

10th ANNISH!

gambit 48

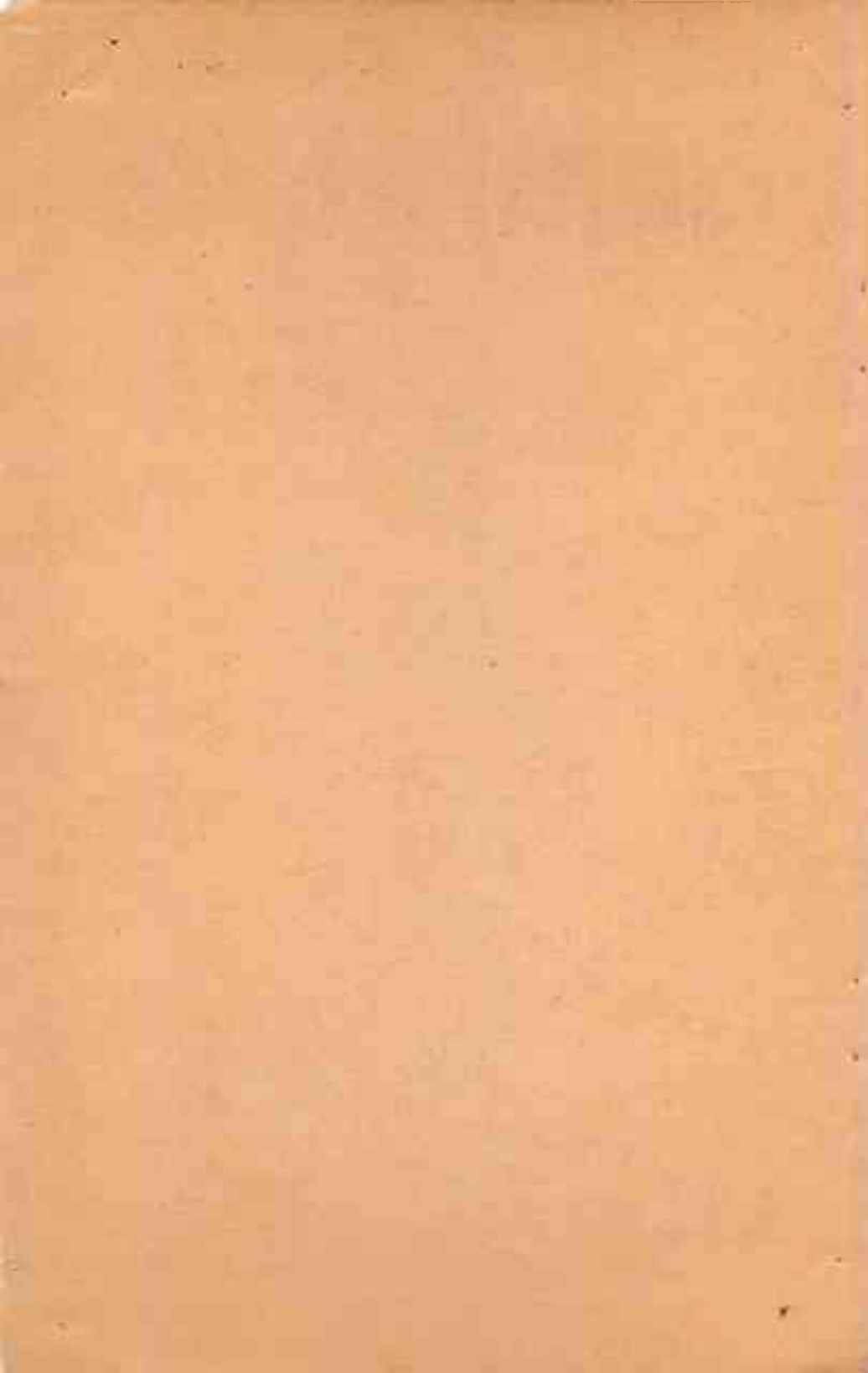


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MINAC

4

SPECIAL
DISCON
ISSUE



GAMBIT is written and published on the QWERTYUIOPress by Ted White, for the celebration of its 10th Anniversary. GAMBIT is normally an editorial column or a rider with other fanzines, and there's no use asking to be put on its mailing list.

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SPECIAL 10TH ANNIVERSARY & DISCON ISSUES

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gambit 48

TEN YEARS...



...THAT'S NOT TOO MANY...

The last issue of GAMBIT appeared as a four-page micro-elite rider to AXE over a year ago; the one before that appeared in VOID 28, in January, 1962.

But the first issue came out in late August of 1953--ten years ago.

I didn't call it GAMBIT then; the title has metamorphosed several times despite the continuous numbering. The first issue was titled ZIP and was the first fanzine I ever published.

I had purchased a postcard mimeo (a Sears Tower) in early 1952 because I didn't understand how mimeography worked and wanted to find out. Learning was a relatively painless process, and I mimed up little cards and leaflets for distribution at school with gay abandon. I recall that my first regular mimed publication was put out during the Presidential campaign in 1952 when my highschool class held a mock election (in which, to no one's surprise, "Eisenhower" won). Mine was a brief news-sheet called the REPUBLICANAT. Like everything I published on that mimeo, it measured 4" x 6".

The first fanzine I received from anyone else was the

first issue of Warren Fricberg's own vest-pocket zine, BREVI-ZINE. I was very much impressed by the size, which was not only one accessible to me but also appealing in its compactness. I've related the Fricberg Story elsewhere (GAMBIT 45, in VOID 27) so I won't go into it any further here, except to say that despite my general disagreement with Warren's editorial tastes and policies BREVI-ZINE was probably the strongest early influence upon my own fanpubbing ideas.

The summer of 1953 I mowed an endless number of lawns, and as I did so I spun magnificent fantasies to myself. The ones in which I was not publishing a revived ALL-STAR COMICS or DOC SAVAGE Magazine, or engineering and building a marvelous new automobile, would find me daringly venturing into the field of fanzine publishing, to put out a zine which would outdo even VEGA -- then the leading monthly fanzine.

It should be remembered that I was then young (fifteen) and fanishly naive. I had read Marion Bradley's excellent column in VEGA, "What Every Young Fan Should Know," and I knew that putting out one's own First Issue should not be a Hasty Stop. I approached that dream, that ideal, as a timid swan wooing a princess.

But it was in my blood. I gloried in the very concept of setting type to stencil, and then running off on my toy mimeo a genuine Work of Creation -- a real fanzine. I daydreamed about it for hours.

One day I decided to call a halt to daydreams and actually publish a fanzine. I recall the Moment of Truth vividly. I was sitting in my room, staring out at the summer sunlit trees on a Sunday afternoon in August. I remember my exultation at the thought that at last I would be doing something.

I had already decided upon the size and format -- there really was no choice there -- and because of this I had also decided to call the zine ZIP - "The Fanzine That Moves Right Along." I immediately began cutting the stencils for the three-color cover.

My problem had been material. I knew few fans well enough to ask them for material, and besides which I wanted to put the zine together now. I had two alternatives: fill the issue with my own material, or steal some.

That second alternative can be dignified by the term "re-printing," and I found that a compromise between those two alternatives would be reasonably workable. I reprinted two stories of my own from BREVI-, wrote a brief review of EC's sf comics, did some "pocketBOOK REVIEWS" under the pseudonym of Jacob Edwards (two of my middle names), and reprinted several items from old fanzines. In this respect I was fortunate: I had purchased from Dick Witter a mixed lot of fms going back to 1937. I venture to say that none of the reprints (with the exception of my own stories) were familiar to my audience -- and probably deservedly so. My Critical Judgement was not of the

best those days.

I once said, one or two years later, that I could look back on my earliest efforts with no embarrassment, a boast few other fans cared to make. These days I am glad indeed that only about thirty copies of ZIP #1 were printed, and I prefer to regard the entire period of ZIP #1-7 as one of primordial development.

Considering the absolute lack of good material in the first couple ZIPs I am astonished at the response the zinc actually garnered. It got no bad reviews (that I saw, at any rate), and the letters I received were kind and friendly. Some of these were from neos like myself, of course (one of them, Ron Ellik, had just launched his own first issue at about the same time -- coincidentally it too was a reprint zinc), while others were from established fans like Marion Bradley and Dean Grennell.

One of the most fruitful responses was from a correspondent and fellow BREVIL- reader, Bobby Stewart of Kirbyville, Texas. I thought "Bobby" was a bit silly for a sixteen-year-old, so after a spell I changed his by-line to "Bob M." Today he is the only surviving Bob Stewart in fandom, and everyone knows him as Bhob.

