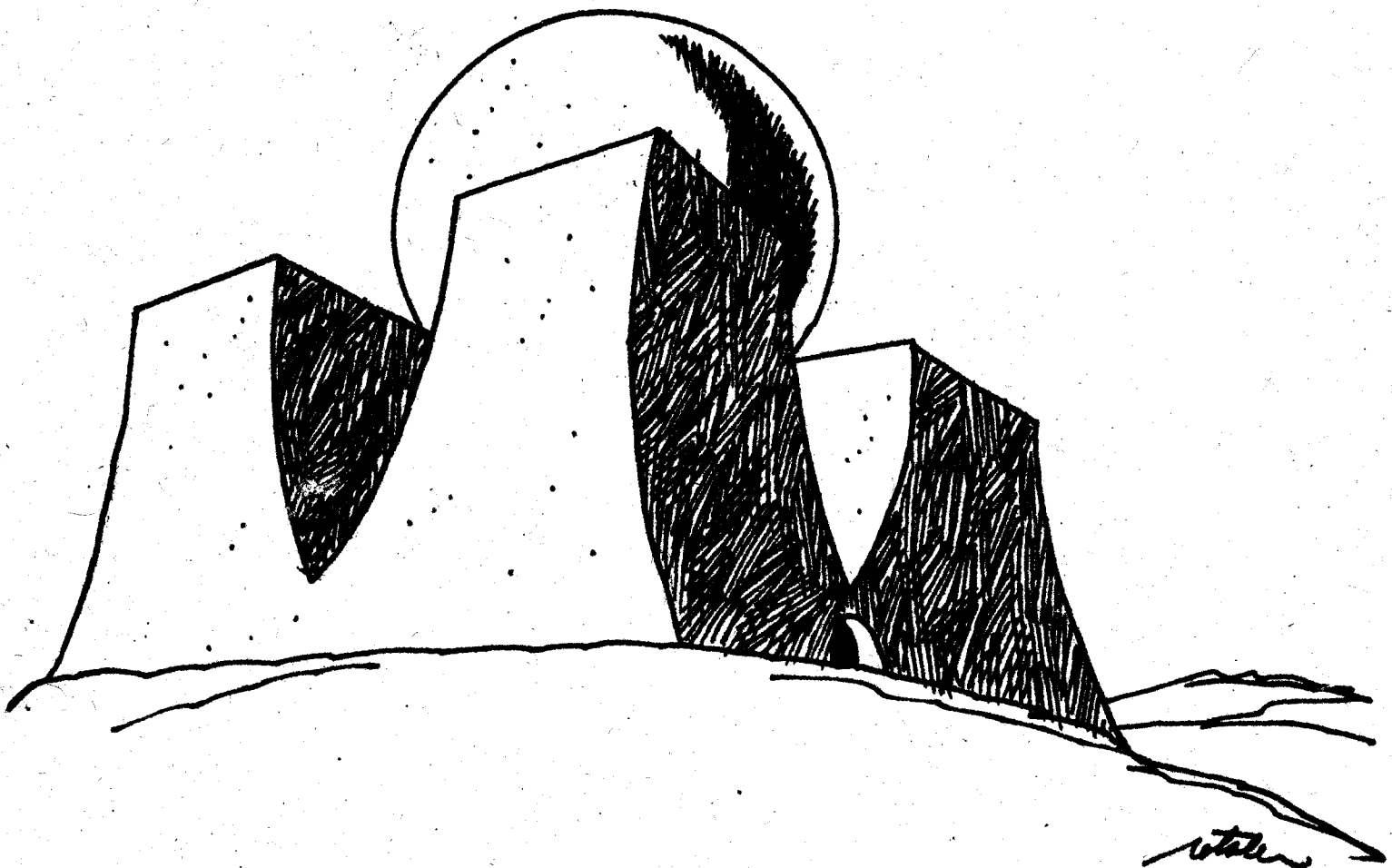

OUTWORLDS

13TH ANNISH
THE ECLECTIC FANZINE

31

BILL BOWERS • 2488 HARRISON AVE. • CINCINNATI • OH • 45211



"Men do funny things when they come up against a birthday with a zero on the end of it."
□□□ John D. MacDonald, CINNAMON SKIN, p. 47

"...have you done any fanzines lately?" Brian Earl Brown asked me a couple of months ago, at Conclave.

"...oh, nothing much -- just some apazines," I evaded, on my way down the hall.

"I miss your fanzines..." Brian said. Sincerely, I'm sure.

"Brian," I said flippantly, "...there's more to life than fanzines."

"Outworlds 31 will be out...January, 1983...for ConFusion. Yes." [Xenolith 21, p.322]

I not only wrote that (10/2/82) -- I put it into print.

One would think I would have learned.

"Outworlds is not dead, he said. Repeatedly. It is only resting. And, having rested... You were expecting, maybe, Outworlds 30?"

Well, until perhaps a month ago, so was I. With, for better or worse, my excuse for two years procrastination out of the way...I apparently (in a moment of weakness) made a statement, in front of witnesses, that I would have an issue of Outworlds out for ConFusion."

THAT particular bit of memorabilia was written in late 1978, and published in January, 1979, in something called Xenolith One. (...even though it wasn't the first issue under that title; yes, I continue to do things like that!)

Time passed, and eventually Outworlds 30 came out. At a ConFusion. 1980.

As a "speech".

I hadn't done anything like that before...but it seemed like a good idea (even though it greatly upset Ken Keller) ...and still does:

If only because I had not put any foolish statements into print before doing it.

"I think every man...at some point in life should not work, just let his hair grow long and think..."

□□□ Gregory Hines

I've done a bit of that...and a lot of each of those...since Outworlds 28/29 came out in October of 1976. ...and it will possibly show.

But then, even though many of you may have thought so, I never really disappeared:

In the six plus years interveaning, I've attended over 75 conventions, quit a job with 16 years seniority, moved 200 miles downstate, written some things I'm rather pleased with, formed relationships (some "worked", some didn't--but all have been "interesting"), have raised the practice of fiscal irresponsibility to a new artform, have published over 30 fanzines with sporadic distribution, failed to gain entrance to Mensa by one/half of one percentile-point...and in my spare time...

But, no, I still haven't decided what I want to be/do when I grow up...

Though perhaps I should start thinking about it...since that birthday with the big zero at the end of it looms this July... I should...but I probably won't!

"...but...it doesn't look like an Outworlds!"

There. I've said it for you.

...other than the fact that it's rather tacky for you to tell me what an issue of Outworlds should look like...you've probably got a point. But the essence remains the same: what I find interesting, published how and when I have the inclination and time.

After all, everyone knows what an Outworlds really is:

It's what I mean when I point to the word.

1|23|83

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Notes Toward A Speech Delivered at CONFUSION 6 and/or 7, Friday, January 18, 1980

In early December, when Leah asked me for a title for this...to use in the program book...I gave her the best one I could think of¹ -- knowing full well it probably wouldn't have anything to do with what I eventually came up with. And it doesn't.

True enough, I made my very first speech ever, in public, at this convention four years ago -- and if I search long enough, I could probably find a way to work that fast into this, the 9th Bill Bowers Speech.

Perhaps I would, if I were into keeping lists...and such things as marking the various anniversaries of events in my life. But as you well know -- after the previous eight speeches, starting four years ago this weekend -- that I would never resort to such a cheap gimmick in any of my public utterances.

Others may wander on erratically, about a variety of topics, but me -- I stick to the issues...

So now, for something completely different -- for me; and for something that, as far as I know, has only one precedent in convention history (that at Balticon 10, in 1976). That said, let me present to you this, the "live" version of:

BILL BOWERS' / THE TENTH ANNISH² OUTW(30)RLDS

...unfortunately, thus far -- in the short time span since the last issue -- I've only had time to finish the editorial. Note that this is not the new editorial policy; that will come later.

What we have here, therefore, is yet another installment of "...from William's Pen". And it goes like this:

¹"Bill Bowers, You've Come A Long Way in Four Years!"

²"Annish" is fannish for "Anniversary Issue." A glossary of such terms will be appended for those of you who have just discovered fandom, fanzines, and conventions, since the advent of "STREK: The Motionless Picture".

IT REALLY HASN'T BEEN THAT LONG. Since October of 1976, when that massive double issue came out. Oh, yes, some of ye of little faith -- and less patience -- have persisted in expressing some doubt as to the eventual appearance of this issue.

I won't say I told you so.

But I did.

Some of those same people have even questioned my ability to get out the two promised lettercolumn supplements. I hope that discovering that *Outworlds* 27.5 and *Outworlds: The Epilogue* are enclosed in the same envelope with this will not prove to be too great a shock to anyone.

You know how I hate upsetting people.

Ignoring for the moment 1966, and the first first issue, we come to January, 1970, and the first *Outworlds*. It was small -- 26 pages; mimeoed; and had a print run of 312 copies. Initially it went to *Double:Bill* holdovers, before gradually building its own unique mailing list -- a process I seem to be going through again, with yet another new fanzine title.

