





# WARHOON

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Warhoon, which is sometimes "driven by impulses exactly antithetical to those which, normally, make fandom work" -Creath Thorne1980, was founded in January, 1952. It is edited and published on an irregular schedule by Richard Bergeron, "the single most speculated-about, gossiped-about, and mysterious figure in early 80s fandom" -Patrick Nielsen Hayden1981, at Box 5989, Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00905, which is sort of like "a small university town in the Rocky Mountains just outside New York with the climate of Florida" -Walt Willis1952, except that for some reason practically everyone speaks Spanish. This is issue number 29, dated October, 1981, produced with the invaluable assistance of the Nielsen Haydens. It is available for accepted contributions, in trade for your publication, for letters of comment and reviews, or, as a last resort, \$2.00 per copy. Do not send money for more than one issue: subscriptions are not accepted. Wrhn 28 is still in stock at \$25 and a few issues published in the 1960s and 70s are for sale at \$2. All letters of comment will be considered for publication and may be published unless otherwise noted: Robert A. Heinlein got very upset once when he carelessly overlooked this dictum and found himself in our letter column among John W. Campbell, Theodore Sturgeon, Isaac Asimov, and all the other riff-raff who infested that department once upon a time. "The Improbable Irish" is copyright 1969 by Ace Books-Grosset & Dunlap, Inc, and is reprinted with their kind permission. All other material copyright 1981 by Richard Bergeron with all rights hereby assigned to the respective contributors. Coming next time: issue number 30!  
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## OUT OF MY PLACE AND MIND

Unaccustomed as I am to writing Wrhn editorials I approach this one with a certain amount of trepidation. The last one took something like eight years to get in shape and I don't want to put you or myself through that again. Unless, of course, another Walt Willis comes along. Unfortunately, I don't think there's much danger of that happening. The circumstance placing a genius out there on the fringe of the lunatic fringe (as he once put it) who is semi-starved for contact with the fantastic and its devotees was a product of time and place. Now we doddering veteran pioneers, one-time propagandists for scientifiction, are trampled in the rush of 5,000,000 screaming neofen as they try to get into "Star Wars" (the celluloid biography of our escapist dreams). Captain Future rules Hollywood and Startling Stories is its Bible. Eric von Stroheim has been reduced to dust by a death ray. This is no time for loneliness on the vanguard of the avant garde. Too many contemporaries. Today our genius on the fringe, whose dreams are worth millions, is more likely to take over the entertainment and communications media than be an oddity in a distant part of the world. The cover of this issue is already being rehearsed for photography. Our collective imagination has taken man to the moon and revealed the secrets of Saturn. We have won.

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Up to my old tricks. Packing Wrhn with columnists, I mean. That was the strategy I used in the 60s to insure these pages were filled with a constant supply of material. With an occasional commissioned article Wrhn often had more manuscripts than it could comfortably handle. Some of the special pieces were so large they had to be serialized. "Two serials in one issue of a quarterly! Well, I'm an old-time serial fan, so I can't

object too strenuously", Bob Lowndes remarked once. The pieces were Ted White's three part review of "Dangerous Visions" and Harry Warner's "A Wealth of Fable."

Serials and columnists. Wrhn's columnists and the baffling faith they show issue after issue is the single aspect of the magazine of which I am most proud. It's also, aside from having four co-editors, like Telos did and Void may yet again, the easiest means of solving a fanzine's material needs. Until you try it yourself you can't begin to fathom the ingenuity, dexterity, persistence, and sheer creative inspiration an editor must have to fill a fanzine from scratch without the continuity of a few good regular writers. Just thinking up ideas and finding the perfect writer with the interest and time to execute the piece is the great and nearly impossible task of editing -- given the word rates of such journals as this. Which is why fanzines without staff writers are often so uneven in quality from issue to issue: their editors are at the mercy of whatever shows up in the mail and their own ingenuity (which is usually a much more fertile resource -- if they would but trust it).

The editor has to show potential contributors that their material will be attractively presented and that they'll hear what the readers have to say. A dialogue has to be implied (and then delivered -- why else would a writer want to bother unless he feels he'll be heard and hear what the readers have to say?). An editor who doesn't forward comments not quoted in the letter column of his fanzine is courting the indifference and frustration of his contributors. An editor has to set standards the contributors will want to surpass. My success is indicated, I think, by the fact I am my own worst writer. Willis' material for the next several issues is already prepared but I'm going to enjoy seeing what lengths Bangsund, Warner, and Perry can be driven to. The work of each of these people is graced by love for the written word -- some of them live by their wits, but all write with the affection of the amateur: Willis said in 1964 that the winner of the Hugo for the best fanzine was more to be admired than the winner for best prozine because the former was at least as good at his hobby as the latter at his job. Similarly, our finest writers set standards for themselves which might be, at best, irrelevant to the professional and, at worst, an impedance to sales. Fans don't have that problem...their work is marked by the literary urge; not by the need to pay the rent. If such creativity is to have rewards, in terms of recognition and self respect, it has to be good.

After saying that I now must point out that my favorite amateur is represented by a work which has been professionally published at least three times! "The Improbable Irish", which starts in this issue, was originally commissioned from Walt Willis by Terry Carr for Ace and subsequently reprinted in hardcovers by Taplinger and, again, Burns & MacEachern, Ltd. Two chapters of the original manuscript, "The Rats That Ate The Railroad" and "The Strange World Of Flann O'Brien", appeared in Wrhn as part of "The Harp That Once Or Twice" prior to the appearance of the Ace pb. But only the former appears in the Ace edition. Why was Flann O'Brien, a towering literary figure with a taste for the fantastic, considered too improbable for "The Improbable Irish", Terry? This book may be better known as the Marie Celeste of fandom -- Harry Warner once wrote that it "seems barely remembered by most fans today...and on several occasions when I've hunted it in huckster's rooms at worldcons, I've found myself trying to convince a skeptical dealer of its very existence." I was reluctant to revive Wrhn without Walt but doubted he'd want to become active with the Harp again... though he mentioned he was finding scrapes of it written in his head on invisible notepaper. Walt has retired from the civil service and is enjoying the abandon of having no obligations whatsoever. In "All Of Willis?", a bibliographic search sent out before completing the last issue (and which seemed to have generated the not too likely notion in some places that I was going to reprint everything Walt had written up to that moment -- now there's a concept!) I flippantly commented I "reluctantly wouldn't be including this 223 page book in the WAsh: maybe next issue". Well, here



is the next issue and here we are with the first of an 18 part serial of a Willis work barely known to fandom. ("The Improbable Irish" appears here with the permission of Ace Books/Grosset & Dunlap through the good offices of Edna Thuma, Permissions Editor.)

My admiration for the wild talent of John Bangsund goes back about twenty years. In fact, in the first installment of my column "Fangdom" (in 1968) I was urging fan editors to persuade him to write a column and now, only 12 years later, have taken my own advice. What was wrong with all you people? I'm expecting the unexpected from Bangsund and already I see I've got it. His piece is entirely first draft (though if I had guessed from his near flawless manuscript I'd have said it was the 10th) and runs counter to the rewriting practices of others. Subversive, is what it is, but I'll call it "Cheesehenge". With a characteristic hallucinatory twist John penned: "PS: If I ever get round to writing a column for you, I'm thinking I'd like to call it 'Cheese-

henge', and I probably will. But you call it whatever you like." You'll note, therefore, that he neither submits a column nor is rejected and now ends up with one -- that's known as having your cheese-cake and eating it, too. John touches on the problems of writing and rewriting and John Foyster could join us to explain what this whole thing may be about; that is, if Foyster feels in the mood to write a serial. At any rate, it more than amply meets some guidelines I set forth in my invitation to Bangsund: I was looking for "a fannish attitude with nothing taken really seriously except care about writing, wit, and organization with care taken to avoid getting pretentious about that. The Ermangarde Fiske attitude really is what I'm trying to find but that's such a precarious state of mind I fear all those of such persuasion have been carefully locked away somewhere for their and our protection" or are running around free under the names Paul Skelton and David Locke. If you think a man in a white jacket is sneaking up behind you after you finish reading John's column, you're probably correct and it's probably the waiter.

(It's not that I have anything against "serious" material -- as long as it's helarious. Enjoying your hobby can be a serious matter if you want to get the most out of it -- and if you really don't care about that we'll notice soon enough and then you can't be surprised if other people don't care either when they read your writing. If you're an editor I'm not thinking about presentation here: superior reproduction and layout as a paramount concern are a dead end when you're "stalking the perfect fanzine". Seriousness of intent is, of course, quite different from

## WARHOON: THE OUTLINE OF ITSTORY

### I

#### The Awakening: 1952-1954

1....January 1952.....	8pg
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### II

#### The Great Columnists: Blish, Boggs, Breen, Berry, Baxter, Lowndes, and oh yes, Willis: 1960-1965

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### III

#### 1968-1970

Bob Shaw and The Transition To Fannishness:	
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### IV

#### The Wash & After: 1980-????

28...May 1978 (out January 1980).....	618pg
29...October 1981.....	64pg

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seriousness of subject matter -- the problem with the latter is that it passes easily into the merely grim as Victoria Wayne discovered when she found herself in the middle of Simulacrum surrounded by the total destruction of civilization and wondering what the people in her own fanzine were talking about. So, if we have to discuss the end of the world let's keep it light...)

Tom Perry is another old friend (of most of us) and this is the second installment of his column. The first was published in the last issue of Hyphen! I hope that was just coincidence. Tom is feeling a bit gafia these days: you'll see why after you read "The War With The Waterbed" -- a grim tale that calls to mind Napoleon and Wellington. This story also ends in the loo.

Tom says: "The only way I can stay active in fandom is to increase my productivity, and that means not keeping copies, since I am addicted to rereading and re-writing my stuff." Well, it's true that a little Creeping Perfectionism is a lot but I think Extreme Over-Extension is what led to his present condition. In an earlier letter he outlined some of his Gibbon-like ambitions: a hardcover work of SF literary criticism embodying an extended detective search through Hugo Gernsback's editorial practices, a volume of fanhistory complimentary to and accepting "Warner's challenge to produce something to remedy what I consider the faults of his...not a massive, all-inclusive, definitive volume like Harry attempted, but rather a smallish one that tries to get to the heart of things" and "Fancyclopedia III...here I am thinking of printing several thousand copies, and of going with longer articles, signed, rather than the brief-entry approach Speer and Eney used." Poised on the brink of completely reappraising and defining our hobby, Tom then disappeared in the general direction of Oasis -- lured into one of those energy dispersal machines known as apas which have done so much in recent years to dilute and fragment fandom into colonies of fans slowly drifting away from each other in this population explosion of the tendrelled ones. But to get back to Tom and his gafia: All these projects are of undeniable worth but beyond the reach of any but the most dedicated -- willing to abandon wife and work and devote all spare life to concentrating single-mindedly on the realization of even one of them -- much less all three. Concentration, not diversification is obviously the answer. I had offered Tom some fanzines I was selling and this rope dangled across the abyss brought a reply:

"Yes, I'm still interested in those fanzines I ordered. No. That's a lie, but I'm not sure I can explain the truth, though I've been observing it for a couple of months now with a detached scientific attitude, and am even thinking of writing a column on it. You see, I am in the throes of gafia. Now, I know from past experience that I'll pull out of it -- but I am definitely in it, suffering from the delusion that my job and family life hold more interest than a packet of mimeographed pages from some stranger in England or Toronto (DNQ and Nabu arrived today). At the same time another part of me, far back in my head, is observing these alarming symptoms and analyzing their cause and prescribing a course of behavior that's sure to lead to recovery ... Oddly enough this seems to happen to me when I get a chance to add to my fanzine collection. I know that I have a deep commitment to fandom, though I sometimes feel ambivalent about it, and despite my current state of ennui I don't intend to let this opportunity escape me."



A PhD in Crifanac awaits anyone who writes the definitive treatise on the treatment, care, and rehabilitation of these cases: hourly applications of egoboo are indicated but a suddesn increase of productivity might be a bit of a shock for the victim. Perhaps the erratic schedule of this incarnation's Wrhn would be just what Tom needs. An installment of a column every 10 years shouldn't be too taxing. We shall see.



Harry Warner discovers a new subject in fanhistory that he had largely overlooked: himself. Four installments of his autobiography are already on hand and his forty years in fandom should supply several additional chapters. Another serial! If you have any old Harry Warner stories he has forgotten; why not send them to him?

Now how did I get into this endless encomium to these people -- without whom Wrhn would be as nothing -- and in the process give far from mute confirmation to Joseph Nicholas' charge in Nabu 10 that "American fan writers have a quite horrifying tendency to wordiness, a turgid verbosity...that renders it almost impossible for them to express even the simplest of opinions...without dragging in several tons of irrelevant and distracting detail"? I've cut about 14 paragraphs of turgid verbosity and distracting detail (a succinct discription of the Nicholas style, come to think of it) from that opinion, but it's worth thinking about (if you're still awake). I was about to launch into a review of all the other people who have ever written for Wrhn but I'll content myself with noting that Ted White's unexpected contribution could have been turned into a two part serial quite easily. Ted isn't just another gifted amateur: he's our star P\*R\*O this issue and I'm lucky to lure him away from Pong -- his and Dan Steffan's projected replacement for Heavy Metal -- and I've just noticed that a small friendly dog has fallen off my lap and all this while has been peeing on my leg and elsewhere in this issue.

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"Not everything in print has to be derivative of Burbee, and having done both, I'd like to point out it's more work to index 60 cons than write a helarious essay" states Mike Glycer recently. Well, I suppose it's also more work to dig 60 ditches and someday must ask Burbee if he's ever had occasion to find out which is more fun. Mike's dedication in fandom is to produce a magazine providing the "basic information fans need to plan their activities" which is a laudable ambition if one has the burning desire to know where the next 60 conventions are going to occur in the next two weeks. Actually, Mike's statement seems funny enough to be true. I'd assumed any competent secretary could put together a list of practically anything but wonder how long it would take that person to write a Burbee article. I suspect it's a lot more difficult for most of us to write amusing prose than Mike thinks and would further suggest that most essay writers would have no trouble drafting lists but that most fans whose principle activity is indexing would be totally lost trying to write humor. I speak from experience as one whose indexes are funnier than his essays.

Maybe anything seems helarious after a hard week of typing up a list of 60 conventions, or am I missing a joke somewhere?

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Sometimes I send someone down to get the mail because on certain days of premonition I'm positive Dan Steffan is waiting with a Pathe News camera to catch my elusive self in the act of drawing a Pong out of Box 5989. (Or is he photographing the PhD graduate?)

Most days there's no mail. Few fanzines seem to find their way to Puerto Rico. People like Dave Langford and Avedon Carol go up several extra notches in my esteem (if that's possible) when another dazzling tropical day is brightened by the appearance of a fanzine like Ansible or Blatant.

You can imagine, then, what kind of day it turned into when I found an envelope with the most unexpected name on the return address. Bob Leman. That's one of the most charming aspects of fandom, I think: it's a vast saga like, say, "Terry And The





Pirates" with colorful and fascinating characters returning to the continuity for another adventure and then giving way to a reprise of The Dragon Lady, or Bill Blackbeard, or Bob Leman. Bob was one of the best fan writers of all time and, unfortunately one of the least prolific: his work was extraordinarily fannish but at the same time highly literate and political. Sort of an unimaginable cross between Wm. F. Buckley and S.J. Perelman. He also had a brilliant gift for annoying me with some outrageous right-wing opinion (he probably thought everything was right-wing to me). In a previous Wrhn I devoted several pages foaming at the mouth in a calm dissection of our respective views on the House Un-American Activities Committee. At the time I considered it the most un-American thing about this country. (Of course the Committee was later surpassed by my old nemesis Richard Nixon who was so un-American he was forced to quit his job. I am not so cynical, yet, that I would agree Nixon was, instead the quintessential American though he had qualities which might have earned him the title: notably as the loser who triumphs inspite of his need to fail.) You see how the mere proximity of Leman turns this editorial in a direction it easily could have taken in the 1960s... But what was Bob up to this decade, I wondered, as I tore open the envelope with a flabbergasted expression (a letter opener is much more effective). I've gotten tired of writing this editorial (oh, you noticed?) and if Bob will forgive me I think I'll share his problem with you (anyway, how can I resist publishing something by one of my favorite writers and a prospective Wrhn columnist?):

You are, I daresay, astonished (and perhaps consternated) at this ghostly voice from the distant past, but there appears to be something peculiar going on, and it looks kind of interesting, and since from the slight material I have at hand I think maybe you and your monumental Willis issue are the proximate cause, I am going to be guilty of the effrontery of asking you if you can or will tell me what may be going on in the world of fandom that seems to be inspiring numbers of people who weren't even born at the time to be carrying on with the most flatulent nostalgia about the fanzines of the fifties and sixties. I agree with them, of course, but then until last December I hadn't seen a fanzine for -- at the very least -- ten years, and when a zine called Telos dropped through my slot and I read what seemed to me what I would have called very good but in no way avant garde in, say, 1962, I wondered greatly that so slight a change had taken place in the microcosm during twenty years of television, the collapse of education, brain-cooking chemicals, rock music, pro-totalitarian activism in academe, and the rest of the merde that has marked the last two decades. The publishers of the zine were of course unknown to me, but the columns and articles and letters were mostly signed with names that were not only familiar but old favorites and I was almost convinced that time had stopped entirely in the strange little world of fanzines. There was even your own mention (flattering, God bless you) of The Vinegar Worm, which I would have sworn was remembered by no one in the world but me, and my own recollection is a little hazy.

Now here is a bundle of matter from Ted White and Dan Steffan, running on at considerable length about the same matters that concerned Nielsen Hayden and Co. in Telos -- can fanzines be fannish again, and good again? I take it from this that most of them are not in fact like these (that is, Telos, Pong, and Boonfark) but are rather something else, and that these are a deliberate effort to get back to a time of literate facetiousness and competent prose. I can't say that I see much in the way of humor in these zines, but Telos, especially, has some good, clean writing, and I like it very much.

This small clutch of fanzines consititues my sole acquaintance with modern fandom, and so I turn to you, as one who quite evidently has not only stayed the course but has risen from strength to strength, to enlighten me about the status of this particular set of fanzines in the context of fanzines in general. Are these typical? Or exceptionally good? Or exceptional in other ways? I do see Locus and



SFR now that I do a little professional writing, but they are not of course fanzines in our sense, and the impression I have had from them is that fandom is now an enormous anonymous pack of characters not differing greatly from snuff-film fans or Jane Fonda fans, who see fanzines as something like movie or rock music fan mags, and want to read inside dirt about their idols. Is this wrong? I urgently need an answer because receiving these fanzines out of the blue was something like an arrested alcoholic inadvertantly downing a slug of Scotch: it tasted mighty good, but if he swallows a second one, he's a gone goose.

The peculiar thing I mentioned initially is my receipt of fanzines featuring you and Terry Carr and Ted White and Walt Willis and John Berry and Rich Brown, fanzines which take as given that Quandry and Innuendo and Hyphen and Warhoon are standards of excellence, fanzines that are consciously trying to find in another era techniques that will bring to the fanzines of the 1980s something of the joy we (I, at any rate) found in the fifties and sixties in the magazines I just named. I don't think they'll get it from the old-timers; we all sprout from Willis, or are shoots of sprouts of Willis; these people are going to have to find their own Willis, and one of those doesn't come down the pike every day.

I trust you have been prosperous, healthy and happy for all these years. I myself am quite unchanged, except for a tendency to snivel if somebody else gets the last cookie.