After Warren Freiberg, Bhob was probably my first close friend in fandom. The fact that today both of us live in New York City and remain good friends is a bit startling when I think back upon the friends made and lost throughout the shifting years of fandom as new fans popped into prominence and then faded again into gafia. Bhob and I held for a time a WO3W with Larry Stark, to whom Bhob introduced me, patterned on the then-famed Boggs-Silverberg-Grennell WO3W. Then he gafiated, not to regain any strong interest in fandom again until 1959, when he briefly rejoined the Cult (he was a charter member, and the first to drop out) and then attended the Pittcon, to return to NYC with us in my car, staying in our apartment in the Village until he found his own a block away.

But to return to the days of yore... Bhob had been working on a fanzine with BobbyGone Warner, FANSCIFUL, which due to the breakdown of Bhob's hecto had gone defunct after a single issue. (Bhob had managed to produce two issues of the first EC fanzine -- and thus possibly the first comics-fandom fmz -- on that same hecto before it gave up the spirit.) I suggested we join forces, and with ZIP #3 Bhob became a co-editor and ZIP's inventory of material was noticeably improved.

This was not to be obvious until the next issue, however, because the third ZIP was devoted to the controversy Warren Freiberg had touched off in #2 with "The Science Fiction Fan: A JACKASS!", an article of amazing fuggheadodness which it seems to me has a startling resemblance to the ones written only a couple of years ago by Jack Cascio. Several people wrote replies: GMcCarr, Ray Thompson, Don Wegars and John Fletcher. Although only the first two are probably still known by young fans today, all were then active fanzine publishers, and

I was pleased to turn that issue of ZIP into a symposium to print their replies. (The issue also contained a rebuttal by Warren and a very short short story by Jacob Edwards. My "stories" of that time were accurately summed up by Marion Bradley as "plot synopses--outlines which, if they were written up in story form, might be good stories but as they are, are only plots." At this time ZIP was running about 50 pages -- or the equivalent of about 12 normal-sized pages.)

ZIP #4 was the last of the quarter-sized issues, and the first to feature a modicum of decent new material, by people like Phyllis Economou and Torrey Carr. It also brought to fruition the experiments I'd been making since the first issue with color mimeography.

Once, while reading a Miri Worlfo fanzine review column in IMAGINATION, I had been traumatized by her comments on the first issue of Lee Hoffman's SCIENCE-FICTION FIVE-YEARLY. While I no longer recall what she actually said, the impression I was left with was that color mimeography was so marvelous that its use can redeem even the worst crudzine (which, I hasten to add, SFF-Y was not). Naturally, I decided to use color work in my zine.

Color is not difficult to run on a postcard mimeo. The drum is easy to clean, the pads are easily removed and changed, and if one feeds one sheet at a time with utmost care, the registry is likely to be adequate. So you can bet I used color to a fair degree in ZIP. And the backcover of the fourth issue remains an impressive one even today. At the time I thought it was fabulous.

But the postcard mimeo was too restrictive, and when I had the opportunity, I bought a full-size machine, a Print-O-Matic. I used it for the next two issues, then bought a Heyer Lettergraph, and soon after a reconditioned electric ABDick 100, which did the seventh issue and carried me through all the big STELLARS until I got my first Gestetner. It took me until #6 to figure how to run color on a large mimeo (the problems of changing colors were solved by methods I was to use on each of the hollow-drum-type machines for years afterward), and from then on it was one of my hallmarks.

It is easy to look back now and see the extent to which I was confusing good appearance with a good fanzine; it was to a large extent less important to me what my fanzine contained than how it looked. I rationalized this with a perfectly valid explanation: good material is made even better by good presentation, and at that time it was my hope that by presenting an attractive fanzine I would attract better written material.

But ZIPs 5, 6 and 7 were still the developing products of a neo. They "showed promise" (as the reviewers were now pointing out) much more than they actually fulfilled any. By #7 I had pretty well mastered the art of producing a really good looking fanzine, but the quality of material was about what

you'd expect of a zine rated 4 or 5 today. I was still a poor editor; I tended to run a great deal of inferior material without realising its inferiority. But in two years of fanpubbing I'd more or less set the stage and prepared myself for the beginning of a more worthwhile career of fanpublishing.

Many other things were happening in those first two years. I was still exploring the possibilities of fandom, for I was still shy and introverted as a fan, hiding myself behind a typewriter and conducting all my fanac in print; my chance meeting with another fan, John Magnus, in DC's George Friend's Book Shop ("Science Fiction Our Specialty" -- but George paid his bills through the sale of under-the-counter items and by making book) was not to have any effect until two years later, in the fall of 1954, I joined the Washington Science Fiction Association (and in half a year was elected its president).

I had created, from the first foolish use of the penname in ZIP #1, a Hoax, "Jacob Edwards," who put out one issue of his own fanzine and conducted a feud with me (it was illuminating to read the letters to Jacob and find out what some of my fanish friends -- like Pete Vorzimer -- really thought of me).

By the fall of 1955, I had joined four apas. The first was Larry Anderson's Whimsical Amateur Press Ass'n (the group whose rules inspired the Cult, only a month or two later, and which perished after only a year's operation) of which I was a charter member. In late August, 1954, only a year (and six ZIPs) after I'd begun publishing fanzines, I became one of the founding members of the Cult. I still occupy a position in the Cult very roughly analogous to that of Jack Speer in FAPA, but sometimes I've wondered if this singular honor is really worth it. The climax of my apactivity came with my entrance, only six months after application, into FAPA, with the May, 1955 mailing. I joined OMFA, anticlimactically, about six months later, after meeting Ken and Pam Bulmer at the Clevention.

These groups diverted my fanac; ZIP #6 appeared in the summer of 1954, and while work on #7 followed immediately, it did not appear until almost a year later, when I put it into the August, 1955 FAPA mailing. (At the Clevention Leo Hoffman upon meeting me complimented me on my color work...). In the meantime I was publishing full-time for the apas. First came SPLOTCH, a 3" x 4" fanzine for WAPA, which touched off a mock battle of "World's Smallest" fanzines with Larry Anderson and Don Wegars. (I won, with one measuring a quarter of an inch by three quarters of an inch. I doubt anyone would care -- or so any reason to -- dispute that "record".) In the Cult I published the first 50-page FR, in an era of five- and ten-paged FRs, and for FAPA I created NULL-F, a zine which has had thirty-four issues to date.

That was an era of apas. The successful formation of the Cult and OMFA signalled a drift away from gonzino fanac, as

not only the fans of stature but the eager young blood as well migrated into FAPA, SAPS, OMEGA and the Cult. The slow and lingering demise of Dick Geis' PSYCHOTIC (which became SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW for its last few issues) left general fandom without any leaders among its fanzines. This fragmentation and disintegration of general fandom, coupled with the frantic clustering into the apes continued into 1958, a three-year interregnum broken finally by the Solacon, Rick Snodgrass's ten-year-dream come true.

While the bulk of my output went into FAPA and the Cult during 1955 and 1956, the summer of 1956 witnessed my half-hearted return to gonzine publishing, and the resumption, under a new name, of the ZIP Sage.

ZIP had seemed an inappropriate name for my zine ever since it had gone full-sized, and in 1954 I'd decided to change both title and policy drastically with the 8th or 9th issue. I wanted to call the zine STELLAR and to feature fanfiction.

I was very much turned on at that time by the idea of fiction about fans. The social situations in fandom, new to me then, with their microcosmic mirroring of Real World politics and relationships, struck me as overripe for fictionalizing. Some such pieces had already been written, and they had been my inspiration. I expounded the idea to my closest friend of the time, Larry Stark, and we decided to go it together. (What became of my first coeditor? Bob had graduated in the summer of 1954, in anticipation of his first year at college.) Stark had written some of the fanfiction I'd liked (one story appeared in PSYCHOTIC), and had a much better-developed critical faculty than I, so he was the logical choice as editor. My function would be to design and publish the zine.

But my interest in gonzine pubbing had dimmed with my entrance into the apes, and indeed ZIP#7, while edited and published as a gonzine, appeared only in FAPA. Larry spent the summer with me and my folks that year, and we talked, vaguely, of STELLAR, but nothing was done. It was not until the following summer, in 1956, when Larry again stayed with us, that we finally got to work on the zine, and somehow managed to produce #8 and #9 (the latter in time for the NyCon), as well as a portion of #10.

