

XENOLITH

14

...herewith, Bill Bowers' Refreshing and Innovative Fanzine Assembler 101, or: I know basically what I want to say in this issue but, since I haven't gotten around to say it yet, why don't we start with the letters?

Semi-obligatory Cover Lyrics:

Twist and sh-mmy, swim and then
Flip about and do it again
Run and hide, there's no hope when
The whee punks come a boppin.

Fly so high you touch the sky
Mashed potato, don't ask why
The continental is worth a try
When the whee punks come a boppin.

Chorus: Ooooooooo weeeee oooooo yip yip yip yip
yip yip yip yip
Ooooooooo weeeee oooooo yip yip yip yip
yip yip yip yip.

---LUKE MCGUFF

ERIC LINDSAY Broken pieces all over the floor, little rods and bits of nylon bearings in the heaps of crud sheets, ink all over. And into the middle of the mess left by the self destruction of my (previously) faithful mimeo, an Outlandish event. Outworlds arrives.

What are these words that fail to arrive? Outworlds produces a sense of history for me, a remembrance of a time, not known by most of the people who are now active in fandoms here, when the mere mention of the word Outworlds conjured up an image of you, always striving for the perfect fanzine. And, in the process, inspiring naturally lazy people like myself to do just a little better than we would otherwise have managed, even if only by virtue of stealing layout from you.

Even the obligiatory editorial, with its relating, in tedious technical detail what went wrong with this issue, owed something to you.

Different now. As I said, most people do not know what Outworlds meant, and fail to relate it to Jophans quest, thinking it only a forgotten mythprint. The presentation of a different double Bill is part of it. You've come out of the cupboard, no longer the editor hiding in a corner of the room, drinking coke and not saying anything. Speeches at cons, which, even if I don't get to hear them, read exceedingly well.

Parties, even the odd drink. More than that, the presentation of self, which was formerly absent.

Outworlds still has the columns, and could have the controversy, but it is not the same. The introvert at the helm, the one whose technical chat I could answer, is revealed as a whole human being. It kills those fannish stereotypes of gross inadequacy.

And, I fear, it kills my chance of all that much response. Over the past few months I have more and more been hiding from all human contact. If it is thus in person, why attempt otherwise in print?

(8/29/80 - 6 Hillcrest Ave., Faulconbridge, N.S.W. 2776, Australia)

>>>I hate to be the one to break it to you, Eric, but the Flaming Extrovert that is Bowers: 1980-Style...is not quite all the way out of that cupboard...yet. I still spend more time alone (sometimes, even in a fancluster at a convention) than I do with others. Even when I spend extended amounts of time in the relative safety of Cinti-- I often do a fairly good job of "hiding from all human contact". After three years of this, the local fans (at least the ones I care about) realize that one of two things have happened: I'm either picking up the pieces from a "situation" that didn't go as well (i.e., my way) as I might have hoped...or I'm working on a fanzine. My friends patiently wait for me to re-emerge in either case, and are generally there when I let myself need them. ¶ Ironically, the more I withdraw from human contact, the more open I am in print. But then, I always did have my own way of doing things. ¶ Now listen here, He-Who-Is-Shorter-Than-Glicksohn-and/or-Locke: There's no way that I'm going to allow you to go into hiding! What with Wally no longer going to cons, and Andy no longer wearing caftans...well, whenever I get a bit high and do something slightly foolish...I need someone to point at and say, "...wasn't me; it was him!" Guess who?<<<

JAY BROWN Speaking of computers, may I say that what victimized the Old Smooooothie wasn't the R-O-B-O-T, it was employers' tendency to place on a given job someone just a little less intelligent than the job requires. Similar jokes used to be told about human clerks; they still are about some bureaucracies. Computers are really very nice beasts when doing jobs suited to their limited intelligence; fr'instance, one friendly R-O-B-O-T has been uncomplainingly printing mailing labels for sending out con flyers. The job used to take a couple of meetings of people sitting around hand-addressing envelopes and getting cramped hands.

Sigh Maybe someday I can hear Al sing *Changeling* and then I'll know the tune. I keep wanting to sing the chorus to the tune of the chorus of *Elf Glade*...

It seems to be accepted liberal bias nowadays to not only be against sports, but to be against television as well. Coward courtesy? It seems to have been thrown out along with propriety, with which it is often confused.

I just noticed Susan Wood's loc, and I wonder if the reverse is or can be true. Probably the reason for the change in attitude (besides the unquestioned fannish bias toward feminism) is that there are Girl Wonders in fandom too. And that leads to an interesting question. Doubtless there are still some women in fandom who got where they are as "appendages of their Boy Wonders". (No examples come to mind.) But what of the male fan who finds himself attached to a Girl Wonder? Obviously a question of some concern to me.

(7/3/80 - 1218 Washtenaw Court, Ann Arbor MI 48104)

>>>...well, unless Al's Financial Condition [Cincinnati Fandom's Catch-Phrase, circa 1980] changes, he probably won't make that many conventions. However, he is back to playing regularly...Saturday nites at Hap's--the ersatz-Irish-Pub-with-the-"Space-Invaders"-game. ...so why don't you and Dan come down some CFG-meeting weekend: We'll go to the meeting for an hour or so (it'll make you appreciate Al all the more) then over to see the Al Curry Chug-a-lug Memorial Wake. ...and I'm sure that, if you were to ask, he would be glad to play *Changeling* for you. Knowing Al, it would be sand-

which between his other two big 'hits': *Price Hill Blues* and *The Dogshit Blues*. (It is probably the best way to hear it--makes you wonder who ghost-wrote the "good" one for him...!) ¶ I could give you a short list of examples, but I won't; I have enough troubles already! ¶ Incident-Close-Enough-To-The-Subject-Matter-To-Relate-Here: One night at Noreascon, I was wandering from party to party with a very attractive person [...and also, her groupie: Dana who?] whom I've been "chasing" for a couple of years now. Repeatedly, throughout the course of our travels, someone would look at our nametags, pause, and say: "...aren't you Linda Michaels...the artist?" It's really a lot of fun to watch someone else curl up and die when they are "recognized" in public. [And someday I'll tell you my Steve Leigh stories...] ...and at no time during this epic bit of nonsense in trying to "hit every party" did anyone I didn't know look at my nametag and say, "...aren't you...the....?" Perhaps at long last I've regained my anonymity. But that's okay; they were all male... It was Wonderful!<<<

MARY COWAN I think I may have missed something. Like all of your speeches, most of your previous fanzines, and the last ten years.

