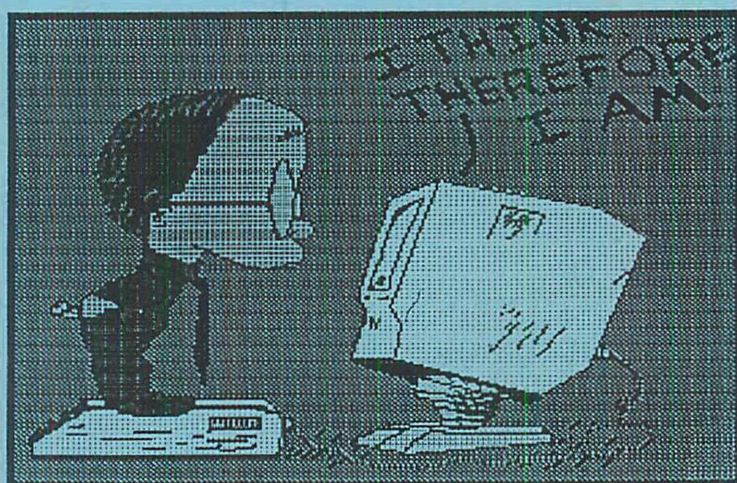
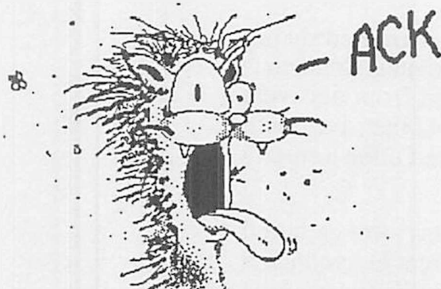


Whistlestar



Whistlestar 5



This Note's For You

— from the desk of Neil Crab

Think Ralph Molina & Billy Talbot:

One, two — one, two —

To trade your feather and headband —
It was just an oversight.

For tricorn stars and American bars,
it was just an oversight.

The steps they paved
from the grassy stage
are banked off to the right.

We'll all paint faces
on the Sony TV —
This is just a childish night.

That trip to the tailor for
your Superman suit,
I remember, you told me
the point was moot.

Begging for time
in the lazy man's pen,
I know we'll laugh at ourselves again.

This is just a childish night,
It's all an oversight.

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art credits

Jaime Bowman	7, 8
Brad Foster	12, 14, 23
Harry Bell	22

All of the unattributed schizophrenia is by the editor. The miscellaneous graphic fillers are computer-captured or generated images spawned in the subatomic world of MS-DOS (with thanks to Berke Breathed and Bill Waterson). Details for would-be Micronauts available upon request. *Whistlestar #5* is brought to you by Lenny Sailes of 504 Bartlett Street, San Francisco, CA 94110. It is available for letter of comment, trade or as a come on for conversation.

Former Fanzine Returns!

with assistance from Von Turing
Publisher and its boxy alternate
function keys (see details within).

Banapple Gas

Long time, no fanzine, eh gang?

"THE DYING MIRTH"

by Jag Fancy

As the bloated orange sun hovered in the sky, a series of gnarled shapes crept over silicon-pocked landforms to the site of their annual council. Some flew down through the Vale of Violent Clouds. Others debarked from decaying landrovers to the grotto where the ancient mimeograph stood. At the cavemouth two butterflies skimmed briskly over a rusty silver crank, and alighted upon a square plastic disk.

The heirs to the great ruminants of the Numbered Fandoms were gathered to pay homage to their common legacy. The magicians of the Great Hectolineum had been agile in wit, their emphasis placed upon the hidden wellsprings of the spirit rather than upon the dross of contemporary fashion. Fan publishing, they had known, was a whimsical science, or more properly a craft. The mages of the Hectolineum had scorned the glossy realms ruled over by popular demons. Instead, they had turned their attention towards the ineffable. A casual glance into Faandal's Catalog of Magic may serve to illustrate these proclivities to the right-minded observer. Indited in bright purple ink one might find:

Speer's maleptic handicap
and
Tucker's old-fashioned foam,

not to overlook

Van Arnam's Fanoclast Joke,
The Spell of Forlorn Employment,
and

Weber's Evasive Mist, entered upon slightly less faded pages.

The fan publisher's of the '80s cycle were a disparate and uncertain group in comparison to the wizards of the Great Hectolineum. Notwithstanding this, they continued to meet and hold discourse under dank lustrous rocks in the fading orange twilight.

"Nothing to eat but *File 770*!" a Neo-Dande growled in frustration. The encrusted stylia on his back bristled querelously. "Tell me, Turgid of Meyer — think you that Glyer will accept the Hugo if he wins this year?"

"Today, the sun grows cold," Turgid replied. "Scarce a score of fanzines remain known to the ken of fankind — yet few, indeed, can fathom the mind of a LArean."

As Turgid spoke he let his fingers riffle through the debris in the dusty ruins, seeking for even one spell of Ancient Telos....

This year's CORFLU had an alchemical effect on me. I've fallen into a fairly solitary lifestyle in the past year or so. Most of my time has been spent reading about and experimenting with personal computers. I do actually leave the house from time to time, but the people I see are would-be computer users or junior high school students. The social activities in San Francisco science fiction fandom have evaporated considerably since Allyn Cadogan decided to move to the suburbs and raise her own children.

I've been turning the time and energy I spend in solving computer software puzzles into little articles for a local magazine. Doing this has shifted the seat of my soul from people-oriented activities into a kind of "beat-the-machine" mode. I'm afraid I find myself not unlike the way I was when I was a shy, intellectual teenager (back in the days before fandom, rock 'n roll, etc.). It seems harder now to write fanzines or go out to musical events than it did in my first cycle of escaping from nerdiness. I feel like I've played through a lot of things that were fun when I didn't know what to expect next. Equipped as I am now with my Silverbergian sense of *deja vu*, I can't work up the same enthusiasm for stepping out. I carry a finicky anticipation with me, and tend to remain silent in crowds. When conversations come around to the narrow wavelength where my feelings are lumped up, my pent up energy pours out and overwhelms people.

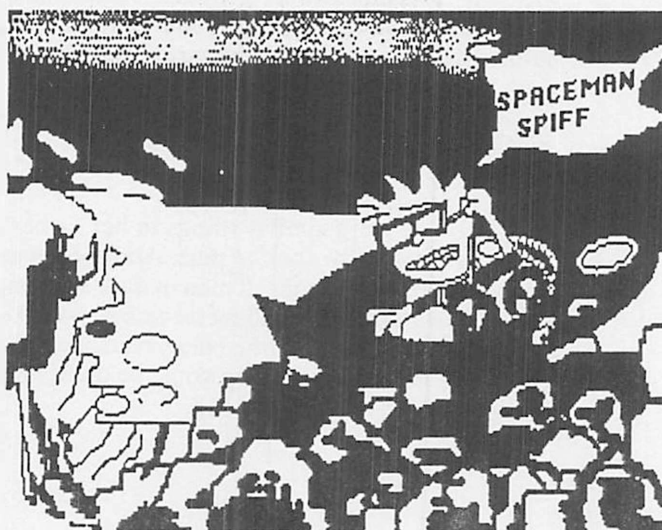
CORFLUs return me to an interpersonal space I didn't realize I'd withdrawn from. I always enjoy spending time with people like Avedon Carol and Ted White because of their willingness to accept conversational "riders" while they hold forth to a group. But I don't have Ted and

Avedon's balancing system. (Yes, they really do have this!) When I become loudest person in a group, I don't modulate as well as they do, and the group usually doesn't last very long.

CORFLU has a calming, thawing effect on me, but it doesn't usually take effect until the last day.

That's what it was like for me this time. In a brief interlude during the Saturday programming I was chosen to sum up my feelings about fanzines and new technology -- computers and desktop publishing. This stuff has been the focus of my leisure thoughts for almost a year now. It felt good to get all of the echo clusters out of my head and let them settle into a wider stream of consciousness. (Teresa Nielsen Hayden, who arbitrated between the traditionalists and modernists, observed that in fine fannish tradition, neither side actually answered the other's points or followed the ground rules for civilized debate, though she said she enjoyed being able to intimidate people into trying.)