Many have called these zines self-conscious, and perhaps they were; Stark certainly was. But we were trying something genuinely new, and I think we may be forgiven for our awareness of the fact. Larry was a good editor, and he gave the zine something previously lacking from my publications: a consistent level of writing quality, as well as a sense of form and balance. With this aspect of the zine assured, I began putting newly developed layout and design talents to work, and between us we produced a fanzine which we are still proud to look back upon.

STELLAR had very little impact upon fandom when it came out, although in the six years following its death it has gained a considerable reputation for the quality of both its material and appearance. The reason for its lack of popularity at the time of its appearance can be summed up with one word: personality. STELLAR hadn't enough personality. I had not yet learned to express my personality in print in such a fashion as to mold the zine's personality (or, perhaps I hadn't developed sufficient personality to express), and Larry Stark was aiming for something else entirely. Then too, STELLAR ran almost only fiction, and this gave it a timeloss quality; only the occasional fanzine reviews provided any real reference point to the era in which it was published. Today many have found it as enjoyable as it had been to fans then -- and in some cases perhaps more so.

STELLAR was also the culmination of my attempts to attractively "package" a fanzine. Its layouts were extravagant and arty -- often making use of double-page spreads, and blocks of shading -- and the covers brought color mimeography to a peak I do not believe has been surpassed since. In this very fact lay the seeds of some readers' dissatisfaction, for although Redd Boggs has at times entreated me to do "another STELLAR", many felt that I spent too much time on STELLAR's appearance and too little in warming its pages with my generously genial personality. The impeccable appearance seemed a trifle too polished, a bit too cold to be human.

There was a time when I considered these criticisms very unjust. For I was expressing myself in STELLAR as I never had before. I entered fandom as an artist (albeit a poor one) whose interests lay predominantly in design but whose output was pretty much stock spaceships and tired cartoons. In designing STELLAR I found an outlet for my creative desires that was of enormous satisfaction. Although I've experimented with new ideas in layout and design since then (largely in my FAPAZine, NULL-F), never before or since have I given such free rein to creative design, or been as happy with the results.

People grow, and they change. Challenges are met with ones growth, and once bested are discarded for the next. STELLAR represented a challenge successfully met on several levels (my first "good" fanzine; my most artistically successful zine; and, with the publication of the cover of #12, the successful translation of a water-color painting into six-color mimeo), and in satisfying myself I lost interest in those aspects of fanpubbing. For that reason I doubt I shall ever publish "another STELLAR."

Larry Stark resigned his editorship when he returned to New Jersey at the end of that summer, and I edited and published STELLAR myself, with the assistance of local fans like Dick Ency, Jack Harness and Phil Castora, through the fall of 1957. The last two issues, 13 and 14, abandoned the fanfiction policy (which had proved unpopular and too restricted), and were about half as large (30, as opposed to around 60 pages). Although I

prepared and published a portion of #15, it died with the end of the year, and STELLAR, as an entity if not as a title, died with it.

The last five years seem far less long than the first five years when I look back upon them. It is hard for me to realize that an equal amount of time has passed since I attended the Solacon and distributed STELLAR 21 there. While the first five years saw a great deal of obvious growth and change in me as a fan, echoing my gradual departure from the teens stage, the last five have seen a much more gradual maturation; I am probably still about as well known as I was in 1958, and my reputation has not changed too greatly. I'm now one of the Fixtures: fans who've been around For Years and will be expected to be around for Years More. When I began writing this piece it gave me a profound jolt to realize how much and how many different things those ten years have meant to me. They have bracketed five years of my life as a sheltered neurotic teenager (a fan for all the classic reasons) and five as a man who's weathered one marriage and begun a second, been on his own in The Big City, and gradually established himself in a career of some satisfaction.

In early 1958 I began publishing my first small, frequent zine, the spiritual ancestor or later GAMBITS and MINAC, and I moved out of my parents' home to Baltimore. Before the year had ended, I had met and married fandom's most eligible femmofan.

GAFIA MWSHEET ran only ten issues (one of them, #8, devoted to an obituary of Vernon McCain, I destroyed after publication after serious second thoughts) before Redd Boggs complained that I was infringing upon his Gafia Press imprint. But in that time I probably established myself as a real person sans Fancy Package, for the first time. GAFIA started out two pages, became a four-pager, and was written every week entirely by me. There were no fancilly shaded buffers between me and my audience. The circulation was low -- around 30 or 40 copies -- because I was putting it out as a rider to Magnus' RUMBLE, but GAFIA reached a fairly important group of hard-core fans. Including Redd Boggs...

Because of Redd's complaint, I changed the title to STELLAR, picking up the numbering where I'd left off with #15. Effectively though, the zine was still GAFIA, since it remained the same sort of personalized individzine. (I did use up the material stencilled for the large #15 in successive issues of the small STELLAR though.)

I lived with Dick Wingate and John Magnus that summer in a state of nearly total fanac. We pubbed zines at the drop of a stencil, and in no time at all I'd run the number of STELLARs up to #20. (This actually meant about fifteen issues, count-

ing the first ten GAFIAs, published up to that point during 1958. Well, that's not too many...) The Con was approaching, and it was August, the fifth anniversary of ZIP #1.

In honor of the occasion, I put out STELLAR 21. This was a twenty-page zine with regular genzine-type material, a Solaconnish which I took with me to distribute and perhaps to even sell.

The Solacon produced some drastic changes in me, not the least of which was my falling in love. As we travelled across the country, coming and going, and at the Con itself I was constantly amazing people who had pictured me from some of my writings as a dour angry young fan. It seemed to me that it was time to do something about changing that image. With my newly sweetened outlook on life it was not hard to make the decision: I would become a Humorist.

Fans who know me well have long suspected that buried somewhere deep within me might well lie a flickering spark of humor. In times long after these I have sometimes been so emboldened as to be a Life of the Party. But at the time of which I write I was not very funny. I was terribly earnest, and, having just not the first great love of my life, feeling woefully inadequate about Facing The Stern Realities of Life.

However, I had long admired Charles Burbee's deft touch, and I had been impressed by the way it had been inherited by Berkeley fandom -- especially by Terry Carr.

For a long time after I first attempted it I tended to mistake mannerisms for content, and to seize upon devices Burbee had intuitively invented for my own mechanical construction of "humor." However, despite the occasionally belabored item, my use of such devices allowed me to loosen up and unlimber my own sense of humor -- and this is a development I've never regretted.

STELLAR was too plunkingly serious a title for the light and witty zine I now aspired to publish, so with issue #23 -- the first to be issued after my Change of Heart -- I made the final name change: GAMBIT. And GAMBIT it still is.

GAMBIT has had its ups and downs. It has run up to thirty pages, and has been reduced to a single sheet. It has been combined with Peto Graham's THIS, has served as a Christmas card, and has even lost its identity amongst the pages of VOID when it served there as an editorial column. It has been a rider to both FANAC (when Terry Carr was publishing it) and AXE (upon two occasions, a year apart).

The history of GAMBIT necessarily runs tangent to that of VOID. GAMBIT 30, the third (counting S#21) large-sized issue (of some thirty pages), was mailed out within a week or two of VOID 14, the first I produced in collaboration with Greg Benford. During the hiatus between VOID 18 and 19 (which encompassed my move to NYC), I published GAMBITs 33 and 34 to accompany FANAC. In early 1960 I effectively combined the two zines,

running numbered GAMBITS as my editorial column in VOID. Occasionally separate issues of GAMBIT would appear, as when VOID nearly disappeared in the midst of its VANISH, and later, when I felt the need of an immediate soapbox. Significantly, better than half of the entity I called first GAFIA, then STELLAR, and lastly GAMBIT was circulated parasitically, first with Magnus' RUMBLE, later -- around #23 -- on its own when RUMBLE folded; but again from #31 on with various other zines: VOID, FANAC, AXE, etc. This very issue I am now pubbing has hopped upon MINAC's back and it too has no true mailing list of its own.

Throughout its career as an individual GAMBIT has been of largely utilitarian value -- a vehicle for various momentary needs rather than a continuous publication in its own right. But with its appearances in VOID and now MINAC it has tied together the string of developments of my fanzine career and provided another sort of continuity which pleases my sense of the fit and proper.

I suspect VOID, the fourth stage of my fanpubbing career, is the most successful fanzine I've ever published. It is certainly the most fanzine and the most popular, rating in the (as yet unpublished) FANAC Poll as second best fanzine of 1961. (WARHOON was #1.) It's never been nominated for a Hugo, but the measure of recognition that it has received was enough in itself to make me feel I'd successfully met and bested ~~yet~~ another challenge.