Still, even if I didn't have the least idea what you were talking/writing about, I enjoyed reading this latest issue of *Xenolith*--or was it *Outworlds*--or does it matter?

It gives me something to look forward to. Someday I'll have been around long enough to understand the obscure references. Or to make obscure references myself. I am making progress towards that. I may not know what's going on, but with each issue I recognize more of the names in the letters column! (6/19/80)

I am moved to comment on the "fandom as substitute for real world" business. I've heard even very active fans preach the dangers of turning one's back on reality, as it were, and I don't understand what the worry is. I go out and check on things in mundane society every once in a while, and they never get any less boring to me. Does that mean I'm neurotic, to prefer doing things I find interesting with people I find interesting, and that I refuse to try and convince myself that I should find other things equally interesting?

Your quotes from things you wrote several or many years ago intrigue me, mostly because when I re-read things I wrote long ago I can't for the life of me figure out what I was thinking at the time. I wish I had the sense of continuity in my life that you seem to have in yours.

Hell, I have difficulty getting a sense of continuity into the locs I write...
(8/3/80 - 801 S. 18th St., Columbus, OH 43206)

>>>...at first I was going to laugh, and say "...what continuity? If you had to live my life...!" But that's not fair to say to anyone who knows me primarily through writings/fanzines/public 'performances'. The biggest word in my vocabulary has always been "Why...?" I am intensely curious about myself...and in particular, my reactions to ("Handling of") certain situations. I spend a much larger portion of my time simply living life than ever before...but I still spend an inordinately large percentage of time simply sitting on my duff, constantly re-analyzing every possible nuance of anything I find "important"; which mainly comes down to anything involving me and the people I want to deal with (as opposed to the people I have to deal with). I do not believe in predetermination (well, not most of the time), nor do I believe in the total immutability of patterns of behaviour in a given individual. The "sense of continuity" is probably there in my life as written in the pages of fanzines; but if so, it is there because I keep digging back to "that what made what I is today"... rather than because of any Natural Order in/to my life. ¶ I really wouldn't worry too much, Maia, about having "missed" anything...at least as far as my speeches and fanzines are concerned. As you've no doubt noticed, I tend to regurgitate previously published material quite regularly. I'm already to the point of regurgitating quotes with-in quotes [X:Four; p. 121]; so, before you know it... ¶ ...as to having missed "the last ten years": Well, you did...and yet you probably didn't... Trust me!<<<

fanzine without a byline and readers were asked to guess who wrote it, there would have been a lot of perplexity because it doesn't sound like your style or like the way anyone else in fandom I can think of normally writes.

(7/11/80 - 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740)

>>>Recapturing the basic emotions and moods from those years isn't impossible: No, I don't have total recall...but I do have enough photographs, writings, and various kipple around to act as a prod to memory. Certainly I am somewhat removed by now; but that's not all bad...I no longer have nightmares. No, the problem with making anything commercial out of that experience, is the same problem I would have with attempting to tell the "stories" I hint at in my fanzine material as "fiction". I'm simply not to the point yet where I can step aside enough from the emotion to record it in a logical manner. Someday, however...<<<

BRIAN EARL BROWN It's not every day that one has the chance to loc a fanzine before it's published. I relish having this rare opportunity. The printing's only fair. I wonder if that's because you didn't have your typer set for great enough intensity or whether I was being too stingy with the ink. The printing is not bad mind you, just not Victoria-Vayne-perfect. (Remembering the last time Victoria published a fanzine of her own, I wonder how many people are going to find "Vayne-perfect" an esoteric reference?)

Loved the cover. I haven't seen it but I know that with your usual impeccable good taste it will be excellent, but then: Rodak

Bowers

Streff

Joan Hanke-Wood

Terry Austin

[check one] just never does a bad drawing.

Terry Matz unwittingly makes an esoteric reference with her "Ken". You may know who she's refering to, and I do remember a "Ken" involved with MidAmericon. But the only Ken I think of is Josenhans. Keller? Ken Keller, is that the man?

"F.H.F." Funny Hat Fandom? Only I never remembered you wearing a funny hat, or Derek either... (6/24/80 - 16711 Burt Rd., #207, Detroit, MI 48219)

>>>Brian was at a slight disadvantage in that when I called (after my mimeo had Failed To Perform) I'd told him that there would be six sheets involved. But I sent him only ten stencils. Brian's "cover"...the other two pages...turned out to be the "Index": It, after heading modification and trimming, was run-off by Denise at her office. In any event, with thanks to Brian, and Denise (err...this one!), plus thanks to Jan and Dan for Transportation Services, X:13 was indeed out for Midwestcon. Aren't you thrilled?<<<

✓Thrilling Technical Note: I'm trying wrap on this page; lots of slippage noted. *sigh*

