

"So what am I, with less than two months in fandom, doing producing a fanzine? That's a good question. Let me know if you can answer it...." ABANICO #1, 8/28/61

"...the excuse for this particular publication is twofold: To Save My FAPA membership ...and the realization that My Very First Fanzine appeared almost precisely 15 years before the time most of you will be seeing this. Ah, sweet nostalgia..."

"...Actually, I'm Only 15... But Fanzine Publishing Aged Me!", 7/25-7/26/76

...which can only mean that this is the 18th issue of XENOLITH, The Fanzine of Lists!

Moving the identifying material upfront for a change...I'm BILL BOWERS--still holding forth at 2468 Harrison Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio, 45211. This is for a few friends--and will also be my initial contribution to FLAP (Mlg #12); Happy Anniversary Dave Hulan! As always, thanks to Jackie for use of the mimeo. # (9/15/81) # My Publication #114.

"Several months ago I had Big Plans (since Jerry Kaufman is in neither apa, I can revert to my over-use of Capitalizations) to celebrate this momentous occasion: a special issue of OW (remember that?), a self-collection of what I want to acknowledge of my fan writing/art, all sorts of neat things. Yes. But even Institutions don't always perform their functions, particularly not when they are trying to live a 70's version of ON THE ROAD...so this is what you get. (Maybe in 1981, for my 20th...?)" (ibid.)

...then again, just possibly in 1986...for the 25th Anniversary of that first of the Bowers-fanzines: Abanico #1, dated September, 1961.

In the meantime, here's what has happened in the five years since #87 listed the preceding fifteen years' output:

					Print	
	Issue	Pgs.	Date	Repro	Run	
87.	"...Actually, I'm Only 15..."	4	Aug 76	offset (150)		for FAPA #156 & MISHAP #20
88.	Father William's MISHAPventures	4	2	Aug 76	offset 112	for MISHAP
89.	MISHAPventures	5	2	Sep 76	mimeo (100)	for MISHAP #20
90.	Outworlds	28/29	64	late 76	offset (1100)	
91.	MISHAPventures	6	2	12/2/76	mimeo (150)	for MISHAP #23 & AZAPA
92.	MISHAPventures	7	3	1/6/77	ditto (80)	for MISHAP #24
93.	MISHAPventures	8	2	1/24/77	ditto (70)	for MISHAP #25
94.	AZapatite	1	2	2/9/77	mimeo	for AZAPA #22
95.	MISHAPventures	9	2	5/3/77	mimeo	for MISHAP #28

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It is a little past Six, Wednesday evening, October 7, 1981.

I'm Bill Bowers, and this is yet another slice of my life, in yet another cleverly cute issue of my fanzine, *Xenolith*.

The reason I say all of this so simply, so directly, so soon ... is because it's been a long time since February, and the last "real" issue.

...and I probably have a lot to say.

I say probably because I have only a week in which to say it (and in which to get it published) before Octocon. Naturally, despite multiple subjects (mostly about myself) in mind, I was still unsure of what opening gambit to utilize...as I came home from work today, determined to at last get started.

So, procrastinating, I examined the mail:

A form from the City of Cincinnati dunning me for the quarterly installment of their income tax (so Simon Leis can keep getting his check, I suppose);

An issue of *Rolling Stone* with "ELVIS: The Party Years" and cover banners informing me of a "Simon & Garfunkel Special Photo Report", and "J. P. Donleavy On Violence" inside (this, as I wait to see what that maniac Begin will do now, as the repercussions of the Sadat assassination remain unclear);

A statement from Mastercard informing me that I'm now a remarkable \$91.00 under my credit limit...~~YAY! YAY! YAY!~~

A large brown envelope from the Academy Life Insurance Company of Valley Forge, PA., bulk-mailed, containing "Non-Transferable Documents For: Mr Alvin Marshall" ... of this address. The residents of the other two "apartments" in the house are female, and have been so for a surprising number of years (30 in one case, over 60 in the other), so I shall transfer the documents to the large container containing used cat litter.

...and, surprisingly (given my level of direct response) without an "X" over The Axe, my copy of *Pong* #24.

At Denvention II (without a doubt, the most enjoyable Worldcon I've been to since Torcon II) Mike Glicksohn showed me a single copy of a large fanzine he called "*Energumen-16-but-with-a-substitute-cover-because-the-real-one-is-still-at-the-printers-damnit*". I verified that my name was on the contents page, and that I was mentioned appropriately early in Mike's editorial ... and so I was not terribly surprised when a copy-complete-with-the-cover-that-depicts-two-of-my-fanzines-but-only-one-of-all-the-other-faneds' of *Energumen 16* was personally delivered into my hands on the stoop of a small, humble fannish abode in Findlay, Ohio...on September 19th of this very year.

It all seemed somehow fitting that the first comment I made to Mike after ego-scanning the issue was to chastize him for omitting the date-completed from the end of my contribution.

That date was, according to my carbon, 9/25/80. For the record.

Last Thursday evening, I was over at the Locke-Causgrove Publishing & Drinking Emporium, to run off an apazine. After I had published a remarkable total of four stencils, we sat around the table testing our respective drinks. After Jackie and Dave had spent an appropriate amount of time respectfully making awe-struck noises about the latest Bowers-publication, the conversation fell to the level of discovering that Dave had, indeed, read *Energumen 16*.

A suitably short time later (I wasn't eating, and I was tired), I glanced over Dave's shoulder, saw his copy of *Warhoon 28*. "I really have to get that soon" I-said-without-pausing-for-breath "--and so what did you think of it?"

Stroking his beard as if he found it reassuring to still have one, Dave unexpectedly responded straightforwardly: "...possibly the best thing you've ever written."

I was surprised.

And when the following afternoon, as Joel and I were waiting for Denise to get it together (so that we could leave for Conclave), Steve Leigh said virtually the same thing, I was more than intrigued...

I wondered if Dave and Steve had read the same fanzine, with the same Bowers-piece, that I had.

I made Denise read it on the way up, and she's still speaking to me. But at Conclave (#107 on My List; #10 for 1981), the few who acknowledged having read "Thots While Swinging" were those who had been referenced in it--so that wasn't valid feedback.

Everybody else was off doing whatever it is that Midwestern fans do at conventions.

...and so I come home to find that Ted White considers my contribution to *Energumen* 16 "The worst piece in the issue..."

Wow, that's a relief!

I'm sorry that Ted didn't like the piece, but I 'll probably continue to write things that are "filled with elipses ... references to local ingroupisms ... and, most of all, Bill Bowers, who may be not only Bowers' favorite subject but his only subject, and certainly his major focus of concern."

Next on the agenda, after this (and Octocon) is completed, is to do something for Denise, who has promised another *Graymalkin* once I deliver;

...and something for Leah, who has promised to have *Imp 2* out for *ConFusion*, if I contribute by December 1st;

...not to mention Yet Another Friday Nite "Speech" at that *ConFusion*, plus several "projects" in various stages of completion.

