

FOCAL POINT

VOL.3 NO.3

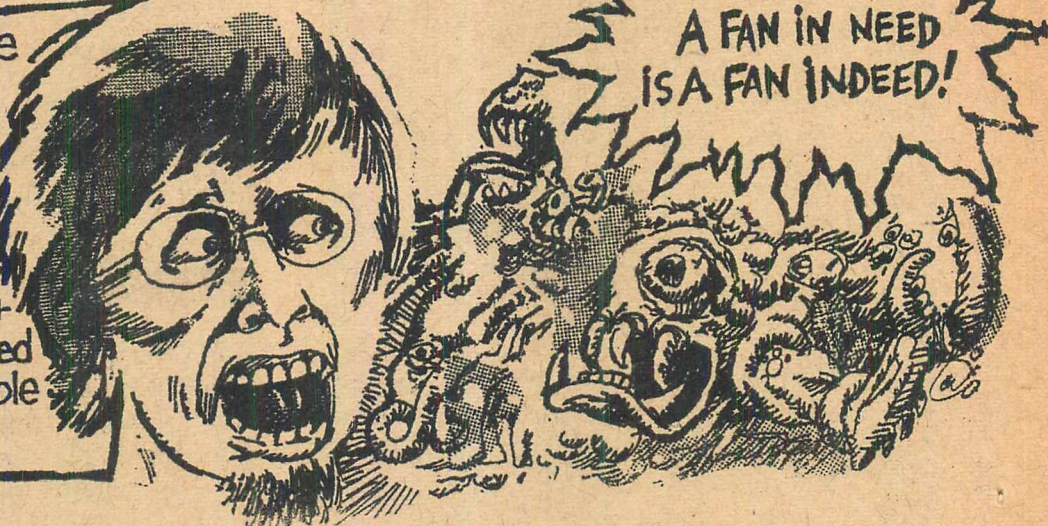




FOCAL POINT

May Roscoe save
my poor sanity
when trembling
memory returns
To that eldritch
time when I was
faced with A
nameless,
ACCURSED OBSCEN-
ity which turbled
those unspeakable
Words...

Steve Stiles



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Katzenjammer

The Honeymoon is over.

It has now been established conclusively, at least to my satisfaction, that the Rex 1000 that Joyce and I recently purchased is not The Enchanted Duplicator. If there was any doubt on this point in anyone's mind it was completely erased during the Saturday afternoon publishing session which produced the second issue of Chris Couch's up-and-coming fanzine CIPHER.

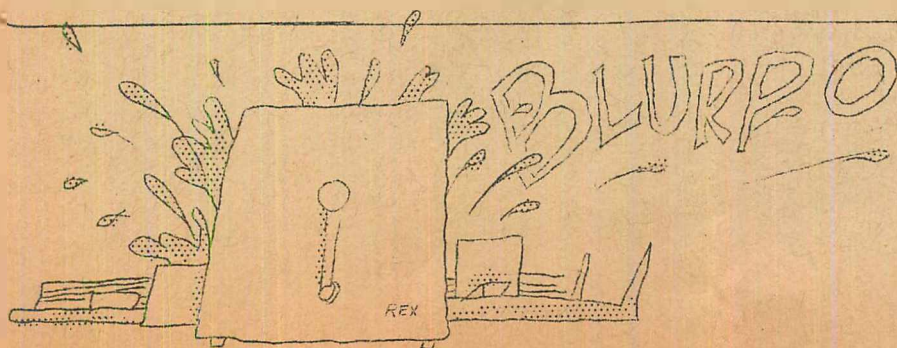
Chris had gone to the Fanoclast meeting at Steve and Gale Stiles' apartment the previous evening. After a pleasant evening of fannish fun, Chris came back to Brooklyn Heights with us and bedded down in our spacious spare bedroom instead of trekking back into Manhattan to his own apartment. He wanted to get an early start on doing the finishing touches on CIPHER, and he felt he could put the time he was going to save by not going to his own place to good use.

By the time Joyce and I staggered out of our bedroom Saturday morning, Chris was already hard at work at the lightscope, committing a cover Joe Staton had done for him at the meeting to stencil.

By early afternoon, we were ready to begin mimeographing.

It would be hard to find a more cocky and confident fan than I was as I attached the stencil for the cover to the machine, inked it up, and began running it off. Serene in my mastery over the newly-acquired machine, I deftly made the little adjustments which are always necessary at the beginning of a day of duplicating. My hands flicked lightly over the controls of the machine as the first dozen perfect cop-thumped into the receiving tray.

As I watched copy after copy of the cover roll from the machine, my eagle eye saw that the inking was getting a touch lite. No problem. I hit the manual inking lever a couple of times to feed an extra dollop of ink into the machine to correct



a column by Arnie Katz

the trouble.

The next few copies seemed better, but before I could settle into the groove of mimeographing, the pages began to fade again. It occurred to me that it might be just one spot which needed more inking, so I used the inking lever to put more at the spot which seemed the lightest. A few copies showed this wasn't the solution, either.

I stopped the machine and cleaned a thick film of paper dust which had collected on the stencil. "Ah, ha!" I thought. "Now I've found the problem!"

I switched the Rex back on and hit the ink lever a few extra times for luck.

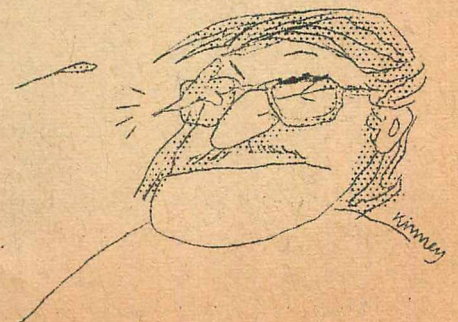
It still seemed light.

I should explain that I had a Gestetner for many years prior to buying this, my first, Rex. I had, quite naturally, evolved a set of procedures for dealing with the Gestetner's little idiosyncrasies. The Gestetner inking system pulls ink from a tube with suction. When a Gestetner doesn't seem to be inking right, it means that the suction isn't pulling the ink out of the tube for some reason, usually something like a dent in the tube. The counter to this difficulty is simple; you pump away at the ink lever until the suction gets going again, after checking the tube for dents.

So it was hardly surprising that I turned up the gizmo that governs the rate of ink flow and hit the manual lever about a dozen times. I turned the speed control as far as it would go, to get the ink I knew must be coursing through the Rex onto the drum.

The test copies I ran were even more faded than before.

"Hey, what's happening, Arnie?" Joyce asked as she came into the mimeographing





room. I told her my problem.

"If the ink isn't going onto the drum," she said with the air of one quoting an immutable maxim, "it must be going somewhere."

"Why, no, Joyce, it's right there in the --" I was about to say "tube" when I recalled that Rex ink comes in pop top cans. Dimly it came to me that Rex used a different inking system than Gestetner. I began to recall how my new machine worked. The outside of the can functions as a piston cylinder. The top of the can is forced in like a piston, with ink escaping through a hole in the center of the top, thoughtfully provided by the good folks at Rex for precisely this purpose.

"I think I know where the ink went," I said finally. I opened the gizmo that holds the can in place. The top of the can had turned somehow. The ink was being pushed out at the sides as well as through the center hole. A half pound of black ink covered the innards of the machine.

In my fanwriting "career", I've written many articles about various aspects of the nuts-and-bolts side of fanzine publishing. I've done paeons to stencils, mimeos, corflu, and even collating.

I've never written a tribute to ink, and I'm not likely to, either. Ditto fluid may at the very least give you a slight rush, but not mimeograph ink. Oh no. About the best you can hope for with ink is that it won't cover you from head to toe.

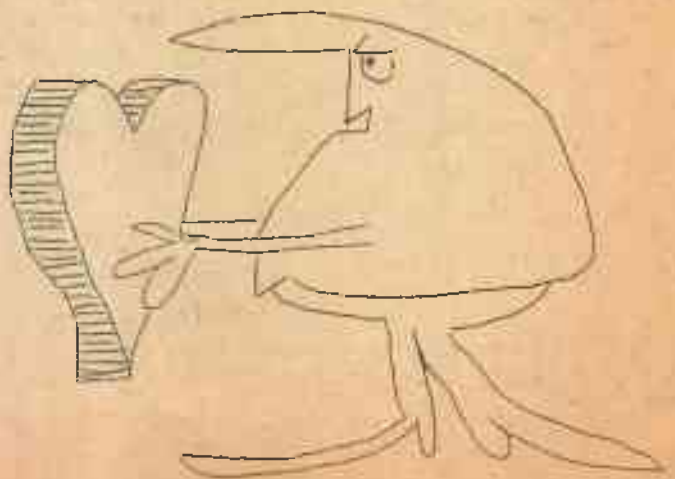
After working to clean out the mimeo with Joyce and Chris, I'm not likely to write a glowing article detailing the glories of ink any time in the near future, either.

To start with, the Rex is constructed something like one of those wooden Chinese puzzles. It took the three of us at least a half hour to locate all the screws that were holding the machine together.

After that, it took a Sunday Times -size stack of newspaper to mop up the puddles, and an ocean of evil-smelling ammonia to get off the black residue.

In fact, after spending a couple of hours getting the machine back to workable condition, I intend to regard ink as no more than a necessary evil from now on.

And that's how I know the Rex isn't the Enchanted Duplicator. -- Arnie



THE INFINITE BEANIE

BY Terry Carr



WORDS TO REMEMBER:

I was reading a fanzine today, as is occasionally my wont, and I ran into a paragraph that I thought was worth repeating; here it is:

"To my mind it is practically impossible for any one fan to set himself up as an analyst of fandom as there is no one person who is thoroughly enough acquainted with every fan to put on paper the exact factors of any fan situation. You will find in most cases that the situations that are analyzed are covered from the viewpoint of only one person -- the writer -- he is governed by his own likes and dislikes and by his friendship with others. Fan polls are not an adequate means of congealing fan opinion either. Too many poll cards are sent in after a hurried decision and there is no two or three pages explaining why the pollee chose this instead of that. A good analysis must be made on a dual basis. On what a fan writes and on what a fan has to say personally. Too many fans have a habit nowadays of writing something as a fact when actually it is their own opinion. Opinions and facts are the two biggest problems of fandom today, I believe. Don't you think things would appear a little better with less 'this is' and a little more 'I believe'?"

