

- c) he has forgotten his ethnic origins
- d) he was totally drunk when writing...

...I could have saved myself a few lines there, couldn't I? 10/12/78

BRIAN EARL BROWN It's a particularly gloomy day outside. Looks like it will either rain or snow, and more likely snow--so it's a pretty appropriate time to read and loc X-7.

There are so many things to say...where to begin. It's good to see that you survived Iguacon. I feel you gave a very good speech there--not only well written, but well read, too. Perhaps you can get Marcon to turn off the house lights for you, too.

But all the egoboo I have (and could) heaped upon you probably doesn't--beyond a temporary warm glow--mean as much to you, as your own sense of satisfaction/dis-satisfaction with the way things went.

This letter is harder to write than I thought--not only figuring out how to say what I want to say, but whether I should, too...we seem to share a certain reticence about personal matters. I--ah--had heard vague rumors that you and Pat were no longer together but felt it would be boorish to straight out ask you at Conclave. It seems sad when people who feel so intense about each other suddenly burn out and go different ways. And hard to understand. This last, tho, is probably because I've never felt "intense" about anything--except maybe fanac and there occasionally I do tire of the feeling that I need to fanac, fanac, fanac.... I'm not a mellow person, tho I think mellow is a nice state to achieve. Rather I think I'm too involved with myself to feel any intense involvement with others. Or perhaps it's a feeling of being "personal" which often means appearing foolish that keeps me from forming profound, personal relationships. Yet--yet, for all that I find that I care very much how Denice feels and for her good opinion of me. If this is love, it's not the intense love poets love to eulogize. Perhaps it is an enduring love.

In any case, three months of happiness is something to hold onto. There doesn't always seem that much happiness in life.

"Hoo! Heavy, look of profound meditation....," as Mork would say.

I also have affection for Joe Walsh's "Life's Been Good to Me". This past year it seemed like I'd graduated into the inner circle of trufans (or something like that) -- mentions in *Xenolith*, strangers approaching me at conventions, all sorts of weirdness... "everybody's so different; I haven't changed..."

This "I am just entering the adolescent real world" is just bullshit, Bill. Maturity is just bullshit, too. All it means is that you have pat answers for all problems--only some problems never have simple answers--unless one blindly declares them non-problems by making them non-events. If there is a difference between an "adolescent" and a "mature" response to a heartbreak it would be that the adolescent assumes that one will never adjust to the heartbreak, while the mature person knows that in time one can become reconciled with what happened. And by that definition, Bill, you're certainly mature.

11/6/78

HARRY WARNER, JR. ...I enjoyed this issue except where some passages worried me by making you seem to be less happy than people should be. I hope the painful sections don't reflect as many perturbations as they seem to at this distance.

I feel much as you do about the dangers of "total honesty" in fanzine writing. Too many fans may overlook the fact that Don Thompson, for instance, is a middle-aged man with enough experience in the writing field to know exactly what he is doing and to be aware of the potential long-range consequences of what he writes. But a teen-age fan who decides to imitate his extreme frankness may overlook the eventualities that a Don Thompson or a Richard Geis must have considered: Twenty years in the future, someone who isn't born yet may undergo a traumatic experience, reading something a parent wrote long ago; long after the writer has dropped out of fandom, he might find his good, high-paying job gone because someone who doesn't like him somehow ran across an old fanzine and showed it to the company president; one of those tabloid weeklies might

decide to run a lurid feature on fanzines and quote the most sensational items its researchers can find in a pile of them. [71]

In my own case, I stopped writing about Hagerstown in FAPA a couple of years ago. I also downplayed the degree of candour with which I was writing about myself. FAPA mailings are reaching people nowadays who would never have seen them long ago when most FAPA members hung onto them firmly.. Fans and semi-fans are turning up in Hagerstown. I don't think I've written anything libelous or nasty enough to inspire anyone to give me a hiding. But I just don't want to risk creating a hassle, even something as simple as a quarter-hour argument with someone who might object to something I wrote about local events, or the teasing of local mundanes over this frenzied passion for Julie Andrews that continues to sear away at my vitals.