DAVE ROWE I must say Outworlds 30/Xenolith Two: Four had that certain something (that Three: One lacked) that made it one of the best fnzs I've ever received; that is the way it was delivered. I mean 13's delivery was all very well, or rather as well as anything in your sick pile of narcissism could so be called, but white envelopes do have their limitations. White envelopes can not present you with 2 lb of sunflower seeds (well not in one go anyway) and then get freaked out by the fact you know who they're really from; alternatively no white envelope has been known to freak out the otherwise totally unfreakable Boris Lawrence on the Corent Garden, or take compromising pictures at Stonehenge, and further more it has been scientifically proven that before enjoying a George Bernard Shaw play white envelopes are totally incapable of mistaking St. Pancras Hotel for Big Ben. (Well, if you can be incredibly esoteric so can I.) In short, getting Carolyn Doyle to hand deliver your fanzine was the best idea you've ever had. I hope you reinstate it immediately...whilst I realize this puts your bill up by

>>>That's the silliest idea I've heard of since...since, well: Glicksohn *did* spend \$125. on a plane ticket to hand-deliver a LoC to *Xenolith* last year, after all. I'll think about it, Dave. "...several weeks per year?" Just might be worth it...oohs!<<<

Paul Novitski was mentioned twice--once by Billy Wolfenbarger, once by Susan Wood. I remember 'Paj, it's called. Alpajpuri, where are you now that fanzinedom needs you? Actually, 'Paj tended to reject more of my writings than he accepted. (I was writing, in my limited way, more then for fanzines.)

By the way, I don't understand the pagination on Xenolith 13. No. 2:4 ended on p. 128; 13/3:1 starts on p. 209. All that comes between them is Xenolith: The Index (your pub. 108, between 107 and 109), and two pages don't get me from 128 to 209. *** (Short pause.) *** okay, okay--I see it all now--Series One, 78 pp. + Series Two, 128 pp. + Index, 2 pp. = 208 pp. I suspect in Series Four, you'll start with p. 1 again, just so you can confuse things by being cumulative in Series Five.

(7/10/80 -- 820 Charlotte, Stephenville TX 76401)

ALEXIS A. GILLILAND *This package with fanzines--Xenoliths, indexes, a speech packaged as Outworlds--arrived yesterday.*

I've been away too long. They aren't easy reading. Oh, the reproduction is clean, and so is the grammar, spelling and typing, but in the same mail came John Thiel's APA-H, and what he had to say was a lot clearer than what you had to say. It didn't look nearly as good, but Bill--who were you writing for?

ALEXANDER DONIPHAN WALLACE Suggested titles for your MANIFESTO. STATUTES OF
LIBERTY. Or, after the French Revolution -- LEF:
LIBERTY, EQUALITY, AND FANDOM. (Fandom = Fraternity?)

(postmarked 7/15/80 - 306 E. Gatehouse Dr., H, Metairie, LA 70001)

JACKIE CAUSGROVE Read Al Curry's "cover" poem last--poetry not usually being my favorite reading material--and was pleasantly surprised to have liked it. Could be because of it not being "poetry", but lyrics (which aren't quite the same thing); or maybe because of its appeal to the Irish in me; but whatever the cause of enjoyment, it's good. Very strong imagery--makes my fingers twitch for the feel of stylus and scratchboard. How did you resist?

Began reading Tucker's piece first, and who can feel critical after exercizing one's liver from laughing so hard? Bob touched on so many items that tickled me because of similar real-life occurances (the robot-like dumb clerk; losing control of what words go where in an argument that's been endlessly repeated) that the slant of the whole article seemed aimed in my direction. Even the ending, where the goals in a ~~discussion~~ fight get all scrambled, had that ring of reality to it.

Is it my imagination, or is Ted White doing more fanning lately? Seems every zine I read recently has material or mention by or of him. I realize that solar activity is supposed to cause electro-magnetic disturbances, but we won't hit the peak in the current upswing in the sun's cycle for quite some number of months to come. Dare we look for even more of Ted White in the immediate future? He's got the "pub annish" urge now; what comes next? (Whatever it is, it's bound to be eminently watchable...)

Don D'Ammassa was a bit grumpy toward fans when he wrote this, it seems. Of course there are rude fans, and of course fans aren't different from the general populace in preferring the familiar and comfortable to the new and unknown. Fans are human, and to expect them to have somehow avoided all traces of foibleness in their rise to Fanhood is basically unrealistic. We have some semi-saints among us, as well as some doltish clods. No entrance exam was given, that I recall. I hope Don's mood lightened later, because there's no way any group of people can behave, without exception, in a super human fashion. Hold up fandom as some sort of Perfect Union and that idealistic image is bound to get shattered. Shot down by some action that would be considered as, if not acceptable, then at least as understandable in some less-favored group, the shock could destroy whatever was of value in that dream concept by causing utter rejection as a reaction. It's happened before, although I doubt that Don's got such a rose-colored view of fandom. He's probably more irked at the idea of someone, who's welcomed into his home and then acts like an ass, being somehow a reflection on himself. Hey, Don! You weren't responsible. You didn't do it; someone else did. Just don't invite the same people back if you know who they are; otherwise, once you've apologized as the host, your sin is absolved. No more is required.

As for Wallace's suggestion that your pronouncements be labelled a MANIFESTO, why I thought you stamped all the pages that contain such material with some kind of pschodellic ink because I saw the word "manifesto" sort of hover out and over the sheet when I reached certain sections. Maybe you forgot to rubber-stamp ADW's copy. (Of course since I also heard the word spoken in a voice similar to yours, I may have been hallucinating. Who knows?)

I'm glad that Mike Glicksohn found someone to translate all the esoterica in last issues' speech transcription. No one's answered the ads I've placed in the newspaper want ads yet, so there's a few I haven't puzzled out. Considering the length of time I've been out of contact with your in-person appearances at cons, it was surprising how much of the "speech" was recognizable/translatable. I feel quietly *proud*.