Yes, I know you agree and everybody's been saying that all year and ho hum. That particular instance of it just struck me because it was by Walter J. Daugherty, writing in h's FAPazine CUSHLAMOCHREE #1, dated September 1944. Plus ça change..., as Hugo Gernsback and Ted White have been known to say.

And it reminded me of another quote I've been wanting to reprint here, this one from Harry Warner in SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES #20, November 1944:

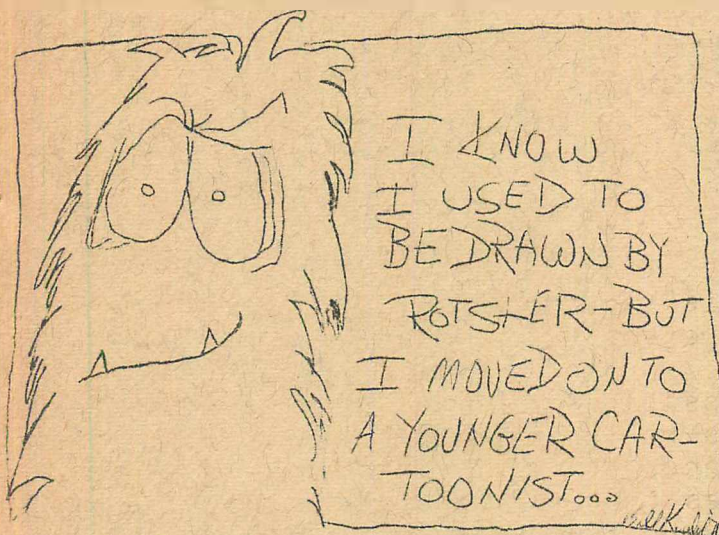
'But the thing that no one seems to recognize these days is that fandom is no longer the way it used to be -- it has grown so complex that any sort of activity interests only a certain portion of fandom, and the percentage

interested in any given item grows smaller and smaller annually All this is nothing to be deplored, it's simply something to be recognized -- that no one can possibly be active in all lines of fan endeavor today, and that no one should be disappointed when a suggestion is taken up by only a certain section of fandom."

Yes, that was in 1944: fandom was already getting out of hand 27 years ago. Is it any wonder it's become so sprawling and fragmented today that sometimes I read tributes to BNFs I've never even heard of?

FOCAL POINT'S BOOK REVIEW CORNER:

Arnie often doesn't read the stencils for this column when I give them to him; he says he likes to run off the whole issue and still have something in it he hasn't read yet. I thought maybe I'd put in some outrageous slander against him one of these issues, but a far more diabolical plan has



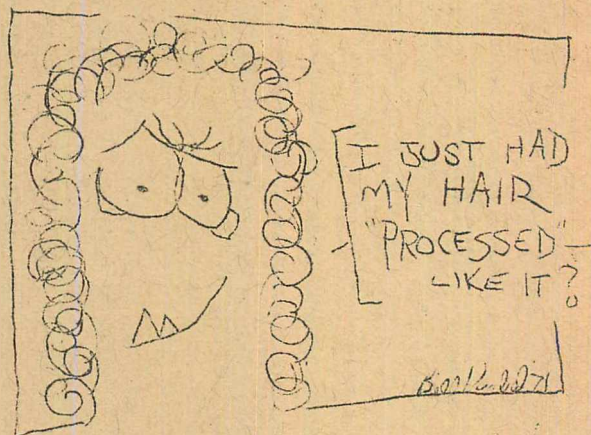
come to me: I shall write...a...book...review. Yes, right here, in the pages of this hyper fannish fanzine in which the words science fiction haven't appeared since Third Fandom. A science fiction book review. Oh, it's just satanic. It's so outrageous that Arnie will probably catch me at it and at this very moment you're probably reading a hastily-inserted Katz article about his electric stapler. (Don't do it, Arnie -- I'll tell Ted White what you said about him.)

Anyway, the book I want to write a little about is The Suicide Academy by Daniel Stern, published in 1968 by McGraw-Hill. Nobody in the sf field seems to have noticed it -- at least I saw no reviews of it in either prozines or fanzines -- and that's not too surprising, because Stern is ordinarily a mainstream novelist, author of five previous novels. I read one of them fifteen years ago, his second novel, The Guests of Fame; it was about the loves and traumas of a concert pianist and I didn't think it was terribly good. The Suicide Academy really isn't outstanding either, but it is interesting.

For one thing, this is a book that disproves the rule that mainstream writers who venture into science fiction do so cynically, like Ira Levin, or disastrously, like Taylor Caldwell. Ordinarily you can tell a mainstream writer's sf novel easily because it's about a theme that was worn to death inside this field twenty years ago, and it does nothing with that theme that wasn't done here thirty years ago. Not so with Stern's book; he has a fresh and valid theme that could only be told through science fiction. (Or fantasy, or speculative fiction or whatever you want to call it. As a matter of fact, in conception the novel is an excellent example of the kind of work Alex Panshin has been calling for in his series of articles about what he's decided to call speculative fantasy.)

The suicide academy of the title is a place to which people planning suicide can come to do it legally. (You know suicide is illegal, don't you? It used to be so illegal, in fact, that if you got caught trying it they executed you. Really.) The Academy is licensed by the government, and it insists that each applicant spend one day in self-examination, meditation and final decision-making about whether he wants to go through with suicide the next day or opt for returning to the world. There are instructors who show applicants the various ways of dying that are offered, and who will give them a clear idea of what each method feels like. It's a place of decision, life or death, and it's part of a chain of such Academies across the country. (This has to be the United States, though the novel doesn't specify.)

The Director of the Academy, Wolf Walker (yes, I'm afraid that's his name), has an almost fanatic commitment to the basic principle that no one who comes to the Academy shall be influenced one way or the other in his decision. The surroundings of the Academy are deliberately neutral: plain fields and trees and rocks, nothing particularly ugly or beautiful. A location near the sea was at one time being considered, but it was felt that the sea, even the sound of it in the distance, was such a primal thing that it would pull at people, interfering with their private decisions. Even the music that is played over the speakers at the Academy is carefully screened for neutrality.



In the Academy library there's a book about the history of the Academy; its inscription reads: Suicide is not to be undertaken lightly. At its best it is a life-long endeavor.

The entire novel is set at the Academy; very few hints of life outside the Academy come through. Thus the book might be set in 1990 or in 2070, though I'd guess the earlier date. There's no futuristic gimmickry or evolved figures of speech -- we might as well consider this a novel about an alternate world of today in which the Suicide Academy is the only change. But the Academy is all we see of this other world, so the fantastic element is strong.

The Academy is an analogue for Purgatory, or perhaps Limbo. Wolf Walker has given his entire life to it since the breakup of his marriage; the Academy has become his retreat from life. Others pass through, staying only a day, but Walker remains with his life immobile for year after year; he never has to make the decision. Until, when the novel begins, his ex-wife and her lover, the man for whom she left Walker, come to the Academy to film a documentary about it. His retreat from life is ended; and, with his defenses against life mostly dropped during his retreat, Walker immediately becomes involved with the two of them and in an involved series of

stresses within the Academy itself that build inevitably to a climax that will force him to feel, to decide: life or death.

This is a solid basis for a novel, and Stern goes right at it determined to make the most of it. I wish he'd succeeded, but the fact is he overshot the mark: he tries to get more out of the story than there is in it. He piles heavy symbolism atop purple flights of prose, and the whole structure just won't hold up. There's some very bad writing in the book -- also some very good writing; it's damned uneven. There are several good characters and powerful scenes, but always there's Stern carrying the scene one step beyond where it should end, trying to get more irony from it, more tragedy, more exaltation. One of the characters tells of how he once died -- literally died, no respiration at all for twenty minutes -- but miraculously came back to life, and in the process achieved a kind of satori, or perhaps madness (or maybe they're the same). "Morior, ergo sum! I die, therefore I am!" he says, and this could be a powerful narration...but Stern will take no chances that readers might breeze through it not realizing its importance, so he has his character break into four pages of free verse to tell the story. That's an example of the kind of trying-too-hard he does over and over in the book.

I don't want to dismiss it as a failure, though, because I don't think it is one. It made me think, several times it moved me, and it stuck in my memory. I read this book over six months ago and I still have all the preceding wordage to say about it...and I could go on. But if you're interested enough to read more about it you're interested enough to read the book itself, and I recommend that you do; just don't expect a perfect book. I don't believe there's been a paperback edition of The Suicide Academy, but since Daniel Stern is a mainstream writer with a good reputation, evidently, your local library might well have a copy.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Effective as of the time you read this, my address is c/o Dick Ellington, 6448 Irwin Court, Oakland, California. That's a temporary address till Carol and I land in a place of our own, of course, but Dick will hold all mail for us till we get there.

I'm going to tell him not to accept any packages from Arnie that tick.





Everything was beautiful for the first thousand miles. Lee Hoffman had rented a 12' U-Haul truck, and I was to drive it and all our possessions from dirty old NYC to our new home in Port Charlotte, Florida.

The night before we left we got some friends to help us load, and then I drove from the East Village to Brooklyn Heights, where Terry and Carol Carr were going to put us up for the night. I learned that maneuvering the truck through the narrow streets of Brooklyn was almost as bad as being trapped in a stalled elevator with two opposing women's roller derby teams on their way to a grudge match, but I managed somehow and tried to think of it as good practice for the 1400 miles that lay ahead.

Less than a week before this I'd had two first year molars extracted, and I'd been having trouble with the sockets. They weren't healing at the proper speed. The night before we left for Terry and Carol's, one of the sockets had hemorrhaged and I'd been bleeding pretty profusely inside my mouth, which had a most stimulating effect on my hypochondria. Mainly I was worried about infection, and the constant taste of blood was very unpleasant.