On the other hand, there is one way in which the risk of trouble is growing less. Fanzines are becoming less and less comprehensible to those who rarely or never attend cons. Obviously, there can only be one Mike, and some of the other given names you drop are probably known to me as members of fanzine fandom, but it's hard to be sure. If you become the nation's greatest fin de siecle writer, along about 2040 the college people researching for their theses on your early career are going to have a terrible time filling up their footnotes when they try to identify all the individuals referred to in these *Xenolith*'s. 11/5/78

BILL BREIDING Today: in the mail came your X-6&7. I felt prompted to say something. Mainly because all the way up til the last page, including Billy Ray's "LaM", I was going "whew!"

As you may have predicted, your "...LETTERS..." aren't Loc-able; well, maybe to some but not to me.

I enjoyed it tremendously, I enjoyed your writing as much as I did what you were saying. You have a great knack for succinct choices of words that remind me of my father's writing (I suppose that's a compliment).

Your many years of playing faned has not decreased your sensability at all. Your placing Billy Ray's "LaM" in this issue was no mere accident or "hurry and publish" type thing. It, in so many words, reflected many of the things you have felt, were saying. A stroke of genius on both Bill's parts. 11/16/78

SUZI STEFL I just read *Xenolith* 6&7, and I wanted you to know two things: 1) I am NOT LOCing it (I don't want to ruin my reputation as a pro-groupie by being seen in some BNF's zine), and 2) I love you. Proudly. As a Mama does her brilliant and formerly errant child. (oops) Your words are clear, succinct, and if not always to the point, at least they ramble.

I thought I wanted to give you my cure for your athsmatic illnesses [I have allergy-associated athsma, too, which gets especially bad when there's cigarette smoke around (ya'hear that, Son? Cigarette smoke irritates it!)], but I don't make chicken soup. And ever since you called my yummy-delicious homemade pea soup "cement", you lost my vote as most deserving sickie of the year. So I'll save my health-giving, stick to your ribs, eat it with a fork, etc. soup for Dotti and...er, ah...I-hate-to-admit-it-but-Sid (There. When I say it fast and hold my nose it doesn't hurt so much.) and those others who appreciate it.

Your open letters were touching, Bill. So how come you never write to your poor Mommy? Why is my mailbox always bereft of those ~~snivelling sponorous~~ succinct sentiments from you, my Son?

And I can assure you, Bill, that I do not spend time with you at cons because you are a ~~B&F~~ BNF [Heavens! My reputation!]. Nor is it because you are my son, the father of my grandson Rusty, who is the father of my great-grandson, Bob Tucker [qads! Has anyone drawn up a Family tree? And where does this leave Glicksohn (LNOCing lesson #387.4: mention Glicksohn's name at least twice in each unLOC, three time in a LOC.)?]. It is because if I don't, Denise would probably never speak to me again, and I'd lose a lovely aunt for Dotti (Say!--how come you're her uncle? I'd like to hear the story, because if she's Dot's aunt, and you are my son, then Dotti's your sister, and Denise is your Aunt, and, er, ah, well...and how do you like having an

[72] only child for a sister, Bill?)

And Bill...you were wonderful at WorldCon. We were all sitting there pulling for you. Didn't you feel the ~~psycho~~ psychic vibes?

11/16/78

CAROLYN "C.D." DOYLE Your envelope of zines prompts a response from me, both of that which has and hasn't already been said... The effect, reading one after the next, instead of having the actual periods of time in between, is different, of course. The parts seem both unified and separate--the two issues of X which seem to have the most in common are #1 and the most recent. You sounded as though the feeling that prompted you to publish the first time was present again.

I guess you sent them to me because of the fanzine I gave you at Iggy, right? They look nice, and better yet, read nice too.