All, I'm sure, will be extremely self-centered and esoteric.

But then, maybe just to prove that I can do it... We'll see.

Right now I wouldn't consider the *Energumen* piece my "best"...or even my favorite self-work to date. Those distinctions would fall somewhere in a group of four earlier works: the NASFIC-speech-about-Mike's-sex-life; the Post-Iguanacon "Report" delivered at the 1979 Marcon; the Iguanacon speech itself...and the "Letters To..." segment that ran in *Xenolith* 7.

I reread "Thots While Swinging" a fair number of times in the year between its writing and its publication...and I still don't know what to think of it. Still, there it is--affectionate tribute to Ted in its opening and all--right out there where you can all see it now.

I am curious as to what reaction it will garner (but then I'm always curious), while suspecting that most of that response will fall in between the two extremes I've already encountered.

...and when, on the season opener of *WKRP In Cincinnati* tonight, Les hopes that his "scoop" will get him a spot on the Al Schoettelkotte 6 O'Clock News... Well, I couldn't help wondering whether that was esoteric, or merely local color. That mouthful is of course the title of the local news on Chanel 9, the CBS affiliate here. But that should have been obvious to anyone who was paying attention.

But then, we so rarely pay attention to what we are viewing ...or reading, for that matter.

And our Very Own Venus Flytrap has landed a job on KISS 96. It's a bit north of here but still in the area. I, and my budget for tapes, are both glad for that fact!

...just in case you weren't paying attention earlier, I'll remind you that this is the Illustrated Version of the Fourth Annish of the fanzine Ted White reads to find out what's going on in thrilling decadent Midwestern fandom:

...brought to you by the Editorial Whim of one who has been, at one time or another, "an Institution", "almost unanimously catagorized as 'an eminently decent person'", "Machiavellian" ... but who is now "the Cult Object of midwestern fandom" Himself --
 BILL BOWERS (2468 Harrison Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45211; 513 481-3613).

It is being stencilled on c*h*e*a*p Quill stencils, and will be mimeoed on the much appreciated Causgrove Gestetner. Not only is it Copyright (c) 1981, by W.L. Bowers, it is also My Publication #116. And naturally, since half the run of #17 remains undistributed (and 95% of #18 likewise), this issue will probably consist mainly of letters...such as this one, from:

MAIA I was going to start by complaining that you brought out a *Xenolith* before I'd had a chance to loc the previous issue; then I realized, why complain about having to write half as many locs? ((Or possibly 1/3 as many, since I just noticed that what I thought was X 15 is really X 15 and 16. I won't ask about that, I'll just sit here and contemplate the sound of one hand clapping...))

In keeping with an inadvertent tradition, I missed your speech at the most recent ConFusion (though I was in the room for a few minutes). I suspect they're easier to read than to listen to (easier to write than to speak, too?); I can take my time pondering the esoterica.

Don't worry about those who ask you when you're going to settle down and get a "real job". I've been steadily employed for almost 8 years now, and I still haven't had one. I never did get a real ulcer from my work experience, though for a while I was working on one. Unfortunately, I have this obsession about paying bills (stemming from a compulsion to acquire them), so haven't the nerve to give up a well-paying though incredibly boring job for the freedom and dignity of poverty.

"I've been told," you write, "with some fervor, that the future of fanzines lies in video-tape, or with home computers." Oh, in the future all fans will be rich? And pigs will fly? And yes, recorded (as opposed to written) fan fiction does truly indescribable things to my digestive track, even to think of it. But that's what "Fast Forward" buttons are for. Though the concept of "Al Curry Goes Disco" boggles the mind, too.

Getting around to commenting on the Letters reminds me that I was once tempted to comment on the similarites between *Xenolith* and an apazine; but I didn't think it was quite polite (not to mention safe).

I have my own guesses as to the meaning of F.H.F., but I'll keep them to myself. Not only are they probably more inventive than the real meaning (if there is one), but even if I were right no one would tell me anyway. And how many points do I get for recognizing that Mike's HHGTTG reference was a HHGTTG reference even before he said so? #27 Now you'll probably be getting strange guesses as to what HHGTTG stands for. ((Incidentally, I know of no group that uses "guys" to refer to members, more often than teen-age girls. At least in Columbus. So Mike is exonerated of all charges of sexism. This time.)) ((Only kidding, Mike. I think.))

By the way, I collected 55¢ at Minicon Saturday night, from people who wanted to make certain I had The Dime (but who gave me the quarter?). And now that Bill is over 18, he's still putrid, but no longer cute. What can one say about someone who wants to be Mike Glicksohn when he grows up, but lacks all the essential qualities except height (or lack thereof)? He positively ruined a brilliant esoteric comment of mine by babbling on about the relevant details (at least she did get her dollar back, eventually, but there's still no excuse for his behavior).

To enlarge upon something Harry Warner said: Any job has its own elaborate set of pointless rules to feel rebellious against. My own job is virtually the antithesis of fandom (when Mike G. asked me what I was doing in such a job, when I could apparently handle something rather more intellectually demanding, I did admit that I take a certain perverse pride in being one of fandom's few blue collar workers), but even if I did work at something more satisfying, I'd still want to see the people

whom I encounter only in fannish gatherings. Though I suppose I could move to ~~Minneapolis Cincinnati Toronto Detroit~~ wherever (no, that's Michelle).

I was greatly amused by your introductions of Steve & Denise (and by the introduction to the introductions -- I agree), though I can't find anything specific to say; I suppose I've been undone by the unexpected compliment (Thank You).

So much for Xenolith 15, er 16.

The sudden appearance at ~~Inconsiderate~~ Inconsistent .55 of #17 startled me a bit; but it was fun to read. I think I attended the convention it describes. At least, I definitely witnessed that poker game (but then when you've seen one, you've seen them all).

And I've just discovered that it is possible to burn hardboiled eggs, if one forgets about them and lets the water boil away... Yes, indeed, there are times when I get a little too involved in my fanac. (5/4/81)

...well, he might possibly be worth a dollar...Canadian. But I doubt it. ¶ I don't know if I've mentioned it before, Maia, but I enjoy your letters; you certainly do it better with a typewriter than one would expect from one of your tender fannish years. ¶ By the way, what was the final bid at Conclave? ~~XXX XXXX XXXX OF THEM WERE ACCEPTED~~ I never did get a chance to top them. ¶ Who is this "Michelle"? ...and were the crossovers esoteric, or simply an indication she has trouble making up her mind a lot?

MIKE BRACKEN It's funny, but until I "left" fandom I wasn't much of a topic for conversation. And now, in the latest Xenolith I find Mike Glicksohn and Harry Warner Jr. discussing my letter in the previous issue, which responded to Glicksohn's letter in the one before that, which was a response to my letter in the issue before that.

And, in writing this letter to you, I find that I haven't really left fandom. I've found a new place in fandom. I'm sitting at the edges, watching what's going on, but not having the time to become involved.

