

Nine years; that's not too many. SAM #15 is published irregularly by Steve Stiles, at 3003 Ellerslie Ave., Baltimore, Md., 21218. Letters of comment are quite welcome; subscriptions are not. (But have you considered "love offerings," anonymous donations, candid snapshots, a copy of "The Incompleat Burbee"?)

SPRING, 1983 ISSUE

A fanzine can be deep emotions on a smooth twilltone surface.



A LONG TIME: Yes, it has been a long time between issues, hasn't it? So enough of that; I'm sure nobody wants to deal with all the hoary old cliches attached to the revival (however brief) of a 60s fanzine --I sure don't want to deal with all that, other than to establish a few points by very briefly mentioning that I was instrumental in "laying" all the really fine, really important foundations of the modern fandom we are all so fortunate to enjoy today. For example, I introduced the practice of even, right-hand margins in the fanzines of my era. "Justification,"

as I came to call it. (I've dropped justification for this issue as I'm quite busy and just can't be bothered.)

More impressive, I launched the Jules Verne Prize Club in Brooklyn, N.Y. --a club which was later stolen from me and altered beyond belief by Moshe Feder, a fan who has a lot to answer for. Tsk. But this all really pales in comparison with my concept of the "pen-name," a device whereby the canny fanwriter can have as many articles in a single fanzine as he (or she!) desires; "Calvin W. Demmon," "Biff," "Warren Brick," or my own personal favorite --"Daffy Dimples."

Yep, it's been a long time... I thought about that for a few spare moments at Larry Carmody's party this summer. It had been too long since I had last partied in New York --many months since I had last been in the city of my birth at all. And I barely regretted it, but it was a big shock to discover that my old neighborhood, and the block on which I had been raised, had been entirely leveled; in its place a gigantic high rise, with rent, no doubt, way the hell beyond my expectations. A little taste of future shock --transient neighborhoods. I raved and ranted a little as my wife Elaine and I drove past 93rd street, and we decided that what was really needed was a little party to clear up my mood.

And a fine party it was. I even got to see a few of my old friends like Susan Palermo, Chris Couch, and the newly transplanted Jeff Schalles. I also got to meet a batch of New York fans who were entirely unknown to me; some younger, some perhaps newer, maybe even some Fanoclasts (who the hell knows these days?). I met them so well and so thoroughly that we all got quite "sercon," as the expression goes. We even got sercon in the old sense when I asked if anyone had ever heard of Moskowitz (one had). Later I was seen wandering around with a sappy grin on my face --and on my head was this strange antenna-like device, a v-shape with two red styrofoam balls.

I'm sure that most people are familiar with the headgear by now. I first spotted them in Baltimore's Harbor Place; young children were wearing them, teenage lunks were wearing them, Republicans from the sticks were wearing them. I was wearing them at Larry Carmody's party, wandering around from group to group and knowing that many people were meeting Steve Stiles for the very first time --and that this was the impression of me that some would retain for years to come. "You've got some pair of balls," said Susan Palermo. I think I know what she meant, I'm sure she meant my red styrofoam balls (on my head), but this got me thinking --I did have balls to wear that thing; this had significance that went beyond mere macho posturing. It was kind of a Zen thing. I was saying "I know that I look like a fool, but I know that I'm not a fool, and that's all that matters." Thus, the very antithesis of fannishness became a fannish statement. Or something like that.

I'm hoping that this headgear will spread to the outposts of hipper fandom. With that thought in mind, I wandered over to bother one of my favorite fannish fans, Eli Cohen, who is into zen. Eli was also deep in conversation with a pretty girl. He ignored me. There's no punchline to this little story; that's zen for you!

Soapsuds on a dork are still soft.



MOTIVES: So why am I doing this? I certainly don't have the time; aside from holding down a fulltime job I spend most of my spare time doing freelance art of one kind or another. There is, of course, nostalgia for fanac and I do enjoy writing. There's also guilt; I've been receiving a hell of a lot of well written fanzines lately, and although I consider myself a semi-gaffiate, these fanzines have gotten harder and harder to ignore. I sure don't have the time to write up letters of comment-- this fanzine is to be considered a trade for all those zines

I've been getting this past year. At best, SAM is a thank you note -- and at the worst maybe this will choke off the flow.

