

# SERENADE

Serenade is published quarterly for the Shadow Fantasy Amateur Press Association by Richard Bergeron, at 110 Bank Street, New York City 14, New York. This issue, the second, is intended for the eighth Shadow mailing and is available to members and for comment. All letters received will be considered for publication unless otherwise specified. May, 1962

The sudden transformation of Serenade, a one-time SAPSazine of faltering origins, into a Shadow publication should catch both those SFAPA readers who had (a) let down their guards or (b) given up hope that I'd be participating. The opening movements Chauvenet's most laudable inspiration were marked by a few mentions of my name as a possible participant. These prophets have long since fallen into an embarrassed silence on the subject and I'm forced to the realization that I'll have to fulfill at least the minimum of their expectations if I hope to see my name in these mailings again. But my motives aren't entirely selfish: these quarterly enticements have been highly enjoyed and the temptation to tender long over-due egoboo to the likes of Chauvenet and Hansen has at last proved irresistible. One can never tell, at the outset, what his interest in a new project will blossom or degenerate into, but I should make clear that my interest in the Spectator Amateur Press Association remains high. As a matter of fact, the sound of the trashing of a chained green beast on a dead sea bottom reminds me, at this very moment, how jealously this time is begrudged. As many of you know, the pits of Warhoon have become pretty much home for me and I have no desires of giving up those blue chambers, however dank and lifeless you may find them, for the insecure life of a roving troubador. But, though the thought of being a FAPA scavenger is depressing, the sounds of the quarterly Shadow mailing do invite at least a token response and I'll try to make my voice heard in reply in these pages from time to time.

## HOUSE AD

Those readers who have never seen Warhoon, my other fanzine, should be warned that it's available for trade or comment. As this goes to press, the current issue is #14, which contains a marathon article by Walter Breen on some James Blish opinions and "Stranger In A Strange Land", columns by Walt Willis, Redd Boggs, and James Blish, a defense of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (for those of you who have lost your sense of wonder) by Jerry Pournelle, and millions of letters, mailing comments, and editorials. If you don't get Wrhn you should, because I want your comments or your fanzine (it's not as though I wanted your life). Ted Cogswell says Wrhn is "the prop of his declining years", Robert Heinlein says its "interesting", and Wm. F. Temple wrote: "Sometimes I feel I'm struggling with the British Times with its cast-iron early Victorian format." Well, you can't please everybody.

## 4¢ OUT OF THIS WORLD 4¢

Check your mail carefully because if I have occasion to write to you within the next few weeks I may send you a picture of John Glenn's space capsule. It seems the fannish thing to do, but if the United States Government hadn't intervened I'm sure I never would have gotten around to it -- and that in itself is a sad comment on my status as a fan. It's sad that after all the dreaming I did about space travel in my younger years, that when it actually comes about the only acknowledgement I'm sure to give it in my fannish activity will be these Project Mercury commemoratives the Post Office just released.

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Odd how space travel has crept up on us. Somehow I expected to be properly warned before it became an accomplished fact. At the very least, it seems as though there should have been a ravaging beast bursting across the room with a breast plated amazon in full pursuit (or have I avoided science-fiction for so long that my memory betrays me?) Science-fiction never prepared me for the way it actually happened. John Glenn would probably chuckle at the thought that a simple triple orbit was too restful a theme for our favorite fiction.

I'd arrived at work a bit late the day Mr. Glenn went into orbit and was still munching on the jelly-doughnut and sipping from the glass of milk I have every morning for breakfast when I noticed that most of my co-workers in the art department were grouped around a small portable radio and remembered that some sort of space attempt had been scheduled. I joined the group saying, "Oh, goody, I love countdowns!" It seemed the fannish thing to say and must have been because I got a couple of dirty looks. At the moment of takeoff I was biting into the juicy red heart of my jelly doughnut and absent mindedly noting the expressions of the people around me. I wasn't showing it, but I shared their evident apprehension -- just the day before a memo had been circulated ordering the owner of that portable to bring it home and I could well imagine the scene if we were caught in this mass defiance. There wasn't much chance of this however -- I later found that most of the executives were watching the blastoff on a television set. No one did much work the radio played on and even the most prosaic details of the orbit hypnotically drew a small and changing crowd to the radio all day. A hunt for a prop took me to Abercrombie & Fitch at around 2:30 that afternoon where a small demonstration model of a sports television set was playing and, as seemingly everywhere else in the city where people could view or listen, a crowd was gathered. Grand Central was packed as mobs gazed at a monstrous television screen that had been installed for the event. When I came back down Madison Avenue toward the office, obsolete theatre tickets started showering down on my shoulders and soon great long ticker tapes were streaming out of the Newseek and Esquire offices. People were cheering from windows.

Of course, we've been in the space age for some time now, but it makes it a bit more immediate to be able to follow every inch of an orbit as it happens rather than waiting for the news to be revealed at a moment when it makes the most effective international publicity for an ideology. There's something spine tingling about the sound of a mid-western voice coming from outer-space. I sort of like the idea.

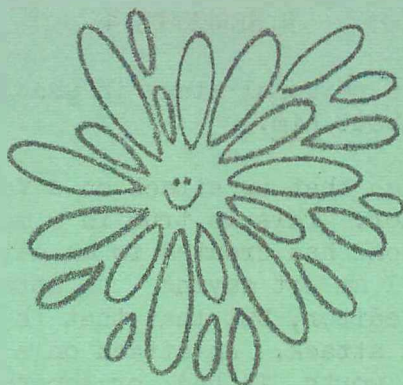
--February 25, 1962

### THE VOICE OF WONDER PAST

The main article in this issue is a reprint from PSYCHOTIC #19, April 1955. It originally ran as an installment of Vernon McCain's "The Padded Cell", a column he wrote for Richard Geis' fanzine. There has recently been some discussion in fandom re the relative merits of a FIJAGDH/FIAWOL attitude and I'd hoped to resurrect this piece in Wrhn but space never premited. Fannish etiquette demands that permission be secured before republication of material like this, but Vernnn is unhappily beyond my reach and Richard's whereabouts have been an equal mystery to me for several years. However, I trust there will be little outcry at this pillage: Dick could hardly begrude us this reminder of the fine and fair mind of Vernon L McCain.

.....  
I wondered if he felt like an eagle.  
.....





## GREEN THOUGHTS by Charles Wells

### FANZINES

Although fandom is notoriously given to navel-inspection, the idea that a fanzine is an extension of the editor's personality is one that, as far as I know, has never been discussed. It is obviously true to some extent, for some fans, and there are people who might well be saved considerable grief if they were aware of the fact. Of course, it must be understood that this is only one facet of fanzine publishing: fanzines are published for many and varied reasons and it would be an oversimplification to explain all of fandom with a bit of Freudian jargon. But the concept does have some interesting implications which it does no harm to discuss if a proper perspective is kept.