I guess, in cutting back all of my activity, and sitting on the sidelines watching for awhile, I'm now able to pick and chose which fannish activities I still enjoy. Like writing this letter to you, for instance. I still read a few of the fanzines that show up. Once in a while I write a LoC. Or draw a cartoon. Or whatever.

I'm happy with myself.

As Mike Glicksohn seems to imply, there is one hell of a lot to fandom. There are parts of fandom where I've been, and parts of fandom I'll never be. The part I was in, I enjoyed. At least, most of the time I was there.

But my reasons for joining fandom initially were quite different from Glicksohn's, I assume. I published my first fanzine because I couldn't see professionally. I'd never heard of fandom before, and published six issues before I saw another fanzine. My goal at the time was to learn to write, to learn to publish, to learn about layout and design, and all those things.

When I discovered fandom, I didn't abandon those goals. What I did is gain other goals. I discovered other people who read sf, and wrote sf, and talked sf. And the deeper I got into fandom, the less sf was concerned, and I still received enjoyment from my fannish pursuits.

But somewhere in there all of my efforts to learn all those things began paying off, and those aspects of fandom were no longer important to me. I changed direction. I withdrew from active fandom. And, like I said earlier in this letter, I'm beginning to dip a toe in here and there, and I'm finding those small aspects of fandom that I still enjoy, and I'm keeping, however slightly, involved in them.

I think I can understand Harry Warner's comments about fandom having fewer restrictions. Every field, be it journalism, or graphic arts, or medicine, or whatever, has certain rules and regulations. Sometimes they don't make sense, and having to blindly follow them is occasionally irritating. It is nice to back away from it, and to allow yourself the creative freedom that fandom usually allows.

At the same time, it's fun to learn all those stupid rules and regulations, and then learn how to break them. Part of the fun is knowing how and when to break the restrictions.

If you seriously enjoyed the time you spent as a technical illustrator short as it may have been, you might want to try going into typography (typesetting to the layman). If you went to one of the smaller type houses in your city (non-union, of course), there's a strong chance you could work out some sort of part-time deal. Most type houses I know of are hurting for talent, and would probably be willing to hire someone part-time. So, in a sense, you'll be near all those things you mentioned, and still have some of the freedom you seem to need.

And, with luck, you won't become so locked into the job that you'll abandon *Xenolith*. Because, if you do, I won't have any place to write LoCs. (3/24/81)

Well, part of the reason you haven't seen X in a while is that I do/did have a job; one that became another. And it is related to what I want to do...in a strange way. I haven't quite figured out how to tell you about it, but I probably will soon. Terry Matz says that I owe an explanation to everyone who read my last *ConFusion* speech... and I'd probably do most anything Terry asked me to do. (Except write letters...)

TERRY MATZ Thanks for sending *Xenolith*--in spite of the fact I haven't written for a long time. I'm try desperately to catch up on my letters now--but people keep writing back.

How is the job situation? I worry about you but there's not much I can do down here (unless you want to move--I didn't think so). I certainly understand for two reasons--we went through the same periods of unemployment and insecurity when we were 'in business' and Ken is still going through that. I opted for security--I'm a product of my background. But I've only been here a year and I feel like I've been here 20. I want to stay nine years to get all my profit-sharing but thinking of nine years is like looking down a tunnel. You know I've never even lived in one place for more than six years let alone had a job that long. Of course, just like you, I made the choice and I will probably stick with it. Since I don't have as much contact with fandom as I'd like I need to be around people, I need to have other stimuli. This job gives that to me. Well, sometimes.

Ken's trying it your way for a while. He always did like the idea of free-lancing but I was afraid it would be easier to get a full-time job. It wasn't. He still isn't sure what he would like to do over the long term. I know he enjoys free-lancing but he doesn't get medical insurance that way. How do you handle things like that?

How was *ConFusion*? I try not to think about all the conventions I'm missing. I guess I'm postponing most of that awhile while we get back on our feet. We had to get a new oven and a new mattress (priorities after all)--and they cost as much as two conventions. I hate to think what's going to happen when our car finally gives up.

All is not as bleak as I'm making it sound. *Trumpet* will be out next week. I know Ken never thought he'd see the day. He really enjoyed putting it together. I don't understand the publishing bug but I understand how it effects him.

As I may have mentioned, Ken is fan guest of honor at Ambercon in Wichita. That's one reason he wanted to get *Trumpet* out--to show he was still doing things.

This is the second time I've written this letter--trying to make it more interesting. I'm afraid it's not much use. I'll write if something interesting does happen. (3/27/81)

Well, I haven't received a letter from Terry since, so I can only assume that life in Kansas City is still just as exciting as I remember it being, from the two years I spent near there, at Dickie-Garbage AFB. By the way, Terry, I really appreciate the hospitality you and Ken extended on the Devnention Trek: It helped turn the worldcon

into a very enjoyable eleven day vacation. Besides, after spending that long in a car with Cavin, it was nice to see an attractive woman who is definitely H*O*T S*T*U*F*F! ¶ I'm glad that I got a chance to see both you and Ken after too long a time. I'm sorry I won't make Icon, but think about Chambanacón. And you definitely have to come to ConFusion, so that you can listen to one of my speeches...and I can make you famous. (I realize that I've made you famous before, but that was a long time ago, and the effects seem to have worn off!) ¶ I couldn't help thinking of you twice recently: once, when QUEST/STAR finally showed up on the stands...and then last weekend, at Conclave, where I heard: "Gee, I used to hear from you a lot more often when you were chasing me!" Ah, well. I guess I'll just have to start chasing you (both) again... ¶ (Denise said..."Ken's lost twenty pounds...really!?! I think there's something esoteric going on here that I'm not privy to. Denise won't, so maybe Ken will tell me? Thought so.) And it was fascinating talking about Alex and Phyllis's new book; can hardly wait...! ¶ By the way, guess who's talking about coming over again next year? You'll never guess.

ERIC LINDSAY Al Curry's little ditty seems so very accurate. Why I remember when you were an ambitious publisher, who would never think of attending a convention if a fanzine deadline was near, and who sat in the corner with an undiluted coke. By now you probably drink pyote coffee.

Opps, sorry about that, I used that letter last time, didn't I?

Who you calling "he who is shorter than Glicksohn and/or Locke"? Them's fighting words. I'll have you know that if it weren't for Mike and Dave, a certain elevator shoe company would be out of business. Besides, you haven't been close enough to the ground (except when drunk, and that doesn't count) to know the heights of any of us normal sized people. Why, I remember the last time I was at a con with you, you wearing a white caftan, some fans wanted to know why you didn't have a torch...they thought the con was being held in New York harbour.

Alas, that fans should have to resort to the methods mentioned by Harry Warner Jr. to make stencil typing film. I noticed here that Colgate Palmolive made a sandwich wrapping film known as Lunch'n'wrap, which appears similar to the freezer bag style of plastic, and this does not give wrinkling problems when removed from the roll. Unfortunately, it also isn't apparently on the market any more. I count myself lucky that, when I bought it, I bought several dozen rolls of it. Would you like some to try?