Good to read the upbeat tone of your comments after Susan's letter. Yes, a lot of people have encountered change in the last few years, myself among them, and while problems and things will still be met (and cause, too often, even more problems and things to deal with), I'd be willing to bet most wouldn't agree to setting back the clock. Know I wouldn't.

The vehemence of your disdain for the Phillipines (actually the Filipinos) took me aback a bit. But then I recalled, yes, you have mentioned painful memories about that period... No, I couldn't ever imagine you as a recent cynic. It's too practiced a reflex to have been ingrained only a while ago.

(7/16/80 - 2813 De Mel Ave., #2, Louisville, KY 40214)

>>>Gee, Jackie, if you ever do that illustration...? ¶ ...and remind me to tell the people--sometime--about the 18 hours you and Dave spent in Cincinnati a couple of weekends back. I don't remember too much about it...except the part about the Gin... Welcome Back to the Wonderful World of Esoteric Midwestern Fandom!<<<

TERRY MATZ ...now I get to read one more speech I didn't hear at a convention I wasn't at and try to pretend I was there. It just isn't the same. (I would much rather read a speech I didn't hear at a con that I was at--makes me feel very fannish.) How come you didn't have one of your speeches? I love Tucker but I was very disappointed to find there was very little of you in this issue.

As for fans being conservative, ask all the fanzine editors who tried to convert to offset and typesetting (as you well know) about how fans reacted against that--(not to mention Xeroxing).

I don't know whether conservative is quite the right word. Most fans I know are not conservative in their politics--however they are narrow-minded. The main focus of their political interests is getting the US to try space industrialization. The main focus of their scientific interest is in hardware, physics, etc., when all sorts of biological discoveries are causing major revolutions around them. And of course the main focus of their social and recreational interests is fandom. None of these are unworthy of attention or interest but none is worth the singleminded defensive attitude that fans put into something they have 'discovered'. Fans, like anyone else--and to a greater extent than some, tend to look down on what they haven't tried. Perhaps this is a function of the fact that many feel inferior and love to have someone (like hockey fans) to look down on.

It always seemed ironic to me that intelligent people should be narrowminded and set in their views. I know geniuses who are the least open-minded people I've ever met. One I know hasn't changed his views since he was three-years-old--and he's proud of it. I wonder what makes otherwise intelligent people think like that?

(By the way, Ken was not pleased with your comment about him. Was that nice? I mean, that's hitting a little below the belt. How would you feel if someone made some comment about your physical appearance (well-deserved though it might be)?)

Lest anyone accuse me of disliking fandom, I have to say, how can I reject something that gave me the man I love, my best friends, egoboo, and Bowers? Criticize, yes, but never reject. I would still rather spend my free time on fandom than watching tv, and I would still rather travel to see my friends than to see some monument (except for you, Bill--you are registered as a national landmark, aren't you?). (Sorry, had to get you back about the comment about Ken--I have to protect him.)

(7/23/80 - 1131 White, Kansas City, MO 64126)

>>>...I picture that last remark as being about as significant as the idea of Glicksohn "protecting" me; I mean, I'd feel secure from the kneecaps on down...but the rest of it I'd still have to do myself! (Actually, I used to have a full-size bodyguard, but she went over to the enemy: she married the former member of F.H.F.--a short person.)<<<

ROGER WADDINGTON ...after this [work-related] incursion by the real world, fandom has never seemed so far away. Though maybe also to blame is the discovery that I just can't be a 100% sf fan all the time, and Ghu knows that I've tried. There are times when I feel like taking in instead of giving out, and to that end, read learned and serious articles from Harper's, Encounter, The Atlantic and other such illuminating excursions; which lead in their turn to thoughts of the less demanding hardboiled private eye novels that I've also found as a refuge, all the way across the spectrum of Mike Shayne, Glenn Bowman and Lew Archer.

Then again, there are times when I long to go all the way back, and settle down with stories of travel and adventure in far-distant lands, among strange peoples, those very same stories that I read as a child, and which helped to ease my transition to sf; though the search is harder these days, they aren't being written any more; and

I see TV as the reason for opening out those unexplored corners of the world, sending cameramen to bring it all back to our firesides; though personally, I think there was something lost when we put aside the imagination that books could bring... And there are even times, especially on winter days without a cloud in the sky, when I'm happy enough to go down to the beach and throw pebbles at the sea. (Though being inland, it takes a thirty-mile journey; which in American distances, is probably just down the road!)

All of which, you can imagine, doesn't help to reduce this pile of fanzines that I've been accumulating, or strengthen my fannish resolve.

But I must admit to a liking for receiving those huge and multi-paged fanzines from across the pond, a liking which I suspect is instilled mainly through my fascination with their more commercial partners, the *Saturday Evening Posts*, those *Reader's Digests*, the pre-Xmas editions of the *New Yorker* with their 200-plus pages. Though in their case, it's the adverts that help to pad them out--as I've sadly discovered with one of my favourite magazines, one of the facts of life is that the more successful a magazine, the more adverts it attracts--and with fanzines, it seems to be creativity running wild. Though unlike the commercial magazines, virtue can be found in the smallest two-sheet zine as well as in the most prestigious of annishes; and with that in mind, I might regret the passing of your blockbusters, but I know there'll be as much Bowers spirit in these smaller zines; and definitely as much entertainment!

(7/20/80 - 4 Commercial St., Norton, Malton, N. Yorkshire YO17 9ES, U.K.)