First, what does "extension of personality" mean? This depends on the particular brand of psychologist you talk to; for present purposes it will probably not do any harm merely to consider it a metaphor: the important idea is that many fanzine publishers feel an intimate and thorough personal involvement with their fanzines. This is certainly not an unusual phenomenon: any observant person should be aware that for many a man, his occupation is an extension of his personality. This is not only true of artists, writers, and the like, but of corporation executives and shoe repairmen. People who feel that way about their work usually do better work, and are usually more touchy about their work. Anyone who has to work with other people should look for this phenomenon in his co-workers and act accordingly; he will usually find his day considerably pleasanter.

And of course personality-extension occurs even more often in hobbies than in occupations. The fanzine is a peculiarly apt vehicle for this kind of extension (and here we may find a partial explanation of why people publish fanzines) because publishing a fanzine -- especially if you write a good bit of the material yourself -- is more nearly an act of total creativity than anything else I can think of. The editor has complete control (within physical and financial limits) over the appearance of the magazine, over the written and pictorial material in it, and over who receives it. With his own hands, he shapes the page on stencil or master, he makes the copies on his duplicator, he collates and staples and addresses and stamps it. He writes much of what is in it -- and often draws the illustrations -- and what he doesn't write or draw himself is in it on his sufferance.

Now I ask you, how Godlike can you get?

Not every fan editor feels Godlike in all these different aspects, of course, For some, the duplication and other mechanical parts of it are merely boring. Some people don't find the problem of layout at all interesting: all they are interested in is what they have to say. Others are so interested in producing a beautiful fanzine that they impatiently throw in whatever material they can find. But these editorial idiosyncrasies merely give credence to the idea that a fan's publication is somehow

part of himself, that he has a personal stake in what he has done, that talk about his magazine is indeed talk about him.

And this of course implies that an attack on a fanzine is a very personal and individual attack on the editor. This is true in a more general way, too: any attack on anything which someone has created is an attack on its creator. Now I want to make this very clear: (1) I am not saying an attack on a fanzine is necessarily intended as an attack on its editor, but that that is the effect of it. (2) I am not construing disagreement as an attack. An attack on a fanzine is any statement to the effect that the fanzine lacks worth, is bad, or something like that. It is a value judgment, not merely a difference of opinion. And these two points apply to attacks on other created objects as well as fanzines.

Now, this discussion is necessarily subjective. Some of it of course is based on my observations of other fan editor's reactions to attacks on their fanzines, but in the ultimate account I believe that this account is right largely because of observations of my own actions. Hence the thicker-skinned fan editor, or the fan editor who published his fanzine for reasons other than personal expression, will find what I have said, and especially what I am going to advocate below, rather hard to take. But how many people can honestly say, when someone whose opinion he values attacks a fanzine he has published, that he does not take the criticism personally that he does not feel hurt and ashamed, or hurt and angry?

The hard-to-take thing which I advocate is that people should tone down their scathing comments about other people's fanzines. Let us take a hypothetical case. Suppose you receive a copy of Joe Phann's latest effort, NOSEPICKER'S DIGEST. You immediately find yourself overwhelmingly irritated at the sloppiness of format, or at the silly stories he prints in it, or something. How should you review it? Well, I know how I would review it: I would confine myself to what would have been page thirteen if he hadn't got mixed up in his numbering, because on that page is an interlineation stolen from Alexander Pope which has Philosophical Pregnancy and Import. I would write a page-and-a-half discussing that interlineation and ignore the rest of the issue. Why? Because I find it very difficult to say what I feel about the rest of the issue: if I'm honest, I will be saying bad things about him, although ostensibly I will be attacking his fanzine. If I'm "tactful", I will feel dishonest.

Admittedly, I'm an extreme case. (Call me softhearted. Call me weak. Go ahead, say it. I don't mind. Where's my handkerchief?) What the competent reviewer should do is curb his sarcasm, scrap his witty barbs, and provide some good, solid discussion of the ways N. D. could be improved. Example of what I object to:

"Joe Phann's latest effort of NOSEPICKER'S DIGEST reminds one of an airplane which drops a hundred feet before it ever takes off. I haven't seen such a ridiculous attempt at fan publishing since PLANETOID. From the outrageously adolescent title to the snide mailing wrapper for which the editor ought to be fined, N.D. can only be said to be a resounding and total failure."

There is a much better way. The essence of a good sound review is to start with the assumption that the editor is seriously attempting to produce something which will be appreciated by its readers, no matter how ill-informed or clumsy an attempt it is. With that starting-point, the reviewer would probably point out the disadvantages of such a title, the dangers of such mailing wrappers, and the specific errors in the contents of the magazine. He can save his temper tantrums for the rare fan editor who through his own snotty disregard of the ethics of fandom earns an attack. If I may be so bold as to name names, one fan who does NOT deserve the attacks that have been heaped upon him of late -- including an unforgivably snide remark made about him



by Dick Lupoff in the last AXE -- is Seth Johnson. Ninety percent of his gaffs are made through ignorance of certain fannish personalities and customs. It is a far wiser course to attack ignorance instead of the ignorant.

A final point about the extension-of-personality concept is that if it is taken seriously many fan-editors may find themselves producing considerably less but better work. For the relationship is two-sided: it is true that an editor puts part of himself in his magazine, but it is also true that the reader infers from the magazine the kind of person the editor is. This is obvious when stated so baldly, but many people, especially people who are not given to thinking about other people (which is a common state of affairs not always to be regarded as faulty), seem to forget it. When you come right down to it, for the reader who has never met you personally, you are your magazine. If Joe Phann, who is noted for the frequency and low quality of his publications, realized that his readers are going to form opinions about him as well as about his fanzines, solely on the basis of what he publishes, then I suspect he would suddenly care a lot more about what his product looks like. After all, there are not many people who are completely insensitive to other people's opinions of them.

The points that I have made are debatable. But they are not entirely made in a vacuum: you can find out what other people's attitudes to their fanzines are, by talking to them and watching them, and though some of my generalizations may be wrong, it is at least not illegitimate to generalize.

#### AMENDMENT-PROPOSING TIME AGAIN

Most people who know me know that I dearly love proposing amendments to constitutions -- not to mention proposing constitutions outright. In the past year, I have proposed them to the United States Constitution and to the FAPA Constitution. Neither of them came anywhere near adoption.

