



FOCAL POINT, Volume 2, Number 22, a fanzine of news, views, and reviews, is edited by Arnie Katz (59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201) and rich brown (410 61st St. Apt. D4, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11220). Assistant Editor: Colleen Brown. Invaluable Held: Joyce Fisher. Published bi-weekly, it is available for news, all-for-all trades (both editors, please), or 6/\$1. Illustrations by Jay Kinney and Steve Stiles. January 18, 1971.

SHAW FUND HITS GOAL!!

The Bob Shaw Fund, to bring all-time great fan and rising sf author Bob Shaw to the Noreascon from his home in Northern Ireland, is now officially a success. The fund, begun in FOCAL POINT last August under the co-chairmanship of Arnie Katz and rich brown, now has over \$1000 on deposit in the BoSh Fund bank account, exclusive of monies which will still come in from auctions which have not yet ended and proceeds from the many special Bob Shaw Fund publications. These sources of income will, when they come in, put the Bob Shaw Fund well beyond financial worry.

The original target date for ending the Fund drive was February 1, to avoid conflicting with the soon-to-be-launched TAFF race. The early closing was made possible in large part by an anonymous donation of \$300. We would sincerely like to thank our Unknown Benefactor (he's even unknown to us. U.E. sent his check to Charlie Brown, whom he rightly guessed could resist spilling the beans even to us.)

The Fund would not have been a success without the strenuous efforts of the Bosh Fund Committee which, besides the co-chairmen, included Terry Carr, Colleen Brown, Joyce Fisher, Richard Bergeron, Dave Lewton, John D. Berry, Steve Stiles, F. M. Busby, Ray Fisher, and Bruce Pelz. In particular, we would like to thank Colleen Brown, who has run the auction, and Terry Carr and Richard Bergeron for special efforts on behalf of the Fund.

The committee cannot claim all the credit for the Fund's success by any means. There are the fans who have published or will publish Special Bob Shaw publications: Jay Kinney (NOPE), Dave Burton (MICROCOSM), brown and Katz (FOCAL POINT, The Enchanted Duplicator), Greg Shaw (METANGIA), Frank Lunney (BEABOHEMA), Dave Lewton (INFINITUM), Carl Brandon, Jr. (TRANSLATIONS), and Terry Carr (INNUENDO). There were the fans who donated large amounts of materials for the auctions: Lee Hoffman, Andy Main, Terry Carr, Richard Bergeron, and Forry Ackerman, to name just a few.

As we said at the outset, though the Bob Shaw Fund was coordinated through the pages of FOCAL POINT, the BoSh Fund was not a FP project but a fandom project. As trite as it may sound coming from two such old and callous fans as the editors of FOCAL POINT, the

Fund would not have been the success it now is without you, all of you.

When Bob Shaw was first contacted about the idea of the Fund, he replied that he kept thinking bemusedly that the proposal "came from a faned who never even received a letter of comment" from him. He added: "Did you ever get the feeling that maybe people are fine, godlike beings, after all?"

Now we can reply: Yes, Bob, we've had that feeling.

-- rich brown and Arnie Katz

NOREASCON NEWS Membership in the Noreascon, the 29th World Science Fiction Convention scheduled for Labor Day weekend 1971 in Boston, is 662 as of January 1. Mass. has 84 and N.Y. has 83 to lead the state-by-state breakdown.

Membership fees are currently \$6 attending and \$4 supporting. Mail registrations will not be taken past August 10. It will cost \$6 to convert a supporting membership to an attending membership at the con. Additionally, only those registering at least two weeks before the convention will be able to take advantage of the reduced hotel convention rates.

The third progress report is in the mail, contains 28 pages, and sports a Fabian cover, the original of which will be auctioned at the con.

Send your membership money to Noreascon, Box 547, Cambridge, MA 02139.

ALBUQUERQUE SF GROUP ELECTS OFFICERS Mike Montgomery was elected Moderator of the Albuquerque SF Group. Harry Morris was reelected Secretary, and Bob Vardeman retained the post of treasurer.

Our Albuquerque informant reports that Mike became Moderator as a result of arriving too late at the meeting to protest his election.

ALBUQUERQUE Jack Speer, having won election to the judiciary, took office January 4. The Hon. John B. Speer now has all the rights and privileges accorded his position, including offices in the County Courthouse among all the non-fan judges who were also elected. ::: Harry Morris was judged 4-F by his draft board. His doctor convinced the Army that they would not want someone who once had a broken back.