Bah, humbug to Joe Christopher. Breakfast better indeed. If you could destroy food with the facility that I have gained in years of practice in burning water/meat/cereal, etc., you too would count a letter from a friend much higher. Now, were I able to cook, maybe I would agree that breakfast was better. At least letters don't give me heartburn.

As for Terry Matz and her totally unfounded defence of offset and of xerography, one would think that a person with her fannish background would know better. You see, of course, the sad consequences of going about with convention chairmen. Why, even Robin Johnson, ex-chairman of Aussiecon, makes favourable mention of offset. Not so us tru fans. We know that if ghod intended us to use offset, he wouldn't have invented plastic tubes of ink, and silk screens. Besides, I've had an offset press, and it was a total menace. Took far longer to set up, far longer to change a plate, and longer to do print runs of 250 or so (which is all I ever find myself doing, postal charges being what they are). I suspect, art aside, that mimeo is just so much easier for the average fan.

The real reason for rejection, of course, is that if everyone uses offset, and gets good at it, us letterhacks will have nothing to mention when we write our letters and reviews. How terrible to no longer be able to mention that "Joe Blog's fanzine was totally illegible."

So what is esoteric about referring to Cas, or indeed any other fan you've never met before or mentioned? Fans do that sort of thing all the time.

My congratulations on printing Dotti's GoH speech, and to Dotti on doing such a good job on it.

(4/1/81)

TIM C. MARION Okay, I'm going to tackle the subject of Dotti Stefl and Family Relationships again. You make a very good point when you say, "Let S/He Among You, who has written and stencilled every word in every fanzine you've done; run it off, collated, stapled and personally delivered every copy by yourself...cast the first ballot." Still, when it is suspected that the person in question did only one of these things, it causes a fan to wonder how much the fanzine can really be that person's fanzine.

As for your charge that the FAAn Awards should be for whoever votes, I disagree. A body of people have a right to set up a group of awards for themselves and exclude those they do not consider knowledgeable enough to vote. The case of Rusty Hevelin (deserved though it was) winning DUFF is a total non sequitar. The only requirements for voting in DUFF is to have been active in fandom, in some form or another, one or two years or so before the vote (that, and having the voting fee). The FAAn Awards are set up specifically for fanzine fans, and I do not feel this is an unreasonable criteria for voting on fanzines. (7/20/81)

MARTY CANTOR I discovered fandom relatively late in life (in 1975, just before my 40th birthday); and whilst I feel that neodom is a state of mind that has never afflicted me at any age (no matter what it was that I was just starting doing), I find myself having neoish feelings when I approach Xenolith. Admittedly this is a subjective feeling that I have (and it is not to impute any feelings of humbleness on my part ((humbleness on my part would be something on the order of Hell freezing over or some such nonsense))); but there is something about Xenolith that makes it appear to me to be the distilled essence of fanzine fandom. Bill, I am not trying to turn your head or anything quasi-wonderful like that. I guess that one of the things that I am trying to say is that I am jealous and that I wish Holier Than Thou were like Xenolith. Oh, not that HTT should copy Xenolith in any particular matter (and it will not, it will continue to go its own idiosyncratic way), but that I wish it would acquire the same type of fannish air that seems to pervade your zine.

As a digression I want to ask you if you feel that Xenolith seems to have a life of its own apart from you? (Rather, do you have that feeling about Xenolith?) I often have that feeling about HTT, but maybe that is because I allow the contributors much space for their thoughts in lngish lettercols. I certainly interject myself into HTT with comments on everything and everybody; yet I still (at times) have the feeling that HTT has an existence apart from me. I am just wondering if you have the same feelings about Xenolith?

Whatever. The point of this peroration is my wonderment in having my LoC printed. When I wrote it I did not expect it to be printed; after all, who am I to be put into the Bowers fannish circle? (Remember, I am not humble in any sense--I just feel that I occupy a niche on the fringes of fanzine fandom (with the mainstream of fanzine fandom being either in Australia or in the mid-West of America ((and also interacting with each other at all those cons that I cannot attend))). I wrote several LoCs to Atarantes on the topic of how most fans tend to think of themselves as being isolated from the mainstream of fandom--I purposely excepted mid-West and Northeast fans from this as I felt that they interacted with each other at the numerous cons that are held in that relatively small geographical area. Now that I have "made" your fanzine, I wonder what your other loccers would say about this topic. The Southern loccers in Atarantes seem to consider the South to be the most isolated section of American fandom--I believe that feelings of isolation are part and parcel of being a fan. We may get together a lot at cons and communicate with each other in our fanzines; we are still, though, but a minute portion of a large mass of non-fans. Despite my immersion in the weekly madness of LASFS (110-140 fans at each meeting) I tend to feel somewhat isolated from much of fandom. There are many kinds of fans at LASFS meetings; however, few of them are genzine fans. (As I am, many LASFSians are in APAs--there are though, only Pelz, Glyer, and myself as genzine fans who are regular LASFS attendees. And Paula Lieberman.)

Now what is all of this nonsense about "obligatory obscure references"? Especially the pointing out of same. Any fanzine that has an interaction with its readers and has been around for awhile automatically develops references that are obscure to those who have not been reading the zine for long. And that is one of the charms that fanzines have for those who have been reading them regularly. A good fanzine becomes a sort of family to its regulars, with the obscure references acting as a weeding-out mechanism--a sort of rite of passage (whilst being, at the same time, bonds which hold together the "family", rituals which the regulars share). Certainly this makes it difficult for newcomers; however, those who will find themselves at home in the fanzine will soon overcome the lack of knowledge about the obscure references. So it is really not necessary to point out the "obligatory obscure references"--unless that in itself is an obscure reference that is part of the *Outworlds* ethos.

Now that I have taken enough time away from typing stencils for *HTT* #10 (I just finished page 50 and there is more to go) so that I could get this LoC typed, I want to know what ~~is~~ is necessary to do to get Denise working on the next issue of *Graymalkin*. I agree with you that it is a good fanzine ~~that would be better if it were not~~ ~~profligate!~~ (4/1/81)

Well, in a lot of ways *Outworlds* had a "life" of its own; there were definitely times when it went its way...and took me along for the ride. ¶ *Xenolith* is another matter entirely; it may not be perfect, but it has always (even the *big* issues) pretty well reflected what I wanted of it at the moment, rather than it demanding certain things from me to keep it going. In fact, what I wrote in that first issue, just a week shy of 4 years ago today, still rings remarkably (for me) consistent:

As to just what *Xenolith* is (and you can take the title as literally as you wish) ...well, that's a bit more complex. It is, among other things, a letter-substitute, a place to run stuff I love but which just doesn't "fit" in OW, something to keep getting the few fanzines I really want, an outlet, an intake, an excuse to ask Derek for a cover, a vehicle to preclude Cinti from being known exclusively as Quantum-country, something to hand to friends at cons, or to send to friends I don't see often enough, an ego-trip, a crying-towel, a testament of joys, an excuse/or a reason for doing/not doing certain things... You know, it's just another damn fanzine.