Undeterred, I am at it again. This time I have decided that the United States needs an amendment to establish civil rights. What the Federal Government most needs in its efforts to keep the southern states from practicing discrimination and segregation is a clear-cut constitutional clause on which they can depend to win court decisions in their favor.

And actually, the chances for adoption of a civil rights amendment are not as far-fetched as some people think. A mildly worded amendment could be passed by two-thirds of the Senate right now, if it weren't for the filibuster; and if in 1964 Kennedy manages to pull into the House about 50 more liberals with him than he has now, I would estimate that a mild amendment could get a two-thirds vote in the House, too. The greatest difficulty would be with the states: to be ratified, the amendment would need the approval of at least 38 state legislatures, which would have to include all of the non-Southern states and four of the five border states (Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, Oklahoma). That would be quite difficult, in fact, it probably could not succeed with the present political balance of power.

The other alternative, the use of state conventions, would make it harder to get through Congress, since it would be regarded as an intrusion on the rights of the state legislatures.

But at any rate there is a bare possibility of the passage of such an amendment. But what would it say? Remember, it could not be too strongly worded, or its chance of passage would be reduced to nothing at all.

In the first place, it had better be restricted to restraints on state govern-

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mental discrimination. There is probably no hope for adopting an amendment barring job discrimination and similar things. The easiest way to do this is to attack discrimination under three headings. The first is what is commonly called "privileges and immunities": A citizen of the United States has a number of constitutional guarantees of his liberty and all we have to do is require the states to respect them equally in all people:

(1) "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States."

The phrase "or enforce" takes care of laws already on the books -- particularly segregation laws in many Southern states.

Another heading could refer to the famous "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness" in the Declaration of Independence: it's about time the principles of the Declaration were incorporated in the Constitution, and no politician in his right mind would be caught dead opposing the Declaration! If we can guarantee that a citizen could be able to pursue these basic goals without state interference -- except as the result of court trial, of course, and has the right of appeal to Federal Courts -- then we would be a long way toward accomplishing the goal of equality of opportunity. I think, however, it would be better to substitute "property" for "pursuit of happiness" since the latter is rather hard to define legally. So we have:

(2) "Nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law."

The phrase "due process of law" is the legal phrase for "at a court trial". Naturally, we have to retain the right of punishment by imprisonment, and probably the right of capital punishment, too, in order not to alienate many of our supporters. Thus this section would operate as a restraint on the executive and legislative branches of the state governments; the restraints on the courts would be taken care of by the appeals process.

The third heading could require equal enforcement of the laws. It is no use to require a state to pass nondiscriminatory laws if it enforces them discriminatorily:

(3) "Nor shall any State deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

You might want to add another section which would reduce a state's representation in the House of Representatives if it denies some people the right to vote. It would be rather complicated to word, however, and I am dubious of the effectiveness of that kind of move.

Such an amendment would undoubtedly provide the civil rights supporters a fairly strong constitutional basis for ensuring that the southern states maintain a nondiscriminatory policy towards Negroes. I am only afraid that the courts, as is their wont, would distort the meaning of the amendment so as to emasculate it of its effectiveness; this has happened time and time again and I know of no way to stop it.

NAMELESS W. NAMELESS, JR., WRITES A GUEST COLUMN

You can be absolutely 100% sure-fire certain that if you light the wrong end of a filter cigarette it will smell bad. This has been the subject of a lot of confusion



on the part of the goody-goody 100% "equality" boys who think that one end is as good as another. A Law of Nature is an uncomfortable thing; it goes right on operating whether you like it or not, and even worse, whether you know it exists or not!

I most urgently recommend to you, if you haven't seen it, an article by J. Finlay Entwistle in the November, 1936, LITERARY DIGEST where he uses sheer 100% common sense and the application of a few well-known laws of statistics like the chi-square measure of heuristic probability to prove beyond the 100% shadow of a doubt that Alfred Landon won the 1936 Presidential election. Yet in spite of the clear evidence he adduces, the Liberal Vested Interests have persisted in maintaining that Roosevelt won. The clear connection between this example and the one about the filter cigarettes just goes to show you what Subjective Thinking can do to make people confuse the Objective Facts. After all, look at the ancient Romans.

You can bet solidly on two sure-fire propositions: (1) These people who wrote in saying that the system I proposed to limit voting to Intelligent People obviously don't realize that they are showing themselves up as stupid by disagreeing with me; (2) anyway, the African native doesn't smoke; and (3) it is a 100% sure-fire double barrelled proposition that either Landon or Roosevelt won.

So it obviously follows rigorously that you have to limit voting if you are going to have a stable government; you cannot have stable government when most people are clods! You could propose here that voters be limited to people who buy Analog, and that has all kind of merits and only one little drawback -- which, however, turns out to be crucial! That is that some people who buy Analog do so only in order to make fun of it, and it is a 100% sure-fire double-barrelled absolutely solid proposition that we shouldn't let people like that vote!

Besides, some filter cigarettes are mentholated.

EFIN

"Green Thoughts" will, barring accident, appear in every issue of SERENADE. I am decidedly happy to have an opportunity like this, since it provides another outlet for my fulminations besides the all-too-infrequent issues of CADENZA. However, it is highly unlikely that Nameless W. Nameless, Jr., will appear in future installments. Whether this is to be regretted or not depends on your attitude towards prozine editors who are not Jewish and who do not wear beards, but in any case you can always read his editorials in his magazine, which is named, uh, what was that name...?

Oh well, maybe I'll think of it in time for the next installment. --Charles Wells

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McQUOWN'S ALIENS  
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Man will probably take aggressive action against an alien species not out of inherent viciousness but out of fear or ignorance. If a ditchdigger saw a Martian for the first time, he is equally as likely to brain it as to run, depending on the size and appearance of the thing. A number of ordinarily tranquil people will, on sight of a snake, for instance, attack it viciously and usually without cause. I have killed a number of rattlers in my own yard, as well as in the glades, but before I learned the basic differences between poisonous and harmless or beneficial reptiles, I killed many black snakes and others which could have been no threat to me.

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Like almost anything else, encounter with an alien race would be a matter of attitude development. If man were trained to look openly at extraterrestrial life, our encounters would probably be peaceful, but consider the racial situation on this planet alone -- where people of different races have been brought up together, there is little friction, but where tradition has been discriminatory, it has taken a long time for the situation to improve. Many of the white students in the south, for instance, are rebelling at long-established racial attitudes and taking a stand for integration. It has taken seventy years, but it is finally coming.