Well, if it's a Fig Newton you'll get no argument from me but the matter of proximate causes for the current rejuvenation of fanzines -- a turn to "literate facetiousness and competent prose" -- might be another kettle of fish; that is, if you still like fish and cookies. Delighted as I'd be to claim responsibility I think the fact is that the completion of the Willis issue itself was inspired by a climate that was already changing. Fandom had begun to remember that a fanzine is a creative act. It started with such people as Eric Mayer and Kathy Malone, whose Groggy Tales is "one of the strongest contenders for the title #1 US fanzine" I wrote in Fast & Loose 9, June 1980, and with Alan Bostick, whose Fast & Loose (spurred on by the Nielsen Haydens, who may be guilty of more instigations than this fandom gives them credit for and who even published a fake issue of that title themselves) was a very conscious return to the crafting of a fanzine as an artifact. This was immediately noted by Brian Earl Brown -- who cited it as "an example to us all". Bostick himself articulated this conscious approach: "I felt when I published all four pages of F&L #1 that I had completed a more significant contribution to fandom, however small it might really be, than I had ever done before... Someday, somebody is going to go through their fanzine collection, deciding on what to keep and what to give or throw away, and come across F&L #1. Whether or not this person decides to keep it, he or she at least will have to make a decision of its worth... I write for the present, but I also write just a little bit for the future as well." The effect of this was somewhat dramatic and inspired fossils like myself and Ted White to contribute unsolicited columns to his little magazine. I hadn't written anything for any fanzine in years and Ted produced his column in spurts of three installments at a time: even Bostick wasn't fast or loose enough for this and the result was Pong -- one of the most perfectly designed productions in the history of fandom. "Pong is our artwork", wrote Ted White, done "for the love of doing something well". Of course, you, Ted, and I, come from a time when all this was taken as given; given by Burbee, and Boggs, and Tucker, not to mention the subject of the last issue of Wrhn. But much of the present generation derives from Captain Spock and, as you may know, literary attitudes aren't easily inferred from a visual medium. Fast & Loose's contemporaries were fanzines pre-occupied with packaging, or large circulations, or media, or mundane problems -- it is even thought that a publication consisting of little more than a complete listing of all the conventions you could attend qualifies as a fanzine that should be nominated for the Hugo and Wrhn found itself



in contention for the same award with the diary of an internationally famous man who has written over 200 books and with a media star of popular science whose name is a household word from here to Andromeda IV. It is to laugh. Then there were keepers of the flame such as Gary Farber who must have been goading on other hapless creatures as well: one day I went to the door of my apartment and found a large box of fanzines of the recent past. "I was appalled by the seeming carelessness of finding such valued artifacts on my doorstep --like orphans of the immortal storm" I wrote to him on 3 Aug 77. (And what is Gary Farber up to these days?) Proximate causes? There are a few to chose from and I haven't even accused the likely suspect: Patrick Nielsen Hayden, whose very finger tips may be typing these words and whose effects and works can be seen all around us.

While fandom in America forgot its literary roots there were still wonderful things happening in England where fandom had been given a bath of fire by Greg Pickersgill and I'm sure you would like Wrinkled Shrew and Maya -- if you can ever find copies. I should take this opportunity, myself, to advertise interest in purchasing a collection of the important British fanzines of the 70s if anyone out there has become jaded with them. David Langford has been known to write material as good as some of the best we've seen. And Paul Skelton's Small Friendly Dog is delightful.

However your impression of the generality of fandom is correct and the fanzines you mention are a conscious effort to return fanzines to an expression of "a literary phenomenon." True, a Willis "doesn't come down the pike every day" (I just got through saying that in the first paragraph of this editorial) but he's already "given". As you and I are. The point of Wrhn 28 was to remind us of a standard. Standards have to be observable before they can be transformed and built on: that was also the point of the Basic Books I suggested in Pong. Bostick recapitulates a lot and probably derives from Gary Farber's fanzine collection (I warned that he was an "example of what reading too many old fanzines can lead to")but the process is older than me and thee and fandom and goes back to Lewis Carroll and Lovecraft and other amateur lovers of words and to Pepys, Pope, Johnson, and Wilde in other quarters.

There will be an element of nostalgia and analysis of periods when all this was understood. This will pass and we will be left with a few people who can apply these lessons and perhaps even show us how to do it better. The WASH was based on the same impulse as LeeH's series of Fanhistory fanzines in the 50s wherein Willllis wrote: "like any other civilization, fandom depends on timebinding -- the passing on from generation to generation of accumulated knowledge and experience...any pleasure like fandom is worth taking seriously within its own limitations. This is not to say that the game or the pleasure has any intrinsic importance outside itself: though it could be argued that anything that gives pleasure is pretty damned important."

Patrick Nielsen Hayden sums it up rather well (but, then, he sums up so many things so well) in F&L #7: "The point of something like F&L: play, which Chip Delany has pointed out, can be a perfectly serious human activity. Fanzines like F&L play with the language, with fan's self-images and facades, with myths, reputations and notorieties, and above all with words, in a manner impossible to find in the non-fannish media."

With the more talented contemporary fans reaching such independent conclusions the impulses that inspired the best of our past are, evidently, a consistently recurring phenomenon. An immensely entertaining fanzine like Boonfark can today reach a level by its 5th issue where it surpasses all but certain issues of the very best publications of sixth fandom. Then, of course, there is that "Terry And The Pirates" effect: we return to the enthusiasms of our youth and find a wonderful opportunity to surpass former selves with present mature identities. Thus Rich Brown who mastered the form as a highly active fan years ago now shows us a more literarily



oriented Brown with depths which were only hinted at previously when he was with us as one of the children of the universe.

Can the best of all possible fandoms be far behind?

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There seems to be a rumor well on its way to becoming a legend. This rumor needs squelching before it finds its way into Martin Morse Wooster's "Children of the Universe: The Social History of Science-Fiction, 1869-1980" (though, truth to tell, my story belongs more to an "Anti-Social History of Science-Fiction"). Some people are under the impression I destroyed most of the last issue of Wrhn before releasing a version I was satisfied with. Well, not most of it. Rich Brown in Boonfark 4 recalls hearing I had "thrown away hundreds of typed stencils merely because /I/ did not like the way they reproduced." Around 1976 or '77 I had a sheet run off as a test to see if those hundreds of stencils were still any good. Many had been cut in the late 60s. John Bangsund and I were getting apprehensive that the whole question of whether the issue would ever be produced or not might soon be moot. Those two stencils disintegrated when they were removed from the mimeo after running off 1000 perfect copies and had to be recut and rerun in due course when the page numbers were no longer valid. Countless page numbers had to be changed by cutting out old headings and gluing in new numbers with correction fluid. The stencils were no longer oily enough to be typed on again. Then it occurred to me to type new sections without page numbers and add them in the final years. Now I know what to do next time...

What did have to be destroyed, though, was all the artwork! The mimeographer was sending me well selected examples of his work and it wasn't until thumbing through the entire 400,000 pages of the run (looking for skipped sheets in an effort to prevent the occasional blank page from being bound into your copy) that I saw mimeo set-off on all the art and concluded 75% or more of it was unusable. This added a year or two to the production: there was nothing to do but rerun the art and this time reproduce via off-set the text appearing on the back of it. No restencilling was necessary, fortunately, as John S. Swift & Co. were able to photo the text exactly as it had been very legibly mimeoed. The problem, of course, was that it was legible on both sides of the sheet. The disaster here (aside from financial) was that all the acetate negatives (about 140) from the first printing had been destroyed and had to be separated again (by me). There was no way I could have sent out copies of the issue with that first printing. The reviews alone would have killed all possibility of selling the WASH (let alone giving it away) so my motives were not entirely perfectionistic -- shall we say. This left me with some 20 cartons of ruined artwork. Many of these extras were distributed by good people like Mike Glycer, Brian Earl Brown, and the Nielsen Haydens but I soon tired of imposing on my friends and finally threw out those thousands and thousands of ruined pages. Perhaps this is what Rich Brown was referring to: "Later, reportedly, the same thing had happened with run-off pages -- they were not good enough, so they went into file 13 and these stencils would also have to be retyped as the originals had not been saved". If the stencils had had to be retyped I doubt you would have had an opportunity to read Wrhn 28 yet.

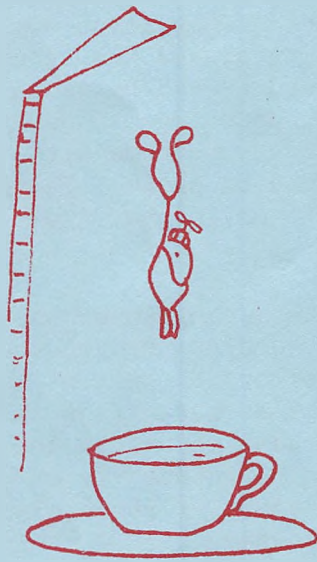
Not that there weren't occasional painstaking corrections. For instance, the artwork illustrating "Fandom At Sixes And Sevens" was, inexplicably, run off in its second printing with the top part of the upper "s" sliced off. Just vanished. It looked terrible. Now, on this page is a drawing by Lee Hoffman of a character (Korshak?) wielding a tomahawk at a recumbent figure with a drink in his hand (Kyle?). It occurred to me if I had a third printing done for the missing fragment of the "s" it would look like LeeH's character had nicked it off in his frenzy and also work as a bit of typographic design...necessity being the mother of something or other. Herb Lubalin,



the typographical advertising genius (one-time art director of Eros, for example) whose work this particular page is inspired by, could rest in peace. Then, again, perhaps you got one of the few copies containing the first printing (with a perfectly intact "s") and haven't a clue what this gibberish is all about.

These were just a few of the logistical problems of production -- as Rich Brown points out: I "was the first fan in history to need a shopping cart to prevent the taking of a mere 10 copies of his fanzine to the post office from becoming a staggering feat." Ten packaged copies of Wrhn 28 weigh 50lbs.

Once I was satisfied with the disposition of a few last minute details, two tons of material were ready for the binder. (You have no idea what I've skipped in the short version of this story. The truck taking the 4000lbs of finished pages had a load capacity of perhaps 3452lbs and proceeded to have two flat tires -- both of them with me in the truck and the second at 70 miles per hour on a super-highway between Newark and Philadelphia with vans loaded with cargo roaring beside us in both directions: the truck tilted, literally, on its right side --



the side I was on -- and hurtled hundreds of feet before righting itself. I left the truck shortly thereafter and returned to my apartment and bed -- letting the WASH go on to what I was sure was total doom. They never told me fanzine publishing would be like this! Once all 80 cartons of completed but uncollated pages were inadvertently dispersed from their storage point -- the basement of 25 West 52nd St: the Medieval Revival mansion next to the 21 Club which I had absent-mindedly neglected to empty of all my effects -- to three different places in Manhattan. I retrieved the material at the first two locations and barely, by a matter of hours, arrived from Puerto Rico to rescue the major part of the book just before it was about to be destroyed at the third place. This was all a hobby, you understand -- the avocation I would turn to in my spare time for relaxation from a hectic mundane schedule! I began to think it would be easier to dive into a tea cup from the high board than to actually materialize that issue of Wrhn.)

And so it is written that the day came to past when over 950 bound copies of Wrhn 28 arrived at 1 West 72nd St. Don't ask how they got from the sidewalk on 73rd St. into my apartment. At last they were finished -- and so was I. I put on my favorite lounging robe (the Fu Manchu one), opened the first copy and settled back with a glass of Rhine wine to relax and enjoy "the feeling of accomplishment I get from holding the last collated and stapled copy of my own 'little magazine' in my hands" like Allyn Cadogan writing in Boonfark 4.

I opened the book to the masthead -- the first page of the editorial, naturally. It was upside down. I leafed through the entire issue getting more depressed as I went along. Several pages were either upside down, or doubled, or blank. I went through a dozen more with the same methodical thoroughness as I sipped my third bottle of wine. Virtually every one had something wrong with it. By the end of the evening I knew with the certainty that I know the fate that awaits us at the hands of Issus, Goddess of Death and of Life Eternal, at the end of the long ride down the River Iss, that I wouldn't be able to send out a single issue without personally looking at every page and would have to cut out all double sheets, reverse any upside down pages, and carefully glue in good copies of sheets that had blank sides.

Ah, yes, the unendurable pleasure of accomplishment -- apparently, in the case of the WASH -- to be infinitely prolonged.



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I love fan polls -- especially if they are accompanied by a knowledgeable review and critique of the period being polled -- but there was something I objected to about the Pong Poll so I voted for myself for "Fugghead of the Year". On principle I dislike surveys which appeal to negative prejudices which, I suspect, is what such a question does. For the same reason I acted with a small number of fans to blackball the entire FAPA waiting list to demonstrate that a very few people could vote to exclude one fan because of their own peculiar bias or misconceptions. I suppose it's pretty much the same to vote for what you like most as for what you most dislike but I prefer more singular and specific types of criticism. "Fugghead of the Year" amounts to a vote of ostracism. When I think of the reaction of the members of SAPS to the first issue of Wrhn I know how brutal a matter-of-fact mass opinion can be. Everyone has done something fuggheaded sometime. There are more illuminating forms of criticism than giving fandom an opportunity to organize itself to single out its favorite Dork. The ultimate callousness of such judgement is in the poll results themselves: Susan Wood, whose memory deserves compassion and love, is coldly listed in this category. Even with death they do not understand the pain.

That scourge of the mentally clubfooted, Francis Towner Laney, institutionalized his overkill against the forces of Dorkness by printing a special citation called "The Fandango Award" which was to have been given annually for outstanding achievement in this area. There's a fascination in watching such promotional genius at work but for it to be lavished on inconsequential matters calls for a high order of over-compensation which Laney himself recognized. A casual glance through even a fragment of his writing, as I showed in Telos 3, reveals just what he was a sincere acolyte of. A lifetime of complaint about other's shortcomings is usually an attempt to call attention away from one's own.

Simply from a sense of justice one stands with the outcasts rather than those who would cast out -- but we don't have much choice: by definition the majority has already decided we are pretty special and consigned to our own categories of the unusual. I also prefer to go about with my shirt tail out...and do rather quixotic things like working on one issue of a fanzine for 10 years or this editorial when I could be examining the reefs off Ponce with Bo Derek (well, tell me about your fantasy life!).

Let he who has no trace of Dork cast the first stone. I thought that was one lesson we might have learned after 2000 years and the decades of our own revilement.

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It's winter in Puerto Rico. I sit here shivering on this bitter January 11th in my old cut off jeans and favorite pair of raggle taggle fabric shoes which I expect the local sanitation department will arrive to condemn at any moment. The day started with mild winter rain but around 9:00AM all clouds fled for parts unknown. The sky turned cobalt blue and white fire. I sat on the roof among the flowers and vines editing and rewriting while birds sucked sweetness from unprotesting blooms. I recall New Year's Eve, 1980, when a blue laser flashed eerily the length of Central Park... in the cold among the gables of the Dakota I poured a glass of champaign for John Lennon. It's 5:00PM. The rains have returned. The temperature has plunged to 77 degrees. It's winter in Puerto Rico and the plants are drinking. The rain comes down on plastic panels overhanging the solid concrete roof. This shelter protects a small patio the kitchen is built around. One can walk up a U-shaped masonry stairway to the roof. The birds come down into the kitchen to watch me open the refrigerator. I take out a can of beer and wish it was champaign and wish I was pouring it for John Lennon.

--Richard Bergeron, 15 October 1981



# CHEESEHENGGE

John  
Bangsund





About these spears someone is chucking through my walls...

Friday I just sort of admired Warhoon 28 and fondled it a bit and gave a lot of thought to whether it should go in the glass-fronted cabinet with Flinders and West-all's Drawings and the autographed Alexandria Quartet and so on, or whether it should be somewhere closer to hand and the hell with its immense value to collectors, I paid for it I've got a right to read it if I want to whatever damage that does to it as a collector's item haven't I! Of course I have, so I compromised by putting it next to the Britannica, which seems vaguely appropriate. Vols 1 to 24, all the facts about the known universe arranged A to Z, each volume handsomely bound in maroon and gold with embossed thistle, then jump to this maverick vol 28, bound in green and flaunting a wild shamrock, and in it all the really important stuff you'll never find in the other 24 volumes.

Saturday or more accurately Sunday morning I read the first 176 pages, to the end of the Chicon report, fascinated, chuckling here and there, laughing outright a few times, and dare I admit it? wondering now and then what all the fuss was about with this Willis bloke. A pleasant fan-writer, yes, welcome in any fanzine I publish, certainly, but not the legendary Willis who lives in my head. But this is 1952 and I am 13 years old and not yet in fandom. It will be another eleven years before I meet Lee Harding and become innocently entangled in this crazy alternative universe, in which live giants and legends unknown to Britannica, a world of Warhoons and Warners and Willises, who leap full-grown into my head, and stay there, and time and closer acquaintance does not diminish them. But in the small hours of Sunday 12 May 1980 I wonder, just a little, about this Willis bloke. His puns annoy me -- me! a paid-up card-carrying member of Carthaginian fandom! -- and I wonder about that, too.

Sunday or more accurately Monday morning I read on to page 229, and skim affectionately through the 30 pages of "The Enchanted Duplicator," for which I am not in the mood right then, personal Willis shading anything ever achieved by allegorical Willis, and anyway it's awfully late and there's work to be done tomorrow. Which note I am not doing.

So I've read just a little beyond "The Harp Stateside." I'm at the foot of page 259, wondering precisely what (rb) means by 'Hi, Ho, Kehli.' I have seen westerns by Lee Hoffman who, so the sound of galloping hooves does not elude me, but Kehli does. I make a mental note to ring Foyster and ask him what Kehli means. He will tell me, a note of scorn barely suppressed in his telling, he may even call me a fakefan again if he's in a good mood, but I will know. After talking to John I may still not know whether Willis stateside and Hoffman gafiote are cause and effect.

By page 259 I certainly know what all the fuss was about with this Willis bloke. From the moment he left the convention and went looking for America, the legendary Willis who lives in my head started emerging on paper. And from that moment I started to understand why it was necessary, even if it took ten years, for (rb) to publish all of this massive 614-page hardbound fanzine. Anything less would have been merely extremely interesting and a collector's item. But this, this is a book to read, a book to keep close to hand to read again, and again, and yet again, and stuff the collectors. You have had it very well bound, Dick, but before too long you should be able to tell a trufan's copy of Warhoon 28 by the fact that it looks as scruffy as a magic mimeograph.

Monday afternoon, 4.05pm in Melbourne as the crow flies, drizzling with rain outside my window, the factory workers up the road beginning to knock off for the day, and I haven't started work for the day yet. Penguin Books (Harmondsworth and Ringwood, 1980) have favoured me with a cookery book to edit, and the lovely Jackie will



be ringing me on Wednesday to see what I think of it, and all I think of it so far is that the title page is very nicely typed, because that's as far as I've read, but hell, there's all Tuesday left for the rest.

Puns and drafts. Before I forget, I must say something about puns and drafts. In January 1975 I ignorantly started a brand-new fanzine called First Draft. The title was totally honest, but I was soon informed that it had been used before, and I detest using secondhand titles, so I changed it to The Cosmic Circle Commentator, but that looked ridiculous, so I reverted to Philosophical Gas, which is also a totally honest title, if not a felicitous title ('Not a felicitous title' -- Jack Speer). Some even consider it a secondhand title, but this is debatable, since Scythrop Glowry, who published the original Philosophical Gas: or, a Project for a General Illumination of the Human Mind, was a figment of the imagination of Thomas Love Peacock. In February 1975 (ah, them was the days, Joxer, them was days, when the world was young and we thought nothing of doing a fanzine every month) I published Philosophical Gas 29, in which John Foyster said: 'Has anyone ever told you that your writing is reminiscent of that of Walt Willis? No? There is good reason for this, and perhaps one day, when we can spend a few hours idly conversing, I might take the opportunity to outline this reason.'

Five years have passed and John has not yet taken that opportunity, but I have not spent all that time sitting around waiting for him to outline the reason for my writing not reminding him of Walt Willis's. A grown man of my worldly experience and excessive bulk may surely be allowed to think about such things for himself, however absurd a conclusion he may for the time being come to, and this I have done. And it all has to do with puns and drafts and being born only one-eighth Irish.