But it's my damn fanzine!

Meanwhile, back to obscurity (obligatory, or not) the following carried a return address of "somewhere in the country". But I knew where...

DAVE ROWE "Faans" was one of those small but beautiful little treats that pop up in fandom from time to time. So both Larry & Randy deserve a big hug (in the case of Randy it will have to be big) for a few moments joyous reading. In fact Carolyn in a single phrase encapsulated my wholehearted reaction to the piece, but even I wouldn't be so devious as to pinch one of her lines, and anyway she's threatening to write it in her loc.

Bill, I think I've finally discovered how you could make some sense to the reader with your self indulgent esoteric meanderings.

Take each doublesentence-paragraph (longer ones will need to be split into two) and add to each an Edward Gorey type illustration... Lines like "Once the note was found wedged in the door, and it was established that the accident had been reported to the police..." & "A couple of weeks later, I introduced Denise to Mike Glicksohn on my front porch --and, later that night, they proceeded to save my life" are just screaming out for that individual Gorey sort of presentation.

Of course this would take ages to put together but would have the added benefit that ~~we wouldn't have to work our way through your opaque self-analysis so often~~ it would achieve the great man's aim "to make all serious men mad, mad, mad, and to amuse

children (& fen) little, little, little.", whilst also putting you in line for the Pulitzer Prize for Extreme Pseudoirity.

Tis good to be a lot closer, hope to see you in Cinci in the not too distant...
(4/10/81)

Thanks, Dave--I like you, too! ¶ Now that you're Over Here (and I'm see you fairly often), that means that I no longer owe you The Letter...right? (Quite frankly, I've forgotten what it was supposed to be about anyway!)

GEORGE LASKOWSKI Glicksohn's letter pulls a few comments out of me. He says: "On rare occasions people call me short, drunk and hairy and I don't quibble because two out of three ain't bad." I wonder which he isn't (and at what time of day). I also agree with Mike's comments to Mike Bracken. One does not have to give up fandom if they take on a job which involves the same kind of work one did as a fan. There are many aspects of fandom in which one can participate. A friend of mine used to work on and organize conventions, which she now does for a living. She still attends cons, but doesn't work on them anymore. She just enjoys them.

Combining Mike's comments with those of Larry Downes, I think that F.H.F. stands for either of two things: Fuck Harlan Fandom which seems somewhat vague for the members who have been revealed as belonging to that particular initialling; or Forsaken Husband Fandom (or Former Husband Fandom, or something like that). I really think it's the latter, mainly because Derek Carter, one of the members, did recently get married, which could account for Larry's comments.

Indeed, Marty should feel deprived. Midwestern cons are unlike any other kind of sf conventions, and are the best ones. Maybe Mr. Cantor should move out into the Midwest and partake of more fannish things.

I didn't know that the fan funds were mainly for the fanzine fans. I agree, Rusty has done more for the fanfunds than any fanzine fan. He was voted winner for DUFF for one year, the year I got into fandom, yet he has not yet stopped auctioning things off for TAFF and DUFF.

Most enjoyable was "Anna" by Carolyn Doyle. She does know how to write. I wish her well in her writing career. I also wish her well on her marriage to David Rowe. She deserves the best in everything.
(5/31/81)

...I certainly wouldn't go that far, since she doesn't write me LOCs anymore, but I join with you in hoping that Dave never becomes a member of F.H.F. ¶ Yes, Folks... this is the big moment! I was going to drag it out for another issue, but George has come so close that even Leah "I know what F.H.F. is, though I'll be damned if I can remember what the initials stand for" Zeldes could figure it out...so I'm declaring him the W*I*N*N*E*R, and hereby award him the Brian Earl Brown Master of Esoteric Deciphering Kit. ¶ F.H.F. was founded in late July, 1975, in the bar at Toronto's Fanfair III--and was probably one of the few fannish things about that particular con. (Trivia buffs may now go back and discover on any number of Derek Carter fanzine covers little "FHF" labels on all sorts of vehicles...and say smugly: "That's esoteric...and I know what it means...ha ha.") The correct designation was Failed Husbands Fandom, and there have only ever been three official members. But with Derek now married again, ~~and since Mike didn't as well~~...an already exclusive club is becoming a bit too exclusive: I'm not sure I want to be a member of a club that I'm the only member of! ¶ I was thinking though, that if, say, Maia and Michelle might be interested in forming a Women's Auxiliary...it might be worth keeping the organization functioning. At least until I got tired...of the idea. ~~Just kidding of course!~~ ¶ Youse guys really did good with this contest; now if you can explain (to me) what I meant when I said...

MIKE GLICKSOHN Recent evidence has amply demonstrated that I Don't Do This Sort Of Thing Anymore. Locs with the Glicksohn signature have become mere fannish legends; they no longer exist, just like issues of Outworlds. Were this the

old days, I'd have handed you this page in Columbus last weekend, a week after you'd handed me the issue in Cincinnati. But these aren't the old days. I no longer even read fanzines, let alone loc them. (Hell, I no longer even get fanzines, at least not in comparison to the paper floods of yesteryear.) Oh, I make a few exceptions for old friends and Xenolith but for the most part fanzines lie unlamented, unread and unresponded-to until I unearth them a few weeks after their arrival and file them in boxes for some future Taral to inherit and write about. Thus doth old age and apathy make gaffes of us all.

But this very afternoon I gathered together the material for *Energumen* 16 (all one hundred and ten plus pages of it!) which is the first small step along the long and lonely path to the Best Fanzine of 1981 and so it seemed right to dash off a loc to one of the minor contributors to that mammoth undertaking. (Talked to Ro last night: he claimed his major contribution would be in the mail today. We shall see, we shall see...) It might help me regain that youthful spirit of fannishness so vital to successful fanzine publishing. Although I don't suppose you know anything about such matters, eh?

I remember listening to your speech at this year's Confusion (that's 1981, in case you publish at your normal less-than-frenzied pace) and thinking that you really didn't have much to thank the new year for, what with the various disasters that had already befallen you. I recall, too, thinking that I was lucky that such things never happened to me. Of course, the trip to Marcon helped balance the scale a little but despite that horrendous hegira I can't complain about the way life's treated me. I have a steady job I like and for which I'm overpaid; I have about four months a year of either vacation or non-work; I have many good friends; and right now I even have a special person I'm inordinately fond of who's inordinately fond of me who happens to live a mere mile or two away. I'm not at all sure what I've done to deserve such a happy lot when you suffer such steady tribulations but probably it's compensation for being short. I mean, look at Harlan: he's even shorter than I am, yet he's richer and more famous and more comfortable too. And look at you: tall as all hell and unemployed, disaster prone and a walking emergency zone. I think I may have stumbled on something here! Yeah, perhaps...oh shit, I forgot about Dave Locke! Well, there's one theory shot to hell. Well, whatever the reason, I hope the rest of 1981 is better for you than its start was.

HHGTTG is "Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy" of course. You know, that sci-fi stuff?