Number seems to have a bearing on the situation, too. Pocahontas was grief-stricken in England, as was Frobisher's Eskimo. Had either of them been in a group, I think they would have been able to survive the alienness of their surroundings, even as did Frobisher's seamen, or the early American colonists. Were there a dozen Et's walking the streets of New York, I think they would be reasonably secure, but a loner would have the miseries just as we would in an alien environment.

Communication would have a bearing on the problem. I was quite happy the time I spent in England and France because I could talk to people. I would be most unhappy, and probably sullen and aggressive, or timid and cowardly in a city on Venus, for instance.

What I am saying, basically, is that there are a number of factors bearing on the attitude which might be developed by people or by individuals, the physical appearance of the aliens, the ability to communicate with them -- the loss of the feeling that they are talking secretly and plotting against you -- and understanding their needs and basic ideas, and the number encountered, as well as the circumstances under which the encounter took place. Another factor which enters strongly into the picture is that of the degree of culture which the alien may have achieved. It is easy to be magnanimous and loving to Little Fuzzies (H Bean Piper) who are considerably below us culturally, but could we love a race of beautiful, superior humanoids whose culture and technology would supersede our own, or would jealousy and the fear of being made obsolete in the scheme of things drive us to plan genocide of such a culture? If a threat to our civilization (?), we would be ready, I think, to be as warlike and hostile as the situation deemed sufficient. I don't think I want to be replaced, and I would probably, unless I had reason to feel otherwise, be among the first to start stringing the barbed wire.

All this is pure speculation, of course, and it will be hard to say just what will happen when we make that first important contact with Them.

So then, we have this:

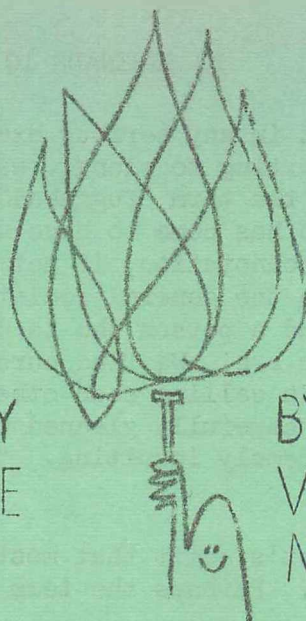
- (1) Appearance
- (2) Circumstances
- (3) Who makes the encounter (ditch-digger or college professor)
- (4) Degree of civilization of alien
- (5) Existence of threat of society
- (6) Attitude of aliens
- (7) Number of aliens
- (8) Ability to communicate

I seemed to have missed my point on the bearing number has on the situation -- the attitude of the outsider would be considerably more friendly where he had the security of his own kind, I think, than if he were alone. A large number, however, might tend to make him feel a little more than secure, and he might, bolstered by the presence of his numerous comrades, become over-aggressive.

-- Michael L McQuown



# A WAY OF LIFE



BY  
VERNON  
McCAIN

In the beginning was the word. And the word was this: There are the Star-Begotten and there are the 'others'. The Star Begotten follow the Path of Destiny...that path's name is Fandom. And Fandom is a Way of Life.

That was in the beginning. But then came Degler to present a horrible example of the lengths to which this pleasant little Fantasy for Schizophrene and Egoboo could be carried. And later came Laney and a whole host of imitation Laney's to attack with high-voltage typewriter and unleash sneers against the befuddled innocent who had not yet got the word, and still regarded fandom as his way of life.

It seems to me the anti's have had their innings long enough; it's time for an examination of the other side. Why not fandom as a way of life?

Usually the undesirability is treated as pre-proven and no attempt to justify the condemnation is given. But just what are the reasons given on those occasions when they've been voiced?

First, and most oft-repeated, is that to make fandom a way of life is to retreat from reality, to live in a world of fantasy. Second, it is considered a self-obvious waste of time to narrow one's life to such a small arena. It is said to be the source of easy triumph and worthless fame since the fourth-rater who has only fifth-raters with whom to compete is hailed as a genius. Fandom as a way of life can interfere not only with one's mental and spiritual growth but also prevent possible advancement in one's profession, social recreation, and even love-life. To devote one's life to fandom is to waste it. And so on.

Have I missed any? Probably, but actually these are all variations on the same general theme.

Oh yes, I did miss one...one of the most frequently used...that any fan who takes fandom that seriously is a fugghead. And just what is a fugghead? That is a question. Any answers? Well, it happens to be a word coined and primarily used by F Towner Laney. It has received more limited usage by other fans, usually admirers of Laney, including, at times, myself. It does pinpoint a certain fannish type more effectively than any other term and as such is useful upon occasion. But that type can best be defined as a sort of person who was anathema to F Towner Laney and who would be apt to be the subject of a critical article by Laney. This doesn't advance us much, does it?

Ignoring the somewhat scatological origination of the term we have an undefinable slang word which is definitely opprobrious.

My personal feeling is that in any serious exchange it is best to state what is meant explicitly rather than resorting to slang...especially slang with no positive meaning. However we have seen the term "fugghead" used all too frequently in supposedly serious articles and it has come to have within fandom somewhat the all-embracing and general semantic connotation, if not the emotional overtones, that the word 'communist' has acquired in the general society of the U.S. A person who is a 'fugghead' should be disliked and a person who is disliked automatically merits the term 'fugghead'. And there you are. We find ourselves on the same intellectual level as two angry five-year olds calling each other horrible names which neither understands but which have been very carefully gleaned from the conversation of their elders and are recognized as being extremely insulting. "We told him off, all right...that Vegetarian!"

Before we go any farther let's admit that most of the charges levelled at fandom as a way of life are quite true. Perhaps the term 'inadequacy' best summarises the objections of the opposition.

Fandom, alone, is an inadequate way of life and there is, perhaps, a suspicion that only an inadequate person would be willing to settle for fandom as his way of life.

Certainly to make fandom one's primary interest in life is to retreat from reality. But is the fan unique in this respect? Has he retreated any farther from reality than the housewife who uses soap-operas to deaden her brain to the realities of the detested housework she is performing as she listens; then the adolescent who pays no more attention to her studies than she can avoid and instead spends every spare moment reading movie magazines or day-dreaming about a miraculously de-pimpled and filled out version of herself to whom Gregory Peck makes passionate, though chaste, love; than the woman who wraps herself up in her own family to such an extent that she finds it impossible to discuss any other subject at all, so complete is her ignorance...and who becomes actually angry if forced to listen to a discussion of those 'awful unsolved world problems' which have 'nothing to do with me, anyway'; than the businessman who is so tied up in the race to make money that he works 14 hours a day, acquires ulcers, never takes a vacation, and doesn't even know his own family; than the hedonistic young woman who knows all about make-up, all about men, all about the best places to go...but lacks the knowledge necessary to retain a job, raise a family, or vote intelligently; or even than the important politician who is so wrapped up in world affairs and his own importance on the stage of current events that he thinks only in terms of the diplomatic camouflaging of truth, the international power-play, the sly political counter-move...and loses all contact with the normal low-income unimportant individual who comprises 99 $\frac{1}{2}$ % of the world's populace?