Saturday night, under guise of sitting



quietly and listening to Ted White and Rob Hansen recreate the history of British fandom, I absorbed some of the other strong egos at the convention as they dealt with their needs for recognition and self-expression. There were low energies and high energies. (Oh, just look at me, I'll tell you how to make blind men see!)

Mostly I felt outvibed and lacking in subtlety; that I didn't have the repertoire to establish rapport with the people I would have liked to talk to. Luckily the macro-structure on top of all these little tensions was really friendly and comfortable. Underneath the "I'm really a good guy" signals, most everyone was a good guy. I felt the need to transmit my own "okay" signals, but instead got lost in contemplating the semiotics of other conversations.

By Sunday evening I was mellow enough to utilize my Chuch notepad to converse with Mr. Harris. Later on, Art Widner put on a slideshow of his 1941 trip to Denvention. Gerry Sullivan and I replaced the New York-bound Teresa and the computer with a furiously scribbled play-by-play of the narration on the Chuch pads.

Joyce Scrivener charged me with a box of fanzines to convey to TAFF administrator Robert Lichtman, and I found that to be a pleasant circumstance. On the plane home I caught up with many fine fanzines of the late '70s. Interesting to read of Mike Glicksohn's typical ordeal as a high school teacher and compare it with my own experiences. The little world of combat heroism which he casually shrugs off is difficult to explain to outsiders.

Will she find her roots?

"The whole situation – the events of her disappearance, the terrible thing she had learned, the tall gentle madman who had kept her safe both from the inquisition and from the random abominations travelling now through the Void between universes had the aspect of some hideous quadratic equation, with two solutions and no means of determining which was correct."

The daylight side of the equation was simply that she had been temporarily insane. (That was easy) At Gary's houseparty last August she'd imbibed some chemically enhanced punch, of which there'd been a fair amount, and had undergone a long period of illness and violent hallucinations, peopled by wizards, warriors, evil princes, and the kind of man whose love she had always craved."

--- Barbara Hambly, The Silicon Mage

. . . .

"There were similar things in her father's study, four of them, black lacquered cubes arranged along a low shelf of pine. Above each cube hung a formal portrait. The portraits were monochrome photographs of men in dark suits and ties, four very sober gentlemen whose lapels were decorated with small metal emblems of the kind her father sometimes wore. Though her mother had told her that the cubes contained ghosts, the ghosts of her father's evil ancestors.... if they did, she reasoned, they would be quite small, as the cubes themselves were scarcely large enough to contain a child's head.

---Wm. Gibson, Mona Lisa Overdrive

Here, also were a clump of latter-day Arnie Katz fanzines, *Swoons* and *4-Star Extras*. Whatever clashes Arnie may have had with New York Fandom while I was GAFIA, I found this stuff to be warm and genuinely funny.

luconnu is a banker
and Cugel is a clerk....

Getting into actually producing thish of *Whistlestar* reaffirms my faith in the ancient ritual. We forget sometimes, when the mailbox energy isn't enough to keep us moving in the right direction, that publishing fanzines is the key to unblocking

creativity. Riding on Bob Dylan's calliope harmonica, I rediscover the liquid bridge back to poetry, leap outside of the frame [within the frame which sets the x,y coordinates of this page].

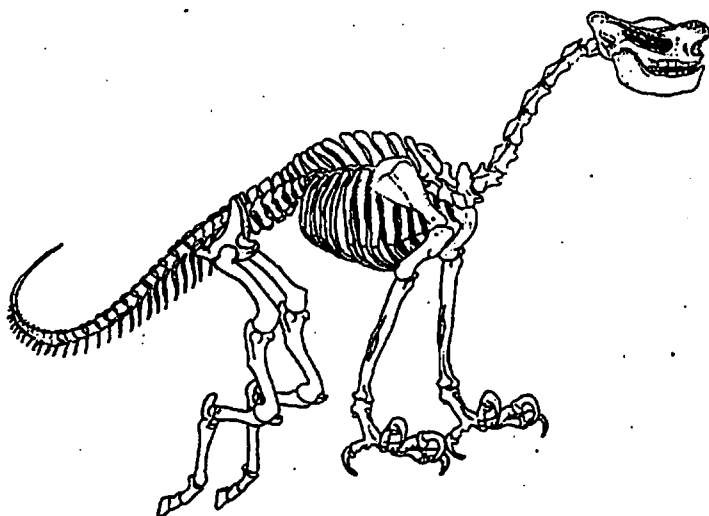
Do not scale moose and squirrel.

...Remember what Greil Marcus never said in *Lipstick Traces*, in his crucial discussion of rock 'n roll and the industrial revolution..

"The tynes, they are a changeling!"

-- Lenny B.





Jeanne's Banapple Gas

-- Jeanne Bowman

ROBERT LICHTMAN WINS TAFF

I first met Robert at a S.A.F.E. meeting before as in Sex as in Sonoma Alternatives for Energy. Robert was a vegetarian long-haired dropout from an inspirational spiritual community. My man! My kinda guy. Robert was politically correct before PC was coopted by IBM. Now he's a computer literate PC shorn & shaven unreconstituted vegetarian kinda guy. He likes garlic, Kim Chee (still makes his own) and works a real job. Shift happens.

Just last night I called Robert for this exclusive fictitious *Whistlestar* interview:

JB: "Hi Robert, so are you ready to go?"

RL: "Oh hi. I was *sniff* hoping you'd found that photo *snort* of all of us with long hair."

JB: "No. But I haven't checked the basement yet. Sorry. So you've got your sox packed & that nifty rotary brush electric toothbrush squared away?"

RL: "Really Jeanne. Allyn Cadogan *sniffle* loaned me her transformer. But I really want to see *sneeze* Dylan Thomas literary sights *sniff*, you know, The River TAFF."

JB: "Are you getting sick, Robert?"

RL: "**Sniff* no. *Sniffle* my nose is running oh oh I've got snot everywhere... allergies... is this the interview?"

FIRESIDE CHAT

I sit in my rocking chair watching the coals glow in the woodstove. Don lies upon the rug, his head propped up on the frame of the baby carrier. Soon he will switch that for the tiny painted Mexican-cane bottomed child's chair. Nick has the ancient teakettle and is removing & rejoining its singing toggle top. He stands astraddle, triumphantly maintaining his balance as he puts the parts together. He laughs and nods his head up and down, up and down, celebrating his accomplishment. He crawls over to and onto Don.

Jaime's chair squeaks & groans echo-

ing his mental machinery as he struggles with his math homework.

