

2962 Santa Ana Street

South Gate, California 90280

USA

August 4th, 1978

Dear Leigh:

Received Rataplan 19 a few weeks ago, for which the following is ment as thanks, small though it be by comparison (all my own work, tho.) It seems odd, but I have recieved three or four fanzines in the last month, all apologising for delays of up to two years. Little realizing that I have been so FAFIA, that I hadn't missed them. -- Oh, I knew they weren't coming in, but I have been so out of touch due to ill health of my mother and my self, that I wasn't aware that these fanzines were not appearing.. I thought that the editors had merely wised up and dropped me off the mailing list.. While you editors out there, floundering around in your own GAFIA, hadn't noticed that I wasn't writing LoC's to anyone.. == Well, hardly anyone. I have been trying to keep up a little minac, just to keep in touch, and so that I would get a few zines, and learn what was going on in fandom.. - There is a slack spell just now in some of our troubles, and I am trying to catch up on some of you good folks.. The trouble is, you will probably all go GAFIA again for two years, and my letter as an investment in future fan activity, will never be noted by anyone but your own tired eyes.. -- And, while LoC's are always ment as thanks for past favors, there is always the hope of influencing future ones as well.. Well, that is the risk of being a fan.

Over all view is a very neat, and easy to read issue. Almost looks like a copy of Warhoon, though you have art rather than graphics.. Your non-house artist is mildly shocking, for a family fanzine.. You also expand on the legend of Bob Tucker.. In my opinion Bob is enough of a legend in his own time, already, and if his friends don't start cooling it, the old man will burst, trying to live up to it. Admittedly, that might be a enjoyable way to go, but think what the rest of us would be missing. == One criticism of your format-- I wish you would draw a little stronger line between different pieces and authors.. If one carefully reads the zine from front to back, there isn't too much trouble, but who has the time to do that? -- Actually, I find it easier to read and comment on fanzines half the size of this issue, but as you had several items that ran on to great length, it would have been hard to have held it down without ending up with only a couple items in this issue.

There is not much in your editorial to sling a comment hook into-- other than being an old non-dancer, and an advavend avoider of all ball games, I can't imagine were I would have gone, at one of your Brunswick parties. I have seen fans dancing, and what ever their skill at other things, the vast majority seem to dance the way I spell.. Though, at the last Westercon (July 28) they had a program of Regency Dancing, with 50-60 people involved--some in costume of the times.. It is a sub fandom that boggles the mind.

Your issue is made up mainly of convention trip reports, which by me is just fine. With limited time I'm mainly interested in keeping up with fandom old and fandom new, and this sort of fair is far more interesting to me than book reviews and discussions about the depressing new writers that I haven't read, or the optimistic old writers who's works I've forgotten. == They also caused me to pull out my nearest atlas (in all seriousness, as a cartophile, I have over a dozen, but the handiest one is rather small and limited,) to check the relationship of places in your far off and exotic land.. I couldn't quite remember the relationship of Melbourne to Brisbane. A fact I feel rather embarrassed about, as I read maps a lot.... all I can off in excuse is that you haven't made many wars in your area, so it's overlook in history. (Not that I haven't read several articles on Australian history-- it's just I forget some.) I didn't really try to look up Bushill, but there is a guess down the

088 The report on the B-Con is very good.. Most of it has the right ring to it, and just funny enough. I suppose there are in-group jokes that I miss, but for all of that it is very good. I don't understand what a unicorn was supposed to be doing there, but that is more likely my fault than his. - If I could write fiction, this is the sort I'd want to try..

