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THE FANZINE THAT'S BEEN REALLY SICK



STOP THE PRESSES!
TUCKER NEWSFLASH:

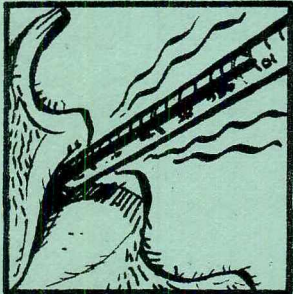
Bob Tucker writes: "Claude Degler is alive and well (?) and living in or near Indianapolis."

"I was attending 'InConjunction' there a couple of weeks ago, when a tall and very thin half-stranger stopped me in the hotel lobby and called me by name. He asked me if I recognized him. I recognized his voice immediately, and it was Claude. He had seen my name on the convention advertising and came down to meet me.

"We talked for perhaps ten minutes and then parted, not to see each other again. I carefully did not give him my address, nor did he mention his but his remarks led me to believe he was living and working nearby in some Indianapolis suburb. He sounded sane and rational, his brown eyes sparkled with an inner fire, and it was Claude all right. The Cosmic Circle was never mentioned.

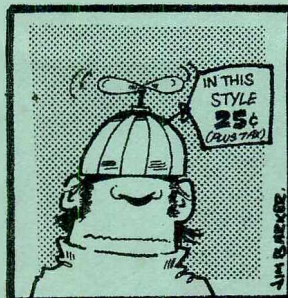
"This news will plunge all fandom into war."

Well, yes, Bob, but did you say anything to him about John Thiel? --tw



LATENESS SHOCK: Well, there you are -- we missed the month of July completely, didn't we? Apologies, but extreme ill-health prevailed. Yours undersigned returned from the Westercon to find himself feverish, a state which quickly led to a state in which he was numb -- but simultaneously itchy -- from his waist to his toes, victim of a virus which attacks the nervous system. Unpleasant, to say the least. But a great many books were read, so it wasn't a total loss.

It's not over yet (either I'm getting better very slowly or I'm becoming used to it), and there is no known cure, only the hope of remission -- but PONG must go on. This is a double issue (just like #6&7!), and we may crank out the next one in less than two weeks, if we can, just to do a little more catching up, because PONG lives, and make no mistake about that! --tw



A LETTER FROM CHUQUE: Chuck Harris writes: "First, let's get the definitions over. According to my dictionary, 'pong' simply means 'stink.' It's a sort of euphemism like 'pee,' 'bum,' 'hampton,' or 'cunnilingus.' It's certainly nothing that would have any effect, subconscious or otherwise, on a poll evaluation.

"I'm surprised that it wasn't better known Stateside, although I do realise that there are still enormous differences in the vernacular. It's a long time ago, but I still remember the dire warnings that Walter got from Ermengarde Fiske -- never, never, never refer to a gentleman chicken as anything else except a rooster. Or else. And not

excepting rooster au vin.

"Not that this saved him. Arfer once had a lovely story of Walt in Chicago....

"Checking into the hotel he had filled in the usual form at the reception desk and, in the nationality box had written 'Irish.' Realizing that this wouldn't tally with his British passport, he asked the comely young lady behind the desk if she had a rubber.

"I beg your pardon, sir?"

"A rubber," says Himself -- vague rubbing gestures with the right hand.

"One moment, sir," says the bright pink receptionist, and from a little door behind

her came the biggest house dick in the world -- a cross between Nicely Nicely Jones and Charles Atlas.

"What's the problem, bud?"

"No problem," says Walt. "I've made a mistake in the form and want to...."

"Jesus," said the cop as comprehension dawned, "all he wants is an eraser, baby."

"Personally, I don't believe a word of it . . . but after a couple of pints Arfer tells a lovely story.

"More seriously, about the mention of fan editor motivation. Like you, we mailed around 250 '-'s but really aimed at only 20 or 30. Looking back, I sometimes wonder if even those mattered. Could there be a sort of compulsion to publish similar to the way some authors have a compulsion to write? Could we get all erudite and quote Dylan Thomas in support?

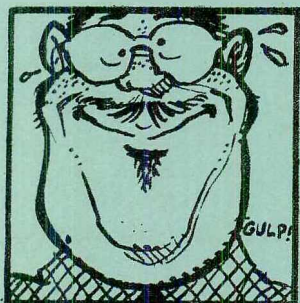
"...I wrote for the lovers,

Their arms wrapped round the grief of the ages,

Who pay no praise or wages

Or heed my troubled art."