Great-grandmother Hodgins did her best for me by being born and raised Belfast-Protestant-Irish, but in later moments of forgetfulness about my future as a fan-writer emigrated to the Australian colonies, married a Frenchman, and allowed her daughter Mary Eugenie to marry an Englishman. My grandmother Holyoak in turn positively encouraged her daughter Ivy to marry a nice young man named Leif, whose father was Norwegian and mother Danish, and by the time I came along there was hardly anything left of my Irish heritage. Whether this accounts for seven-eighths of my inability to remind John Foyster of Walt Willis I am not sure; if it does, it would also go halfway to explaining why my writing does not remind him of Ibsen's or Kierkegaard's, though in fairness he has never said that it doesn't.

Oh, and there's the little matter of science fiction, too. I started reading science fiction in 1963 and more or less stopped in 1968. I have read more sf than the average reader ever will, and each year I read more sf than the average reader does, but it would be fair to say that I was a science fiction fan for only five years, after which I became a fan. I can put an exact date on this. Leigh Edmonds started ANZAPA in October 1968, and that's when I started enjoying fans more than I enjoyed sf. I suspect -- no, I'm sure -- that Walt Willis enjoys fans more than sf, but his enjoyment of sf and his commitment to it lasted far longer than mine. I imagine that this would be part of the reason that John hasn't got around to outlining to me yet.

I enjoy puns, even other people's puns, perhaps especially other people's puns. Adelaide fandom, when I had the pleasure to be part of Adelaide fandom, was a hotbed of punsters, and I have no doubt it still is. To be with Marc Ortlieb, Paul Stokes, Mike Clark, John McPharlin, Jeff Harris and Roman Orszanski, and perhaps a few others as token audience, when they were in full-punning verbal flight was sheer side-splitting bliss. I had no urge to out-pun them. They were like a four-dimensional cryptic crossword puzzle come to life and I just sat back and tried to look like someone who



had known since time began what 14-down in five letters beginning with F was, and they pretended I really did know, and the performance was exquisite.

Adelaide fandom is different from the other fandoms I have known -- Melbourne, Canberra and, up to a point, Sydney -- mainly because the Adelaide fans were either at university or had just emerged from university but were still part of a total, integral sort of fandom. Melbourne has so many fandoms I've long since lost track, and Sydney was getting that way when I made my few dismal attempts to broach fandom there in 1972-73. Canberra? Canberra, ever since it opened for business as Australia's capital city in 1927, has traditionally been the home of all of Australia's lost causes -- one has only to look at the governments in that time for proof -- and fandom in Canberra has faithfully reflected this. I will never forget the night when I first met the Canberra Science Fiction Club or whatever it was called, at Leigh and Helen Hyde's place. 'What's all this garbage about a Worldcon in Australia?' someone said. Helen said 'Why don't you ask the chairman of the bidding committee?' and pointed at me. I blushed, for I was he, and they changed the subject, just like that. Leigh came to Aussiecon, along with four people I'd never met before from Canberra, but the Club didn't.

I can't recall any puns from Canberra, nor from Sydney. We do have our moments in Melbourne, the most memorable of them, believe it or not, usually provided by John Foyster, whose fine wit (if you'll pardon my quoting Shelley on Peacock) 'makes such a wound the knife is lost in it.' George Turner is capable of that sort of wit, too, but luckily he doesn't subject us to it too often in conversation, else we should die of it. It's enough that he does it in writing, giving us leisure to recover from it.

Just what kind of verbal wit really did fly about the room at those fan meetings at Walt Willis's place? Was it really as concentratedly brilliant as Walt and Bob and John would lead us to believe? Or is it more likely that Irish fandom -- that is, the mere handful of people that gathered at Walt's place -- was extraordinarily fortunate in possessing so many truly gifted writers, and therefore recorders, and therefore embroiderers, of happy utterances and amusing happenings, that in a larger fashion might have passed into group memory and ultimately oblivion?

Oh, to have been at Oblique House when Walt said... and BoSh replied... and James, just back from Paris, murmured... Of course. It is only natural that one should wish to have been there. But we were not there. We were in Falls Church, Virginia at the time; or much later at 82 Hughes Street, Mile End, in a room full of smoke and the cream and dregs of Adelaide fandom. Or wherever.

The point I am slowly meandering around to thinking about working up to is that puns of the brilliance and frequency and intensity and memorability of those perpetrated at Oblique House have rarely been perpetrated in my hearing -- but I have seen Australian fanzines, some of them published by me, that might lead you to think that they had been.

And the next point is that I have spent seventeen years attempting to eradicate puns from my writing, because they just don't belong there. I have failed (I counted five puns in my most recent apazine, not one of them worth thinking about), and I know that some of my readers just love to see them, and I do like to please my readers, but this is not the way I want to please them, so whatever they think, I have failed.

But this is not the whole story. Puns are for conversation, to be there when they come, or to be remembered and repeated in subsequent conversations when invention flags. In writing, puns must be suppressed and humour attempted, not that verbal humour of which puns are so entertainingly part, but that human humour of which I want



so much to be part. But that human humour includes verbal humour, and fanzines are a kind of conversation, and the pun is the spoken equivalent of composing-on-stencil, and composing-on-stencil is a vice or complex form of laziness that once contracted is an almost impossible disease to get rid of. It is so vicious that even when you are typing on a sheet of paper, as I am at this moment, you consider your margins and take care with your spelling and generally approach the task as though this first draft will be the final definitive printed version. And so this will be, unless Dick elects to change it.

I like to think that my first drafts are better than most fans', if only because I think so carefully between sentences, even between words, before writing whatever comes into my head. And they may very well be better, because I have trained myself to think in sentences -- the thoughts may be trite, but the sentences maintain themselves, even when I seem most wantonly to ignore them.

How much better would my writing be if I wrote first and second and umpteenth drafts? Mr. Bergeron seems to think that I spoil the fine frenzy of whatever it is I reckon I'm saying when I go back and revise it. George Turner, conversely, recommends that I think out what I have to say, if anything, write it, chuck out the first draft, rewrite it, revise it, cut it down to one-third its length, rewrite it again, then cut out the adjectives and adverbs and pompositives and egotisms remaining, then... Well, I'm not sure what he does after that, but if I tried it I'd be left with a rather unsatisfactory epigram.

Walt Willis, I am given to understand, uses the Turner method. You have seen what Walt Willis is left with after he has applied that unthinkable rigorous method to whatever it is that he writes off the top of his head. I don't think I need ever ask John Foyster why my writing doesn't remind him of Walt Willis's.

But I must ask him, or someone, what to do about those spears someone keeps on throwing through my walls. Not that I mind, lord no, but me mate Bergeron wants to know in case it ever happens to him.

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#### THE PUN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

I've had to start locking my razor in the bathroom cabinet when I leave for work. This is because one morning, when I prepared to shave my manly chin I discovered large chunks of wood embedded in the blade. Closer examination revealed these to be shards of pencil. Who, in their right mind, would use my razor to sharpen their pencil when the house is full of sharp knives? "Not me" chorused three small voices. On another occasion my razor was jammed with bits of a red substance and slid waxily over my stubbled countenance. Now that same person had taken to sharpening a wax crayon with my new twin-blade razor. "Not me," in the same three tones. I told them that instead of spending all their time sharpening pencils with my razor they should do some useful jobs around the house. "Oh, no," came the chorused reply. A perfect example of three-toned sloth.

I never did discover who was misusing my razor and it remains a mystery to this day. Then it dawned on me that this was nothing new. Exactly this problem had plagued married fans with children in previous decades, to such an extent that it had been fannishly enshrined as "The Shaver Mysteries."

Paul Skelton in Small Friendly Dog 19, August, 1980.

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ZULU FANDOM

"A Serious Question: If someone was throwing spears through the walls into your apartment, what would you do?"

-- Dick Bergeron in Fast & Loose #6, 27 Apr 80

"And finally, I've been giving serious consideration to your serious problem. I'm glad you asked me. After weighing things up very carefully and searching my memory banks for relevant data, I would suggest you take action immediately.

"Duck."

-- Chuch Harris in a letter to Bergeron, 8 May 80

"John Brosnan's letter concerning his wrath at neighbors who make too damn much noise made for very amusing reading. ...You see the very first article I published by John Brosnan in Mota was a factual report of the time Mr. Brosnan and Mr. Pickersgill and (I think) Mr. Hall got drunk, became boisterous and soon were hurling metal spears through the flimsy walls of the apartment where John lived. Yes, through those flimsy walls and into apartments inhabited by not-so-fannish neighbors. ...I find it just the slightest bit difficult to be sympathetic to my friend John Brosnan when he complains about the old folks upstairs walking from chair to sofa."

-- Terry Hughes in Groggy Stories #9, March 1980

THE WAYS OF CREATION

I'm in danger of sounding all pedagogic now, but this business of form in any kind of writing -- and especially in humorous writing -- can hardly be over-emphasized. You can take a collection of trivia as the basis for an article as long as you ensure than you arrange and interconnect them in such a way that the underlying form is well made and aesthetically right. I still do it by, before I begin an article, making a list of all the available components, staring at them until I can devise a satisfactory sequence, and actually numbering them in the order in which they are to be used. Only when that is done will I start to write the article itself, but by then most of the vital work has already been done. The method may sound terrible cold and calculating, a recipe for doing away with spontaneity, but in writing it's the pieces on which the author has worked hardest at his craft which appear most like an effortless flow of words.

-- Bob Shaw in Mota 28, June 1979

IF A THING IS WORTH DOING...

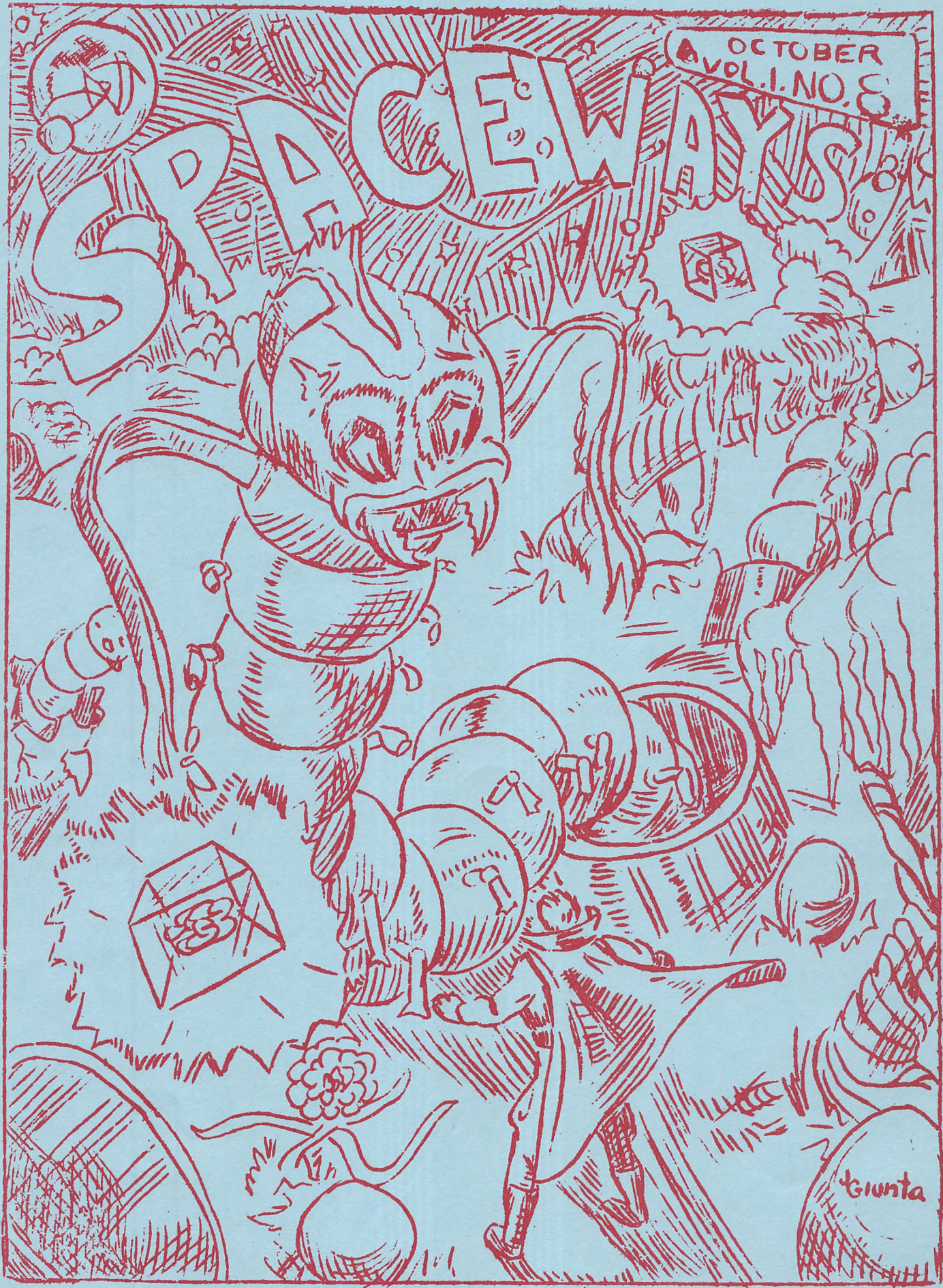
Fandom has, since at the very least the early Fifties, been one of the few fertile grounds for the art of the personal essay, a form that has been in eclipse in commercial publishing for decades. That particular kind of informal, literate, amusing, highly personal writing has always been what fascinated me in fanzines, and it is that kind of writing, and the fanzines that publish it, that has most interested me in fandom. It's the kind of writing I like to do; it's the kind I like to read. It is well worth taking seriously, worth criticizing and insisting that it be done well, and worth preserving and reading again and again.

-- John D. Berry in Nabu 8, (no date) 1979?



OCTOBER  
VOL. I. NO. 8

# SPACEWAYS





# ALL MY YESTERDAYS

Harry Warner, Jr.

When I first contemplated these reminiscences, I was still finding an occasional mention in fanzines of Spaceways, my first fan publication. Once in a long while, someone still found good things to say about it, even compared current fanzines with it to the disadvantage of those later fanzines. By now, Spaceways is known in fandom only to a few collectors of fanzines and to those who read every word of "The Immortal Storm". A copy of it looks dowdy and its contents seem unexciting today. But Spaceways was quite popular during its lifetime, from late 1938 through part of 1942, when fanzines were less handsome and erudite than they are today.

Even today, when I think about Spaceways I'm smitten by conscience. I shouldn't have done this and I shouldn't have done that, and most of the things I did wrong or didn't do can be traced to just plain laziness on my part. It might be remembered today as a really great fanzine, if I'd been willing to hurt the feelings of more fans, rejecting a larger proportion of material submitted for it; if I'd taken the trouble to get better and more art work; and if I'd continued during its final three years the strenuous efforts I made at the outset to find the very best contributions of material.

Fans who somehow manage to read an issue of Spaceways today find in it much better mimeography than most of its contemporaries could offer and a fair quantity of very fine articles mixed with mediocre stuff. Only a few fans active today know one other element which contributed to its old reputation. It was regular in appearance, coming out seven or eight times a year, usually at the predicted dates. I suspect that its legibility and its frequency of publication were main reasons why it ranked as the No. 1 fanzine in a number of polls during its lifetime. In the same years, I finished in third and fourth place in several polls to determine the top fan. Spaceways apparently caused me to get that high, because I didn't attend conventions, take a prominent part in organizations, carry on a stupendously large correspondence, or write very well for other people's fanzines.

The odd part of all this is the fact that no fan or fanzine could have had more modest beginnings.

Early in 1938, I was an active fan mainly because I corresponded with a half-dozen other prozine readers. I had requested correspondents in a Brass Tacks letter published in Astounding Stories in 1936. My request netted a dozen responses. I answered every letter that I received, and struck up long-term correspondence with about a half-dozen of those letter writers. They were a mixed lot. Only one of them ever became active in fandom. The others drifted out of my ken after two or three years, usually after some sort of personal crisis. A youngster in West Palm Beach, Fla., much have exchanged 50 letters per year with me for two or three years, until he developed a respiratory ailment. He followed doctor's orders and moved to Colorado, somewhere finding the money to buy a farm there while he was still a teenager. He stopped writing letters after moving, sent Christmas cards for three or four Decembers, and that was the last I heard from him. A fellow in San Diego was another good correspondent until the day he was turned down by the United States Naval Academy. He'd been accepted, actually went to Annapolis, and the last-minute discovery of a slight weakness in one eye destroyed his career plans. He scribbled one despairing letter about this and I never heard another word from him. I still wonder if a British youth had some connection with royalty. The impressive portrait of himself that he



sent, the posh stationary that he used, certain vague references to important-sounding relatives, and perfection of writing style seemed to hint at high birth. Then he suddenly stopped answering letters. A year later, he posted in the middle of Europe a letter which appeared to have been scrawled by an old man. It explained that his health had broken down and he would resume correspondence soon. He didn't.

Jim Avery was closest to my age and interests out of the whole lot, and he was the only one who became a really active fan. We corresponded almost always by return mail, frequently scribbling sixteen or twenty pages before we converted to typing. At the very height of this correspondence, Jim suggested that we should start a fan magazine. I was always sensitive about betraying my ignorance, so instead of admitting that I didn't know what a fan magazine was, I told him it was a fine idea. Jim had somehow encountered a few copies of Fantasy Magazine, which collapsed around that time. I sent away for several fanzines (a word which Louis Russell Chauvenet hadn't invented yet in 1938) including Tesseract and Science Fiction Correspondent. This meant that Jim and I had approximately equal knowledge of fandom and fanzines, by the time we began actual work on co-editing. All we needed were a title, material, a means of reproduction, and money.

Jim thought up the title. I fell in love with it instantly. Neither of us suspected then that the title would be his only lasting contribution to our fanzine.

Spaceways might be even today the only fanzine in history which came into existence through the issuance of bonds. We prepared forms which contained coupons and blanks for filling in the date, sum, and purchaser. Each bond sold for a dollar. By clipping one coupon each month for a year, the investor could get back his money at a more favorable interest rate than was generally obtainable in that Depression year from any other source. We sold several to ourselves, the others to relatives, and used the investment money to buy a hectograph and other supplies. Jim took charge of the practical matters, like preparing the bond forms, making purchases, and spreading word of the new fanzine throughout fandom. Because I was the faster typist, I solicited and edited material for the fanzine.

Then and now, the logical way to get material for a new fanzine is to ask active fans for contributions. I would have done this, if I had known the names and addresses of enough active fans to fill up an issue. What I did know was the names of lots of pros. I found some of their addresses in letter sections of prozines and my tiny fanzine collection. I sent identical letters to them, asking for material, and was dumbfounded when almost all of them responded by return mail, most of them including contributions. I'm sure you wouldn't get nearly that sort of response if you tried it today. But in 1938 fandom was small, had only recently emerged, few of the pros lived by their writings, and I suspect I was the first person to ask some of them for fanzine material. I received the impression that several of these pros were delighted to find a medium through which they could get non-fiction into print or clear their files of fiction which hadn't sold.

That first batch of letters to pros provided enough material to give a basis for the contents of the first two or three issues of Spaceways. I pieced the pro items out with contributions from a few fans, an item or two which I wrote under pennames or published unbylined, and an array of departments. In fact, material turned out suddenly to be the least of our worries. The first issue was partially hectographed, when Jim suddenly decided that he was tired of being a fanzine publisher. He had made the discovery that afflicted the life and happiness of almost every fan back in the days when most fanzines were hectographed. The gelatin in the hectograph pan was the clearest modern proof of the existence of Satanic powers.