Starting at the top...I like the bright green of the first X... and of course, rather than carefully save the Carter illustrations for each issue, you pub them all in this first, to impress people...which you do! The last line in Leah Zeldes poem about being 25 and 16.... every birthday, even at *my* age, is both a celebration and a mourning. There's some magic age--I think it's between 16 and 28, closer to the former, where you get fucked up, then un-fucked, then just as you start to soar, the fact you're 30 jumps on your back and won't get off.

You know, looking through the zines, I can't find all the things I want to talk about, so let's not start at the top and say we did. I remember you talking about what has to be the worst Marcon experience you had; I couldn't help, along with the sympathy, feeling a twinge of relief I hadn't attended that con (I'd not been at any cons then); when someone you don't know well is hurting, fate has an awful tendency to push you over in their direction "just to chat"--you say all these horrible things that, if you'd only known what they'd been going through, you wouldn't have said.... it can make both parties feel very bad. Several of my friends are divorced; some before I knew them, some after. I've never been close to both partners, then had something like that come about; it's a strange situation all around. Obviously the divorce must be better than what it's breaking up; yet, no one thinks of divorce as a happy event, either. I guess the best thing you can say about it is that it can be a means to a good end, which doesn't help until you've reached the "end" and are looking back.

Fandom has certainly given me a more real picture of the "world"--strange, you may think, when so many people treat it like a protective cocoon? Compared to my former home life, the things I'm learning in fandom are very educational in preparing to deal with Life. Nearly everyone has a secret, you know; once you're a part of someone's group, and they'll talk around you, you may wish they hadn't. No one is what they seem, it seems. It's a little scary at first. The first few times I heard things about people I considered friends that were new and startling to me, I was frightened. But...most of them are *still* my friends, regardless. Intellectually, I was fairly "grown-up" before I got into fandom; but, in street sense, in worldliness, it's made me wiser, and (I think) better.

I also remember you talking about the uneasiness of having a "reputation"--wondering if people act in an unnatural way around you because of who you are. Ho! I worry about the same thing, though from the opposite end, of course. It's very hard to talk to a well-known fan sometimes; you're afraid s/he'll think you're doing it because of a reputation, not the person him/herself. I've been lucky; I have several friends in fandom I like very much, who I never even worry might think that; we just like each other, "click", and that's that; I can't say we wouldn't if they weren't "who they are" because if they weren't who they are, I sure as hell *don't* know if I'd like them or not. I *can* say that I like them because of themselves, and not a reputation they've built up. But in this particular sub-culture, it seems that one often gets famous by being oneself; and that happens to be the criteria I use for forming friends, as well.

You *do* have to be careful; relations with people are like a tightrope; you try to keep them balanced and proper, and maybe it is a constant struggle. I guess you can't just rely on instinct, and what feels good, to pull you through. Doing that, it be-

comes too easy to slight people as your circle of friends grows larger; too easy to appear to have meant something you didn't mean. [73]

It's part of growing up, I guess. Learning manners beyond "please" and "thank you", and when to use them. They can get awfully subtle and tricky. Some people are able to muddle through everything just right, soothing feelings, winning large and small. Others, like me, have to work at it, it seems. Feeling shy, but seeming "cold" to others, and such.

Well Bill, one thing we have in common; we are both moral creatures. Your morals brought you into a lot of extra hassle about being Fan GoH in Phoenix this year; mine complicate matters with school and family officials.

Whether I agree with your principles or not, I admire how you managed to express them during your delicate situation before the Worldcon. And how you did it at Iggy-- it was a very last-minute rush of events that got me to Phoenix at all, and an even more hurried accident that got me a decent seat at the Hugos so I could see and hear you. (And there were lots of empty seats around me that never did get filled!) I felt kinda quietly proud of all of us moralistic rabble-rowers as you made your final speech. Your delivery was very realistic and understandable; I was pleased when you wore the caftan I'd only heard you were considering wearing the night before. I'm sure people have already told you all these things, though.