"I think it's the editor of almost any fmz who gets the most pleasure out of it. This is his creation -- and all proud and protective like the 25-year-old Harris, he proclaims, 'this is our fanzine, not yours, and we publish what we like.' And I don't think you ever quite get over it. I think it was Tucker -- way back in the Paleozoic -- who said that he still kept a file of LeZ in his room and still re-read them all with pleasure. WARHOON 28 is parked on top of the '-' file on my bedside table and I still haven't tired of them."



WEDDING BELLS: Saturday, June 27th, was an exciting day in Fabulous Falls Church Fandom, for that was the day my worthy coeditor and the yet-more-worthy Lynn Collier became husband and wife in the eyes of both God and the State (well, Dominion) of Virginia. (Did you know that Virginia is not actually a state, but is in fact a dominion? I believe only those of us who had the privilege of growing up in Virginia and attending its schools are actually aware of this little-known and less-cared-about fact...but I digress....)

The actual ceremony, attended by some forty people, including both families, their friends, and our friends, took place in my tree-shaded front yard in a patch of sunlight between a maple tree and a dogwood. (Originally we'd planned on using the more park-like back yard, which is considerably larger and enclosed on three sides by woods, but my self-powered lawn-mower chose the middle of June to break down, and the local repair shop couldn't guarantee it would be ready in less than a month, so I borrowed a push-it-yourself cheapo-mower and was much-daunted by the notion of mowing several acres with it in more than 90 degrees of humid heat. Thus, I greeted Dan's suggestion that we use the front yard -- much smaller -- with considerable relief.)

The weather broke the day before and the wedding was distinguished by one of the nicest days (mid-70's, dry) possible. Michael Dobson performed the ceremony while I stood by with The Ring (well, one of the two rings, actually; it was a double-ring ceremony). I found myself quite sentimentally affected (more so than at either of my own two weddings); Lynn was glowingly lovely and Dan grinned fatuously throughout (no fool he!).

The ceremony took place at about 2:15 in the afternoon (it was scheduled for 2:00, but we waited fifteen minutes for the tardy Lou Stathis to arrive; Lou blew his deadline -- no surprise to me, his ex-editor -- and showed up just afterwards) and immediately following it we rapidly went through a case of champagne (for which Lou was in time).

At about 4:00 that afternoon we all reconvened for the reception/party at the Nally Compound in nearby McLean, where over a hundred people were in attendance, with two live rock bands, an elaborate wedding cake (topped with statuettes of Popeye and Olive Oyl), an excellent champagne punch, and many fine edibles (thanks to Edie Nally). The police came by to politely shut off the live music at 11:00, and things finally wound down around midnight. My coeditor and his wife were surrounded with gifts and well-wishes and looked happily dazed. One can only hope it never wears off. --tw

SACRAMENTO IN JULY
A WESTERCON REPORT
by Wally "The
Snake" Mind

The 1981 Westercon came and went recently, and so did I. It was this nightcrawler's first trip to the West Coast, and the editors of this snappy little fmz have instructed me to give you readers a worm's-eye view of the festivities. (Now of



course your lowly reporter is not actually a worm. I am a snake. I don't know why the editors, among others, refuse to believe this simple fact because it is self-evident that my intelligence far exceeds that of any invertibrate, no matter what my appearance may be. I am not a worm! I am a snake! And leave the quotemarks off "snake," please.)*

Secreted in the cleavage of PONG's newest wife, I travelled by air from coast to coast with only a brief stopover in the Windy City just long enough for Dan to spill a full Bloody Mary all over the O'Hare Airport Cocktail Lounge. "It's okay," he said, his words reaching me distinctly through the thin fabric of Lynn's blouse, "it's the worst Bloody Mary I've ever almost had."

Upon arrival at San Francisco's airport this snake was struck by its similarity to every other airport I'd ever seen. Ted remarked, "You know, the last time I was in this airport, two years ago, I ran into Paul Krassner. He borrowed a dime from me to make a phone call." But we didn't see him again and I guess Ted'll never get that dime back.

Grant Canfield met our party, helped us collect the humanoid baggage and then gave us a delightful 15-minute tour of the orange level parking garage as we attempted to find the spot where he'd left his car.