The morning of D-Day, I went to a dentist. He took X-rays and told me I wasn't infected, and gave me some pain killer, a type of synthetic codeine that wouldn't fuck up my head while I was driving, and an antibiotic just to be safe. He told me I was healing slowly, but that I was in no particular danger. One of the worst side effects of all this was that I couldn't help with the loading of the truck. It certainly made me feel sad not being able to pick up all those heavy heavy book-filled cartons and carry them up that long flight of stairs to be stacked in the truck. I cried bitter tears while everyone was working, and to salve my conscience I occasionally shouted encouragement. Keyhole that barge, tote that bale. Oh it was awful.

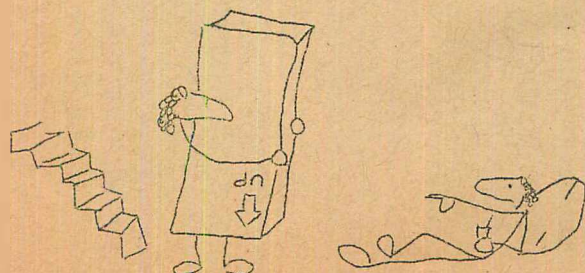
Then we were loaded---Brooklyn ho. Terry and Carol were both quite gracious, and our farewells to them were almost like farewells to friends, instead of to strangers. Lee gave Carol a chrysthamum to remember us by, and I gave Terry a couple of cold tablets.

That might not seem like much after all these years we haven't known each other, but what the hell. The French have a phrase, of course. To say goodbye is to die a little.

"I'll miss them," said Lee.

"Yeah," I said. "Whoever they are."

And we were off.

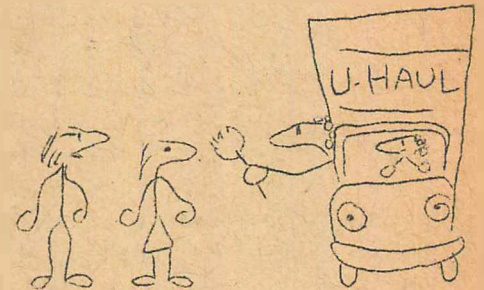


BOB TOOMEY

THE EGG MAN

Let us pass lightly over the first thousand miles. It was easy rolling all the way. But I would like to make a few comments on U-Haul in general.

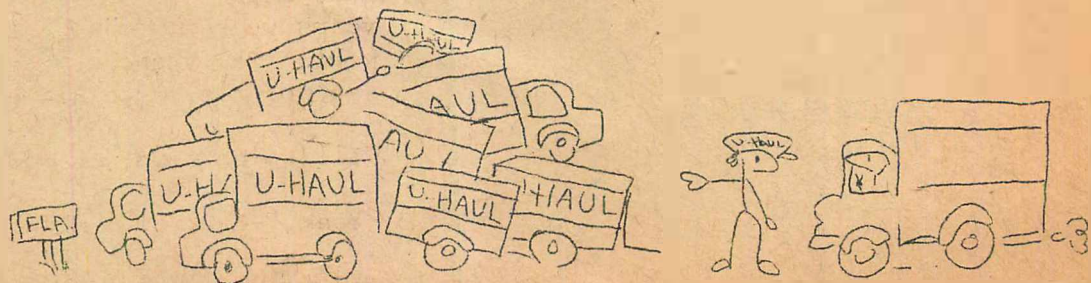
We named our truck Bessie. She was a lady---by which I mean she had no balls. What she did have was an automatic transmission, a crime in any truck larger than a runabout. On hills she would fink out so bad we felt we had to caress her dashboard and tell her how wonderful she was and how much we loved her to keep her going. On the straightaway her carburetor was governed to hold her pace down to a nice sedate top end of sixty-five. Whenever we dropped below forty she would cough and buck. Below twenty she would choke and hop like a rabbit in heat. Off the line she was simply nowhere. My advice, if you're planning to move yourself, and it is the covered wagon American way, is to try for a truck with a stick shift. My reasons for mentioning this will become even clearer in a moment.



Otherwise though I suppose that U-Haul is as good an outfit to rent from as any. They have depots everywhere, on the main pulls, and in out of the way service stations all across the country. This comes in very handy in case you break down, and my guess is that you probably will, no matter who you rent from. It's one of the rules of the road.

If you're going to Florida, it will cost you double fare in surcharges. People are all the time driving into the Sunshine State, but not nearly so many are driving out. The trucks and trailers pile up down there and U-Haul, and all the other rental companies, have to pay to have them driven back to their point of origin. You can circumvent this by renting to Georgia or wherever is convenient, then hiring someone there to unload you. Then you reload into another truck, which you've already cleverly rented, and drive on to Florida and years of carefree living. Labor for loading, especially and to our shame, black labor, is dirt cheap in the Great American Southland. But they need the money, and by doing it that way you can save you a couple of hundred bucks.

Mail ten percent of that saving to me for the suggestion. Send it to Bob Toomey, 350 N.W. Harbor Blvd., Port Charlotte, Florida 33950. I thank you.



Bessie was a good old gal, but somewhere this side of Savannah she got a flat tire.

It wasn't too bad. The tire was one of the rear ones, and there were four of them back there. The remaining three took up the slack. We limped into the nearest town, and a U-Haul franchiser was right on the side of the road. He didn't have the tire we needed. He told us the last people to pass through here with a flat had had to lay over for a week until one came in.

I wasn't about to wait no week, and neither was Lee. I told the man to call all the local tire dealers to see if any of them had what we wanted. The lay-over people had waited for U-Haul to provide them. The man started making calls. Lee meanwhile found us a place to stay for the night in a nearby motel. We'd travelled 565 miles that day and we were both a mite tuckered out. I don't mean that to be a reference to any well known big name fan.

Firestone had the tire. We tooted Bessie over and they fixed us right up. Lee's Master Charge Card stood us in good stead for the occasion. Respectability is marvelous. I really must try it sometime. Allegedly U-Haul will repay her for her outlay, and I'll report on whether they do or not, and how fast and willing they are about it.

The point of the above---besides illustrating the rules of the road---is that you might have to shop around a bit to find what you need. Those people who got stuck for a week were quitters. They gave up just because someone told them no. What they should have done, if they couldn't have thought of anything better, was to raise a little dust, threaten to sue for lost time. Then they would have got some action. Walk softly and carry a big stick. I believe it was Carrie Nation said that, but I could be mistaken.

On Sunday we ran out of gas, just before we hit Jacksonville. It was all my fault. The indicator needle was edging toward the big E and I figured we still had a few gallons left in reserve, at least enough to take us the five more miles we had to go to the next service station. But practically within sight of the Jax Airport, old Bessie coughed and choked and bucked and died. We rolled to a stop.

"What is it?" said Lee.

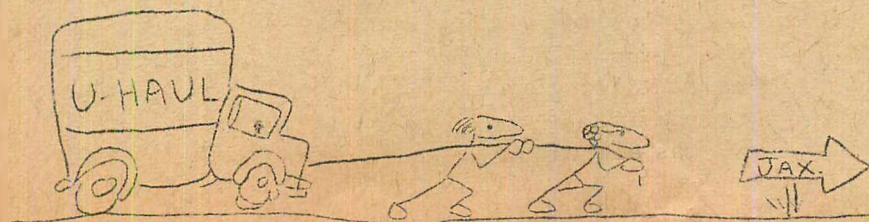
"I think we're out of gas," I told her with my patented boyish grin.

"Oh," she said. "We're out of gas."

"I hope that's what it is," I said.

"What else could it be?" she asked.

"Don't ask," I said.



We got out on the highway and tried to flag someone down. The cars whizzed past and cooled our fevered brows with the wind of their whizzing. Them Florida motorists sure is friendly. They waved to us and smiled as they drove on by.

"Did you say something?" Lee said.

"I said fuck," I said.

"That's what I thought you said," she said.

"It was," I said.

Finally someone stopped. He was more than kind. He gave us a ride to the service station two exits down, and then he turned around and drove us back to poor old Bessie with the can of gas. Lee held the funnel thingie and I poured and we got into Bessie and I switched her on and she started right up just as nice as you please. I shifted into gear.

"Bob?" Lee said.

"Yeah?" I said.

"You said that word again," Lee said.

"Yeah," I said.

"Why'd you say that word?" Lee said.

"Because I felt like it," I said.

"Why'd you feel like it?" Lee said.

"Because we aren't moving," I said.

"Why aren't we moving?" Lee said.

"Because Bessie refuses to go into gear," I said.

"Why does Bessie refuse to go into gear?" Lee said.

"Because her goddam automatic transmission is gone," I said.

"Fuck," Lee said.

So we got out on the highway once more and went through the whole flagging down routine, and it was back to the same service station to return the gas can and the funnel thingie, and the day was getting warm.

I had to call about twenty U-Haul places before I found the one that could help us. The inside of the phone booth was like the sauna at the Phlange, but this time I hated it as the sweat oozed out of my flesh and ran down into my eyes. Additionally I was getting very uptight and frustrated with putting dime after dime in the phone and either not getting an answer, or getting someone who was all alone in his Sunday service station and wasn't able to leave it.

Then after what seemed like the length of time it takes to watch one hundred convention panel discussions on the future of science fiction laid end to end, I got someone who had the red light emergency home phone number of the local regional representative of U-Haul. I called the man and he was ready to assist us. He told me he'd send a wrecker to get us at the service station where we were, and then collect old Bessie and tow her to a place where they could look her over. He was so decent about it, I couldn't even bitch at him half as much as I would have liked.

The wrecker came and took us back to Bessie, and the man opened the hood and told us some asshole had put about a quart too much transmission fluid into her. It was no wonder the poor thing had conked out the way she did. Apparently the wonder was that she'd made it as far as she had. He hooked the crane onto her and raised up her front wheels off the pavement and away we went. Lee and I kept exchanging pained glances. We had visions of days of repairs, of wandering around Jax searching for something to do, of paying for motel rooms and watching endless movies we'd seen six months ago in NYC. Shit fuck piss hell damn darn drat.