You mention honesty in X-7 (in connection with Don C., a man I've surprisingly grown to know and love in the course of a summer). I try to be honest in what I say; I think I'm more honest in letters; in person, it's so easy to have someone take the wrong thing the wrong way, or to get caught up in a lie. But I've never felt as though I write the way ^{you} does...or even as you do of Pat in X-5. (Which points up how hard it is to write about yourself with honesty and not involve other people. Some people have gotten burned for saying about someone they liked what you said about Pat. And then, some have been kissed for saying such things...) Perhaps it's just that I don't publish my stuff; I write letters and locs about the range of this one, [8 pages!] and ask the editor to use a lot of good judgement when looking for something to fill out the locol with.

I love this Father William shit--to use a word I reserve for echoing after my mother when she sees a new-born baby, "It's cute!"

I like Terry's way of phrasing it--"I lost my Rocky Horror Virginity..." I did too, two or three weeks ago when a theater here had a midnight showing. I enjoyed it more than I thought I would, sitting in the next to front row with some friends, rocking to the songs I'd already heard--I want to expose Tucker and Thompson to it sometime soon.

Your last issue of *Xenolith*... like I said, it feels like the first. What you say to your friends here represent feelings I've tried to express to some of my friends; always hoping the very few I tell to come to me when they need to be shitty will someday do just that; and with a fearful knowing in my heart that they probably never will. There are two kinds of closeness, that I discovered by riding up and down the escalators at the Hyatt in Phoenix. There's the kind of closeness where you're going down one escalator, and see your friend going up parallel to you--and you clasp hands and swear undying love and grab as kiss as the escalators pass. You wave till you can't see each other any more.

Then there's the kind of closeness where you see your friend going the other way, and your friend sees you...and one of you gets off the escalator at the end, and goes back to be with the other. I have friends of both types, and love some of both types. I have some of the first type that I am someday going to get the courage to turn around and come back to.

This still isn't the letter I wanted to write you --

11/6/78

JODIE OFFUTT Any parent understands why Dave Locke can write better with his brian turned off. I, myself, can write ever so much more efficiently with my chris, jeff, scotty & missy turned off.

(I've had indications that Andy writes more effectively with his jodie turned off, but we needn't go into that here...)

So what's your & Mike's excuse?

11/2/78

[74] ERIC LINDSAY It wouldn't do to ignore *Xenolith 7*, especially not when you pointed out that your typer was sitting here unused.

Your little run in with the "acute bronchial asthma" really had me scared; I was under the distinct impression, when I went to Pghlance, that had you attempted to drive there, your body would have been found somewhere along the roadside not long after. Of course, for a while there you were looking as if you would not have made it as far as the car itself. I would tell you to take better care of yourself except that coming from a person who entered this country carrying enough pills, potions and drugs for bronchitis to get incarcerated as an international drug smuggler such advice would carry little weight. Especially when you consider that I still haven't rid myself of my bronchitis, and still refuse to go see a doctor (except Lin Lutz-Nagey, and I can't talk her into free prescriptions, or even advice), and particularly considering my excessive imbibing (of coke, I mean) during Anocon and Octocon. Yes indeed, not taking those pills is a bad mistake. You should have asked me about that sort of thing earlier; but then, you never did take my advice on editing either, and look where that got you (which reminds me, is *Outworlds* really going to be ready for Confusion, or do you intend to turn the con into a collatio party for the issue?).

I suppose that I'll have to compensate for your not doing an Iguanacon report by doing reports of dozens of cons, at great (and boring) length myself. The trouble is, as you imply, that what can be said is not all that important, and what is important, especially as it affects relationships, can not be said. Or at best, not said very well, and certainly not to a great number of people. I could, I suppose, talk about my own feelings, but when to do so reveals also my (possibly faulty) interpretations of the feelings of others, then it becomes too great an imposition for me to attempt to speak out honestly.

You would not have been known to me as early as you were had you not been "Bill Bowers, the faned"--I got your stuff in the mail and said to myself "I want something that good". (I never did manage it, but that is beside the point.) The change in viewpoint came slowly; seeing you at Torcon and other places in 1973, and more in 1976. By that time OW was something I joked about with you, because you were the important part of the "Bill Bowers faned" gestalt, to me, by then. And now, when I care even more (enough to become a Bill Bowers lookalike) you are going to read these words, and for a little while be pleased that someone else is willing to care...until you get into being your course on Self-Deprecation again, and tell yourself that anyone can write down that they care.