Once underway in the Canfield conveyance, the happy party drove up and into the City of St. Francis and the fabled 28 Atalaya Terrace. Your humble reporter was more than pleased to be released from confinement (pleasant though Lynn was to nestle between, I like to get out and around as much as the next snake) for the freedom of Casa Canfield. But once I was out on my own I made a discovery: this Canfield guy, like most artists, doesn't own a dustmop, but he does have two cats. I found myself tussling with dustballs under the furniture that made my normal sanctuary from thoughtless feet pretty hairy. And while I have nothing against felines per se, Grant's cat Rosco was a problem for a journalist of my size. You see, she (despite her name she's a female feline) drools constantly. I found this out the next morning while sunbathing. At first I thought a cloud was passing over or maybe San Francisco's famous fog was coming in early, but when I looked up I was confronted by a looming kitty, upon whose hairless chin hung half a pint of spittle. My reactions were razor-sharp as I executed a maneuver designed to roll my body out from under -- but I'd ignored the fact that I was freshly oiled with Ban de Soleil (for the perfect tan) and I nearly drowned. It was at that moment that I knew I had to choose between the safety of Lynn's blouse and the possibility of drowning in kitty-drool. I knew immediately that I'd prefer tit for 'tat any day.

The drive to Sacramento was eventful in reinforcing my opinion that humans -- no matter how cool they try to be -- are total klutzes. Take this Canfield fella, for instance: by all outward appearances he is a cute (too cute, if you ask me) cartoonist who exudes charm and control. The fact that he was winner of the "nicest legs" category at the masquerade (he came as a white handkerchief) doesn't negate the fact that he cannot keep the windows where they belong in his automobile. Try as he would, he could not keep the rear window of his conveyance from popping out in traffic, causing us to make our journey to and from Sacramento with the top down. In the increasingly hot sun. I was almost a Delmonico fried snake.

The Red Lion Inn was a superb place for a snake to attend a convention. It was multi-winged, large, and confusing -- much like all the dragons that went around the convention perched on the shoulders of the nurdier fans -- but was easily mastered with a little study and quantities of white powder for the nose. The fact that none of the connected buildings were over three storeys tall made for less tension when party-hopping, as there was no need for elevators (and few to be found, anyway).

Though this reporter spent most of the convention out by the pool (I found a choice

*Wally "The Snake" Mind is in fact an earthworm. --eds

spot under some shrubbery -- fresh peatmoss and an exciting view of the pool barmaid) with Grant Canfield (he too was enjoying the view) I did manage to attend several of the SMOF-type parties that went on during the weekend. At these parties there was much talk about the "drug du jour" and the fact that the con hotel seemed to be infested with bugs:

"Hey," a famous science fiction writer would say, "what's that by the ashtray?"

"Don't worry," someone else would inevitably respond, "it's only a roach."

Sometimes someone would hand something to someone else and say, "I think it's a roach." Obviously these stfnal types are keenly into entomology (or do I mean etymology?).

People seemed to be enjoying themselves at the convention, but every so often they'd put their heads together for the ritual gripe-session, directed mostly at the con committee. Bill Rotsler said, "To every con I say, 'Put me on any panel you think I might be useful for, but not before noon.' I'm no fool -- I didn't fall off the Airport Bus yesterday. I know what cons are for. So what happened? They violated my edict in every case but one!" And Ted pointed out that they had him down for a panel on space technology at 9:30 Sunday morning -- "But I made them take me off." Grant was exercised because they assigned him to certain events without even telling him about it, "And I'm the fucking Fan Guest of Honor!" All three of them were informed late Friday night that they had to judge the Art Show at 9:00 the next morning. General opinion seemed to be that the con committee, inexperienced at this sort of thing, was going through the motions of putting on a con without any idea of what was actually required and depending upon the program participants to keep the trains on time. But, as Ted remarked from time to time, they did have a large cache of Pepsis available if you knew where to look behind the registration table....

The highlight of Saturday's parties was an informal BNF giggle-fest held in Sandy Cohen's room. This nightcrawler suspects the manic frivolity had something to do with the public-address system at the con, since I heard a discussion of the number of "mikes" available. I'm not sure what they had in mind, because some of them wanted 250 mikes, while others settled for 125. Frankly, I'm not sure what the real difference was, because, after all, how many mikes can one person speak into at one time? But then, part of the time this discussion was going on I was distracted. I'd heard Sherry Gottlieb had a snake of her own named Wrinklesnakeskin, and I thought she'd be neat to talk to, but she kept laughing at me and saying, "You're not a snake, Wally. I know snakes when I see them!" Well, I tried to argue with her -- I even pointed out how intelligent my argument was, which should have proved my point -- but she just laughed at me and told me I was being silly.

By the time I was noticing things again it seemed like half the people in the room were staring intently at the wallpaper and saying things like, "Oh, wow, this is really visual!" which I suppose it was, since they were looking at it. It just looked like wallpaper to me, though. Then someone named Angela Moon Feldperson came in and started indulging in incredibly sadistic pleasures upon the backs of Grant and Liz Lynn. She started on Grant, who sat there with beads of sweat breaking out on his face while saying that he didn't feel a thing. Angela said she was simply administering pressure-point therapy to spastic muscles, but it sure looked to me like she was submerging her thumb, her whole hand, and then most of her elbow in Grant's back. And I saw her thrust most of her hand into Liz's neck. Now that had to hurt, and from the look of the contorted faces watching all this, it was painful even to watch.