NEW MEXICON III which FOCAL POINT's uncle Roy Tackett assures us is called the Bubonicon, will be held August 27-28 at the Ramada Inn East in Albuquerque. Further information from chairman Bob Vardeman, P.O. Box 11352, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87112.

PRESS REVIEW The annual meeting of the Tolkien Society of America was written up in the Monday, December 28, issue of The New York Times. Elliot Shorter, Ed Meskys, Ivor Rogers and Mike McQuown were quoted for a meaty paragraph each as to why they found Tolkien a worthy subject of study.

NYC New York Fanoclasts held their annual New Years Eve party, and if it was a bit more modest than most, it had a visit from former FP editor and editor emeritus Mike McInerney going for it. Also on hand were host Steve Stiles, Lee Hoffman, Bob Toomey, Frank Wilimczyk, Mike Hinge, Joe Staton, Bruce Telzer, John D. Berry, Andy Porter, Hal Hughes, Darroll Strange, rich & Colleen Brown, and briefly Ken Beale. ::: Mike McInerney and Steve Stiles were robbed of \$70 and a watch while on their way to visit Hal Hughes on January 2.

B. SHAW FUND

\$1006 is the new total in the Bob Shaw Fund account, up from last issue's \$661.00. Further direct contributions are no longer being sought for the fund.

SPECIAL BOSH FANZINES The following fanzines are those which have been published, or which will be published, to benefit the fund. Fanzines marked with an asterisk have already been published and will be sent to you as soon as your money is received.

- *MICROCOSM #14, Dave Burton (5422 Kenyon Dr., Indianapolis, Ind.)(50¢)
- * FOCAL POINT 12.5, rich brown (410-61st St., Apt. D4, Bklyn, NY 11220) (\$1)
- * APA-L #289, Fred Patten (11863 W. Jefferson Blvd, Los Angeles, Calif., 90230) (\$2)

THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR, \$1, Arnie Katz (Apt. 6-B, 59 Livingston St., Brooklyn, NY 11201)

INNUENDO, \$2, Terry Carr (35 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn, NY 11201)

METANOIA #9, 50¢, Greg & Suzy Shaw (64 Taylor Dr., Fairfax, Calif. 94930)

BEABOHEMA #13, Frank Lunney (Box 551, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pa.) (\$1)

INFINITUM #5, 50¢, Dave Lewton (735 E. Kessler Blvd, Indianapolis, Ind. 46220)

NOPE #12, 50¢, Jay Kinney (215 Willoughby Ave., Apt. 1212, Brooklyn, NY 11205)

TRANSLATIONS #2, \$1, John-Henri Holmberg (c/o Thomas Mellgren, Nedre Slottsgatten 16, 752 20 Uppsala, SWEDEN)

BOSH FUND AUCTIONS All bids for the following auctions should be sent to Colleen Brown (same address as rich brown, above). Send no money, unless specified, just a bid on the items you want. We still ask that bids be submitted in increments of at least 50¢ on items under \$10 and \$1 on items over that.

CLOSED AUCTIONS Lenny Kaye will receive his MOJO-NAVIGATOR R&R NEWS as soon as he sends us \$8.50. :: PANIC BUTTON '6-15 will belong to Robert Whitaker when he sends us the \$25 he bid for the set.

AUCTIONS STILL ON The following items are still the subject of furious bidding. Items which have been asterisked have not received bids since the last issue of FOCAL POINT and will be closed out if no further bids have been received on them by January 26.

* A complete file of SLANT, donated by BoSh. Richard Bergeron is the current high bidder at \$65.

* THREE COPIES of THE GOON GOES WEST, donated by F.M. & Elinor Busby. The top three bids are from Richard Bergeron (\$7), Chester E. Lee (\$6) and Robert Whitaker (\$6).

SPACESHIP 21, donated by Lee Hoffman. Top bidder is John Leavitt @ \$4.

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST VII, 182pp from the pages of SPACEWAYS. Chester E. Lee is the current high bidder at \$7.50.

QUANDRY #13, donated by Dick Bergeron. Missing page 40, "A Dream," by Dave English. Robert Whitaker has bid \$8 for the issue.

DON FORD'S TAFF REPORT, two volumes, published & donated by Lynn Hickman. Five copies are up for bids. We have bids from Joseph Pate (\$4.50), John Leavitt (\$4), Chester Lee (\$4), Richard Labonte (\$4) and Robert Whitaker (\$3.50).

HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT: A TENTATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY, published by Laney & Evans in 1943, donated by Dick Ellington. Robert Whitaker has bid \$3.50.

A COMPLETE set of LIGHTHOUSE (#1-15), edited by Terry Carr and Pete Graham, donated by Richard Bergeron -- in mint condition. Joseph Pate is high bidder, having offered \$45 for the set.

UNKNOWN, March, 1939, VIN1, donated by Forry Ackerman. In excellent condition; only minor rips along spine. High bid is from Tom Mullen @ \$13.

FEN CRITTUR COMICAL BOOKS, donated by Richard Bergeron, a Pogo takeoff written by Walt Willis & Bob Shaw in 1952. Robert Whitaker has bid \$3 for this.

QUANDRY #14, edited by Lee Hoffman and donated by her. This issue was the "Nola-Quandry" issue of sixth fandom's focal point fanzine. Robert Whitaker has bid \$2.50 for the issue.

SCIENCE FICTION FIVE-YEARLY #4, edited and donated by Lee Hoffman. Robert Whitaker has bid \$4 for the issue.

FUTURIA FANTASIA #1, donated by Lee Hoffman. Robert Whitaker (is he in all the rooms?) has bid \$47.

WILD HAIR #3, donated by Richard Bergeron. Contains Burbee's classic, "I Was The Captain Of A Spaceship." Arnie Katz has bid \$6 for the issue.

TWO ORIGINAL Rotsler-Kirk collaborations, full page. Both of high fanzine quality. Neither have been published. Joseph Pate has bid \$5.50 for the pair.

FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND #2, edited by Forry Ackerman and donated by him. Fair condition. Joseph Pate has bid \$2.50 for the issue.

FANCIFUL TALES, VIN1, Fall, 1936, edited by Don Wollheim, donated by Forry Ackerman. rich brown is top bidder @ \$7.50.

NEKROMANTIKON #1, edited by Manly Banister and donated by Dick Ellington. Chester E. Lee has bid \$2.50 for the issue.

FANTASY MAGAZINE, June, 1936, donated by Forry Ackerman. rich brown has bid \$6 for the issue.

WARHOON #17, edited and donated by Richard Bergeron. Joseph Pate has bid \$2 for the issue.

THE WHITE SYBIL by Clark Ashton Smith b/w MEN OF AVALON by David H. Keller, donated by Forry Ackerman. Printed. Robert Whitaker is the current top bidder @ \$5.

UNKNOWN WORLDS, June, August, October 1943, sewn together, donated by Robert Whitaker. Only defects being small areas chipped on June and October covers. John Leavitt has bid \$4.50.

"THRU THE DRAGON GLASS" by A. Merritt, 24pp, printed, donated by Forry Ackerman. Mike Padwee is the current high bidder at \$6.

THREE pen & ink illustrations by Vincent DiFate, contributed by the artist. One appeared in ANALOG. Chester E. Lee has bid \$3.

The Boats of "Glen Carriq", by William Hope Hodgson, donated by Forry Ackerman. Second edition, 1920. Robert Whitaker has bid \$3.

THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, donated by Andy Main. The set is complete from the first issue in Fall, 1949, through March, 1958. 1959 is complete but the set has only eight issues between the beginning of 1960 and May, 1963. From May '68 to the end of 1968 only four issues are missing. Joseph Pate has bid \$50 for the set.

A BOOK OF WEIRD TALES #1, donated by Forry Ackerman. Robert Whitaker is current high bidder @ \$2.

MIRACLE SCIENCE & FANTASY STORIES #2, June-July, 1931, donated by Forry Ackerman. Missing spine and backcover. Poor condition. Steve Stiles has bid \$4 for the issue.

THE ARKHAM SAMPLER, Winter, 1949, donated by Forry Ackerman. The "all science fiction" issue. Mike Padwee has bid \$4.50.

WARHOON #15, edited and contributed by Richard Bergeron. Joseph Pate has bid \$2 for the issue.



THE INFINITE BEANIE

TERRY CARR

I have sort of a guilty secret that I've been keeping dark for most of my time in fandom. Well, I mean, I'm not really guilty about it, but it makes me look sort of like a weirdo among high-type fans whose interests are intellectual and spiritual. What it is, I really dig sports. Even all-American type sports like baseball.