I shan't even mention the other hobbyists who make stamp collecting, model rail-roading, or sports-car racing a way of life. The similarity there is too obvious.

Which of these people is truly normal? Which one is not, in his own method and to his own tastes, retreating from life and actuality? Each has one piece of reality which he chooses to regard as the only important portion. The science fiction fan has, also, although the fact is not usually recognized. His portion of reality is the future...the part which has not yet come...and also, to a lesser extent, the frontiers of man's mind, his imagination.

Where is the individual who is 'normal'? Can you produce him? Is there, any place, a person so free of the weight of the world's woes that he has not fashioned for himself a retreat from reality, even though he may not recognize it as such? The American who complains about hard times...but has two cars, one for his wife and one for himself...a newly purchased gaily-painted set of lawn furniture on which he and



his family loll in front of their house in their long hours of leisure after completing their eight hours of work, perusing the newspaper which gives him all the latest information from all over the world...and yet he assumes his existence is the normal one... 'this is the way man lives'...but he has a bulging larder and an overflowing closet within...riches such as are possessed by only a minor portion of the Earth's populace. Or the illiterate Asian working in the rice paddy as long as the daylight lasts, his family working beside him, in tattered clothes and with hungry bellies, to retire at night within an insect-infested hut and sleep fitfully, almost totally unaware of the world beyond his village...he also regards his own lot as typical. Yet is either of these two normal? Can either regard himself as typical of humanity as a whole?

There is no such thing as true normality, only a statistical average. Normality comes in two billion different patterns...and new ones are constantly being created while old ones are being destroyed. Perhaps the only insanity is that which occurs when the individual fails to keep faith with his own personal 'normality', the pattern which is right for him.

If all the world is an asylum, if reality is too big for any human to accept in its entirety then is the science fiction fan (and I'm referring to the all-out way-of-life fan) actually 'different'? And if not, why does he receive ridicule, so frequently from family, friends, acquaintances, business associates, even the press?

First you must remember certain types of abnormality or retreat from reality are more noticable than others. The woman who pursues herself into mothering to the exculsion of all else, not only tends to draw a certain amount of approval, since her mania is devoted to a constructive purpose, but also is well-camouflaged since at a casual glance she can pass for any other more normal (in this respect) housewife.

Reading garish-covered magazines instead of kicking a football around after school is noticable behavior in the adolescent. Also, the more widely known eccentricities take on an aura of respectability and acceptedness. There are probably a hundred stamp collector for every science fiction fan. There are probably a thousand movie-struck adolescents for every one who is entranced by science fiction. Science fiction fans numbers, at even the most generous estimate, around two thousand. At any given time probably not over 200 fans are active and, as one prominent fan has said, there are usually only about a dozen or so people who really keep fandom operating.

2,000 out of two billion is a ratio of...well, did anyone ever tell you you were one in a million? I wouldn't advise you to go around broadcasting the fact, however.

But one thing many stf-fans with persecution complexes do not realize is that they are not the only scoffed-at minority. As a long-time jazz enthusiast I have just, in the past two evenings, written two long letters straightening out misconceptions of non-jazz-minded stf-fans who, through ignorance were mislabeling it and had some weird ideas about it and its devotees. The sort of slanted and wildly innacurate reporting which is the almost invariable lot of <sup>fandom is</sup> nothing new to the jazz fan. We've been used to the same thing for years. In fact, in many respects, it is worse since fandom is larger, and therefore of more general interest, it is treated more frequently by the press but seldom with greater accuracy. And the very real problem (although a minority one) of dope addiction within the ranks of jazz musicians lends an easy peg for sensationalism which is invariably distorted and blown up beyond all recognition. (For a parallel, though less potent weakness, stf has the Shaver Mystery and L Ron Hubbard.

And the general public joins in eagerly with their misuse of (usually out of date)

jazz terms which they frequently don't even understand. How many times have I read one of those Bopster 'crazy' jokes in some fanzine! And how those same fannish editors would scream if fannish terms were subjected to such persistent ridicule and idiotic misrepresentation elsewhere.

The jazz enthusiast actually takes all this much more moderately than does the stf-fan. It's been going on longer and at greater volume so we're more used to it. And, more important, the average jazz fan is older and has learned getting heated up about the matter solves nothing.

You can still frequently read items in the music magazines pointing out the usual inaccuracies and wild reporting and ridiculing them. But only rarely does anyone get really disturbed.

Science fiction and jazz are two fields I know well. But I have not the slightest doubt the same applies to every specialized hobby and most other specialized interests. The hot-rod fan (mainly adolescent) probably suffers just as much and is made even more angry (though lacking the means to vent his displeasure, not being an amateur publisher) than does the stf-fan at the misrepresentation he receives. And in every case the golfer, collector of Ming vases, or Genealogist undoubtedly is ridiculed by his family and friends and urged to do something more useful.

Just to prove the point let me ask you this: can you truthfully say you've never made fun of someone else's interests or attitudes or pastimes, if only in self-defense, when the Mickey Spillane fan was making fun of you for reading science fiction?

There are exceptions (here, as so often elsewhere, Redd Boggs is the one I know of) but I think in the vast majority of cases fans enter fandom with stardust in their eyes. The virtues of fandom are so enormous and unexpected that its drawbacks do not become visible until your eyes have had time to focus and put fandom's advantages in their proper relationship.

I'll admit (though I probably shouldn't) that when I first entered fandom it was with a thrill at discovering what I'd long been searching for and, while I hadn't yet heard the phrase 'fandom is a way of life', I was very much a partisan of that philosophy. My first fanzine contribution was an article to that general effect. May I say that my fondest hope is that someday the last remaining copy of the issue containing that piece will be destroyed.

But fandom's once boundless horizons quickly shrank to their present proportions and the alluring vista gradually showed up as a rock-strewn and crevasse-spotted terrain.

It took me perhaps three months to get over the 'fandom-as-a-way-of-life' kick and another nine months before I was no longer ready to devote every spare moment to some fannish activity.

Since then I've regarded fandom as an important and valuable segment of my life; one which claims a quite generous portion of my time. Fandom offers me certain rewards I cannot obtain elsewhere in any way and I only wish they were available in a more satisfying and elegant form. Fandom's gaucherie's can sometimes be appalling.