Glad you put your thoughts about Dotti/Suzi into print and they strike me as extremely perceptive. (Come on now, 'fess up: Dotti helped you with them, right?) It would be useful if Suzi went on record about how much help Dotti had on her fanzine but I strongly suspect that those who have complained about it in the past wouldn't believe anything she said unless it agreed with their views. All that Dotti's nomination showed was an essential weakness of the FAAns that had long been obvious to anyone involved with the awards anyway. Namely that even fanzine fans are such an apathetic lot that a little self-promotion could get a nomination for anyone willing to hustle a bit. And since I've hustled for the FAAn Awards themselves for the past six years I can't complain too much about individuals hustling for the awards even if their motives are somewhat ulterior. Besides, I thought Dotti's zine was a damn good one and in a pretty weak year for fanzines I didn't mind it making the ballot.

As for the rest, well it's typical Bowers: enjoyable to read (at least for those on the Inside) but not to be commented on. Or maybe it's just that I've lost most of the knack and can't keep it up for as long as I used to. It's tough being an ex-letterhack...but somebody's got to do it and Harry Warner shows no sign of slowing down.

(3/23/81)

Notice the date at the end of your letter, Mike. ...now notice the lack of a date at the end of my piece in *NERG* 16. See, this way you can say you predicted in March that Dave would be out of a job in September...and feel superior about it! ¶ *NERG*'s okay.

HARRY WARNER, JR. Neither you nor Tim Marion went into what strikes me as the basic problem in the ballot-stuffing accusation involving the Stefls. If they went to convention fans, as Tim wrote, were they counted toward the final result? The whole point of the FAAn awards is supposed to be judgment by peers and only those who have been active in fanzine fandom are eligible to nominate or vote. If the ballots in question were voted by fans who had the proper credentials, I see nothing awful about the episode: it's ballot-stuffing in a sense but there's no doubt about the existence of many a previous episode of ballot-stuffing in one form or another in fan award competitions when the followers of this or that fan or pro decided that this was the year when their hero or heroine ought to win something.

The argument that Dotti didn't do all the work on her fanzine reminds me of a long-ago flap over Terry Carr's first wife's fanac. Miriam couldn't type, and Terry apparently put at least some of the things published under her name onto paper or stencil on the basis of what she said. I had no difficulty deciding where my sympathies were in that instance: Miriam emerged from fanzines as a distinctive personality with special ways of reacting and feeling about mundane and fannish matters, so I felt there was much more Miriam than Terry in her published stuff. In today's fandom, it would also be possible to cite the example of Ed Meskys: I can't imagine anyone in fandom disputing his right to be credited with the things he writes and with the fanzine he helps to publish, even though his vision problem makes it impossible for him to be as self-sufficient a fan as most of us.

I read with a morbid sort of interest the accounts of your sudden job separations. You see, up to now I've never been fired from a job, and the suspense is growing intense over the question of whether I'll reach retirement without that particular form of experience in my life. Several people where I work were dismissed last year and I was expecting to get at the very least intense pressure to retire at the end of 1980. But nobody said a word to me, and so now I must go through the same tension again as December begins to approach. (Retirement there must occur in the month when the employee's birthday occurs.) Meanwhile, if I struggle through the rest of this week, I'll be within 19 months of scheduled retirement, and there will be only 17 more months of work ahead because of vacation time, or even less if I should start to use up the ten weeks of sick leave I've built up. The proposed changes in the social security retirement plan with the deep cut for early retirement had me upset for a while. But after a few days I decided I'm still going through with retirement at 60, even if it means eventually finding it impossible to cope with inflation and needing to take parttime work somewhere to make ends meet.

Carolyn's little word sketch was very well done. I had a 50-50 scorecard with the seat belt the first time I flew. Despite jitters, I got it locked quickly and neatly before takeoff. Then I couldn't figure out how to get it open when we landed. Someone in the next seat before I'd asked for help, so I had the consolation of assuming that enough first trippers suffer a similar embarrassment for him to keep an eye open for people who may find themselves in this plight. (5/24/81)

Well, at least you may get something out of the Social Security system, Harry. I just can't believe that, no matter how much I put in, it'll be there when I'm ready for it. 27 years; that's probably too many, isn't it?

ALEXANDER DONIPHAN WALLACE A gargantuan aggregation of gramercies for your kindness in sending me #15.

Turning through 360°, what role--if any--does George Orwell play in Fanland, of course absent ANIMAL FARM and 1984? It is a bit on the strange side (it seems to me) that his memory is not still burning brightly among the idiosyncracies who populate Fanland. He was born, as he said, in the lower middle class, came to hate communism, facism, imperialism and all bad thingies. He was among the first to say (ANIMAL FARM) that the revolutionaries would be defeated by the despots so that the status quo ante (only worse) would come again. The freedom fighters would defeat the regime and then

lose to the dictators, villains all: Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini. (Possibly Orwell was the true and pure anarchist of LeGuin's DISPOSSESSED. On the other hand he may be related to several of Jack Vance's protagonists.) I exaggerate summat, in that I do not expect Orwell to be mentioned regularly in fanzines, only once in so often. (undated)

I think that may have been our Science Fiction Corner for this issue. I don't explain 'em folks; I just print 'em!

MICHAEL J WALLIS I think I have achieved a high state of procrastination considering that in my five years in fandom, I think I have yet to actually finish writing a loc and mail it. Oh well. And another one bites the dust...

Actually a large part of this loc is due to having finally gotten the back issues of Outworlds that you sent back from Marcon with Hania.

Your ~~confusion speech~~ editorial was, as usual, fascinating. I don't think I know anyone who can cram so much living into so short a time with such regularity. I say living because life is, after all, the process of adapting (on a day to day basis) to the changes that occur around you. To hide from change, as some people suggest, is to exchange living for merely being alive. You yourself admit that you could 'do what Mike is doing for a living', but the idea of being tied down, the drudgery of 'punching a clock' is a limitation that you are unwilling to accept at this time. (And I suspect that when you do submit to it, it will be on your terms, not someone else's.) To give up 'living' your life as you see is too much. The trade-off for living your life your way is the risk that somebody won't like it. If you gamble, you must expect to lose sometimes, it's the dues you pay to win on occasion (and you seem to have paid more than most).

Mike Glicksohn's comments to Terry are true, but the Big G is forgetting one facet of human nature. This is the unnerving human habit of interceding on someone else's behalf. Especially when that someone doesn't take immediate offense at the alleged slight. I believe the term for this is 'Busybodyitis.'

I agree with Mike about 'losing the enjoyment of fandom' as the one valid reason for dropping involvement in any activity. There are some people for whom fandom will always be part of their lives (and Mr Glicksohn [ouch] is one of them), but that is not to say we all share this ~~associated~~ trait. At one point, I couldn't see myself not being a fan but with Susan here all the time, and time slipping by me at an ever increasing rate, I wonder if my amazingly low current activity could drop to nil? Is this the distinction between fafia and gafia? One sneaks up on you while you 're off at the show, or off hiking?