The hectograph and fandom have become so alienated in 1981 that some fans think it's just another name for the ditto reproduction process. It is impossible to put into words all the traumatic effects on the fannish psyche and nervous system which the hectograph can inflict. Even a plain description of the operation of the hectograph doesn't give a hint of the infernal attributes of that method of reproduction. Jim learned in 1938, as I was to discover a couple of years later, how drastically the fires of fanzine ardor can be smothered by repeated hectograph catastrophes. The gooey mass of gelatin lay at the bottom of a shallow, flat pan. Blank pieces of paper were laid by hand atop this gelatin and smoothed neatly with the other hand, so they could be imprinted with whatever had previously been deposited on the hectograph from a master-sheet. The pages were stripped off with infinite caution. At best, this was tedious and slow work. The best lasted only until the gelatin had given birth to several hundred pages of hectographing. Then it began to deteriorate. The pages were lifted with even greater care, water was sprinkled on it, several days were allowed to elapse between uses when the gelatin attained symptoms of corruption. But the hectograph user knew that whatever he did, like waiting for the humidity to increase, doom was inevitable. Whatever precautions might be taken, calamity was on its way, and it struck halfway through a page's run with a faint slurp as part of the gelatin arose from its pan, accompanying the last page as the paper was lifted from the surface. When this occurred, the fan could throw away the old gelatin and buy a new can, or he could melt the old gelatin on the kitchen stove and use it for another hundred copies or so, or he could quit fandom. The hectograph process had other drawbacks, like the permanent purple hue which spread gradually over the fan's body, his clothing, and one or more rooms of his home. You could type masters with either hecto ribbons or hecto carbons, and it was a tossup, which of the two was more efficient at smearing over anything within 50 feet.

Hectography was incredibly inexpensive. Nobody has ever found anything else to say in its favor.

The hectograph got to Jim halfway through that first issue of Spaceways. I began to grow alarmed when he did nothing for weeks. Some money was arriving for subscriptions and I felt a moral debt to those who had sent material. I finally prodded him into at least looking at the hectograph again. That was the end. His next letter announced that upon opening the hecto he had found a strange substance growing on the gelatin. It might be a fungus or it might be something out of Weird Tales. He didn't like the looks of it. He was done with hectography for good.

This was very embarrassing. Fortunately, I had retained copies of the manuscripts which I'd sent to Jim to put into purple print. When it became clear that Spaceways would never come to term in Skowhegan, Maine, I sort of took charge without asking permission from my co-editor. By some great stroke of fortune, a local church had taken pity on its minister, who had been cranking out the mimeographed weekly bulletin by hand. The congregation bought him an electrically driven mimeo, offering the acoustic one for sale for five bucks. I bought it. That's how the Doubledouble-toilandtrouble Mimeo came into fandom. I never spent a penny for repair parts or maintenance from the day I acquired it in 1938 until I retired it from active duty around 1958. I'd probably be using it today, if I hadn't found it impossible to obtain ink pads of the size it required. It functioned faithfully for all 30 issues of Spaceways, about 60 issues of my FAPazine, Horizons, and dozens of other fanzine issues which I ran off for other people or for organizations. It still sits in the attic, and I imagine that it would be quite possible to clean it up and put it back into service if I can someday find a seamstress versatile enough to turn out custom inkpads to fit obsolete mimeograph drums.

I hastily pounded out two dozen stencils. My father wasn't an artist, but he



spent a half hour with paper and pencil and turned out a sketch of a spaceship which won favorable mentions in locs on that first issue. I'd forgotten to ask anyone in fandom for something to put on that first issue's cover. Just about the time I was putting the finishing touches on that first issue (and finding someone who would staple it free at a local printshop) I took time to write to Jim, telling him what I'd done. He didn't react ecstatically. We had no fuss. But his letters from then on were short and formal. Our correspondence limped to a pitiful halt a few months later. I kept his name on the contents page as co-editor even though he did nothing more for Spaceways from then on, except for contributing one or two articles. Oddly, fandom never seemed to realize the situation. I believe Tucker was the only person who sensed that all was not well along the Skowhegan-Hagerstown axis. Jim remained active in fandom in other ways for several years. He published an issue or two of a fanzine of his own, entitled Funtasy, wrote occasionally for other fanzines, and I believe he was active in a Maine-wide fan club. One article backfired on him. He'd written something about Street & Smith's financial circumstances, the publishers of Astounding wrote him a letter threatening libel litigation, and his parents suggested gafiation. Jim eventually went into the Navy, married, and went into newspaper work in Virginia where he's still a journalist, as far as I know. His son, Red Avery, was in fandom briefly during the 1960's. My contact with Jim is now limited to an occasional Christmas card. I miss that voluminous correspondence to this day.

Considering my inexperience, I got through those first issues of Spaceways with remarkably few difficulties, after the coup. I did some minor stupid things. I had established a policy that Spaceways should not contain any material of a controversial nature related to fan feuding and politics. In the first or second issue, there was a short-short story by Walter Earl Marconette, "Three Spanish Ladies." Jack Speer took me to task about publishing a fantasy set in Spain, in view of that nation's recent revolution. I had confessed the transgression and pledged greater future care, before I realized that Jack was joking. Ackerman wrote an article for me in his nonstop paragraphing, which consisted of beginning a new paragraph a space or two to the right of the last period of the previous paragraph. I didn't understand the principle. So I carefully started each paragraph at exactly the same position along the line that Ackerman had used. His typewriter had a different number of characters to the line than mine so the paragraphs ended in entirely different places when the article was stencilled. A pro contributor, Amelia Reynolds Long, used "diaphragm" repeatedly in something she wrote for me. I thought the word looked wrong and without consulting the dictionary, I changed it consistently to "diagraphm" on every appearance.

But some of Spaceways' popularity resulted from my greenness in fandom. Some of the things about it which fans praised resulted from my lack of familiarity with fanzines. I got ideas for Spaceways from mundane publications instead of imitating other fanzines. Something as rudimentary as an organized index page like the one in each issue of Spaceways was a novelty in fandom in 1938; few fanzine editors took the trouble to list all the fiction together, then the articles, and then the departments. My ban on controversial material on the fannish situation like feud descriptions and personal attacks was new to the fanzine field, although it was nothing more than the disfavor in which many good mundane editors held ad personam writing. If I'd had more experience as a fan, maybe I would have found something of interest in the question of how Wiggins had reacted to Sykora's criticism of Wollheim, and wouldn't have had the courage to exclude this sort of thing from Spaceways. If Spaceways had any real influence on the history of fanzines, it might consist of the way my policy was imitated in either modified or unadulterated form by other fanzine editors before long. One side effect of my policy was the way I managed to remain on fairly good terms with most participants in the major vendettas of the day. Fandom wasn't as preoccupied with feuds as "The Immortal Storm" might lead you to believe, but they did occupy the minds of some leading fans in 1938 and less cowardly neofans sometimes found themselves



drawn into hostilities.

It's hard to believe now the financial facts about Spaceways. In 1938, it was quite possible to break even financially on a fanzine which contained two dozen pages and sold for a dime, if a bit of effort went into building its circulation. Twenty-pound mimeograph paper that was actually opaque cost 65¢ per ream. The store delivered it to my home if I purchased at least three reams at a time. The heavier cover paper came from the dime store. It cost something like 60 sheets for 10¢, and needed to be cut down to proper dimensions. I paid 50¢ for a heavy duty stapler from a local industry that had finally surrendered to the Depression. Postage was, I believe, 1½¢ per copy for the first year or so, then went to two cents because of an increase in rates or a new interpretation of postal regulations by local clerks. Under such circumstances, I sustained an average loss per issue in the neighborhood of one dollar. Subscriptions and occasional paid advertisements provided most of the needed money. Spaceways would have finished each issue in the black if the free list hadn't grown so fast. Complimentary copies averaged perhaps 50 per issue. Most of them were mercenary complimentaries, for people who had contributed or might engineer new material from first-rate writers. Paid circulation ranged between 100 and 120 copies during the latter part of Spaceways' career. This was better than most fanzines then and now. It might have gone even higher if I'd been as energetic in promotional ways later on as I was at the outset.

I haven't sat down and read through a copy of Spaceways for many years. But I can still remember some of the best material in it. There was "The Golden Road," written by C. S. Youd, who adopted John Christopher as his byline when he turned pro. I didn't realize when I published it that some of this parody could be sung to existing music. Sam based his poem on the concluding pages of James Elroy Fletcher's "Hassan", for which Delius wrote incidental music. I still have fond memory of "If I Werewolf" as the last first-rate example of an art form which has died out in fandom, the carefully written round robin story. Practically all the famous fans of the time contributed chapters. J. Chapman Miske's "Stardust" was probably the best of the half-news, half-gossip regular columns in that era's fanzines. Miske was a sort of prologue to William Atheling, Jr. He created a tremendous stir for strong opinions and apostasy involving demigods of prodom. The pages of Spaceways were blessed by numerous examples of Tucker humor, most of it as fresh and understandable today as when it was written.

But the fiction was the weakest part of Spaceways, a malady common to most fanzines. Most of the rejects which pros submitted were no better than they ought to be. I liked some tales which Robert W. Lowndes wrote in the Clark Ashton Smith style. Ray Bradbury provided one or two pieces of humorous fiction, mercifully brief. If a recent Lester del Rey collection is accurate, I had the boldness to shorten a story by him. Maybe his status at the time as half-fan, half-pro gave me the gumption to perform such daring surgery.

One odd distinction of Spaceways was the way it scooped the entire fanzine field with extended conreports two or three times, even though it was a large enough fanzine to require considerable production time and I didn't attend cons in person. My usual system was to think until I remembered an obligation that some fan or other owed me, then to demand payment on this moral debt by asking him to serve as worldcon reporter. I managed to adjust Spaceways' publication schedule so an issue would appear soon after the worldcon, and the fans who agreed to write the conreport kept their promises to provide the manuscripts as soon as possible after the event. But Spaceways was a near-failure as far as illustrations were concerned. I had no ability with a stylus and some of the covers I published betray the fact that I wasn't the only fan burdened by

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Continued on page 31.



# PERRY AND THE TIRADES



Tom  
Perry





"Are you there?" asks the postscript on the letters, notes and postcards Dick Bergeron has inundated me with over the past few months. "Of course I am still here," I have been meaning to write him, of course I am -- but I've never written that answer, and now I never will. Because it just dawned on me last week, when a fat envelope from Dick turned out to hold an advance copy of his column for Telos, that the answer is not yes.

Gafia doesn't say it. I've gafiated as much as anyone, over the years, but fandom has always been with me in some dormant sense ever since I first encountered it in 1953. If I wasn't active in it, or even passive, I always knew I would make contact again and rev up my fanac till it once again needed cooling off. Things that happened to me got cataloged away in a corner where I saved events that I could write about, someday. (It is with some horror that I remember how I used to do things so that I could write about them. Even if I never did the writing, this attitude served to make my adolescence in Nebraska unreal to me even as I lived it. But I don't need to explain that, do I?)

Or maybe I'm wrong -- maybe gafia does say it.

I can't compare my gafia to yours; that's something that happens deep inside of each of us. Outwardly it manifests itself as not answering letters, not going to conventions, not reading fanzines -- in fact all the negatives of what defines a fan in the first place. In critical cases it may go so far as destroying fanzines. Time to swallow hard and admit that I too, like Ed Wood, have sinned by violating this one of Willis's Fen Commandments. (But then, so has Willis.)

Comparing gafiations is like comparing pain, or comparing pleasure. And anyone who rhapsodizes about the depth of experiences like these must be viewed with suspicion. "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" is the classic example -- 130 pages about Laney's life in fandom, stopping every so often to explain that he is recording it only to warn others away from wasting their time on such a useless hobby. Not that I question the disgust with self and others that Laney records so well -- I have felt that myself, and I suspect you have, too -- but I doubt like hell that he was feeling that disgust as he wrote about it.

True, complete, absolute disgust with fandom is shown by people who don't participate in it any more. At all. Ever.

I know former fans who've quit. Unfortunately I don't have much data on why, or how they feel about it. They're gone, that's all.

But that's not gafia. It resembles gafia, sure, but gafia is a less than total lack of interest. It has to be. Not just because otherwise we couldn't talk about it at all (since we'd have to admit that we had next to no data on which to base conclusions), but because of the etymology of the word itself.

Getting Away From It All was a capitalized cliché to Dorothy Parker in 1931 (see her column, "The Constant Reader," in The New Yorker for January 24) and served in clipped form as the title of Cedric Belfrage's book, "Away From It All: An Escapologist's Notebook," in 1937. Speer's Fancyclopedia in 1944 gave this acronym a single line: "gafia - Wilson - Get Away From It All; motto of escapism." So we hardly know which way the gafiate was going then. I would guess, though, from what I know of Jack Speer, that he would not have left undocumented the curious reversal in meaning the term had undergone sometime before 1959, when Dick Eney published Fancyclopedia II.

Gafia was "originally an escapist slogan," wrote Eney, "meaning the intent to



withdraw from the Macrocosm to indulge in some intense fanac, but has undergone a complete reversal of significance"; what was gotten away from was no longer the Real World but fandom itself. Eney, like Speer, attributed the term to Dick Wilson, but gave no hint of who turned it around, or when it happened.

But I suspect it was shortly after Wilson invented it. As I recall, Tucker's first Neofan's Guide (circa 1954) alluded to the flip-flop in meaning. The Glades of Gafia in "The Enchanted Duplicator" lead one away from fandom, not toward it.

All of which testifies to the power of the human mind to create its own world. SF develops a technological future; its fans execute a machine simulation of it, with typewriters to make us witty and mimeos to make us popular.

With the human awareness of the future comes the awareness of death, a shock that ends the paradise of the present, as recorded in the Eden story. SF rescues us neatly, transporting us to times beyond our death; perhaps that's why so many of us got addicted to the stuff just at the age when we realized that someday we're going to get old and die, just like grandpa -- around eight or ten or twelve, depending on circumstances and perceptivity.

Fans live in the future, waiting for the letter, working on the fanzine. Gafia is an escape -- an escape from the reality of fandom. The human mind always forms its own reality; everyone's life excludes something. Even the Eastern religions that celebrate the Present Moment serve as an escape from the future -- and the future is also real.

#### THE WAR OF THE WATERBED

Our three-year-old waterbed had been making odd sounds for a couple of weeks. Plus, water was disappearing from it. Flop on it and it would gurgle and retreat. But where to? It didn't seem to be leaking. We let it go, busy with other things.

Until finally one night curiosity overcame weariness: we stripped off the mattress cover and looked. And wished we'd done it earlier.

The waterbed came with something called an air frame -- a tube full of air surrounding the part that's full of water. The salesman said it eliminated the need for a regular frame.

It was into this air frame that the water had been leaking. Alix took one look, reminded me she had to be up early, and left with her pillow for the living room couch. I went and rummaged in the garage for something I vaguely remembered having bought and never used.

There it was, still in its package: a little pump that chucked into a power drill. Not far off, covered with dust, was the power drill; the bits seemed to be missing, along with one of the two drawers in its plastic stand, but the chuck was there. I got the garden hose from outdoors and carried everything to the bedroom.

I tried running the hose into the bathroom so the water could drain into the shower. It reached, barely, but the pump wouldn't pull the water that far. "Primes 8-10 Feet" said the bright yellow package in inch-high letters. I noticed these words after spending half an hour trying to make it prime 12-14 feet.

Okay. I took a screen off the window by the bed and ran the hose out the window. Now it only had to prime about two feet, which it did with ease. I sat there watching



the sparks inside the drill as I held it, watching the water go outdoors, where it couldn't hurt the books in our gravity bookcases. Safe at last. What a relief.

After a while my eyes drifted to the bright yellow package again. "Pumps 200 GPH", it said. Let's see, that's --

About three gallons per minute.

I thought about that for perhaps three gallons. Could I hold out till dawn? How many gallons did a waterbed hold, anyway? I gave it a gentle poke -- just a touch, really -- to get an idea how much was left.

It slithered off the base.

It slithered over some two hundred dollars worth of books and priceless fanzines.

And stopped.

It was at that point that the seals between the air frame and the water mattress burst. The air frame filled with water. I touched it; it felt as fragile as a water balloon.

Remove the hose, cap the valve, unplug the drill, put the whole works over by the screen from the window. And wonder: what next?

The bed had slithered in the direction of the bathroom, but it was still too far from the pump to prime. Besides, that was too slow.

And there was more than books at stake. Files, photography equipment, microcomputer tapes were all within easy striking distance of the damned waterbed. Not to mention such mundane things as the carpet and the floor under it.

And suppose the tidal wave knocked over the little desk and crashed the computer to the floor? End-of-the-world scenes from dozens of SF movies filled my fatigued mind. Crowds running, people screaming, walls caving in.

But SF can suggest solutions as well as catastrophes. The thing had started for the bathroom, hadn't it? A host of John W. Campbell Jr. epigrams came to mind. Take me to your bathroom, it seemed to be saying. I couldn't recall an encounter story with that twist.

In forty-five minutes I had moved it about eight feet. Now came the hard part -- I had to get it through the bathroom door. That meant standing it up on edge.

A half-empty waterbed doesn't have an edge.

I pulled it and pushed it and shoved it and heaved it, and after forty minutes more I had it half in and half out of the bathroom door. My fingers ached from trying to maintain a hold on its thick hide. It was well after midnight now and I was exhausted. I collapsed on the shapeless blue thing, panting and puffing like a lover.

It shifted slightly and I sank into it further -- and then sprang to my feet, trembling with fear. What a narrow escape! It had almost absorbed me.

Apparently it didn't realize it was tangling with the toughest, meanest, dead-



liest creature in the known universe.

That was Heinlein, of course, and as I continued struggling I remembered that Heinlein invented waterbeds, at least in the same stfnal sense that Gernsback invented radar. The cosmic significance of that associated absorbed me as I struggled. Were all those Heinlein books really subtle warnings against waterbeds? Was this really a gigantic blue Puppet Master? How many times had I laid innocently down to sleep on this thing that had turned out to be The Enemy?

It yielded by inches. I would push it, climb over it into the bathroom, pull it, climb back over it, push it, climb back...

...until at last it was all the way into the bathroom. Now to get it to the shower at the far end.

Push. Pull. Shove. Heave. How could water weigh so much? How could plastic be so rigid?

At the other end of the bathroom it had to go through a narrower door yet -- the shower stall. I got it half way through. Unfortunately, it was not the half of the bed with the valves. They seemed to have disappeared somewhere. As it turned out, they were not only outside the shower stall, but on the bottom of the mattress, unreachable on the floor.

Push, pull, push, pull, and the part with the valves was inside -- but they were on the top.

I was inside the shower stall, too. I'd have to go over the mattress to get out. So I opened the valves and tried to squeeze water out of the bed. Then I got on top of it and tried. Nothing.

Okay, then, I'd just have to get tough. I'd make holes in it. All I had to do was get back to my toolbox in the bedroom.

But I couldn't. I couldn't move. My legs were buried deep in the waterbed. It had somehow absorbed me almost to the waist without giving up any perceptible amount of liquid.

It was like being stuck in mud, I thought. In fact it was exactly like the mud I had got stuck in when I was ten. My seven-year-old brother had taken a shortcut across the grassless yard of a new house. The spring rains had soaked the land deeply, and he got stuck. He struggled for a while, got angry, and then finally burst into tears. I had been watching my curly-haired sibling rival with a certain detached pleasure, but when tears came I knew I'd have to go after him. So I waded in, too, and got stuck, too. The helpless feeling I had then was just how I felt now, stuck in a waterbed in my own shower.

I relaxed, and sank in further. The bed was engulfing me. Maybe it was hedonism that Heinlein had been warning us against? I tried to remember which of his characters had used waterbeds. Did Lazarus Long approve of them? Did Roger Stone? But all I could think of was Mitch Courtney lying down to die in the snows of Antarctica. That was Kornbluth and Pohl, of course, except that it was really Kornbluth, authentic Kornbluth, the Kornbluth who lured you into the future only to flash ugly reality at you again. Thought you'd got away, didn't you? Sorry -- and he'd show you the weak, the stupid, the corrupt, the cowards, the bullies, all the things that twelve-year-olds read SF not to think about.



Okay, one last try, and I e-x-t-r-a-c-t-e-d myself from the waterbed. I came back armed with a phillips screwdriver and stabbed it repeatedly near the base, putting my weight into the blows to get through the tough plastic.