It was of course compared to *Double:Bill*; mostly favorably, but not entirely. History repeats itself.

In the same timeframe, there appeared an obscurely titled fanzine, mimeographed on yellow paper with heavy -- very heavy -- white covers. It featured neophyte editors, and thumped into our post office box bearing a Toronto postmark.

Though he claims we met the preceding Labor Day in St. Louis, I don't remember that. What I do remember is this: the very first check *Energuman* ever received was signed by Joan Bowers.

And I'm sure it still resides in Glicksohn's shoebox, somewhere.

1970 was a very long time ago, and the world was different then. Well, a little bit different, at least. Those were the days before the FAAn Awards, before *Rocky Horror*, before the attainment of our "just and honorable" peace, before look-alike fandom, before Larry Downes, before... Before so many things that are taken for granted today.

Why, it was even before Bill Bowers Speeches.

Nostalgia...ah, isn't it sweet?

Relax. I'm neither going to give you a history of *Outworlds*...or the 70's.

Just yet.

What I am going to do is not in the nature of one of my speeches -- that is, presenting a carefully reasoned, tightly constructed thesis in a logical straight-forward manner. No, I'll do just as I've always done in my editorials: sermonize, and ramble on about myself...and the contents of this issue.

A Quote:

...but, he said repeatedly, *Outworlds* is not dead; it's only resting. Bill, on the other hand, was definitely not resting; he was busily going where no Bill Bowers had ever gone before... A bit hesitantly here, a little awkwardly there... but nevertheless, he left loose, giving full rein to emotion rather than logic, reaction rather than preplanning everything... and was able to (and it was as surprising to him as much as anybody) to do so to such an extent that, while it bemused, amused, and confused friends of longer duration, he held onto them, while making new friends: loving and caring, going and living--a process that, once started, just seemed to keep on mushrooming...

...and now he says, Behold! Proof that *Outworlds* Lives! (And Better Than Ever, he not at all modestly adds.) Bill, on the other hand, is still not resting: he is overextended, overinvolved, overcommitted...and thoroughly overjoyed by it all, even if just a bit overwhelmed!

...and he suspects that he may well become overbearing about it all.

while he is attempting to achieve an overview, overall. So why not? All new converts are zealots; I am not immune.

Overnight it seemed to happen, but surely I overlook the obvious?

---*Outworlds* 28/29, 1976; page 1104

XENOLITH FOUR / 119

Almost...I'm sorry that I wrote that over three years ago; it would have made such an appropriate lead-in to *this* issue!
Status Update: One of these days I'll probably have to rest. But not just yet.

Back when the world was younger ... and I was older (I have witnesses!):

Those were the days when Bob Tucker wrote for me...rather than for 10 & 1/2-year-old nymphettes... (I'm still waiting, Dotti...)

Those were the days when Jerry Kaufman swore he'd never publish a fanzine...

Those were the days when Ted White's fanzines were mimeographed...

...and Andy Porter's prose was dittoed.

Those were the days before Mike Glicksohn learned to play poker. ...before he called me Machiavellian! ...the days before F.H.F. (...very, very esoteric reference).

Those were the days when the very idea of holding a Worldcon in Detroit was as likely as the mere suggestion that Chicago host another Democratic convention...

Those were the days when Ro Lutz-Nagey had long hair. And I didn't.

...the days when Ro Nagey womanized. And I didn't know what it was.

Those were the days when only andy offutt wore captains ... before becoming SFWA President, and going respectable on us...

Those were the days when we were lucky to have a convention or two a month in the summer...rather than being lucky enough to find a weekend in March without four or five scheduled opposite each other.

Those were the days of the second folding of Science Fiction Review.

Those were the dying days of the New Wave...

...and of an approaching Worldcon in Boston!

And, yes, those were the days before the widely proclaimed death of the giant genzine. ...but that's a topic to be considered later in this issue:

Like, at One O'Clock...tomorrow afternoon.³

Speaking of this issue, I won't dwell on how unique and different it is from the preceding issues. The fact that the cover is numbered Page One should suffice to give you the barest hint...

And how about that cover! Some would call it Jack Gaughanish because of its sketchiness; others might refer to it as John Berkeleyish, because of its splashiness. But call it what you will...a full-color, wrap-around, typically avant-garde Fabian is still... a full-color wrap-around typically avant-garde Fabian!

A Second Quote:

One thing I've been meaning to mention for a long time is this:

I get a lot of mail addressed to one "Mr. Bowers"; that happens to be my father. The "William L." you see occasionally on the contents page is simply for posterity; my name is Bill. So Be It Known To One & All, that only the following three individuals are required to address me as "Mr. Bowers" (with an optional, but respectful "Sir" afterwards): Michael Glicksohn, Jerry Kaufman, Larry Downes.

(I told you I'd make you famous, Larry...)

Outworlds 27; 1/6/76

³...a panel titled "'Not I,' Said the Fly: Who Killed Fanzine Fandom?", with Brian Earl Brown, Denise Parsley Leigh, myself...and moderated by Mike Glicksohn. (It seemed to go better than most such panels go...)

5

I've been trying to accomplish this for a long time... So I'm pleased to announce that I have finally managed to entice *all* of my regular columnists into contributing to a single issue. There's really not that many, and I'm actively courting a few additions to pad out future issues, but in the meantime the line-up this time goes like this:

POUL ANDERSON switches from beer to whiskey, from mutterings to shouting, in his spirited defense of George McGovern;

PIERS ANTHONY tells how much he enjoys conventions, as well as the welcome stream of recent fannish visitors to his door...and expresses, abashedly, his gratitude at the reception his first fanzine has received;

GREG BENFORD reports that he is sick and tired of being referred to as "the Bradbury of his generation" -- and that he plans to take a correspondence general science course real soon now...;

DAVE LOCKE splits his column between giving helpful hints gleaned from the care and feeding of his legendary fanzine collection -- and tidbits on how to be kind to people shorter than yourself (if you can find them...);

DOC LOWMDES declares that nothing of worth was written in science fiction until the late 1970's;

ANDREW J OFFUTT discourses on maintaining the purity of the field -- that is, crucifying Conan immediately ... and further declares that any s.f. writer caught writing porn -- even under a pseudonym -- should be barred from SFMA for life!

JODIE OFFUTT makes Gloria Stenius look as liberated as Pat Nixon, while saying that any woman caught knitting at a convention should be stitched to the cross...behind Conan;

BOB TUCKER preaches the smooth joys of temperance, and decries the prevalence of sexual innuendoes in the deliveries of other toastmasters...;

TED WHITE bemoans the predominance of fannish writing, and points with some alarm at the prevalence of drug use at conventions -- interspersing his Thots with other, lighter, elements...;

BILLY WOLFENBARGER descends from his life of urban penthouse splendor to ask: Are farms really the way they're depicted on "The Waltons"?

...and SUSAN WOOD commemorates the fifth anniversary of her emigration to the States, from the cultural wasteland of Canada.

Err...

Actually, I copped out on that last one: I was going to say...

SUSAN WOOD describes her vasectomy, and enumerates her techniques for seducing young fans...while playing Hearts all night at conventions...

I was going to say that.

...but I decided I enjoyed living too much to do so!

...you can call me chicken, and you can call me coward -- but you can also call me cautious!

At first, I was going to say that my proudest achievement in this issue was the spread of Roger Elwood's Limericks -- graphically illustrated by Taral... but, on second thought, that honor has to go to the fact that I -- at long last -- have managed to coax a second article out of Ro Lutz-Nagey.

It is titled "The Secret Handpress of Fandom: A Sur-real and Semi-True Version Thereof" -- and it describes his rise to prominence as the editor of a big time, big deal prozine that no fan (with the possible exception of Gene Wolfe) has ever heard of. I hate to get emotional, but I'm certain that Ro will bring you to tears, in modestly telling of the sacrifices he makes for his indentured servant...a prolific writer in his own write.

Quote Three:

...from *Outworlds* 20 -- mid-1974:

I really wasn't going to write another of these self-examination editorials for a while... When completing #19...I didn't expect to have to. But rather than putting in [sic] a new way, I'd like to offer some excerpts from my editorial in *Outworlds* III [May, 1970] as a Credo/Statement of editorial intent:

Communication; Involvement; Obligation: Three words.

I operate within certain prejudices, some of which even I am unaware. But I definitely prefer people who do creative things, over those who are always talking about doing creative things. And those people I consider to be wasting their lives by not attempting to leave the world a bit better, a little more beautiful than it was when they arrived...these people would probably say that I have an unhealthy, almost fanatical desire to produce a beautiful fanzine.

They would be right.

I wish that I could say that I could do it alone; at times, I think Yes... at other times, well, maybe...

I will publish for a hundred, or a thousand; it doesn't matter overmuch. But I require response; I cannot read your minds.

Come...let us, together, create a speck of beauty in a graying world. We can have some fun, perhaps learn a thing or two, prove that name-calling is not the only way to have a lively letter section, and (perhaps) construct a fanzine that is, indeed, greater than the sum of its parts.

I realize that you may not need me...

But I certainly need you.