At the service station they told us that old Bessie had more or less had it for the time being. We told them we didn't want to wait around for them to fix her. They told us the best they could do was to give us another truck. We could unload Bessie and load up the new one. I told them I was not about to do any of that loading myself and neither was Lee. I was firm. U-Haul was liable for this, and U-Haul would do the work. We'd lost a day already, I told them, because of a flat tire. This was the last straw. There was a house we had to occupy in Port Charlotte. I was getting mad. I was shouting. I was jumping up and down. My little fists were clenched. I was going to sue U-Haul and everybody who worked for U-Haul and everybody who knew anybody who worked for U-Haul right on up to Richard M. Nixon and anybody who had voted for him. You bet your sweet ass I was.

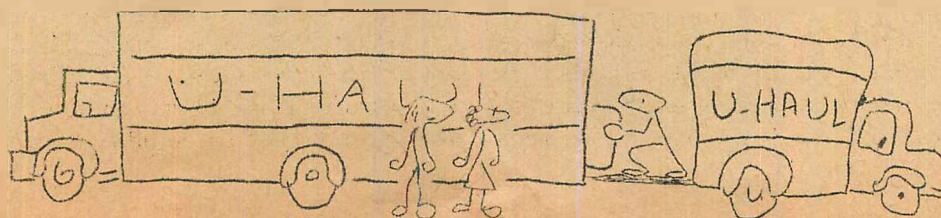
That sure got a rise out of them. But when they stopped laughing at me, they told me okay okay okay. Then Lee and I had to take a car belonging to one of the guys there at the station and drive around Jax and pick up a couple of black men to load the truck at U-Haul's expense. U-Haul was prepared to pay these men the munificent sum of \$1.65 an hour, and the men were dying to get it. Lee slipped them an extra five bucks. But it was really lousy how desperate they were to do bull labor in ninety degree weather for next to nothing. Something's terribly wrong somewhere when a willing man can't find a job at a living wage.

Back inside the service station one of the attendants said to me, "Niggers can work when they have to---once you get 'em going."

"Yeah," I said. "I'm that way myself."

He gave me a funny look.

I know they needed the money, but somehow I feel tainted for my part in hiring them, for being that close to their poverty, for seeing the holes in their shoes. Maybe I'll be all right if I just don't think about it. Don't you think about it either. I'm sorry I even brought it up.



The only truck U-Haul could find for us was a twenty footer we immediately dubbed Goliath. That extra eight feet made quite a difference. I wasn't entirely sure I wanted to drive it though it at least had a four speed floor shift. It ran to well over 18,000 pounds, and looked as long as a steamboat and as wide as a river. The idea of navigating it down the highway and between those narrow white lines shook me a bit. But we had less than three hundred miles left to go and Lee looked at me with such trust in her eyes that I knew I had to do it. Besides it was that or back down and wait for Bessie to be repaired. I couldn't do that, not and keep my pride of manhood. And actually we were doing all right. The delay, from time of breakdown to time in motion again, had been less than five hours, and that on a Sunday. Obviously God was with us.

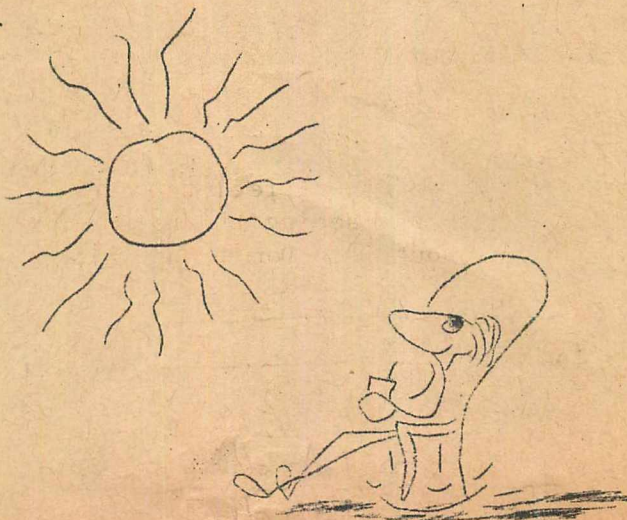
Me friend, Goliath, friend. Nice Goliath, handsome Goliath. See how I pat your sturdy flanks. Friend, see, friend. Easy there. That's a good fellow.

The worst part was driving through Jax, getting used to all that mass and momentum. It was stop and go, stop and go, and the transmission in Goliath wasn't as great as I'd hoped it would be. The big phoney turned out to be a eunuch. Like Bessie he had no balls. First gear was so bad I quit using it altogether, and took to starting off in second. Second wasn't much better, and I went into third as fast as I could. Third was pretty cruddy too, and in fact Goliath didn't really seem happy except when he was in fourth. His top end was fifty-five, but that was fine with me. My fearsomest fear was of sideswiping another vehicle, since Goliath's rearview mirrors weren't as neatly angled or anglable as Bessie's had been. His excess length got in the way. Finally I just tried to be cautious and hoped for the best. I figured Goliath looked mean enough that cars would get out of my path when they saw me coming.

And anyway we made it. And with everything I think we were lucky. No major problems developed along our route that we couldn't handle. The AAA Triptik that my father took out for us never played us false, at least not on anything important. Lee's Master Charge was the rainbow's end. We made it. What we found when we got here is another story. Stay tuned for details. Until then, this is Col. Bob Toomey, Hon., Ret., coming to you from sunny Port Charlotte Florida, the Second Sodom of the South, saying---

Peace, y'all.

-- Bob Toomey



ENERGUMEN #9, edited by Mike and Susan Glicksohn, 32 Maynard Ave., Apt. #205, Toronto 156, Ontario, Canada. Frequent. Mimeo. 50¢ per issue or the usual. 54 pages.

ENERGUMEN is the reigning champion of the middle-of-the-road genzine field. Contrary to what some people have said, I think there's a definite place for fanzines printing a wider range of material than is offered by either fannish or serious fanzines. I've seen numerous comparisons equating ENERGUMEN and OUTWORLDS, but frankly, I've never seen it. Though Bill Bowers is a fine fellow, he's not a great editor. The Glicksohns are much better at mixing the various elements of their fanzine to make an enjoyable whole. At their editorial best, Mike and Susan have shown an increasing talent for skillfully balancing fannish and serious articles, presenting both kinds of material with appropriate art of excellent quality.

Unfortunately, this issue doesn't show the Glicksohns at the top of their editorial form. I have the feeling that the increased publishing frequency has had an adverse effect on the quality. The colophon proudly proclaims that this once quarterly fanzine has had five issues in the last seven months. That's quite a record for such a hefty fanzine, so it's not surprising that the material is getting a little thin in spots.

Of course I'm only speculating as an outsider, but I have the impression that the Kindly Canadians who edit this mag have a hard time bringing themselves to reject all but the worst written material. As ENERGUMEN has begun to earn a justly high reputation, they have received an ever-increasing flood of contributions.

When a fanzine gets more material than it can use, the editor has two choices. He can publish larger and/or more frequent issues or he can start rejecting the worst of what he gets. The Glicksohns seem to have ignored the chance to practice greater selectivity in favor of greater production.

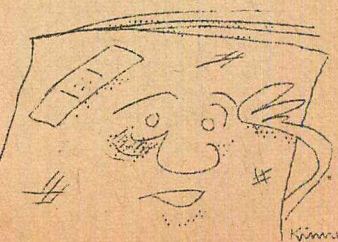
It's a shame, actually. Without Leon Taylor's wordy review of Farmer's Beyond the Walls of Terra and Andy Offutt's pompous comments on writing in "Extrapolation Problemation", the issue would have been seven pages shorter and considerably better.