Actually, this fanzine has been in the making for two years or so, inspired by two fanzines circulated at WSFA meetings --WSFanac, by Avedon Carol, and Fantagony, by Joe Mayhew. Avedon and Joe were having a mock-serious "feud" of sorts and I had hoped that the energy produced between them might spill out and inspire other members of WSFA to produce their own fanzines. Very little happened. But as Avedon mentioned in WSFanac #3 (October-November 1980) "Spurred on by this sudden spurt of fannish publication, Steve Stiles has threatened to put out his own fanzine, and to make the Carol-Mayhew feud the central focus of his own first issue."

My fanzine was going to be called Aghast. What follows is what I wrote two years ago, so let's plunge into "the realm of imagination" --without moving our lips!

Envision this if you will; it's the Gillilands' basement on a First Friday evening. The meeting has yet to begin. Hunched over in the first heat of fanac sit "Mort" and "Adenoid" ((Mayhew and Avedon, get it?)), fingers fairly flying over smoking typewriters. The instantaneous club fanzine concept has been born. Forsaking trusty mimeo and trendy xerox, they are simultaneously and spontaneously creating fanzines--

typed on mustard-yellow mimeo paper in a single gesture to tradition. A little space is left on spots on some sheets; these spots are immediately filled with a fast pentel sketch from one or more resident WSFA artists. The sheets are then exchanged, passed to the two typists by carefully selected neutral visitors to the club. Even more furious typing is the result, more pages pass between them --pages with phrases like "intellectual up-chuck," "moral drool-cup," "fish-eye," and "that's just the kind of stupid remark I'd expect you to say."

It's a fairly hostile scene. Suddenly, a particularly salient written thrust brings Adenoid springing to her feet, bicuspid a-grind. As for Mort, a brace of veins pop in sequence across his rapidly purpling face. The sound is sickening in the sudden hush; little moist "plips"!

"EX-PAPIST SPAWN!" Adenoid screams, snapping on tiptoe at Mort's jugular. "STAND BACK, RIB WHELP!" shouts Mort in a rage, "I'M CARRYING A TWENTY MEGATON NUCLEAR DEV

FLASH!!

It's amazing what you can get into a briefcase these days. But, seriously, folks --kidding aside, hey, you're great! Seriously, it was exciting to see two additional, unofficial, club fanzines spring up in the wake of antagonism. Perhaps this will spark a trend within the club, a club apa, as it did with the Fanoclasts and LASFS. Perhaps a APA W, or "WAPA." Why, it's a natural! I feel as if I'm on the fringes of something Big. Even more exciting, several other people in the area are working on fanzines; it's a return to the sixties! Why, I'm already a coeditor of VOID! ((Remember, this was written in 1980.)) Avedon bounced my first recent fan article! Already stirrings of interest are felt in other areas of the country--among the gaffiated, the critically successful professionals ("Hey, fanzines are FUN! Fuck my novel!"). Fanzine quantity and quality will reach ever new levels as fan club after fan club dust off old Gestetners and disregard false and unfannish goals such as putting on World Science Fiction Conventions!

This new attitude, this new literature will spill out of fandom and into the real world, into society at large! A new counterculture will be born! More Hippies!

But wait! RONALD REAGAN is PRESIDENT! OH NO, HERE COME THE PIGS!! Jesus, they just shot some INDIANS!! But We Won't Be Fooled Again! The People form armed cadres; "OFF THE PIGS!" BANG, BANG!--The decadent old order is swept aside! A new Golden Age begins on Terra. Star ships pass the orbit of Jupiter. I become the president of WSFA.

Soufflé comes from elemental matter.

11/4/82: A few mornings ago I stopped by my local drug store to pick up a few #2 Quality Writing pencils, the kind with the medium soft rubber erasers on the tip --very important in my line of work; the eraser is by far the most important part. While on checkout, my salesperson became intrigued --nay, croggled-- with my old red, white and blue bellbottom jeans. "Why, those are tie-dyed!!" she gasped, amazed at the incongruity of it all... #And at this point in the anecdote I interrupt this fanzine to announce that our house was burglarized today. For the second time. They smashed the door in and made off with our last remaining stereo system. I'm considerably upset about this, the only consolation being is that I was able to cut short an anecdote that had no punchline I could think of --I am now off the hook.