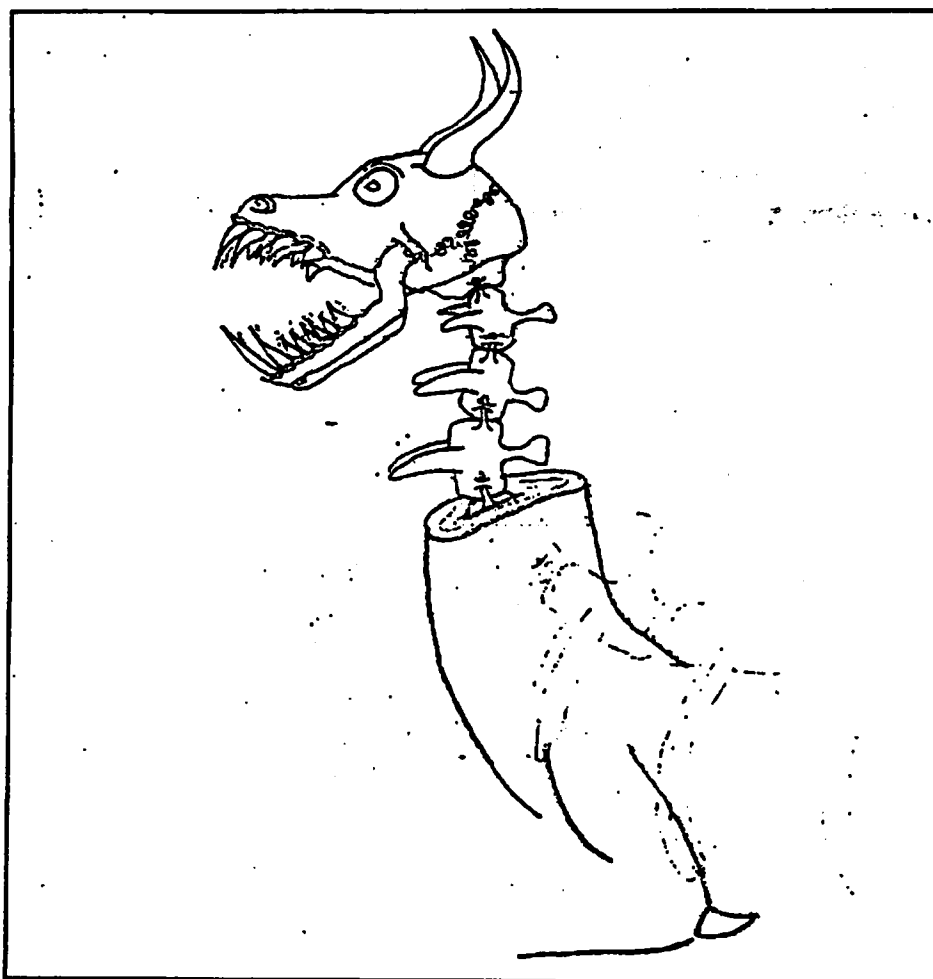
Jesse wants another Kiwi fruit.

"Not now, Jesse," I say. "But if you want to set out some more to ripen that's a good idea. Take them out of the plastic bag in the refrigerator. Bring them in here & put them in the paper bag with the apple."

"How many can I put in," Jesse wonders, "only one of these is soft."

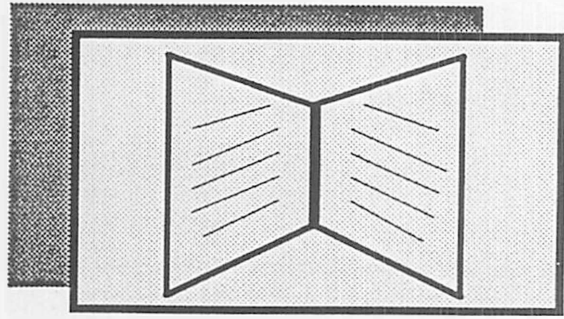
"As many as you want," I say as I begin to warm to the subject, "As long as you can close the bag. You see Jess, the apple gives off ethylene gas and that ripens the Kiwi fruit, but you have to trap the gas."

"Oh Jesse," Don says, "Now Jeanne just has the wrong idea about that ripening folklore. What really happens in that plain brown paper bag is that the apple farts. That's right. Those Kiwis are trapped in there. Pretty soon they are flavored by those Sweet Apple Farts."



The Fanzine Fanfaronade

by Ted White



My eighteen-year-old daughter goes to more conventions, these days, than I do. She met her current boyfriend at one. "Why do you go to these conventions?" I ask her. "Nobody I know goes to them." They have names like "Evecon" and are thrown by groups which exist to put on conventions for (they hope) profit.

"I go to see my friends," she explains patiently, and I hear words I spoke to my parents thirty years ago coming back to me. "We hang out, we party. You know" And I do. The difference is this: neither my daughter nor her friends are into fanzines.

::

"You fanzine fans," a woman says from the audience at a panel I'm on, "you don't know anything about fandom, do you?" She goes on to tell us that she's been a fan for three years, now, and it didn't take her long to figure things out. "You're snobs," she tells us. "You're prejudiced against the rest of us, but we're the real fandom."

Is she right? Have we been abandoned by the Spirit of Fandom -- or, worse yet, abandoned it ourselves --

and passed over in favor of the newly Chosen fen?

Evidence to that effect is everywhere around us, particularly in the halls of myriad conventions, riding the shoulders of strangers, like a stuffed dragon.

Strangers speak our language, but use it to say incomprehensible things. Our vocabulary has been co-opted by people who neither know nor care about its origins and evolution. Even the vocabulary of our fanzines has been wrestled from us by people who live in New Jersey and think science fiction is for jerks, who think that any self-published vehicle is "a fanzine." The very word, "fanzine," has been trademarked by Fiorucci. (Take that, Chauvenet!)

LAN'S LANTERN won a Hugo -- and may well win more -- on the strength of its lack of fannishness. Its editor preens himself; he is publishing his hundreds of meaningless bookreviews (and movie reviews, and TV reviews) for his kind of fans, the perpetual neofan to whom fanzine fandom is forbidding and elitist and ghod knows what else. He takes a paranoid, "Didn't-I-tell-you?"

delight in the criticism he receives; it binds him closer to his audience, each one of whom knows in his or her heart that fanzine fans are Degenerate Ogres and fanzine fandom is a closed club which would never admit any of them.

::

None of this would be so bad if in fact fanzine fandom was anything to brag about these days. But it isn't. Good fanzines still appear every so often, and from widely divergent sources and locales, but they fail to connect. There is little sense of community to be found in the fanzines which arrive in the mail. Each exists in splendid near-isolation. Harry Warner may have a letter in each and every one of them, but these days the community reflected in most fanzines is the local community of the fan (or fans) who produced it. Maybe it was always thus, but increasingly these individual communities seem to be insular, self-absorbed, and self-referential. Few reflect the larger community of fanzines and fanzine fans. Those in which other fanzines are "reviewed" most often proffer only addresses and single-sentence comments.

Fanzines don't talk to or about each other much.

I miss that.

And thus, this column. I want to talk about some fanzines here

::

RUNE 78 is a good example of what I'm talking about. Like an increasing number of "desktop- published" fanzines it is spiffily produced, and easy to look at -- but is given over to amazingly voluminous and vapid contents.

Distributed to everyone who attended the last Minicon (print run: 2500), its centerpiece is a twenty-seven page "Operations Log" from that convention. What an incredible waste of space! Entries (selected here at random) include: "16:51 Peg I. showed up with Val Lies' checkbook (Yea!). 16:54 Val Lies picked up her checkbook. 17:11 Val Lies called to find out Opening Ceremonies rehearsal time /place from DavE (Romm)." ... "22:29 Keypercalls in. He never received previous beeps. I will test beep him in one minute. 22:30 Test beep for Keyper. 22:35 Keyper's beeper need [sic] a new battery. Scott Raun refuses to fix it. 22:39 Keyper will get Registration beeper until other beeper fixed (not until Friday AM)."



On the one hand, this "Log" (edited down by 25%, we are told, "to remove the boring parts") makes a dam- poor reminder of the convention for the vast majority of its attendees (none of whom saw this aspect of the convention). And on the other, it shows up the pointlessness and self-importance of the "inner circle" of people who believe that running a convention consists of sitting in a side room somewhere, armed with beepers or walkie-talkies, twiddling their thumbs and missing

90% of the convention-- both programming and parties. Minor logistical problems assume an undeservedly vast importance, and those involved preen themselves over the ways in which they "handled" it all. While a certain amount of this sort of thing is inevitable in running a large modern convention, it's scut work at best, and appears to attract those too incompetent to do anything else. (Say, just how hard is it to change a battery in a beeper? Why would anyone regard this as a sophisticated repair job -- or refuse to do it?)

The "Log" is preceded by a two-page piece by someone for whom the convention was his first. It might be interesting to his friends -- as a personal letter (which, in effect, it was, having first appeared on a computer bulletin board) -- but is so narrowly focused that it evokes nothing of the convention and carries no insights into the first-convention experience. Following the "Log" is something called "A Barbarian Survival Guide to Minicon," by Susan Grandys, who tells us, "I was one of five Exec members who ran Minicon this year." This piece of fluff consists of eleven numbered suggestions to future Minicon "Execs" of which #9 is typical: "Carry a parachute. (In case the elevators break ((again)) and when you need to get down from the 22nd floor in a hurry.)" The humor throughout is sophomoric at best.