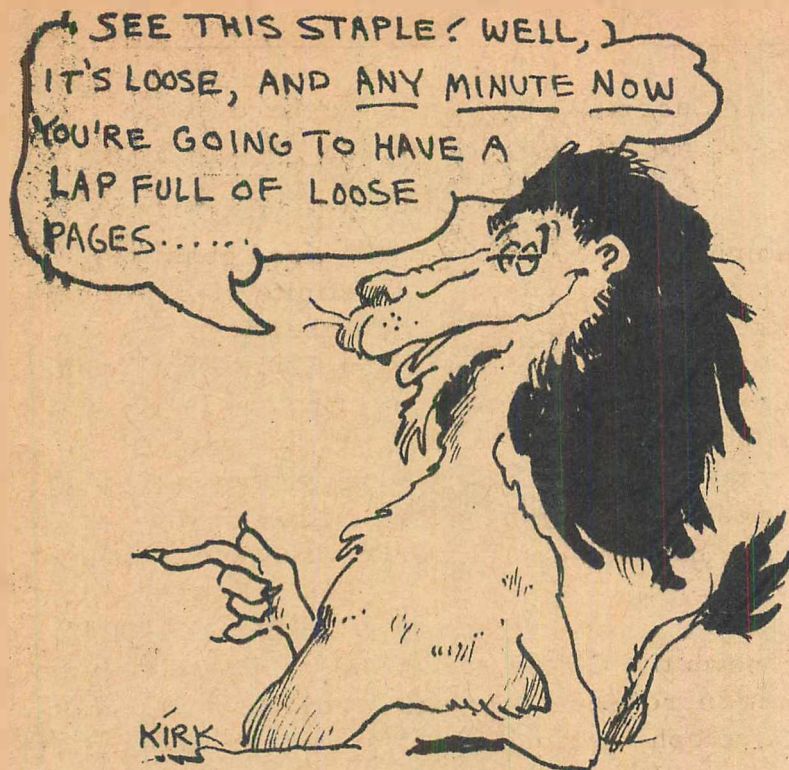
Bent
Staples

FANZINE
REVIEWS

BY

Arnie Katz



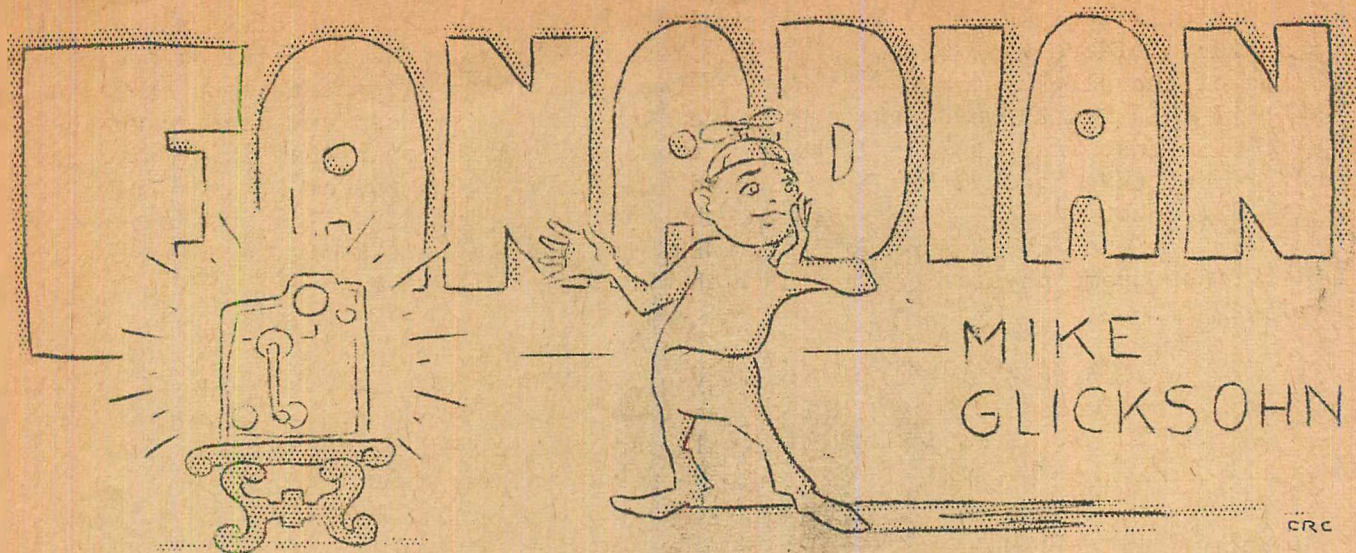


Bob Toomey's otherwise good column about James Blish's writings including Day After Judgment starts badly. Bob has unaccustomed trouble with a simile. He likens attaching Day After Judgment to Black Easter to attaching wings to a brick. His phrasing makes it appear that he is equating Judgment with the wings, when he really intended to compare it with the brick.

Rosemary Ullyot's column about being accosted by a drunk in front of the library and her inability to get satisfaction from the police has about the best narrative writing of any of her published work. Heretofore she's relied mainly on her excellent ability to write dialog. When she gets a little more practice at combining the two elements, look out... The piece wasn't quite up to her best, but it does show that Rosemary is on the rebound from a recent period during which she was doing relatively average work.

Mike has his most effective editorial, about the big changes in his life attendant on leaving school for a teaching career. Susan has a more serious, though still interesting editorial, discussing the Peter Whimsy series of detective novels by Dorothy Sayers. Ted White is also well represented, with an amusing piece discussing Elmer Perdue and the relationship between pros and fandom. Fine stuff. The issue is a little less illustrated than previously, but what there is is excellent. A few very effective cartoons by James Shall stamp him as definitely one to watch in the near future.

Material: 7.5 The two weakest pieces pulled down the overall rating.
 Appearance: 8.5 Not really exciting graphics, but very, very well done and effective.
 Comment: Note the rating and my comment that this is a little of an off issue.



We all know that it's a proud and lonely thing to be a fan.

Of course, in the fannish boondocks such as Canada, the Upper Volga and Barberton, Ohio, the emphasis is often on the "lonely" part of that old saw. The fan who is isolated from his brethren by distance cannot dash out at the drop of a beanie for a friendly fannish visit with some local trufan. He needs a surrogate for actual contact with other fen, some way of renewing his sense of contact with fandom, and his almost spiritual ties with his fellows, far across the mundane wilderness. He seeks a way of strengthening his pride to alleviate his loneliness.

When I started to become even slightly active in fandom, I became aware of this need almost immediately. And at first it was easy to satisfy. A fanzine, a letter from some fannish acquaintance, even a prozine or a paperback would do. Just the sight of this science fictional object would immediately bring to mind my limited convention experience and produce a warm rosy glow of "belonging". But this didn't last.

Like the need for egoboo, the desire to feel in tune with fandom as a whole would appear to vary exponentially with the amount of one's fanac. The more locs I wrote (this being the basic nature of my early fanac), the more I felt the need to restore my fannish ties, and the less satisfactory were the objects I'd chosen for this purpose. For a little while fanzines with my own locs in them sufficed. I would glance at one and visualize the harried faned retyping the actual words I had written and I could easily imagine veritable legions of fans reading my very words as I was reading them. Naturally, the sense of communion with the greater body of fandom was very strong at these moments.

Then after a while (quite a while actually, by fannish standards) I felt I'd served my apprenticeship and became a faned. And if it's a proud and lonely thing to be a fan, it's a damn sight prouder and lonelier thing to be a faned.

Oh, there's egoboo once the issue's out, of course. And there's nothing like a mailbox full of praisefilled locs or complimentary reviews to spur one on to "pub one's ish", but when production time itself rolls around, and the faned gazes upon piled-up reams of paper, and boxes of ink tubes and huge stacks of slipsheets, and looks around to find that he is totally and absolutely alone, his many faithful friends having faded away like a case of bheer at a bidding party, he needs something to push him onwards.

Basically, this is because the actual physical production of a fanzine often appears, to an outside and uninitiated observer, like work! Yes, it's true. The cranking of the handle, the feeding of the slipsheets, the removal of the damn Bloody slipsheets, the collating, the stapling, all this has the external appearance of a chore! How can any poor onlooked possibly feel the intense feeling of comradeship, the deep sense of spiritual unity with fandom past and present that is engendered in a fan as he sets about the creation of his latest issue? Why, I doubt that he could even see the shadowy figure of Willis cranking out HYPHEN that materializes whenever I'm running off ENERGUMEN! But I will admit that this communion requires a focus, some physical object through which the divine sense of fannish oneness can manifest itself.

Since I began publishing, I've tried a variety of objects in this catalytic role. All with varying degrees of success. My empty beer can that Poul Anderson discarded at our party in St. Louis helped a bit (although the ginger-ale can that Astrid had used was much more powerful). My stack of old HYPHENS brought out the first annish, while ALL OUR YESTERDAYS prompted the double issue of last spring. But, like the junkie, I found myself needing something stronger with each passing issue.

A variety of grandiose schemes crossed my mind: I would fly to New York and buy Arnie's old mimeo, giving it a place of honour in my own publishing room (slightly below and to the left of my own press, of course;) I would vandalize Terry Carr's fanzine collection and make off with his bound volumes of FANTASY TIMES; I would kidnap Bob Tucker. Luckily for the peace of fandom, these measures were never needed. Gestetner of Canada themselves came to my rescue, saving Bob Tucker from a fate worse than death.

I've never been a religious man in the traditional sense (in fact, I belong to that largest of all sub-fandoms, Non-Practicing Jewish Fandom) but I recognize that my search has been for a fannish Grail. I needed something to embody the life and soul of fandom, something to instil in me the sense of kindredship necessary to dispel the relative isolation in which I lived and make the undertaking of great fannish activities possible. As I've said, I yearned for that feeling of communion with other fans; and Gestetner helped me find it.

It all came about when I was out at their main plant one day buying supplies. I placed my order, and started wandering about gazine enviously at the equipment in the showroom while waiting for my quire of stencils and packet of pliofilm to arrive. Suddenly my eye was caught by a startling new addition to the displays. A beautiful new 466 mimeo. But not an ordinary 466, oh no. Instead of the usual quietly-competent greys and browns, I was gazing in awe at a completely pure white 466, gleaming with immaculate virgin purity!

I approached it with a feeling of reverence, something inside telling me that my search was over, my Grail had been discovered. I viewed the pristine beauty of the machine with a growing sense of spiritual joy. Gazing around the showroom with a glow of beatific wonder on my sensitive fannish face, I quietly stole the descriptive booklet that rested on the all-white cabinet of the machine.



Later that night, I pored over my treasure. No ordinary booklet, this. No cheap, slick offset paper, no crude two colour printing. Oh no. It measures a mystical 8 1/4 by 11 3/4, and consists of a mere six pages of the finest quality stock. The cover...ah, the cover! The feel of the cover alone would be enough to delight a sensualist for a week! Heavy, sensuous, linen-surfaced cover stock in glistening white that catches and tosses the light back and forth in a myriad sparkling patterns. In the bottom half of the page, a superbly printed line drawing of a Roman palace in the deepest imaginable black. And across the top, embossed not printed, in letters of the richest gold, the simple elegant title "Gestetner in the Vatican".

Yes, dear friends, it's true. And the inside tells it all. Again, the finest possible stock, printed in full rich colour with the photographs somehow covered with a fine golden dust which scintillates and adds life to the images. Open those splendid covers, pass that magnificent protective parchment page, and you are greeted by the smiling face and open arms of none other than His Holyness Pope Paul VI! In full colour, of course. It's a truly religious experience, I assure you.

On the next page, in six different languages, I learned that that white 466 had been an exact duplicate of one placed in the Vatican itself when the Pope had granted a private audience to the World Gestetner Organization. And sure enough, in a page of photos, there they stood together, the Pope on one side, the 466 on the other, both in their glistening white robes.

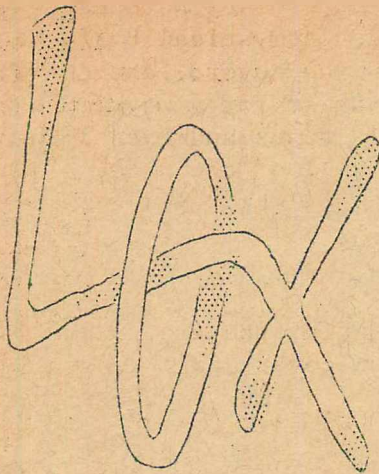
To the casual observer, I'm sure it looked as if the Pope was just shaking hands with several of the Gestetner people. But any fan could tell that, in one picture at least, his hand, apparently reaching for the outstretched hand of another minor mimeo official, was obviously slipping down towards the paper joggers, and it seems obvious from his expression that only a supreme effort of papal will prevented him from seizing the crank and putting out a one-shot.