VOID of course has been the work of many people other than myself. Greg Bonford had developed it into a good fanzine before I ever touched it. It swerved off in another direction when I took it over -- to some fans' audible dissatisfaction -- but without any real decrease in quality I think. Pete Graham's addition to the editorial staff in the midst of the VANISH gave it another shove in the right direction, and when Torry Carr came east and VOID incorporated INFLUENDO with issue 26, I think we actually achieved the largest measure of what I'd wanted for VOID. #28 was, significantly, another culminating issue. It was printed on white stock twice as expensive as we usually used, and made use of some color work (for the first time in years). It marked the conclusion of the multiple-page covers created for us (with the Willish, #23) by Bob Stewart, with a five-page Gestofared cover. We made no effort to hold down the page count, and to top it off, I wrote an article on Heinlein for the "Wailing Wall" column which I was quite proud of.

(I should mention here, since I never have elsewhere, that Stewart's five-page cover was completed by Steve Stiles and myself when Bob found himself too busy to do more than the first two pages. After I wrote the script for the remaining three pages, Steve Stiles, working in a style as close to

-14-

Bob's as possible, did the pencil roughs for these pages. Then I inked them, and spotted the shading on all five pages. As an artist of extremely amateur standing, I was inordinantly proud of my work on that cover -- and for that matter, I still am.)

Torry Carr and I began work on VOID 29, and part of it has been run off for over a year, but the thrill's gone out of it, and once we get the zine finished and out VOID will pass on to other, more eager hands.

But of course the ZIT Saga -- really the Ted White saga, if you've noticed -- does not stop there. GAMBIT continues, sometinely, and with this issue it is linked to my newest outlet, MINAC. MINAC represents an opportunity for Les Gerber and me to publish a fanzine regularly with minimal effort, and in many ways represents a return to the original GAFIA/GAMBIT conception. But you can never really go back; as I could no more recreate the STELLAR of yore, so I've no desire to revive the original GAMBIT of that brief period when it was a zine in its own right. Always we must be doing something new, even if subtly so.

It's funny to look back upon oneself and try to view oneself present self from those long-dead eyes. I entered fandom as a wide-eyed spectator in 1951, and as a contributor in 1952. I was thirteen when I discovered fandom, and just entering high school.

I wanted to be an artist then, and found it difficult to write more than a brief paragraph at any given time. My aspirations for the future were to be either a professional (commercial) artist or illustrator, or to be a professional editor -- preferably of a science fiction magazine. Curiously, these ideals have never entirely left me (three years ago I did up a portfolio of art samples to show about the prozines), but at the same time I've never expected them to come true. They were the stuff of dreams -- daydreams of the future and not a solid part of the present. I admit that when I cast myself back into my 1952 self I can only marvel at the fact that I've sold two science fiction stories and a novel, been published in leading jazz and mens' mags, and am now Ass't Editor of F&SF. These things I drifted into; they just happened, and most mundanely. But when I take them out of their prosaic context, they do give my sense of wonder a real jolt.

Like when a young Fuller Brush salesman came around recently, glanced over my record collection, and was almost awestruck to hear what I "did". "I--I thought somebody like you'd live in a penthouse in Manhattan," he said. I used to think that myself.

-Ted White

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MINAC 4

TED WHITE:

UFFISH
THOTS

THERE CAN BE
ONLY ONE
POSSIBLE
CONCLUSION
--- THE
NBP NEEDS
A LOYALTY
OATH!



THE STRANGE CASE OF THE WEREWOLF BOOKSHOP:

You've probably already seen mention of this bookshop in STARSPINKLE. I know I'd heard for years rumors of shady dealings. One recent evening Jon White (no relation) told me of his misfortunate encounter with Bob Michael and The Werewolf Bookshop (an appropriately named enterprise).

The first letter Jon received was dated March 23rd (postmark) and was a mimeod form letter which read as follows:

Since you inquired about the science fiction books and magazines on sale here at 50% to 90% off, here is what's happened.

I've almost run out of catalogs and won't be buying more, because I expect to rejoin the Army in a couple of weeks now. So I can't send out catalogues the way I used to.

But if I rejoin the Army, I'll have to dispose of my books fast -- faster than the 50% to 90% off offer is selling them

-- because the janitor here will just dump into the incinerator any books still on hand when I vacate.

I guess I'll have to give my books away free to anyone who will pay the delivery cost on them, to keep them from being burned. So if you think you might be willing to pay just the delivery cost for a batch of free books, if and when I rejoin the Army, send me a self-addressed 5¢-stamped envelope.

Then when I find out definitely that I'm leaving, I'll notify you in time, and send you one of the few catalogs I have left.

Yours,

Bob Michael

So Jon sent the required stamped, addressed envelope. On March 27th, he was mailed two four-page mimeod catalogues (Vol. XVII, #1, and Vol. XVI, #3) and the following letter:

Since they'll just dump into incinerator /sic/ any books still on hand, when I vacate a week from tomorrow to rejoin the Army, you can have \$35.00 worth for \$3 now, \$75.00 worth for \$6, \$155.00 worth for \$12. (If COD wanted on that, add 25¢ Postal fee per book.)

That will only cover packing and shipping costs /hah!/. I know, but I'd a lot rather give my books to you free than see them burned.

Also, under the circumstances, you can advise any preferences at all now, even for books not on the enclosed list. Advise titles, or authors, or even subjects -- no use paying regular prices some day for books you can get now free.

Yours,

Bob Michael

So Jon ordered about \$40.00 worth of books and sent \$4.00 for them. He received none of the books he'd ordered, getting instead "a pile of junk" -- the sort of books one can pick up for almost nothing, anywhere. With the books was another mimeod note:

Items on bargain list were grabbed up fast.

If there are any of these books you do not want to keep permanently, they or other books of yours can be swapped in at \$2 worth for \$1 worth, for any books you want, as per the swap offer in my catalog, at any time, as long as my wife keeps things going.

Werewolf Bookshop, Bob Michael

-17-

Jon sent the books back, of course, and asked that his \$4.00 be returned to him. He did not receive it. Instead he received another mimeod note, postmarked April 8th:

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter and forwarded it to my husband.

Even if nothing had been said about it in the offer, common sense would indicate that my husband was not going to rush out and buy more copies of books already given away free, to give to a later customer free. But to expect him to do that, when the free book offer was plainly and clearly limited to books still on hand -- that would really be asking too much.

However, if you will send me price quotations showing you can get the books he sent you free for less than the list prices marked in them, I will send you enough additional books to make up any difference.

It is obviously impossible to be clearing everything out, and still have everything in stock to take care of all preferences. That is why he could not and did not offer a definite choice.

Yours truly,
Mrs. Bob Michael

Jon wrote to "Mrs. Bob Michael" twice more, without receiving any reply, or the return of his \$4.00. Apparently at that point the Michaels ran out of mimeod form letters.

There are a number of interesting aspects to this case, aside from the obvious one of intentional fraud (with anticipated complaints). There is the fact that both the first and last letters were addressed with the same erratic typing, with the address far left of center. The address, 7055 Shannon Rd., Verona, Pa., stayed the same as well, despite Michael's announced intentions to "vacate." Of course Michael did not mention the fact that his wife would be continuing the business upon his supposed entry into "the Army", and one can see in these letters a number of clever prevarications--including the reiteration of "free" when in fact the books were sold. (The COD charges are no where near that high -- 25¢ a book -- either; and books can be mailed for 9¢ the first lb., 5¢ each additional lb.)

The Michaels should be warned that Jon is preparing to make a formal mail fraud charge against them, and I have every hope that in so doing he'll be effective in putting this pair of highwaymen out of business for good.

8¢ POSTAGE DUE: Every so often a fan moves. To judge by the CoAs in FANAC and STARS INKLE, a fan moves every couple of days. And already several of MINAC's recipients have moved. Unfortunately, they either did not bother to file a change of address with the PO, or they failed to check the box specifying that all classes of mail be forwarded. And, since they didn't tell us, MINAC came back, 8¢ due. This bugs me not only because I am parsimonious and cheap, but also because every time this happens the postman's strident ring wakes me from a sound and needed sleep. Anyway, by the time we remail it with the correct address on it, that issue of MINAC will have cost us 16¢ in postage, which I consider a trifle excessive. So we're instituting a Policy:

To Wit: if a copy of MINAC is returned to us because you've moved and failed to notify us or have your mail forwarded, we shall assume your interest in MINAC is insufficient to warrant your receiving further copies and your name will be Stricken From Our Lists. Be Warned, all ye.