PAULA LIEBERMAN [...on X:2:2] The tone is different than *Outworlds*. I didn't realize that when I first read through the *Xenolith* last year, thinking that "Bowers is doing it again, changing the title and changing the format, but keeping the same zine." No, it's not the same. The *Xenolith* in front of me is a lot more relaxed than the *Outworlds* sitting next to it. The editor seemed more relaxed, the editing more relaxed.

You were more relaxed: that one threw me, especially at Minicon. I guess I still had an "Old" mental picture of Bill Bowers, dating back to 1975--a long time ago, in many ways. I didn't know how to react; I'd been away a long time, and while I was gone a lot of things changed in fandom (undoubtedly including me). Anyway, I hope that the changes in you have been for the better.

...somewhere in an old *Outworlds* was a loc from me that incautiously said "I'll subscribe to what Bill Bowers edits and sells." (But I didn't say how long it would take me to get around to doing so!)

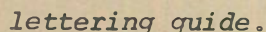
(8/2/80 - 3512 W 133rd St., Hawthorne CA 90250)

MIKE BRACKEN In regards to Mike Glicksohn's letter [X:13]: I don't feel that fandom is something one outgrows. Instead, in my case at least, I was at a certain phase in my life when I found fandom. The things I was interested in, the things I enjoyed, the things that turned me on, were encompassed in fandom, And I still enjoy many of those same things.

And it was my involvement with fandom that led me into my career(s). If I did not enjoy the acts of designing magazines, of writing, or whatever, I sure wouldn't have wanted to do it for a living. But now that I am working as a typographer, now that I am, finally, earning money for my writing, now that I am involved in the "real world" version of all the creative aspects of active fanzine fandom, I find it hard to stay actively involved with fandom.

I'm not belittling fandom, nor am I belittling the fans who stay active in it. I know how many hours of pleasure I've found as a fan the past seven or eight years. I know how much enjoyment other people find in fandom.

But I also know that when I spend 10 hours a day slaving over a keyboard at work, I don't look forward to coming home and typing three stencils. When I spend seven hours with a ruling pen, presstype, galleys of type, stat camera, I don't look forward to coming home to a fanzine article that needs to be layed out, and a stylus and .



I have a family now. I have responsibilities now. I have changed in many, many ways since I entered

Perhaps Mike missed my point. Perhaps I said something I didn't realize I'd said. But I don't mean to belittle fandom or anyone still actively involved with it. I don't believe in "fandom as a substitute for the real world", but, perhaps, fandom was my preparation for the "real world".

I really think I put it best in my last letter: "Perhaps fandom was my apprenticeship. Now I'm in the real world."

"And perhaps, what I'm really trying to say is that I wish I could be an apprentice again..."

(7/7/80 - POBox 387, O'Fallon, IL 62269)

>>>I'm sure that there is a "proper" term for it, but I call it one of your basic "life" decisions. Surprisingly enough, this one was made consciously. To wit: I have the skills/training/talent to do what Mike is doing for a living. But I'm not. ¶ I'm am not afraid to gamble--I have risked all, emotionally, and financially, more than once over the past decade; and I continue to do so, no matter what the track record. But the one gamble I have consistently refused to take has to do with the inescapable gut feeling that, were I ever to go into "graphics" as a profession...I might not enjoy it any more. It doesn't have to be that way, I know; but the risk is not worth it to me. ¶ Mike, I'm really glad you enjoy your job. But by the same token, your letter has convinced me anew I've made the right decision... s/The Eternal Apprentice.<<<

LEAH A ZELDES *This may very well be the first LoC I've written in about three years.*

Somehow it seems fitting that I send it to you, since to the best of my knowledge that was where the last one went. According to Xenolith: The Index, that was in December, 1977. (Way back when you used to talk to me--maybe that's what it is: retaliation for not loccing your fanzines.)

This is a joint loc on XENOPHILS/4/and/YB/41/Y2/and/YB/41/01Xenops/30/and XENOPHIL/YB your last two fanzines. (I don't pretend to understand your numbering system--I think I got four issues of Outworlds before I figured out that the pages were numbered consecutively from issue to issue.)

As always, your speech impressed me more in print than it did when I heard it-- partly because, as you well know, anything impresses me more in print. (I am much more an Eye person than an Ear person. I once walked out on a Harlan Ellison reading, the first unveiling of the then unpublished Croatoan, for this reason, and he took it personally. Wrote in F&SF about "one person walking out in disgust.") And partly because despite my best intentions and aid in first setting up your "Practice" speeches,

your delivery is still something less than smooth (we have your hands shaking on videotape). Copping out by publishing your speeches without giving them is certainly not going to help, either. (Grazynalbin reference.)

I know what F.H.F. is, though I'll be damned if I can remember what the initials stand for.

One thing you left out of that list: "Those were the days when you could count the typos in a Bill Bowers fanzine on the fingers of one hand...not fingers, toes, and electronic calculator." You really are getting sloppy...too many cons and late nights, I suppose. For that matter, "Those were the days when Bill Bowers stayed home from conventions to finish his fanzine." But yes, it's true you were older then. ~~You seem to be in puberty now!!!~~ Already I feel older than you--please stop before ~~infancy~~ you get too young for me. I don't like children, remember!

It's good to see a reminiscent fanzine from you; it's nice to know most of your esoteric references again.

You may be interested in knowing that ConFusion 1 is supposed to be the very last ConFusion ever. Ro is supposed to have reserved the right to come back and run it, but Larry thinks it should be a collaboration of all the past ConFusion chairmen--sort of like the Fan Guest of Honor panel.