Water poured out of half a dozen holes. Would it find its way down the drain? I was too tired to care, or to do anything about it anyway. I staggered into the bedroom and collapsed on the hard platform that had held the mattress, feeling like a killer.

-Tom Perry-

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All My Yesterdays - Continued from page 25:

this affliction. I didn't run interior illustrations until near the end of the fanzine's life. They were more trouble than they were worth; moreover, the bother of arranging for them to be drawn and getting them onto stencils probably caused me to kill the fanzine an issue or two sooner than destiny intended.

Occasionally someone has reprinted something from Spaceways over the years. Bill Evans produced a really giant anthology of Spaceways material many years ago, but copies of that are probably harder to find today than issues of Spaceways itself.

A combination of circumstances, not just my impatience with artistic labors, ended Spaceways. World War Two seemed in 1942 destined to go on for many more years. This put me into a mood that made fanzine publishing seem more like a chore, less like a pleasure. After 30 issues, I had grown sick of non-literary labors, like keeping track of subscriptions, wrapping and addressing copies, and handling the letter-writing involved in a large-circulation fanzine. Serious illness in the family restricted the time when I could make noise with the typewriter. Publication costs began to rise, and I didn't feel justified in subsidizing a greater proportion of a fanzine's expenses when that illness had made the financial circumstances of my family somewhat difficult. I've always been happy that I decided abruptly to discontinue publication instead of letting Spaceways struggle against the inevitable for years as some famous fanzines have done. I returned manuscripts on hand to their authors, arranged for another fanzine to take over the remainder of existing subscriptions to Spaceways, sent out a single-sheeter announcing its demise, and used one left-over cover on my FAPA publication even though it bore the Spaceways lettering at its top.

In recent years, I've occasionally been tempted to revive Spaceways. But whenever I feel the urge, I tell myself that the only cause for it is my desire to start the editorial in the 31st issue with an apology for having yielded to a temporary fit of depression, followed by an expression of hope that the delay in publishing this 31st issue will not have inconvenienced anyone or caused any Spaceways readers to grow impatient.

Then someone beat me to the draw a few years ago. In 1940 or 1941, I wrote to Harry Turner, asking him to draw a cover for Spaceways. One day in 1977, he replied, explaining that he had been too busy to answer my letter promptly, but now he had enough spare time and would be glad to oblige.

(To be continued.)

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COMING NEXT ISSUE: Trapped in the eternal flow between commitment and execution (do with him as you will, I say!) the fates have conspired to promise us the fourth section of "The TransAtlantic Hearing Aid": Count Langford's amazing TAFFtale. Watch out!



# THE IMPROBABLE IRISH

Walt  
Willis



## 1. THE GLOCCA MORRA SITUATION

I think it is time the American public had answers to some of the questions which have been posed continually, first over their radio by Bing Crosby and currently by Petula Clark in the movie version of "Finian's Rainbow." Such as how things are in Glocca Morra.

I can only assume the reason nobody has attempted to answer this question before is that it has not been addressed to the correct quarter. Mr. Crosby and Miss Clark first ask a bird from Londonderry, which is 250 miles away from Glocca Morra as the crow flies; they then interrogate a River Shannon breeze, which is still nearly a hundred miles off course. Glocca Morra is a remote spot in Kerry and one can only assume that if the writer of the song ever traveled there he fell into the hands of an unusually unscrupulous cab driver. However, I have made the journey specially on your account, taking only my wife, family, car, baggage and the advance on this book, and here is a situation report from your Man in Glocca Morra.

Q. *Is that little brook still leaping there?*

A. Yes, I am relieved to report that this is indeed the case. Since it is only about two feet wide the danger of its being harnessed for hydroelectric power was never very great.





*Q. Does it still run down to Donnycove, through Killybegs, Kilkerri and Kildare?*

A. Frankly no, and I am surprised to learn that it ever did, no matter how acrobatic it was. Killybegs is more than two hundred miles to the north and Kildare a hundred miles to the west, which you must admit is quite a startling series of leaps for a little brook to make, especially when you think of all the intervening mountain ranges. As for Donnycove, I am sorry to say I was not able to find this place at all in the "Topographical Dictionary" or "Townland Index of Ireland", which together contain about a hundred thousand Irish place names, including such unlikely ones as Dirtystep, Bootown and Ballywatticock. Nor could I find anything remotely like it, though I assumed that even an author with the fine old Irish name of E. Y. Harburg might have been forced to make a few changes in the interests of euphony. It was obvious, for instance, that Glocca Morra was originally Glash na Gloragh (the voiceful brook), which I admit cannot be quite as easy to croon into a microphone.

*Q. Is that willow tree still weeping there?*

A. I did not find any willow tree available for interview, and was reluctant to intrude on private grief.

*Q. Does that lassie with the twinkling eye come smiling by?*

A. Not while I was there. Perhaps I shouldn't have brought my wife with me.



Q. *Then does she walk away, sad and dreamy there, not to see me there?*

A. Presumably. I only hope she doesn't go to look for you in Donnycove.

Q. *How are Things in Glocca Morra?*

A. Actually there are very few Things in Glash na Gloragh, but what there are seem in reasonably good condition considering that they have been lying out in the rain so long. The rocks show signs of wear, but the grass and heather appear to have recently been renewed.

Before we leave the Glocca Morra area, there is a real estate problem in that neighborhood which used to concern singers almost as much.

Q. *How can you buy Killarney?*

A. The answer to this really depends on how much of it you want. If you would be satisfied with part of it, the first thing to do is to write to a reputable estate agent in the locality. Plots of ground in Killarney Urban District are sold locally at less than \$1500 an acre, but fetch more than twice that when sold through advertisements in foreign newspapers. There might also be tax to pay because the Irish are getting worried about how, after fighting foreigners seven hundred years for their country, another lot are now buying it from under them.

If however you want to purchase the Killarney Estate itself, I am afraid you are too late. It was bought in 1959 by an American, Mr. John McShain, and I don't think he has any intention of disposing of it. To his eternal credit he has thrown it open to the public free of charge. The rest of the scenic district known as Killarney is owned by the Irish Government as a National Park, having been presented to Ireland by some even more generous Americans, Mr. and Mrs. Bourn of California and Mr. Arthur Vincent. May their shadow never grow less. I can see very little prospect of the Irish Government selling it to you, even if you bought Northern Ireland and offered it in exchange. An eccentric American millionaire did once attempt to solve the Partition problem by offering to buy Northern Ireland, but the British Government was not interested and could certainly not have offered possession.

In any event, solutions to problems in Ireland are never as simple as that. As Ed Murrow once said about Vietnam, anyone who isn't confused doesn't really understand the situation.

There is, it seems to me, confusion even about songs such as those I have just quoted. Many people in Ireland feel a great hatred for songs like these, which are obviously written by people who know nothing about Ireland, just to make money. I shared that hatred myself, until one day I lost it in a supermarket. I had strayed into the unfamiliar regions of the cereals department and there, among the alien corn, the truth dawned on me.

In the British Isles a rather touching relationship has grown up in the last fifty years or so between suburban housewives and wild birds. It has become the custom for the average suburban housewife to throw out her food scraps on the lawn for the birds and watch them while she washes the dishes, and they become her friends in the lonely mornings. In coastal districts housewives attend courses on how to clean seabirds being killed by oil pollution on their wings. The average housewife knows that many wild birds have by now become completely dependent on people like her, and in winter-time when there are not enough scraps for them she throws out fresh bread. The cereal manufacturers observed the phenomenon, realized the need and now market under the trade name Swoop a balanced diet for wild birds.

It appears to sell well, which is a tribute to the kindness of thousands of ordi-



nary women. It seems to me it is a credit to the manufacturers too that they should help the women give effect to their good intentions, even if they make money out of it, and that the same credit might be given to the writers of fake Irish songs. If many ordinary people feel an affection for and an interest in Ireland, and for some reason they do, surely it is a good thing that they should be given a way to express it. The affection might occasionally be misguided and the interest ill-informed, but the birds do not complain that the housewives who love them are not ornithologists.

However, the Irish are more than wild creatures who have had a hard time, and sing prettily, and have never done anyone any harm. For all the number of them, they and their tiny island have made a great stir in the world, and it is well worth anyone's time to find out more about them and the country which made them.

(To be continued.)

#### A VIEW FROM A BOX

Your words about fandom being largely a "literary phenomenon", as opposed to the world of club meetings and conventions, checks with my own feeling. I might like to attend one convention a year (although I never do), but the abundance of conventions nowadays confounds me. Laney criticized fans spending too much time on fandom, but he meant publishing fanzines and attending club meetings -- and in recent times fans probably are spending more time on fandom than ever before, by going to three, four, or a dozen cons every year. People who go to cons that often must be looking for something, and not finding it. I'm looking for various things in fandom, but the main thing I find occasionally right at home, in Box 1111: the literary phenomenon that is a "properly done" fanzine.

-- Redd Boggs in a letter to Creath Thorne. 12 Feb 72

#### THE PUN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

Maybe you don't know it but Walter Willis, like Hugh Rowley, liked making bilingual puns. On one occasion, before playing Ghoddminton I took off my jacket and when the party broke up couldn't find it. Walter found it where it had fallen behind the sofa and pointing to it said "Hic jacet." I should have replied, "O puer!" but I didn't think of it till next day.

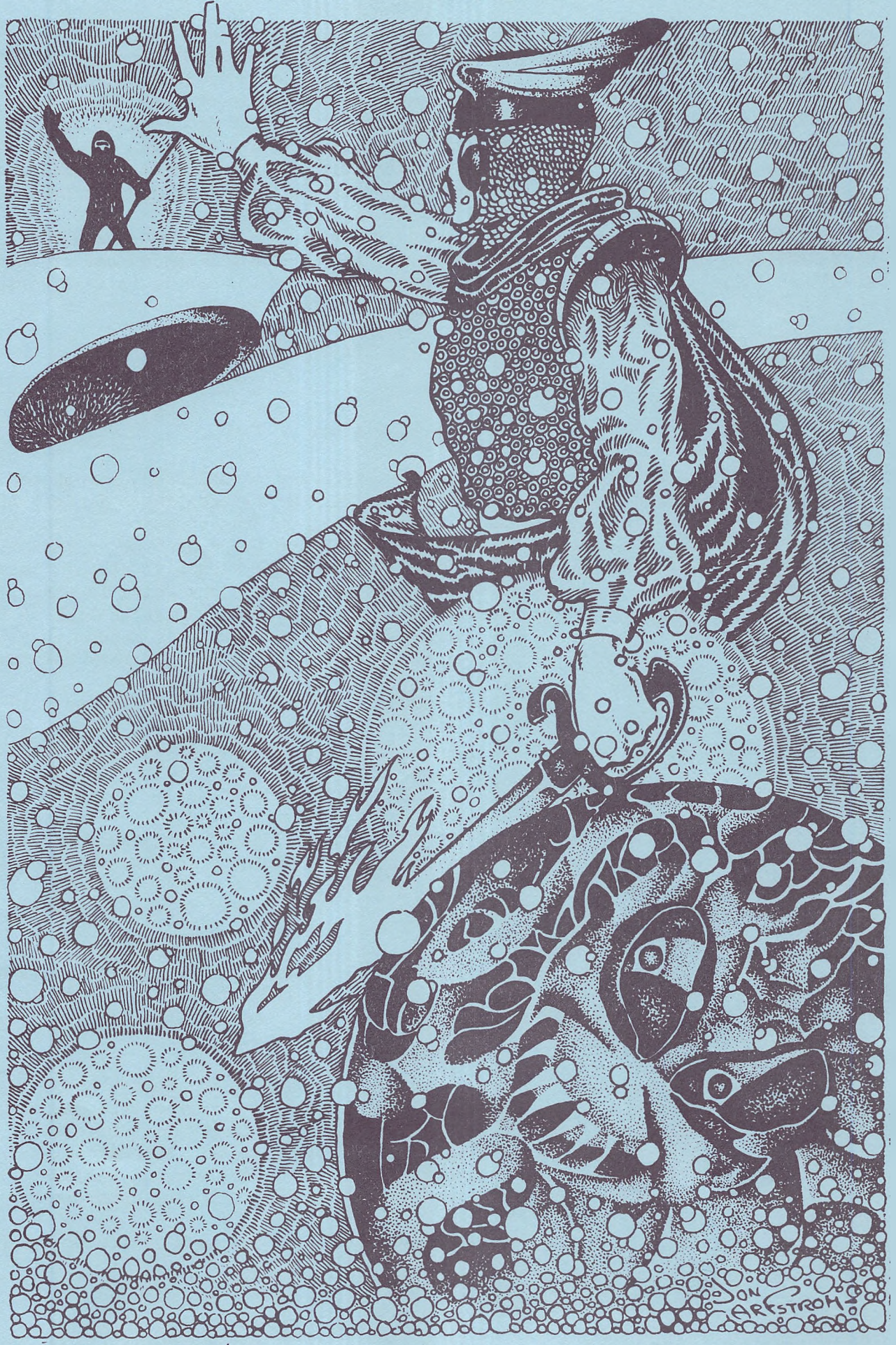
On another occasion young Bryan had broken his toy train and Walter said he would bring it to Gloria, his secretary, on Monday. (Her father was a dab hand at fixing toys.) So as not to forget Walter made a note (on his shirt-cuff?): Sick train-set Gloria Monday.

When the whole gang got together it was forgettable. No, that's not a typo for unforgettable -- but the things they said came so fast and furious that nobody could remember more than a tiny fraction of it. I took little part in it because my brain is too slow but I could always appreciate the wit and humour. Sometimes, during a lull, I would deliberately make an innocuous, almost inane, remark, and that was generally enough to start the river flowing again. Just thinking about it now sets my nostalgia aching.

-- George Charters, 2 Aug 80, in a letter to the editor.



# THE POLITICS OF FANDOM Ted White





In the early fall of 1954 I finally screwed up my courage and attended my first sf fanclub meeting. I'd been contributing to fanzines for several years by then and had put out three or four issues of my own fanzine as well, but I was young and shy and afraid of personal contact with other fans, most of whom I knew were older than I and most of whom I assumed to be more knowledgeable and more able than I as well.

The fanclub in question was the WSFA -- the Washington SF Ass'n -- and it had been formed a couple of fannish generations earlier -- at least six years earlier, anyway. The club had been organised by people like Bob Pavlat, Bill Evans, Chick Derry and Bob Briggs -- fans who had been active in FAPA or SAPS and had attended their share of conventions; in a phrase, seasoned fans. When I attended my first meeting the only one of those founders who was there was Bob Briggs, and I think that was because I had phoned him (on Bob Tucker's advice) for details on the meetings and having given me that information he felt obligated to be there to meet me. Bob was by then largely gaffiated; he was still in SAPS but otherwise over the hill, fannishly speaking.

The rest of the half-dozen or so attendees were clubfans. They laughed uproariously when Harlan Ellison's name was mentioned (yes, even then!), but were otherwise ignorant of fanzine fandom. None of them had ever been to a major convention, and perhaps none had even been to one of the then-few regional conventions like the Phillycon. Bob Briggs spoke briefly but entertainingly about the car-trek west to that year's worldcon in San Francisco (in a car which included Harlan among its half-dozen passengers) and I was the only one there who recognized the names of the others he mentioned.

The club included an attractive young divorcee with two children, Dot Cole, whose apartment would, with the next meeting, become the WSFA meetingplace for the next year or two, and for whom I nursed unrequited lust in my heart; an old man whom I knew only as Mr. Morman, who carried a briefcase empty but for a fifth of Southern Comfort; Joe Valin, who was in his twenties and subsequently sold me for a modest sum a number of rare prozines (Stirring, Cosmic and the like from the late thirties and early forties), but whose personality was otherwise too bland to make much impression on me; and Phyllis and Bill Berg, whose newborn baby, Bettyanne, they brought with them to every meeting. Phyllis was fat and loud; Bill was thin and slightly less loud. They were WSFA's love-story, having met through the club. Both were heavy beer drinkers who tended toward maudlin garrulousness. They also fancied themselves the powers who ran the club.

Within a few months of my first meeting, the club had changed considerably in character. Bob Pavlat, who had not attended meetings for some time, but who knew of me through fanzines, started attending regularly again. Briggs attended semiregularly. Derry and Evans also became once again regular attendees. And, within less than a year after that first meeting I found myself elected club president.

Soon younger fans, fans of my generation like Jack Harness, John Magnus and Fred von Bernewitz were also coming to every meeting. The club became a genuine sf fanclub again, full of active fans who brought the latest issues of their fanzines, discussed FAPA and SAPS and Cult business, planned trips to conventions, and generally did what fans do.

As a direct consequence of this, I was never elected -- nor even nominated -- to another office in the club.

Dot Cole explained it to me: "Ted, you really shook the club up. The Bergs have never forgiven you. This used to be a little card-players' club until you came



along. That's the way they liked it." The Bergs might have lost control over the nature of the club, but not over its politics. I remained on their blacklist for the rest of my stay in the area, and nothing I ever said or did changed their minds.

That was my first exposure to fan politics.

When I moved to New York City, some five years later, I was no longer the shy neofan. I'd been a vocal and active fan on both the fanzine and convention level. I was putting out Void, which was one of the better fanzines of the era. I was hardly a BNF, but I'd been around; I was well known.

There were a number of fanclubs in NYC. The most prominent was the Lunarians, which held its meetings in the Bronx in the apartment of Belle and Frank Dietz. I knew them both, of course. Frank had been in fandom since the forties, and Belle was the Phyllis Berg of NYC fandom: fat, loud, opinionated and determined to run things. Belle had already precipitated the WSFS Inc. feud and lawsuits in the aftermath of the 1956 and 1957 Worldcons, and I was not fond of her. But moving to NYC made me the new guy on the block: all the fanclubs invited me to attend their meetings. So I tried a Lunarians meeting.

I did not attend another meeting of that club for five years, and the choice was mine. In the Lunarians of that time I saw the Bergs' WSFA writ larger. Meetings opened with formal business sessions, with minutes to be read and approved, old business and new business, reports from committees, dues to be collected, the treasury to be reported on, etc. Watching that meeting (I was a "guest"; I did not participate in the business session) was painfully boring. The "informal" part which followed was no better. An incredibly frumpy woman who dressed very badly cornered my rather pretty wife, Sylvia, to give her clothes advice. Milk and cake was served. People sat about politely. I felt as if I had somehow mistakenly wandered into a mundane gathering of some sort. I resolved not to return, and did not until after Frank and Belle had split up. Belle had dropped out of fandom, and I heard rumors about an attractive young fan named Robin Postal who had started going to Lunarian meetings because her parents (whom I then knew slightly) were members. (It is totally irrelevant to the point of this piece, but the first Lunarians meeting I attended in 1965 resulted in my taking Robin back to her home in Brooklyn, asking her for a date, and, subsequently, making her my second wife.)

I have played the fan politics game. I've been elected to office in various clubs and apas. I co-chaired a worldcon. I even attained office in the Lunarians at one point (simply by allowing them to elect me). But I dislike fan politics enormously, and I've played that game only when it seemed to me that it was absolutely necessary.

Let us consider a simple hypothesis: Fandom is a meritocracy, conducted anarchistically.

Working backwards, let's take the "anarchistically" part first.

Fandom is a hobby. It may become an avocation (and has, for many of us), but we enter it and participate in it because we want to -- not because we have to. Because fandom is always and essentially voluntary, it is virtually impossible to compel anyone to do anything that they don't want to do. Some fans assume obligations -- such as the schedule with which they intend to publish their fanzines, or a workload within a club or convention -- but only their own morality compels them to maintain these obligations. They must answer only to their consciences.



This was more obviously the case when most fans lived in isolation from one another and conducted their fanac on paper, through the mails. But it remains the case even today, when a fan may live only blocks away from another, and physical contact can reinforce obligations that have been assumed.