"NOREEN!" SCREAMED THE SCREEN. Our patron had taken us to the arts, as it were, and the four of us -- Esther Davis and Henry, Sandi and I -- were sitting in the audience of the Network Preview Theatre watching cruddy pilot films and winning prizes (Esther won a lifetime supply of razor blades).

Actually, it was a lot of fun. We saw two complete half-hour shows, replete with commercials, and every few moments as we watched a number would light up at one side of the big screen and we'd check the box for "Good," "Fair," or "Poor" at the corresponding number on our poll sheets. After each program microphones would be passed among us and we'd have the opportunity to comment on the show. While the majority of the com-

ments ran along the lines of "I thought it was just swell and I know people will like it," and "The little girl will appeal to the young kids, the young couple will appeal to teen agers, and, uh, the older people in the show will appeal to older people," ad nauseum, there were a few comments like "I thought it was very unreal. I mean, the problem they had, that was silly. I've been to college and a married couple in college just doesn't live like that."

I'm sure Scotty Tapscott will be intrigued to hear that the show which brought about the above comments concerned a young couple still going to college. They live on a houseboat in Seattle. The characters were interesting, and the settings novel, but the plot was hoary: should young man go for Phd or join father-in-law's firm and be a Good Provider? His wife wants him to go for the Phd, but he feels he's shirking his duties to her. They argue, get stubborn, and then make up, as he decides she's right. Typical situation comedy, and resultingly mediocre. But the girl who plays the young wife (Yvone Somebody) is a knockout.

It was during the second show, though, a come-back for Joan Blondell (which was a terrible drag, in both senses of the word), that the commercial for Noreen appeared. While it may well be that Noreen Shaw has been buying the stuff for years, I had never before heard of a hair-conditioner for women called "Noreen", and I admit it rocked me a bit to see the name in huge black type on the otherwise white and empty screen.

After the thing had finished, we headed east on 46th Street to Fifth Avenue for a bus. Esther will not ride the subway, and as a result we waited over twenty minutes for a bus, only to find when it came that the driver wouldn't change my \$5 bill. "This wouldn't have happened in the subway," I muttered. At any rate, on this block of 46th St. we encountered one of the most fascinating shops I've seen in New York. It's the Sterile Telephone Co., and it sells phones. All kinds of phones, from antiques (with

modern innards) to the latest super-streamlined items from France, and including even pay phones. I've five phones in this house now, with a spare on the shelf, but I've always wanted a payphone for my bathroom. I hope if I get one from that company it won't really sterilize me...

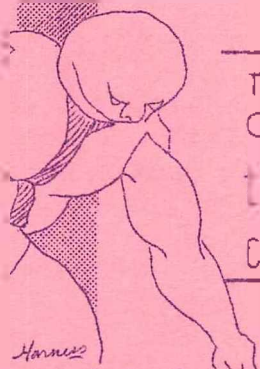
REPORT FROM VAN ARNAM: When I called Terry Carr today (I do this frequently), he told me he'd just had a call from his office. "It seems Dave van Arnham called in asking for my telephone number so he could ask me for your number. You know how they are at Scott Meredith; they took his number and said we'd call him." (My phone is Unlisted -- and the reasons for this are several hilarious stories in themselves, but at any rate this is for mundane, not fan-nish reasons. Fans can easily reach me at 212-HY.2-9518.)

So I called Dave, and he told me the stencils for Lin Carter's THE TIRED TAILOR OF OZ were ready -- all 110 of them. As soon as he and Lin have proofed them, and we've gotten the illustrations (Bjo -- are you still interested?) and enough bankroll to buy the paper, we'll begin work on the volume's publication. No orders yet; we'll let you know when. After all, I was supposed to have the book in the 100th FAPA mailing...

Dave also mentioned that he's finishing up the first issue of JARGON, his new fmz, for distribution at the Discon (where many of you will be receiving and reading this). If you haven't bumped into him yet, hunt him up; if you couldn't make it, a copy can be had for 25¢, trade, or contribution (following issues also for LoC) to Dave van Arnham, Apt. 353, 1730 Harrison Ave., Bronx, N.Y., 10053. It looks to shape up well, but that may be my bias showing; I'll have an item in it...

ANOTHER PLUG: We've just received LOGORPHEA #3 from Tom Perry (where's the "Silent 'H'"), PO Box 1284, Omaha, Nebraska, and if you like MINAC, you'll like LOG even better. Because it is. Ask Tom for a copy.

-Ted White



TERRY
CARR:

troll
chowder

INSIDE #2 (new series),
June 1963. 25¢, 4 for
\$1.00 from Jon White,
90 Riverside Drive,
New York 24, N. Y.
Offset, 56 1/2 size pgs.

The first issue of
Jon's revival of the
justly famous INSIDE
relied a bit too ob-
viously on material

which had been sitting dormant in Jon Smith's
files for years. but with this issue Jon be-
gins to move forward on his own. There's
still a good amount of stuff which must have
come from the files, but the patchwork aspect
of the first issue is happily missing this
time: I get the feeling in each case that
Jon's publishing the old material because he
likes it, not because he's clearing the file.

There are no less than three major items
in this issue. Top honors as far as I'm con-
cerned go to George O. Smith for "The Seven
Stages of Authordom," a speech delivered at
an undesignated con. It's the other side of
the coin from Bloch's celebrated "Seven
Stages of Fandom," and I enjoyed it immense-
ly. (An historical aside which may be of
interest to those who like me as well as
those who don't: when Bloch's original
piece was reprinted in TWS back in '48, I
was just dabbling my toe in fandom, and I
took the article seriously. It depressed me
so much that I almost turned aside and didn't
enter fandom.)

Arthur Jean Cox contributes the second
major piece, a long article on s-f as a sub-
literary phenomenon; it's well written,
thoughtful and persuasive. (And Bill Dona-
ho, who's been putting forth many of the same
points for years, will undoubtedly be de-
lighted with it.) The third major item is
a set of cartoons about John Campbell by Art
Castillo. Castillo's long articles in HABAK-
KUK may have been a bit turgid, but his car-
toons have always been absolutely deadly in

both aim and delivery, and these are among his best.

There are two short stories. The first is presumably, as Jon says in his editorial, "the last published story" of the late S. Fowler Wright. It's an interesting parabolish (parabolic?--no.) thing, but after setting up a somewhat ingenious wheels-within-wheels problem Wright invalidates the whole story by bringing an ironic ending in from the wings (otherwise known as "left field"). The second story is by Gordon A. Weaver: it's a grim Kafkaesque thing which is unsuccessful simply because Weaver isn't Kafka.

William F. Temple has an amusing but rather slight humor article on "Ego" Clarke. Clark Ashton Smith has a poem which I understand is pretty good. There are book, movie and fanzine reviews, none of them particularly noteworthy, and a rather short lettercol which could develop into something good.

RATING: 9

DIANOURA #1, May-July 1963. 50¢ from Phil Harrell, c/o S.W.P. Wyszowski, P.Eng., Box 3372, Station C, Ottawa 3, Ontario, Canada. 63 pages, mimeoed with multilithed cover.

This zine represents easily the most ambitious effort Phil has put forth in fandom to date, but unfortunately it falls a bit short in just about every respect. Dave Prosser's cover, for instance, would be quite good were it not for the fact that some poor perspective drawing causes the cover girl to look almost as hideous as the gruesome beast shown peering over her shoulder in the mirror.

Leadoff item (after a thoroughly undistinguished editorial) is Marion Bradley's s-f short story, "The Middle of Next Week". Marion writes well, of course, but in this story she doesn't seem to have come to grips with the time paradoxes involved, so that the ending just seems thoroughly confused. (This isn't helped a bit by an error in copying on the last page which

makes one of her explanatory sentences quite nonsensical.)

Dean Grennell has an article on how to write and edit fanzines. His advice is good, but it's the same old stuff that just about everybody's heard eleventy hundred times by now. Useful only to newcomers and maybe a few fans of longer standing who haven't yet got it through their heads that writing and editing are crafts with standards.

There are two pages of excerpts from August Derleth's diary which are interesting though ghod knows what they're doing in a fanzine. (This isn't a complaint, however.) Buck Coulson recommends Science Fantasy as the successor to Unknown. Michael W. Elm (who he?) spends too many pages arguing with Gernsback's Delusion and otherwise wasting time with platitudes about what's wrong with s-f. Thomas Dilley has a long article defending Lovecraft's more obscure stories; many of his points strike me as pretty dubious, but since I haven't read the stories in question I'd better let them pass. The issue closes with a 7-page photostencilled portfolio by Tim Dumont. It's very well re-produced (as is the whole issue, actually), and many of the drawings are quite good.