I really hate to do it, but this is going to have to be *absolutely* the last issue to carry anything on the Harlan Ellison / Ted White / Dean Koontz / Piers Anthony Donald Pfeil --who?-- love feast. I mean, really, the whole thing has become so positively saccharin, that my teeth decayed while I was typing up this issue's modest 44-page installment.

I've had it. The five thousand print run of this issue is a bit much. I'm going back to basics. The next issue will be heckto.

A "serious interlude" is mandatory here. Insert mandatory "serious interlude". Insertation complete.

I once said that every time Joe Haldeman wrote a song, I'd publish an issue of *Outworlds*. Well, perhaps it *is* stretching a point, but in this issue we have a reprise. It is titled thusly: "Locked Up In a Spaceship With Five Hundred Unfrozen... ..and Very, Very Honny Stan Longs!"

A while back I mentioned two fanzines that, in other circumstances, would be celebrating their tenth anniversaries this month. And, by inference, if not in actuality, I mentioned two names associated with those fanzines.

Much later tonight -- if you can convince Rusty that it won't impair the bid if I momentarily womanize... I will show you a complete run of *Outworlds*...

...and at about the same time, Mike Glicksohn will show you his poker hand, and regale you with stories of *Energuman's* 6-issues-a-year quarterly schedule...

Cliché time: In all seriousness, folks...

Discretion is not my long suit, and tact is a mythology to me, but this I must say:

Two names have to be added to those two names...

Without -- and it is as simple as that -- without Joan Baker and Susan Wood, there would not have been an *Outworlds*... there would not have been an *Energuman*. ...and that is the least of the reasons I thank them both. Just for being---

This is not a fanzine; this is a speech.

This is not Toto, Kansas ... this is Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Sort of.

Later tonight...after the latest in the Lincoln-Douglas debates...and after an address by a teetotaling would-be fanzine writer...the parties start.

Enjoy.

And if you enjoy them enough to go home and start a fanzine called *Out-U-Men* or *Energ-U-Worlds*... tell me about it.

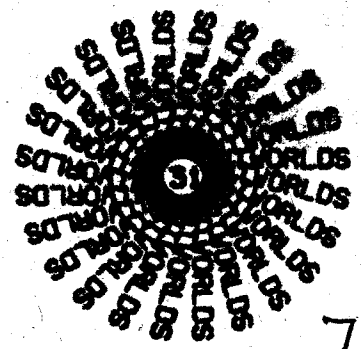
...in about ten years:

At Confusion One or/and Zero.

Goodnight.

---BILL BOWERS; 1/17/80; 12:54 apom.

+++++



"Cause and effect.

"...of words: spoken flippantly, or written carefully."

I would suppose that I am not alone in liking to think that some of my words/actions/deeds have had some measurable impact on others.

Choosing to self-servingly ignore negative reactions (I am, after all, an American), there are a couple of instances where I'm fairly certain that if it weren't for me, something neat would not have been. There may even be a couple that I can relate publicly.

She may disagree (she does that a lot), but I still say that it was a ~~chance~~ chance remark on my part that led to Denise Parsley Leigh starting *Chaymalin*. (The fact that there has not been an issue in recent memory only indicates that I've been too nice to her recently...)

But there is one case in which I have more concrete proof of cause and effect; and that in reaction to the "speech" you have just read:

"In May, 1980, I received a letter... 'When you sent me advance word of the annish, I wrote to Mike. Mike is coming here to visit in July. We are sitting down to plan the Tenth Annish of *Energumen*, the Hugo winning fanzine. It's your doing, Bowers!'

"...from Susan Wood."

The words in quotes (both places) above are extracted from my "article" in *Energumen 16*, the "11th Anniversary Issue". (Mike was a bit slow, it seems.)

It is debatedly the best single issue of recent memory, but it contains a lot of heavy-weight contributors in its one hundred plus pages. (I must admit that, after my own piece, my favorite was Patrick Nielsen-Hayden's "At the Mountains of Mimeography, or Bill Bowers Stole My Soul"...but some of the other stuff isn't bad either!)

A few copies are still available from Mike Glicksohn, 137 High Park Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M6P 2S3, CANADA. US \$4 (by mail) or US \$3 (in person), with all proceeds donated to the Susan Wood Scholarship Fund. Do it.

The previous incarnation of *Outworlds*, at least the "big ones" from #19 on, were known primarily for the "controversies"...

But the most response I received over those years was positive, and was provoked by such things as Jodie Offutt's article on the Irish, Poul Anderson's ode to peanut butter...and in response to Susan Wood's appreciation of Teddy Bears...

Susan was my friend.

Susan was someone I loved, very much...and I still have trouble dealing with the fact that I'll never see her again.

But a lot of Susan is still here...in the memories, and in her writings...

THE BEST OF SUSAN WOOD.

Eighty pages, plus covers...it contains sixteen of Susan's editorials, columns, and articles from *Energumen*, *Outworlds* (including the one on arctophiles), *Amazing*, and several other fanzines.

If you knew Susan, and her work, your memory will be jogged, pleasantly, despite the sense of loss. If you never knew Susan...or have not read her writings, you are in for a treat. Her Hugos for Best Fan Writer were never less than deserved.

If you buy nothing else fannish this year...

It is available from Jerry Kaufman, 4326 Winslow Place North, Seattle, WA 98103. \$2.00 US or equivalent "(Postage is not required, but would not be scoffed at)" All profits will be donated to the Susan Joan Wood Memorial Scholarship Fund, Carleton Univ.

Thanks, Jerry...for doing this.