In "letter to a friend" you say that you will be cynical and self-protective; but you are not very professional about it, being one of the most unconsciously non-cynical people I know. Even your act doesn't fool many people, at least, not the ones you write to/for.

I could guess who you mean by the people you studiously don't mention, but that isn't important knowledge. What does seem important is that you have changed more and more aspects of your life. I suspect that you will always be looking after stray kittens, of one kind or another, and always empathising with people. I'm glad there are people like you in this world, for it would be a hell of a worse mess if everyone were like me, for I am a really cynical person. Of course, I could be wrong there too, for if I really were as cynical (or were cynical all the time, instead of in bursts) I would be able to talk about things, instead of using the distancing device of a typewriter.

11/1/78

PATTY PETERS I vote that you tell all--but, then I always was a gossip monger! 11/17

RO LUTZ-NAGEY I just had this dream.

Mayor Coleman Young and Gov. Milliken of Detroit and Michigan respectively, were having apolitical debate, obviously for some elective office in Michigan. Things go predictably. Typical questions are asked. Routine answers are given. Both candidates are allowed to slip in a well-worn ad-lib that momentarily breaks the "tension of boredom" (if, indeed, that can exist) the permeates the room. I am sitting to one side of the room and occasionally taking notes, wondering how I can write this

up honestly and still get it printed in my newspaper.

[75]

Suddenly, from the back, I see a hand waving madly over the sea of journalists' heads. Young, who has the floor, points to her and asks her to ask her question.

She stands up, cassette recorder in hand. Blue denim shirt and Levi's. Long, brown hair that goes half-way down her back. Without being so, she looks dirty, unkept.

She launches into her question which, everyone quickly realizes, is more a tirade than a question. She's intent on cataloguing all the atrocities committed on humanity in the last fifty years--in Detroit and around the world--and as she yells out her question in staccato bursts, I notice the Red Army star pinned on her worker's shirt. Finally she has reached the end of her litany. Everyone looks around at each other, kind of nervous and embarrassed, finally all looking at Young for a response.

There's a pause as he looks around the room. He looks over where Milliken is seated, who looks smug and happy that he didn't have the floor when this non-question occurred. Young looks back at the woman, his hand re-adjusting its grip on the microphone. He clears his throat. Finally, "Young lady, I believe all those questions have already been asked in the Sixties. Now, are there any other new questions?" He looks about the room hopefully.

I woke up and either laid, layed, or lied in bed--better yet, there I was prone, staring at the ceiling, wonedring WHAT THE BLOODY HELL that was All About. Ten minutes or so later, I realize that I'm not going to drop back off to sleep, so I amble into the study, find your magazine on top of the pile to be locced, took it downstairs with me, reread it while I brewed up a pot of coffee, since I realized that I needed some stimulation to keep me alert and awake since it was quite late (or quite early depending, I suppose, on your point of view), well, it was 3:15 in the ayem anyway and while I was brewing coffee and reading fanzine, our kitten Doctor Gonzo was mewing plaintively (redundant terms) and occasionally jumping up onto my shoulders and exploring my right ear as I impatiently waited for the Mr. Coffee to finish brewing and wondering idly what I might write in response to all the myriad *Xenoliths* that I owe you locs for and what the true meaning of the Strange and Arresting Dream was when, finally, I got my cup of coffee, took it upstairs to the study, decided to tell you about my dream to see if maybe that would clear it up in my mind and then, suddenly without me consciously becoming aware of it, the strange eerie feeling came over me that I was caught in what could become the World's longest run-on sentence without any definite point, and it was at that very moment, and no other, when I realized that I 11/15/78

DAVE ROWE This is in reply to X-7.

Remember X-7?