The rest of the material (particularly Betty Kujawa's article, "Fandom Equals Identity") is pretty blah.

RATING: 6

The Full Edition of THE COMPLETE E.C. CHECK-LIST. \$1.50 from Fred von Bernewitz, 12006 Remington Dr., Silver Spring, Maryland. 126 pages, mimeoed.

A complete listing of stories and artists in all the E.C. comix, from Picture Stories From The Bible and Tiny Tot Comics through Weird Science and The Vault of Horror to the "Picto-Fiction" zines. The checklist is undoubtedly about as complete and reliable as can be, and it's supplemented by sketches and biogs of the most prominent artists and an E.C. elegy by Larry Stark. There are

also original drawings by Jack Davis, Wally Wood, Al Williamson and George Evans -- the latter of which you saw in a recent HINAC.

The volume is, of course, indispensable for E.C. fans. Others won't find enough of interest here to justify paying \$1.50, but that's to be expected.

SPECIALIZED INTEREST,
no rating

ENCLAVE #3, July 1963. 25¢ from Joe Pilati, 111 S. Highland Ave., Pearl River, N.Y. 37 mimeoed pages, with lithoed cover.

That cover consists of three brush-sketches by Bob Stewart, apparently done in a bar. I don't think they're very good, and they're sploored together here in very unattractive fashion -- hardly a fair representative of the fanzine to follow.

By God, it's a pleasure to see a new fan who knows how to put together a fanzine! I could quarrel with some of Pilati's choices in material (like the Boardman article in this issue), but his taste and ability are so evident and praiseworthy in most places here that I don't feel like it. There's an interesting article here by Julian Scala on the Catholic Worker (billed as "first of a series on American radicalism"), an amusing piece by Don Thompson on the humorous copy written by Ron Goulart for the Ralston cereals, and the first column by the Coulsons on folk music records. There are a number of minor items too, but the lettercol which rounds out the issue is tightly edited and a joy to read. (And, as if to vindicate Carr's Law of of The Equality of Lettercol-Editing and Layout Ability which I formulated on-stencil last issue, Pilati's layout throughout is quite neatly done.)

I gather Pilati is still in his mid-teens, which makes the zine even more impressive as an indication of things to come (if he doesn't drift out of fandom in his late teens, as so many do).

RATING: 7

CADENZA #8, August 1963. 20¢ from Charles & Jane Wells, 200 Atlas St., Apt. #1, Durham, No. Carolina 27705. 17 pages, mimeoed.

A potpourri of editorializing, interspersed letters, and a couple faanfiction stories (both by Chas. Wells). The letters are reasonably interesting, Wells' remarks are likewise (I particularly liked his defense of the public accommodations law in Kennedy's civil rights program, though Wells is a mite emotional here), and both stories are quite disappointing -- particularly from the author of "Encounter" in an earlier CADENZA. One story, "Why Danny Pulaski Went Fafia," is one of a regrettable type of faanfiction pieces which have been showing up lately: stories in fannish settings which essentially have nothing to do with fandom. (Just like westerns set on Mars.) The only point any of these stories have is that The Real World follows us even into the half-world of fandom, and this is hardly new by now. The other story, "A Trufan's Reward," is a corny and very forced humor piece.

RATING: 6

THE BUG EYE #12, July 1963. Available for contributions, locs, trades, etc. from Rolf C. Gindorf, 5603 Wulfrath, Hans-Böckler-Str. 52, Germany. 30 pages, mimeoed.

Helmuth Klemm, the former publisher of this zine, is now in the U.S. as an exchange student; he turned over this almost-completed issue to Gindorf to finish and handle future issues.

The leadoff piece is a rather long and definitely labored humor article by Rolf G. Caesar (a penname for Gindorf?) concerning fandom and the Real World. Again, it's not a new subject, and despite a few amusing touches here Caesar doesn't manage to bring it to much life. Burkhard Blum has a piece called "How To Interpret Me" which he says is "Not an article". It certainly isn't -- in fact, it really isn't much of anything. If Blum is having trouble with people who

don't understand him, he might consider the fact that writing should communicate. (Tho in fairness I must say that I'm disappointed in Bill Donaho for taking Blum's obviously spoofing letter re the Church of the Brotherhood of the Way seriously, if he did.)

Gindorf himself follows with an article equating genius with madness (including "addiction" to hashish; fat chance) As usual with adherents of that tired old line, I refer Gindorf to Lawrence Kubie's Neurotic Distortion of the Creative Process.

The issue closes with a long and pretty interesting international lettercol -- half of which, as usual in European fanzines, is by Andy Main.

RATING: 6

JESUS BUG #9, Sept. 3, 1963. 35¢, or trades, locs, etc., from Andy Main, 333 Ramona Ave., El Cerrito, Calif. 94532. 26 pages, mimeoed.

This is another title change for the former BHISHI'LLAH and OMTAE. The contents are the familiar stuff: a long editorial by Andy telling all about what he's done since last issue and all the restaurants in which he and his friends have eaten and said funny things to each other, followed by a few outside contributions and then a very good lettercol.

The outside stuff is by Avram Davidson (funny), Peter Ober (funny, but the ending's telegraphed by Nelson's illustration), Esther Davis (a minor but neat parable-story) and Calvin W. "Max" Demmon (a biffable which is, surprisingly, quite blah).

Andy's layout and such deserves a mention: he's mastered the art of attractive and deceptively simple work...and a style of layout which somehow manages to convey a feeling of whinsey. It all adds greatly to the zine's atmosphere, and is quite pleasant.

There are some good cartoons by Nelson, too, plus one by Gary Maxdorfer which is Very Funny (and one which Isn't).

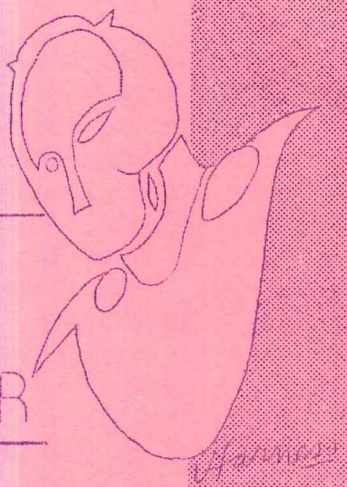
RATING: 7

MINAC VIEWS THE FILM WORLD:

Unfortunately, we really couldn't get anyone to go to the ESFA meeting and report on the National Film Board of Canada's Moskowitz spectacular. Shortly thereafter, though, I did have a fascinating exper-

LES GERBER:

MORE
GERBER



ience with another product of the avant-garde cinema, a Monday night exhibition by the New York Film-Makers' Showcase at the Gramercy Arts Theatre. Featured in this program was a film "exploring the limits of absurdity," our own Bhob Stewart's notorious "The Year the Universe Lost the Pennant." (Bhob tells us he'll be presenting the film at the Discon.) I had already seen this film last year, but I mentioned the showing to Joanne (never mind who she is; she's not interested in you) and she said she'd like to go, especially since she had met Bhob at my place a few weeks earlier and wondered what kind of film he'd made. Also on the program was one of the avant-garde film "classics," "The Blonde Cobra," which I wanted to see. So we went.

The Gramercy Arts Theatre is used for off-Broadway productions, and it isn't ideally set up for film showings. I discovered this as soon as we entered the theater, after having absurdly overpaid for our admission because it was by contribution and I didn't have the nerve to ask for enough change out of a \$5 bill. It was almost time for the second (9:15) showing, and the small theater was crowded. We wound up sitting at the back, where I had to sink quite low in my seat to see the entire screen past the very low balcony. Joanne, who is three inches taller than I am, had even more trouble. (Bhob later confessed that he had toyed with the idea of making a spectac-

ular entrance by leaping off the balcony; it was that low.) The screen was set up on a more or less bare stage; behind it could be seen all sorts of props and electrical equipment littered about. Everyone in the audience was squirming uncomfortably, as if dreading what was to come. We saw Bhob briefly, and chatted with him for a minute or two before he disappeared backstage. Just about on time the lights went out and the show started.

The first film was "Doomshow" by Ray Wisniewski, and I realized as soon as it started that I had seen the blasted thing on the same program the first time I saw "The Year the Universe Lost the Pennant." It is a fairly effective film; the sound track juxtaposes Ray Charles records with a broadcast of an air raid drill protest in City Hall Park, and the images are often striking -- particularly one of a very sweet little girl riding a bicycle into a doll and ferociously trying to crush its head. But much of the impact of the film depends on the viewer's not being quite sure of what is going on at any given moment, full understanding coming only in retrospect. I didn't get much out of it the second time.

