the late '50s, the first fanzines I saw were fannish fanzines, and I retain a strong interest in that aspect of fandom, though not to the exclusion of others. (I did my share of letterhacking to KIPPLE and HABAKKUK in their day, for instance.)

I think it is quite natural that entrants into the fannish arena since the '60s have tended to come via non-print sources, such as Star Trek. Since many fans tend to enter fandom during their teen years or at least their 30's, it is easy to see how it took until the late '60s or into the '70s for this sort of new fan to gain predominance. I believe it has much to do with the advent, and overwhelming invasion into America's everyday life, of television. Generally available commercial television started in many major metropolitan areas around 1947, and it would be safe to say (I think) that for many children born shortly before or (especially) after that date, it more or less replaced print mediums as a primary source of information input about the world around one. We now have people in fandom who were born wholly in the TV Age, and it shows in the composition and interests of the "younger" fans.

A lot of this shift away occurred during the years I was not involved with fandom and I leave it to others to chronicle just how and when it all went down, but speaking for myself, I was reactivated into fandom by the appearance of PONG in 1980, a year which also marked

my departure from the nearly ten years of life at The Farm, a countercultural community in Tennessee, and return to California. I didn't receive PONG directly myself at first, but read Paul Williams' copies as they showed up. PONG was so obviously and directly a rebirth, for me, of the sort of fanzine I'd liked in my previous incarnation that it sucked me back in. I think I was not the only one so lured back into fandom, and the comment you make on page 5 of #4 ("Some of the quiescent, or semi-gafiated, older fans were urged to return to full fanac, and many of those so approached responded") may slightly miss the mark. I think many of "us" were enticed back by the appearance of PONG. So you can blame Ted White, as usual.

It was interesting to read Terry Jeeves, Brian Earl Brown, Eric Mayer, and George Laskowski, as well as yourself --faneds all -- commenting on your circulations and the problems and intricacies of sorting out who to send your fanzine to. Like Brian, I have a Bulk Permit (actually I share it with the Philip K. Dick Society Newsletter and Entwhistle Books) and I find it difficult to come up with 200 US fans to send TRAP DOOR to. What I do is address the excess copies needed to make up 200 to myself, then relabel them for overseas. On TD #4, I was able to come up with 165 US names, and so even at the new increased Bulk rate I figure that the cost per copy of the US copies was about 15¢. Much better than the 39¢ which is what it would be by "regular" mail. My print run is 250 and I send over 50 copies to UK addresses. It costs me more for postage overall than it does to print the fanzine itself (I have access to inexpensive copying). If fanzine fandom had grown to hundreds, even thousands, of people, I still would probably attempt to restrict my circulation out of sheer economics. I guess you could call this elitism; I call it "just a goddamn hobby".

I think it's unfortunate that fandom has diversified in interests and attitudes to the extent that it has, but as many of your writers point out, it was inevitable. Far be it for me to condemn whole groups of fans because they aren't fanzine fans, but on the other hand, one only has so much time and energy to devote to a hobby, and there comes a need to draw a line somewhere. At conventions I tend to socialize with other fanzine fans, therefore, because there are enough of them around that this takes up all my time. It's not that I wouldn't like to meet other fans, but they, too, are wrapped up in socializing with their own little (or large) group and it just doesn't happen. Other than the fact that some conventions seem really large, which is a little bit of a drag from a sheer crowdedness standpoint, it doesn't really bother me that much if these diverse groups exist, except that it has made Worldcons impossible to afford.

At LACON I took time out one evening to go to the ElfQuest party that was held there to celebrate the conclusion of twenty issues of ELFQUEST comics. One

of the people I had as a passenger in my car on the way down was an ElfQuest fan from Glen Ellen. She was there and I wanted to see what it was like. It certainly was different from fanzine fandom, and yet, there was a conviviality and oneness there that was just like...fandom.

I don't go to that many conventions at all, actually; and I've never been to a convention held outside California. Most of this is economic -- I simply have never been able to afford the cost of transportation to get to a far-off convention. But a lot of it is that I prefer to spend my hobby money on publishing fanzines, and so that is what I do. So while at this point I would dearly love to go to CORFLU in Falls Church next year, and even to Britain in '87, it is a fantasy for me now.

I have to applaud your closing sentence, about Reality, in closing myself. I've been more or less enjoying ETILE, though sometimes your opinions have been somewhat abrasive to me; but then, that's just part of fandom.

§ The appearance of TV in the neighborhood where I was raised (a suburb just South of Chicago) brought dramatic changes. For one thing, the sense of "Family" that had been so pervasive disappeared as more and more family units retreated to their own homes in the evenings rather than continuing the practice of 'dropping in' for a night of conversation or card playing or whatever. When the first TV sets were bought, it didn't look like it was going to work out that way -- TV viewing was a Group Activity then. (I can still recall mild-mannered, sweet Mrs. O'Brien finally rebelling and insisting that if a dozen or so friends were going to come over each and every night to see their TV, then they darned well better start providing their own refreshments or her own family would go bankrupt.) Many of the early TV shows, being direct adaptations of radio hits of that era, disappointed me. I preferred using my own powers of visualization and grumped as more and more of my favorite listening material disappeared from the radio dial and were converted into someone else's concept on the television tube. It wasn't until programs that were uniquely developed for the televised medium began to appear that I began to enjoy TV. (I believe it was the TODAY show, with Dave Garroway, that first attracted my liking.) Even so, I continued to read books, magazines, and newspapers, and do so to this very day. When you pause to consider the many ways TV has so strongly impacted our culture, it almost seems miraculous that anyone under the age of, oh say 40 or so, reads at all. ¶ Though my first contact with fandom was brought about through my interest in a TV show, my primary interest, even then, was in written SF. As I was also older than most neos--29 at the time--I found fanzines far more attractive as a hobby, or aspect of a hobby, than anything else--even in STrekdom. When I came across

SF fanzines I thought that mankind could cease its striving for Perfection, for here it was. Well, no, I didn't think that highly of fanzines; though it did come rather close. A year or so later I attended my first convention, and those were pretty nifty ideas, too. All hope was lost, and I've been hooked on fandom ever since. To go from working on a Save Star Trek committee, to doing a SF fanzine, to helping out convention registration tables, to 'joining' a local fan 'club'--coming to the realization one day that all one's friends were fans--may seem like pretty much the same sort of thing to a mundane observer, but certainly didn't seem that way to me. I was moving in a line from peripheral interests deeper into 'core' interests. Going from an entertainment to a way of life. ¶ There's little doubt that PONG was the primary impetus behind the re-emergence of the Sleeping Fen who hailed from the '50s and '60s. But groundwork had been done beforehand by relatively newer fen--the likes of Gary Fraber and Joe DiCicci and Patrick Hayden et al--whose interest in fan history led to active spading of fields long left fallow. The Old Names were kept before the 'public' eye, and in some cases the old-timers were contacted and correspondences initiated which nudged the veteran fan out of their somnolence and back into fanac. In a sense PONG was a tangible sign of that reawakening, and it inspired yet other drowsing fans to return to full fanac. (For it should be kept in mind that the fannish network among many of the older fen, though moribund, was still intact. PONG supplied the electrical jolt to jar them back into life...) ¶ What some view as Elitism, others view as Finding One's Audience, or Own Niche. The majority of faneds are forced to be restrictive because of economic considerations--a rich faned is a rare beast indeed--and no one expects anyone to even attempt to relate to each and every individual in fandom, nor, for that matter, with each and every facet of fandom. Whatever complications that may ensue begin when the fans start to view their Audience/Niche as the center--if not entirely--of Fandom rather than merely the center of what they are able or willing to deal with. Whatever portion of fandom we interact with is only a portion, and it should be kept in mind that there are equally talented, witty, charming, sensitive, and likeable people whom we will never meet that are fans and consider fandom as Home, or Family. ¶ I gave up on large conventions some time ago. It's only on rare occasions that I attend one that draws more than 300 or so attendees. Several cons I used to enjoy have been dropped because they've grown too large (and generally, too expensive as a result) but smaller cons have sprung up to take their place. The growth of the 'ensmalled' con is not unlike the rise in number of 'ensmalled' fanzines. More exist now than I can possibly deal with, but I'm pleased as punch that they are there. Like you, I don't begrudge the existence of large cons--they're fun for those who like them--and I get enough news of what's going on in the larger fan world through small con gossip and the

newszines. Small cons make life easier on those who, like me, can't adjust to the crowding, noise, confusion, and expense of conventions which try to be All Things to All Fen. But though I prefer them, I'm well aware that they're certainly not all there is.¶

ERIC MAYER -- 1771 Ridge Road East, Rochester, NY
14622. July 10, 1985

I was rereading EITLE on the bus coming into work today. I had quite an assortment of stuff with me -- EITLE, William S Burroughs' Exterminator!, a couple of records to return to the library (Berg's Wozzeck and the original cast recording of the 1925 musical "O, Lady Be Good" featuring Fred and Adele Astaire. And that's not counting what was in my briefcase. Burroughs is fond of juxtapositions, of discovering unexpected relationships. He cuts up text and rearranges it and sometimes he cuts up experience and does the same -- the name of a street just passed matches the name of a murder victim in yesterday's newspaper. Life is made up of endless such surprises, coincidences.