Now, it's true that Harry Warner, who likes to pretend he's a timid man, has made his addiction to baseball public fannish knowledge for many years, and last year Gordon Eklund admitted much the same thing. Neither of them was ostracized from fandom, but I notice there were no hordes of crypto-baseball-nuts who rushed into print to shout me too. In fact there are a lot more fans who've publicly acknowledged doing acid than those who've confessed to liking baseball.

Well, I not only like to watch baseball, I even used to play it, like on an organized team with uniforms and everything. Not professionally, you understand, but fairly close to it. I played for a team in the Class AA sandlot league in San Francisco, which as I recall is two notches down from the beginnings of semipro ball. If I were to choose a fannish parallel I guess it might be writing a column for SF REVIEW.

I got mixed up in the netherworld of baseball because of my brother, actually. Allan is 7 years older than I, and always has been, except for those months when he's 8 years older. He used to be a baseball nut when he was in high school; he was a pitcher and he started in the Class B league, moved up to Class A and eventually to AA. My parents and I used to go watch him pitch every Sunday, and the smell of liniment was a familiar one Sunday evenings. My memories are no doubt colored by the natural hero worship of a younger brother for the older, but he was good. Good fastball, sharp curve, good control, and he mixed his pitches well. My opinion isn't all brotherly admiration, either, because it's a fact that he had a helluva won-lost record and usually led his league in strike-outs.

When he was 19 or 20 he got a tryout with San Francisco's pro team of the time, the Seals of the Pacific Coast League (one step down from the majors). They liked what they saw and gave him a contract. The whole family had a celebration, and then the next day Allan got his draft notice. He went into the army, spent two years in Korea farting around at the motor pool, and when he came back his arm was gone. I don't mean shot off or anything, just that

two years of no pitching messed up the muscles in his shoulder somehow; when he tried to pitch after that he said he could feel a muscle popping in his shoulder with every pitch. He was good for one or two innings before it would get to hurting too much, and for several days after his arm would just sort of hang limp.

Well, you know all the cliches about how younger brothers are supposed to fulfill the dreams of older brothers. Instead of quitting baseball when his arm went bad, Allan became a manager of a Class AA team, played second base and pitched short relief. To keep in shape he used to work out with me; he bought me a catcher's mitt and I'd catch while he continually tried to work his arm back into shape. It didn't happen, of course, but I learned a lot of respect for catchers: Jesus, Charlie, you ever try to sit on your haunches and try to catch a curve thrown at you at 75 mph?

I hated it, if you want to know the truth. What I wanted to be was not a catcher, but -- surprise -- a pitcher. I used to go over to a nearby public park with Boob Stewart and we'd take turns pitching to each other off the mound. Allan walked by with some friends one day when we were doing this and he stopped to watch me pitch for awhile. A light came to life in his eyes and he came out to the mound saying, "No no, let me show you what to do...."

A few weeks later, after an intensive crash-course in pitching from Allan and a friend of the family who used to pitch major league ball, I was put on the roster of the team Allan was managing. In sandlot ball, teams usually took the names of whatever business or fraternal organization could be persuaded to ante up the loot to buy uniforms and equipment; thus I played for the Moose. (Pete Graham once came to a game when I was playing, and had a hard time keeping a straight face all afternoon. "I'm sorry," he told me later, "but seeing you in that uniform with MOOSE written across the front just broke me up.")

I'll never forget the first game I pitched, especially the first pitch I threw. The catcher, who was an experienced old guy probably in his thirties (I was 18), came out to the mound after the warmups as the first batter for the opposing team sidled into the batter's box. The catcher knew I'd never pitched in a game before, and he figured I'd be nervous. He was right. He said, with the wisdom of experience, "Listen, on this first pitch, don't try to get fancy or anything. Just throw me the fastball sort of medium speed, and concentrate on getting it over the plate, that's all." I nodded, my mouth too dry for a verbal reply, and he trotted back behind the plate. He went into his crouch, flashed one finger between his legs meaning fastball, and I took a deep breath, wound up and delivered, trying hard as anything to get that damn ball over the plate.

It was over the plate -- right down the pipe, letter high. The batter swung, crackkkk!, and they'd still be chasing that ball if there hadn't been a fence in left field for it to hit. He got a double.

The catcher came out to the mound. (After one pitch?!) "Maybe you better put more on the next one," he said.