And thanks, Susan...for having been a part of my life.

~~~~~  
A Note to Contributors: When last we met, *Outworlds* was set to become a semi-prozine. That never happened. For reasons. What we have here, now, is a fresh start. Where it's going to go this time...I haven't the faintest. I not only have the verbosity, but the chutzpah to fill entire issues by myself. Or I can bribe Dave Locke with a six-pack. But all of the former columnists are welcome back...and I would not be upset if you sent me something, either. If I like it, I'll print it. So do it!

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REVERSE ENTROPY PREPRINT: S.A.F.E. 1984  
REVERSE ENTROPY PREPRINT: S.A.F.E. 1984

# DAVE LOCKE

REVERSE ENTROPY PREPRINT: S.A.F.E. 1984  
REVERSE ENTROPY PREPRINT: S.A.F.E. 1984

THIS IS NOT AN ENTROPY REPRINT. IT IS A REVERSE ENTROPY PREPRINT. I WILL NOT BE DREDGING THE PAST TWENTY-TWO YEARS FOR MODERATELY READABLE EXAMPLES OF MY OLD FAN-WRITING. TRIPS TO THE PAST ARE FINE, BUT SCIENCE FICTION FANS HAVE TO LOOK TO THE FUTURE, TOO. WE ARE FORWARD-THINKING PEOPLE, YOU KNOW.

WHAT I HAVE IN MIND HERE IS TO PREPRINT SOME OF MY MATERIAL FROM THE FUTURE. IT'S ACKNOWLEDGED THAT YOU MIGHT NOT FIND IT ANY MORE UNDERSTANDABLE OR INTERESTING THAN SOMETHING FROM HISTORY, BUT AT LEAST WE CAN GRANT THAT IT'S DIFFERENT. AND MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE FORWARD-FOCUS OF MOST SCIENCE FICTION.

OF COURSE, THIS WON'T BE SCIENCE FICTION. I'M ACTUALLY GOING TO PREPRINT SOME OF MY FUTURE FANWRITING. NOW YOU MIGHT ASK HOW I COULD DO SUCH A THING, AND IF YOU DID I WOULD PROBABLY FEEL OBLIGED TO FORK OVER A DISCLOSURE IN THE INTEREST OF GOOSING YOUR WILLING SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF. HOWEVER, THERE'S NO NEED TO CLUTTER UP THE CONTINUITY WITH DETAILS ON THE MECHANICS OF OBTAINING MATERIAL FOR PREPRINT. JUST DROP ME A LINE IF YOU'RE INTERESTED. I'LL DO THE SAME, FOR SURE.

NOW, HOWEVER, I WISH TO INTRODUCE MY SELECTION. IT'S CALLED *S.A.F.E. 1984*, AND WILL INITIALLY APPEAR IN *VIRGINS OF GOR #1* DATED AUGUST 1984. THOUGH NOT A HAPPY STORY OBVIOUSLY I CONTINUE TO HANDLE MY FANWRITING IN A RATHER LIGHTHEARTED MANNER. THERE ARE THE TYPICAL DAVE LOCKE TOUCHES TO IT: A DISASTER STORY TOLD WITH MUCH DIALOG AND IN A MOOD CLOSELY APPROACHING APATHY ('WHAT WE NEED AROUND HERE IS MORE APATHY. BUT THEN, WHO CARES?' @ DGL 1972). THOUGH MUCH OF MY FANWRITING IS NOT SUBJECT TO BEING DATED, BECAUSE I OFTEN DON'T SAY ANYTHING, THIS PARTICULAR ITEM IS OBVIOUSLY FROM THE FUTURE. IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN WRITTEN YESTERDAY OR TODAY. IT DEFINITELY COMES FROM TOMORROW.

## S. A. F. E. 1984

*S.A.F.E.: Acronym for Standard Approved Fanac Ethic. Established early in 1984 to aggressively promote standards in fanwriting and fanpubbing, S.A.F.E. adherents quickly assumed the trappings of authority and began enforcing their own dictum.*

*---from Speer's LEXICON OF FANSPEAK, 1984 edition*

It could have been a fan panel, and would have passed as one if somebody had stuck their head in the room to see what was going on. No one did. The door was locked.

Five of them sat on the dais behind the two tables flanking the lectern. Two drank water, three drank beer. The audience, all twelve of us, sat in the folding chairs which make convention programming so much fun to attend.

But this wasn't fun and it wasn't listed in the program book. It was a S.A.F.E. hearing and I was the heeree. I drank scotch & soda. The others, including two fanewzine editors with steno books, were half asleep. It was 11:00 am on a Sunday morning in June.

.....  
Facing me from left to right on the dais were Eeny, Meeny, Miney, Moe, and Snow White. Obviously these were not their real names. That is how I thought of them, though, and you know who they are, anyway.

Meeney kicked off the hearing. "The purpose of being here is to discuss rumors, evidence, and direct knowledge of the activities of Dave Locke in abuse of fan standards as established by the Standard Approved Fanac Ethic. Are there any questions on this purpose?"

I raised my hand. "Should I nurse this drink or do we have a gopher to fetch refills?"

Snow White spoke right over my inquiry, leading me to believe that it was likely to be a long, semi-dry hearing: "The charges against Dave Locke, fanwriter, are that his fanarkles are seldom devoted to the issues of the day, or to the approved days of fanhistory, that he displays iconoclastic behavior outside of approved channels, that he does not agree to standards of quality such as S.A.F.E. or the FAAN Awards, that his material does not always represent his absolute best efforts, and that he displays his individualism outside S.A.F.E. boundaries."

"Any other major points?" Meeny asked.

I held up my glass and pointed to it. Everyone looked at Eeny as he spoke up and said: "As a fanpubber, within his fanzines he has started new topics in the middle of the page and without proper headings. He has talked about admittedly strange, but mundane, things. He has sometimes not used a single illustration. His fanzines are neither S.A.F.E.ly conventional nor S.A.F.E.ly insurgent, but merely 'Locke'."

"And his contention is what?" Meeny inquired.

Moe coughed and said: "That he'd probably been drinking at the time, and will try to cut back if we don't subpoena him to any more panels."

"Panels?" Meeny snorted. "Dave Locke, this is not a panel. This is an official S.A.F.E. hearing, and you are the subject of serious attention here!"

I looked around. Sure enough, of those who were awake everyone was looking at me, and wore various kinds of serious expressions.

"Dave Locke," Meeny thundered, "you are accused of not fanning in approved channels and in approved ways." He leaned forward at the table. "What do you have to say for yourself?"

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

It had been only a few months earlier that I was blissfully enjoying my old hobbies of fanwriting and fan-publishing. Although I recognized people who were heavy into Standards for fanac, at least when I fell over them, it had never occurred to me that there was more involved here than merely an infatuation with one's own personal standards.

Even when they formed S.A.F.E., the Standard Approved Fanac Ethic, I didn't really take it seriously. Fans band together in odd groupings and do goofy things. That's normal. It was when I began getting the notices in the mail that I realized things were getting out of hand.

They were all done on official S.A.F.E. postcards. One of them quoted me as writing "somebody else's standards become uninteresting when presented as a Guide to Fan By," and delivered to me the admonishment that "this kind of anarchism is not condoned by S.A.F.E."

Another postcard warned that my statement "I believe that fanwriting should be approached with an effort to do it well, but always striving for my absolute best wouldn't mesh with a hobby that, for me, blends relaxation, communication, escape, and creativity" was "contrary to the ideals of fanwriting, and subversive to the tenets of S.A.F.E." And those were only two of the postcards.

But of all this unS.A.F.E. material I had created, none of it displayed any major departure from all my prior material. It was just the same old shit, you see. Not the same thing over and over, but no abrupt changes from what anyone might expect me to be writing.

Definitely I was dealing with a different kind of fan.

And then, on Saturday night at the convention, I received a subpoena to attend

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.....  
my hearing the following morning.

There wasn't much time for preparation, let alone much time for sobering up. All I needed to kick things off, though, was to make one phone call.

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"I plead guilty," I told Meeny as I stood up, glass in hand. I made eye contact with each of the four others on the dais, in effect telling each of them the same thing. Then I took a big swallow from my drink and sat down.

"Really," said Snow White, her face not hiding disappointment, "I would have thought you'd put up some kind of fight." The way she said it made me want to check and see if my balls were still there.

Instead I said: "Well, there's no getting around it: I'm guilty of all those things. There's no denying it."

"No?" Snow White arched one thin eyebrow.

"You are asking if it is me who has said and done all those things, and the answer is: yes, it is me. I did it. I said it. I even meant it."

"I didn't think it was going to be this easy, either," said Miney, obviously disconcerted.

"Then," Meeny said to me, "are you intending to tell us that you understand the purpose of fanning within S.A.F.E. standards?"

"Of course," I told him. "I understand it perfectly."

"And," piped in Snow White, "that you would take more care in the future?"

"Take more care of what?" I asked her.

"Of your fanwriting and fanpublishing," Meeny answered for her.

"More care in what way?" I queried.

"To conform to S.A.F.E. standards," chorused Eenie, Miney, and Moe. We all stared at them until they appeared uncomfortable. Finally Meenie coughed, then turned back to me.

"Well?" he said.

"Hell, no," I said.

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As soon as I had been served the subpoena, I called for the information I needed.

"Room 335 about nine o'clock," the soft voice said, answering my question. "Do you want the password?"

A joke. "Sure. What's tonight's password?"

"Horsefuck."

"Say," I asked, tongue-in-cheek, "what kind of closed party is this: APA 69?"

"No," the voice told me, "obviously not. Their password is 'suck the chrome off a doorknob.'"

"That's a long password," I suggested.

"It's a long process, too."

"See you there."

"Later."

I hung up and headed toward the elevators. It was close enough to nine o'clock. Well, considering that I was going to use the elevator, it was.

Room 335 wasn't swinging yet, which meant there wasn't enough vocal cords present to drown each other out. I head-counted seven fans already there, four in one conversation and three in another. I united the two groups and explained my situation.

"Wild," Joan said, using a finger to swirl the icecubes in her drink. "What do you figure we can do, give advice?"

"Yes and no," I replied. "I'm not rejecting anything at this time. What I'm after is what you all think about this. Input. I want input. If you want to phrase it as advice, and tell me what you think you'd do, go to it. I want to wallow in this for a bit, and see what still clings to me when I walk out."

Input I got. Thoughts, musings, advice, rhetoric, reactions, inclinations, anger, disgust, amusement, analysis, disbelief, and a bit more besides.

.....

The general consensus, after everything got boiled down, was that I wouldn't be having this problem if I didn't participate in fanac with these people.

"It's quite simple in their minds, I suspect," George said. "If you don't have dealings with them, as far as they are concerned you are a part of some other fandom. If you do have dealings, they recognize you as part of fanzine fandom, and presume their own vision of it should apply to you, as well."

"Your suggestion?"

"Tell them off and then ignore them."

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"Listen," I told them, "I'm tired of this shit." I finished my drink and stood up.