I ask you, what more powerful object to inspire a sense of fellowship could a trufan have? That beautiful booklet is now in my mimeo room, and is a constant source of inspiration to me. Should I feel myself flagging, should the cranking of the handle start to seem onerous, should the slip- or goddamfuckingdeslip-sheets start to seem neverending, then I comfort and strengthen myself with this thought: "I am not alone!" Just as my hand pushes the inking button, or riffles another ream of paper to start another stencil, so that other hand is similarly employed, across the sea, in the Vatican. When I'm walking wearily around the table at three in the morning mechanically picking up pages, it is intoxicating to realize that probably the papal feet are treading the same dreary path. The resultant sense of kinship is so strong that I have already finished ENERGUMEN 9 and am starting on #10. I may go monthly. Or biweekly. Perhaps I'll start a newszine and an apazine or two as well. The horizons are virtually limitless.

But I must admit that there is one tiny thing that bothers me. I keep gazine at these six pictures of His Holyness Pope Paul VI and asking myself, why doesn't someone tell him that he's lost the propeller off his beanie?

-- Mike Glicksohn

Orders are still coming in for The Enchanted Duplicator by Willis and Shaw with Chamberlain illustrations. There are still some left, but the supply is dwindling. If you want to own a copy of this classic, rush your dollar to the editor who will be thrilled to take it and send your copy in a flat envelope.



HARRY WARNER
423 Summit Ave.,
Hagerstown, Md.
21740

The news about FOCAL POINT's transmogrification was good and bad. I'm unhappy to know that it won't be coming frequently and pleased to learn about increase in size.

The Kings County system of choosing people for juries is illegal, according to what I read somewhere about Supreme Court decisions on the topic. The whole procedure that Terry Carr describes is similar to the way juries always had their panels chosen around here. But a couple of years ago the local system was changed on orders from the state, which I assume was impelled by federal authorities.

Now a circuit court judge draws a little ball out of a box filled with numbered balls. If it's #138, let's say, the panel for the new jury will be chosen by starting with the 138th person in alphabetical order on the county's voting books, and picking after him every 150th voter in alphabetical order. (My figures are approximate—the exact distance between persons chosen from the voting books represents the number of times the total needed for making up a panel can be divided into the total voting registration.) This is simpler than it sounds since the county has its voters lists on data processing equipment and just presses a button to get a printout of the names. This is closer to impartiality and would end such things as the limitation of Black jurors to 1-1/2 per cent of the total. But it also creates problems. There's a state prison near Hagerstown which has been having riots periodically. About a year ago they tried a bunch of participants in ~~these~~ disorders. One person on the petit jury was a prison guard. He was excused immediately because of his occupation. He wasn't on hand when the riots occurred, but defense attorneys seized upon it as a basis for appealing convictions, arguing that this guard might have influenced other jury members simply by sitting with them and exchanging some remarks about the episode while sitting with them before he was challenged.

////// I don't think monthly is all that infrequent, actually, though it isn't the same as biweekly, I admit.

It's a funny thing about "larger", though. I remember thinking that I would have a hard time filling 24 pages after being so long out of practice. Now I find myself struggling to keep from filling 40. Perhaps this newly-purchased micro-clite typewriter will help me fill a few less while still having a very, very long letter col. We'll just have to see.

You know, I'm starting to believe there really is a Susan Glicksohn. I'd assumed right along that she was just another Geisian alter ego whom Mike had argued with so frequently that he'd begun to think of it as another person. But Susan is developing a life all her own, whether she does the writing or is described in Mike's articles. The next thing you know, people will start to see her at cons, and then we'll have to face up to the question it's a mass illusion epidemic throughout fandom or a real person.

Of course I was wrong about XERO's comics content if both Dick Lupoff and you agree. I was relying on memory when I should have hunted



up some issues before making that statement. Maybe the goof could serve as a lesson for all fandom as well as for me. It's a perfect illustration of what I've been trying to point out about some misconceptions held by larger quantities of fans. When I thought of XERO while writing that article, I thought of its comics material, its role as a pioneer in interesting mature fans in nostalgia in general and old comics in particular, its service as the inspiration for a book about old comics. So my memory wiped out all the non-comics content of XERO, and I remembered it as something based almost exclusively on that subject matter.

Now I feel that this is exactly the process that goes on in many fans' minds when they write about numbered fandoms. They think about a few individuals who were simultaneously active during a year or two, and instantly they begin to overlook all the other people who were going on in an entirely different manner of fandom at exactly the same time. Pretty soon they find that all fandom was dominated by these special ideas, attitudes, and interests for several years, and thereby a new fandom complete with number has been alleged.

I don't say that numbering fandoms is impossible. I just feel that the generally accepted number of fandoms is two or three times too large. I do grant the gradual creation of a new fandom, complete with number, during the late 1960's, when the fandom we knew expanded so vastly in size, took on so many semi-relationships with other subcultures, and shifted so much of its attention to professional science fiction. But so help me, I consider that to be the first real new fandom in a quarter-century or slightly longer.

////// I don't think you understand the premises of the Numbered Fandom theory, or at any rate, I don't think your conception of the theory is the same as mine. The purpose of such a theory, if it has validity at all, is to divide up the history of fandom into small, easily understood units. The very fact that you see no new fandom in the last 25 years means that you are probably thinking on too large a scale. When fandom has been around for one or two hundred years, it may be profitable to talk of sweeping quarter-century trends. But this is still a young hobby, and it must be measured in smaller units if it is to be measured at all. If the Numbered Fandoms approach helps us see that a different set of values and so forth operated during 4th fandom than operated during fifth, then it's useful. Of course, you may say that it doesn't do anything for you, but that's all right, too. I mean, it doesn't really matter all that much, if you come right down to it.

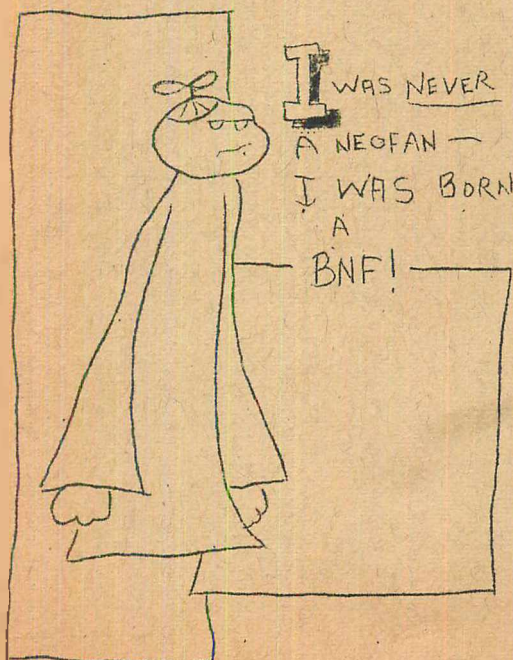
GREG SHAW
64 Taylor Dr.,
Fairfax, Ca. 94930

Thank you for the favorable review of METANOIA. There isn't nearly as much egoboo in fanzine publishing these days what with review columns being so rare, but an intelligent critique like yours is worth 10, 50-word raves. I may have gotten one new reader as a result; at least his letter came right after the review appeared, and it was the first such request I've had in several months. It's a funny thing for a zine which seems to be becoming en-

shrined as one of the trend-setters of this era, the mailing list has shrunk steadily over the last few issues, and is now around 50, where it started. Though I did refuse to let John Berry review it in AMAZING, there have been a fair number of reviews in fanzines, all in the most glowing terms, yet I doubt if more than 10 of my current readers are people who responded to those reviews. Could it be that news just aren't interested in fanzines any more, even highly-touted ones? If so, that's a sure sign the end is near. We all better repent PDQ.

In regard to your review, I have also been aware that my stuff about rock is beginning to drag. After all, I know which of my readers are interested in rock and it's not a majority. What I've run up against is the question of how personal a personalzine should be. The original purpose of METANOIA was to keep my list of 50 or so fanish acquaintances posted on what's going on in my life, and to provide a record for myself of the changes I go through. I envisioned it going on for several years, or maybe indefinitely, in a slim, monthly format. On this premise, then, I should simply write about what interests me most at the moment, and assume the readers will be interested because they are supposedly interested in me.

Where this fell through was when I started getting involved in the big



time rock scene. It's a very time-consuming profession, as many an ex-fan rock critic (Lenny Kaye, for example) can tell you, and it's a wonder that I manage to get METANOIA out at all anymore, especially since it's become a gazette in its own right.

//// I've found the fanish situation just the opposite of what you describe. FOCAL POINT's mailing list is bulging with new, promising fans like Rick Stoker, Lane Lambert, Terry Hughes, Seth McEvoy, Dan Steffan, and just so many more that I know I'm slighting them by not listing them here. FP is enjoying the greatest response of anything I've published in my fan career, including QUIP. Having seen the mountainous sheaves of letters, I can tell you that POTLATCH and RATS! are doing equally well, if not better.

(Uh, the rest of you, please don't take this as a cue to stop writing. It's your encouragement that keeps FP and the rest of the local zines coming out.)

FRANK CAMPIETRO
2297 West Lake Rd.,
Ashville, NY 14710

I am finally breaking down and writing my first Letter of Comment. I have not done so before as my knowledge of fandom and fanzines is rather meager. Now I think I'll do a little work and become a bit involved in fandom.

The Art was pretty fair, what there was of it (there wasn't much), although I did like the last two covers. It's nice to get an idea of what people look like, whether they be author, artist, BNF, or faned, at least for those of us who have never attended a con or met them in any other way.

I noticed at the end of your editorial in the first issue of the new FP that you ask for contributions of cartoons. I hope this does not mean that you will print no serious art. Perhaps you feel that serious art would detract from the zine's fanish approach.

//// Welcome to the letter column, Frank. See? It wasn't so hard after all, was it?