It's hard to imagine what the typical Minicon attendee will make of this stuff. The sheer absence of substance, to say nothing of the lack of any evocation of the convention the attendees experienced, may leave most of them shaking their heads and wondering what they're supposed to do with the fanzine.

It gets a little better after the first

thirty-five pages. "Not A Minicon Report" by Teddy Harvia is a collection of twelve cartoons masquerading as a two-page comic strip (although arranged and laid out like a comic strip, there is no panel-to-panel continuity, each carrying a separate caption). Harvia's art does nothing for me -- it's "cute" -- but it's inoffensive, and the writing is mildly amusing.

The letter column fairly cries out for the firm hand of an editor; half the letters are of the "I liked it" variety, with nothing more than that to say, and should have been relegated to the wahf listing. But for once I won't complain about four pages of fanzine "reviews" which are little more than listings: perhaps this kind of brief overview of many different fanzines is exactly appropriate for convention-attendees unfamiliar with fanzine fandom, and perhaps some of them will feel the urge to sample the fanzines.

Or perhaps not. If I knew nothing about fanzines and this issue of *RUNE* was my introduction, I might decide to look no further. Self-indulgent, bloated and superficial, *RUNE 78* represents fanzine fandom at its worst: a pale reflection of self-absorbed con-runner fandom.

: :

KAMERA OBSKURA 2 is the exact opposite of *RUNE 78*: small and personal. Owen Whiteoak is one of the best of the current crop of British fanwriters, and he has evolved a style uniquely his own.

As I theorize about it, Owen, who entered fandom early in this decade looked around and observed that a primary focus of British fanwriting was -- and still is -- the conreport. But, as a natural corellary, the art of writing a conreport had developed

into a stylistic cul-de-sac, with West's *Performance* its end-result: naturalistic, tour-de-force, Significant, and all-enveloping. Those, like Simon Ounsley, who still had the courage to follow after *Performance*, had to resort to convoluted rationales: the gothic dream, perhaps. A simple, straightforward conreport didn't stand a chance. Even the details of who slept with whom, and who threw up on whom, were no longer enough. Exaggeration alone was oldhat – Roy Kettle had mined that vein years ago. What to do?

Owen's solution was to fantasize. He created his own conventions and reported them. They might carry the name of a real convention – or they might not. The names which appeared in them were usually real and – more to the point – so were the events and conversations. But the reality was poetic as often as not: Had those people been in the stipulated situation, their behavior and conversation would have been exactly as Owen wrote it.

In doing this, Whiteoak reinvented a fifties concept, originated in the pages of *A BAS*, and originally called a "Derogation." In the original Derogations (usually written by Boyd Raeburn), an unlikely cast of fans was assembled, ostensibly at a party, and thrown into conversation. Quotes were often lifted (sometimes grossly out of context) from published pieces in fanzines, freshly juxtaposed and larded with the comments of Raeburn and his friends. The overall purpose was satirical, and the satire was often bitingly sharp.

Whiteoak is less the satirist and more the observer; his quotes come infrequently from actual published statements and usually from overheard real conversations. The effect is softer, gentler, but no less



Insightful.

In *KAMERA OBSKURA 2*, only the first four of its eleven pages are Owen's own writing; the remainder is a well-edited letter column. No matter: the feel throughout is Whiteoak. In "Hatton Coat-Tales," he describes a fannish meeting at a pub: "Meanwhile, the meetings at the Sir Christopher Hatton continue apace, and unabashed, attracting such names as Mike Moorcock, Mike Glicksohn, Eric Mayer, Claude Degler, Arthur "Ego" Clarke, Bob Tucker, H.G. Wells, and the man who has been called 'the Walt Willis of the 1980s,' Walt Willis. Unfortunately there were no bodies to accompany any of these names. However, here is an extract from the official minutes of a typical meeting ..."

What follows is incredibly pun-filled and fairly frothy: "Mr. Whiteoak proposed that the days should be taken as ours, but that the seconds should still be minuted even if the minutes hadn't been seconded. The hours should remain unminuted unless seconded. Ms. Carol felt that this was week and could go on all night. ... Mr. Whiteoak noted that the table had been moved before the motion could be tabled. The motion was tabled and then carried. The table was moved but not carried, and then the drinks were carried to another table, in one swift and continuous motion. The chair was then carried. On second

thoughts, it was moved back for the other table for some minutes, but then returned for ours." A little of that goes quite a way.

Elsewhere Owen remarks on how little time he has to read these days, and says that in the last year he's read only one book, Harry Warner's All Our Yesterdays, which he then discusses briefly. *KAMERA OBSCURA* lacks the meat of some of Whiteoak's bigger fanzines (the titles of which changed regularly), but enjoys the advantage of frequency ("Two fanzines in three weeks?" said Rob Hansen. 'If you're not careful, Owen, you'll give London fandom a good name.' ...") and, as previously mentioned, a solid and enjoyable letter column. In these eleven pages there's more to enjoy than can be found in the 50-page *RUNE*.

::

YHOS 44 straddles the gap between *RUNE* and *KAMERA OBSCURA*, but this issue is weaker than some previous issues. Art Widner brings to his fanzine both the breadth of experience of someone who is perhaps the oldest fan (in terms of fan-activity -- Art dates back to the early forties) still publishing a solo fanzine (and with that phrase, "solo fanzine," I extricate myself from an argument over whether someone like Vinç Clarke might be "older" as a fan still active in fanzine publishing) and the enthusiasm of a "reborn" fan, returned to fandom after many years of gaffiation.

Art's concept of "editing" is pretty much laissez faire: he doesn't really "edit" very much -- and in fact encourages his letter-writers to give him xeroxable copy which he can run intact. So *YHOS* varies a lot, issue-to-issue, in quality and feel. In this

issue Paul Skelton leads off with "Typing in Talkos," a ramble on the subject of both typos and mispronunciations. Typical of Skel when he has no axe to grind, it's an enjoyable read, unpretentious and occasionally acute.

Unfortunately, William Rotsler's contribution to "Fannish Geography," "Lassfass and Me," is minor reminiscence. The concept of a series on "Fannish Geography" is Art's, and one with which I've quibbled in conversation. (Art wants pieces on the fandom of each area of --at least-- this country, but confusion exists over whether this is supposed to be a current survey or an historical one.) Rotsler's contribution is really not much about LA fandom, either historical or contemporary; if you don't already have an overview of LASFS, many of his offhand references may be confusing. The piece is really a brief memoir which reads as though it was taped during an impromptu talk, and suffers from all the informality that would imply. Minor stuff.

The remaining twenty-two pages are letters.

Years ago, in an issue of *SCIENCE-FICTION FIVE-YEARLY*, I wrote a piece of fan-fiction in which a character put out a xeroxed fanzine in which he preproduced the letters he received. It was remarked that despite the disparate typefaces used in those letters, he managed -- via xerox-reduction capabilities -- to assemble them into a neat-looking fanzine. In my mind's eye I could see that fanzine, and how it would look. And, I must confess, it looked nothing like *YHOS*.