Now to Xenolith 13 (it says that in two places; it must be the right number):

Tucker's skit, I think, 'comes across better on the stage. I like the way he spells 'R-O-B-O-T'. You might want to mention somewhere that ConFuSion has both your speech and Tucker's skit on videotape, which Larry & I are happy to bring to any conventions we are going to who will have the equipment (Beta 1 format). We may be able to dub tapes for cons we aren't going to attend, but we'll need plenty of notice (the above includes Spare Chaynge productions such as Everything You Wanted to Know About Fandom, Big Bird Eats Moon, and The Thing That Ate Gargonzola State University, as well as numerous ConFuSion tapes).

I kind of agree with Terry Matz about your esoteric references. At the very least you could avoid pointing them out. The best esoteric references are done so smoothly and gracefully that only the ones in the know catch them and no one else knows they've missed anything. E.g., one of Tucker's books or Rocky Horror Picture Show--you may like these better if you pick up on the Tuckerisms or the allusions to old B movies, but they certainly can be enjoyed by people who don't. (But I suppose anyone who learned about esoterica from Patty Peters can hardly be expected to be subtle. *Boinga, boinga, boinga, boinga...Hnnnnnnnn*)

Mike is right about your writing. The two fragments on the back pages (especially the last) are some of the most poetic things I've seen from you, but I know what you can do when you try. Please do. (Maybe an article for Imp ??)

I just realized I completely forgot to comment on Al's lovely song/poem. I really admire people who can write in meter and rhyme. I can sometimes manage meter, but rhyme... Poetry is something I haven't done in even longer than I've been away from fanzines; somehow I just haven't needed it.

Good grief, is fandom returning to the '70s? Bowers publishes *Outworlds* (sort of), Glicksohn and Wood revive *Energumen*, all the original members are returning to *Apa-50*, I plan another issue of *Imp*, and Larry Downes may even resurrect *Ay Chingar*! Do you think the current state of fandom can survive it?

(7/28/80 - 2818 Whitewood, Ann Arbor, MI 48104)

>>>...but I don't go to cons to use the swimming pool! ¶ "Those were the days that Leah Zeldes told me there's simply too many people in the world to love...to restrict yourself to one..." ¶ Besides, both apprenticeships and puberty can be so much fun!<<<

I also heard from: Carolyn Doyle, Aron Eisenpress, Geoffrey Mayer, Linda Ann Moss and the Incredibly Esoteric Patty Peters. ...but nothing from Glicksohn while in Chicago.

[illegible]

I suppose that everyone, at one point or another in their scholastic "career", has been asked to write something about "What I Did On My Summer Vacation". Or, even if not so asked, did so at least to fill fanzine space.

Somewhere in the morass that is the contents of this apartment are several such exercises. At least I suppose them still to be in existence; I do think I finally disposed of my grade school workbooks when I moved down here three years ago. (I would hope so; my tendency toward holding onto things long after their validity has passed is too well developed as it is.)

I am slightly past the academic requirement for such reports, but this year my summer "vacation" has lasted from the Friday before Memorial Day...with but two very limited exceptions...until now.

And as summer fades into fall--and the time to change the clocks fast approaches (I don't "live" in Indiana anymore), I can safely say that it has been a summer to conjure with.

I say that with a very subjective frame of reference, but that's okay. As we all know, if we stop to think about it, objectivity is only subjectivity rationalized.

I know: I've objectively rationalized all of my subjective reactions to... well, you pick the subject.

This is, after all, a participatory fanzine.

Even if I have the "most equal" vote.

I thought I was...but I guess I'm not quite ready to relate the definitive version of BILL BOWERS' SUMMER OF '80. All the data is in, but the carefully constructed program that was designed to separate the wheat from the chaff (i.e., what really happened vs. what I *thought* happened) has been known to malfunction. It must be doing so: after all, I was there, and I *know* what happened! ...don't I?

Well, sometimes. F'instance, I do know the lyrics to that old standard:

 "HAPPY SPACECON... HAPPY SPACECON TWO YOU...!"

The last really "happy" birthday I had was in 1975.

Now that I have your attention, I should point out that of the five birthdays since then, only one was a total disaster...and a couple were rather enjoyable; if with complications. I have my own sets of criteria for determining "happiness" and "enjoyment", of course. But because I have them, I have to grant them some validity.

...and if you've been paying attention, you're aware that I'm capable of stringing together the damndest bits of circumstantial happenstance--be it Marcons, the relationship of conventions-attended to fanzines-published, or the number of times Dave Locke has been introduced to Susan Wood--as a lead-in to getting where I want to go. Granted, sometimes the point I'm attempting proves to be fully as obvious as one of my patented blatant propositions...but that's okay; I get there.

Besides that, the opening statement is valid.

In 1975 my birthday occurred during BYOBcon 5...of fond memory. (I've found out since that, for some reason, more people I now know well, but then didn't know at all...were at that convention than had right to be... Mind-boggling.) As it was the people I *did* know helped to make it a very good convention, and an extremely enjoyable birthday.

Of course I know what July 20th Signifies--it's Viking Landing Day. Seriously, as one of the two known sf fans (the other being Richard Delap) who share Lunar/Viking Landing Day as birthday, I hereby Declare that All Future Significant Steps in Space take place on said date. Be it Noted. Actually I do think it all rather a neat thing, and thank whoever had a hand in arranging both events.

--ct to (then) Patrick Hayden in FATHER WILLIAM'S MISHAPventures, 7/27/76

That year, the actual birthdate was during the week, but the weekend before Patrick and Phil Paine had arranged something called SYMPOSIUM 2 in Toronto to celebrate the anniversary of the Lunar Landing. Naturally I went; and I basically enjoyed. It was interesting.