But I have far too many other interests, several of which equal fandom in their attractiveness, to be willing to devote all my spare time to fandom, much less to build my life around it. (Not that I'm laying any claims to normality, please note.)



Fandom has more in the way of virtues than most of its detractors will grant but it is a narrow field, too narrow to satisfy me by itself. But if there are those who can see in fandom dimensions not visible to me or who can be satisfied within the narrower confines, then I fail to see why they should be condemned by me, or by anyone else. If someone wishes to make fandom his way of life, why shouldn't he? It's certainly more desirable than pyromania; it is more wholesome than sex crimes; it develops the mentality more than comic books; and it is less damaging to one's reputation than alcoholism.

Perhaps it doesn't match Einstein's Unified Field theory as a contribution to society but then maybe the fan in question lacks the ability to produce a theory to top Einstein.

Fandom strikes me as an essentially harmless and in many ways constructive activity. Even of the miniscule number entering fandom a very small percentage will be satisfied to make it their way of life. But where those few are concerned, it's their life, so why not let them?

Probably the one unmistakable instance of a person who has made fandom his way of life is Ackerman. Ackerman had some faults, of course, and he was not always the most brilliant fan of all time. But the sum total of Ackerman's record with fandom shows a balance of worthwhile contributions to fandom far outweighing the occasional lapses in which his somewhat eccentric devotion to the genre may have been a minus factor.

Of course, the fandom of Ackerman's day was a somewhat different thing. It was far more slanted towards the pro field than now, and Ackerman's first devotion has always been to science fiction, not to fandom. Despite his frequent Herculean efforts in supporting fandom I suspect his interests toward it were solely in aiding in the potential support for his favorite fiction. Analysis of Ackerman's feeling would probably show little, if any, loyalty toward fandom for itself as an entity.

Holding true to his own type of fannish loyalty Ackerman has exited the fannish scene almost completely, building his entire life around his current professional connections with science fiction. I might say that Ackerman the fan was both more valuable and easily admired than Ackerman the pro, but that is another matter. No other person has so completely made fandom his way of life as Ackerman...even though to do so has led him out of fandom.

I don't know that I would actually encourage any young neofan to make fandom his way of life. I do think there's something a little unhealthy about it and I wouldn't try to steer anyone directly into it. But I fail to see why the fan who chooses this course should become fair target for anyone's gibes.

I recall an article written some years ago by Francis Laney in which he denounced the new term 'fen'. As Laney defined the terms 'fen' and 'fans', fen were no longer human...they were a subspecies of life...the plural of 'fan' a creature who lived of, by, and for fandom...who was addicted to fandom and could not live without it, who would go through actual suffering if he were denied his fannish participation, while 'fans' were merely those 'normal' human beings who pursued fandom as a hobby which they took none too seriously and who could cut their fannish activity short without the slightest pain. The article was biting as only the Laney prose has ever succeeded in being, and at times it was close to vicious.

Laney heaped scorn upon the 'fen'; he denounced them in every way. They were loathsome, below contempt, utterly without justification. He did everything but call for a holy crusade to exterminate them.

I've never been fond of the term 'fen', which seems to me an unnecessary artificialization and not particularly useful, but that article went too far. This column probably started germinating at the time I first read that and has been growing ever since. Why should these 'fen' (to temporarily accept Laney's terminology) be so objectionable? I can see why they might be an object for pity...just as the hopeless addict of heroin or morphine would be pitied. To one who can partake of something or bypass it, it is disturbing to observe a weaker individual who has lost the ability to refrain. But why should that individual be condemned?

It was a question Laney never satisfactorily answered and, for that matter, was, in essence, the universal enigma running like a thread through all Laney's writings; why did the man have such a near psychotic hatred of so many seemingly innocuous things; why was he compelled to attack and attack and attack? Perhaps it is an example of Robert Bloch's 'in-group - out-group antagonism', the instinctive mistrust of that which is different from ourselves which is at the root of so much of humanity's darkest chapters. I do not know.

Laney is no longer in fandom and I, for one, miss him. He wrote with an acrid style which no one else has been able to approach or duplicate. Much of his output was brilliant. He had an ability to see instantly through many layers of sham and pretense and the utter amoral frankness of a two-year-old in exposing it, undisturbed as to the consequences. Laney provided a flavor to fandom which is now missing. Without him we are once again in danger of allowing affectedness and self-deception to grow beyond reason.

But Laney also did damage. Partly it was in his own effectiveness...Laney became an idol, the head of a cult...and a far more potent one than his close friend Burbee, who has been the recipient of so much open praise. For Laney changed the face of fandom. Many fannish institutions are far different than they would have been had he not existed, and, too often, lesser writers try to emulate him...many of them without knowing they are doing so or even knowing who Laney was or what he had written. For Laney is still a current in fannish affairs, one which the new fan instinctively feels and, in some cases, attempts to emulate without knowing what he is imitating. Much of the boorishness of some of the younger fans is traceable to this. Of course you might have called Laney a boor (Although I really don't think so. Laney's bad manners were usually highly pointed, while it seems to me the essence of boorishness is pointlessness.) but, if so, he brought to boorishness a class and elegance beyond the ken of the current practitioners.

The other respect in which Laney can be considered a fannish liability was in his seeming unconcern for who he attacked or how. He never seemed to bother reckoning the possible personal repercussions to his victim. Undoubtedly many fannish careers were turned into far different channels due to an attack from Laney. And it would be hard to estimate how many non-pugnacious or sensitive individuals left fandom as a result of Laney's acts, rather than further submit themselves to the sort of verbal brutality of which Laney was a past master.

Unlike Laney's arch-enemy, Ackerman, whose plus value is easily ascertainable, it would be difficult to decide whether Laney's contributions to fandom outweighed the damage he did. For the legacy of Laney remains with us. And part of that legacy is the near-ostracization suffered by the earnest young fan who wants to devote his life to sf and/or fandom.

I repeat, what's wrong with fandom as a way of life?

--Vernon L McCain

"I'm not drunk -- my true personality is emerging."



# SHORT CHANGE

The following are comments on the seventh Shadow mailing and such current FAPA magazines as I can lay hands on.