The letter column in *YHOS* is a mess. Some pages are double-columned with tiny type, while others look typeset and

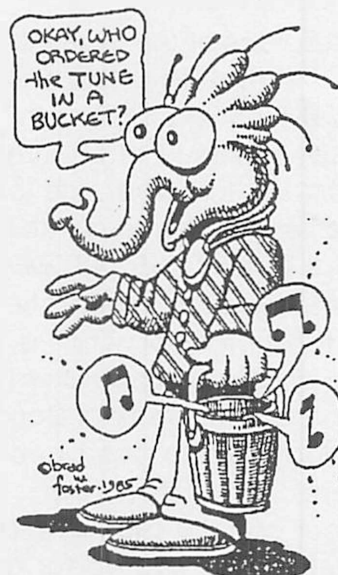
yet others (no doubt typed on an obsolete typer with a worn-out cloth ribbon -- like mine) are patchy and hard to read. Dot-matrix type intermingles with daisy-wheel type. Point-sizes (and/or pitch) vary vastly. Worse, there is no dependable way to even be sure of who any letter is from, since some have letterheads, while others do not, and one offers only an indecipherable signature as a clue. With such a variety of typefaces Art's own responses (generally footnoted and following each letter) get lost as well. There is no overall format, no uniform way of introducing and closing each letter, no headings, no ameliorating graphics (although some letter-writers supply their own graphics, adding to the messiness). This visual clutter and confusion is abetted by the fact that Art appears to publish letters whole: he does not edit out the blah paragraphs -- although in some cases he appears to have deleted the salutations, another inconsistency --and thus the letters appear "raw," unedited.

Very few letters of comment deserve to be published whole, and any good fanzine editor knows this. There is an art to editing letter columns: both in the choice of what to print, and the sequencing of the letters. A good letter column reads like a well-structured conversation between the participants and the editor, with letters effectively responding to each other. Widner does not practice this art, and the result is that *YHOS*'s lettercolumn is a hodgepodge, a scrappy collection that is difficult to read and not always worth the effort.

PULP 9 offers an interesting contrast, especially so since beginning with this issue the US/NorthAm copies are dupli-

cated by Art Widner in a physical format like that of *YHOS*: saddle-folded legal length. (Widner has taken a clean mimeographed copy of the British quarto-sized fanzine and slightly reduced it and xeroxed it into his size/format. My copy arrived in the same mail with *YHOS* 44, although it was mailed separately. (Oddly enough, Art has chosen to assemble it so that the covers are blank, the bacover is the effective page 2, and the zine starts, with its true cover, on page 3. To achieve something approximating the British version, one must fold the front cover back, giving one three blank pages between the last page of type and the bacover....)

PULP, despite its rotating cartel of editors (Vinç Clarke, John Harvey -- who replaced Pam Wells -- and Avedon Carol & Rob Hansen) is a well-edited fanzine with a coherent issue-to-issue feel and format. This issue is edited by Carol & Hansen (although Avedon's is the predominant voice throughout), and may be the best



issue yet.

PULP is a fanzine that talks to and about other fanzines, and, in this issue, a fanzine that talks to itself. Much of the issue is actually a response to Clarke's editorial in the previous issue.

Avedon's editorial is a long, serious, and surprisingly fannish rebuttal to Clarke, who took a position against fanzine criticism. In addition to that editorial and a number of well-written and well-reasoned letters (from Skelton, Whiteoak, Jimmy Robertson, Simon Ounsley, and Chuck Harris) also addressing the subject of fanzine reviews/criticism, there is a typically brilliant piece by Dave Langford, "Jetbuff Ltd.," which approaches Clarke's editorial obliquely and perhaps the most effectively of them all.

It's good to see this kind of discussion, and to see material of this calibre generated by it. Langford's response is exactly the sort of thing any good faned hopes to see sparked by a previous issue.

The centerpiece of the issue, however, is Chris Priest's "What It's Like To Receive a Death Threat From Harlan Ellison." Priest published a special issue of his infrequent fanzine, *DEADLOSS*, last year, devoted to the question of what transpired with Ellison's Last Dangerous Visions. *THE LAST DEADLOSS VISIONS* is a meticulously researched and carefully written history of what is known (largely from Harlan's own published letters on the subject) about the final Dangerous Visions anthology, which has been in the offing for more than fifteen years, and in which a number of once-promising authors have seen their stories tied up for as long. Priest's long history concludes with his own speculations about what went wrong, and

what, if anything, will eventually come of the book. (Copies of *THE LAST DEADLOSS VISIONS* are still available for \$5.00 or \$10.00 if you want it airmailed, from Christopher Priest, 78 High Street, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 5AQ, England.) Priest's piece for *PULP* describes what happened after the publication of *THE LAST DEADLOSS VISIONS*, although ultimately it says less about Harlan than it does about Mike Moorcock, who gleefully informed Priest of the supposed death threat. Typical of Priest, the piece is delightfully written and a coup for *PULP*.

Avedon has continued the format John Harvey initiated in *PULP* 7, borrowed from Malcolm Edwards' late (and lamented) *TAPPEN*, of interpolating material that bridges from each contribution to the next, editorially commenting on what came before and what is to follow. She handles these interpolations well, so that in addition to filling out the last page of the preceding contribution better than a filler would, they tie the issue together nicely. The effect is an overall coherence that pulls together the disparate contributions and helps create the feeling that *PULP* is an organic whole, and not just a collection of pieces.

Despite this, and despite all the talk about the necessity of fanzine criticism, Bridget Wilkinson's "Chalk & Cheese," in which two fanzines are discussed at some length, is the weakest piece in the issue. It's not entirely her fault: it's hard to compete with Priest and Langford, arguably two of the very best writers in fandom. But, and although I agree with her overall assessment of *CRYSTAL SHIP* and then there is something about her reviews which leads to an overall feeling of blandness: a too-cautious, too gentle approach, perhaps an unwillingness to cut cleanly and sharply

when such surgery is called for, or maybe just an unwillingness to be unkind.

Rob Hansen is one of the best letter column editors in fandom, and demonstrates that facility strikingly well in his *EPSILON*. As a rule, he has edited the letter column in *PULP*, but the editorial responses in this issue appear to speak with Avedon's voice, so I am uncertain about his contribution. In any case, the letters here are all-meat, no-fat, and rank as solid contributions in their own right. Just to get a letter from Jimmy Robertson is a coup, and here Jimmy's letter stands with the rest to form a section which, at eleven pages, is still too short. Simon Ounsley sums it up: "I like to see fanzines talking about each other for a change. I think this is a sign of health, it puts a buzz in the air (or in the ink or somewhere), it gives the idea that the fanzine medium is alive and kicking. And that's an idea whose time might have come round again, here in mid-88."

Hear, hear!

RUNE: \$2.00 a copy, or The Usual, edited by Jeanne Mealy and David E. Romm, published by the Minnesota SF Society Inc., PO. Box 8297 Lake Street Station, Minneapolis, MN 55408.

KAMERA OBSKURA: available for The Usual, edited and published by Owen Whiteoak, Top Flat, 11 Horsell Road, Highbury, London N5 1XL, Great Britain.

YHOS: available for The Usual, edited and published by Art Widner, 231 Courtney Lane, Orinda, CA 94563.

PULP: available for The Usual (trades to all three editorial addresses, Please -- that's three copies of yours for one of

theirs, but *PULP* is published every other month, so it evens out), edited and published by Vincent Clarke, 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent DA16 2BN; John Harvey, 43 Harrow Road, Carlshilton, Surrey SM5 3QM; and Avedon Carol & Rob Hansen, 144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London E6 1AB; all in Great Britain.

-- Ted White.



FANZINE ANNEX

Struggling against the gravity well generated by the forward flow of space and time, I'd like to briefly appreciate some of the fanzines I've received since last *Whistlestar* to complement Ted's thoughts on the fanzine scene.

BSFAN 17, the official publication of the Baltimore Science Fiction Society is proof that desktop publishing does not have to mangle fanzines. Elaine Stiles applies aesthetic layout techniques to an issue full of eclectic, interesting writing. Taral's faanish Don Marquis poems follow a piece of fiction by rich brown. For those who also remember rich's archy &

mehitabel parodies, the continuity is especially appropriate. Steve Stiles contributes an illustrated Conspiracy report, and the sercon element of the club is placated by provocative rhetoric from Alexis Gilliland. Three or four more fanzines like this one, and I'd be back to publishing monthly and letterhacking happily.

WING WINDOW 11 came in from John Berry with an enlightening account of what transpired between Dave Langford and Fred Harris at Brighton. **TRAPDOOR 8** from Robert Lichtman contained an interesting column from Paul Williams describing his reunion with '60s fan Greg Shaw and some adventures in the pop music world. **AB-BATOIR 5** from Lucy Huntzinger arrived with its usual dry personality descriptions and BArea local color.