John Bangsund's piece is everything you say it is. It is good on two levels.--to state what must be obvious to everyone.. It is good and even entertaining writing, either in the light or serious parts. Better than average fanzine fair for sure, but not unheard of. What is really exceptional is the way that it is put together.. How a series of seemingly unrelated items are caused to flow smoothly from one point to the next, building to a very serious and thought provoking ending.. There are many fan writers who have flashes of writing brilliance, but few are the real craftsman that John proves to be. And, when I notice, it has to be really outstanding.. = I'm a little puzzled by his reference to the red-back-spider, which he says is the same as our black widow. It is perfectly natural for us to have different names for different things, but --but, why call something a 'red-back' when it has a red hourglass mark on the stomic? -- Now, if I had the wit of a Glikesohn or a Shaw, I might suggest it was because everything is upside down where you are, and you don't know your hats from your boots (to put it in G' rated language)-- but I'm not given to ~~such~~ crude ethnic humor, so I will place it as a serious request for scientific enlightenment. --We do have black widows in our wood shed and other dark corners, but hardly ever in the house.. All bugs in the house get stamped on, excepting ladybugs, which are carefully gathered up and returned to the garden.. Out side we do kill anything that looks like a black widow, but regular garden spiders are usually left alone. = John's point about how we can become upset over the death of one person, but feel little in the death of many, is a counter point to a letter in a local paper recently.. A Cambodian, living among us, asked more in puzzlement than anger, how so much interest and energy could be devoted to the trial of two Russian jews, when 20,000 of his people were dying of starvation and persacution.. A very good question, and one few would find easy to answer.. John's reason are as good as any: - Thanksto good news paper F.R., the jews were 'people we know about' and thus their lives had meaning and reality.. The 20,000 Cambodians were not even faceless beings.. they were just numbers.. -- The truth is though that we can not "feel" for all our bothers, no matter how we might wish to, or we would be hopelessly paralyzed. A Doctor sees death all the time, but has to go on. To brood on it would lead to insanity... To think serially about our personal troubles and future is bad enough. "To be, or not to be...." is more than a question, and if given any real though, many would decide life isn't worth the trouble. There have been many times when I would have been relieved not to have to face another day.

I'm not sure what Barbour's piece is doing in a fanzine, other than you wanted it.. Popular music like modern SP, only seems to get depressingly worse.. I never heard of this group, and while they sound better than rockers or punk rock, I don't think I'll look for them. --I can't recall knowingly haveing listened to the Rolling Stones, though I suppose I have..but it all sounds like noise to me.. - Read a review in Stereo Review panning the latest Rolling Stones album.. saying that it attacked everything, and was disrespectfull not only to country, women, love, but even the Stones.. They thought the end was in sight.. = The magazine also reported on the resentment and apprehension of some rock groups at the growth of disco music, which is really a return to dance music.. Just as their style replaced others, now they are being replacd (or, starting to be...no one can say the trend will go on..) --The trouble with rock is, among other things like being to loud, is that you can't humm it. My current preference for music is for quiet, soothing stuff--either very cool jaz the Impressionist of the classics like Bevel and Debussy--or clasical gatar or flut. "A Favon for a Dead Princes" is about one of the most restfull pieces of music I think of. - I once liked the more dramatic of clasical ballet, marches and suit

Aug. 14th

Delay, delay, that has been the way things have been going for years. No wonder nothing gets done. (Beside the fact I'm slow when I do anything.) This time it was a five day visit by my sister, that cut into the middle of the letter, and broke any chain of thought I had going.. I'll just have to start off some where, and hope it flows again. --That is one mild feeling I have against fanzine editors who cut LOC's up according to subject matter...thus making mini-articles, but leaving one writers letter struen over several pages.. I feel it brakes up the feel of the personality involved..

An article on a 1,000 Fannish words would be very interesting--and about when the Fancycyclopedias are, though I don't think they cover that many words.. -- Ofcourse there aren't that many words native only to fandom.. After you get past 'fannac', 'actifan', 'erifannac', 'conflu' and a few others, that fit only our field, you run into things like 'nimeo', which is useable in other fields, but has special meaning to many fans...-- The article might trace how fan words started, and how they have grown and changed.. I've noted that nearly all fan words or slang are newly created. Mostly from contraction of other words it is true, but not the degenerate practice of using existing words to mean something new. If I had no objections to homosexuals, I would for their commondearing the word "gay", and giving it a new meaning.. What will it due to the Gay 90's?? == Mike might be a good man to be Sr. Editor of a new Fancy III. It is more than a one man job now, but I would think it would have real commercial possibilities now.. With all the books tracing the history of SF, one that deals so well with fandom might find a wide demand--goodness knows, sales to fandom alone might be bigger than most hard covers get.