Bhob's film came next. For once, incidentally, the advertising blurb was relatively accurate; the film does explore the limits of absurdity. It consists mostly of spliced-together film clips collected from a cutting-room floor, with a few shots of Bhob thrown in. (One classic shot shows him riding into a room on a film-can truck, sitting on top of it with his foot behind his head.) The sound track is a mixture of music, electronic sounds, narration by Bhob, and occasional other things. (One beauty: a rich, sonorous voice recites, "My name is Ozymandius, king of kings," and a Brooklyn accent replies, "Oh, a wise guy, huh? Let me see your driver's license, bud.")

The unique feature of this film is that Bhob appears, live, as part of the film. At one point, he wanders out onto the stage and stands in front of the screen, wearing a brown cardigan, with an iron cord wrapped around his neck. He laboriously removes the

cord, puts down the iron, and pulls off the cardigan. All the while, his own voice on the sound track is shouting questions at him. It never goes exactly the same from performance to performance (the first time I saw the film he missed most of his cues because he couldn't hear them) but as I gather he is supposed to answer each question (like "What?", "Where?", "Why?") with "I don't know!" When the canned Bhob has run out of questions, it asks, "Where are the answers?" "I don't know," howls the live Bhob. Then the sound track says, "Out there," and Bhob rushes shrieking up the aisle and out of the theater. It's a very effective sequence, even to the juxtaposition of live actor on film, which occurs rather inconspicuously.

At our showing it seemed to go perfectly, all the questions being answered and the timing coming out just right. Bhob's film got more applause than any of the others, and, I think, deserved its reception.

The next film was something by Ron Rice called "Senseless." It was. I can't even remember what happened in it, except that there were many well-photographed shots of things happening. I'd seen it before too, at the earlier program, and I suffered pretty badly through most of it. The soundtrack came from Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra, so I should have enjoyed at least that, but it was a mediocre performance and dubbed onto the sound track with harsh distortion in the loud passages. After the first two movements were played, the first movement started again and ran halfway. Then the film ended and the sound cut off, right in the middle of the movement. Foop.

The final film, the piece de resistance of the evening, was "The Blonde Cobra" by Bobby Fleischner and Nutty Jacobs (this is sic from the VILLAGE VOICE ad), and starring somebody named Jacky Smith, who appeared in all the scenes and narrated the entire sound track. This was another film consisting mostly of disconnected scenes, some of which were pretty funny (like Jacky Smith, dressed up at a party, slowly sitting down in what we discover to be a bathtub). Most of them were dull. The narration was chanted in a halting, childish, irritating manner, sparked with occasional isolated flashes of brilliance. "God...is...

not...dead.....He...is...just...marvelously...sick...."
"Why shave when I can't even think of a reason for living?" But most of it was pretty silly, and I again found myself wondering why these film-makers didn't bother to learn to photograph movies properly. Not only was most of the film unimaginatively photographed, but nearly all of it was either under-exposed or over-exposed. Oh well, I guess the avantgardenik writers can't spell.

The showing ended at eleven, and Bhub came out to join us. We talked for a while, as the patrons filed quickly out of the theater. Hardly anybody seemed to be arriving for the next showing, and at 11:10 there were only about half a dozen people there, including Bhub, Joanne and me. Someone who seemed to be running the showing put a huge ladder in front of the screen, climbed up it, and fiddled around with the lights. Then people started to arrive, including a friend of Bhub's who had brought with him another guy who was completely drunk. We talked perfect non sequiturs with the drunk for a few minutes, during which time the theater became about half-filled. Then I talked Bhub into joining us after he did his film again so we could all go out for beers. Joanne groaned at the thought of having to watch "Doomshow" again, but I promised to keep her amused. We told Bhub to put on a good show for us, then the lights went down and "Doomshow" started. I kept my promise. I tickled her until the film ended.

Bhub's film went all right until he came out onto the stage. He walked out, and removed his iron and his cardigan as before. Then he took off his shirt, and then his undershirt. By this time, the sound track had begun to shout questions at him (the volume was turned up much too loud) but he ignored them and began to take off his pants. I began to get worried. The Film-Makers' Showcase has been raided several times by cops who thought they were showing obscene movies. Bhub got his pants off, and stood facing the audience in nothing but jockey shorts, socks and one shoe. Then he shouted "I don't know" back at the sound track, picked up his pants and the iron, held the pants up against the screen, and began to iron them. "Where?"

shouted the sound track. "I don't know," shouted Bhob, ironing his pants. When the sound track shouted "Out there," Bhob dropped his pants and ran off down the aisle in his shorts. The audience was laughing hard, but Joanne and I were falling apart at the seams. When the film ended, the audience tore the house down, especially after the man who had climbed the ladder walked out onto the stage and began to pick up Bhob's clothing. I think Bhob, Joanne, the manager and I were the only ones who realized what had happened.

The mood was too beautiful to be broken, so we had our bheers, I played Joanne at the bowling game in the bar (I won), and we walked a mile in the rain to Bhob's house and spent a few more whacky hours before anyone could bear the thought of going to sleep. But that wasn't part of the film world.

-Les Gerber

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LETTER

C O L U M N

RON ELLIK Trust the notice about F&SF this issue of STAR-SPINKLE clears things up. Honest, I wasn't leveling a charge of plagiarism (which you ought to learn to spell if you're going to plagiarize) but merely twitting F&SF on its "discovery".

I thought the reference to Lehrer particularly amusing -- and mentioned the Evil Old Professor series to get in a dig at the cruddy Biffables which I feel are a waste of my time and money. And for gosh sake, the covers are distinctly alike -- look at them. The similarity is highly remarkable, and would be justifiably noted in any circumstances. I really doubt Emsh is copying Bok. My pleasure at seeing the pseudo-retraction in SS was tempored by the way you presented it. I certainly think that the reference to the Lehrer song (which extolled the virtues of plagiarism, and featured the refrain, "Plagiarizo, Plagiarize, Plagiarize!") was something more than "amusing," and so did Avram. However, I pretty much agree about the Biffables...-twj

ROB WILLIAMS Your comments on "Glory Road" provoked agree-

mont on my part. It was too long in the F&SF version (and the Harpers edition is to be expanded, even?) -- and, worstor, dull. I got mildly excited as I began to read the novel. The style was different than that which Heinlein usually doles out, and I thought that promise for a fairly major Heinlein work was being extended. Alas for that much! As it turned out, the opening chapters were the most interesting. As for the rest of the sociological/sexological foldorol he threw in, it was interesting enough the first time around but it's beginning to pall on me by now.

DON WOLLHEIM Who is this Les Gerber? He has a nice style for a noofan...I predict he may be going places.

Of various items, I liked your analysis of the Heinlein epic. Haven't read it, but does seem to sum up much of the attitude of his previous works. I think you have him pinned down right: a good writer resting on his oars and drifting seawards.

DAVE HULAN Many thanks for MINACs #1 & 2. I have yet to figure out why I got them -- is it because I sent you a couple of copies of LOKI say about a year ago? Or because my scintillating mailing comments in SAPS impressed you so? Or because as an ex-Director of the NSF I'm a ~~DIFF~~ (choke..)? Anyhow, they were muchly enjoyed, and I'm writing one of my rare LoCs so I'll keep on getting it. [Yes, I felt guilty about receiving copies of your zine in trade for a zine which I wasn't then publishing, so I put you -- and others, for similar reasons -- on The List. This would be a good (and inconspicuous) place, I guess, to add that beginning next issue we start Getting Tough -- if anyone who's been receiving MINAC hasn't acknowledged it by then, he'll be ruthlessly pared from The List. Maybe we can get our postage bill down again... -tw-

NORM CLARKE Thanks for sending MINAC (#2 came this afternoon);

I am highly flattered to have received, in both cases, Numbered Copy #1 -- and so is Boyd, who sent me a letter from Holland (where he is sticking some part of his body into dikes, I think) just to tell me that he, too, received Numbered Copy #1. We're both terribly flattered, you terrible flatterer, you.

Now that FLYING FROG has folded, I'm especially glad that you and Les decided to publish a biweekly fanzine. I seem to have "entered" or "Bogun to take interest in" fandom in a period of its decline: monthly fanzines were going bimonthly or worse; biweekly fanzines were going half-yearly, if at all; the Cult was going to hell in a bucket; and then there came a FAPA mailing with no LIGHTHOUSE in it. But STARSPINKLE, FLYING FROG and now MINAC are, taken all together or separately, a Good Sign, I hope. (And, although it seems that there will be no more FROGS, perhaps you'll be able to persuade Mr. Demmon, when

he arrives in New York, to contribute some Stuff to MINAC. Or, to quote Mr. Dommon, Maybe Not.)