Somewhere in the middle of all this, Terry and Carol Carr, who had told everyone they weren't coming ("Sacramento in July? Don't be silly!"), walked into the party. As it happened, Carol was carrying a drink, something with gin in it, and when she finished it a lime remained in the glass.

Ted, who was sitting next to Carol, looked at her glass and said, "Is that a lime you have there?"

"Sure," Carol said. "You want it?" And she fished it out and gave it to him.

He turned it over a few times in his hands, looking at it. "That sure is a big lime," he said. Actually it was, too -- maybe half a whole lime -- but I don't know why everyone started laughing when he said that. Then he put it to his mouth and bit into it.

"Wow," he said. "This is a powerful lime!" Everybody broke up again. "Good, though," he said through pursed lips. By now everyone was howling with laughter, tears running down their faces. "I'm glad you're enjoying it, Ted," Carol said, and people were hysterical. (I asked Sherry if she understood what was going on and she stopped laughing

long enough to say, "I'll tell you later, Wally," but she never got around to it.) People watched Ted eat the entire lime, except for the rind which he handed back to Carol, saying, "You can have it back now -- it's all used up for me," and they all laughed and laughed, so it must have been pretty funny even if I didn't get it.

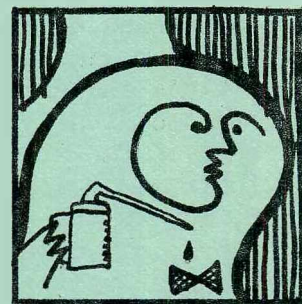
Later on that night there was a celebration held to celebrate the first anniversary of Dick Lupoff's nasal surgery, and event which Mr. Lupoff enjoyed so much that he kept right on celebrating for the rest of the convention. Boy, these people do know how to enjoy themselves.

Sunday afternoon, while all the con attendees were lining up in the lobby to check out, C.J. Cherryh (pro GoH) and Grant (fan GoH) gave their Guest of Honor speeches -- just one more example of the care and advance thought which the con committee put into this year's Westercon. Some of us attended anyway, and got to hear Grant give a slightly peevish speech about dorks, boobs, and English authors with "bad" wrists ("No, I won't give you an autograph -- I've an injured wrist. But you can supply a bed-companion for tonight, and we'll see what I can do...."). It was a marvelously snobbish speech, subtly punctuated with "um"s, "ahh"s, and that perennial classic, the Pause For Dramatic Effect. It seemed to this reporter that Mr. Canfield exhibited distinct signs of being under sedation (I didn't even know he'd been sick), but he managed to finish his speech with considerable wit. After witnessing Canfield's talk one can only speculate about when he will be asked to be a fan GoH again -- surely by the end of the century, I would think.

Ms. Cherryh's speech was very good too, or so I was told. I was busy at the bottom of a Bloody Mary and missed most of it. Then, suddenly, it was all over. Next year's Westercon is to be held in Phoenix, and as we left I heard someone saying, "Phoenix? In July?!" --w"ts"m

BERGERON SQUEEKS
Richard Bergeron

The question of facsimile editions goes beyond the mere fact of being a facsimile of a famous fanzine. Sure, Bob Lichtman reproduced the first issue of SPACEWARP (for SAPS, I believe) and Victoria Vayne reran an old LE ZOMBIE. But so what? Neither exercises gave us a look at those fanzines at their peak or told us anything about what made them great publications -- they might as well have reproduced any other available crudzine they had at hand. Now if Victoria had copied the Tucker/Bloch issue of LeZ which was published by Dean Grennell or if Bob had reprinted the Insurgent WARP we would have had something that would have told the present generation of fans a lot about what a great fanzine is...and this also tells us something about the purpose and point of a facsimile edition. Which I think Malcolm Edwards misses in his comments on the idea in PONG 15 when he suggests that selections of material from the best issues of the best fanzines might be preferable to selecting entire issues. (By the way, my projected idea of The Top Ten wasn't to reprint the entire run of ten fanzines -- that would be a five-foot shelf of volumes in itself -- but was to be a selection of one issue of each bound into a volume with introductions written explaining the importance of each.) The idea of reproducing a complete issue was for the example of it -- the way a particular editor achieved an identity and personality through the form of the fanzine. Selections of articles would lose all of that and there would be no reason to suppose, say, that any article hadn't come out of VOID instead of QUANDRY. What an editor did and how they did it was the idea behind The Top Ten: with partial selections we're back to square one with another editor and what we end up with is a FANHISTORICA or a BY BRITISH where the peculiarities of the editor doing the selecting distorts the source material. For instance, it's inconceivable that the perhaps most significant, influential, and flamboyant British fan of the 70's is completely omitted from representation in BY BRITISH: I refer to Greg Pickersgill, of course, who in addition was the Lord High Panjandrum of the New Fannish Criticism and who I (and probably you, too) would like to know a lot more about. That's the flaw of a selection system: it ends up reflecting the selector -- not the period -- unless a conscious effort is made to project a specific panorama and be deliberately inclusive as I did in the WASH. (Did you think I thought those little postscripts in the Harp and other asides particularly worthy of reprinting? They weren't, really, but they were part of the gestalt and that was the important thing being conveyed.) Just as how Terry Carr handled the letter column in INNUENDO, or Lee's