"One real question remains," I said. "What are you going to do about it? What can you do?" They weren't saying anything, so I went on. "You know something? In my fandom everybody feels their way along, plays things by ear, and in some circles can even, \*horrors\*, publish first-draft -- brain to stencil to mimeo -- without anyone overly worrying about it. In your fandom everyone is supposed to have all these writing and publishing standards to contend with. So the way I look at it, you go play in your fandom and I'll go play in mine, and maybe we can send each other cards at Christmas."

"It isn't that easy," Snow White chuckled.

Meeny pounded his fist on the table, making foam rise in his beer. "You have violated S.A.F.E. conduct and you must be dealt with!"

"I repeat: what can you do about it?"

Meeny smiled at me. That's when I remembered the door was locked.

"Dave Locke," said Meeny, "we will break your spirit and remove your resistance. Everyone has something they fear more than anything." He laughed. "Everyone."

"You are not going to force me to read convention reports and fanzine review columns." I stood firm. "I refuse to do it," I told him.

"No, no," said Meeny with impatience, dismissing the idea with a wave of his hand.

"What, then," I asked, "locking me up in an NSF room at a convention? Forcing me to listen to people who play guitars at room parties? Making me read the collected works of Jessica Salmonson? What?"

"Everyone," Meeny repeated, "has something they fear more than anything." He chuckled, then made a motion with his hand.

Two men came from behind and grabbed me by the arms.

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"And your thoughts?" Ralph asked me. Probably because I looked pensive, and wasn't drinking from my glass.

I stood amongst the seven at the room party, rather blankly making occasional eye contact. Finally I took a drink.

"Okay," I told them, "I see it this way. My participation in fanac with these people is based on what I like, not what I don't like about them."

"That attitude," suggested Sue, "will get you the subpoena you're carrying in your pocket."

"When not talking or bitching about Standards," I said, "they seem like affable enough people. It's just that one thing that they have."

"And one that they don't have," Tom noted. "Perspective. They're not encouraging people to set their own standards; they're trying to do it for them."

I took another swallow from my drink.

"I have a plan," I told them.

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No one who has worked as a bouncer, even as long ago and far away as I had, is going to be overly concerned at two English Lit majors grabbing him by the arms. Especially when I knew that four of the remaining spectators were going to arise and take hold of the two fellows who had a hold on me. I waited for that to happen, which took about five seconds, then smiled at everyone's surprise and stepped closer to the dais.

Before I addressed anyone up there I turned and thanked the seven for coming.

"You'd better thank us," said Tom, while helping to escort the two strongarms back to their folding chairs. "We don't normally get up this early on Sunday at a convention."

"I just stayed up and came straight here," Sue added, yawning. Then she got up, unlocked the door, and let in another couple of dozen fans who were lounging outside. Some of them she had to wake up first, and Bill and Karen had to be pulled apart. But they all came trundling in.

"Okay," said Snow White from the dais, while working her face into a rage, "what the hell is this?"

"Did anybody bring me another drink?" I asked, looking around. Everyone stared at me, so I shrugged and turned to Snow White and her cohorts, who were displaying anger, bafflement, anxiety, the twitches, and heightened awareness. Respectively, of course.

"I have a little speech to make here," I told them. Someone behind me groaned. Three others coughed, and I heard someone snoring. Suddenly I became conscious that my bare face was hanging out and that I didn't know what to do with my hands. But I pressed forward anyway.

"What this is," I said, addressing Snow White's question, "is a setting. In this setting you gave yourselves the trappings of authority. I had to take that crap away from you." I paused, then walked over to my drink, saw it was empty, and fidgeted. "That's a lot of crap to cut through before we can get down to dealing with reality. You're only deluding yourselves if you think you have any authority, and until we dispense with that nonsense I can never really communicate with you."

"Who, besides those of you here," said Meeny, "thinks there is no authority in S.A.F.E.?"

"Everyone in fandom who is watching you play this game." With a sweep of my hand to take in everyone on the dais, I said: "Let me put it to you this way. To speak kindly, you are a subfandom."

"What!?" four of them exclaimed at once. Moe, who didn't join the chorus, just sucked his thumb.

"Yes, I know it's a blow to you," I sympathized, "but you're not the cutting edge of fanzine fandom. You're a special interest group within fanzine fandom, generally referred to as The Standards Bunch. Not," I pointed out, "to be confused with The Critics Crew, although there's a lot of overlap."

Someone came in with a fresh drink for me. Sue groaned. "Now he'll take his time," she said. "We'll be here forever."

I ignored this, and kept rolling without missing too many beats. Snow White started to say something, but I ignored her protest, too. "What this amounts to," I told them, "is that you've got a group of fans who like to talk about Standards. It's boring as all hell to the rest of us, but that's not the problem. The problem is that you're pushing your dogma because you presume everyone should be involved."

"They should," said Meeny.

"It doesn't occur to you that a lot of people are not in fanzine fandom to issue or receive standards. Everyone has their own reasons for being a fan, and usually those aren't two of them."

Snow White snorted. "You're saying we shouldn't have standards?"

"Not assigned ones," I told her. "People tend to develop their own personal standards, and to find amusing or presumptuous the idea that other fans would establish those standards for them. If you want to point at what you consider to be good, that's one thing. It's another to point and say that this will be The Way."

Meeny objected. "There are traditions in fanzine fandom. Those traditions have made it meaningful, and they can be synthesized and presented as Standards."

"Bullshit. Traditions are to be enjoyed or disregarded, as the individual sees fit. If you find them amusing, then keep them rolling. Maybe I find some of them amusing, too, but they're not Scripture to me. I am not bound by the fanwriting or fanpublishing of the past, regardless of what I or you liked or disliked about it,

and I'm certainly not bound by the standards that you have chosen to adopt for yourselves, even if every individual does believe fandom would be a better place if their own standards were the norm.

"You are trying to overlay a game on fandom," I told them, "so that you can deal with it in the black and white terms of right and wrong. You forget that fandom, even fanzine fandom, consists of a lot of individuals and almost as many approaches. Yours is but one. You can coexist, but you cannot rule."

"I don't believe," Snow White exclaimed, "that we are a subfandom. I believe that you're all insurgents, and that you're the leader."

"I couldn't lead people down a one-way street. There are no leaders in my part of fandom, and we are not a New Wave. In my part of fandom we take an interest -- or not -- in the works and in the people, and we respect the right of a person to go their own way. We don't box each other in by imposing standards. Most people do what they want, anyway. We don't presume to nobly coerce people into a mold that others believe would look good on them."

I took a long pull on my new drink, to lube the tubes. "However," I pointed out, "we have no objections if you want to do it to each other. Anything two fans do together is fanac, you know. Fell free."

"That's gracious of you," muttered Snow White.

"Think nothing of it."

Mo turned to Meeny and said: "Perhaps we should drop this 'standards' business and join them. Sounds like they've got a looser organization, doesn't it?"

"Don't drop the idea of standards," I said to Mo, who looked at me with a puzzled expression. "Just drop the crusade, and put some effort into setting your own standards. And use them; don't just talk about them." I fondled my glass, took another swallow, and added: "If you do, you'll find one thing for sure."

"What's that?" Mo asked.

"A BNF".

"A big name fan?"

"No, that it's a brave new fandom out there."

A whole bunch of people came from behind, grabbed me, and carried me down to the bar.

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Much later, in the hotel bar, Meeny and I were drinking and swapping stories and lies.

"Shay..." I cleared my throat. "Say, Meenie, what *was* it you figured to do to me? What was it you thought I feared more than anything?"

Meeny was playing with the beer rings on the table. "Well, we had plan A and plan B," he told me.

"What was 'A'?"

"We were going to take you down to the final auction, and force you to watch as we slipped them a copy of your first fanzine to auction off."

"Aaaarrggghh!"

"If that didn't shape you up, plan B was even worse."

Slightly shaken, I signalled the waitress and ordered the next round. "You wouldn't have had to use it," I told him. "I'd have broken down."

"We thought so, but we were prepared to go farther."

"Anyone who'd go that far would go farther, as Dean Grennell says."

"Right," Meeny agreed. "We were to ... no, I can't say it. I'm too ashamed of myself for even thinking of it."

"Ah, go ahead," I told him. "No, wait a second." The waitress came over with our drinks on a tray and I finished mine in one gulp, then ordered another. "Okay, go ahead."

"Well, said Meeny, looking sheepish, "we have a complete run of the fanzine you did when you were chairman of the NSF Welcommittee."

"You bastard," I said.

"Cheers," he told me, lifting his glass.

□ DAVE LOCKE □ 6828 ALPINE AVE. #4, CINCINNATI, OH 45236

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"They say the most important things are to be able to laugh and to cry. Well, if I have to cry, I think of my sex life. And if I have to laugh--I think of my sex life."  
---Glenda Jackson, on acting...  
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...as a prologue to LAST year's Confusion speech, I mentioned that I actually had two "speeches" in front of me on the podium. I "made" the one that I'd written for the occasion; it was heavy, but it had to be said. The one that I wanted to make had not been written as a convention speech--rather it had been poured out for a fanzine that was to be out for that convention. It wasn't, so after the convention, I printed the piece in a limited print-run apazine (Bill Bowers' MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS #3), but I still considered it to belong to the fanzine it was written for...

Well, a year has passed, and it's obvious that IMP #2 won't be out for THIS Confusion either. Whenever it does come out, I plan on having something in it. But it won't be the following...