Now then, I've been down a few times in my life--and when I do it, I do a damn good job of it. But I've never...before or since...been as depressed as I was over my birthday in 1977. Still, even at my worst...although I'm not pleasant to be around... I've never been suicidal. But that one time...: It's why I've said that between them, Mike Glicksohn, my friend, and Denise Parsley Leigh (whom I'd known a grand total of two and a half weeks), literally saved my life. Simply by being there.

I go through my spells of forced self-dependence--some things you gotta work out for/by yourself...but it's nice to have friends. When you really need them.

...and while the actual birthdate in 1978 passed uneventfully, it led directly into an AUTOCLAVE that was not the best of conventions...for a lot of people. ...and a very bad one for reasons not unlike those leading to the downer of the year before... but reasons totally different. The patterns were similar; the people were different.

And so it went, leading up to this excerpt from "Bill Bowers' First Post-Iguanacon Non-Practice Speech" [delivered 1/19/79, at ConFusion]:

Nine-and-a-half years ago this weekend, a man stepped out of a spiderly-looking vehicle, onto the surface of the Moon. I saw it happen, and I've never been quite the same.

Six months from this weekend (July 20-22, 1979), Rusty Hevelin and I will be co-chairing something called SPACECON--to be held in Wapakoneta, Ohio. And if you don't know the significance of that little speck on I-75, then you probably won't understand why I wouldn't let Rusty forget an idea he mentioned to me in a van, on the way to Boston, almost two years ago.

But even if all that romantic sense of wonder nonsense don't grab you, you should come anyway...

You see, it'll be my birthday party, also.

I should have known.

...A BEDTIME STORY FOR CAS:¹

Early in the evening, as Mike and I stood caftan-clad outside the "programming" room, the lady approached us...and commented on the rumor that one of us wore "only" the caftan.

Mike grinned, said "There's one way to find out..."; she smiled, and wandered away.

A while later, as Mike and I were standing in the doorway to the huckster-cum-banquet room (it was a slow night; the poker game hadn't started), she returned.

Pausing in front of us, she announced: "I'm bored. One of you take me away from all of this."

Mike looked at me and said: "If you don't take her up on that...I will."
So I did.

Later.

...the phone calls and the knockings-at-the-door began. Eventually it was communicated to me that there was this "surprise" birthday party for me in Ro & Lin's room at Midnight. And my presence was required.

"Go away," I said. To all of them...

The harrassment continued; she giggled.

And when we not only made a fashionably late appearance at the party...but spent

¹...and that's probably the most esoteric thing in here since, a) I've never met her, and b), she's never before been mentioned in any of my fanzines.

a good portion of the remainder of the weekend in each other's company (in spite of her persisting in wearing that "Harlan Ellison" T-shirt), the talk began. We were aware of it and, because it was fun, we played to it.

When, the following weekend, we showed up together at an out-of-state party, the rumor mill went into full gear. This time it came in two parts:

- a) We were obviously an established "couple", and...
- b) I had "stolen" her from Mike.

(Leaving aside for the moment whether 1) she had a mind of her own or, 2) was indeed anyone else's in the first place...I really shouldn't have been suprised. Apparently I'm very good at such things...whether it be at all-night fast service stores, or Institute parking lots, in addition to cons...since this was the fourth time in a little over two years that I was accused of having "stolen" someone from someone else. The only difference in this instance was that the person supposedly ripped off wasn't the source of the accusation.

(...still, I often wonder just how I do it. It never works when I consciously plan it!)

We were aware (we couldn't help being otherwise--my friends aren't subtle; I am) of both parts a) & b)...and again we played to them: to the hilt.

Well, we at least were having fun with it...

Came the next convention on down the line and at least five different people, the first night, inquired: "What's wrong? Why aren't you together?"

"Nothing's wrong," I replied. "We both came to this con to see other people, and we really didn't plan on spending that much time together," I continued...but I could sense that they didn't believe me.

Ironical. Because, for once, I was telling the absolute truth.

The next convention after that was the first time that Mike was in attendance after the original encounter. We placed into motion the plan we'd fabricated the very first weekend:

The lady and I disappeared from the con suite Friday evening...and re-emerged in matching caftans. As we wended our way back toward the con suite we were the recipients of several comments...and a few knowing glances.

...until we entered the con suite, escorted an unknowing Mike out between us... and later emerged in three matching caftans.

Okay, so it was a cheap (well, not totally; the material cost money, and the caftans then had to be made) way of making a point. And, probably in the long run it didn't prove anything--except maybe to us. But tweaking people's assumptions is so easy.

Plus it's a lot of fun.

...most of the time.

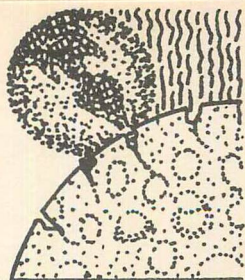
So, you say, you did have a good birthday that year?

Well, yes. But no, not really.

And no, I'm not telling you why. It is not teasing this time. I can't yet, and probably never will. It was something so completely unexpected that it hurt all the more. And it has since been resolved, thankfully. So Be It.

At least, from everything I've heard, the other 115 people at SPACECON One had a very good time!

So Rusty and I decided to do it again...



TEN YEARS LATER!
SPACECON 67

RUSTY HEVELIN & BILL BOWERS
[a semi-religious organization]
PRESENT

ONE YEAR LATER...

SPACECON Two

July 18, 19 & 20, 1980

DOTTI BEDARD STEFL* → → → GUEST OF HONOR

"Dotti, in far too short a time, had carved a large niche for herself in Denise's admittedly generous heart."

And my own, too -- though I'd never admit it to her: she'd just giggle and make that disgusted face she makes whenever someone mentions french kissing. The above quote was culled from a con report I did after attending Iggy. That was the first worldcon for Denise and I, and our first meeting with the now-infamous Bedard Stefl.