Since 1941 some fans have tried to organize the others. The National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F) was the first such attempt. There have been many others. A pathetic fan of the early fifties named Orville Mosher started up something he called Project Fanclub, which was supposed to compile enough data on all the then-extant fanclubs that not only could a directory be published (a moderately worthy aim) but the template for the Perfect Fanclub could be created. Mosher saw local fanclubs as only stepping stones to the Ultimate, Perfect Fanclub; a fanclub so complete and perfect in its every aspect that all fans would fall all over themselves to join. We haven't heard from Mosher for twenty-five years now, but he may still be laboring somewhere over his vast project.

In the early forties the notion of an organized fandom was not as obviously ridiculous as it is now. Memories of Gernsback's SF League were still fresh. The SFL was basically a circulation gimmick designed to promote Wonder Stories, which was vying with Amazing in the mid-thirties for last place among sf magazines (Astounding being the sole other SF magazine). But Gernsback had enough belief and conviction in the idea and his readers were sufficiently in tune with it themselves (being proud and lonely fans who desired a little social intercourse with others of their kind; fandom was still being invented then) that the SFL was modestly successful in setting up local, if not regional chapters. The LASFS began as the LASFL, the Los Angeles chapter of the SFL, for instance. A few other existing fanclubs affiliated themselves with the SFL and new fanclubs came into existence as SFL chapters. The SFL effectively died when Gernsback sold Wonder Stories and it was rechristened Thrilling Wonder Stories, although I believe it was kept up for a while in the new magazine.

When Damon Knight (yes, the very same!) wrote "Unite or Fie" and called for a working national fanclub (the N3F, as it soon turned out), he must have been recalling the SFL. He might also have been thinking of the original idea behind FAPA when that organisation was hatched by Don Wollheim in 1937: an amateur press association large enough to encompass all of fanzine-reading and fanzine-publishing fandom. Just think: if you joined one group you could get all the fanzines being published! (That didn't happen either. Fans joined FAPA and put out FAPazines while continuing their non-FAPazines.)

But it didn't work. And it never has worked. The attempts, like the N3F, either died quickly or became bureaucratically-clogged backwaters of fandom into which fans could disappear, never to be heard from again. (The N3F has been the laughingstock of fandom for at least thirty-five years now, and it still remains the home of the perpetual neofan, priding itself on the "services" it performs for fandom, few of which are needed and some of which are harmful. What Willis had to say about the N3F in the early fifties remains every bit as true today.)

Fans resisted being organized. And why shouldn't they? What was to be gained by making fandom over into an analogue of the mundane world in which they went to school or worked? Where was the enjoyment in trading one petty bureaucrat for another?

The attempts to organize fandom have always foundered on the simple fact that those who wanted to do the organizing were not people anyone else wanted to be organized by.



I think this became obvious to most fans in the mid-forties when the infamous Claude Degler and his 'cosmen' (most of them his own pennames) started up The Cosmic Circle. Degler was another fan who had Heard The Call and wanted to organize fandom. His ideas were semi-religious and semi-utopian: he saw fans (with their Broad Mental Horizons) as the leaders of the future. They were, according to this scruffy semi-literate fan from Indiana, the Next Step on the evolutionary ladder, only waiting to be told their True Purpose before going out and setting the world to rights.

Up until then some fans of a utopian bent had been thinking along similar lines. Naive, genuinely idealistic, politically questioning, and the products of the Depression and the social ferment of the thirties, many fans had espoused somewhat visionary causes, from Marxism to Technocracy. The explosion of the atomic bomb had a real impact on these fans. There were those among them who believed that it might be possible to build a genuine community of fans, a utopian town of some sort. In Michigan, in Battle Creek, the first Slan Shack was organized along such ideals. The very term, "slan shack," derived from the aphorism, "Fans are Slans"; van Vogt's Slan was still fresh in everyone's memory as a strongly compelling novel about mutants called "slans." Fans, paranoid about their position outside the mainstream of society and the general attitude about sf expressed by mundanes, identified readily -- if not entirely seriously -- with "slans."

Degler changed all that. By taking such ideas to their *reductio ad absurdum* extremes, Degler showed fandom just how inherently foolish they were. Degler was the embodiment of fandom's lunatic fringe. (He was also something of a beatnik/hippie who rarely bathed or changed his clothes, wandered nomadically from one fan household to the next, freeloading and often departing with more possessions than he'd arrived with. Laney, among others, was aghast to discover the condition in which he left the beds he'd slept in, and years later, around 1950, fans were surprised to find Degler -- under another name -- huckstering their long-disappeared books and magazines at conventions.)

Today fandom is in some respects more organized. Large regional and worldcons require manpower; efficiently run conventions require organization. But fans voluntarily submit to this kind of organizing on a purely temporary basis. Although it's been twenty-four years since Dave Kyle first incorporated the World Science Fiction Society to run each year's worldcon, it's been twenty-two years since the WSFS Inc. was abandoned. It's my impression that some sort of umbrella organization presently exists to create continuity in the rules for worldcons, but it's been my observation that each year's con committee pretty much runs its worldcon as it chooses, accepting those rules as a pro-forma arrangement and ignoring them when convenient or necessary.

Because fandom remains a voluntary hobby, there is little likelihood that fandom will ever be anything other than anarchistic. As always, things will get done when specific individuals agree to do them and then act upon that agreement.

Fandom is a meritocracy.

One of the most common complaints of the new fan, fresh upon discovering fandom, is that fandom appears to be class-conscious -- that there are circles within circles, each conferring upon its members certain aspects of status. It used to be that one heard complaints about the exclusivity of BNFs, about supposed snobbery, and about closed, invitation-only clubs and parties.

I think we can understand the attacks upon people like Willis (who is, in my opinion, uniquely undeserving of such attacks) by people like Charles Platt and, several fan generations later, Don West, when we view them in this light. (The only



other ready explanation is that these are people who feel that the only way to Make A Name for themselves and advance themselves in fandom is to seek out the best-liked person and attack that person irrationally.) Platt and West are attacking what they wrongly perceive to be a class-consciousness -- like communist termites boring from within.

They are easily dismissed as individuals who have failed to understand either fandom or their perceived targets, but they are symptomatic of a general misunderstanding which equates the castes of fandom with mundane class consciousness.

I am not going to either excoriate or defend mundane class consciousness here, although I will note that fandom is probably not entirely free of it, and that this is especially true in Britain where it permeates mundane life. It is significant that both Platt and West are British, however -- or, more specifically, English, and their target was Irish. It's a safe bet that both individuals are more closely bound to their mundane culture than most fans are, whether in acceptance of that culture or in rejection of it.

The mistake many new fans make is in assuming that those who appear to have status did nothing to earn that status. A new fan finds it easy to equate the social structure of fandom with that of the world he or she grew up in. In the mundane world many people enjoy a status they do not appear to deserve, whether through inheritance or through connivance. It is this basic apparent inequity which has fueled most of the world's revolutions over the past one or two hundred years.

But fandom operates anarchistically. Being the progeny of a BNF does not automatically make one a BNF also. Money means little, since even in these more affluent times most fans are students and have relatively little money to spare. Nor is mundane position of much importance. Many fans are blissfully unaware of what their friends by correspondence do for a living.

Further, one's sex and race and appearance mean little if one conducts one's fanac on paper. Fandom has had its share of polio victims, cripples, hunchbacks (Ray Palmer) and others with handicaps. (Fandom even has its blind, although this handicap causes special problems for those who indulge in paper fanac.)

I caused a minor uproar in fandom a few years ago by pointing out that until recently fandom had no gender barriers; that women could as easily go as far in fandom as men, since the deciding factor was not who they were but what they did.

Fandom's present-day feminists, who seem unwilling to accept this idea (possibly because they are in fact trading on their gender rather than their intrinsic talents), have tried to import into fandom all of the wars raging between the sexes in the mundane world, betraying their own ignorance of the significant differences between fandom and the mundane world.

Fandom is a meritocracy.

I could be a thoroughly repulsive-appearing individual, perhaps dying of a leprous disease, my hair falling out and my skin flaking off. But if I can create something of intrinsic merit, a drawing or painting, an article or a story, a fanzine or a piece of music, my reputation in fandom will be based on that work -- not on my personal circumstances, whatever they may be.

When Lee Hoffman revealed herself as a woman in 1951, fandom was astonished. Not because "a girl!" had created in Quandry a fine fanzine, but because Lee had



successfully hoaxed everyone, even if the origins of that hoax were inadvertent. Nor did her reputation suffer when fandom found out the truth. Lee was, and for many of us still is, a BNF because of her evident talents and abilities. Quandry was, and remains, a high-water mark in fanzines. There were other female fans in those days (not many; women were enculturated in other directions for the most part and few admitted an interest in either science or stf in those days; those who became fans did so for the same reason we males became fans -- a 'loner' attitude and outlook which distanced us from all mundane society), each with her own talents and abilities.

"BNF" means "Big Name Fan." That's not a term you can take too seriously, any more than forties fans could take too seriously the appellation, "Number One Fan Face," the term applied to the major egoboo poll winners like Ackerman and Tucker. Self-ridicule lies just below the surface.

But it is a descriptive term, and what it describes is the way others see the individual in question. One becomes a BNF by acclamation. No one can simply assume the title. You are a BNF when people say you are. Your status is earned through what you do and how what you do is received by your peers -- your fellow fans.

BNFs are fans who are highly thought of by their fellow fans.

Fandom, thus, has no pre-ordained social structure. The social structure is created by those who make up fandom and the ways in which they perceive fandom and their place in it.

But some fans can't leave it at that.

One of the biggest problems fandom faces at present is the balkanization of fandom brought about by its increasing size. Where once fandom was analogous to a small town in which everyone knew everyone else (and worldcon attendance figures ran in the low hundreds), fandom is today a moderate-sized city, which because of its size has divided itself into a series of vaguely overlapping neighborhoods. It is now possible to be a BNF in one neighborhood and unknown in the next. Regional cons, like Balticon, have larger attendance (over 2,000) than worldcons did fifteen years ago.

This has caused some dislocation in fan traditions, and has resulted in an influx of "normals" -- mundane types who are not in any real respect distanced from mundane society and who bring normal mundane concepts and expectations with them into fandom. I already mentioned the feminists; far worse are the 'greedheads' who see fandom as a place to make a living. One such individual puts on conventions in California for a profit -- an idea borrowed from those barbarians, the Trekkies. This would be marginally acceptable except for the fact that he sees traditional west coast cons (like the Westercon) as competition, and has tried to put his competition out of business with both legal and illegal harassment.

Less immediately threatening, but perhaps more invidiously dangerous in the long run is the actual change in the character of fandom itself, as brought about through the change in the character of its component fans.

As already mentioned, fans until about fifteen years ago were, by and large, outsiders in mundane society. Often first-born or only children, readers, above-average in intelligence, fans tended to be those who had always stood outside the society of their mundane peers; neither jocks nor otherwise popular in school, they were from an early age the 'loners,' often shy and socially inept. Beset at once with superiority and inferiority complexes (they knew they were smarter, were convinced they were more foresighted -- who else believed in space travel before Sputnik? --



but they also knew they were outnumbered and subject to scorn and derision for the very foresighted views they espoused), they found themselves uniquely distanced from the society in which they were raised and lived.

Scornful of mundane values, fans found their own. Most of the early fan-values were intrinsically idealistic. A fan might be just an ordinary guy working in an ordinary shop during the mundane hours of his life, but his hobby could operate on a higher plane, a more idealistic plane. Conventions were deliberately structured to be non-profit (a position that is slowly but surely eroding as the potential for profit in conventions increases -- no one can convince me that Denver won't make at least \$100,000.00 in pre-con attendance fees, a sum the committee is very unlikely to find legitimate uses for), and fanzines were never expected to make a profit even if they broke even -- itself an unlikely event more than fifteen years ago. The basic currency of exchange in fandom was egoboo, and when Eric Frank Russell published his story, "And Then There Were None," in Astounding around 1950, the idea of social credits and obligations ("obs") immediately caught on with fans because it so exactly paralleled contemporary fannish practices -- something of which Russell might well have been aware.

In its imperfect way fandom had evolved a utopian structure based upon common human decency. Fandom is the only case I know of in which anarchy has naturally evolved and works.

Fannish anarchy worked precisely because it offered fans an idealistic alternative to the mundane world in which they still lived and worked. On another level, fandom was a place in which everyone was, or could be, an artist -- a creator. Maybe you drove a taxi to pay your rent, but as a fan you drew, wrote, edited or published. You had a creative outlet, and your creative work had value and could be exchanged via the barter system for the creative works of others. In fandom you could be your total self.

Today this is less true.

Fanzine fandom has fallen upon bad days. When the 'small town' of fandom was scattered over the continental United States and portions of the rest of the world, paper was what bound it all together. Now that fandom has grown much larger it is possible to be an active fan without either reading or contributing to fanzines; indeed, it is possible to be a 'neighborhood BNF' without any involvement in the paper world of fanzines, and many have achieved this state. Such fans attend many regional conventions, and are socially active in their own fancommunity.

Direct social contact emphasizes different values and virtues. Shy, socially inept people who can write brilliant sentences on paper but don't speak forcefully (or surely) are not going to be BNFs in this new social fandom. People who learned how to socialize well in school will do much better. But these people, by virtue of their success among their peers while growing up, are much less (if at all) alienated by and from mundane society and are themselves much more mundane in their values. They accept unquestioningly what we once did question.

Then too, science fiction no longer carries the social stigma it once had.

The success of "Star Wars" and its sequels point to this, as does the generally successful 'deghettoization' of written stf. (In passing, I might remark that one sure way to separate the old fans -- in attitude -- from the newer crop is to check out their opinions on "Star Wars" and similar 'sci-fi' movies. The newer and more mundane fans embrace 'sci-fi' unquestioningly, and even use the term approvingly.)



Thus, stf no longer symbolizes the distancing from mundane attitudes and values that it once did, and is increasingly attracting into fandom 'mundane' people.

I can't help viewing the 'mundanization' of fandom with distaste. More and more, fandom is taking on the attitudes and values of mundane society, and to the extent that it does it loses what made it both unique and valuable. The idealism is starting to disappear, for example, and mundane conflicts (like those surrounding sexism) are infiltrating inward.

But worst of all is the politics.

Fandom has always had its fan politicians. In the late thirties, a time of mundane political turmoil, fans brought some of that turmoil into fandom but they did so on an idealistic, utopian level. (Which is to say that Wollheim and the Michelists saw 'Michelism,' or Marxism, saving the world.) What disgusted fandom was the way this was translated into purely fan politics: the politicking in fanclubs, the Exclusion Act of 1939, etc.

New York City fandom was always particularly reprehensible in this regard: fan clubs were forever undergoing coups and schisms, reflecting the personality clashes of the participants. But NYC was hardly unique. It was just that there were more fans in New York City earlier than there were in most other metropolitan areas.

Early fan politics had a very juvenile cast to it which was not very surprising when you consider that most of the participants were still in their teens.

But by the time I became an active fan there were several generations of 'grown up' fans around -- people in their thirties and forties who had been fans by then for ten to twenty years. (It's sort of startling to me to realize that I myself have been in fandom now for nearly thirty years!).

Fandom to me was always a place which despite its idealistic underpinnings kept a sense of humor about itself and never took itself too seriously. But fandom always had its fuggheads, and I define as 'fuggheaded' anyone who takes himself too seriously and takes fandom too seriously. As a rule these are the same people who want to organize and run things, who feel that fandom has some specific "purpose" which it could easily achieve if only people would just do things a certain specific way.

Often a fuggheaded fan is simply a person who has seriously misapprehended the actual nature of fandom. I have met people who think that if only fandom was 'properly' organized it could do all sorts of good things in the world, as if fandom were simply another variant on the Elks or the Rotary Club or the American Legion, and its purpose were to Do Good Works in the local community.

But for some of these people fandom is a place to make up for their failures in the mundane world. Fandom is still, even now, a relatively small pond in which some people feel the need to be big frogs. These people seem to gravitate automatically into fan politics, just as their mundane cousins have made their way into mundane politics, whether it's the local school board or national office.

Choosing politics as a career is obviously something few of us care for. The very nature of the job tends to weed out those who would be best qualified to lead. People who are comfortable with themselves and confident in themselves rarely seek positions of public power; those positions are sought by precisely the sort of people who should never hold them. Power-trippers are insecure, emotionally unhealthy people who seek outside assurance of a power they inwardly lack.



In fandom the power-trippers are also insecure; one can measure that insecurity by the extent of their overbearingness. My antipathy to the Bergs in WSFA in the middle fifties and to Belle Dietz a few years later was born out of my own intuitive awareness that these were at root unpleasant, devious, manipulative, hypocritical and insincere people who wanted to have a hand in ordering my life and telling me how I should be a fan.

These people did not accept fandom as an anarchy. They knew that was "wrong," and that the mundane values by which they were raised were opposed to anarchistic values. They could not live and let live; they had to dominate. I can think of nothing good that has ever come about in fandom from the efforts of the fan-politicians -- only strife, conflict, and unpleasantness (including lawsuits).

Nor were these people who, for the most part, were willing to 'succeed' in fandom on their own merits and abilities. No doubt unconvinced of their own merits (as insecure people always are), they were unwilling to put themselves to the test. It was easier to thrust their ideas and opinions on others, convinced that bluster and pushiness would succeed and viewing fandom's anarchistic operating procedures as a chaotic vacuum crying out to be filled with their own 'leadership'.

One of fandom's most famous politicians wrote his own book-length history of "fandom," a book which detailed his own microcosmic battles in New York City fandom as if nothing else existed at that time. A man who never achieved genuine literacy, he next promoted himself as an editor and critic, although his victims (actual authors) rarely appreciated him in either role. Ultimately he appointed himself science fiction's chief historian, although he had not involved himself in the field until a number of years after the events he chronicled, and his "knowledge" was based on self-serving anecdotes from one of the principals recalled some twenty-five years after the fact. This "historian" clung to his version of history even when researchers (doing the research he'd never bothered to do) proved it false. Worse, he attacked the chief researcher for doing the research and not accepting the version he'd been promulgating for years unquestioningly.

It made no sense until one realized that for this person the "history" he'd been pushing was his own validation: it gave him the status he could not otherwise earn. That's a bit pathetic, and I can feel some real sympathy for the man. It's no fun being in a meritocracy if one's abilities appear to be mediocre. (Oddly enough, outside fandom and in his real, mundane job, the man has proved himself to be a genuine expert and earned wide respect. There's an irony for you.)

The worthwhile politics in fandom are not the make-believe transplants from mundanity, with business meeting, minutes, dues and officers. The politics of fandom which are worthwhile are to be found in learning to get along with a diverse and anarchistically-inclined bunch of people, learning to do whatever it is one wants to do within this context.

For fandom is, after all, really just a ghoddamned hobby.

-Ted White

.....  
ARTWORK CREDITS: Lee Hoffman: 6, 7, 12. (Note: these drawings are part of the Hoffman/Bergeron duel -- she does the illos and I have to make the context fit them -- which has raged across fandom in Fast & Loose and Telos and now has spilled into Wrhn.) John Giunta: 20 (reprinted from Spaceways 8, Oct. 1939). Jon Arfstrom: 36 (famed forgotten fanartist of the late 40s-early-50s -- a sincere acolyte of Virgil Finlay. Reprinted from a sheet torn from an unknown fanzine of the period. Perhaps Fantasy Advertiser. They shall not die). Bergeron: Covers, 14, 26, 32-33, 46.