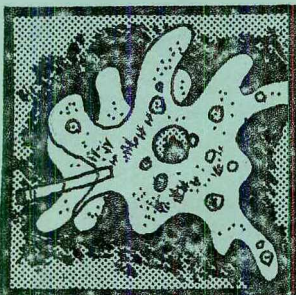
editorial department in an issue of QUANDRY, or how GRUE mirrored the whimsey and panache of Dean Grennell only means something in the context of the reproduction of a whole issue -- its complete gestalt. The best issue should be selected in each case, of course, but this should be the easy part and was, I thought, a Basic Book important to a reference library of fandom.

I was, in addition, talking about facsimile editions of the entire run of two fanzines in my piece in PONG #10: HYPHEN and SKYHOOK. The limitation was very deliberate: not just because I think they were the best of the humorous and serious fanzines but because the one was serious about its humor and the other was witty about its seriousness. HYPHEN shows very little evolution: it was the end result of SLANT, but it represents about 1,000 pages of material selected by a fan with near-perfect taste. Boggs' taste was virtually flawless also, and in the bargain SKYHOOK showed the development of a creative viewpoint with a superb editorial flair: of course that particular wheel every faneditor has to reinvent or end up looking like the best we've seen (but that's part of the fun and challenge of being an editor). The lesson in a SKYHOOK is that a filler is just as important in the total context as the editorial department and the subjects of that department must transcend letter column filler and project a personality and purpose that exemplifies the whole. This is something all the best fanzines do: from PONG, to APHORETTA, to FANDANGO, to BURBLINGS -- and don't think those last two would be omitted from a selection for The Top Ten either. There are important points about HYPHEN and SKYHOOK that make them my top choices for a complete reprint of the entire run. Other publications might be able to stand it, too, like LIGHTHOUSE (surely a very strong fanzine), the Carr/Ellick FANAC (for a fascinating look at fannish news and a treasure trove if ever), SLANT...and very few others. Edwards is correct that even the best fanzines include lumps of material of little interest: which is why I would exclude WRHN and QUANDRY. Fanzines like these last two didn't know what they were about for too large a portion of their run, though they contained some fine material and had important impact.

As for editing an "anthology cum history of Faanish Fandom" as suggested by Lichtman, and Dan's thought that I might be able to pull it off: well, that brings to mind another project called Ten Pillars of Fanac which was to have been a selection of the ten best pieces of fan writing I'd ever seen -- except for something by Willis, I suppose, since all his major work is presently in print; though how one could omit The Enchanted Duplicator, surely the top of the Pillar, is a dilemma. The book could actually be ten major authors, of course, to make it a bit larger, or it could be Lichtman's idea of a panorama of fannish writing extending from T. Bruce Yerke to David Langford. I wouldn't mind editing and art directing this last if someone ~~was foolish enough~~ would like to produce it. Perhaps in the size and scope I would envision it, it might do well in the library market (as bro Litchman suggests) and actually make money -- in which case royalties would be paid to the authors. The library market was deliberately avoided with the WASH because I want it in print for the future use of Trufandom for years to come -- that's sercon as hell, isn't it? The fannish thing to do would be to make a buck on it! I assure you there's no money to be made in the Trufannish publishing racket, right Siolari? I would like to do that anthology of great fan writing but with fandom as its only customer it would certainly require an angel looking for a tax loss. I would insist on total editorial control, however -- both artistic and literary. Anyone who has ideas they want to impose, outside of financing, need not apply -- and they'll need someone to type the whole thing. Any takers? (I've thought of a title for it: Fandom!) --rb

seeded shoulders

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FIRST CLASS MAIL