X-7 was the one with all that vague, no names, no 'specifics', no palpability writing that the trendees refer to as 'literary masturbation'. I wouldn't/couldn't be that vicious, but I did find it all disconcerting.

I once read one of your 'soul-bearing in code' editorials and was actually able to understand half of it! I doubt whether anyone but your immediate/close friends were able to understand an eighth. No I didn't run 'round explaining it to all and sundry. A confidence is a confidence and I keep them, but it still makes me want to take you quietly aside and say "why?"

Not "What is it all about?" If you'd wanted to tell us that, you would have. No, all I am asking is *why*? Why create all the queries and questions in our minds which would never have been there but for the way you'd written the piece and presented it? Why draw attention to it if its so private you can't name it/them?

Gil Gaier has a habit like yours, he leads the reader along expecting a full confession, a revalation and then suddenly slams his open-book shut. Perhaps out of timidity, perhaps out of a personal regard for privacy (and a gentle reminder to the reader) but I seem to think there is also more than just a hint of fun in Gil, maybe he is struck by sudden 'cold-feet' timidity, and as open as he gets he still obviously has a high regard for what is private, but isn't he just leading us along that little, just to culminate in his friendly but firm smile that says "that's far enough, and no further."

Where you differ is you don't do it with a minor mischief in the back of your mind,

[76] except unto yourself maybe. It's all 'as far as I can go' soul bearing, which makes me wonder (as you're willing to go that far) why you don't go whole hog and tell all--something I would not advise in print--write direct to each individual friend &/or tell it as a narrative with less or more 'concealed' hints.

Damnit, you were almost challenging the reader to guess who they were, and if it's really that private I don't want to know. I want to know you Bill, but not via your other private correspondence.

I only hope this isn't coming across as an angry letter.

Perhaps I'm a little angry with myself; I'm entertaining self-doubts (yeah, you ain't the only one) -- do I send these letters to you because you are the great Bill Bowers, or because you are a friend/acquaintance? I'm a naturally nervous person, riddled with questions about my motivations, which I throw out every so often with a cry of "to hell with you or I'll never get anything done." I'm making reference to this not just because you asked it (more or less) in X-7, but I've asked myself it several times. I don't know why, and perhaps I'm writing this to discover why. Of my friends in fandom, they vary from the little knowns to BNF, their status within fandom has never altered my attitude to them one iota, so why get self-doubts about you... I think I have an answer but I've never had the guts to say it before. There are two people in fandom I really wanted to get to know, who I thought I'd get to know and never really have... Donn Brazier & You. In both cases (I would surmise) the reason has been the same: both of you have been hyper-active, Donn with *Title*, you with *Ow & then cons*; both of you aren't given to much personal correspondence, as a result and both of you had/have your fnz to speak for you, which as personal & individual as they may be simply aren't the same as personal contact.

In both cases there has been something early in the line which promised of 'better things' (hell, what a phrase) but never really happened. I'm only sorry that on the two occasions we did talk for any time nothing substantial came up. My excuse is that my mind was sheer jello on that US trip and 90% of the time I tend to be the world's worst conversationalist anyway.

...anyway writing this has helped me know one thing. I write because I do want to know you Bill, and not because you're a 'semi-well-known former fan-ed'. Its also allowed me to say that I'm not blaming you or me, but I am sorry we never got to know each other better.