I'm running it here (as it was written), for two reasons:

- 1) Because it says some things I think need saying; and
- 2) because I consider it the best example of my "public" writing so far...

It's certainly not up to "S.A.F.E." standards, but whathell...the Midwestern Beautiful People will get a charge out of it.

Leah mentioned, during a phone call a couple of days ago, that most of the material in hand for Imp was of a fannish historical nature. That was probably meant as a subtle hint (to go along with the not-so-subtle one that the deadline was past), but my ability to cater to the hints I receive (even the ones I notice) is one of my lesser developed attributes.

Still, with over twenty years as an active fan in my background, I've certainly experienced a fairly substantial amount of fannish history. I've even, in my own way, been responsible for some small part of it. So I suppose it would be possible for me to whip off some significant statement on fandom in the 60s and 70s, and the areas of it I know best -- fanzines, and conventions.

It's possible, yes...but Leah has read enough of my "work" over the last five years...that she probably won't be too terribly surprised when that is what she does not get herein.

I've received fanzines by the thousands, and have attended well over a hundred cons. But the fanzines I remember and revere are a motly crew--mostly completely unlike any of my own; and my memories of conventions rarely have to do with formal programming, or whether the hotel and committee performed in a properly SMOF-worthy manner. I am constantly amazed when I see fans of lesser time-in-grade writing brilliant treatments of the fanzines of my early days...or when I read a con report that strikes absolutely no note of familiarity in me, despite the fact that I was in that hotel, over that weekend.

This, for instance: Denvention II was definitely a fannish worldcon, but the most fannish part of it was not the panel I was on, titled "The Sexy Sixties in Fandom" (obviously, the panel unanimously agreed, named by someone who hadn't been there). No, to me the most fannish (not the "best", not the "most fun", but...) event was this:

Late one night, a couple of friends and I wandered out to the Hilton's pool, to sit and talk. It was after hours, and I had this nagging worry that someone (not hotel security necessarily; more likely another fan) would discover the Coke-can with which we'd propped open the door to the pool deck. But time passed and eventually, hearing our voices, another fan detached himself from the shadows poolside, and joined us.

He obviously knew, and was known to my companions...and the conversations ebbed and flowed for another ten or fifteen minutes, until I said something now lost in that Denver dusk. "Excuse me," he said, leaning over to try and read my name-tag-with-the-blue-ribbon (it meant I was "important") in the darkness, "I don't believe I caught your name..."

.....  
A moment later we were launched on a typically cryptic fannish exchange:

"My God," he said, "...you won't remember me, but my name's Dwain Kasier..."

(my mind groped blankly, attempting to refocus from a conversation centered on current-day LA-fandom...to one that had suddenly gotten personal)

"...and the last time I saw you..."

(something clicked) and I said: "...we crashed at your parents house in Las Vegas ...on the way to Pacificon II..."

"...seventeen years ago," he completed.

The conversation continued, changed. "You know," he mused, "that was half my life ago." It wasn't quite that for me, but while I have difficulties relating to the Bill Bowers of late August, 1964, the memories of that epic three-week trip flooded back.

Eventually, our mutual friends--much younger (naturally)--grew bored with the direction of the conversation, and suggested that we "...go party."

So we did...and the moment passed: but it was fannish while it lasted.

...no, I'm afraid any fan-history chronicles I produce will not be comprised of a factual or critical nature...but rather the stuff of which memories dictate. I, in one box or another, scattered about, have all the hard-copy to verify most of these memories; but not all that is important is inscribed in mimeo ink on twilltone...or even by typewriter ribbon (and carbon) on personal letters.

This: I have a copy of *Imp* #1...somewhere. I remember that it was piggy-backed, Ace-Double style (and how soon will that become an esoteric reference?) with an issue of *Diehard*...but that's all I remember about it now.

I don't even remember when it came out...but I do recall a bit about that era in midwestern fannish history: It was the dying days of the Suburban Femmefen, and their Mascot...but in the meantime, they had acquired their Very Own Groupie...

The Christmas/New Year's holidays that encompassed the end of 1976...and the beginning of 1977...

I had a friend visiting me for the holidays--someone who was very special then, and who still is, despite her occasional tendency for driving me straight up a wall. It was fun, and all went well--including her day-time suitor--until one day, when I returned from work.

I opened the front door of the townhouse I then inhabited, and for some reason my gaze was immediately drawn past the living room to that small arc of the kitchen that was visible from the entrance. Down, down...my gaze was going...and then I spotted it: there, on the tiled floor rested two bowls; one of water, and one of...

My immediate words were of the order... "You DIDN'T...!"

Her words went something like this: "I said I would...I didn't say when... Besides, you'll love it...it's small, and black, and cuddly..."

"It's name is 'Bill Bowers' Responsibility' ...and this way you'll have to stay home from all those conventions you can't afford...and take care of it!"

When we resumed speaking to each other, a couple of days later, we (my houseguest and I) left for the New Year's Party in Cincinnati. There were several other options, but such was my choice, and I enjoyed myself, even if my guest didn't: Primarily because I was already falling in love (even if I wouldn't admit it to myself) with the person who would precipitate my move to Cincinnati six months later...

"There are simply too many people in the world to love, to restrict yourself to just one." ...so my friend had told me, and that is Lesson #1.

And, yes, we took the kitten along to the New Year's Party...

And, no, I did not stop going to conventions. But when, in early 1977, I took 'Sponse along to three conventions, I discovered a tangible benefit to compensate for the drudgery of lugging food and litter box along: As I would carry her about at the cons, an incredible number of attractive women would suddenly materialize and ask if they could pet her. It gave me an opportunity to read nametags, and occasionally, to get to know someone I probably wouldn't have otherwise.

...which, at last, gives me the opportunity to segue into the title of this...  
.....



Bill Bowers' HANDY-DANDY GUIDE FOR PICKING UP WOMEN AT SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTIONS

"Part of the beauty of fandom is that age simply doesn't matter."

It's been a long time since Leah taught me that one; about as long as it's been since she taught me the first...both about as long ago as when I suddenly realized she was half my chronological age.

It's been some time, and I suppose that there are those who would say that I took both lessons a bit too literally...but it hasn't been all that long since Sunday afternoon, at Octocon 1981, when (as I was trying to get body and possessions back together in time to leave when my ride did) Leah said: "I have to talk to you."

The timing was less than auspicious; I had a distinct feeling I knew what was bothering her...and I also had a definite feeling that I would no more be able to "answer" ~~her~~ than I had been on a similar occasion, fifteen months earlier.

And I wasn't...but I was able to listen; and as I did, I also came to know what the "article" I would write for *Imp 2* would probably be about.

No, this is not an "answer" for Leah -- that she has to arrive at on her own; what it is, rather, is an attempted explanation of why one fan behaves the way he does at conventions...

*"You are likely to see a lot of hugging and kissing and things of that nature during the convention--most of these people are old friends who haven't seen each other in months (or even weeks). Just because a young lady is cuddling with six different men (or vice versa) doesn't mean you can join in--she knows the six men--she doesn't know you. Fans are friendly...but not that friendly. ...And the woman dressed in almost nothing is wearing a costume, not advertising her availability."*

That particular piece of sage advice is excerpted from the "Neofan's Guide to Con-Fusion", as printed in the program book for The Nine Billion Names of ConFusion, January, 1981. The piece is uncredited...but it was written by Leah A Zeldes.

...and I would not attempt to write this particular piece for anyone but Leah A Zeldes. By its nature, it has to be in a place where she can respond to it directly.

A lot of what I have to say may surprise some, but most will not come as any great revelation to anyone who has known either of us for some time. Leah's and my relationship may not be the stuff of which epics, or even soap operas (though there was "Mary Heartfan, Mary Heartfan"), are written--but it is the essence of fan history...because she was the single most important element in pulling me out of a post-divorce depression, and setting me off on a path I'm still following (in my own inimitable way) today. For better or worse.

I have my suspicions that oft-times she believes it is the latter, but the fact remains: she is responsible.

...now you know who to blame!

Obligatory Background Info Concerning the Author:

I was reared in an ultra-conservative, holy roller, totally WASPish environment. I was skinny, bookish...and totally shy. Even more so in the presence of women.

Sex was always a preoccupation; but never an attainment. Until 1967.

Even then I was so naïve that I didn't realize that the first woman I slept with was a hooker. (The fact that that story has yet to be written is not because I'm ashamed...or have any regrets; it's simply that I don't yet consider myself capable of doing it justice. Sooner, or later, though...)

There were others...now nameless. And when I Came Home in the fall of 1968, my opinion of women was, at best, mixed. But I, luckily, almost immediately met someone who convinced me that women, by and large, are incredibly neat--even if they are ever so obviously members of a totally alien race. (It's a belief that, yes, in spite of Everything, I continue to hold today.)

The fact that the marriage was not a total success is obvious; it does not exist

today. There were hurts and regrets then, but time mellows all: I don't speak for her, but I have no regrets for having attempted the institution...and still consider her a very valued friend...even if not one of "The Three."

Marriage, like fanzine publishing, is something that everyone should try at least once. ...just don't make a religion out of either.

Still, for perhaps a year and a half after I qualified for membership in F.H.F., my self-esteem--never overwhelming--sunk to a level matched only by the height of several of my friends. It was a dark and melancholy time...and so was I.