CHICON, 1962: The third Chicon was my first World Science Fiction convention, an event I thoroughly enjoyed and hazily remember. But I do recall that one of the very first familiar faces I encountered belonged to Lee Hoffman-- which added a sweet significance to meeting her again at Chicon IV, this time as the convention's FGOH. Lee was standing around with Walter Breen and a few others, and I remember both of them being incredulous (or croggled) at the sheer size of the vast & milling fan hordes present; there were over six hundred con attendees! It was absurd!

I also remember meeting Robert Heinlein for the first time. That was slightly absurd too, so let me go into it. I had worshipped Heinlein; well, that's not absurd, that's a familiar story. I discovered science fiction novels through Heinlein, starting with Rocketship Galileo and going on with the rest of his juveniles in roughly chronological order. Teenagers groove on Heinlein; even allowing for his rigid view of overall reality, there is this impression that Heinlein understands teenagers and grants that they're people. Junior people, maybe, but people with thoughts, feelings, responsibilities.

So I was a teenager, and meeting Heinlein was a tremendous disappointment. If you've ever seen the plans for the Tucker Hotel, you've noticed that Tucker has supplied a safety net under the rooftop ledge --in order to catch neos after they've met their "Hero Pros."

My friends and I stood in the hotel hallway, waiting to enter RAH's suite and meet the Man; it was a convention event, and there was quite a line. We were nervous, the wait was a long one, and I'm quite sure my armpits were pumping madly. My friends consisted of Mike McInerney, Mike Deckinger, and one of my first Best Friends from New York, Bob Krolak. We trickled in with the rest of the crowd, advancing up the line and eventually into the room.

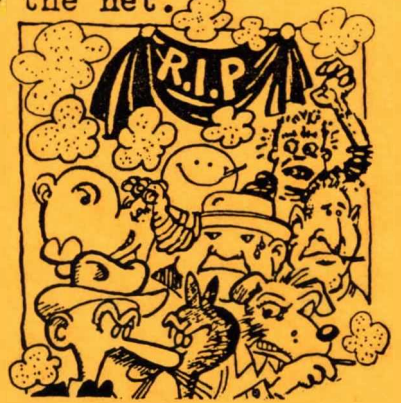
Heinlein sat off in the distance in what seemed like an immense suite of rooms. Heinlein made some kind of joke about us to a friend and beckoned us in with a patronizing remark. I was simultaneously stricken with stagefright and resentment; resentment because of the condescension I thought I saw, maybe resentment because I really don't like being in awe of someone else. But it was apparent that Heinlein wasn't that kindred who understood my thoughts in his books, he was one of "them" --a distinguished looking middle-aged man with a strained formality that was several generations removed from me and my scene. What's more, I had become used to more democratic ways of other grownup pros and had indulged in casual conversations with more informal types like Larry Shaw, Don Wollheim, and Avram Davidson. I had expected the usual pro room party --I got an audience with the Pope.

Mike Deckinger was heavily laden with cameras and in order to use one of them it soon became obvious that he'd have to set the rest of the assortment down somewhere. The most convenient spot for an unloading was a nearby liquor cart and Mike edged towards it. Unfortunately, Heinlein completely misunderstood Mike's intentions and each time the underage Deckinger moved towards the cart Heinlein blocked him with an anxious haste. We watched this little dance and body block spin through its climax three times. At no time did

Heinlein pay any attention at all to Deckinger's attempt at explanation; here was a *teenager* headed for the liquor cabinet! Oh gasp! I met Krolak's eye. He seemed as disappointed as I felt. An unspoken message flashed between us: "Hey, this guy's an asshole!" And then we left... (Red Planet was never quite the same.)

I was probably too critical. After all, at the time most of my major moments as an asshole were still ahead of me. Besides, there's one other item on the Tucker Hotel rooftop. It's a springboard-- to enable Vile Pros, after meeting their fans, to clear the net.