1/6/79

PAULA-ANN ANTHONY Sorry to hear about your "acute bronchial asthma"--you should have listened to me and *not smoke so* much--tsk tsk. Seriously--you have to take care of #1--or you will have nothing to share with other people--and obviously (when reading this *Xenolith*) sharing with other people is what you desperately want to do. I say 'want' because I've become a firm believer in "wants" as opposed to "needs". (--This note may not make too much sense--as I'm getting bombed at Gatwick Airport; my flight has been delayed 8 hours! Not much to do except go pubbing.) Anyways--but you sure do (right + left--La De Dah)--write well--I never realized that you were *so* introspective! Of course--then again--I don't think I've ever read anything you've written --you could be Joe Introspect! Hmmm...I laughed when I read the very top part of page 61--Question: If someone *does* spend time with you *because* you are a "semi-well-known former faned" [like my brother (maybe)]--why should it bother you? If you are enjoying their company then it shouldn't make a difference--because you are each getting something out of it. Complaint: What is this one totally insane line in the middle of 61? You know which one--don't try to act innocent--the one that says--"Maybe...the world is simply not ready for a happy Bill Bowers yet." --what was the decision behind that line? You can't actually believe that--if you are unhappy--then--I honestly believe it is of your own choosing--then again--if you had nothing to mope about--then you may not have written as philosophically as you did--and I may not have had the opportunity to read this. The letters you wrote in this thing--were great--it doesn't make a difference if you don't know the people involved. The content made the underlying meaning clear--Only thing is that it seems to have an underlying theme of "Even though Life Is A Bitch --we can have some rays of sun through the grey"-- Now--is that correct? Or did I just read that into it? I hope I read that in--cause I'd hate to picture you in dreary

Cinno with that kind of subconscious current---

[77]

Sorry--I've another Complaint: Top of page 64--"I give so little, and take so much--that I don't deserve people like you."--

I haven't decided if that is a CROCK or if you actually believe it-- I really don't think that you believe those words--you impress me as too intelligent for that-- so if you don't actually mean them--then why are you writing them? Surely--you would not be stooping to FISHING? No--I hope not--

I'd like to write more later--when I'm totally together--

12/11/78

MIKE GLICKSOHN As I told you on the phone this is an emotionally charged issue and one that hit me quite hard. It also startled me that I knew so much of what you were writing about, that you and I had been together through so many things that were important to both of us. I know I'll never write about any of them, so I admire you for being able to do so. And you did it well: honestly without being maudlin, openly but gently where others are concerned. I hope it helped to put it all in print. I know it helped to read it.

I guess you know without me telling you that such brief times as I spend with you nowadays are because you are you. Hell, I knew you long before you were "something of a somebody within the mighty world of fandom" and you can say the same of me and that didn't stop us being friends then and it won't stop us being friends now. Our lives have touched and crossed and interacted on more fronts than I really care to remember and you'd be every bit as dear and as important to me today if you'd never published a single fanzine in your life and never been to a single convention. ...tell me, are you really "something of a somebody...?" Gee, nobody tells me *anything* any more...

You know, old friend, that you and I are different sorts of people. Yet oddly we do have some of the same concerns. You feel far more deeply on an emotional level than I do, but you have difficulty translating those feelings into physical expressions. I tend to express my affection physically rather readily but I lack the real depth of caring that you know. And yet just this summer I found myself asking a young lady I'd just made love to whether she was there because she actually liked me or because I was what my reputation said I was. (We both know how accurate one's fannish reputation tends to be, of course.) So you're not alone in your concerns: and yet, when I look at the two of us I have to believe that anyone who spends time with either of us has got to like us! We'll never be known as either the Ellison-Silverberg or the Newman-Redford of our fannish generation, that's for sure!

Your "Letter To A Friend" is moving indeed. It is obvious that you have done a great deal more than I have done in this regard. You've at least *tried* to bridge the communication gap that both of us know so well. I doubt that I've done as much in recent years. You give more of yourself than I seem able/willing to do and as a result you get hurt more. But every gambler knows that you can win the big pot without taking the big chances and occasionally getting burned. I may not lose as much as you have just lately but the way I'm playing the game I'll never win either. I can only hope that your willingness to put your whole stake on the line will eventually pay off while regretting that, in life as in poker, I seem incapable of taking the big chances for the big gains. Betting on sure things keeps you around for a long time but it sure isn't exciting or even profitable. Somehow that seems to have become a metaphor for my life...

I'll tell you another difference between us. If and when my life starts to crumble (and when you don't climb too high you haven't too far to slide backwards) I wish I'd your ability to call up any of several friends (in this case "Another Friend") and accept what I know to be a standing invitation to lean on them for support. But I can't. ...odd as it may seem you are lucky you can take advantage of their availability.