So I reread Skel's letter (and, yes, I did chuckle over Paul (Skel) Skelton) and he tells you he can't understand why no one is mad at him about his TAFF views, and I just yesterday replied to that same question as posed to me in a letter from him. I had said to him, in effect; "It's because you are perceived by the group that is pissed off as being a fan, one of their family. I am not. Richard Bergeron is not. Jackie Causgrove--god forbid--has been a convention fan." And thus to your editorial, the drawing of lines between fan groups as Fandom becomes TOO BIG.

Isn't that just an excuse, that business of fandom being TOO BIG? As discussed in the loccol, everyone draws his own lines, for various reasons, as regards the number of fans he can or wants to reach. The reasons may be financial, or have to do with shared interests, or preferred duplicating methods. Why this pretense that there must be some higher motive?

I certainly can't read every book ever published, or listen to every piece of music ever composed. Does this make me uneasy? Should I say; "Well, sf is the only real literature and I can try to read all of that." A proposition that won't work anymore... How about "Only hard science fiction is true literature and I can read all of that, thereby satisfying my urge to read all literature worth reading--being an authority on all literature worth reading, incidentally." Therefore I do not read William S Burroughs (or Edgar Rice...) or E.B. White, or....

Of course we don't approach most things this way. I read whatever comes to hand and strikes me as interesting. I listen to Berg and Gershwin and The Kinks and Hank Williams and John Lennon. So what if these things cannot be reconciled into some system, some School of Listening? I generally despise country music, yet if I arbitrarily exclude from my listening I

price was put in the colophon for those who didn't loc or had no zine to trade. Except for people like Bowers and others who produced slick zines, no one I knew actually charged money and actually expected to make money on their publications, so I never really had intentions of making money with LAN'S LANTERN. (Well, I had hoped to get back some money on publishing the three special issues on Williamson, Simak, and Norton, but that never materialized.) I thought fans always just traded or used locs as "currency"; I didn't know that faneds, even back when fanzines started, intended to "sell their efforts" as you wrote. I considered those fans rather mercenary, as opposed to those who were in fandom as a hobby/way of life. I guess those who first told me about fanzines relayed erroneous information.

For myself, I would say that inside a year I was considered a long-time fan. Becoming active in fanzines, apazines, making long-distance calls to fans, writing locs, attending lots of conventions, and associating with new as well as long-time fans had something to do with it I'm sure. Becoming acquainted with you, and spending time in the CFG suite at my first MEROON certainly helped too. I got to know a lot of fans very quickly, and was not afraid to approach people.

However, I do see the dangers of the too-fast influx of people who get into fandom. The fragmentation and specialized interest groups have definitely caused problems, in some cases rather extreme ones. Consider Wendy Counsil's letter. I have generally skipped that particular program item at CONFUSION the past few years. I have found it beyond the point of being silly to being boring. Previous fan Gohs introducing the ones that followed them (with substitutions for those who couldn't be there) lost my interest after my fourth CONFUSION. This year a filker and Star Trek fan is the Goh, and she knows none of the others who came through fanzines and regular SF conventions. Yet an opportunity was lost here. Had the concom informed Julia of the structure of the panel, this would have been a great time for a cross-over of some of those splintered groups. As for the obnoxious fan (yes, I know him, and he can be a decent person at times), his claim to fandom is exclusively conventions; I don't remember seeing any letters, let alone an apazine or fanzine, published by him. Wendy made a good point about how the proceedings might be perceived by a neofan. Putting myself in such a position, I would rather have joined Julia and what she represented, than the heckler. Besides being prettier, she also represented the tolerance that I have associated with most fans. So what if she's a filker and a Trekkie; Julia is a fan with an interest in SF, and has the extraordinary ability to tell funny stories, much in the vein of fannish writing (which Brian Earl Brown has praised so much in the past).

But to get down to a definition of fandom--maybe, as you say, those who invented it, or were around when

it was invented, could come up with a good one. Like Bob Tucker, or Harry Warner, Jr., or Howard DeVore. Then again those people are kind and gentle and generally accepting of fans of all kinds. They probably would come up with the general sort of criteria you've listed.

As for types of cons, I, like you and Terry Jeeves, prefer the smaller ones where most people know each other, and the conversations range far and wide among all sorts of topics, from the general to the very personal; fannish stories from the past and from recent events are told and retold. Little cons like OCTOCON and SPACECON (and our recent WAPAKON) are a joy because fannish history is passed down one way or another. If only we could get Tucker to one of them!

Back to fanzines. I've just cut my circulation back to under 500. It is not easy to publish a 50+ page zine a couple of times a year and mail it out. It is financially draining, and time-consuming. But I enjoy doing it. However, as costs keep rising, I am considering cutting back more. I hate to do that, because I like staying in contact with lots of people, but I do have other things and people to consider than myself now. Of course, Brian Earl Brown and Eric Mayer do have a point about the ensmallled zine: smaller zines can be put out more frequently and maybe circulated more widely (cheaper postage costs). But I feel some sort of desire/obligation to publish articles that people normally would not get a chance to see, and try to get them into as many hands as possible. And so I will probably continue to put together monsterzines, and hope to win the Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes.

§ Whoever described the way fanzines were circulated (trades, Locs, contributions, etc.) was being accurate for this day and age. But current custom evolved from past practice. In the '30s and '40s, the fanzines were attempting to imitate the prozines (a fairly high percentage of them were even typeset, and looked more like a so-called 'Little Magazine' than a fanzine of current times). They charged for their zines because that was what the prozines did--and I gather there was a bit of ego involved as well. If you didn't think enough of your work to ask a price for it, then maybe you considered it valueless. A free zine, to people with that attitude, was most likely worth exactly what it cost--nothing. Bit by bit, with time, habits changed, and now it's unusual to find a faned who doesn't distribute most of his/her zines for free. Those early faneds weren't being "mercenary", they were following (setting, actually) Established Standards. Even today there are exceptions to the general rule--some faneds don't give freebies for Locs, published or not, others do not trade All-For-All, but only Issue-For-Issue. Those are carry-overs from those by-gone days before it came to be accepted that a zine was the editor's hobby, and he or she was expected to bear all the

expenses involved. (After all, why should a fan be expected to pay for another fan's amusement?) Nowadays it's accepted that certain types of zines--let's call them 'Servicezines'--are more of a chore for the editor than play. Newszines, clubzines, even the fanzine-like progress reports some of the large conventions publish are being done for the benefit of the reader, not the editor, and most fans are prepared to pay for them. As with most things in fandom, there is no clear-cut, cast-in-concrete, one-and-only-one way to handle distribution of one's zine. ¶¶ Most fans come into fandom as teenagers. You and I were exceptions to that, and I suspect that had a lot to do with our relatively quick acceptance. Newer teen-aged fans would also assume that an older person had been around for a long time--I recall being asked questions about events that had occurred decades before my entrance into fandom by young neos--and I generally knew about the events because of my fannish mentors. Folks like Buck Coulson, Tucker, Gordie Dickson, Martha Beck, Joni Stopa, et al, passed on the fannish lore they knew, and that was, in turn, passed along by those they indoctrinated. There are conventions that took place when I was still a toddler that I practically feel I had attended, I've heard so many tales about them. My legs still ache from the stair-climbing at Chicon I, and my arms still bear the welts from the mosquito bites gotten at Beastly's-On-The-Bayou, site of the first Midwestcons. Weren't you there, too? ¶¶ I agree an opportunity was lost at this year's CONFUSION. It would have been nice to have a sort of roundtable discussion about the varying perceptions of fandom and fanac of the previous and current GoHs. (And I also admit that the GoH panel performance was getting a bit tedious--problem was, no one came up with a concrete solution for the situation. It was suggested that we each give a little speech, or say something besides an introduction for the next in line, but that would have consumed so much time that the GoH wouldn't have had more than a minute or two to get his/her remarks in.) However, it's pointless discussing what might have beens.... §§

WALT WILLIS -- 32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, NORTHERN IRELAND BT21 OPD. August 15, 1985

Your view of fandom was strange to me in some ways, as no doubt mine would be to you...perhaps there are as many views as there are fans...but I wholeheartedly agreed with your concluding remarks. They seemed perceptive and wise, especially the point that fans tend to be so taken with clever turns of phrase that they overlook their potentialities for hurt. I think this is the besetting sin of fanzine fans, and it is one that I have been struggling against all my life with indifferent success, ever since, when about the age of 15, I made my little sister cry, to my astonished horror. It seems to me that you are trying to do

what I tried in "As Others See Us" in 1959, except that it's all got more complex since then. It's a thankless task, but well worth trying and I wish you well.

§ You realize that your comment drove me to go to the bookshelf to look up that article in WARHOON 28. Fascinating reading--would you be willing to let me reprint it next issue? The conversational gambit you employed--one 'speaker' pro and one con on the issue being discussed (fanzine fans vs convention fans)--was clever and effective, and the points brought out are still relevant in today's fandom. (Yes, it may be more complex, but I feel it's far more a matter of degree than kind.) ¶¶ In their attempts to achieve a more spontaneous tone to their writing, many fanwriters set down their words informally, as they would say them in conversation. Now, there are always times when a flip comment will be made about someone else, not present during a conversation. Something perhaps funny, but cutting, and words which never would be uttered if that person were present. Too many fanwriters seem to forget that when they set such things down on paper, in print, it is as good as saying them to another's face. Though a faned selects to whom his/her zine will be sent, those are not going to be the only ones who will ever read it. Some puns, some snappy turns of phrase, some witty observations, are much better left in the domain of in-person fanac. They have no business being set on a page where harm can result. §§

AL CURRY -- 4 Galtrim Road, Bray, County Wicklow, IRELAND. August 6, 1985

Sorry for taking so long to respond to ETILE FOUR. As you know, things have been a bit hectic since Midwimpycon. But that's been over a month...I've run out of excuses...so it's time to get back to work.