AFTER CHICON, 1982: What a party! Elaine and I were staying with some old friends of mine, Joe and Hilary Staton (and a pleasant vacation visit it was), and sometime around Tuesday, the day after the convention, it suddenly dawned on me that there were underground cartoonists living in and around the Chicago area. Now, I'm an underground cartoonist myself ("Snappy Fun With HYPER Comics") and I was understandably anxious to meet some of these birds. I've been an underground cartoonist for nine years now and for the most part I've been working in a void. It's been a proud and lonely thing. The only other underground cartoonist I see with any regularity is Dan Steffan. I felt I lacked a certain personal and professional perspective in my isolation. What I really wanted to know; was I normal, or what?



The party was a load o' fun. Skip Williamson was there, as were Jay Lynch and Gary Whitney. My publisher/editor Dennis Kitchen (of Krupp Comics) was there, and Jay and Dixie Kinney (who were vacationing in the area) were able to make it. There was also a respectable above-comic contingent; Joe Staton, of course, Bruce Patterson, and Mike Gold --representing the new Chicago comics company, First Comics.

In fact, about twenty five people showed up and I only managed snatches of conversation with a fraction of the horde. I'm only sorry that Steffan, Canfield and Rotsler weren't able to stay in Chicago for this massive meeting of the minds and heads. I'm also glad that the Statons volunteered their digs for the mob --and that nobody broke the coffee table, burned the furniture, or heisted the silverware...

Although the party itself was a "load o' fun," there were certain aspects of a wake hanging over our heads; after some twenty years of dramatic ups & downs it looks pretty certain that underground comics are about to shuffle off the cultural coil. Dennis pretty well confirmed this; sales are way down. In their heyday top undergrounds enjoyed print runs of 30-50,000. 10-20,000 is more typical today, with a considerable drop in sales. This drop is due in part to two reasons; the 60s are over and the Moral Majority is acting up again.

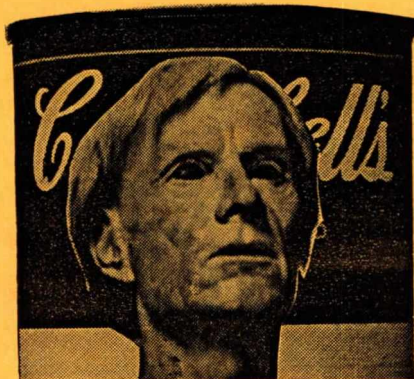
I say "again." Underground comics really got their start with good old E.C. comics --and most of my generation of bonzo cartoonists cut their teeth on the likes of Mad and Tales From The Crypt. But E.C. was a child of the fifties and fell victim to a Jerry Fallwell of the time, the late Fredric Wertham (I'm still bugged over the fact that one of my cartoons was in his last book.).

In the summer of 1973 I decided that I'd get busy and try to break into underground cartooning. I spent four months of evenings working on seven stories that I sent to five publishers. They all wrote back accepting the stories --and in the fall of '73 the Supreme Court passed a ruling to the effect that local communities had the right to determine obscenity violations. Four publishers promptly evaporated

into mist. Kitchen was the exception. One of the target's of today's bluenoses has been the paraphernalia shops, a major outlet for underground, or "head," comics; they've been remarkably successful in shutting them down. Ordinary comics shops have proved conservative, their owners oriented towards superhero material and nervous about crackdowns.

And then there's the death of the counterculture --dying for years. It's likely that most college students are a bourgeois lot, considering the hippy era to be sappy and naive. And it was. Still I miss it; the utopian dreams, the risk-taking, the irreverence and surreal qualities... but the whole "movement" was really nothing new and will be around again one of these days...

But I'll miss doing stuff like "Sewer Love," "Wet Mouth Follies," "Bondage Shogun," and the ever-popular "Lil' Grunt."



JUST SUPPOSE: What if Andy Warhol discovered fandom? That's not as farfetched as it first sounds, if you think about it--I have, and I think the concept has possibilities. Warhol is, of course, famed for his silk screened portraits of soup cans and Marilyn Monroe, an eight hour film of the Empire State building, and his support of musicians like Nico and The Velvet Underground. In short, Warhol has sought to immerse himself in a variety of popular, or offbeat, cultures --to create art as a reflection of lifestyles. To go a step further, this fanzine represents a form of pop art.