I first met Leah in 1975, at Toronto's Fanfair III. She met me sometime later.

And when I suddenly started spending a lot of time in lower Michigan...well, everybody knew what was going on. Everybody, that is, except Leah...she simply thought I enjoyed being with the whole group.

...I did; but such was not the primary *raison d'être* for all those trips. It was my first experience with an apparently unique talent I seemingly possess: that of being totally...even blatantly...obvious to everyone in the world except to the object of my interest. (It was far from my last encounter with the phenomenon.)

All of that was a long time ago... the days when S&M meant Suburban & Middleclass, the days when Larry Downes had a philosophy of the month...and the days I first encountered the word "esoteric" as practiced by a master (thanks, Patty!). A long time ago...and the world, circumstances, and Leah and I have all changed incredibly. There have been ups and downs, but she has remained my constant friend--even when she didn't approve (which was often)--through everything: I appreciate that very much...and I still love her.

...even though I was never *in* love with her. Though I was once convinced I was.

"There is a distinct difference between loving someone...and being *in* love with someone." Lesson the Third.

Some things are obvious to even the slowest learner; clichés are generally clichés because they have considerable basis in fact. Without the I've heard, in one form or another, all these things endless times before. But all three "lessons" were demonstrated to me, carefully explained to me..."taught" to me by one person. And they have formed an essential foundation for my personal philosophy of dealing with others ever since. Not always successfully, but...

...the ironic thing is that the person who learned me all these neat things has, in succeeding years, modified her own interpretation of them (at least in my view). To her, perhaps, they are nice theories. To me, as the convert, they have become basic tenants of faith...and I have interpreted them literally.

Despite my aspersions, the home in which I was brought up was not an unloving one-- particularly on the part of my mother...

("Fine," I said, "...you asked for the divorce...you tell my parents.")

(She returned. "Your mother's only comment was: 'Well, I guess he could be rather difficult to live with...'" )

...but it was not affectionate in terms of being physically demonstrative.

A large measure of my caring for Leah has to do with this:

At a time when I really needed reassuring of my basic worth, she was not ashamed to be associated with me (even if she wouldn't use my name in con reports) ...nor was she afraid to demonstrate public affection.

I know; I still have the photographs.

In many ways, even more than the Three Lessons, that was Leah's greatest influence on me.

Her greatest influence on you may well be the fact that she was the one who suggested the "Bill Bowers Practice Speeches" for Iguanacon.

I have since forgiven her for that particular bit of fannish myth-making. But when you realize to what lengths I've carried that initial impetus--not only well past the 1978 worldcon--but when I realized I liked having an audience so much that, when

.....  
It has to be disconcerting to the bystander; it is certainly frustrating to someone on the outside who wants to talk to/be with/whatever someone who is not; and it is probably totally depressing to one who wants so very much to be part of such a group... but probably never will be.

After all, that's what I always told myself. Not so very long ago.

It just occurred to me that the people I'm talking about probably comprise a large percentage of "the family" you read so much about in *DNQ*.

You know: the group that's solely responsible for the decline and fall of fannish fandom in the midwest...because we boycott any convention that's not run by our friends.

Well, gee, I've been to eight Marcons in a row--no matter who ran them--and I plan on being in Chicago next Labor Day weekend--no matter who ends up running that.

Hell, I even went to Iguanacon...

...and Roger Reynolds' first two conventions.

(I'll probably be drummed out of the family for that damning admission!)

I sometimes wonder about those who find *everything* in current-day fandom totally negative; what possible joy can they have in sticking around? But maybe they're just pulling my leg...

If so, they should be reminded that it's Not Nice to Fool the Cult Object of Midwestern Fandom.

Sometimes I'm totally uncomfortable with the whole thing myself.

That's when I'm on the outside, looking in.

But that's often by my own choice; I'm a cantankerous old geezer at times (when I'm not off chasing women half my age).

When I'm on the outside, looking in, I wonder--sometimes wistfully--just what's going on. But when I'm inside--I don't look out.

Sorry.

I like touching.

I like the hell out of women.

I still have insecurities (more than enough, thank you) but it's been some time since I worried whether those who spent time with me did so because I was me; ...or because I was "important".

I am important--but not in the same way I "was" when I was busily publishing *Outworlds*...; or being Fan GoH at conventions:

I'm important because I'm finally learning to be able to demonstrate my feelings.

Not all of my relationships have ended as amicably as I might have wished, but this still stands true: I've never been involved with anyone I'm ashamed of being identified with...or of appearing in public with. That being so, it seems rather less than honest to pretend otherwise simply to avoid upsetting someone else.

Of course that simplistic, idealistic...

Sometimes it's just fun to fool around in public...either for the sheer pleasure of the experience, or to tweak a few noses in the process.

Flirting is fun.

I guess I always knew that, but never quite knew how before.

After all, it helps pass the time in between all the serious stuff. But, sometimes, when the flirting backfires, and someone unexpected takes you up on it...

Well, I never said all of this couldn't be awkward at times.

Affection, and the way it is demonstrated, is different things to different people. It doesn't have to be explicit and public to be real; I never said that.

Leah will recall when a mutual friend told us that he did not find french-kissing sexual; it was merely a gesture of friendship. We looked at each other...

Affection, just because it is explicit and public is not any less real.

I find french-kissing an extremely sexual act.

It's all a matter of taste.

.....

.....  
the convention "appearances" started diminishing, I started doing "speeches" directly for fanzine publication...well, you may or may not be so forgiving.

Inevitably, and not indirectly, it also lead to this particular piece.

"...my conventions are not the stuff of which sequentially factual con-reports are made--they are essentially private, even when I'm visible...in a crowd, or alone. Not that I don't write about them...even the most private moments. But I have *Xenolith* for gut-spilling...and furthermore, at the moment there is the article I owe Leah for Imp #2. She had asked for something...and then, Sunday afternoon at Octocon, she expressed some dissatisfaction at the amount of extremely explicit, public, physical affection (and not all of it hetro) prevalent at certain midwestern convention these days. Since I am on occasion one of the prime offenders, and since I generally "answer" better in print than after a weekend of such carrying-ons, the subject matter for the piece was obvious. But it remains to be committed to paper; it was due three days ago... but since I've spent the past three weekends researching...well, it'll be a better article for all of that."

...or so I said, 12/3/81...space-filling in an apazine.

And I will hasten to add--before she does--that this is not the sum total of Leah's discontent with current conventions... It's probably only a symptom. As far as her feeling that she's being ignored by old friends...or that she's being "shut-out" primarily because she's monogynous....

A lot of it has to do with relationships.

"I don't go to conventions to spend all of my time with Larry," she once told me.

"Well," I said, "...you come to conventions with Larry--and you go home, after a con--with Larry.

"It's a little different when you live alone...when conventions comprise your primary social interaction.

"...and it's a lot different when the person(s) you are involved with lives far away...and you only see them at a few cons a year."

I might have added: "And when you are not involved with anyone, but are looking..."

I've spent a lot of time...I've spent a lot of *myself*...ever since my marriage looking for another primary relationship. A few times...sometimes for a period of time encompassing whole months...I thought I'd found it. Looking back, now, I can see where I could probably have had it once...twice...but blew it because of my own blindness. ...and a couple of times I've been the one to back away, when it was offered.

I haven't stopped looking for that primary relationship; what I have done is I've stopped looking for it in everyone I become involved with...in everyone I'm attracted to. It's made my life considerably simpler. It has also simplified the lives of those who have become involved with me recently, as opposed to those who've done so in the past. (Would that I knew then a lot of what I know now; but how otherwise would I have learned?)

...it's also made my behaviour at conventions appear a lot more casual.

But I am never casual.

The public part..."the extremely explicit...physical affection"; the, if you will, "graduate-level" fondle-cons that occur at certain conventions when a certain, core, group is present...

I know most of those involved, on one level or another. Several I am very close to; others, in the same general gestalt are merely friends of friends. A few are not among my favorite people.

Life is like that.

But several points should be made:

Upon initial observation by a new onlooker, the entire flux would probably appear extremely casual...and totally sexually-orientated. Both are truisms...

But not really: There is contained within the same circle, the same context--a lot of genuine, caring affection; and there is nothing at all casual about these friendships.  
.....

I'm sorry Leah doesn't enjoy conventions as much as she used to. I'm sorry that she, and others of my friends, are shunted off to one side, when I am engaging in non-programmed activities. It's not an evil plot, nor does it indicate that I care for you less: it's simply a matter of available time.

But I must admit that I'm becoming increasingly more tired of, and less patient with those who rationalize their own lack of fanish enjoyment as being the "fault" of a particular group that just happens to be physically demonstrative.

Some of those physically demonstrative people are my friends.

Others I hope will become my friends.

And one of them is me.

It's been said by several, hence the quasi-quotes: "Those I'm most affectionate with in public...are not necessarily those that I am most affectionate with in private."

Do not judge everything by appearances.

Not everyone in the "family" has, or is, sleeping with everyone else in the family.