Pardon my naivete, Mike, but does F.H.F. stand for Flagrant Heterosexual Fandom? No? Oh well... ~~Not About Family Weekly Fanzines?~~

Maybe Marty's legendary (?) apahacking is due in part to the lack of suitably fannish conventions to attend? The, on the other hand, maybe we go to cons as a substitute for apahacking (or other serious fanac)?

Carolyn's piece on friendship in the face of adversity was moving. She definately has a way of summing things into clear and poignant prose. Excellent.

My first memories of Dotti are at her mother's side, at some convention. I thought she was a neat kid, one who would be hard pressed to not grow up as a very mature and outgoing young lady. When I heard that she had done a fanzine, I was interested in getting a copy, but when, at the next con, I asked if I could get one, I was informed (in her best 'truer-fan-than-thou' tones) that I wasn't important enough to get a copy. I think the nasty part of my mind said something like "snotty little bitch", but all that came out was "Oh, really?" It was not until Inconvenient .5 that I was able to again talk to Dotti at any length. (You remember Inconvenient? Where Roger was giving everybody Hugo nomination forms and pleading with them to nominate him so he could mail them all before the deadline.) I spent Saturday afternoon losing miserably to Dotti at pinball and pool (on my quarters I think) and talking and being silly. This isn't as easy as some think, as Dotti seems hellbent on maintaining the

image of respectability. But it was fun. Phil Wright has been saying that she will break a few hearts when she's older, but I think not. You've been chasing her for years and if you had a heart, it'd be broken by now. I think she has already started. It is not at all unusual to see and read her speech and be delighted and entertained. She is a very bright, very inquisitive, very observant young lady. I sincerely hope to be able to watch her wit and humor grow and develop over the next decade or so, and I think she may surprise a lot of people in the depth of character she develops.

I'm sorry that the KingCon intros could not have been given at the time. I, for one, would have enjoyed them, and reading them is almost as much fun. (If I jiggle the page I get the same stammering effect.) KingCon was one of the best cons Toronto has run in a while (and I include my former efforts in that 'while') and I hope they will not kill each other until they put on a second one. In true Toronto tradition, info on Son of Con will be out realsoonnow. Oh, well...

Impressions on "Impressions" whirl through

my

mind as I am

carried along.

So nice to see such

a

different style of writing

and writing. Don't be

afraid to love, for it is

only

by taking chances

that we ever get the chance

to

live.

Do it again.

Soon.

(5/3/81)

Oh, I definitely remember Inconvenient .5; it's Inconsistent .55 that I don't remember part of: ...but even more vividly, I remember Dotti at Roger's first con: She definitely wasn't playing pinball with you all the time...I really wish she would have...! (Somebody else might agree with me.)

Some of the prozines publish "First Stories, but *Xenolith* has something a bit different. Mike Wallis joins such nice people as Steve Leigh, and Denise Parsley Leigh (as well as, I'm afraid, Bill Marks) on X's Honor Roll of Very First LoCs. At this rate, I may still hear from Hania, or Tanya (either one). In the meantime, here's one more:

MICHELLE FISHER After spending all this time vehemently claiming that I do NOT write locs, here I am writing one. (Now don't expect TOO much, after all, this is my first time.) In fact, I even bought a dictionary for the occasion; of course that won't help my typing, but... But then none of this has the least to do with *Xenolith* #15, does it?

Knowing your financial situation, I was quite surprised when you gave me the latest *Xenolith* at Marcon. As I read bits & pieces over the weekend, I found that there were places that brought laughter and others that brought tears. And as I shared what I was reading with friends, I found myself explaining, where necessary, what brought on my various reactions. I must, in this case, applaud your timing--there were parts that I could share that were very appropriate for what was happening at that point in time. Thanks!

Sorry I missed your speech at ConFusion this year, but then, I didn't make it to ANY programming at ConFusion this year. Did enjoy reading it, esoteric references & all. (Hm, did I ever mention that I enjoy your writing?) I'll assume that the "northern Ohio town" you referred to was Norton. I would certainly consider myself to be a fan (if only because of the large number of esoteric references I not only could understand, but could explain to bewildered friends), so you couldn't possibly have been referring to dear, *disappearing* beloved Barberton. (Oh, by the way, you didn't miss anything much at Christmas there anyway. The big excitement was the new Taco

Bell across from the shopping center!) Sorry to hear about all the latest tragedies in your life; hope things improve this year. I'm not sure I would have trusted your car to do any of the things you've done with it. but then I don't trust Fords (it all goes back to when I was in 6th grade...)

I really enjoyed Sandy's poem, unusual for me since I seldom like poetry. But it said a lot that is, often, true for me. And said it well. Carolyn's article, while less personally effective, was also well done. In reading "little Bill's" comments, I stopped to realize that I've only known most of my closest friends for less than six months, many for half that long. Fandom does strange things to the speed of time! I would also like to repeat that there are some others that understand at least some of your esoteric references; ~~of course his spelling is another matter.~~

Of course, most of the stories about Denise I'd already heard ~~and heard~~, but did enjoy seeing those you'd chose to collect. ...I certainly won't mention giggling, ~~1777 leave that to my friends(??)~~. As to the stories of Steve, well, yes, I'd heard most of those, too. You did however fail to mention what Bill is better at than Steve. (I realize that's your editorial prerogative, but there's something REAL strange about knowing a quote is out of context, before it's even completely said.)

As to the rest, I'm not sure there's much else I can say, except that times change, situations change, and yet in many ways things remain the same. I think that you are like me in that while the past may well be the past, it is also part of the present and will be part of the future. Old pains, old hurts, old loves never quite go away, they're always lingering somewhere in the background, ready to resurface at the least provocation and probably at the worst possible moment.

Well, so here it is, my first real loc. And I kept swearing I wouldn't send you a loc, 'cause you'd be silly enough to publish it. I just hope this doesn't become as addictive as the rest of my fanac seems to be! (See, I can do it with a typewriter, too.) (3/17/81)

I've thought about it for a long time. ...and I'm not going to say a word!

~~~~~  
I've also heard from: Mike Gilbert, Roger Waddington, Paula Lieberman, Neil Rest, Jack Herman...a loc on OW #27 that Bruce Arthurs just remembered to send...and a note saying --"Here. Now get off my back! And don't tell Jackie! Or Denise, either!", introducing:  
~~~~~

→ → → → → FULL CIRCLE ← ← ← ← ←

by
Jodie Offutt

A few years ago I made a speech and then wrote an article on how to be a good fan. One of the things I talked about is the importance of wearing nametags.

Not only do most con committees prefer--some even insist--that we display our nametags, it sure makes it easier for fellow fans who almost remember your name. Why not give each other this little memory jolt? And why not print our names in dark letters so they're easier to read?

I still feel strongly about this and wear my name tag all the time.

...Well...nearly all the time...