Maybe you can see where this is going. At present, fandom is a vast, untapped subculture. Its many facets might well prove fascinating to Warhol. Of course, the sudden publicity could be dangerous to fandom; we all remember what happened to the hippies after the media discovered them. Then too, a miasma of bad luck hangs over Andy Warhol; people near him commit suicide, overdose on drugs, attempt murder. Since fandom is so fragmented these days, additional, outside pressure just might send the pieces flying apart. Blooey!

This might be a good thing! Like many of the fan cranks of, ahem, my generation I find myself embittered by present-day fandom, a fandom that no longer reveres --or even recognizes-- those greats of yesterday like Walt Kublicus or Chet Cohen.

I have Andy Warhol's address! Should I gamble on fandom's future by sending him this fanzine? With that one act I just might have more impact on fandom than a Willis, Burbee, or even a Degler.

What do you think? Let's vote on it! Send your votes on whether or not Andy Warhol should discover fandom to me and I'll act on it. The future is in your hands, isn't that neat?



BITCHING OLD STEVE STILES: As long as I'm in the rotten mood brought about by the second burglary of our digs, I'm taking the opportunity to bury my old, false, image as this genial, mellow --in short, wishy-washy--guy. Shucks, it's true that I have a long fuse and seldom blow my stack, but this only because I'm well aware of what a truly acerbic guy I really am. I like to keep my monster on a short, tight leash. However...

I have my favorite dork. Perhaps you've heard of him. His name is Kevin Duane.

I first met Kevin at the art sales checkout of Balticon 1980. I was feeling low; unicorns had sold well at the con and I consider unicorns to be the black velvet clown portraits of fandom. My cartoons had sold like mucous on spam, although my painting of a Lil' Fuzzy being kicked off a cliff had done well. Along came Kevin with a few kind words about my stuff and a few complaints about James Warren; my guard came down and I gave him my phone number. My mistake.

For the next eight months I was bombarded with all hours phonecalls from this lunk, proposals for inane projects. Kevin had many projects; he would think them up, I would do them, and then we'd *split the profits*! There was The Incomplete Enchanter Project, for example; I'd get \$100. a page. It was all set and okay with de Camp --Kevin and "Sprague" were pals!

I would've killed chipmonks to take on a neat assignment like that if there was any proof that it was anything more than a pipe dream. To be continually offered these high paying, prestige fictions seemed like a cruel joke; Elaine and I were out of work, planning to marry, and looking for a house. I was job-hunting and spending all my free time on paying freelance jobs. But Duane was annoyingly persistent and finally wore me down, which I think was his intention all along: to get rid of him I sent him a stat of a Professor Thintwhistle unpublished original. I was promised an eventual \$400., with an advance. Needless to say, I have yet to see a dime.

It was just after I mailed out the Thintwhistle piece that I learned that Kevin had been pulling other legs at the 1980 Balticon. He had, in fact, tricked BSFS into cashing a \$130. rubber check, claiming it was for supplies for the Philly in '83 party; nobody on the Philadelphia committee had authorized him to do this, nor did they see any fresh supplies for their party. Oddly enough BSFS has done little about the matter, only going as far as to ban him from future Balticons. It hasn't worked; Kevin showed up at the last one, attended the functions, camped out in the lobby, and even had the chutzpah to exhibit his poorly reproduced portfolio --with my drawing--in the art show (it was two days before anyone noticed).

Kevin Duane is incredible. But this hasn't been as acerbic as I had intended. Excuse me while I go kick my puppy...

Not too many people are aware of it today, but once upon a time I won TAFF. However, among the pitiful small remainder who do remember such an improbable fact, there are even a smaller minority of billous whiners who just can't keep quiet about the fact that I never did complete my report --which was only half finished. The reasons for this lapse are twofold; the fanzine that was running my report folded --and I wasn't able to find a suitable replacement, and (2) I lost all my notes on the trip. This last point seemed an unsurmountable problem, but in the last few years I've come to a startling realization: nobody in fandom today remembers anything at all about British Fandom of the late 60s --I can FAKE it! Fortunately, that won't be necessary. I found a previously unpublished fragment of my original report, and I'm publishing it here to put an end to all the sniping once and for all...