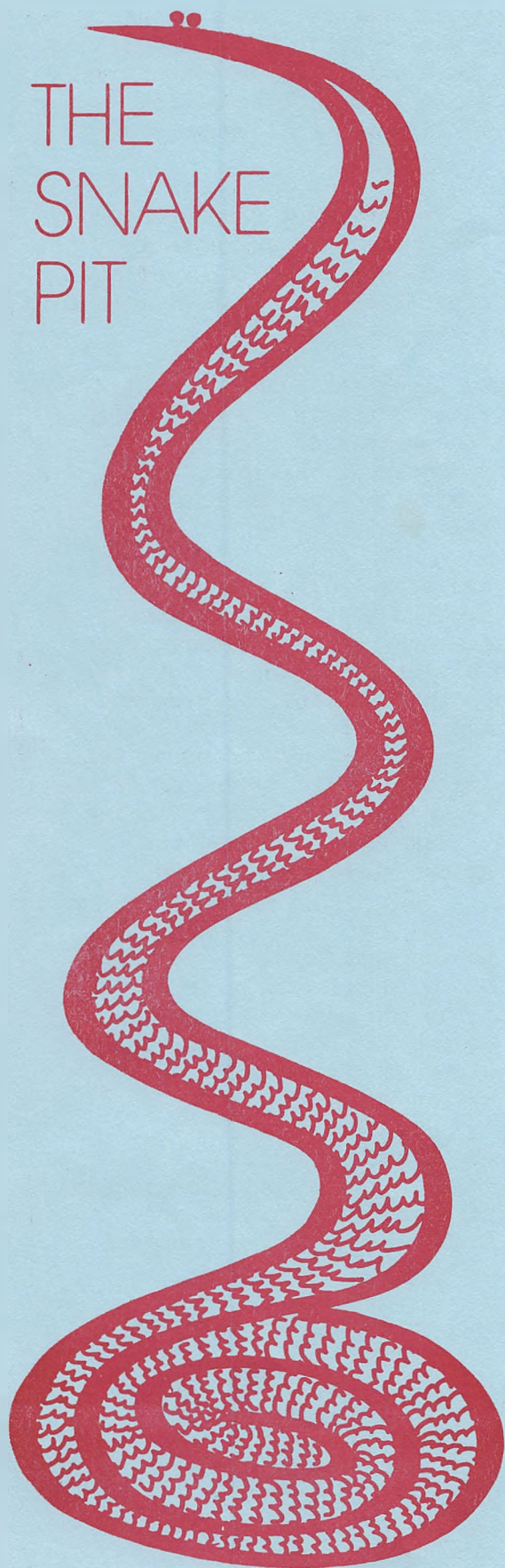


# THE SNAKE PIT

While many of you are still trying to think of something to say about the last issue, I do have the problem of putting together this letter column. Tempus Fugit and you thought, maybe, I was going to wait forever?

I dropped Ted White's copy off personally at Heavy Metal in its bulging Jiffy Bag with a "Guess Wot?" and a shamrock scrawled on it -- and bolted for the elevator. One of the teaser campaigns I distributed across fandom had been an announcement of the impending completion of the last issue with nothing but "Guess What?" on one side of the sheet: approximately two years before the issue appeared and before I knew I would have to reprint all the artwork. This was one of several false alarms I'd used to bring myself and fandom to the edge of a nervous breakdown of expectation -- a forest fire of rumors swept SunCon in 1977 -- the result of which was to create, subconsciously but deliberately, I now think, a moral climate in which I had to produce the thing or claim credit for the greatest Daugherty project of all time: a sort of ultimate cliff-hanger in which my fannish reputation would be completely ruined or vindicated. At any rate, there was an eldritch silence from Ted White: perhaps he was waiting in the lobby to see which elevator I would emerge from. So I dug into my fanzine collection and found a miniscule copy of Splotch (c. 1954), one of his first fan publications which in a 3" x 4" format included a double page spread of color mimeoing which happens to be one of the great unknown tours de force of the medium. Somewhere in its few pages it claimed credit for being a record for a small size fanzine so I sent it to Ted (by post) with a note reading "Since I didn't get a reaction out of you with the largest fanzine ever produced perhaps you'll have something to say about 'the smallest fanzine ever published?'" Ted replied that I had managed to bowl him over for the second time in two months and that he was saving his remarks for Boonfark.

The definitive comments on the WAsH have been Ted's and Rich Brown's in Boonfark and Creath Thorne's in Telos with the rest falling between the pithy and the Goshwowboyoboy. The majority of comment in letters has been in the latter category and as such really won't stand up to extensive quoting. It's pleasant and welcome reading (well, I'm relieved that you liked it) but 100 pages of egoboo does not a letter column make. I'll quote a sampling, but unless there was some interesting critical or historical aside, I propose to skip most of them and just express my appreciation. Sorry, Walt, better luck next time:





ARNIE KATZ: Your Willis volume is magnificent. It is the greatest single fan publishing project in the entire history of the hobby, in my opinion... In a way, your book embodies everything I ever really loved about fandom -- and don't find much there anymore. Willis shows himself to be a brilliant writer, a truly fine person and a perfect role-model for what fans should be at their best. I would go on in this vein, but I don't want to write myself out on this subject. I'm going to do my little bit by writing a long-winded commentary on this wonderful collection for Tim Marion's FAPazine. (59 Livingston St. Apt 6b, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201)

TOM PERRY: Warhoon 28 came Tuesday and has been ruining my sleep all week, until finally Friday I took half a day of vacation to catch up by sleeping in. At the same time I've been wanting to get off a letter to you about it. I fear the effects of what Walt called "annishnesia" multiplied perhaps by ten, since #28 took over ten years to get out and certainly is at least ten times as impressive as any annish I remember, including the VegaAnnish. :: The amount of egoboo I derived from this Willish is certainly more than I'd expected. The illo you did for my piece is just beautiful -- I only hope "The Night I Went..." captures half as well as the illo does this sense of real danger and conflict while preserving the fannish presence of human beings. :: There's even egoboo, if indirect, in the covers, once I noticed that it came from the Lil Person LeeH included in a letter to me and I traced onto a Quark stencil, ever so long ago. I almost seem to see my own nervous hands of that period in the slight uncertainty of those lines. :: The volume itself just surpasses description. Here is Willis. You didn't print everything he wrote, of course, but the selection is so clever that you've caught his whole fannish career and shown his development. It's almost like browsing through one of those collections of 19th-century photographs in which you can follow humanity's ability to capture pictures from the first blurry impressions of dead objects, through the time-exposed portraits whose subjects sit frozen with the help of metal frames, and up to modern high-speed camera-work. And the reminiscences, and that Harp that tells you how to do it yourself ("But no, Dick, the Harp is not all first-draft material.") show just how humankind's consciousness of its own consciousness propelled us out of the Garden with the knowledge of Good and Evil and the duty to decide. :: Of course, the bibliography and memory conspire to make me wish you had put in things you'd left out. I would love to see that article on "Gulf" in the SF News of Summer 1950, which Walt alludes to in his Calkins/Heinlein Harp. And I had expected "Twice Upon A Time" to include that marvelous pun that occurs in Walt's description of returning to their car in Bunratty Castle, in which the "higher perches" of the birds who shat on the car is twisted into the hire purchase under which the car was bought. :: But that's inevitable, isn't it? ...that each of us will have some favorite piece that was omitted. I suspect every reader will weigh in with some such comment. But I still think the selection was brilliant. I'm particularly happy to see "The APA and the Survival of Civilisation" included -- not only because I haven't seen it before but because I think it's superior to Persig's book in focussing on the real questions of life and death. I thought Persig pretentious and tiresome, taking hundreds of pages to say what Willis does (or some of what Willis does) in seven. :: The photographs are marvelous. I regret all over the loss of those I took in 1976. :: And then of course there's your own front and back editorials. I didn't know you were at the Chicon, and I didn't realize you were moving to Puerto Rico (which only means that I won't see you when I visit there instead of when I visit New York). You did a beautiful job of showing what someone like Willis can mean to another fan; I was going to attempt something similar and now I'm glad I left it to someone who could do such a moving piece of writing about something so personal. (PO Box 2134, Boca Raton, Florida, 33432)

MOSHE FEDER: Dick, don't let anyone ever tell you it wasn't worth the wait. Not just the wait since your announcement two years ago, but even the wait since the original announcement in 1969 (a little before I discovered fandom). In a way, the long



wait even added something; a special thrill when after all the scoffing, jokes and doubts the thing finally materialized. You achieved something rare, it seems to me. You allowed something, the WASH, to get built up in our imaginations as something wonderful and unique over a long, long period of anticipation and then, somehow, you actually made it live up to our expectations. There are very few things we look forward to in life that work out nearly as well. :: The idea of all those pages of mimeography in fancy hard covers really tickles me. That you stuck with typewritten text and mimeography keeps the material closer to its authentic roots (where offset-printed typeset text would have distanced it both from those roots and from the reader) and the contrast between the humble media and the overall size and polish of the project only heighten the fannish effect by contrast. It reminds me of my own day-dreams of using a computer-driven IBM Selectric Composer to type stencils. The idea of combining up-to-date technology with stencil-duplicating, a technology the commercial world considers all but obsolete had the same kind of perverse, cockeyed appeal to me, and it felt like a fannish thing to do. :: I'm not sure if I'd ever seen a picture of Willis before, but in any case, it was useful to be reminded that he was still a young man in those great days and not the middle-aged figure I tend to imagine when he's mentioned. It was also interesting to see that he was quite handsome. That's a good picture of Lee, too. (Not that I'm surprised that she was attractive. I met her at SunCon and spent a fleeting couple of hours over the course of the con talking to her.) After seeing Lee's picture it's a testimony to Madeleine's faith in her husband that she let him go off to visit America and Lee. I wish you'd been able to include a contemporary picture of Madeleine. :: Oh yes, another touch I liked: the inclusion of the long-sought quote from Joyce (I was about to give you credit, but I see you credit Tom Perry with finding it.) (142-34 Booth Memorial Avenue, Flushing, N.Y. 11355)

(rb: This is getting a bit gooey but how can I consign the next person to the WAHFs? Well, for fanhistorical purposes a selection from:)

LEE HOFFMAN: I have just spent the past few hours browsing through the WASH, reading bits and pieces here and there, and I am filled with feelings I can not describe. A kind of deep wistful mystical muddle of emotions such as I suspect one might experience from seeing a truly great work of art. It touches me on non-verbal levels. It is beautiful. :: What beautiful covers! What lovely end papers! What a nice title page and dedication! I am tempted to say it certainly is a wonderful thing. :: I can't really make any precise detailed comments, except that it is even more better than ever I had anticipated. I just decided I feel like I've run through a tape of over a quarter century of fandom at fast forward. :: So what can I say besides thank you and I hope something as wonderful as you deserve will happen to you very soon. (350 N.W. Harbor Blvd., Pt Charlotte, Florida, 33952)

HARRY WARNER had received a letter from me about some matter or other and I had enclosed a postcard: There is no possibility that I could confine to the modest limits of a postal card my reaction to the word that the Willis Wrhn is completed. So I return it to you with the thought that you could use it sometime later to get my reaction to something less spectacular like your invention of perpetual motion or your first encounter with Martians. :: I can't imagine any way in which you could have improved on the results of all your time, trouble, and expenditures. There's no point in my parroting again the things you already realize: the significance of the record you've established for largest issue of a fanzine, the service you've provided to all the fans who can't find or afford the old fanzines in which the material originally appeared, the fact that at last it's possible for anyone in fandom to gain access to the delights of good writing and legendry that the 1950s contained. When I write again about this issue, I'll try to remember to praise a couple of aspects that fewer recipients may think about, like the possibility that this Wrhn will



inspire fandom in general to write more carefully for publication. :: So I want to thank you for undertaking and carrying out such a gigantic and needed task. I hope it has a therapeutic effect on Walter's health, by its concrete proof that someone cares about him enough to do something so tremendous. Already I feel that it has helped to shake me a bit further out of the fannish doldrums, reinforcing my decision to remain active in fandom for a while longer. After all, if you did something as fine as this, it's possible that someone else might accomplish something else half as splendid, and I would want to miss anything half as excellent as this Warhoon. (423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740)

TED WHITE: The only reason you haven't heard from me yet re the world's largest fanzine is that I'm still digesting it. (I suspect that this may be a problem for you: the impact of Wrhn 28 is incredible, but almost too vast to deal with. I suspect you'll be getting egoboo on this issue for at least the next ten years, but that it may come in as a trickle, only a few responses at a time, due to the sheer enormity of the volume...) (1014 N. Tuckahoe St, Falls Church, Va. 22046)

TERRY HUGHES: Your nifty fanzine arrived here on Monday, the same day as a summons from the county sheriff. Even though the summons was only for jury duty, I still found Wrhn to be the more pleasant of the two. (606 N. Jefferson St. Arlington, Va. 22205)

(rb: Well, that's refreshing. Actually Terry did go on and on but I think what I'll do, for a change, is quote my reply to him: "Thank you for acknowledging my little fanzine. I hope the next issue will be better. :: I might have known that yours would be the first word of proof that the outside world actually knew that the WASH now existed. I recall when UPS picked up the first shipment of 8 copies for distribution being overwhelmed by an immense feeling of relief (and fulfillment). It is done, I literally yelled as I realized that now nothing could stop the fact of its existence -- something I was beginning to doubt in the last few years. I only worked on it with enthusiasm -- when I felt gafia I let it slide -- reluctantly -- but that was the thing to do rather than force it to an anguished conclusion.)

PATRICK NIELSEN HAYDEN's was the next confirmation to arrive: Willish recieved. Am now expectantly awaiting other prophesied events of the Last Days: Kali Yuga, Day of Judgement and 200th Fandom. (4712 Fremont Avenue North, Seattle, WA 98103)

ROBERT A.W. LOWNDES: This has to be the greatest single issue of a fanzine ever published. I'd bet that you'll retire (when you retire) unsurpassed. (717 Willow Avenue, Hoboken, New Jersey, 07030)

DAVE LOCKE: Judging from wordsmithing alone there have been, and still are, fans who could equal Willis in the short run. At their best, they could equal him. Not to their discredit, however, they did not produce in the long term what Willis did: an enormous body of work, chronologically ranging from very good to excellent with massive projects which represent impressive peaks, and throughout infused with a rare human warmth and a clear-as-a-bell perspective on people in general and the fannish microcosm in particular. No one else that I have read, in fandom, has had that capacity and done that much with it. (2813 #2 DeMel Avenue, Louisville, Ky. 40214)

DAN STEFFAN: At Ted White's housewarming party in his new New York apartment, I was talking with Moshe Feder and looking at the WASH. Next to me, a friend named Bob, (a non-fan) asked what I was looking at. I answered "Warhoon 28" and he said, "Oh, isn't that the thing you've been waiting for, for 11 years? But I thought it was a fanzine?" (Even non-fans know what a fanzine is in my group.) "It is a



fanzine" I said with a sly smile. He never heard of you, Warhoon or Willis; and yet he sat there for a half an hour poring over the WASH. He read passages picked at random, and was laughing. He was oohing and aweing over the artwork, soon he had other people looking over his shoulder oohing along with him. What I'm trying to say in my longwinded way is that the WASH is so good that people who have no idea what the hell it is, are getting a tremendous kick from it. :: Eleven years, that's not too many. (823 N. Wakefield St., Arlington, Va. 22203)

CHUCH HARRIS found himself in the same emotional nexus Lee Hoffman mentions earlier and sent one of the most personal and difficult to quote letters I've ever received...a letter which runs almost five legal length micro-elite pages and comprises an intensely intimate look at IFandom. I'm thinking of sending it to the Public Broadcasting System for filming into a 13 chapter serial to be called "Down The Back Staircase at Oblique House". But it poses a dilemma: (1) I'm not even sure it was intended for publication and (2) I'm not sure if it means anything unless I publish the whole thing and Tell All. I find myself on page 510b where Walt and Madeleine are struggling with the problem of trying to extract an article from the letters of one Chuck Harris and failing because the "humour is so thoroughly embedded in the text that short quotations are difficult to extract." And this letter was written in the following frame of mind:

One thing that strikes me immediately is how odd phrases here and there act like old long forgotten photographs found in a drawer. Memories flood back, and run through the mind as if a video cassette had suddenly been switched on again. My memory seems to work in pictures rather than words. Instead of a formal review this will be just a lot of incoherent notes jotted down as I go along.

Before we get to the scandalous scene in the laundry room I think I'll change the action to this passage about a character I also don't recall anyone mentioning in the mythos:

And Begorrah! I don't think anybody has ever written about him yet. He was Madeleine's father...the only man in Ireland who actually said the word. He was a stern uncommunicative man who was held a little in awe by everybody, but for some reason he liked me and we got on quite well. Apart from fandom I liked gardening as a hobby (fruit and vegetable...not flowers) and he was a superb gardener. He had a piece of sheltered ground...about an acre and grew produce for the family and (I think) to sell commercially. Once, when a freak cold snap hit the British Isles wiping out the whole of the first salad crop, Begorrah had an acre of prime lettuce which were virtually the only ones available in the whole of the United Kindom, and worth about a dollar apiece. Walter, of course, couldn't care less about the damn lettuce, but I thought it an achievement myself... (32 Lake Crescent, Daventry, Northants, England)

Hm, maybe I could edit this letter into something...if Chuch extends general permission and if the other characters promise not to be taken aback when they see "Inside IF" in the special Confidential issue of Wrhn. What say? Then there's the article I was going to do for Tom Perry called "IFen In Kneepants" but he never published another issue of Quark. I tell you if I really wanted to retire it would be at all difficult to go into the blackmail business...

KEN OZANNE did something similar. He sent four air letters (separately, so that they arrived in strange sequences, of course) packed with text from a typewriter with a face easily half the size of the one Harris used. But I have no intention of publishing a fanzine even one third the size of the WASH so there isn't much likelihood I'll quote this manuscript which seems to cover just about every stray thought that



came into his head while reading the book. Sliding bits of it under the microscope I can make out various notes such as these comments on "The Enchanted Duplicator":

This is no doubt the finest piece of fannish fiction ever written. The epitome of the central art of fandom. But what can one really add about a thing perfect in itself. Perhaps that the rest of Walt's writing served to clarify some points in it such as the identities of Profan and Kerles. This alone was worth \$20 -- to have "The Enchanted Duplicator" in a single volume rather than having to hunt out four separate copies of Amazing Stories.

Gad, it seems a shame to let 200,000 words of egoboo go to waste like this so maybe I'll use another bit (not egoboo, this time, lucky you) from these letters which were almost sent to the wrong address:

I have been having subconscious doubts about writing to an address labelled 1978, even if I only just got the zine. Now I find your flyer. At least I can alter these letters before they go to the wrong address. By the way, I have found no internal reference to the number of copies printed and 40 fewer than an unstated number is very little more useful in that regard than was the original. Of course it does show that the original number was more than 40, but I had assumed that anyway. Please clarify this point so that I can know how safely I can claim Willis' bon mots as my own within Australian fandom. (42 Meeks' Crescent, Faulconbridge, NSW Australia, 2776)

Near as I can figure out there were 961 copies in existence when the book was delivered to me at 1 West 72nd Street but either I'm getting confused or else they are doing a loaves and fishes act. Of course it's possible the binder billed me for less than they shipped out of a sense of remorse for all the aggravation they knew they were going to cause me. A cursory check before they went into storage in New York (I brought a couple boxes to Puerto Rico for filling orders) revealed I may have quite a number more than I should have after subtracting the total I've sent out from the 961 figure. Maybe it will never go out of print!

WALT WILLIS wrote several letters which, in some ways, form an interesting recapitulation of my editorial in the last issue (wish I'd thought of it then). I can see now that this letter column is going to turn into a column more of letters than of comments so maybe I should title this section "I Remember Walt Willis". My files from the early 50s are in storage in New York but I have a message here addressed to me at 110 Bank St., New York City, on the 10th of January, 1960:

Nice to hear from you again after all those years. In a mixture of hopefulness and lethargy I have kept your original index card all that time, from when you were living in Vermont, but it wasn't as easy to find the back numbers of Hyphen. A while back I decided to re-organise the Great Archives and everything was moved into the back attic, where the far corner is now filled with a great mountain of duplicating paper. I roamed among the foothills in immanent danger of avalanches and was able to pluck out a couple of old Hyphens of which there seems to be at least one other copy. Sometime when all is cleanness and order I shall find exactly what I have (I hope it includes at least one complete set for myself) and let you know.