Being toastmaster at Marcon was a thrill and lots of fun. I felt I did a good job, and (this really made me feel good) Andy thought I did a good job. So did the Marcon committee. I did a yoga demo, conducted a panel on the care and feeding of writers, both of which went well, and introduced the guests at the banquet.

On Saturday night, fresh from my performance at the banquet, I went to the con suite, approached the bar and asked for my usual--a Tab.

The bartender asked to see my Marcon badge.

...oh my god!

I didn't know what to do. I was wearing a nametag, but not my Marcon badge. I'd decided not to wear it to the banquet.

There was a sign over the bar clearly stating no service to anyone not sporting a convention tag.

What was I to do?!

I could hardly puff up and proclaim myself the Toastmaster of the Whole Convention! That's just not my style.

I couldn't even say, meekly, "I'm a guest of the convention."

I was embarrassed. Chagrined.

"After all," I'd written years before, "no matter how well known you are, there will be people attending their first convention who will not know you."

The barthender was a sister or friend of a committee member who'd volunteered to help out that night.

Fortunately I didn't have to identify myself or slink away without my Tab because a committee member came along and okayed my order.

I've thought a lot about that. It sure proved my own point of so many years ago about wearing nametags. Also, if there'd been any possibility of my weekend celebrity status going to my head, that was cut short.

And I'll tell you another thing--

I went back to my room and got my convention badge and put it on--high on my shoulder--before I went back for more Tab!

---Jodie Offutt, March 1981

[illegible]

I have this extremely perverse streak that permits me to do, after some agonizing, the things I feel I have to do...no matter the consequences. The consequences usually entail hurting friends; friends who sincerely try to understand...but no matter how close they are, they just can't understand the convulated way my mind and emotions function. (The prime public display of this attribute was when, after I'd given up the TAFF trip I'd co-won in 1976--for my own selfish reasons--several friends tried, at Autoclave 1, to start a fund to send me to England anyway. They meant well, but I'd specifically requested they do no such thing. I did not react kindly.) (By the way, RO...people still ask me what was ever done with the money that was raised before I put a halt to the thing.)

I suspect that again, I'm going to do something that nobody else will understand the "why?" of. And, again, I'll probably hurt the very few that I don't want to, but...

It's now fairly late Tuesday evening (the 13th); I've already made arrangements to go over to Dave & Jackie's after work tomorrow to run this off. Ideally, this will give me Thursday evening to pack, do laundry, collate a few copies of this...and still get a few hours of sleep before leaving for Octocon after work Friday. It won't work out quite that neatly, of course, but I try!

I could have avoided the issue by simply ending the issue last night, and filling up the third of a page after Michelle's loc with some idle harmless esoteric natter.

But, I said...if I were to stop at 14 pages that wouldn't make sense; I should have edited more, down to 11¹/₂ pages, and gone the First Class route.

Besides, I further said...after bugging Jodie for so long for something, I really should get it into print--even if the "graphics" weren't what it might deserve.

Besides, ending there would have been the easy way out. Which, I hasten to add, I have nothing against. Except that I (still) find it considerably easier to take the easy way out in print, than in person. Hence:

Just two weeks ago, I finished up an apazine. That in itself was unusual in that since I'd dropped out of MISHAP in mid-1977 I'd done no such thing...and the record of apa involvement before MISHAP was spotty, and rarely long-term.

But this was different; this was an apa run by friends. And it contained some neat people...maybe half of whom I knew well. The other half I'd like to get acquainted with, based on previous mailings I'd scanned. (Incidentally, this part is not esoteric:

FLAP is the apa in question; it is not "secret", but it is invitational.)

FLAP, by the way, is limited to 21 members, because "that is the ideal size for a party". Naturally, my initial contribution, rather than mailing comments, consisted of my reactions (pro and con; mostly con) to parties.

Briefly, in the beginning, when I wanted to be "accepted" in fandom, I went to every party I could find--but I cringed in the corner a lot. Later, I party-hopped a lot--trying to find friends, or to shake those I'd rather not have been around, but was to polite to say so to. It didn't work: the friends had always just left for the next party down the line...and the nerds followed me.

Latter, starting at Iggy, I perfected the method I now follow: I spend most of my public time in the lobby. There I can, sooner or later, spot everyone I want to see. And it is considerably easier to avoid unwanted encounters, simply by spotting a friendly face across the lobby, saying "Excuse me...", and leaving.

Oh, I still go to parties, and am flattered when invited to the closed door ones; but that's the exception. Most of the time I'm not in my room, or on a panel, I'm at least visible...even if often not accesible.

You see, despite much of what I've written...and contrary to the impression Eric Lindsay may have gotten (so he's not shocked next year)--Bowers the Social Fan is still very much Bowers the proto-social fan. There are more situations in which I am vaguely uncomfortable than any other kind.

Many times, when I'm trying to work something out in print, the stencil gaps endlessly before me. This one is rapidly disappearing much to fast...but it is the last.

The crux:

I came down to Cincinnati for the 1977 New Year's Party at the Tabakows; I enjoyed myself, and that led to a major factor in my moving here rather than to Chicago.

The following year, after I was down here...and had found out that the party had been a one-shot, and was not part of a continuing tradition, Marla and I decided to do something about it. So we sent invitations to a few of our out-of-town friends...and selected various local fans to host the parties. (We certainly weren't going to do it ourselves!)

The first couple were fun and simple. But, naturally, they started getting bigger, and more complicated. Things always do. Marla lost interest...but Denise fortunately was here: we evolved the schtick of her inviting the men...and I invited the women. And it was still fun, if increasingly bigger. And more complicated. Some of the complications were my fault and some were not: I am neither blameless, nor to be blamed.

Last year. For many reasons...some of which were detailed in the X-15 "speech", it was the least enjoyable one for me yet. I've thought about that a lot ever since.

Perhaps it's as simple as, for the first time, Marla didn't come to any party.

Perhaps it's as complicated as, where in the beginning our circle of friends was virtually identical...Denise and I now share a considerably larger number of acquaintances as opposed to Friends in common. That's fine at conventions; house parties are another matter. For me. Because, at a con, if I find myself in an uncomfortable position I can generally escape; but as the "space" and the number of people both grow increasing smaller...so do my sensations of being "trapped" if I'm not comfortable.

Perhaps it's none of'em...just me and my insecurities.

Nevertheless it's been over a year since I've had a major emotional upheaval; I like that, and while I don't expect it to last, there's no need to ask for distress.

So this: As far as I know now there will be a series of New Year's Parties in Cincinnati the end of this year. And, depending on several factors--which of my friends are invited; how I feel physically as well as emotionally; what other invitations are open to me--I'll probably be at most of them. And enjoy myself in my own way.

But don't ask me about them: You see, it's not my party anymore.

A-QUOTE-FROM-WORK, after they'd decided *Raiders* might make it big after all: "No sweat! You see, we take the Hans Solo doll...change the clothes...add some stubble to the chin, and Presto! Indiana Jones!" Okay (if I haven't told you)...who do I work for now?

I'm having fun and hoping you are the same. Don't take any wooden rutabagas. Bill