Not much art? Gee, the last issue had 29 illos on 34 pages, which is a higher ratio than is to be found in such zines as ENERGUMEN. You're right, I won't be using serious art. I think some of fandom's artists produce excellent serious artwork (though mostly in the artshows rather than in fanzines), but the medium really should fit the message. I like to think that the cartoons blend best with the type of written material I like to use.

NEAL GOLDFARB
30 Brodwood Dr.,
Stamford, Ct 06902

I appreciate your editorial, since I, too, just got a mimeo. My first, in fact (goshwow!). Only mine isn't a shiny new electric with hydraulic controls, flashing lights, built-in TV antennas, or anything. It's an old Sears hand crank thing. It's just sitting there on the floor under its junky cover. Come to think of it, it isn't really my first mimeo. I just remembered that two months ago my physics teacher gave me an open drum mimeo that doesn't even have anything to attach the stencil to.

Maybe I should mate my mimeos, too, and we could conduct a whole series of mimeograph genetic experiments. We could see which characteristics are acquired and which inherited. Can two manuals give birth to an electric? What about mixed marriages? And think of the marital problems... Your machines will probably argue over whether the kid should be raised as a gestetner or a rex (but when he's a teenager, he'll probably rebel by turning into an AB Dick.)

TOM PERRY
Box 286
Shrub Oak, NY 10588

It would be easy to go on like one of those women columnists in the New York Post about what dark days are upon us when someone can write a funny piece on being mugged -- twice -- and easier still to tell about one's own mugging (I got stabbed), but you say in the letter column that you don't want a lot of serious stuff so I'll refrain.





"The Eggman" made its point too well for anyone to ruin it by expanding upon it -- such a great closing line.

At the risk of getting into Serious Stuff, I am tempted to speculate a little about Hate and all after I noticed how much I warmed to you after reading your putdown, in the fanzine review column, of someone I've always disliked, at least on paper. It reminds me of that advisor of Nixon's who claims that the real secret of politics is "knowing who hates who." I hope he's wrong -- I'd do anything before I'd agree with one of those Republican bastards.

////// You mistake me. I'm not so much against Serious Stuff so much as I am against having my time wasted with the same old Serious Stuff. It may clear the sinuses of all us good bleeding heart liberals (or radicals, as we now call ourselves), but it is simply repetitive and boring to read Ringing Denunciations of all the stuff we know is wrong. Who are we going to convince in fandom? Interesting Serious Stuff is all right in FP, though.

Who did the WOFfields cartoon under Terry's logo? Beautiful. Terry's column wasn't bad, either... lad's coming right along. (That's a corny line, but commenting on Terry's column leaves my wheels spinning. It reminds me of the criticism someone once made in WARHOON about Willis' columns years back: "They're too well written." I puzzled over that comment at first -- my hero worship of Willis was at its height then -- but there was some smidgin of truth in it, and I finally decided what I thought the writer meant. Something to the effect that after you read what Walt (or in this case Terry) had to say on a subject, there was nothing left to add. No hooks left -- at least not for a lesser writer to hang a paragraph on. So all I can say about "The Infinite Beanie" is what they used to say about Willis: Terry was superb.

////// Terry and I have spoken about your letter, and he has assured me that he will try to keep down the quality of future columns. People never said that Willis was superb, though of course he generally was. That adjective, if you'll recall, was reserved for Bob Bloch.

The heading in question was done by the inimitable Ross Chamberlain.

CHARLENE KOMAR
85-30 121 Street,
Kew Gardens, N.Y.
11415

Terry's Pghlange report was a pleasure to read -- it made me look forward to my first con even more. Terry's feelings about the sauna touched a responsive chord. I really got in to saunas about a year or so ago, and they're really addictive. You feel so-o-o-o relaxed in one, you end up returning again and again and again. They're great.

"The Eggman" reinforces my suspicion that I must be the only person left in NYC who's never been mugged. Regardless where I go at what time of night in what company (or rather, lack of company), no one even tries to mug me. Maybe I'm naturally immune, but I'm beginning to feel that I'm missing a great universal experience. Perhaps they'll take away my newly-won right to vote in local elections on the basis that I'm not a true NYer until I've been mugged. I'll be forced to roam the streets, begging unwilling robbers to take my purse.

////// The plight of the unmugged is surely one of the most serious problems facing Fun City. I hope it will give you some consolation to know that I am a fellow sufferer. Even when I was a callow youth of 15 and wandering the streets at night, no one offered to go through my pockets for me.

ALJO SVOBODA
1203 Buoy Ave.,
Orange, Ca 92665

In "I Remember Hackettstown", you say that after the neofan has been exposed to fandom for about a year he (or she, I'm no Male Chauvinist Pig) begins to think he knows all there is to know about it. He thinks that he is no longer the neofan he was, though in actuality he is no less neofannish than he was formerly. I have been exposed to fandom for almost exactly a year now, and I feel just as neofannish as I did a year ago. The only difference is that now I can read an article in FOCAL POINT and understand a few more words than I did then.

TERRY HUGHES

407 College Ave.,
Columbia, Mo 65201

All the interior artwork was fine. It's very good to see Tom Foster appearing in more and more fanzines. But my favorite this issue is the W.C. Fields one by Ross Chamberlain -- a propellor on Fields' top 'hat! Fields is one of my favorite comedians, but I'm also wild about the Marx Brothers and old movies in general. Maybe W.C. Fields will evolve into a fannish symbol. Ken Fletcher has been using him as a character for some time now.

I always enjoy the pieces you write, Arnie, but this issue's "Katzenjammer" was especially delightful, because it captured the affection and devotion fans feel towards their means of duplication. Currently I don't have a mimeo of my own, a friend runs my zine off. About six years ago, I was in charge of running off the high school newspaper on the school's AB Dick mimeograph. Even though the mimeo and I had occasional quarrels, it turned out to be a year-long love affair. Real soon now, I plan on buying myself a Roneo, or a Rex, or a Gestetner, or a Hektograph (A WHAT?), or lots and lots of carbon paper and then...

///// You've just given me an idea for a swell brandonization of "Love Story". You see, there's this young fan, fresh out of college. One day he comes home and finds that his mimeograph, a venerable but beloved AB Dick, is dying of incurable ink clogging.

MIKE GLICKSOHN

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CANADA

I must agree with Ted White's comments on Charlie Brown's comments on the Firesign Theater. To me, "Don't Crush That Dwarf" is perhaps the most multi-levelled and convoluted record I've ever heard. As Ted said, every listening opens up new insights, and connects up different aspects of the album. It is perhaps the least "obvious" record I know of.

///// By now I suppose you've heard the latest Firesign, "We're all Bozos on This Bus", which I think is even more convoluted (and in some ways even more brilliant.)

RAY NELSON

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I notice Terry mentions me as one of the first of the fannish fans, and I sure enjoyed the egoboo, but after I got finished dancing around in the nude and laughing and crying and all like that, I sat down and frowned.

The thing of it is that back in 1945 or so, when I first got into fandom, the difference between fannish and sercon fandom did not, in fact, exist. Now, it seems, it does. The problem is that the division does not yet exist in my mind, even though I'm supposed to be a leader of this quasi-movement.

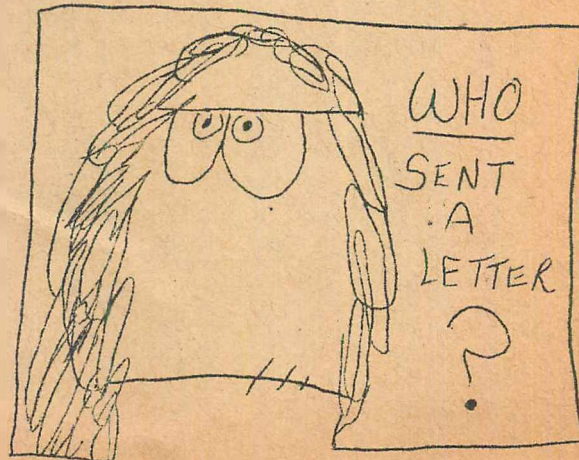
The first really fannish fanzine for my money was Art Rapp's SPACEM.RP, and that had the following policy (Really): Art printed everything that was sent to him. He did not edit. He just printed.

The result was a zine that was both sercon and fannish, since its nature depended upon what Art Rapp happened to get in the mails. And yet...and yet it was also, it seems to me, one of the most interesting fanzines of all time. You never knew what was going to happen next.

Fannish has come to mean, these days, "Exclusively interested in the details of one's every day life, in a humorous tone." Fannish these days, means something just as boring as the most sercon work of unnecessary scholarship.

True fannishness, in my mind, is serious sometimes and funny sometimes and hardly ever afraid of looking like an idiot. Fannishness is admitting you're a fool from the very beginning and going on from there. A trufan can be as pompous as he pleases and still be a trufan, because there's always that subliminal twinkle in his eye.

///// I think your idea of fannishness is very 5th fandom-ish, actually. My working definition is that fannishness is at bottom people oriented while serconishness is ob-



ject oriented. While there's no need to be humorous, there's equally no need to make an idiot of yourself, either. A fan who acts like a pompous ass is acting like a pompous ass, I should think, and all the trufan-nishness inside does not somehow make it all right.

MICHAEL CARLSON
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A fannish fanzine? By all means, yes. To a struggling college student, lacking in the time, funds and/or energy to be anything more than a passifan, something like FP is beautiful: even I, sitting lonely on the furthest fringes of fandom, can at least, once a month, feel really a part of the whole thing.