[Informational note: Al and his wife, Lyn Loughlin, moved to Ireland, leaving the last day of Midwestcon. Though they love the Emerald Isle, they are returning sometime in October or November because things just weren't working out there....]

While some might look upon your six-page dissertation on our group's psychohistory as being "MORE THAN YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT FANDOM AND WOULD NEVER HAVE THOUGHT OF ASKING", I would like to congratulate you on what seems to be a well-researched, well-planned, and well-written piece of work. I certainly could not have done the same job.

It brought out a great number of important points. Have you ever found yourself in the position where a thought or idea glimmers there, then slips away to hide in the back of your head until someone whose head is a bit more orderly puts it out in black and white for you? Well, lady, that is why I especially

appreciated your piece.

Fandom has always been somewhat confusing to me; the fringes, the feuds, the factions. In most of the skirmishes I've sat there trying to figure out what all the fussing was about when everyone could have been down at the bar. Admittedly, I got a bit involved in the most recent one, but that was a situation where I had a clear image of black hats and white hats.

I suppose my problem is that I just don't fit into Aristotle's convenient generalization. As far as I can tell, I'm not a political animal at all. Nor can I understand the need for political activity, for power-broking, for prosletizing, etc. that go toward making politicians and Baptist evangelists.

After carefully rereading your piece, one question comes immediately to mind. After all the in-fighting, the backstabbing, and assorted other bits of fun'n' games that fandom is apparently heir to, how is it that we've avoided a mass migration like lemmings gaffiating into the sea?

In some ways I have to agree with Ruth Berman's thoughts. Labels have a tendency (just as does Aristotle's philosophy) of being too general in their scope. Whether it's hippy, commie, trekkie, or whatever, the term has a tendency to lump too many dissimilar folks for the sake of the convenience of the ones applying the label.

Of course, you still wouldn't want your baby sister to marry one, eh?

§ Often the term "Politics" or "political" is used in a sense different than its definition would imply. At its strictest, politics means referring to governmental matters, the system by which a nation is ruled. At its loosest, the term refers to the way in which any group of people interacts within and without itself. It's not a Dirty Word, though it has acquired some nasty connotations through the years. Aristotle's generalization does fit most people--not at all times, for most of us don't concern ourselves with the way, the manner, by which we interact with others... we just do it, but at some time for most people there comes an occasion where one's personal standards or ideals become involved to the point that it's unthinkable to stand mute. Of course, then most people still would insist that it isn't political action they're taking or doing, but merely the assuming of stance on the side of Right. *Sigh* ¶¶ Labels, in and of themselves, are neither bhad nor ghodd--they are a tool, a means of categorizing the world so one can more readily grasp it intellectually. For instance, you could be labelled as a Musician, and I doubt that you'd take offense--unless, by using that term, the person making the reference was thinking of some dirty, filthy, drug-crazed lout who couldn't be trusted to

pass the salt shaker without stealing it. It's not the label that's at fault, but the weight, the implications of its meaning given by the person who uses it (as well as by the person to whom it's applied). Two labels that apply to me, though taken in their most neutral meaning are innocuous, bear added conceptual freight that makes one virtually an insult. I far prefer to be called a recipient of SSI Disability (which is true) than a Welfare recipient (which is equally true). Ah, words--they're such fascinating, elusive little critters.... §§

BOB TUCKER -- 2516-H East Washington, Bloomington, IL 61701. July 10, 1985

ETILE number four is here and I'm really sorry that I couldn't have been at Midwestcon to receive it from your very own hands. As it is, I'm even now dusting it for fingerprints so that I may gaze at them admiringly and console myself that the fanzine did, indeed, pass through your hands.

In addition to house-hunting, I also couldn't make Midwestcon because of transportation problems. Both my sons had to work that weekend and neither of them would let me have their car. I checked the bus schedule and found that it would require three busses and ten hours to go from here to there, so I resigned myself to missing the event.

Brian Earl Brown mentions, on page 12, that a TAFF Report would cost a maximum of \$2 or \$3 a copy to produce, and said it would likely be much less. I was croggled at that. Ten years ago I produced my Australian trip report for approximately 36¢ a copy: printed, and mailed in envelopes, at a press run and ultimate distribution of 500 copies. I can't remember the postage costs of ten years ago, but assuming that all costs will have doubled in ten years, it could be done for about 72¢ a copy. (That was a 24-page lithographed fanzine.)

This may amuse you: I belong to a small Apa and in one of the recent mailings a member asked innocently, "What is 'Topic A'?" I would guess there are hundreds, nay thousands of fans out there who haven't heard of any of the recent feuds. That speaks of the size of fandom today.

§ You were indeed missed at Midwestcon. If I still lived in Illinois, you would've been assured of a ride. Are you still speaking to those ~~delicious~~ ^{delicious} sons of yours? ¶¶ Printing costs have not merely doubled in the past decade; they've come close to quadrupling. Dave Locke checked the various quick-print places in Cincinnati a few months ago for estimates on TIME AND AGAIN, a 42-page zine. Prices ran the gamut from expensive to outrageous\$. Not even remotely feasible from his budget's point of view. Mimeo production nowadays runs about the same as your costs for having that zine printed 10 years ago--but that's assuming one uses bulk-purchased, discount-

priced materials. If Brand Name supplies—say Gessetner—were used, costs could be as much as twice what you paid. ¶¶ Indeed, words about Topic A and allied matters aren't as wide-spread as some fans think. Also, many who do know what's being referred to couldn't care less.... §§

ROY TACKETT --915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107. June 25, 1985

Puzzled reaction to the recent fussing and feuding which has been stirring fandom...Indeed?

It needs to be pointed out, I think, that the whole thing involved something less than 10 people. In these days of megafandom (or at least kilofandom) that is a miniscule amount. Despite the vast amount of wordage these people generated, the vast bulk of fandom simply didn't care.

And I think the involvement of TAFF was only incidental. It was not a reason, only an excuse.

Your quick scan of fannish history is tolerably accurate, although I have a few quibbles. (You expected that, no?) "Fanzine fandom" was not aborning in the '30s and '40s. "Fanzine fandom" is strictly a product of the '80s. Before that there was only fandom, and fanzines were one form of communication between fen. Fanzines were not, and are not, a *raison d'être* in fandom or a separate subset. Never have been. Never will be.

The faaaanish fanzine and faaaanish fandom (Tucker said it is pronounced with a bray, as in jackass) evolved in the 1950s. ¶¶ I heard it bleated, as in sheep!

Nobody "invented" fandom (as you put it). It just grew. Starting with those people who sent letters to the early prozines and discovered that they had a mutual interest, who began communicating with each other, brought out their own amateur zines for wider discussion of the field, and eventually began meeting together in conventions. Don't forget that many of the early science fiction clubs grew out of existing science clubs. (Gawd, "club is an ugly word, isn't it?)

I would also quibble with your conclusion that the vast influx of new fans in the 1970s had anything to do with the general decline of fanzines. The cause of that was (and is) cost. Far too many of us who once issued general circulation fanzines can no longer afford it. We have, therefore, taken refuge in assorted apas, where circulation costs are much lower. The responsibility for doing grievous harm to fanzines lies with the U.S. Postal Service (and increased costs of paper, ink, etc.) and not with any flood of new fans.

Well, maybe some of the "Old Guard" are intimidated by this vast influx of non-traditional fen. If they are, that is their own fault. Inasmuch, as you well know, Ish, my own fannish roots go back to the 1930s,

I presume you will consider me one of the Old Guard, but I have yet to be intimidated by the hordes of fans who are oriented more towards the visual media than the printed word. Confused occasionally, I will admit, but common ground can always be found and when I attend conventions these days I still have a hell of a good time and find lots to talk about with almost anyone who comes along. I do not like Worldcons or any of the larger conventions any more, not particularly because they are filled with strangers (I'm a stranger here myself, podnuh) but because they have become over-programmed, money-grubbing circuses.

As for a common point of fandom today, it is the same as it always was: science fiction. It doesn't really matter if it is visual science fiction or written science fiction or whatever science fiction. As I've said before: we're all science fiction fans on this bus; if there are any aboard who aren't science fiction fans, they can get off now.