Several issues of PULP succeeded the one Ted reviews. #10 is the last issue edited by John Harvey who retires from the circle of coeditors. #12 continues the strong appeals Avedon Carol started in **BLATANT** to exploit the opportunities afforded by the fan press to do some real writing. Dave Langford follows through with a really funny column about how computer programming

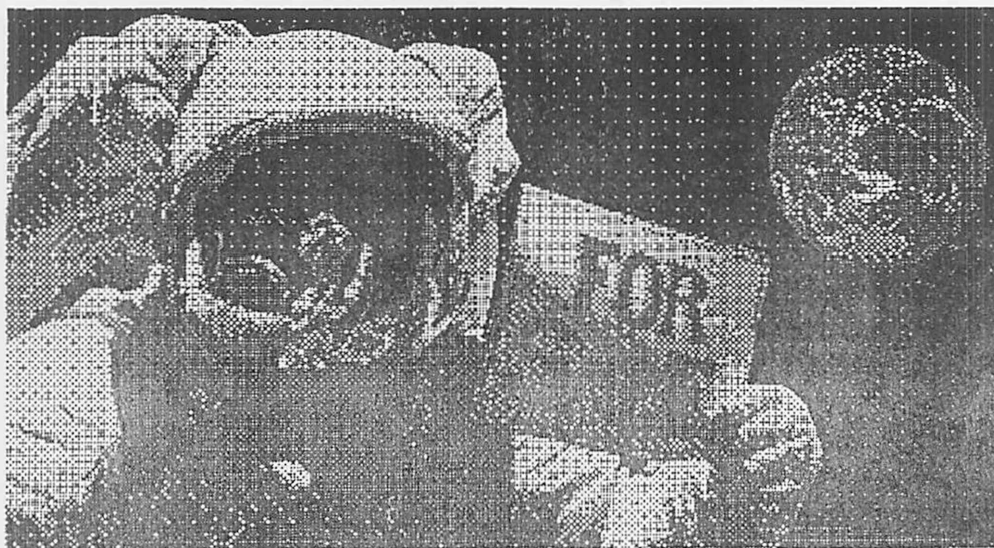
alters consciousness. #11 was probably a good issue, as well, but I didn't get it, owing to a post office foul up.

It's always interesting looking over Joseph Nicholas and Judith Hanna's shoulders in **FUCK THE TORIES**, being reminded to reawaken our fading moral senses, and therefore our larger spirits and senses of humor.

Lilian Edwards and Christina Lake continue to publish cogently written true confessions of every day life in **THIS NEVER HAPPENS 11**.

RUNE 79 was closer to the traditional paradigm of a clubzine than the previous issue which Ted roasts in his column, here. Some people will probably enjoy the friendly-exuberant tone of the contributors (I enjoyed meeting some of them at CORFLU). My taste runs more to unified flowing layouts which focus a fanzine into a continuous whole. The erratic layout of **RUNE** makes it hard for me to read. Clubzines don't have to do this to create a participatory feeling, see **BSFAn 17** for a case in point.

-- Lenny B.



Neuron Mincer

by S.G. Gibson

The space above the port glinted dull silver like a discarded write-protect.

"It's not like I'm a user," Czechkeys said to the hangers-on caught in his personal zone. "No, not me. I go through a hundred applications a month, don't do a lick of work on any of 'em."

"You boys know why I'm here, today?" he continued, licking his lips compulsively.

"We know," one of his zonies replied. "Nothing beats playing those great, cheap mind games."

"Expose 'em and depose 'em," Czechkeys muttered, now to himself, and now to the adjacent wall as his audience drifted gently away. His was a shopworn Valley voice constantly replaying an old Valley joke. Surrounded by hack writers and vermillion cursors, Czechkeys felt like muttering some of his own. He let his hands wander away from the port, his fingers sensuously stroking at the grey metal clone-cases in front of him. As he appraised a group of book salesmen clustered in the far corner of the showroom, his thoughts wandered down to his briefcase and the incendiary bombs contained within it. Pretty soon, now, he would --

Thwack! A custard pie whistled by Czechkeys' ear and landed on an accountant, dislodging the man's MouseHat. On

the wall-screen a pointer skidded and sank out of sight.



Three men in glowing white suits stepped forward and flapped their red ties at a corps of clown-masked minions. The clowns began showering the crowd with shiny CD cubes.

"WHO YOU GONNA CALL WHEN IT'S MERGE OR GET RED-LINED?"

"WORLDPERFECT!" The clowns shouted in unison.

"WORLDPERFECT!" The crowd began to chant.

Czechkeys wrinkled his nose and edged toward the exit. If the Von Turgings picked up on this demo they'd scale it down and box it.

The Von Turing Publishers and World-Prefect Corporation were still stretching their boxy fingers over society's alternate-function keys - - sparring to define the shape of the Interface. Everyone who knew The IBeam Sector knew it would be no-man's land until one of these megaliths prevailed.

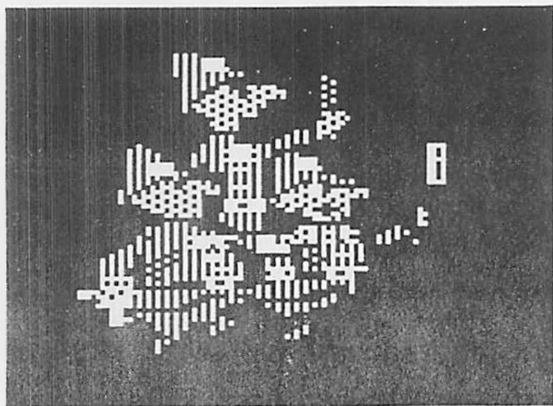
But Czechkeys' briefcase was not for these. This crowd, he saw, was comprised of bookkeepers, professional User-Nerds

down from the Swap Festival. No sign of corporate Erase-Heads or holo-magnates here. These marks were --Czechkeys grimaced-- consumers. He wondered fleetingly what it would be like to be a consumer, actually paying for software.

The custard-drenched accountant wiggled his Mouse ears, buoying back the pointer to his tri-d display. Czechkeys looked down and again licked his lips. In several more hours he would strap on a MouseHat of his own, and release his satchel's incendiary contents into the Net. If he closed his eyes, he could see the Interface blinking before him. He could almost taste it. Czechkeys stuck his tongue out, reflexively.

The Interface had its roots in the primitive OS's of the '80s, in 68000 graphics routines and MicroGate-IBeam pipe-dreams. The command driven hacks and cold blue windowing environments once burned into 8 bit CPUs had evolved into something new -- something which now proclaimed itself to couch potatoes the world over:

Cipherspace was the consensual hallucination shared daily by millions of aging Baby Boomers. The handwriting was literally on the wall.



The flash of media-hack cursors glowed more luminously than MTV, creating a brightness all its own.

...

Eight hours away from the clowns of Shopworn Valley, Czechkeys now flipped his big red switch. As Cipherspace bootstrapped about him, words simultaneously spelled themselves out in garish neon chrome:

HOLO-MICROGRAPHX

Dusty, glass-tube script looped through the space behind his eyes. A purple-haired woman stepped seductively out of black shadows. Czechkeys pulled his MouseHat closer to his temples. With a preliminary ear wiggle he jacked himself into the net.

Something was moving in the shadows behind Holo-Micrographx. Was he discovered? Bezier curves joined mockingly to form a bizarre 3-d vector abstract. An isomorphically deformed ice cube from an ad man's nightmare was threatening to cool him. The ice cube transformed into a child's toy typewriter and began to click. What would the unseen media masters throw at him next?

"COWBOY AT THE CONSOLE, PLEASE IDENTIFY YOURSELF:"

"J-E-R-R-Y P-O-U-R-N-E-L-L-E," Czechkeys tapped out in effortless response.

"THERE IS NO RECORD OF YOUR NAME HERE AT HEADQUARTERS. ARE YOU NEW HERE?"