You know, the IGGY thing will always rankle. And let's be up front: anything they told you about "schticks" was bullshit, pure and simple. They wouldn't have me do your intro because Patrick and I have always been antagonistic to each other, and because what used to be called "the Derelicts" had no time for me and I had no time for them. I am sorry, truly sorry, that I didn't get to write about you at this particular highpoint in your fan career but if sucking up to Patrick and his friends was the admission ticket to participating in IGUANACON then I'm afraid the admission price was just too high.

I haven't heard from Terry Matz. Terry Matz hasn't written to tell me what she thought of Bowers' speech in my fanzine. Just because you publish a lettercolumn and I don't is that any reason for people to send you locs on my fanzine? Maybe we should put out a fanzine together; after all, we're two of the best known fans of our generation. We could combine all the features we're individually famous for and produce a sure Hugo-winner. It'd have brilliant reproduction, great layout, fantastic art, incredible graphics, covers by Carter, contributions from all the top pros, controversy, and everything else anyone could want. And we could even combine our titles, taking the first syllable of yours and the last of mine and calling it XEN-IUM!

11/9/78

I also heard from: Sheryl Birkhead, Ron Salomon, and Mae Strelkov. ... & STEPH!

I know that I've always been curious as to the others who received some limited-run zines along with me. So That You Know Who You Are, those who've gotten all previous ? : Joan Baker, Doug Barbour, Harry Bell, Ric Bergman, Sheryl, Bill Breiding, Sutton, Brian Earl Brown, Donn Brazier, Roger & Trudi, Linda Bushyager, Grant Canfield, Jackie Causgrove, Cavin, Cy Chauvin, the Coulsons, Al & Tanya, the D'Ammassa's, Larry Downes, C.D., George Flynn, Gil Gaier, REG, Marla, Paula & Wally, Michael-My-Son, Glyer, Gay & Joe, Harper, Terry Hughes, Rob Jackson, Jeeves, Ken Josenhans, Steve & Denise, Eric, Bea Mahaffey, Terry Matz, Mary Mertens, Art Metzger, Linda Michaels, Randy Mohr, Pat Mueller, Barb, Steph, Andy & Jodie, the Pardoes, Lynn Parks, Patty Peters, Andy Porter Sarah Prince, Rotsler, Dave Rowe, Ron Salomon, Sally Sellers, Renée, Skel, Jeff Smith, Mae Strelkov, Don C. Thompson, Bob Tucker, Victoria Vayne, Dave Vereschagin, Harry Warner, Billy Wolfenbarger, Susan Wood, Leah... ...there will be more, since I have a few extras, but that will depend on time, whim, infatuation...and inclination!

I don't know who said it, if not first, at least to me (tho I suspect it may've been Dave Locke in something obscure like *Outworlds*), but you should always lead off a lettercol with your "strongest" LoC, and save the second "best" to wrap it up with. I don't know if I did that or not, but this I do know: With all appropriate apologies to the wonderful people in between...Steve's and Mike's letters--for reasons they know, for reasons even they know not--"meant" more to *me* than any of the others, which is why they're where they're at. And yet...

This issue was *done* yesterday. Two pages shorter, with Mike directly after Ro. Dave Rowe's letter was here when I got home from work today. By dint of some retyping, and some cutting & pasting (offset has it advantage) I was able to add it, and, as a bonus, the (slightly) incredible Paula-Ann Anthony.

I...purposely, selfishly, protectively...did not "answer" any of the letters. But I wanted to...want to...answer Dave so very much; because he judges me wrong, and yet he "calls" me more accurately than anyone else... But I can't; not yet.

You see, Eric (as you follow in my footsteps...and I yours) I *am* that cynical. Strangely enough--yes, apprehensively, I'd welcome response to this. And, unless you DNQ your response... Perhaps I'm mellowing (I'm certainly not known as being "flexible"!), but maybe we'll do it again someday... Thanks. All! *Bill 1/13/79*