So I bore down, and got out of the inning with only two runs scored on me. I pitched two more innings, gave up a couple more runs, and then got tired. Hey, pitching is damn hard work; it'll get you beat out faster than basketball even.

I pitched in four or five games more after that, and played the outfield in a couple. My lifetime won-lost record is 0-1, and I'd like to explain a little about that game I lost. It was a 5 to 3 loss, but the two runs that beat us were unearned. What happened, there were men on second and third with two out, and I was throwing a lot of low curves to the batter. I got him to hit it on the ground to second base, right at the second baseman, and that should've been that. But the second baseman booted the ball, it went right through his legs, and two runs scored. The second baseman was my brother.

Don't think I ever let him forget it, either.

I don't want to pretend that I was a really good pitcher. I wanted to be, because I knew it meant a lot to Allan and my parents too, who came to all the games. But it's hell trying to be a good pitcher every Sunday when you're Official Arbiter of the Cult during the week. I had a good hard fastball that I was a little wild with, and a big ole roundhouse curve that wouldn't have fooled anybody if they hadn't been so deathly afraid of my wild fastball. But I actually had a high strikeout ratio, close to two an inning. I'd rear back and fire that fastball toward the plate till I had two strikes on my man, then I'd come in with the roundhouse curve, which started out looking like a fastball that was wild high and inside and then just drifted casually down and over the plate. I struck out a whole lot of batters who dropped to the ground in fear.

As a batter my record was just the opposite: I struck out. Pitchers aren't expected to be good hitters, of course, but I may have set a record. My lifetime batting average was .000, and every one of those times at bat was a strikeout except two. Once I was walked, by a pitcher who must've really been inept; I died on first base, though, when the next batter grounded out. And once I actually connected with the damn ball enough to put it into the playing field: I topped a soft grounder right back to the pitcher. But I damn well ran it out.

I also hit a home run once, but unfortunately it was foul. One pitch later I struck out. That happens a lot to us power hitters.

We had kind of a funny team; as I mentioned, the catcher was an old man in his thirties (or maybe even forties, I dunno; he was partially bald, anyway). The third baseman was a guy who'd been born with a bad right arm, so that in order to throw the ball to first he had to do a windup longer than the one I did from the rubber. That was okay with ground balls hit to third, because he could really zip it when he got the throw off, but one game the other team decided to bunt on him. It was one of my first games, in fact, and at the time I was under managerial orders to let those bunts be handled by the third baseman. So the first

time they bunted I let it go to the third baseman even though I would've had a play. He fielded it cleanly, then did his whole windup before throwing to first. The batter was safe by four strides.

I'm not an indecisive person. The next time they bunted on me I pounced on the ball myself, whirled and made a perfect throw to first to get the batter.

That was the third out of the inning, and as we trotted to the dugout I noticed the first baseman shaking his head.

"Whatsamatter?" I asked him. "I threw that guy out by a mile."

"I know," he said, "but why did you throw me a curve?"

Well, ah...