"Y", said Czechkeys, hoping to elude the awesome AI which had apparently detected his presence.

"YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED, COWBOY
POURNELLE, YOUR CURRENT RANK IS --

"I've got to get out of here," Czechkeys thought frantically. The system's monolithic defenses had already snapped into place. Three moustachioed blue policemen faced him waving nightsticks. The theme from Peter Gunn began to echo from a concealed tin organ. Czechkeys wiggled his MouseHat and sidestepped a whistling paddywagon. While sirens whined, he ducked into an open window and reoriented himself in Cipherspace.

He was confined within an alley-like box. He faced several neat rows of windows and a trashcan. What kind of IBeam array-gates had he unlatched now? Somewhere outside of the virtual hallucination he felt his hand fumble. He opened his satchel and reached for a cube. The ghosts in his modem were still posting telephone bills, but not for long. "Hippies and business-nerds," Czechkeys reminded himself, "up-tight women in stringties, all mocking my flight simulator reviews." He'd show them. He'd --

Czechkeys' thoughts were shattered by a giant arrow reaching down for him out of the sky. The arrow made a spearing lunge and passed through a window behind him, which promptly blackened and exploded.

"Yee-ooow." Czechkeys wiggled his ears furiously. "Quit, close!" He ducked behind the trashcan as the arrow repositioned itself for a second strike. The trashcan was the only thing that stood between himself and instant impalement.

"I'm sorry, sir," a solicitous voice echoed suddenly from above. "We simply can't permit you to hide behind our trashcan in this environment." Two red and gold figures swept the trashcan away, handing him an official looking legal document. The arrow was about to launch itself again out of the sky. Czechkeys crumpled the legal document into a ball and leaped through one of the windows into darkness.

Alone, trembling on a black background, Czechkeys turned and found himself facing a glowing glyphic enigma. As he stared blankly at the flashing "C" in the foreground, two figures in blue and white uniforms switched it off. He was deserted, now, in darkness.

"Mouse your way out of this, smarty," sneered a nasal voice from an unseen partition.

All of his protection had apparently been stripped. And here he was in the twilight zone, no compatibility with real time! Czechkeys moaned softly -- was his MouseHat still in place? Had the Tate-Ash-ton conglomerate 86'd him at last? Or was he being lined out by his partners, the pixellating Raster-men? Would he live to hear the singing Artificial Intelligence known only as Winterlude? Only the BIXing Flatmind knew for sure, and he was dead, with two sequels yet to come.

Real mode, protected mode, the only thing to do was reset, pull off the MouseHat and go back to insulting the readers of his silly columns. There'd be time to explode the new Interface tomorrow, if it didn't explode him first.

Astral Finger

-- Letters

Ken Rudolph

I guess I've made this observation before (and you're probably tired of hearing it); but one of the hardest things anybody can do is to change one's handle for thinking about a person. I still think of you as Len and Lenny sounds all wrong. I have the exact same problem: my family thinks of me as Kenny, as do many people in my professional life who have known me prior to the mid-70's. I hate Kenny, but it is apparently impossible to make that point to people no matter how many times I pointedly refer to myself as Ken. At least I don't have to worry about this in fandom as most people still call me Kenru.

I had heard that Ted White was in prison, probably from Hank Stine; but I didn't get any of the details and hadn't read any of the zines where he published his fascinating memoirs. So the highlight of this issue was your publication of his letters. They are incredibly insightful. They read like a mixture of pop novel and great journalism. I've never been to jail (and am currently so pure that I may never have the experience); but of course I know some druggies who have done time and, as an extensive reader, I thought I had some knowledge about it. Ted's narrative makes me wonder how we can ever really ex-

perience such a thing vicariously. Putting it another way, these letters are the closest I'd ever want to get to the nitty gritty of jail time. I assume he got out on schedule and is OK by now. The dehumanizing aspect of jail, which seems to be the central theme of these letters, is what I found particularly frightening. The feeling that routine is a friend and that when something happens out of the routine it forebodes disaster terrifies me. I've always known instinctually that it is vitally important to stay invisible to the criminal justice system. Ted's experience illuminates exactly why.

Whistlestar is the first fanzine I've gotten that was obviously composed on a word processor/desk publishing combination something which I would have expected to revolutionize fan publishing by now. I got my first computer (a Compaq portable) in November, 1983; and it definitely changed my life. I became involved in BBS activities using my modem to talk to people and make friends. I guess you'd say I found another kind of fandom to be a part of. But BBS "fandom" is a more diffuse entity more localized and oriented around different issues. I was never particularly a technocrat or hacker; so I guess that's why I never got very involved except at the localized periphery. Some people straddle

both fandoms (Jerry Pournelle comes to mind though he's a pro in both camps). ...I've fallen so out of touch with the current SF fandom that I don't know if computers have made any inroads generally. For all, their vaunted futurist orientation, SF fans have always seemed somehow conservative as a group to me. I guess one mustn't generalize, though. **6220 Hollymont Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90068**

[Though there are now a considerable number of fanzines being sloppily produced with computer equipment, the technology has been slower to catch on with the more creative, visually oriented fans. I think that for them the learning curve has been too much to bother with; they'd rather be writing or drawing, than fiddling with software. In the past year, Elaine Stiles, Pat Mueller and Jeanne Gomoll have produced well-designed fanzines with DTP. When the technology becomes more commonplace, instead of a separate fandom in itself, others will probably cross over.]

Harry Bell

In the first stages of ego-scanning (strange, isn't it, how even with a fanzine I've no right to expect my name in, I still ego-scan?) I flicked through the lettercol and found my old mate Mike Glicksohn admitting defeat in the struggle with your prose. Two falls and a submission, I'd guess. I was kind of surprised because Whistlestar looked so open and straightforward. Well, okay, having read the rest of the zine I can see what Mike was getting at ... I'd start reading some of your pieces and think "Hey, I can go with this" and then all of a sudden there'd be a kind of synaptic shift and I was lost. There was a rift in my understanding not unlike the fault line running through poor old Stu Shiffman's cover art. No matter, given the opportunity of another issue and my continued freedom from gafia, I shall perservere.

9 Lincoln Street, Gateshead Tyne & Wear NE8 4EE

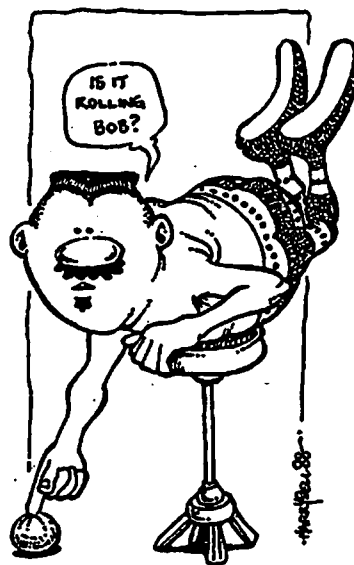
Walt Willis

I enjoyed your semantically compressed editorial, but I thought the best thing in the issue was Jeanne Bowman's article. It seems a long time since I saw a Jeanne Bowman piece...too long.