Those who have met Dotti already know -- she engenders quick and strong reactions. One will usually walk away from that first encounter with a definite feeling for/about her. Dotti is not a bland diet. She is gregarious and precocious, and one sometimes forgets her age is less than the shoe size of one person I know (he does have largish feet, but...). This woman-child is a scarred veteran of fandom. The number and stature (Glicksohn aside) of the Good People she knows, her Family that extends in bewildering complexity across the continent, her nomination for Best Fanzine in the FAAn awards (for which some fans would give their Gestatners...): all these could give rise to envy.

Dotti, frankly, frightens me. There are moments, talking with her, that I forget I'm speaking to someone mumble-mumble years my junior. She can be completely adult, and then say or do something that reminds you -- jarringly -- that she is still 'child', still 'growing-up', with all that implies. And -- if she can learn to avoid having our cat incise parallel claw marks in her nose every time she comes to visit -- she is going to become a stunningly beautiful young woman. As for me, I'm becoming a monk.

Don't let this opportunity pass you by. Rusty and Bill could have honored no better person. Talk to her. Listen.

---Stephen (Uncle Steve) Leigh

[illegible]

PROGRAMMING.....you want programming...?

Well...Rusty will show slides (sometime); Bill will repeat his Midwestcon speech (sometime); Dotti will "speak" (sometime Saturday); Larry Tucker will show videotapes (whenever); Bill Cavin will show you how to carry ice (lots of times)...and Mike Glicksohn will conduct a seminar in Midnight Door Knocking... Color and Hue will be added by Denise Parsley Leigh's Toronto Ensemble.

The Con suite is on the 4th Floor; the pool is where it was last year (with a public poolside buffet Saturday evening)...and the Neil Armstrong Air & Space Museum (closes at 5pm) is right out the back door...Visit it!

Programming...you are the programming...!
Enjoy.

> DOROTHY BEDARD STEFL <

Guest of Honor Speech, delivered at SPACECON Two, July 19, 1980

Greetings, Humans!

My Guest of Honor Speech is in the form of an Official Report.

To: GALACTIC HEADQUARTERS

From: SECRET AGENT QXZ

Subject: STUDY PROJECT 974 865 302 719 358 645 927 413 844 B

This study project concerns a special subculture of the planet. It calls itself science fiction fandom. The following observations have been made:

This subculture gathers at unpredictable intervals to practice secret ceremonies. The meetings take place at hotels. The choice of a location depends entirely on the members' ability to find a hotel with standards low enough to accept such guests.

The members of the subculture arrive at these meetings through some strange exercise of psy powers. Because the automobile is the common means of transportation in this society, it might be assumed that these humans would use it; but we were unable to find a single one who admitted to driving to the meeting. Everyone present claimed to have come with someone else.

As is common with spies, fugitives, and secret societies, the members use the meetings as a cover for the exchange of documents and secret papers. Each member pretends that his are superior to all the rest.

Usually the hotels have a large pool filled with water. Our chemist has tested it; there can be no doubt that it is water. This is one of our strangest discoveries. The humans spend hours each day in and around the pool; and yet our careful observation of their drinking habits verifies that they are allergic to Water.

Animals of another species are kept in a special place in the hotel. These have four legs and a very complex body structure. They light up and sound bells. The humans treat them like pets. They pet them for hours at a time while feeding them money.

At each meeting, this subculture has a contest that is called a banquet. The members gather together to eat plastic food and get talked at. The contest is to see who can sit the longest without listening. Sometimes everyone wins.

The members of this subculture always do things in pairs. They seem to suffer from the delusion that there are only two sexes. We have not yet discovered what they do with the other three. This may be connected with the fact that when two humans register for a hotel room, there are always five humans staying there.

Sometimes the ceremonies become so secret that even the humans attending are not allowed to watch. This is achieved by filling the room with smoke so that no one can see.

We failed completely in our attempt to solve the greatest problem this species presents to us. Humans do not grow up. They grow down. They are born at their largest size, and they gradually grow smaller until they reach adulthood. As a result, big humans are childish, immature, irresponsible, and often stupid. Small humans are wise, mature, dignified, and much better looking. We must continue to research this puzzling reverse growth.

Signed, QXZ

There is one final observation that could not be put in an Official Report. It has to be stated unofficially and confidentially.

I LOVE YOU ALL!

---Dotti Bedard Stefl

There wasn't. It was a full-fledged exam...

"In my youth," said the sage, pouring coke in his rum,
 "I wore it quite short and well-oiled.
 But now that it's longer, my sex appeal's stronger,
 And my rep^ute is properly soiled."

"You are old," said the fan, "as I mentioned before.
And you've grown most uncommonly thin.
Yet you stand and give speeches in caftan sans breeches.
Are you brazen ... or simply half bent?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to the fan,
 "I wore trousers to cover my bums,
 'Til I found that the breeze,
 as it buzzed 'tween my knees,
 created harmonious hums."

"You are old," said the fan, "and the whole world thought
Your fading days were quite dead.
Now Xenolith dashes
from OUTWORLDIAN ashes.
Why couldn't you quit while ahead?"

"In my youth," said William, adding strength to his drink,
 "I considered retiring from print.
 But my bulk mailing rate
 has been hurt as of late.
 Are you catching the drift of my hint?"

"You are old," said the fan, growing tired of the rhyme.
 "One would think all your stamina broke.
 Yet you eye each tight sweater,
 the younger, the better.
 Are you trying, perhaps, for a stroke?"

"I have answered three questions, and that is enough,"
 Father William replied in a snit.
 "I have made your good name
 and I can break it the same.
 Now be off, you ungrateful young twit."

---AL CURRY

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[illegible]