That is a very interesting air boat on page 18.. It is obviously not intended for flying, but high speeds over shallow waters...and diesel powered.. I thought for a while those might be jet intakes at the front of the tail booms, but decided that was unlikely.. That superstructure could never take jet speeds.. But I don't understand the wing-tips...

((In a 1945))
to you, I must confess that while enjoying the TR by Harding, I've been so out of touch that I don't know much about him, or why anyone would want to set up a trip fund for him. It is rather hard, for some one who was as active as I was in fandom, to find one self this far out of things.. -- While the report was pretty good --a little too much on food and not enough on reaction to people met -- there was a sort of feeling of dark brooding about it. I was not surprised to read later that Harding had been the past center of controversy.. He came across as been sort of like couple American writers I've known.. Charming fellows and very good company when they are in the mood, but touchy and moody---to an extent greater than the average touchy and black moody fan. They all seem to talk about writing great stories and novels, but you usually find them doing something else, and not living very professional lives.. They are always going on about the beauty of nature and how important friendship is, but usually turn out but er hard to get along with. --That isn't meant as a blanket criticism, but a feeling that a lot of young writers have a lot of emotional problems, and dealing with them is harder than most, but usually worth it-- for when they are good, they are very very good.. Now back to regular Q&A stuff.))

There was one thing that gave me a bit of a laugh-- the comparing of Brisbane to parts of Sidney and Melbourne, is rather like saying South Gate is rather like a cross between Burbank and Vernon... It means something, only if you know what the other two places looks like. -- Both Harding and Priest use this trick, which is rather supprising.. -- Would the people of Brisbane walk more upright and smartly because of different climate?-- No! That doesn't seem right, as they should be even more tropical than Sid.. Hahah!

Speaking on awards, Harding suggest there should be a 'retrospective award for achievement' give to authors, but finds the "Grand Masters" and "Candalf" awards to incestuous and in-groupish.

would like to hear more of his views on this. The SFMA award is limited to SF's members-- does he think that they are to limited in their view to vote for non-American? (something I would suspect was possible) The 'Gandalf' award though is nominated and voted on by the total voting Worldcon membership. That is pretty open... Beside these, first Fandom has been giving their awards for "singularly important and lasting contributions to SF," since 1963.. This is ofcourse a very in-group type award, but I don't know what other system you could use.. -- Frankly, I have not felt the Hugo's were ever the real awards or merit they should be, and their importance highly over rated.. The only way they could be more than a popularity contest is if everyone who voted, saw/read each of the items on the list. In this day and age that is impossible--especially in the fan feild. (I don't think the fan awards are really any better.) == In the area of awards, we are faced with only two alternatives I see. Ones given by a limited number of semi-informed persons, who being an in-group do not represent any general readership.. Or a broad based ballot that represents general popularity but not a real judgement of worth.. -- If Harding feels, as well he might, that writers from your area don't stand much chance in any American dominated balloting, he might be right, which is just one of the things wrong with them... But then your lot is just as narrow as ours, in its own ways.. Does he know anyway to beat human nature?

- Don't know what the Ocker Moment in Australian SF would be, as I don't dig 'ocker'.... But it laigh, you are making me feel like a blooming neo-fan....