§ You may count "less than 10 people" who are or have been involved in the recent fussing and feuding, but my figures total over 20 who were directly concerned with what was going on, and close to that number (17) who were peripherally involved. Of that number, all but two or three are active fanzine fans, whose words are spread far beyond their immediate vicinity, and whose opinions (at least, they hope so) have influence on others. The people who have come up to me at conventions were not fanzine fen, but through word-of-mouth (i.e. rumor) they had heard about the brouhaha, and asked me either for my opinion or to 'defend' myself. I generally chose to stand mute—it really would take more time to explain all the issues involved, all the points of view, all the various ramifications, than the entire matter deserves. Those who are/were directly involved will naturally carry on their "coff" "discussion", but, as you said, the bulk of fandom just doesn't care. ¶¶ Ghod, I hate to argue with anyone who was der lonk before me, (Charlie), but I suspect that you disremember. The difference between fanzine fen and convention fen was discerned at least by the '50s, and I'm going to include some quotes from Ken Bulmer's TAFF-related zine STEAM to buttress that position. (They will follow my response to your letter, on the next page.) ¶¶ While increased costs have had a direct impact on fanzine distribution/circulation/production, the mere fact that there are more fen out there complicates the matter more than a trifle. And the influx of new fen is not a historical fact; it is an on-going matter. Though it may have begun in the '70s (really, it started in the very late '60s), it—the growth—continues. (I shudder at the thought of those new TV series like AMAZING STORIES and TWILIGHT ZONE and the likely number of neos they will attract...) ¶¶ "Common ground" can be found with the person who totals up your grocery bill at the supermarket... don't you look for more than that in fandom? §§

In response to ETTLE ONE, Harry Warner, Jr. sent a LoC which included a list of reference material concerning TAFF. I sent a request to Bruce Pelz for copies of that material the same day I received H's letter. Fannish (I think it was called LACon...) and personal matters intervened, and it wasn't until mid-westcon, this past June, that Bruce replied. While he didn't pass along the entirety of the list I'd asked for, he did supply some extremely relevant material. Foremost among which was STEAM, a fanzine put out by H. Ken Bulmer following his trip to the USA as a TAFF winner in 1955. When Bruce handed me the file folder of aging Twiltone, he said (as best I can recall) "I don't think you'll like what you'll find in here." He couldn't have been more wrong....

THE FOLLOWING IS EXCERPTED FROM STEAM, VOL. 4, # 4, DATED "AUTUMN 1958 (16TH AUGUST)". (H. KEN BULMER)

It is with pleasure that I have to report that for the first time in its career, the Transatlantic Fan Fund has successfully carried through its objects to transport a fan from one side of the Big Pond to the other for the second successive year. Last Year Bob Madle attended the 15th World Science Fiction convention in London. This year Ron Bennett travels to the 16th—in South Gate. Both do so through the generosity and co-operation of fandom as a whole.

The story of this year's TAFF elections has been one of amiable and industrious co-operation between the two organizers, and of amusing and often heated bickering between people on the sidelines. The hard facts are that 1958 has seen a successful election, a good slate, a popular delegate and an actual journey—and all this without any attempts to raise any squabbles or scandals for the simple reason that there have been none.

...[Bob Madle and myself] had to ensure that TAFF grew up, that it did its job, and that it was made strong enough to function despite the various oddball cries from even oddballer people. When Walter Willis, Bob and myself discussed the various items that should figure in the revised TAFF procedures, we did so with the advantage that we brought a great deal of prior experience to the meeting. Bob was able to put before us at first hand the feelings of the US fen and of Don Ford. The discrepancies of procedures were ironed out and subsequent smooth operations proved that this sort of get-together of interested parties produces results. The trouble is, tho'—you only get one worldconayear!

When all the smoke and dust has died down, one fact remains. TAFF in itself is just about the most worthwhile thing fandom has ever done, and its success is owed to two men—Walter Willis and Don Ford. No one can take away from them this honor—and that's said in all seriousness and without any supposedly funny snide remarks about egoboo. Those two really worked

on TAFF!

...On the US side of the pond, Bob [Madle] had a problem that luckily did not trouble me unduly. He was forced to reject a number of votes from people who were not science fiction fans. This was a matter of principle and was conducted in all amity between those concerned. [...] As you all probably know, there has been some controversy on this vexed question—after all, how do you define a sf fan? In essence, that doesn't bother us; we here in TAFF are concerned with how you decide who has a moral right to vote in a taff election. I'll have more to say on this matter in the non-report sections; but one answer is obvious. You have a taff administrator. As they say in the newspaper competitions: his decision is final.

...It must be driven home to fandom—if fandom considers it worthwhile, that is—that TAFF is part of a person's participation in fandom. You read sf, you write letters, you attend a club and a convention, you read and write for and possibly publish a fanzine, you—if you are one of the few trufans left—collect. You also believe in and support the idea of one of your number travelling across the Big Pond to attend a convention on the other side and to meet new fans. In a word, you support TAFF. TAFF is above politics, above the fluctuations of the fan scene, is not affiliated with any other body, is not dictated to by anyone, is out to grind no axes and does not make a profit, save in the spreading of goodwill.

DIGRESSIONS OF A TAFFMAN

What follows is open to query and correction. I don't pretend to know it all. If you have positive proof of what you claim in opposition to this, then I'm sure fandom as a whole would like to hear it. Otherwise just listen, huh?

During the war, Forry Ackerman decided it would be a nice scheme to visit his many friends in England and the Continent. With typical Ackermanese brilliance, he dubbed his brainchild The Big Pond Fund; but in the event he couldn't make it[he] decided that it would be an even better scheme to bring an Anglofan over to the US. Ted Carnell, at that time a prominent fan, went to Cincinnati in 1949. He paid most of his fare himself; but the idea was born. Later on, Don Ford was in close contact with Norman Ashfield and they decided to repeat the process, although it does seem that Don was going this alone. [...] a hiatus ensued [...] Around the same time (1952) Walter Willis had risen like a Nova on the fannish scene. Through the moribund British fandom of that time, most of Walter's outside contacts were with US fen. We all know of the effects of Sixth Fandom; what is not generally realized is that the US fen were so struck with the writings of Walter that they raised the scheme to bring him to America.

The cry of "WAW with the crew in 52" meant just what

it said. Apart from the Epicentre and a few other active fans, it was all in the States. So the US fen clubbed together and put up some cash. Walter supplied a lot himself, too. He went to Chicago in 1952 [...] carried up on the enthusiasm of US fanzine fandom. [...] Ted Carnell, and now Walter Willis. Both going to the States, both attending a convention; and both, obviously, representing different sections of fandom.

In 1953 Bert Campbell went to Philadelphia [...] on the wave of personal enthusiasm he had generated at the Bonnington Con. His passage was paid by himself, with help from his firm. It was, primarily, a business trip. But he met fans, was well known and liked, and forged another link in the idea. He even put in a snap vote for London as the next Worldcon site. But a warning note was struck in a fanzine of the time, which pointed out that Bert was not an elected representative of British fandom. Not one of the three visitors so far had been that. The nearest was Walter, brought over because the fen wanted to meet him—and Ted Carnell, because of his undoubted position in fandom immediately during and following the war.

Now Walter was simmering with repressed feelings. He'd been taken across the Big Pond—why shouldn't that idea be extended? It was—and Walter will curse me for revealing this skeleton—a matter of conscience. A meeting was held. Out of it came proposals for what was then termed the "Two-Way Transatlantic Fan Fund". At the Coroncon in 1953, Ted Carnell made the first public announcement of the fund that had been set up by Don Ford and the Cincy group to bring Norman Ashfield to Philly. As Norman hadn't been able to go, Don and the CFG had thrown the offer open to any British fan able to go. The meeting decided that there was not enough time to organize the despatch of a suitable fan to Philly [and] that a permanent Two-Way Transatlantic Fan Fund be set up to help both British and American fans to attend each others conventions. That 1954 would be the time to send the first fan across to the US.

Walter was delegated the task of running the procedures and voting. He published his proposed details in Hyphen and set to work. That first election slate consisted of Vince Clarke, Derek Pickles, Ken Slater, Tony Thorne [and] James White.

Now here we have the crux of the matter. TAFF, as it now is, was a fusion of two ideas. The enthusiasm was there. It was agreed by the US fen that we here should elect whom we liked as we liked to go. Walter pointed out that it would be not only good manners, but sensible, to give the US fen a choice in who was going to visit them. Various of the rules, if that be not too rigid a word for them, were proposed then that are now a feature of all TAFF elections.

Item (3) on the proposed rules bears reprinting in full. "There should be qualifications for voters, to prevent such an eventuality as, say, the entire popu-

lation of Trowbridge, Wilts, voting for Norman Wansborough. They must be (a) active already in fandom to the extent of having subscribed or contributed to at least one fanzine or joined a fan club or organization; and (b) show their interest in the project by making a certain minimum contribution to the Fund. Say 2/6d?"

Well, that seems clear enough. If your milkman reads every copy of Astounding that comes out, does that make him a member of those who should vote for people in a TAFF election? [...] The ordinary, sensible way of looking at that is if your milkman talks to you, goes along to meet the local fans, creates, with you, a local group, reads a fanzine or so—then he is bound to understand what fandom and TAFF mean—up to a point of course—and either pull out in contemptuous disgust or plunge right in. Either way, he becomes a sheep or a goat.

TAFF is a facet of fandom. It is generally accepted that readers of science fiction are called fans. But the important point is the degree of commitment involved. Just because your milkman reads Astounding every month [...] he can call himself a fan—but he is not a member of the group of people who have a far greater interest in sf, to the point of collecting it, of discussing it, of attending and giving lectures about it, of writing to one another fantastically long letters about it, of going to meetings and conventions in order to meet writers and artists of sf, and to talk to other readers and collectors, and of seeing in sf something that can take hold and grip their imaginations. From the letter columns of the prozines came the fan magazines. It is true to say that almost every major fan has had a hand in fanzine publishing and writing history. But there are major fans who never have, those people whose talents run to organizing conventions, for example. I fail to see why one group should denigrate the other.