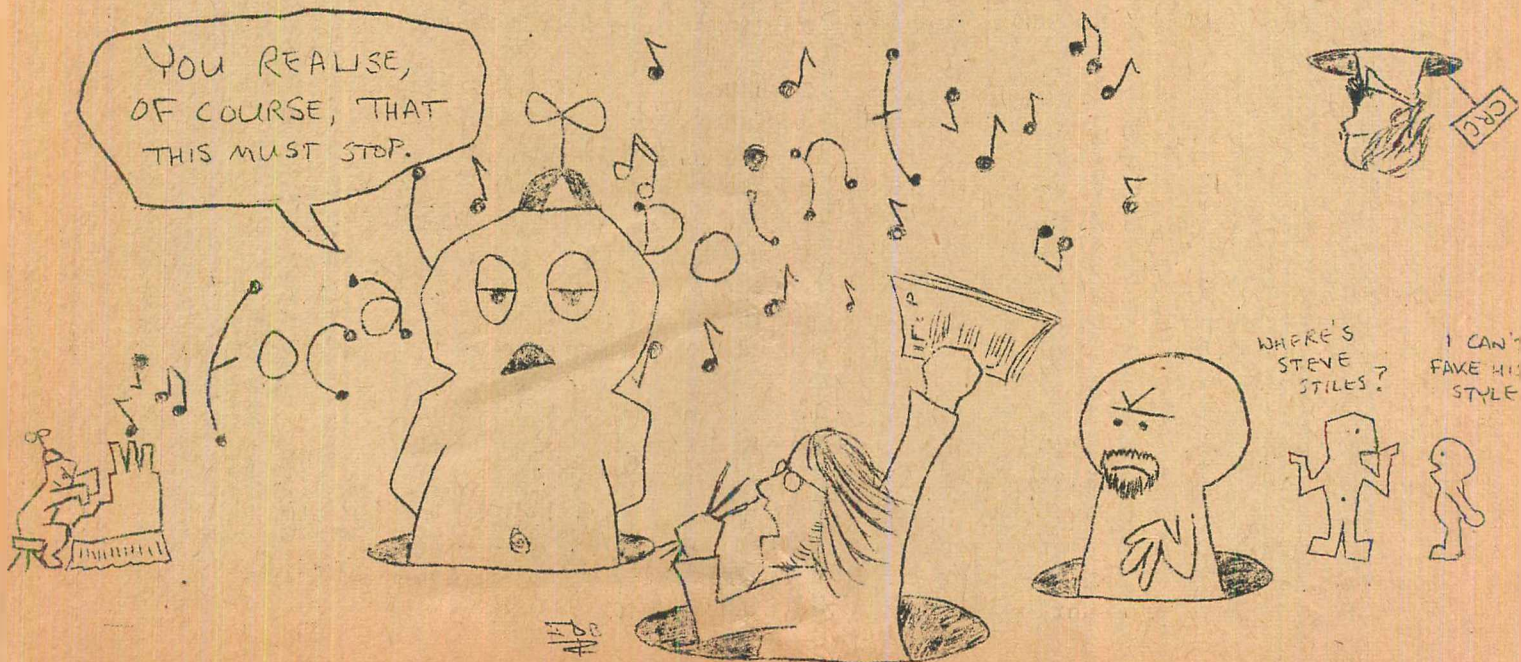
Why, you ask, should a student's pressures be so prohibitive? Good question. Certainly many fans have or have been extremely active in fandom whilst engaging in academic endeavor. But personally, I find the most difficult aspect of the dual existence to face is the repetition of tasks, ie -- reading and writing.

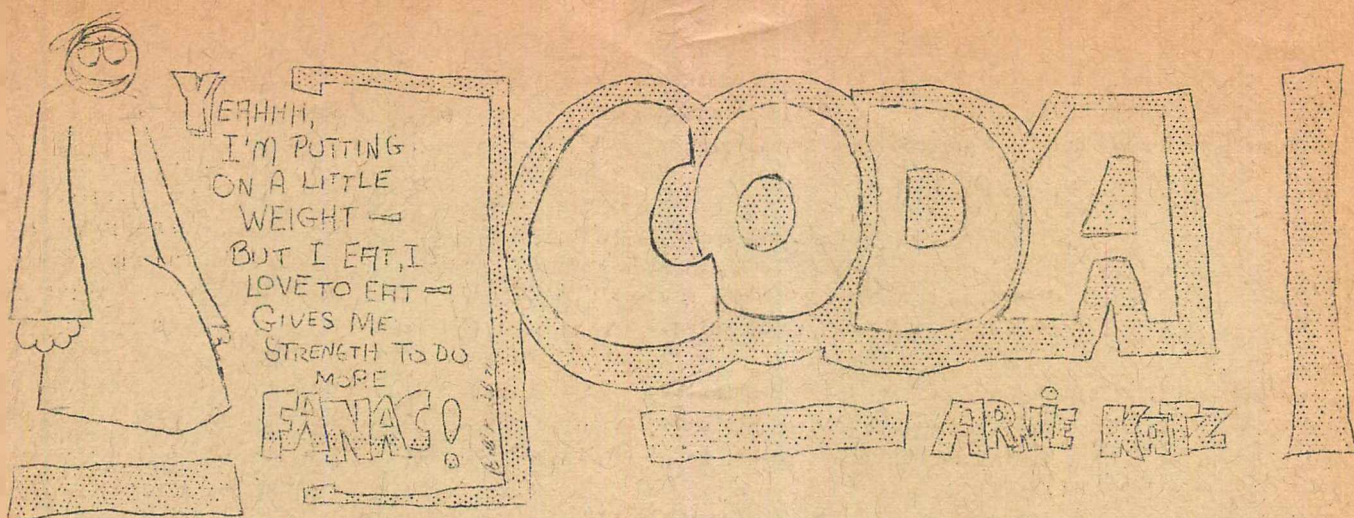
As an English major, those are my main academic responsibilities; and it's oftentimes difficult to gain relaxation from doing those same things in the SF world. Certainly not by reading good stuff... to unwind I'll have to turn to beef opera or the like. But I'm also busy as a dude at school anyway, with the demands of jobs and athletics (and I'd be interested in knowing how many other fans are/were college football players or college athletes. I haven't run into any fans in my athletic career, unfortunately.)

////// I was an English major, too, but I didn't consider fanac a repetition of school. I really love to write, and school papers written in academeese didn't fulfill my need to express myself. Not much egoboo in term papers, either.

Hey, can you imagine two fans playing head-to-head in a college football game? Standing there, waiting for the snap, they'd holler things like, "Fakefan!" at eachother.

Though this is by far the biggest letter column FP has ever run, I goofed in not allowing even more space, considering the extremely nice response. I'll make the next one larger, if you'll all cooperate and send those letters. And now, with sadness for all the fine letters which go unprinted, the WAHFs: Gary Hubbard, Barry Smotroff, , Will Straw, Jim Meadows III, Bob Block, Don Goodman, Aljo Svoboda (again), Jerry Kaufman, Richard Labonte, Bill KunkelTom Mullen, Larry Propp, Chuck Adamek, Dave Walton, Bill Capron, John Leavitt, Jerry Lepidus, Steve Larue, and Michael Carlson. Thank you all, and I'll try to use some of your letters next time if space permitts.





Like most things that get out of hand, our Friday night dinners started small. We'd been having dinner guests almost every evening, but it got to be a little too much after awhile. We weren't getting tired of our friends, but having company so regularly was tying up our evenings. I also thought it was asking too much of Joyce to have her prepare big dinners every night after a full day at work.

We began to double up the invitations. When we revived the N.Y. Insurgents in late spring after a short hiatus, making Friday fanac night, we began inviting a few friends over each Friday for pre-meeting dinners. When Bill Kunkel and Charlene Komar came into the club, we added them to the dinner list.

The advent of Bill and Charlene roughly coincided with summer vacations for Bruce Telzer, Jay Kinney, and Chris Couch, all of whom embarked on trips to various parts of the country. Yet with Charlene, Bill, and Ross Chamberlain as regulars, there were never less than five for dinner.

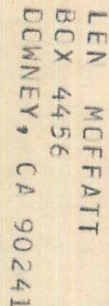
Until the Noreascon, things just rolled along. Though Bruce left town to attend Yale and Jay replaced a lot of his fanac with schoolac, the number of diners began to increase. Chris returned from St. Louis, bringing his girlfriend Alice Sanvito, Ned Sonntag and his girl came to dinner once, and John D. Berry came for a New York visit from the Noreascon.

The dinners quickly grew larger and more ornate. Before the Sept. 17 Insurgent meeting, eight hungry fans gobbled twenty separate dishes, plus three kinds of cake for desert. Among the goodies arrayed on our oval table were hamburgers, breaded ocean perch, franks and beans, macaroni salad, two kinds of potato salad, two kinds of cheese, rolls, and too many vegetables to list here.

How do we eat all this and come back for desert? Joyce has developed a complete repertoire of gambits to coax the maximum quantity of food into Brooklyn Insurgent stomachs. In fact, she's been so successful that we're all cowed. One dirty look from Joyce sends everyone back for seconds.

Capacities differ, of course, and there's one Insurgent who has distinguished himself above the rest by his ability to put it away: Ross Chamberlain.

It wasn't surprising that we decided to match our champion course for course with that renowned food fan, John D. Berry. Dinner, Friday, Sept. 24, was the contest meal, and Bill, Charlene, John, Ross, Chris, Alice, Joyce, and I were on hand for the event.



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Let me tell you, it was quite a dinner. The boardinghouse reach and hearty appetites were both much in evidence.

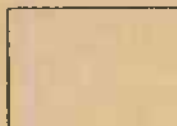
And when it was over, when the dishes had been cleared away, one fan had proved himself a trencherman supreme. By unanimous vote of the bystanders, the winner was -- John D. Berry!

As Judge Charlene Komar put it, "I knew John was the winner when Joyce handed him the casserole of ravioli and he just started eating from it with a fork."

A salty pretzel unto thee, John D.

-- Arnie Katz

And so another issue of FOCAL POINT draws to a close, three typefaces and all. I'm



not sure I've totally mastered the micro-clite yet, so I hope you'll all be patient about what may well be spotty repro in the lettercol. I hope to have better command of it by next time.

The box above? Oh, that's just something I stuck in so that I could put an "x" in it to let some people know they had to respond to this issue in some way or it will be their last. You understand how those things are. Yes, I knew you would somehow.

And if you don't have an "x"? Yes, of course, that means that you are cordially invited to write a letter, send art, write an article, trade zines, or what have you. Till next month. -- AtheK