The Ted White letters ended up on a pleasantly upbeat note, which is more than you can say for *De Profundis*. But then Wilde never had the courage of his convictions. The last two pages look interesting and I mean to read them again just as soon as I finish *Finegan's Wake*. Or maybe I should read some Phillip K. Dick first. **32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, N. Ireland BT211 OPD**

Mike Glicksohn

I've never hit anything on the road but while I have no intellectual problem with consuming a road kill it's not something



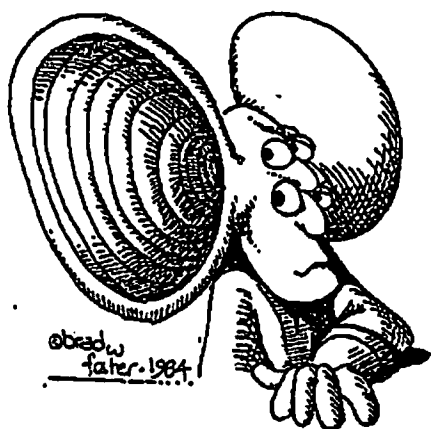
I'd ever do myself since I wouldn't have the slightest idea how to go about preparing it. If someone else wanted to go to the trouble, though, I wouldn't mind partaking of the final result. Even a cat or a dog would be worth trying and both are consumed extensively in poorer parts of the world. Meat is meat, after all, and it's surely only societal conditioning that would make some readers view such an exercise as repugnant. 508 Windermere Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6S 3L6

Jeanne Bowman

Did I really say all those things? About metaphysics? Probly so, I forgot. It was okay to see it in print tho, especially with a letter col response to an earlier bit. Yup, this kind of thing (egoboo, funny illustrations, Dan Steffan's stuff standing up after two years & being a pleasure to read) is likely to get me off my gaffiated butt. 1260 Hill Road, Glen Ellen, CA 95442

Brad Foster

Spent most of the past year in an attempt to go legit with my own little comicbook, *MECHTHINGS*. Got the news



last week that orders had dropped below the poverty level, so that has bit the dust for now. (Be sure to snap up those highly collectible first four issues now!)

Anyway, after doing little else but writing and drawing the comic for the past year, it's kind of fun to sit down again and get back into fanzines and other small-press pubbing. Even trying to upscale my own small-press outfit, Jabberwocky Graphix, into something more than a hobby.

It was so obvious a thought I was surprised to get to the end of Jeanne's article this time without reading about how she might have reacted to the situation had, the following day, they almost run over a person instead of a dog, and got the same questions from the kid. Great images there -- "Well, lots's of good meat on that one, strap 'im to the roof!" Who was it who said we could cut back on a lot of wars if you were forced to eat everything you killed. 4109 Pleasant Run, Irving, TX 75038

Ted White

Joseph Nicholas may be right that better (and rarer) fanzines were produced in the UK in the seventies than in the eighties, although I received the "very limited US circulation" fanzines he mentioned despite the fact that according to some people I wasn't a fan then.... But. In dismissing the eighties output of fanzines rarely circulated outside the UK, Joseph overlooks some of the very best fanzines of the early eighties -- fanzines with a very limited UK circulation as well. I'm referring to the Cretin fanzines which came out of Scotland, the best-known of which was/is *INDIAN SCOUT* (a new issue came out

recently). Produced by people like Jimmy Robertson, Nick Lowe, and three or four others in the Cretin circle, and appearing under a variety of titles (*INDIAN SCOUT* was a group effort; Jimmy's own was/is *TWENTYTHIRD*), often without bylines (they knew who'd written which), these fanzines had a very limited circulation -- around fifty or so, I gather.

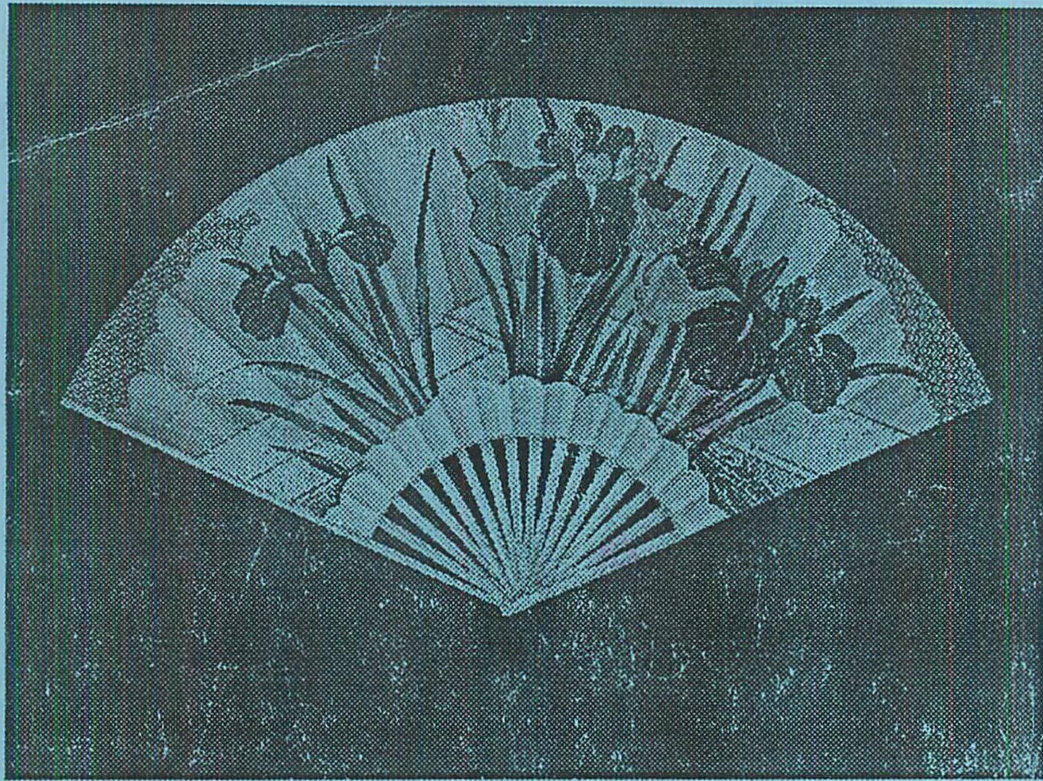
I first saw copies of them at Phil Palmer's house, in 1985. He handed me a file of them to read. I stayed up much of the night reading them, and I was quite impressed. The Cretins reinvented the wheel in many respects, reinventing both fandom and fannishness, and did it dam'd well. Although I'm sure I missed a lot of the ingroup references, I was able to enjoy the fanzines and in many respects they offered a parallel to the Ratfanzines of the early seventies. (Cretin fandom more or less broke up when Jimmy moved to London and the others apparently also scattered, but, as I mentioned earlier, a new *INDIAN SCOUT* was produced recently, and Jimmy still does the occasional *TWENTYTHIRD*, and to some extent the Cretin fans have integrated with general UK fandom, Jimmy himself the most notable example.)

Since reading that file of fanzines I, for one, have sought out copies of those zines for myself, with some success, and I recommend them to US fans as fully as "collectible" as any of the Ratfanzines. (Actually "collectible" isn't the right word, these days, since it implies collecting items speculatively, with an eye to future profit; these are fanzines worth reading.) 1014 N. Tuckahoe, Falls Church, VA 22046

Joseph Nicholas

Thanks for *Whistlestar* 4 -- featuring a letter of mine so old that I no longer have a copy of it, either on paper or on disk! But then again, who wants to keep copies of old letters anyway....

Although its publication did remind me that once upon a time I was working upon just such an article as the one I outlined, although the theorizing that would have gone into it has since been diverted into a critique of Rob Hansen's *The Story So Far*, an anecdotal history of British fandom published for last year's Worldcon in Brighton. Initially conceived as an article for *Fuck The Tories* -- I was having great difficulty trying to pin down a coherent ideology for the article outlined in the letter, and had in fact largely abandoned it as a result -- the critique has since surfaced as a letter of comment in *The Caprician* 2 (published by Lilian Edwards and Christina Lake), written as a response to the review of the Hansen volume that appeared in *The Caprician* 1. And although I'd like to eventually transform it into a fully-fledged article, reality reminds me that for at least the remainder of the year I simply won't have time for any fanwriting beyond the odd letter of comment every so often -- [[*Joseph goes on to say that his political involvements will not allow him to do any future issues of Fuck The Tories, a situation which happily did not turn out that way in our reality matrix, there having been two more issues published since this letter was written --*]] 22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER



Whistlestar 5

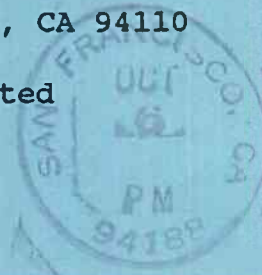
From: Lenny Bailes

504 Bartlett Street

San Francisco, CA 94110

Return Requested

To:



Richard Bergeron
P.O. Box 5989
Old San Juan, PR 00905