Personally, I believe that to be a whole-hearted fan, you must have a fanzine publishing history behind you. I don't mean by that that you must necessarily publish your own farmag. I do mean that you have a knowledge of the field, can orient references, are aware of traditions and personalities, are conscious of what science fiction fandom has done and is still doing. You are not in the full picture if you ignore the fanzines. Equally, you are not in the full picture if you ignore conventions. Some fanzine fans do not attend conventions—very few. Some convention fans deride the fan publishing field—quite a number. [...] very few long lasting top flight fans are just members of one group and not of the other. It boils down to a comity of interest, split by possible divergence—there are other splits if you look for them. [...] We can't all be whole fans; but by heck we can try, and forget this nonsense about who is a fnz fan and who isn't.

We went into 1954's election with a wondering sort of hesitancy, not quite realizing what was afoot. Vince Clarke won that one, but backed out and no one went in 1954. The same set of rules was carried through to 1955. That slate [...] was Eric Bentcliffe, Terry Jeeves, and Ken Bulmer. Walter carried on as usual, again inviting the US fen to take part in the elections. He could have, under the original agreements, run the election purely on an Anglo basis. By this time the impetus of Sixth Fandom had gone [...] The boom had proliferated and busted. Fandom was again temporarily down.

In 1955 Ken Bulmer was elected. [...] in 1955, the very first TAFF delegate travelled. This was, in one important sense, the beginning.

Through my contacts I knew plenty of US fen. I had the greatest of good fortune in being taken care of by Don Ford, under the original agreements. The best bit was that, through Don, I was able to meet and get to know the various convention type fans in the US—a thing Walter had not done to the same extent.

During the period prior to the 1955 elections a few people had been beating the drum for TAFF. I well remember Chuck Harris, in the 1954 elections, energetically going round creating an interest in TAFF and spreading word of what it meant. It is very difficult, now, to gain full understanding of just how TAFF was regarded then. It was a mad dream, a wild vision. It had taken Ted Carnell a long time to get there; Walter had not found it easy; Bert was facing the inevitable bills. And here we were, a bunch of fans, planning to elect a representative to go across. A great many people laughed and wrote us off as cranky visionaries.

Then, in 1955, someone actually went. The obvious occurred. All kinds of people jumped on the bandwagon, shouting their spiel about TAFF and the way it should be run. Why were we doing things like this? It should be by...and so on and so on. Don Ford and Walter were able to hold off the flood. [...] we didn't necessarily consider our system as the best; but it worked, it had grown up [...] and we didn't intend to alter it just because a bunch of johnny come latelies wanted to get into the act. On the other hand, whenever a sound piece of advice or suggestion was offered it was, if possible, incorporated into the body of unwritten rules governing the elections.

[Someone] suggested that a bond be posted by each candidate. This was tossed out in one of the periodic tussles that shook TAFF in that formative period. Walter had to preserve his poise and even temper in the face of great provocation that time. Later on, Don requested a bond posting from his candidates, they complied as a matter of course, and [the] suggestion went through quietly. But some of the ideas dreamed up by various well-meaning people were out of this world. One suggestion was that the candidates be chosen

from the opposite sides of the Atlantic. There is some merit in this one, and a version of it has been used in the last election. The idea has just been put forward again as something new that the TAFF organizers should note. [...]

Now, however, the most serious crisis shook the TAFF idea. I have faced some tricky moments in fandom; none, perhaps, so painful as the months following my return from America. I was treated to the spectacle of various fans carrying on a feud and using as their central captains two friends, Don Ford and Walter Willis. Through misunderstandings a situation was reached in which one side accused the other of saying things they had not, and the second of trying to regain a balance in TAFF that, disasterously, seemed to have been lost. Briefly, the central question revolved around the basic idea of who should morally have the right to vote in any TAFF election. [...]

It turned out that someone wanted to nominate Doc Smith for TAFF. Then the argument turned on whether he could even vote. Facts that he had long contributed to fnz were brought out and it was proved that he was in fact a trufan. I'm on very delicate ground here. I doubt that anyone alive could unravel all the complications that followed. Walter was accused of being a dictator because he had said that Doc Smith oughtn't be nominated for TAFF. Well, I hope you can see the reasoning behind this opinion, and bear in mind that Walter could not have been aware that the Doctor E.E. Grey Lensman Smith had ever done enough in fandom to be ranked as a member of fandom, completely discounting the glory that is his through his pro writing. You see, we're talking about fans.

[...] Walter was told he was a dictator, was told he had said that only people who published a fanzine could have anything to do with TAFF and like that. It was a farrago of nonsense, with the kernel of truth being that Walter and the groups who thought like him wanted to put over the idea behind TAFF, that it stood for those who not only liked sf but who did something about it beyond mere reading in the field. [...]

[...] it is very easily seen just how these misunderstandings might arise; that they did is something to be deplored but not forgotten. They are all over now, but they do serve as a warning for the future. From Walter's idea of fanzine fen clubbing together to bring across someone they had read and liked the sound of and Don's idea of bringing across a British fan in place of the one he couldn't, one project emerged. It was bound to have to find a way around this rock before it could settle down. The situation was further caused by the dissimilar fan structures in the US and in England (Ireland, too). Here the fanzine fan is predominant, and the fnzfan also is predominant at conventions. We have very few top flight fen who are merely confen. In the US there are bnf's in

fnz fandom, but the majority of mature fen in the field are confen. This is especially true in the CFG—the Cincinnati Fantasy Group and their many friends who regularly attend the Midwestcon, which is—Worldcon notwithstanding—regarded by many as the major con of the year. I was fortunate enough to be engulfed in the confen type at Cleveland and quite clearly saw that when things had to be done and decisions taken and the prestige—if I may use that word in this context—of sf fandom had to be upheld, then it was the confen who handled things. Handled them crisply and well, too, as I saw on more than one occasion. Where there was a bnf fanzine type who was also a confan type, he, at the con, quite obviously fit in well.

[...]when a fan who was a fnz type fan and young was involved, he was usually, by comparison with t'others, a nonentity. Now these are harsh words, but it was not until late on in the con at Cleveland that I caught so much as a glimpse of people with whom I could discuss Atom and WAW and Who Sawed Courtney's Boat and '-' and '/' and pootsarods and fully certified sex fiends [...] (apart from Lee Hoffman and Bloch and Tucker and a very few more). Even then the conversation was hard going. They were shy. And, what is far more to the point, very few of them, hyperactive though they were at the time, are still around. The US fanzine scene is composed of, in the main, youngsters, who flare up and die. The confen go on forever, like the combined fnz and con fen over here. True, my friends, hard words.

This is not to say that there are no fnzfen in the US who are primarily fnz fen and who are also mature and long-lasting. Of course there are. But, by definition, if I didn't meet them at the Cleveland con they were not the 100 per cent con types that I did meet there (apart from those who because of distance couldn't make it). I met a whole raft of first class people around the country who were fnztype fen, and who hadn't made it to the con and who wished they had; not all the US fnzfen were the shy inarticulate gazelles I talked to.

And there I suppose you have one of the basic reasons for this old disagreement. A person can only judge what he knows of his society on the basis of the people he meets or knows in it. Things can take place to the nth degree involving many people in the society; unless the person in question knows enough about the others, he will be unaware of what is going on. It is manifestly difficult for anyone except the few present to know what's going on in a smoke-filled room at a con, where all kinds of high policy are discussed and settled. When the results are seen, unless explanations are offered, how can you tell for certain who did what and when? If you do not keep up with the fnz then how do you expect to know what is going on in the major world of fandom? To be able to see round all sides of these questions demands a

sort of encyclopedic knowledge; and it is pretty safe to say that there is no one in fandom today with a full knowledge of what is going on in the current fandom. Plenty of folk know a great deal, and keep up; but knowing it all is reserved for none of this Earth.

To revert to Doc Smith for a moment. I'm not at all clear if the row began merely because he was queried as a voter, and the angry reply was that, by Ghu, he could stand for candidate, too, if needs be. That isn't important; the incident was merely the trigger that released the charge that had been building up, out of the divergent beginnings of TAFF.

Walter's experience had been of a group of friends clubbing together to bring him across because they knew him and liked him. It was a personal thing, a very precious, wonderful gesture.

Don's experience had been one of disappointment that a friend hadn't been able to come across, and a generous throwing open of the offer to anyone who could manage it. He wasn't bothered who came; he didn't even want a hand in this person's selection. It was a very precious, wonderful gesture—and an all-embracing gesture.

Even though the fund started off with the proposals, No. 3, which I have quoted, on a pretty wide front, and with US participation, the clash was inevitable. That it began as it did was a trifle; that people began to chant slogans originating in things not said by the opposite side was to be deplored; and that it threatened TAFF was just darn silly. Of course fans are human [...] Fandom is composed of articulate people and so they say what they think and Degler take the hindmost. Rows in fandom are part of its nature; it distressed me personally that my friends were being slanged on each other's account by other friends [...] You have to watch carefully to see who is malicious in their feuds; their reputations precedes them as a stinking miasma and trufen tolerate them (some don't, of course) and do not allow themselves to become involved. This TAFF argument under discussion was a clean fought debate, thank Ghu. It was not until later, and newer people crept in, that things changed; but then TAFF was a united body, well able to defend itself against the cankers.