There are accouple references to SF writers workshops.. Obviously the people that go to them think there is value in them, but I wonder.. The old saying was that the best way to learn to write was to write--and old time writers are often want to thank some other old pro for professional help and advise when they were starting. Still, the empirical evidence (seen from the back of my hermit's cave) shows few Very important writers coming out of these classes, but on the other hand the whole downward trend in SF, of anti-hero and negative thinking seems to have started at about the time Damon Knight was holding the first of his writers conferences. --I have all but stoped reading current SF as I find it so depressing to, and like in Grand Opera the stories most often seem to end with the lead characters dead or dying.. Before the 60's it seemed that writers wrote to please editors who wanted to please the readers, who wanted some cheap entertainment.. The terrible 60's brought out people with a message, and sneers for anyone writing merely for fun or profit.. So, I started reading detective stories --- old one..

To Valma- that cats do when they want food, some one has called ankle-polishing.. The next fase is to reveal their true feeling, when they start 'mrowling' at you, "hay, dummy, were is my dinner? And none of that damn'd canned stuff tonight." They are better skilled at making a human feel inferior than any other being on earth.. Any ego-boos a cat lover gets from their cat, is purely their imagination at work.. Give me a good, honest (if stupidly loyal) dog any time. Cats are snobs, and if I didn't know so many nice people that house cats, I'd say they probably didn't care for people either..

The article by Mason was a little dissapointing in that it didn't really tell that much about the Syncons.. More about what he felt about them.. As a past Treasurer of a few cons I'm aware how well informed he should be on the workings of the Cons, and sorry not to get more real dope.. It causes me to hope that there is someone there who is keeping a record of your Cons, for postarity.-- I have been trying to keep up a running record of Cons, awards and Contest, and find it very hard to get all the information, relying only on fanzine reports--and due to the high turn over in Fandom, in 5-10 years, there maybe no one around who remembers when or were a particular Con was held. I'd like to get a list of all the Aussie awards, but only see them reported now and then... and I can't trace all the Mid-westcons. So many con reports fail to mention who the Con Chairmen is, or sometimes even the date.. Ofcourse, when the report is written everyone knows, but as future Fandom will remember us only by what we write down and print, it is needfull from time to time to record the dull stuff that facts are made of..

I particularly enjoyed Priest trip report, because he takes the time to describe people he meets to greater length than the meat he eats.. Though I'm not sure what to make of his remarks about you... - Faulty Towers lovers must be a special kind of person--not because of their taste, but that they can become so dedicated to a series that I understood only ran six instalments.. At least that is all we ever got.. -- There was a time last Fall when a real Anglophile could watch three hours of British TV at a stretch.. Very good too.. They get away with more too, than our TV can...

I was amused by his superior intelligence attitude toward you poor fools who insisted on watering your lawns in 80° weather..when everyone knows the lawns don't grow.. It's proverbial attitudes like that, that have always got the Limeys in trouble with the Colonies. I don't know what kind of grass you have down there, but if we stopped watering our lawns everytime it hit 80°, it would not merely stop growing, it would die.. Given a few good waterings a week, our grass keeps growing all year round.. None of this thin, weak, English grass. Ours is called Devilgrass, and with good reason. It is a devil of a job to get out of any thing, once it has got it's roots in..

Maybe he could become adjusted to your accent in three weeks..as I don't remember what part of the Mother Country he hails from--and I have mistaken a Northern accent for that of an Aussie... - Yeah, flat, and rather through the nose... but atleast you don't speak French.

Somehow I'm sadden to read you have Colonel and MacDonald shops. Atleast, though mentioned in a bit of fantasy, I suppose that to be true background.. - They aren't so bad, and we visit them now and then..and I don't begrudge you your share in the plastic future, but while I'm for ending international differences, I can't help but wish you had a few things a little more different.. Ofcourse I was pleased when we started getting real English Fish & Chip shops--- or was untill the price went to high and the amount of fish went down.

Well, that brings me to the end of the check marks, so I guess there is nothing more to comment on. This has run on longer than is good for me.. As I don't get anything else done.. And so much of it is chaff these days.. I will send it by boat mail, just to see if they are still running.. At your recent rate of publication, that is fast enough.. I hope you will publish again, so I wont feel all this is wasted..

Best wishes.

Rick Sneary

SOUTH GATE AGAIN IN 2010!