HARRISON COUNTRY

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There we were, Bill Burns and I, clutching our suitcases and hopes for a fine, fine convention as we strode through the Manchester streets --taking great big strides as befit a con chairman and (me) a TAFF delegate, yet a bit apprehensive, as if remembering other times, other conventions: memories of dreadful bores regaling stupefied captive audiences with breakthrough descriptions of the greatest science fiction plots ever, and worn grey mornings when the mouth felt dry, and leaden phrases were recalled --like something out of a Norman Mailer novel. Stiles himself felt worried about his TAFF speech, half unwritten and perhaps unappealing to his UK audience. It had been enough, he reflected, to insult U.S. fan audiences in the past-- they revelled in it, flaying themselves with the guilt of past fannish gaffes. But these British were a new, unfamiliar lot to Stiles; hardened by inflation and graduated tax rates, lacking the soft underbelly of the easier Americans. It would be a hard thing, a near thing, and Stiles knew that if someone shouted "Who killed Kennedy?" ((remember, this was the 80s)) he would be lost, willing under the knowledge that --excepting the Indians--We Are Really All To Blame. Yes, it would be a pleser.

Otherwise we felt pretty eager and excited. I wondered if Atom and Willis would be attending, and looked forward to meeting the fabulous Goon --John Berry himself. Berry had been an influence. I had devoured each and every one of his written fannish exploits, and envied my friends Gerber and Reiss, who had met The Man himself in New York, during the late fifties. They had even donned trench coats and carried plunkers for the occasion. Unfortunately, I never did get to see Berry, who didn't attend Buxton con. Perhaps April is a busy time for N.Ireland's police force.

There was, however, Sgt. Joan Carr...
(to be continued)

THE FOOTSTOOL

"Late again, eh, Stiles?"

"Well, yes...if "late" is appropriate for a nine year gap between issues; actually, come to think of it, nine years is wrong --- I suspect that the 14th issue was actually published shortly after I got out of the army, which would be some month in 1967. Since I was stupid enough not to date SAM #14, I'll never know..."

"That makes a fifteen year gap in your publishing schedule; you're not just late, you're a blatant antediluvian."

"Not quite. Anyway, I've got plenty of excuses; I got married, I got divorced, I moved to Florida, I moved to Kingston, I moved to Baltimore, I moved to Arlington I moved to Baltimore, I knew women, I drew over 1200 comic pages, I met and fell in love with Elaine Mandell, we got married, we purchased a house, and I'm just now hanging the last picture on the wall -- a Freak Brothers poster. Besides, I dropped "SAM" as a fanzine title; I much preferred "SKIFFLE", a fanzine I published in the 70s, along with a half dozen other titles for those smarmy little exclusive apas."

"So why the resurrection?"

"Pure sentiment, pal. Dan Steffan's sentiment, to be exact. The man practically begged me to bring back SAM---I just can't refuse the big lug. I think he's got a 60s Nostalgia Monkey on his back. Trying to bring back the "Good Old Days," or some such nonsense ---what a load! It is to laugh."

"Speaking of Dan, don't think I'm not aware of what you've been trying to do here."

"?"

"Put down those eyebrows; you know what I'm talking about, what with those layouts ---those little panels on the left side of the page... Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, eh?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Come on, open up for once in your neurotic life, Stiles! You know what I'm talking about; "Bitching Old Steve Stiles," dissecting a dork... It's all too obvious: SAM is a deliberate, calculated attempt to evoke the spirit of a famed Falls Church publication. More accurately, SAM is a PONG imitation."

"PONG? You're crazy, fella! I had a science fiction book review in here!" This isn't a PONG imitation ---this is a PSYCHOTIC pastiche. Talk about style-blind!"

"NOW who's crazy?"

"Don't call me crazy, Geis!"

"I'm not Geis; you're Geis!!"

"You need a shrink, Geis!"

"DON'T CALL ME GEIS!!"

"Geis, put down that knife --no, NO! GEIS! ARRGH!...gasp...gurgle..."

*Deleted for lack of space.

HELLCON

WHERE EVERYTHING THAT COULD GO WRONG....

THE MASQUERADE: Too Many Wookies



There were more elbows than people in Great Britain.

SAM #15
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