[...]when Walter handed over the reins to me [in 1955] I was faced with the debris of the quarrel I have just outlined, and a shining ideal combined of the enthusiasms of Walter and Don, with the idealistic aspirations of Walter and the hard-headed practicality of Don. As a team, they were perfectly fitted to work together once they had decided what the task was. My task was equally clear. My friends were busily arguing amongst themselves about who and what was a sf fan; I had to run TAFF.

I could quite clearly see and agree with Walter's contention that a fan had to know who he was voting for.

The spirit in which TAFF was founded did not include the situation where a fan is approached in a clubroom and asked for money and a vote for someone of whom he has never heard, or, in the normal course of things, is ever likely to hear. Either he doesn't keep in touch with world fandom, or the candidate doesn't. Is it true to say that the only way to keep in touch with world fandom is through the fanmagazines? You answer that one, it's a finger exercise. On the other hand, I have five fingers--I could quite clearly see Don's contention that if TAFF was to do what it set out to do, namely get a fan across the big pond at regular intervals, then we would have to secure cash from whatever sources were available. I am given to understand by various US fen that the US fan won't part with cash unless he has a vote. If true, this meant that all kinds of votes would be coming in, in order to secure cash in a mere mundane greed for money that completely contravened the fanish spontaneity of the original TAFF idea. That sickened some of the true old guard. The hard-headed old guard were amazed that fen could be so woolly-minded and idealistic as to suppose that enough cash could be collected on a spontaneous basis.

It has been proved that US fen will donate without a vote, as if we thought they wouldn't. But that is a sample of inaccurate information that comes the way of a TAFF administrator. Because of misreporting of what the finz fans were supposed to claim, the non-finz fen were hurt at not being called fans. All this is old hat now, but it does point up the sort of situation obtaining when Don Ford and I set the ball rolling on the 1956 elections.

It should be made very clear that though Walter had handed over to me, he remained very active in TAFF framework and consistently supported and encouraged it. His advice was always valuable and his gift of clear thinking extraordinarily helpful. During the elections of 1956 and 1957 Don Ford was the senior administrator, as the fan was coming from the US side of the big pond. During 1958 I was senior, as it was an East-West visit.

[...] Don handled the 1956 elections competently, to the extent that he arranged for TAFF to go through that year. There was a little discrepancy in vote-counting which came to light, was discussed, Don's system was rejected, and the system we now have was reinstated. Again, TAFF was going through a formative period. This was the first US election and the first time anyone was coming from their side.

It will be interesting, for a variety of reasons, to quote the results of the 1956 election. I have a copy of FEZ handy, dated March, 1956. Lee Hoffman 362, Forry Ackerman 177, Dave Kyle 109, Lou Tabakow 61, G. M. Carr 50, Wally Weber 37, Hal Shapiro 10, Kent Corey 8. [...] The leaders were whole fen, the others local white-haired boys (I've met them, incidentally, and they are wonderful fans, real fine guys) disliked or unknown for the remainder.

The demand that candidates should at least be well known to the other side of the pond was now an integral part of the TAFF idea, arising [...] from the force of circumstances than [through] design; only one string of the original TAFF idea having that object strongly in mind. [...] this idea, independent of who stands for election, will prevail. Should Augustus Bickerstaff decide to stand, and no one has heard of our Gus (an unlikely event) he will receive no votes. Alternatively, you have to make sure he doesn't go out and buy up all the votes in sight with women and strong liquor and old copies of Vargo Statton.

Unfortunately, Lee Hoffman backed out, and regrettably left rather late, so that there was no time for the next in line, Forry Ackerman, to make arrangements. Dave Kyle had had not polled the required quarter of total votes so TAFF lapsed that year. Lee came over on her own power, as did Dave. But the TAFF funds were intact.

We went forward into 1957, the year of the first truly Worldcon. Don had worked like a beaver in getting out ballot forms and publicity, and although the 3-for-1 voting system was still in operation, if everyone knew that, we all started even. Anyway, it was a US election and under the original system they were entitled to handle it how they liked. That we here didn't like the system meant merely that we would handle ours differently. It was publicly said by Don that as the election was under way it could go through as it was, and a definite scheme be worked out later that was acceptable. This is what happened; it has all been settled now, and is a matter of history.

I must re-iterate that what I say is what I see; I can be wrong. On reading back, I notice one or two small points that could have been better framed. Like that it was not 4e's idea to set up a fund to bring him across, but to bring a British fan across (later changed to the Big Pond Fund). 4e himself was asked to travel by Anglofen; but was unable to do so and did himself contribute a great deal of money under different names. And if I have left out a great deal of the bickering that went on, it is because it is best forgotten, and only those sections that have a bearing on why we do now what we do have been mentioned.

For 1957 the slate was: Stuart Hoffman, George Nims Raybin, Ed McNulty, Robert A. Madle, Forrest Ackerman (who withdrew almost immediately), Boyd Raeburn, Dick Ellington, and Richard Eny.

Over here a great deal of campaign material for Dick Eny was circulated. How the candidates stacked up in the US was virtually unknown; many of them were just names. Remembering that although very many US fen knew me prior to my trip, quite a number, as is the way of things, didn't. I felt confident that whoever was elected would be received in the same generous way as was Pamela and me. In the event, I was right. The election was held and Bob Madle elected.

On the heels of this, I was made aware that there were

rumors circulating in fandom that there had been vote buying. Putting aside the difference in approach to elections here from that in the US, I felt that Bob Madle himself would not have been vote buying, as would not others on the slate; but that if anything should come of these rumors then the obvious sufferer would be the man elected. However innocent he was, he would suffer. I was very troubled. I wrote to Don and asked him what went on.

Everything blew up.

[...] There are a few facts that so far have not been made public. After the ruckus, it was settled pretty satisfactorily that there had been vote buying by at least one fan. Bob Madle did not buy any votes. What happened is that a chance remark was passed on, had grown in the re-telling, had become big enough to harm reputations, and had been jumped on by a shrill-voiced caucus to air their own grievances.

One of the candidates had approached a wk fan and had said, in essence, that since TAFF was such a good thing, he would put up the 50¢ so the fan could vote for him. This the fan repeated in casual conversation to another bnf, who is a Very Good Man, in the presence of another candidate. The bnf felt a little steamed up; after all, was this the way TAFF was to be run? It so happens that this bnf is one of the Quiet Americans. He is the soul of kindness and generosity, with an immaculate sense of honor and has one of the finest reputations both in the US and over here of any fan living. He is a big time confan and has contributed to the fnzfield a solid body of useful work. He has the welfare of TAFF at heart in the same way all wholefans have. He was writing a letter to a fan in England and mentioned what he had been told, and although the terms of that letter are not known, they were most probably strongly derogatory of the vote-buying candidate's actions.

Assume that the candidate had not been vote-buying. That the wk fan (that means well known, to avoid misunderstandings) had misinterpreted the remark, that it had been merely that TAFF was worth 50¢ or something similar. No one now is going to go on record as saying that this candidate did in fact buy votes. (Some already have, but that's another story.) [...]

The English fan, rather naturally, passed on this information, and reached me, quite possibly, third or fourth hand. It had grown fuzzy by that time. Others were talking about it. I had to find out about it, to get the truth. To do this I wrote to Don Ford.

In the interim, the small party who had been campaigning for Dick Ery and who couldn't believe that Bob Madle had won, seized on this as being the explanation for who nobbled the favorite. Whilst I was trying to pursue quiet enquiries, a hullabaloo broke.

I should like to make it quite clear that Walter Willis of Ballyhackamore was not—repeat, not—one of those people screaming dirty politics, etc. He only came into the act at a later date. Dick Ery, also, was not connected with the rumor mongering. This was not a case, as has been suggested, of sour grapes on the part of Dick Ery—he is a great fan and took the course of the election in fine spirit—but of a very small vociferous body who failed to appreciate that Madle was a bnf when they wore three-cornered trousers and who was still known in the American fan field. (He must have been, look at all the votes he collected from equally well known bnfs.) It was an example of the American confen of later years having been fnz fen earlier on.

[...] I am happy to report that as of now both Dick Ery and Bob Madle have come out of it with their reputations intact—enhanced, if anything.

[...] I am in the invidious position of having to cast out the beam before the moat has shifted. I had wondered whether or not my pro writing disqualified me from standing as a TAFF delegate. As I had taken a job to earn cash in case I was elected, at the time I was not a professional. But, really and truly, I am. Equally so, Bob Madle cannot be called a fanzine type fan, not those days just pre-election anyway. He has come into the fan publishing field again, though, of recent days, and he was putting out FANTASCIENCE DIGEST back in 1937. That was before a lot of the fen who were creating [the fuss ??] were born, of course you can see their argument, but fandom is a continuous growth; it didn't just start the day you, sir, or you, madam, joined up. This is one of those knotty problems that can only be solved by actual individual cases, each dealt with on its own merits.

[...] I am finding this task of writing a history of TAFF a ghastly job. I have steadfastly eschewed mentioning anyone's name in a derogatory context. I will try to adhere to this. I have my own strong opinions, of course. There are and have been feuds and arguments over TAFF going on a long time now. I have friends on most sides of the arguments. If I think a friend is wrong it is my responsibility to say so. And the best way to do this is not to take the negative attitude and say you and you, fugghead, are wrong but to take the positive attitude that this is what should be done. [...] You can have your fights and feuds as much as you like, but just remember that you are fighting over TAFF, which is an idea that goes on, and does not stop because of the fights. [...] I disapprove most strongly of certain insultingly worded slanging matches that have been going on. Let's argue like gentlemen, not urchins with four-letter anglo-saxon words for a staple vocabulary. It takes all the fun out of arguments if you descend to those levels.