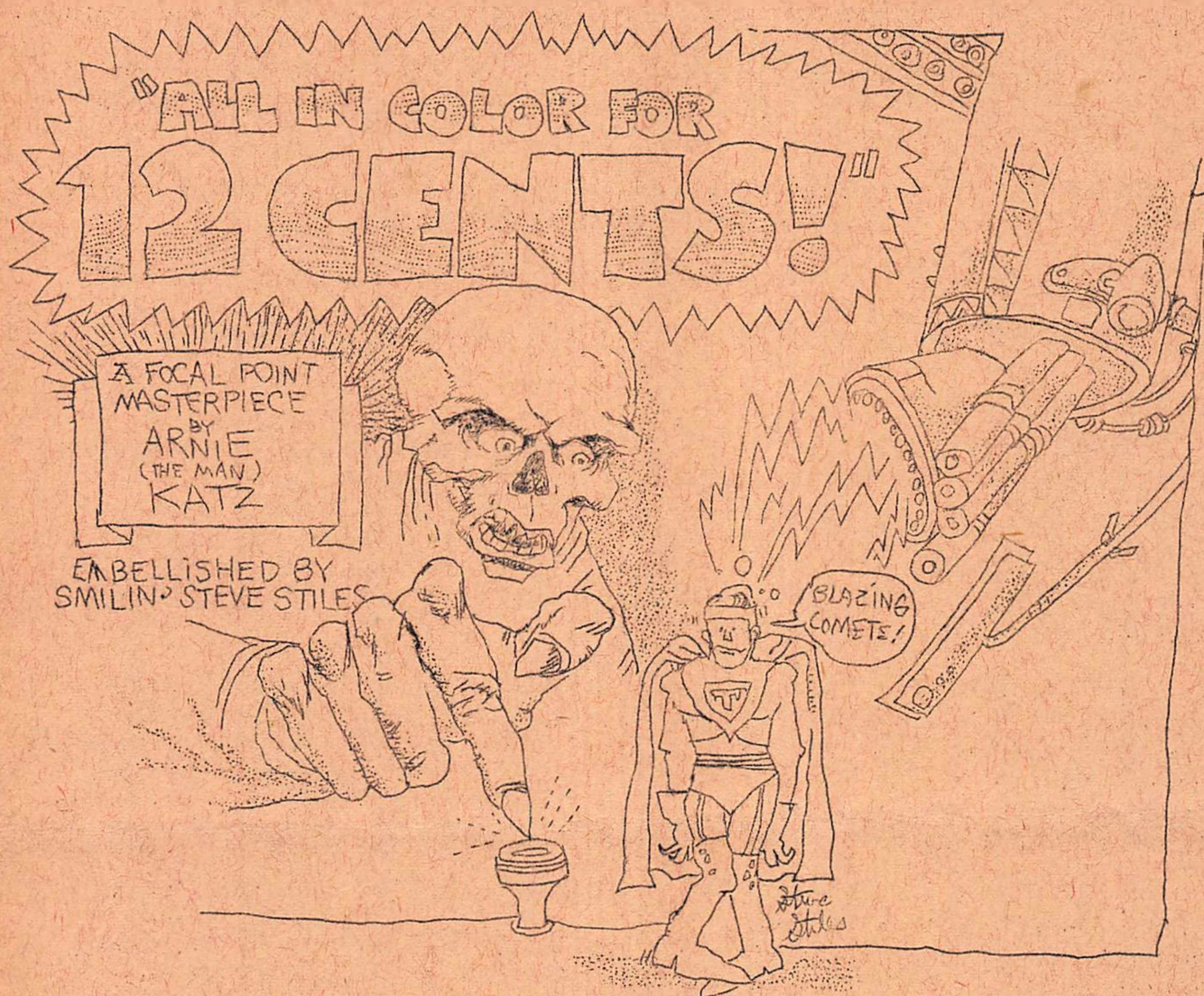
Look, let's face it, sandlot baseball isn't really a precision-trained sport. And Class AA ball is a funny league to be in, because it's populated not only by kids just learning the game, like me, but by older players with lots of experience but maybe not enough talent. And if you're wondering why any team would play a third baseman with a misformed throwing arm, I'll mention that he hit close to .400 that season.

It was the only season I played baseball. Next year I moved to Berkeley to go to college there, and I decided to give up the fast life of the diamond for the studious halls of academe. Berkeley Fandom formed itself around Ron Ellick, Pete Graham, Dave Rike and me, FANAC was begun, INNUENDO went into high gear, and we spent our free time on things like THE INCOMPLEAT BURBEE.

I guess the baseball world didn't really lose another Sandy Koufax when I quit the game. Still, I occasionally have these fantasies of mound duels with Bob Gibson or Tom Seaver. You know, Seaver throws a lot like I used to; I wonder if he was ever one of those kids who stood with their fingers looped through the fence to watch me --

Nah, that's ridiculous. Does Alicia Austin study DEA's artwork for pointers?

-- Terry Carr



Because All In Color For A Dime's path to publication was a rock-strewn one, Dick Lupoff and Don Thompson, the editors of the book, are in the unfortunate position of trend-setters who have come to public notice in the guise of "Me-too's". AICFAD would probably have engendered tremendous excitement if it had been published in 1963, as it could have been. Make no mistake, the series which ran in Dick and Pat Lupoff's fanzine XERO, from which this volume derives both its name and many of its contributions, had at least a little something to do with getting the Nostalgia Cult off the ground.

It is even more unfortunate that, for reasons beyond the control of the editors, at least one of the original articles, my personal favorite, had to be omitted. Though Richard Kyle's "The Education of Victor Fox" was not about the most important or famous comic book line, it was a gem of a piece. Still, there are many fine chapters, ranging from Ted White's "The Spawn of M. C. Gaines" about the creation of super-hero comics with the accent on the historical, to Ron Goulart's "The Second Banana Super Heroes", a wry look at costumed also-rans. Despite the inclusion of an article on movies (all very well, but this is supposed to be a book about comic books) this is a high class compendium sure to win the heart of any comic book fan or nostalgia buff.