Are all ESFA Meetings the same meeting, or does Steve Stiles just make them seem that way? It appears to me that the only good thing about those Meetings is that they provide Steve with material for his funny, nassety, Reports. If I were the ESFA, I would bar Steve Stiles from Meetings; somehow, he doesn't seem sincere in his supposed interest in Mars and other things of a Science Fictional Nature.

Gee whiz, how do these Fannish Legends get started? How come all of a sudden Les Gerber is known as "Mike" both in the wilds of Illinois (and Indiana) and in ~~1966~~ Sunny California (according to Ron Ellik)? Where did it all begin? What time is it? (I know this is from Another Scene, but wasn't the Old Town-or Hall Joko, "What time is it?" also an old Jean Linard joke, at least circa '56-'57?) But anyway, Bob "Uncle Mike" Tucker is Right -- why, I myself was gaffiated for at least six months out of the past year, and I'm sure Les won't mind if I offer a Big Gerber Prize to the first person who correctly guesses which six months they were. [It all started at the 1961 Midwestcon, when Uncle Bob mistook me for Mike Deckinger and nobody bothered to straighten him out. -lg]

Mighod, are we Canadian taxpayers paying Tax Money to support the National Film Board of Canada so that they can make movies starring Sam Moskowitz? Why, I think I'll become a Communist and advocate overthrowing the Government by Force (at present, only the United States is allowed to overthrow a Canadian Government by Force).

PAUL WILLIAMS All right, I'll bite: why, Terry, did your copy of HYPHEN cost you \$1784.66?

MADELEINE WILLIS MINAC: The East Coast's answer to THE FLYING FROG -- is this an example of the art of reporting? This has been a MINAC letter of comment.

Walter is very cross today. He just heard from Aer Lingus that our suitcase never arrived at Idlewild and has tron off two letters to Greyhound during the lunch hour. Let me put you in the picture.

The house next door, belonging to a dentist who emigrated temporarily to South Africa, has been let furnished to a varied lot of tenants, of whom the last provided the most variety. Mrs. McNulty was her name and she ran a convalescent home for old people. She had a lot of callers, including ambulance men and undertakers. She got into financial difficulties and passed a dud cheque, for which, among other kinds of fraud, she went to jail. A policeman called here "to see whether we could help them in their enquiries." It seems that Mrs. McNulty had disposed of some of the dentist's furniture and one of the questions the policeman asked me was whether Mrs. McNulty had had many men

callers. On repeating the gist of this to Walter I was struck with a bizarre idea, but I mentally shrugged it off. A couple of days later I was speaking to a neighbor and she told me of seeing the police carrying out a raid next door and taking away five young women! Maybe it's just as well John Berry isn't visiting us any more or the fanzines would be inundated with a stream of factual articles about how he got himself smuggled into the house in a coffin, jumped out twanging his braces, twirling up the end of his moustacho, and crying "Suffering catfish!" as he hurls himself from the top of a wardrobe onto a couch containing five damsels, whom he wished to fingerprint in the furtherance of tracking down a now fan who was writing articles about expansive sex. Well, to make a long story short, the agent called here recently with some of our mail which had been delivered to the vacant house and had lain there for five or six weeks. There was a letter from Greyhound telling us that our blue suitcase had been found and was being sent to us via Idlewild and Shannon. Our first excitement was tempered by the realisation that we should already have received the suitcase. We enquired of Shannon and Idlewild and they never received it. It must still be in New York.

WILSON TUCKER Dear Sir:

Are you the new editor of THE MAGAZINE
OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION?

Are you the curmudgeon who rejected my novelette?

I trust you have \$35,000 handy?

(signed)

Outraged Author

No to all three, but would you care to shoot for \$75,000? -W

FRANK WILIMCZYK I don't know if Redd Boggs' question about cash registers ringing is serious or not, but it reminds me of a sad little story. The reason for a cash register ringing is so that a floor walker knows that when a clerk takes money for a purchase, it is put into the register, and not the clerk's pocket. And that he's rung up the purchase price, which is recorded on the machine. That's theoretical, of course -- if there's nobody around who can see what's being rung up, the clerk can either ring up No Sale or, safer in case a floor walker does sneak up, make it a smaller amount, and pocket the difference. A girl I once knew worked for a time, when she was younger and innocenter (and therefore less scrupulous) for Willmark's, the Protective Agency. She was sort of a detective, you might say, hitting New England stores, making purchases from clerks who were suspected of robbing the till. Since she was an out-of-towner, the clerks didn't know she was checking on them, and when

they'd ring up the wrong amount, she'd quietly put the finger on them. Eventually she got pretty sick of the whole business, and one day in some tiny Maine town, after a pretty teenager had clumsily rung up No Salo, she gave up. "I'm from Willmark's," she said to the girl, who almost fainted. My friend walked out of the store without reporting the clerk, came back to New York and gave up the whole thing. That sort of thing is really not for essentially decent people to get involved with.

Your mentioning of Zipcodes in #2 and Lee Hoffman's echo in #3, have ameliorated my resentment at having another number attached to me. Eventually I remembered that one Christmas I worked at the GPO in Manhattan, back when I was going to school, and what I did for about eleven hours a day (and night) was slot mail. About all I got out of it was sore feet, a few dollars, and the fact that there is a place in Penna. called Balla Cynwyd, and that zone numbers in the 50's are the Bronx. I don't care so much about the convenience to me -- or the inconvenience of another number to remember: I have the greatest sympathy for anyone who's stuck with slotting mail and anything that makes his job easier is okay with me. [If you'd stayed beyond Christmas you'd have hit Scheme Studios -- which are not Machiavellian plots for the overthrow of the PO, but ways of learning (on incoming mail) what zone every address is in (in order to sort mail which isn't zoned), or (on outgoing mail) how to route mail for the many many obscure towns and villages of each state -- and these, even more than the work itself, discouraged me. One is expected to learn a scheme a year, every year, in your own time, and the first scheme (the local city) one begins immediately upon one's appointment as Temporary Clerk. Hopefully, Zipcodes will eliminate a lot of this, and obviate many of the jobs.-tw]

I, too, ran into one of those catalytic kids -- a little girl named Mina, who was about 4 at the time. She "visited" with just about everyone in her building, but most of the time was in my place. Man, she was hard to get rid of. Her father played trumpet at Nick's then (he's at Eddie Condon's now) [The site of Towner Hall was right across the street from Nick's.], and didn't get home until about three in the morning, and liked to have his family there to greet him when he was through work. I'm not an authority on 4-year-olds, but somehow I think they ought to go to bed by 10 or 11.

That bit of Terry's, commenting on the Dirty Pro business at cons reminds me of a somewhat different angle to the thing. One SF pro told me he was kind of embarrassed by the reverence in which he was held by many fans, and couldn't get used to being called "Mr." He's a pretty shy fellow himself, and wanted to be Jes' Plain Folks, but found it difficult to do so.

Maybe Ron Ellik's putting you on, but I'm not: what is THE FLYING FROG? [Apparently the FROG had a much smaller circulation than I'd imagined, but now that it has folded, I guess

I can spill the dirt. THE FLY-
ING FROG was a four-page, week-
ly fanzine published for thir-
teen issues by Andy Main bem &
Calvin W. "Akm" Demmon, and of-
ten featured Samples of Andy's
Pretty Red Floor, or jelly stains
or even (sometimes) Items of In-
terest. It was actually one
long shaggy Biffable, since An-
dy's writing style sort of grew
roots into Demmon's. But it
was (above all) (and sometimes
"not much else") a Fun Zine, and
we shall miss it -- those few
of us who apparently received
it. The zine folded when the
coeditors separated, Mr. Demmon
to Travel East. To judge by our
receipt of THE JESUS BUG (re-
viewed by Terry Carr herein),
Andy's fanac hasn't been mater-
ially damaged by the fact.-tw,

THANKS ALSO to Dick & Pat Lupoff,
for a good batch of
stamps and a letter to each of
us; and to George Scithors, for
taking time a week before the
Con to drop us a line of apprec-
iation.

NEXT ISSUE: We will probably
actually print the
final instalment of Steve Stiles'
ESFA Meeting Report -- because
he's rewriting it for us. Also,
in addition to the usual good-
ies, Paul Williams on the recent
Solar Eclipse, or something like
that. Next issue will also be
on our regular letter-size pap-
er.

+++++

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