SPINNAKER REACH -- Russell Chauvenet: The reappearance of Arthur L. Widner was accomplished with such sang froid that I expect you'll be getting some inquiries about who this neofan might be and don't be surprised if somebody leaps on him as fresh evidence that new recruits can still be made without the help of the prozines. But I wish you didn't have a similar indifference about presenting the rest of the material in this issue. It proves one of two things; (a) I'm completely style deaf or (b) you and Widner write remarkably alike, because I'm not sure whether the review of "Earth-light" and "My Life as a Martian" are by Widner or Chauvenet. I'm most annoyed when I'm not sure who's addressing me, but I enjoyed the memoirs about John Carter very much. I also got a laugh when I first discovered that Dejah Thoris laid eggs and the whole farewell scene at the end of "A Princess of Mars" verged on comedy with its tender affection over an egg that I always imagined large enough to have been mothered by a dinosaur. These musings about Mars were fascinating Art/Russ and I'd very much like to see your comments on my own piece about John Carter in Wrhn #14. :: The treadmill reviews of DISCORD give me hope that someday you may do the same favor for Wrhn. I recall your complaints about large size fanzines in the past but note your remark on the 6th Shadow mailing that though "regrettably limited to 3 participants, there were still 40pp." 40 pages is almost as long as some Wrhns and no Wrhns have as large a percentage of material by any one person as that Shadow mlg had. :: My concepts of heaven have gone through stages: the first dates back to my Catholic boyhood when our teacher-nuns solemnly assured us that the streets of heaven were paved with solid gold and its roofs encrusted with diamonds and rubies. I believe their text was the Bible. That concept fell by the wayside when I decided that greed was a strange incentive to create a heaven bent orientation and that if god were all powerful what particular need or desirability was there for opulence based on earthly standards. This collapsed at about the time I discovered science fiction when I took to confounding relatives and friends by arguing that heaven occupied the very same space we were in and that the old direction 'up' was just a physical manifestation of the unattainable. I went further and suggested that hell also occupied this space and that all three of these states were separated by as simple a device as an additional dimension. My last mental balkings at an expression of heaven from a Roman Catholic church occurred during a sermon: the priest's last admonition during that message was to pray devotedly so that we'd have a high place in heaven: the concept of status seeking in the after-life was more than my fannish mentality could take. :: Perhaps "publishing fanzines is too easy since the material produced on the first careless try is all too apt to be sent out into the world by the happy author", but it seems to me that fandom has its own built in challenges. At first it may be possible for a fan to satisfy himself by distribution the first thing that comes into his head, but forms of egoboo grow stale and if he has a real need for egoboo, or any ambition, his work will improve to merit the attention of people like Boggs, Warner, Speer, Willis, and others. Egoboo from these sources is not "assured in advance" and work that merits it is very likely produced with the idea that it must "run the critical gauntlet of other eyes." Fans who aren't reached by this principle of evolving standards don't sound like promising candidates to meet "the more challenging and difficult work of producing saleable science fiction." After all, science fiction writing doesn't pay enough to make it any more than a flagrant quest for ego satisfaction, in one form or another. Thus far I've dealt with the argument on your premise, but actually I'm not willing to grant that an ability to produce saleable science fiction is automatically a "more challenging and difficult" job than selling your way into FAPA's Top Ten. If one can believe his eyes, FAPA has more demanding standards for recognition than various phases of PLANET STORIES or AMAZING showed. :: Can anyone direct me to critical writing on the John Carter series other than the articles that appeared in PHANTASY PRESS some time ago? :: Davidson's

Greats of Science Fantasy illustration (Paul, Dold, Finley and Bok) don't all remind me of particular paintings. Paul brings to mind clumsy and cluttered space technology, Dold I can't recall a thing by, Finley brings back memories of a superb Vampiress illustrating a short story in Famous Fantastic Mysteries, I think, and Bok reminds me of lovely females holding opalesque spheres and other such nonsense. None of them remind me of specific stories.

PANTOPON -- Ruth Berman: I don't recall ever communicating with you, Ruth, but I've enjoyed most of your material. Unfortunately, though, this review is going to live up to the title of this column.

A RUBBER MEATBALL -- Steve Stiles: I've seen those "small negroes with bongo drums" on the subway, but always thought they were the same ones. Is there more than one set? :: What vivid color in that illustration on page 3! The rest of the dittoing is of such a high quality that I hope you'll do us all a favor and write a text on the methods of dittography for Jack Speer. :: If you think its sad to see an old homestead about to be demolished, I think I'll break your heart with my tale of the time our large rambling home in Vermont burned to the ground. My brother and I were at school when our parents burst in and took us home where the house was aflame. Everything was lost but a refrigerator, which my father single-handedly carried from the building and a calendar which my mother, in her frenzy, rescued. This happened about two weeks before Christmas and all the shopping had been completed. Everything burned right before our eyes. :: What's this tantalizing bit about in your review of NULL-F: "If it is true that there are a few people trying to blackball Walter, (and I can imagine who they are)..."? These Byzantine intrigues are getting me down. Has fandom always been filled with these subterranean vendettas? Your comment on NULL-F is the first I've heard of this one. Like Ted White in BANE #6, I hate it when somebody alludes tantalizingly to an episode without mentioning any names."

AMNESIA -- Bob Lichtman: That line about FAPA being a democracy because even George Wetzel and Ray C Higgs can come in first on a poll, reminds me to note re the other comments I've seen on the amendment for a vote to keep out undesirables that if FAPA can occasionally vote to retain a dilatory member why shouldn't it be able to vote to eliminate a rabidly undesirable waiting lister? The other side of the coin on votes to retain members is that every such vote is in effect a vote to slow down the admission of waiting listers.

ED MESKYS: Somehow I doubt that any copies of the ASTRA'S TOWER booklet on Tolkien will find their way into FAPA's surplus stock sale. You were welcome to my extra copy.

FAP -- Les Gerber: I much prefer having these Shadow magazines as separate items in the envelope rather than stapled into one larger lump. :: From the buildup given Sylvia's cover in the colophon I assume that it was supposed to be a depiction of an invisible spaceship. :: I don't think there's much doubt as to the outcome if the purpose of the Chicon IQ test is to find out "whether the mean score in fandom will really be above the mean for the entire population." If "the entire population" is considered that of the world, mere literacy should win it for us. If that means just the nation: well, wouldn't the IQ mean of most any given group of bookworms be above that of the nation? Or am I forgetting what IQ tests are supposed to measure? :: After having watched Carlino during the Nixon campaign, I found that in answer to Lane's charges he conducted himself about as I expected he would. But of course, the burden of proof is on the accuser and though Carlino made no bones that his accusers were dupes of the communists this familiar refrain shouldn't cause us to overlook whether or not Lane backed up his charges. Did he? :: I rarely write out full notes in books; White's "The Making of the President" has the fullest notes I've



ever made in a book, but I do check and encircle anything that seems like a point that might be needed for reference or criticism. Since I rarely lend books the idea of who will read it next never enters my head and it isn't necessarily a question of checking to see if you'll react the same way the next time -- it's just a handy means of cutting down that reasearch time. :: "Why does a low woman's voice suggest intimacy"? Because a low woman would do anything.