I have to make clear that the little vociferous group was not Irish Fandom, it was not the stateside friends

of Eny. Whatever may have later been said, at the time the rumors floated about detached from reality, the storm clouds brewing were really and truly waiting to settle about the shoulders of the old argument—fanzine fan or not. [...]

Bob Madle was not, at the time of his election, a fanzine fan. He was, however, well known and respected in the US, he was known to a number of fans over here and as a choice for taffman was first class. Under the original terms the sponsoring country was left to choose their own candidate. There had been a mention, as Chuck [Harris ??] has rightly pointed out, that the candidates should be fairly well known on both sides. I think that Bob was 'fairly' well known. Certainly he wasn't as well known over here as I was in the States; but that was one of those things. Looked at purely from the viewpoint of the spirit which brought Walter over in 1952, Bob Madle was not the fanzine fan type we were looking for. But looked at in the light of the original Don Ford CFG Ashfield fan fund (The British Fan Fund) he was an ideal choice. as TAFF today is composed of both these strings of parentage, as I have attempted to point out, Bob was a fair choice for TAFF.

Unless you all decide to split TAFF right down the middle and set up two distinct funds, one to bring a confan to a convention, the other to bring a fanzine type fan to a con to meet his correspondents, you have to accept a compromise. On the face of it, the confen have the money and the fnzfen the contacts. Yet the fnzfen were able to bring Walter across in 1952. Nothing is clear cut in all this except the single fact that to run TAFF successfully you must steer as clear a course as you can through the murk and dust of competing factions. That I can see both sides of the problem is my misfortune; it's my emotions that are torn up when friends bicker.

After the successful 1957 election, Bob Madle took over as US TAFF administrator. Don Ford, like Walter Willis, remained on the advisory committee, ready to give help and encouragement. Some of the strife of the 'Vote Buying Rumors' still clings; but if I have been successful in showing that a modus operandi can be found for TAFF, that old conflict can be laid to rest alongside the Great Staple War and the Cosmic Circle and Operation Armageddon and suchlike cause celebres of their day

During the 1958 elections, I was far too busy to become involved [in bickering that did not directly concern TAFF]. I'm for TAFF and for no one else. If the person running the affair is dragged into bickerings, then just who do you trust to see the thing through? I figure I owe too much to TAFF and to the friends I have made in fandom to let TAFF go by default whilst I'm busy arguing with people who want things done their way and don't give a hang about the greater good of fandom (If you accept the concept that fandom is worth working for, that is).

TAFF started in a fine fannish spirit, disagreements arose as to the way in which it should be run, the administrators, in their various ways, ignored or listened to the suggestions, and today TAFF is a fannish institution of which all you listening fen can be proud. Yes—proud. Think of it. Here we are, an amorphous bunch of people, all interested as a basis in sf (the odd man who is in fandom without reading sf is rare and can be discounted) reading and writing and collecting and publishing and con attending—and we club together and send one of our number 3,000 miles and this year nearer 5,000 to attend a strange convention in a strange land, which turns out to be not strange at all. Y'know TAFF is something of which to be proud and all the bickering in fandom won't stop TAFF from going ahead. It's on its way to even greater things.

Like the original TWO-WAY Transatlantic fan fund, Yes?

A BLUEPRINT

As you will have guessed from the preceding sections of this report, I am making no attempts to turn this into a long-faced serious and constructive screed, nor am I frothing off in an esoteric fannish burst of glee. So the following rules that are currently in use by all TAFF administrators are presented in the fannish way of freedom, coupled with a certain restraint. They are not listed in any particular order of merit.

1. A permanent Two-Way Transatlantic Fan Fund shall be set up to help both British and American fen to attend each other's conventions. (This category included Irish, Canadian and Continental fans, also.)
2. The ballot shall be secret. Each fan must sign his own paper and no proxy votes are allowed. No block votes are allowed. Each fan may vote once only.
3. Each voter is allowed a first, a second, and a third choice. If he wishes he may leave blank any place, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd on the voting paper. He may not vote for one fan more than once. The first choice shall receive 3 points, the second 2, and the third 1. Highest total of points elects.
4. Should the elected candidate prove unable to travel, the second shall be offered the opportunity and also the third, provided that they both received more than a quarter of the total votes cast.
5. Each candidate must sign a declaration that they are willing to go, come what may, save an impossible situation such as an act of God, etc.
6. Each candidate must be nominated by a panel of five well known fen, three from his side of the Atlantic and two from the other.
7. The leading nominator must provide an election platform of about one hundred words, detailing why it is considered their candidate should be elected to go on TAFF.
8. Fen on both sides of the Atlantic shall be allowed

to vote in all elections, irrespective of which way the fund is operating this year.

9. A minimum sum shall be donated to the fund—at the present it is 2/6d or 50¢—to entitle any one fan to vote. More donations over and above this are both welcome and requested.

10. In order to be entitled to vote, a person shall be a science fiction fan and shall to show this be active in fandom to the extent of having subscribed to or contributed to or published at least one fanzine or have joined a reputable fanclub or organization prior to six months before the closing date for nominations (in both cases). This is a matter for the conscience of the fan; the decision on any point is the administrator's and that is final.

As Bulmer kept reminding his readers, he was drafting STEAM on stencil, and it shows in the number of typos and looseness of construction. STEAM, Vol 4, #4, ran 25 pages, so it is obvious that this is an extremely edited version of it. If anyone wants a 2nd generation photocopy, I can have one run off at the local copy center at the rate of 10¢ a page--\$2.50 for a copy, and 39¢ for postage, let us say.

This excerpt is not being included to stir up long-dead feuds--it's been nearly 30 years since they were fought, after all--but to bring home the point that the arguments about TAFF have been around, and were battled over quite fiercely, ever since TAFF's inception.

I found Bulmer's account quite interesting for a variety of reasons. I had had no idea that CFG was in any way involved with TAFF's roots, nor that the initial funding for TAFF came from convention fans. (I'd be willing to bet that there are a number of more veteran fen that didn't know or had forgotten that, too) Though I knew the fanzine fan/convention fan differentiation went back a lo-o-ong way, I did not know that arguments about who is a fan or who is eligible to stand for TAFF took place so early in TAFF's existence. Though I had heard about the so-called 'Vote Buying Rumor' that Bulmer discusses, his confident prediction that the truth had won out apparently was in error--for the versions I've had told to me, and some came from Britfen, blamed Bob Madle for the fuss. I particularly appreciated this facet of STEAM, and now find myself wondering how it came to be that the distorted version was disseminated so widely rather than the facts as Bulmer says they were.

Fandom. 'Tis a puzzlement.

Perhaps the greatest lesson to be learned from reading fannish historical documents like STEAM is that there is no such thing in fandom as a 'settled' point.

Though fandom has grown through the years, its base has widened, fringe groups increased--the same matters are still being discussed, argued, and fought over. It shouldn't be any wonder that often the older, more veteran fen refuse to enter the debates--the entire matter must be so old-hat, so stale, that they're bored to tears. I can just see the grizzled fen casting their eyes up heavenward--"Oh, ghod; not again!"

And yet, and yet...just as public discussion of the political system in use by one's country rehashes ancient points that have been supposedly thrashed out for centuries, it is a ghod thing to continue the discussion of fannish matters which have bothered fandom for decades. True, affairs may not be settled for all time, no matter how much those concerned wish it to be so, but they can be settled for the time being. At the very least, they can be settled in one's own mind. To air conflicting positions, to discuss varying viewpoints, to pause and take a good hard look at the world about oneself, to establish one's own thinking on an issue; all of these are Ghod Things, to my mind.

Fannish tides ebb and flow, they do not remain static. This year's contretemps becomes a joke five years down the road, and in another decade is simply a part of fan history. New fans come in, old fans leave or die, some fans flare up like novae and are never heard from again, gaffes are resurrected and fandom seems to find a new life. The Traditions are passed on, both by printed means and through the spoken word. Errors creep in, sometimes they're corrected and sometimes they are not--gee, it's just like Real Life, ain't it.

There are many fans out there who don't care to discuss fandom or their place in its working. They're more concerned with when the next convention is occurring, or who's throwing the next party, or when they'll next see a hilarious fanzine chockful of funny fannish things. To them, fandom is simply a source of amusement, a place where they can idle away some time, and take their minds off their mundane lives. And that's a valid way of looking at fandom--but it's not the only way.

For those who look at Fandom As A Way Of Life, and even for some of the FLJAGDHers, fandom is important because it is a facet of their lives, a piece of their existence and as such Matters to them. We all find amusing moments in fandom, amusing things to do, amusing people to be with--else why would we ever have involved ourselves in the first place? But because fandom is composed of people, unique individuals one and all, there will be serious moments and serious matters to discuss. There are always two sides to human interaction, sometimes far more than two. Perhaps as many facets as there are human beings, come to think of it....

To wrap up this issue, I'd like to thank those who WAHF (were also heard from)--I've misplaced the list, but You know who You are...and why not write again, soon? Last stencil typed September 26, 1985. Late again....