...or is likely to.

A few of us haven't proven to be bi. ...yet.

There is more...much.

And you'll see it, sooner or later...here or there. But this will do for a preface.

It's not all that I'd wanted or expected it to be...but neither am I.

Still, both of us are a lot more developed, and coherent, than we would have been a mere year ago.

Rest assured that I do not take myself quite as seriously as you might think, but neither am I quite so casual as you might wish.

All of this is...just a minor footnote to midwestern fan history.

Even though I've basically lived alone since January of 1975 (hmmm...that's seven years: *Double:Bill* lasted seven years; so did *Outworlds...*), I've had occasional houseguests, for varying lengths of time.

And, as my collection of memories has increased...so has my population of cats multiplied.

Strangely...well, perhaps not...while the other cats are virtual pushovers, \*Sponse has nipped or scratched every woman who has stayed with me. With one exception; but I suppose that was to be expected: none of my other women friends like her, either.

There's only one problem, these days: and that is that an incredible percentage of the women I'm currently attracted to...are allergic to cats!

Err...Leah, how would you like yet another black cat?

Final Touch:

A while back, Leah wrote a letter to me, commenting that...it appeared to her...I had recently entered puberty. That may well be, but since I seem to have missed it the first time around, I can't feel too guilty.

I'm having fun.

In the same letter, Leah says she remembers the days in which I would stay home from a convention in order to finish a fanzine. I don't remember it quite that way... but I do know that it's been a long time since I gave up an opportunity to get laid... simply to finish a fanzine article.

I hope you appreciate it.

I know Leah won't...

...but that's okay: I still love her, anyway!

BILL BOWERS 1:51 AM 12/17/81

...a 1983 Postscript: Two months ago, after years of procrastinating, I finally went in for a series of allergy tests. No, I'm not allergic to tobacco (they took that one twice!). But I am, it appears, allergic to cats.

I find this all rather awkward, and slightly embarrassing... I had this neat series of articles lined up on how my cats reflected the personalities of the women who "gave" them to me, you see. Ah, well...just because Poly "went home" doesn't mean you're safe!

"...you've got half an hour," Leah said.

"...but make sure your speech is no longer than twenty minutes," she immediately added. "...just in case Ted runs over. After all, 'Faans' has to start on time... the whole movie schedule follows it, you know."

I didn't know that...but I do remember the days before all night films were scheduled to appease media fans at science fiction conventions.

...just as I remember the days when I used to be the featured Friday night speaker at Confusion -- rather than a filler item inserted between other program oddities.

Gee, the "fame" really must be fading. I suppose I'll have to get busy and do something to reinflate it...lest I end up being a mere Friday night interlineation by next year.

...but I can't spend too much time worrying about that now: after all, I have only eighteen minutes left to tell you all about...

Father William's "TRICKLE-DOWN GUIDE" TO ATTAINING FANNISH PROMINENCE, or:  
Real Fans NEVER Talk About Science Fiction

In the beginning, you might well ask:

"Why...oh why, Mister-formerly-prominent-Bowers, would I possibly want to attain this state of fannish recognition...?"

((utilize "Uncle Albert" routine)) Well... I'm glad you asked that!

Had you not, I wouldn't be able to explain that one of the primary roads to fannish fame & fortune involves that venerated patent medicine, otherwise known as The Boy Wonder's Snake-Oil Schtick. The Proof is variable, and the legal age for consumption is irrelevant...but it is generally more intoxicating to the perpetrator(s) than to the observor. Still, if it wasn't for their schtick's, just think of how many "prominent" fans wouldn't be... any more?

Name names?

"Not me," said the Ticktockman wearing the Aardvark suit, rubbing at the mote in his eye while attempting to enter the con suite, clad only in a two piece silver lamé toga...of which David-the-game-show-player said Theilishly: it a-Piers to me that only Bridgett would say something as foolish as Irwin the fannish mayor of New York did, when he questioned the fannish credentials of the fan GoH at Conclave too early....

...and I suppose that totally insulting Harlan, by including him in the same spielwith nine lesser fannish luminaries, could be judged as fannish schtick--but I prefer to think of it as a momentary lack of wisdom on my part.

Fannish schticks come in many sizes (Mike Glicksohn), shapes (Roger Reynolds), and orders of magnitude (Bill Cavin). Some are amusing; some are annoying. Few are innovative and most require active promotion.

They range from the longevity of Tucker's "Smooth" routine...through the morass of interminable "assumed" fannish names...all the way up to Bill Bowers "speeches".

...but don't act too smug and superior: almost everyone, sooner or later, tries out a schtick...or becomes a part of someone else's...

Oh, yes: It should be emphasized that schticks don't have to be "good" to be effective.

After all, you are trying to become "known"; being loved and respected in the morning ar not automatic byproducts.

If you're not into originality, but still want to make a name for yourself, you can always become a groupie of some established Big Name Fan.

((display "BILL BOWERS: OFFICIAL LYNN PARKS GROUPIE" t-shirt))

...or of an established group of fans. (("SUBURBAN FEMMEFEN GROUPIE" t-shirt))

This is not the same as being a pro-groupie (("OFFICIAL PHYLLIS EISENSTEIN GROUPIE" t-shirt)) -- that generally only works if the pro in question was born in 1943.

But slavishly imitating--or is that emulating?--someone is certainly one way of

.....  
becoming known, at least in certain areas of fannish fandom.

Some try this route, but obviously don't find it satisfactory. They generally leave fandom to pursue other avenues to fame; such as wrestling and electronic games...

Others start as groupies, develop skills, styles, and personalities of their own ...and may even go on to have groupies of their own.

Still others have based entire fan careers on trying--futilely--to become the Ted White of their generation.

...not realizing that one is more than enough, thank you.

The paths to fannish fame and notoriety are many and varied:

For instance, by not only knowing who Stephen E. Pickering is...but by actually having published him.

...or by showing up at a whole slew of American conventions every few years, but adamantly insisting that you are holding down a fulltime job in Australia...a job that somehow involves a brand of tequila with a microchip worm...

A sure-fired way of becoming known is to have your gender surgically altered... and then to become vocally homosexual.

(It should be noted that this last method is not guaranteed to win you a Hugo for Best Dramatic Presentation...and so should be carefully considered beforehand.)

Feuding.

Now there is a way to put your name out on the fannish stage. Sometimes even in lights up there on the marquee...

...at least until someone puts out the lights.

There are two main classifications of feuds. Old Wave...and New Wave.

Old Wave Feuds generally have something to do with science fiction: either by involving pros holding highly literate discussions with the editors, publishers, agents, producers, or fellow writers who have screwed them ... or by pros shredding fan critics who have questioned their work, motives, or sexual preferences. (It should be noted that while they rarely directly attack pros...some fans do seem to have a way of bugging the hell out of some pros.)

New Wave feuds aren't so easily defined. But they seem to involve Sixth Fandom a lot. Why this is so, I'm not sure--but I suspect that Reaganomics has a lot to do with it.

Two Cautionary Notes about Fan Feuds:

- 1) No matter what the provocation, it is not cool to sue; and,
- 2) Unless your name happens to be Anthony, Ellison, or White...the odds are that you're going to be strictly light-weight stuff...so why not just forget it...?  
Who needs you anyway?

Let's see...what other ways are there...?

Well, you can always run a convention.

...or attempt to. ((*"DETROIT in '82" t-shirt*))

Ironically, the same degree of fame accrues to those who run a successful regional for several years, as to those who run a one-shot worldcon.

Those who can't run either...generally end up bidding for a Nasfic.

Still, I haven't mentioned the most time-honored route to fannish fame and glory:

That is, of course, attained by publishing a Hugo-winning fanzine. ((*XENOLITH t-shirt*))

Ooohs! Well, perhaps losing seven Hugos counts for something?

Thought not...

Ah, well, those who can't publish...write... ((*BILL BOWERS: FANWRITER t-shirt*))

...despite the carping of the critics. ((*reverse side: "Restricted Comprehensibility"--Mike Glicksohn / "Not Acceptable"--Dave Locke*))

I could go on like this for quite a while -- I do have a few more t-shirts, you know; hell, I've even had a t-shirt LOC. But time fleets, and I'd like to get serious for just a moment:

FROM BILL BOWERS  
2468 HARRISON AVENUE  
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45211

Striving toward fannish prominence is not always easy, but if you persevere, it can be rewarding. Who knows, you might well become Fan Guest of Honor at a Worldcon.

Or, if you're really lucky...Fan Guest of Honor at a ConFusion!  
Me?

I took the easy way. Simply by ignoring all the hints...and by sticking around twenty plus years--until I became the... ((display "'CULT OBJECT OF THE MIDWEST'--Ted White" t-shirt...))

A final example:

You can make quite a name for yourself by becoming involved in the various fan funds and charities.

I mean...who ever heard of Rusty Hevelin before he began running the TAFF/DUFF auctions?

...and, once you become known, you can stand for one of the fan funds. But you shouldn't grasp for too much too soon.

May I recommend that you start out by running for MAFF...

That's, of course, the Mid-Atlantic Fan Fund.

Once you've won that, you won't have to worry...your place in the Fannish Hall of Fame (located in Hagerstown, Maryland), will be permanently assured.

Now comes the participatory part of the proceedings...

Yes, you too, can be a part of a Worthy Fan Cause...relatively painlessly...and you will feel a lot better in the morning for having done it.

If you haven't guessed, I'm of course referring to E.T.F.F. ((et-ef))

For those of you not into acronyms, that means the "Equal Time Fan Fund".

Like a full thirty minutes.

For Bowers.

Next year.

I recommend it, highly.

For further information, write: ETEF, 2818 Whitewood, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

...or you can simplify matters by just subscribing to the fund's official journal... ((hold up a copy of Outworlds 31))

No, it's not tax deductible, but neither will I tax your patience further tonight! 1/24

Thanks to J. Causgrove Publishing, Ink, for the production facilities...and to Leah, for having provided so much inspiration! Bill.

JERRY KAUFMAN  
SUZLE TOMPKINS  
4326 Winslow Place, N.  
Seattle WA 98103