I am a nostalgia freak (or should I, to keep in character, say "kook"?) I admit it. And I'm the worst type of nostalgia buff, too -- I'm too young to remember two-thirds of the stuff I'm nostalgic about.

I'm 24 years old, which means I know from 1950, maybe 1951. On a good day, I can recall something from the misty years of 1948 or 1949, but this is as likely to be a particularly good Good Humor I had in the summer of '49 as anything truly within the province of the nostalgia buff. I realize that, in today's mod a go-go world in which people can wax maudlin about last Wednesday, 1950 isn't bad (ask me anything about "Time For Beanie", anything....) but in comic book nostalgia, 1950 doesn't make it. Remembering 1950 for a comic book maven. is like remembering seventeen straight meals at a 19¢ hamburger joint.

And I don't remember the comic books of 1950. I didn't start reading them for several years after. Remembering comic books from 1953-54 is like remembering seventeen straight meals at a 13¢ hamburger joint at which the regular chef has gone on a vacation.

Now, I've read a lot of old comic books. I've sat up nights reading the Great Classic Literature. I know my Capt. Marvel; not as well as some, but I know it. I once even owned a Shield-Wizard Comic in which a member of the Resistance was crushed by a tank tread, so I have paid my dues as a comic book nut.

But I came to old comic books in my teens, late teens at that. They can never be important to me in the same way they are to the authors appearing in All In Color For A Dime.

The comic book characters of my youth were a pitiful lot; the lackluster Superman family, the static Batman and Robin, the uninspired Manhunter from Mars. Green Arrow and Speedy, who with age had perhaps lost a step going to his left, listlessly pinged arrows at an equally lethargic array of villains. I think I pitied Green Arrow a little. Batman was getting hokey and cluttered with crypto-Superman gimmickry, but his car hadn't been rendered as futuristic as a 1954 Cadillac by the onslaught of Detroit's rococo designers. The Arrow Car, painted a sickly yellow, with one fin stuck on the rear hood, was about the dumpiest clunker ever to trundle its way across the pages of a comic book. No matter how much they extolled its marvels, you had the feeling that some cold morning it might not even start.

I periodically wearied of comic books every few years, so I almost missed out on the Big Revival. In fact, several issues of SHOWCASE with the revived Flash had appeared without coming to my notice until Len Bailes, a boyhood friend (you may have run into him...) pointed them out. Truthfully, I was not a great follower of SHOWCASE, a comic used to try out new features for National. The first SHOWCASE contained something awful like "Fireman Freddie" and I didn't come back for more.

Once alerted, I picked up on the Flash, and when Green Lantern turned up, I bought that one too. Green Lantern, really Hal Jordan, test pilot, used will power to drive his power ring. His power ring eventually made him omnipotent while conversely his weakness against yellow made that color the In Shade in his strip. I showed I had even more will power than Hal Jordan; I stopped buying his comic book.

A more interesting character was The Fly, a venture by Archie Comics into the super-hero realm, Simon and Kirby doing the actual creating. As originally conceived, the Fly was a Capt. Marvel type hero in that his secret identity was that of a young boy, and after saying magic words he was transformed into/replaced by an adult super hero. Early issues were well drawn and very interesting. When Simon and Kirby moved on to, respectively, SICK Magazine and Marvel, the rot set in. When I checked back a few years later, Fly had become Fly-man and things were pretty sad for the winged wonder.

A revived Shield was intended as a companion hero to the Fly, but somehow they never managed to get past the first issue of The Double Life of Private Strong. In his new

incarnation, the Shield was a slightly suped-up Captain America and, in the absence of the original, not bad at all. For some reason, they were reluctant to leave well enough alone. Shield went through more changes in little two-page featurettes in Fly than most characters go through in twenty years. When the Shield finally made it into print at the end of the Archie super hero venture, it was a completely different character than Pvt. Lancelot Strong.

After another period of disinterest in comics, I remember picking up one in particular that excited me quite a bit. I spied it on a trip to the local candy store with Bailes.

"I think this thing may make it, Len," I offered.

"Not a chance," Len Bailes said, handing me back my copy of The Fantastic Four.

-- Arnie Katz

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