I must admit that myfile of FAPAZines is in fantastically bad order and many good publications that should be reviewed here won't be for the simple reason that I can't find them. One sure way to insure that your magazine is commented on in these pages would be to join SFAPA. Initial activity requirements consist of doing nothing in FAPA for at least one year. To the FAPAZines at hand, then:

THE FANTASY AMATEUR, February issue: The egoboo poll fills me with apprehension: thesection for listing undesirables on the waiting list contains 8 places!

CELEPHAIS -- Bill Evans: I imagine that Chauvenet would be one of the first voted in under the Wells plan, but I think the biggest argument against elective admission to FAPA would be that it might encourage pandering to the membership and other such campaigns. But perhaps something like this should be undertaken on a trial basis. If your worst fears were realized it could always be discontinued, but, of course, something that isn't tried can never be discontinued. Something should be done if duel memberships are breaking up in a deliberate campaign to keep us out. As for the possible undesirability of hyper-active fans, you undercut your own objections, ie, that they "are too busy fanning to devote much time to FAPA", by saying you'd much rather have interesting chitchat "from the Coulsons or Busbys...". The Coulsons and Busbys are probabably the most active fans presently in fandom. The Coulsons produce a large monthly subzine and the Busby's help pull off the same feat as well as being active in SAPS and masterminding a recent world convention.

EOS -- Jack Speer: If this publication hadn't been casting a shadow, I'd never have found it. The text is almost invisible. :: I enjoyed the review of the Pal movie, but the style reminded me of nothing so much as a neo-fannish review of a stfilm with its emphasis on technical errors. I thought of you when I saw "She Done Him Wrong" starring Mae West and Gary Grant recently. Mae accidentally sticks a knife into a woman who promptly slumps over dead. Miss West is called from the room by the film's plot and when she returns the body has completely vanished. No mention is made of this body for the rest of the movie and West and Grant go off into the sunset in a medley of incredibly racy lines. There wasn't an unexplained dead body in late 19th century costume floating around in "Atlantis the Lost Continent" was there? :: Wasn't the fight between man and bull in "Quo Vadis"? :: What's this question in the review of FANTASY AMATEUR? Did you request to have your children put on the waiting list? :: I note you say "if the Hiss case was a frameup". Why so indefinite, or were you just testing Joan Hurley's breaking point before? Your summation of the effects of the Hiss case merely reveals that it's still much easier to read the past than the future. Surely no one who recalls Nixon's management of his 1960 campaign could assign such Machiavelian foresight to his handling of the Hiss case. :: Your varients on the Golden Rule arn't iron clad: Your chap who feels physically equal to any comer might say "I don't ask help from my neighbors and I don't expect them to ask help from me" will be the first one to polish up the Rule when he finds himself ambushed by a mob in some back alley. :: I'm not sure just what connotations the word "fan" still has to the rest of the population that makes you flinch away from it. Around here the word is perfectly useful and underogatory if prefaced by "baseball". Use of the word alone will get you questions about what kind of fan you ~~mean~~ or why you want an instrument to cool off on such a frigid day.

HORIZONS -- Harry Warner: Hey, I like the blue paper! :: Your secret symbol "that could be worn on clothing without making the bearer conspicuous" so fans could recognize each other would be a fine suggestion if all fans wanted to meet all other fans. Personally if I were riding on a bus to the same convention with George Wetzel I'd just as soon be ignorant of the fact. Can't you just imagine some of the joyful meetings between fans who recognize the symbol but not each other? :: There is a lot to be said for restraint in fannish material and even if the silver lining in this case is so small as to be hardly noticable it can be noted that the White-Moskowitz hassel makes clear that the temptation to verbal fireworks should be tempered by the knowledge that there are people in fandom capable of dragging your remarks into court. However, I'm wondering if it doesn't also point up the need to take care at whom your invective is directed -- after all there are degrees in everything, even in people capable of bringing suit, I trust, and remarks need not be truly libelous in order to insitute action. As you say, "there are plenty of lawyers anxious enough for business to start action on borderline stuff that isn't quite libel and it's such an infernal nuisance to be sued for libel that it doesn't matter particularly whether you are found guilty or not; that's an anticlimax." It seems to me that anyone who argues with someone whose knowledge of fannish traditions is vague is risking action merely if his rebuttal sticks to the issues and eschews comment on character if his rebuttal is devastating in its pinpointing of the opponents arguments. Anything you put down in print is a potential powderkeg if inadvertantly directed at the proper party and a deliberate vendetta directed at the same person is tantamount to lighting the fuse yourself. Given this, the careless label "fugghead" could be the basis of expensive legal entangelment. The fugghead section of the FANAC poll is one of the dangerous uses of the honor -- since it's most apt to single out the genuine article and the person most apt to have a legal answer for it. After reading the citation, however deserved, in the FANNISH II, it seems to me that it wouldn't be hard to demonstrate in court that it's intent was to hold up an individual to contempt and ridicule before a large body of people. :: Your reputation as a hermit is always throwing me off: how did you research this statement: they "arrived with the same look in their eye that appears when fans go traveling to rescue a FAPA mailing from a dilatory official editor"? :: How did fandom in Washinton state reach "a climax with the staging of the 1961 convention"? :: I think you've expressed a preference for life in a small town or city over living in a large city, but I see here that you also mention one of the things that makes life intolerable for me in settlements of the size you perfer: "The neighbors are less broadminded than I am about strange women who spend the night in a bachelor's house". The inability of the small town mind to mind its own business and the resulting loss of freedom in terms of harrassment and gossip should have driven anybody who didn't like living in a gold fish bowl into the large cities long ago. The inability to order my private life the way I want to (to the extent that putting up a lady friend for the night would make me an object of discussion) would be an immediately deciding factor in my move, but minor straws like not being able to walk down the street and having to choose between being a grotch or making incredibly pointless small talk with every other individual that came along quickly made up my mind for me. Do I detect evidence of the shaping of small town mores on your thinking in another matter in this issue? You accepted the invitation from Tom Purdom for participation in a panel discussion at the Philcon against your better judgment because you were "afraid people would get the idea that /you're/reluctant to get before an audience if /you/renegeed for the second straight year." If people get that idea from my refusal to appear on a panel at the Lunacon this year, they couldn't be more correct. :: A lovely issue as usual, Harry.

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 It was almost good enough to read.  
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