DUFF: THE DOWN UNDER FAN FUND was created in 1972 to encourage closer ties between fans in Australasia and North America. With host countries alternating each year, there have been 13 exchanges of fan representatives since, supported entirely by voluntary contributions from fans all over the world. DUFF delegates visit a major SF Convention in the host country and visit with fans they might otherwise never meet in person. DUFFers are treated as special guests, and are always well looked after.

DONATIONS: DUFF exists solely on the donations and contributions of fans, and always welcomes material for auction, and donations of money. There will be auctions of DUFF material at future cons. Contributions can be brought to the con, or sent to the local administrator. Anyone may contribute, even if ineligible to vote, and donations in excess of the voting donation are gratefully accepted. Cheques should be made out to Robbie or Marty Cantor (in North America) and Jack R. Herman (in Australasia).

VOTING: Any fan active in fandom before January, 1985, may vote. Ballots must be signed and be accompanied by a donation of, at least, \$2. Each person is allowed only one vote. If you think your name may not be known by the administrator, please include the name of a fan or fan group who can vouch for you. We will not count unverifiable votes.

ALL VOTES MUST REACH AN ADMINISTRATOR BY NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 28, 1986.

DUFF used the "Australian" Preferential system of balloting to guarantee an automatic run-off and a majority win. You rank the candidates in order of preference (1, 2, 3...). If there is no absolute majority for one candidate after the first count of votes, first place votes for the lowest-ranking candidate are dropped and the second place votes on those ballots are assigned to the candidates named. This goes on until one candidate has a majority. It is therefore important to vote for second, third, etc places, especially if you choose to write-in a candidate. (You are not required to fill in more than your name, address and first choice.)

CANDIDATES: Each candidate has posted a \$10 bond, provided written nominations, and has promised (barring Acts of God) to travel to the 1986 World SF Convention, ConFederation, in Atlanta, Georgia, Labour Day Weekend 1986. In the cases of multiple candidacies, DUFF pays for ONE set of fares, accommodation and expenses. Platforms are reproduced on the reverse side and the ballot is below.

ADMINISTRATORS: R. & M. Cantor, 11565 Archwood, North Hollywood, CA 91606, USA
J.R. Herman, Box 272, Wentworth Bldg, U. of Sydney, Australia 2006

I vote for (list 1, 2, 3, etc)

Sally Beasley

Terry Frost

Mark Loney/Michelle Muysert

Morley/Pride/Stathopoulos

(write-in) _____

Hold Over Funds

No Preference

Signature _____

Name & Address (Print) _____

If you think you may be unknown be the administrator, please give the name of a fan or fan group to whom you are known: _____

CANDIDATE'S PLATFORMS

SALLY BEASLEY: I had been involved in fandom since 1971, on the fringes of Britfandom, but only discovered F*A*N*D*O*M when I emigrated to Australia in 1977. Since then, I have been involved in the programming and running of several local conventions, and organised baby-sitting for Aussiecon II. I am in several apas - ANZAPA, A Woman's Apa, and CRAPA/PI. I have not published my own fanzine (despite good intentions for 6 years plus!) but promise to publish a trip report if elected and then, who knows? I support Worldcons ANYWHERE OTHER THAN Perth.

Nominators: Alyson Abramowitz, Valma Brown, Eric Lindsay, Marc Ortlieb, Amy Thomson, and others.

TERRY FROST: Vote the Frost Team. Writing a DUFF platform while selling memberships to Capcon 87 (The Australian Natcon) ((free plug)) at Aussiecon II ain't easy. Don't let the list of nominators fool you - they were selected very carefully for their sterling qualities in order to give the Frost bid a touch of class it otherwise lacks. Wit, intelligence, cordiality, beard (one), housetraining, cartooning skill, funny accent, the ability to stay awake for long periods of time and silliness I already have. Also, Karen Vaughan, my fiancée, will, if I win, be accompanying me on a DUFF trip cum honeymoon.

Nominators: Mike Glycer, Leanne Frahm, Ken Ozanne, Paul Stevens, Art Widner.

MARK LONEY/MICHELLE MUYSSERT: (Michelle) I am a New Zealander and have been involved in fandom in Wellington, Auckland, Melbourne and Perth, where I live currently. I'm small, furry and very friendly, I love room parties, and I'd love to go to ConFederation.
(Mark) I am a large furry West Australian making up the second half of the Muysert/Loney trans-Australasian DUFF bid. My first con was Swancon II in 1976 and my first fanzine was THE SPACE WASTREL (with Mr. Warner) in 1979. Michelle and I have been a joint fanact since 1983 and we'd really like to meet you all at ConFederation.

Nominators: Justin Ackroyd, Alexis Gilliland, Irwin Hirsch, Peter Toluzzi, Roger Weddall and others.

LEWIS MORLEY, MARILYN PRIDE, NICK STATHOPOULOS: (Lewis speaks on Nick and Marilyn's behalf) Having been into rubber for some time, I was delighted to find that fandom held a niche in which I could flourish and fester. Together with Nick and Marilyn, I discovered a group of caring and interesting people who encouraged us to always push ourselves further. My personal interests have included regular entries in Masquerades which let me enjoy absurd behaviour in complete anonymity. Most importantly, I feel that Nick, Marilyn, and I represent a VISUAL face to fandom: while our written contributions have been fairly sparse, in creating a tangible aroma (for want of a better word) in the field of fan Art, we feel "strong" enough to give fans overseas a good idea of what Australian fans are about. And being VISUAL we promise a trip report with SLIDES!!!

Nominators: Forrest J. Ackerman, Sally Beasley, Terry Dowling, Van Ikin, Joyce Scrivner and others.

REPRODUCTION OF THIS BALLOT IS ENCOURAGED; PLEASE COPY TEXT VERBATIM (CORRECTING TYPOES).

ORIGINAL BALLOT TYPED UP BY JACK R. HERMAN, AUGUST 29, 1985. THIS COPY PRODUCED BY JACKIE CAUSGROVE & DAVE LOCKE FROM A COPY DONE BY MARTY & ROBBIE CANTOR ON 9/5/85.

O O O P P S ! ! !
(OR, WHY THIS ISSUE IS SO BLASTED LATE...)

The last stencil was cut for ETILE FIVE on September 26th, 1985. I was running a bit behind schedule, but not too badly considering that my back had decided to impose a two-stencils-per-day limit on me. Friday afternoon I could run off the stencils and take the entire weekend to collate, staple, address and stamp. Boring work, but a piece of cake to do. The mimeo started making Strange Noises about halfway through the ~~300~~³⁰⁷-numbered stencils. Thirty sheets into P. 17, there was a tiny 'click', and the machine stopped rolling. Mid-Run Crisis had struck once more.... It was 5:05 P.M., just in time to ruin any chance of obtaining advice and/or parts from a repair shop before Monday. I spent the weekend fiddling with the Gestetner, and finally spotted the problem; a flat metal band that had something to do with directing the motor's power to the rotating cylinder was broken, and hung over a shaft in an utterly useless position. The motor would run, but nothing else would. I tried cranking it by hand, and it would roll quite nicely--until I engaged the feed lever. Then it would jam up and lock tight. I took it into the dealer Monday afternoon. When I showed the trouble site to the repairman, he shook his head sadly. It was a broken clutch assembly. Assuming parts could be obtained for it (the Model 366 had been in production for only a 2 year period), it would take nearly two hours to dismantle the works and reassemble it after the part was replaced. Rough guess at cost: \$260. And that was not counting the additional time and parts needed to correct the jamming symptom, which was what caused the clutch assembly to break in the first place.

Though this place was a Roneo dealership, the repairman was a former serviceman for Gestetner, and knows the machines well (and works at a much lower rate than Dear Old Gestetner charges). He had taken in four Gestetners from a local business school in trade for new Roneos. One of the Gestetners was a Model 466, the Older Brother to the 366. It had sat in a storeroom for about a year, and would need clean-up and adjustment, but I could have it for \$200. Bill Bowers and I co-own the machine, and he had given me carte blanche on the repairs (he pays 50%), but even so, I wanted his okay first. It took me most of the day to get through to him (he'd had a M.D.s appointment for allergy testing that day, naturally...) and I'd finally decided to contact the shop and tell the repairman to go ahead. Ten minutes later Bowers called. He choked a bit at the estimate for repairs, and gave the go-ahead to get the used machine. (I didn't have the nerve to tell him I'd already ordered it; but, actually, what else could we have done? Pay twice as much to fix the 366? Didn't make sense to me.) It took three days to ready the machine. That brought me flat up against the deadline for the Apa I co-edit with Dave Locke. Time out to type out eight stencils for it. That, in turn, brought me flat up against the mailing deadline for the Apa. Time out to run off the material for it. Then I could finish ETILE's stencils (one had to be re-cut) and figure out the Mysteries of the 466. As is obvious, I had a few problems. Some pages are under-inked, some over-inked. Words appear and disappear seemingly at whim... the corflu was too thick and corrections were, varyingly, hard to impossible to print. *Sigh* But at last the task is done. The zine is 3/4s collated, and only this page remains to run off. Sorry it took so long; I'll try to do better next issue....

--- Jackie Causgrove, October 7, 1985

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JACKIE CAUSGROVE
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CINCINNATI, OH 45236

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Lee Hoffman
3335 Harbor Blvd.
Port Charlotte, FL 33952