I had also ordered, finally, a copy of "The Enchanted Duplicator" and must have recieved the last one because Walt thought it was out of print but figured "an old friend especially one who was sending me the fabulous sum of \$3.00, was entitled to a bit of an effort so I rummaged around and found a copy that apparently hadn't been put together because I ran out of passe partout binding tape. I still haven't any,



but maybe you can fix it up yourself. You'll have not only the last TED ever issued, but a custom-built one. Let's hear from you again?" I wonder if that note from Willis had anything to do with the revival of Wrhn: I see that early in that year I had copies of Hyphen and my first exposure to "The Enchanted Duplicator". Wrhn 6 is dated January, 1960, and I suppose there must have been conscious awareness that Oopsla was nearing the end of its run and that Walt might soon be needing another home for a certain column. Time and space were coming together, obviously, but I doubt I thought then that Wrhn could use a regular columnist. Wrhn 6 was prepared for the Golden Jubilee Mailing of the Spectator Amateur Press Society and I don't think I was even a member yet. Wrhn went on and Walt wrote a bit in his column in Fanac about my atomic question (see pg305) and I did an extended review of "The Enchanted Duplicator" which aroused some comment in SAPS. Then Walt noted, attention faneds, for the first time, my "sympathetic understanding of the importance of feedback" because I copied out those comments on my review for him:

(1 September 1960): It was churlish of me not to reply properly to your letter and comment on Wrhn but I have been very inactive this past while for one reason and another. I hoped the reference in Fanac would convey something of how much I appreciated Wrhn, and as for your comments on TED, I could only have nodded sagely in agreement with the points you make. Every allegory must necessarily be inaccurate at some point and one can only hope to disguise the discrepancies. I'm still very much an extinct volcano and will probably remain so until the autumn, but I had to write and thank you for taking the trouble to quote the SAPS comments. I really do appreciate that no end, and so will Bob. :: I suppose we were a bit hard on Mr. Swift and his brothers Offset and Litho. On the other hand we admit quite readily that the Trufandom of TED is a very small one...the one we ourselves like best, the fandom of the informal mimeoed fanzine which creates a living breathing microcosm of its own with a degree of rapport among the members possible only when they are separated from one another only by the thickness of the editor's stencil. Any more complex publishing process {Such as this one! -rb} seems inevitably to create an atmosphere of pretentious remoteness. The fanzines you quoted were all very worthy ones, but I'll bet there was more affection for Quandry and sorrow on its folding than there was for the lot of them put together. (Incidentally isn't it remarkable how "articles of lasting interest" -- biographies of pros, surveys of sf trends etc -- seem to be forgotten almost immediately, while the ephemeral gossipings of people like Burbee are constantly being quoted and reprinted?) And after all, the thing was called "The Enchanted Duplicator", or mimeograph. If Don Day or Roy Squires ever produce an allegory called "The Magic Multilith" or "The Spellbound Planograph", we shall stand on the sidelines and cheer with unrestrained enthusiasm. The unlikelihood of this is the ultimate answer to your objection. {rb: Is this the first example of the revelation that the medium is the message?} :: Warhoon was fascinating, and I was deeply interested in what you had to say about US politics, which I follow as keenly as our own if not more so. I saw Nixon on tv here and was reluctantly impressed with his presentation of himself. Unless everything one has read about him is untrue, it is no longer a fact that the tv camera exposes insincerity in which case ghod help us all. This Thunder & Roses argument is not so academic, in fact it's likely to be the crucial question in the next Labour Party conference. Support for unilateral nuclear disarmament is gaining ground rapidly in the LP, and one of the main arguemnts of Bertrand Russell currently is that as long as Britain continues to be a US aircraft carrier for H-Bombs, and spy flights, there exists a standing temptation for Russia to wipe us all out with a few H-Bombs, leaving America carefully alone. Is it reasonable, asks Russell, to expect America then to embark on the extermination of all humanity, including herself, just for the sake of retribution. Well, is it? We wouldn't even want you to. We'd rather throw away our atom bombs now, ask you and your H-Bombers politely to go home, and issue every adult citizen with a revolver.

Then Gregg Calkins wrote "The Summer Soldiers" for Wrhn -- an article on the above



matters. There hadn't been an issue of Oopsla in many many months, in fact the last Harp written for Calkins had appeared in something called Interim dated February, 1959. I'd begun to have the feeling Walt was wondering what to do with his stray tunes:

(28 December 1960): Yes, thanks for the invitation. I think we should make a good combination. At any rate I feel I'll be at home in Wrhn, and I hope you won't regret inviting me. I've written to Terry Carr putting Plinth on a sporadic basis partly because one column is enough for me these days (maybe too much) though I didn't mention that point, and partly because I can't feel much interest in a column to which I see so little response. :: Hm. I was going to say, write and let me know your deadline, but I checked the last Wrhn and see it was dated October. I'm a bit rusty, but I'll knock off and try and hack something out. It'll hardly be more than a letter of comment I'm afraid, but it'll be a start. Oh, two minor points. Don't bother to pass on any comments by GMC. And is that the Senator Humphrey who was the candidate for the Democratic nomination?

I had been in contact with Senator Humphrey to urge him to support Adlai Stevenson for the Democratic nomination. He replied! And did support Stevenson who I'd rabidly campaigned for only to see my immense ball of petitions shredded to ribbons by the Kennedy machine at that convention. Kennedy went on to defeat Nixon (the latter not having learned, yet, how to conceal his patent insincerity from the television cameras) but in the meantime, back in fandom, Walt's 'letter of comment' had turned into the Calkins/Heinlein Harp and was the beginning of The New Willis. To my delight and consternation. In those days, Wrhn dealt with World Issues. I even had John Berry, the humorist who lived in Ireland, writing heavy pieces on the U2 flights and other political international subjects. I was hoping for lighter Harps to give some balance to the magazine but Walt knew better how to fit into the context. Wrhn was hardly giving an example of spontaneous, frothy, fannishness: straight ahead were Breen, Blish, and Lowndes though I didn't realize it at the time. The first Harp arrived about one week before the issue was due to be mailed to the official editor of SAPS. It arrived with a problem: "Starship Troopers" was referred to throughout the piece as "Starship Soldiers". I was unfamiliar with the latter title, though it was possible it had appeared first under that name. I wasn't about to call Walt in the dead of night so I fearlessly changed the name to "Starship Troopers" throughout. Walt had written that first Harp on two air letter forms in the rush to get it to me. I received the second half of the column first -- the half with no explanation of what it was -- so I didn't know until a couple days later that I actually had the Harp, though I was agonizing over the idea.

(20 February 1961): I'm just recovering from flu and I'm afraid I can't recommend it as a fannish disease. Here I am in a warm room with a typer and nothing to do but fan, and I just haven't any energy. By the time I do feel up to fanning I suppose my conscience will force me back to work. :: I feel a little awed at what you say about having the Harp in Wrhn and I only hope I won't disappoint you. For my part I was very happy to be invited, because I like the magazine, I like its regular schedule (Gregg used to drive me wild by giving me tight deadlines that faded away) and most of all I find you and thus the atmosphere of the mag very congenial. I'm terribly subjective in my fan writing... for instance I find it impossible to write for an indeterminate fanzine so that I never have a backlog...and everything I do is aimed at a mental picture of a little group of which the editor is the centre. Not that I aim at the editor, but if he is a good one he will be in the centre of a congenial group. :: I'm sorry about the mix-up with the air letters: I did mail them absolutely simultaneously. The fact was that I only meant to write one but I always seem to overestimate the area of these things and underestimate the space I'm going to need. Henceforth I'll send the columns in one piece. I'd prefer it this way myself because it's easier to revise as you go along. I agree with your implied suggestion that we need a little more humour and I hope to get



back to something more like the old Q style occasionally. It was just that last time I was pushed for time and subject matter and serious stuff is pretty easy to churn out. It's the light frothy stuff that's the devil to write, if it's to be any good. :: Oh, by the way, was I wrong in thinking that Heinlein's novel in one form or another was called "Starship Soldier"? I abbreviated it to SS Soldier as a not very subtle insinuation that it had something in common with the Nazi SS. :: Thanks also for the piece about Campbell. I feel a very pampered columnist when you do this sort of thing, but believe me it's very helpful and encouraging. I can never tell what sort of thing I'm liable to get ideas from but even if it only sinks into my subconscious it's still helpful.

After that beginning it's a wonder Walt wasn't completely discouraged from writing further installments... I see I was forwarding along anything he might have missed that could serve as background for future columns or which might have broader reference to the world of fandom. Talk about the care and feeding of columnists! And I was copying out all comments on the Harp in the form of a little fanzine, "The Egoboo Express", which I would staple together and even, probably, did special covers for. I'm sure I did this for all the contributors to Wrhn at the time and I think Calkins had done something similar...that's probably where I got the idea.

(March, 1961): You're spoiling me. No one could write material good enough to deserve the sort of literary luxury you're surrounding me with. I appreciated immensely the fanzine of comments you sent me but it must have been a terrible lot of work. Could you not just send the letters, for return? Or if you have a taper, reading them onto a tape would be the quickest.

Later I discovered what a Xerox machine was and transformed The Egoboo Express into an envelope full of sliced up letters with the writer's name added on the back of them -- and saved a lot of time. :: So on we went into the 60s with Walt writing some of his most important installments. I inspired the 30th chapter by asking if the Harp was "all first draft material" -- a possibility that had suddenly occurred to me because the writing always read so effortless and unforced and looked very much like the text of his letters which also seemed unforced and effortless and looked just like his mss, that is, full of cross-outs and second thoughts...it now occurs to me that the letters may not have been first draft material either. The question was stupid on the face of it but the similarity between the letters and the manuscripts was what raised it. And you all thought this was a clever stratagem on my part. Oh, well...

(27 June 1961): It's the sort of subject that fascinates me, but you can't be sure about other people: though if I'm right in thinking that most fans are writers man-que it should go over all right. Only thing is we'll probably have people writing in to say that everything I suggested is either in some writing correspondence course or contradicts it. I don't know what they say in those things and I wonder if it mightn't be as well to check before I do the fanfiction one: because although there are many points peculiar to fanfiction there are others which are common to fiction in general. :: Many thanks for the Silverberg opus and the Spacemen magazine. Both very interesting, and it's nice to see Forry end up in his niche at last. For years I've been wondering what sort of a position would suit his talents and here suddenly and unexpectedly it is: I feel a sense of relief as with a jig-saw piece fitting into place. But by the way it would be better to send further inspirational material about three weeks before the deadline. I usually start thinking about the Harp about a week before I start writing and the material should be filed in my subconscious before then. :: ...we're on holiday, for two weeks, in a place called Port-no-Blagh, Co. Donegal. All mountains and cliffs and golden strands... and, at the moment, wind and rain. We have a tiny wooden bungalow on the side of a cliff with no radio or tv: we've run out of reading material and the nearest cinema is 12 miles



away and seems to show ten-year-old B features. In bad weather it's a test of patience because with two children in the house you can't write. Though at the moment it's not too bad. Bryan is tearing round the floor with a "Space Jeep" I bought him yesterday in Dunfanaghy, the nearest town (and very suitably named for a gafia resort) and Carol is reading a Strange Adventures comic. What a sfal household.

I don't recall what the 'Silverberg opus' was but the Ackerman magazine was one of those compendiums of sf/fantasy/film material he specializes in. I thought it might serve as basis of a commentary on Ackerman's relationship to fandom and sf and how he had turned a hobby into a living but that didn't happen. Now I think of it I can't really say any of the items I sent Walt actually served as the springboard for an installment but they seem to have been well aimed and he was always very interested in what I might select next. :: I usually scheduled my major vacation of the year around worldcon time and when you were all congregating I was much removed from things fannish in such places as Palma, or Capri, or Stockholm. In 1962 Walt and Madeleine were preparing to lose their luggage in America:

(22 August 1962): Actually I was thinking I might get a Harp done for the next Wrhn before we set out on the Great Trip. But the prospect has been so unsettling and the preparations so thought consuming that I've finally had to admit I won't be able to manage it. So unless I find time and inclination while in the States I'm afraid I'll have to skip an issue. I'll remember your deadline though, and only the possibility that there is a Great Bergeron Mystery prevents me from projecting the wild surmise that you and I might be in NY together to write a joint column-editorial.

I think that was the year I narrowly missed meeting Picasso on the beach at Juanles-Pins and if I'd been more persistent I'm sure I could have arranged it...but in those days I was already well into my recluse act and couldn't figure out the importance of face-to-face meetings. Walt must have realized he would have traveled half-way around the world before I'd be able to publish any installment he might have sent me and would find himself reading something written by the person he had been: perhaps not too congenial a frame of reference for writing. Then, I was away on my own trip, too. "The Bergeron Mystery", of course, is that I realize I get everything I want out of fandom just sitting at a typewriter, occasionally, but it's a mystery that seems to continue to puzzle such people as Dan Steffan and Patrick Nielsen Hayden to this day. :: After October, 1962, Wrhn had appeared for 12 consecutive quarterly issues and was moving into decline, though it didn't look it: that issue was 92pgs and featured both Breen's ChiCon III report and a lengthy article on "Pablo Picasso: The Improbable Genius". Only one issue appeared in 1963, three in 1964, and one in 1965. And none in 1966 and 1967. The Harp went on to Quark where Ted White was heard to say that "this was a much more congenial place" for it than the ominous blue pages of Wrhn. I lost contact with everyone in fandom and then after writing what must have been a series of extremely persuasive letters revived Wrhn with #23, May, 1968...(the first of four consecutive quarterly issues) containing such people as Willis, Breen, and Lowndes. There's another tale to be told here which goes back to the early 50s but that belongs in another manuscript, the story of my life in Wrhn ("The Blue Monster"); in the meantime I had heard from Walt again, of course, who, in reply to my invitation to revive the Harp, wrote:

(21 February 1968): Yes. I couldn't really say anything else...except possibly thanks...and preserve my forlorn belief that I am still part of fandom. :: So give me a deadline -- I'll never get started without one -- and I'll start trying to tune this rusty old Harp. (I washed my thing the other day and I can't do an air with it.)

Four more installments of the Harp appeared in Wrhn. In issue 26, February, 1969,



I confessed I had the bright idea of publishing all of them in a single issue. We know what happened to that dream. Here's what Walt thought about it:

(12 January 1969): Naturally I'd be tremendously pleased to see you produce a Harp anthology. Not just for the honour and glory of the thing (a phrase used locally in connection with the winning of a sporting competition too obscure to have a prize) but because it would be a big help to me in a practical way. Terry Carr has dangled before me the prospect of a book consisting of miscellaneous humorous...and other... essays largely based on what I have already written in fandom, and it would be very useful to have all the Harp stuff together. I have lent so many fanzines in my time that I very much doubt whether I have a complete file myself. I'm not sure to what extent the prospect of a book like this would diminish your own incentive to produce a Harp anthology, but perhaps I could make this point: I think very little of the preWrhn material could be used in a mundane book, since it was only with the advent of Wrhn that I started to broaden my terms of reference; if you feel reluctant to reprint material that may be in part available in a pb you could restrict yourself to the preWrhn Harps, justifying the exclusion on the grounds that most of your readers will already have read the rest. :: I agree that "The Harp Stateside" and "The Harp In England" belong in a different genre, along with the conreports in Hyphen. One other stray thought: if you thought an anthology of preWharps too skimpy you might like to consider adding the Plinths from Confusion, which belong to the same body of writing in the heyday of Sixth Fandom. :: But let me hasten to add that anything you propose will be OK with me. The only thing I'm likely to disagree with you about is the proceeds, if any: I don't see why I should have any part of them without sharing both the work and expense. :: I owe you an explanation about the current installment of the Harp. All this credo stuff was meant to be a sort of statement of position, introductory to and illustrative of an explanation of the present crisis in Northern Ireland which has certain features of special interest to Americans, and even to fanzine readers. (The first phase was resolved by the Prime Minister appealing for letters-of-comment on a statement urging in effect love as the answer to the country's problems: a response equivalent to twenty million spontaneous letters to the President enabled him to rout the rednecks and party bosses.) I decided to defer it partly because it would make the instalment inordinately long, and partly because it would be more interesting to people who have already read "The Improbable Irish", which I hope many of your readers will eventually do. I had indeed thought of a book on the subject as a sort of sequel to "The Improbable Irish", but Terry or rather Ace turned it down as having too limited an appeal to their typical reader. I expect they're right, but I would hope that Wrhn readers would be more interested, because they're more likely to have read "The Improbable Irish" and more inclined to identify with me. It is after all not often that a fan is at, or at least very near, the centre of a political crisis. I was adviser to one of the main protagonists, and in fact I wrote one of the speeches quoted in my book. It delighted me to be able to write my own words into history. :: PS: If the Harp project does materialise, could you add a footnote to the effect that in the fifth instalment in Quandry Lee omitted the sentence "I have the highest possible opinion of armchairs" in my reply to Eva Fireston's indictment of me as an armchair critic. The omission made nonsense of the whole paragraph. (See how it still rankles.)

Oops, I forgot to indent the above -- but there's no time to begin retyping at 9:30 on the morning of October 11th when this has to be at the printer at this same time on the morrow and anyway this puts you in direct contact with the editor's miseries and triumphs like a good fanzine is supposed to do (even a photo-offset one). :: If Walt hadn't been able to forget about an armchair misplaced in Quandry in 1951 I wondered if he was still haunted by those missing SS soldiers in Wrhn in 1961 and offered to re-instate them but speculated it might cause more confusion than clarification. The question must have passed without notice because I don't seem to have an answer around here anywhere. :: The observations on the Irish situation are in reference to the



final Harp in Wrhn, of course, and was the direction the path out of Trufandom had taken Walt. :: On the subject of what to include and exclude from the Wash, there were several changes, obviously, and rather than check everything I let his carte blanche cover just about any question I had though in one of the last communications from him in the 60s:

(7 December 1969): Sorry about the delay, but then I've no objection at all to your including "The Harp Stateside". Indeed no. Awe and diffidence perhaps, but no objection.

He must have decided I'd gone completely round the bend and except for an occasional brief exchange over a bibliographic search or something there things lay for many years until one day the following letter arrived:

(1 April 1980): Yesterday morning, about an hour after the regular postman had passed by, another one came to effect recorded delivery of the copy of Warhoon 28 mailed on 21st January: a cheerful character who said he was glad I'd come to the door because it saved him signing for the package himself, and invited me to admire the patented indestructible everlasting all-weather pen with which an appreciative government had provided him. He also delivered your airmailed envelope mailed on 22nd March, which when you come to think about it is rather strange. How did these two postal packets come to be associated one with another? One can understand that Wrhn 28 became segregated from the ordinary air and surface mails because it was insured, and for all we know was accompanied by an armed guard every inch of its journey by pneumatic sleigh across the Sargasso Sea. But the airmailed envelope had nothing special about it, except of course the affronted albatross which adorned it. On reflection I can offer only the theory that the second postman was really the first one over again. I get up about the same time the postman comes (still driven from pillow to post -- pg568) but seldom see him, so he could have changed without my knowing it. Rather than awaken the family from its sleep he would have decided to deliver the insured package on his way home, and to hold over also for then the other item of mail for our house which by mere coincidence was your letter. Non-paranoid explanations are always to be preferred, if possible. :: Next question; did I like it? Well, no. Liked is not the word. Overwhelmed, yes, overawed, yes. Discombobulated, bouleversed or thunderstruck, perhaps yes and absolutely. Struck all of a heap, definitely. Of course my reactions may differ from those of some others, because much of the text I don't care for very much and some of it, particularly Slant, I can't read at all even after such a passage of time. There is nothing quite like type-setting for withdrawing every trace of meaning and merit from words and leaving mere husks with a distasteful odour about them indicating that life has departed. On the other hand there are occasional passages which I had forgotten so completely that they come to me quite fresh and it may be for this reason that at this moment my favourite passage of all is "Home Hints From Oblique House" on pgs 310/1. I suspect though it has something to do with the fact that it indicates what a nice and unusual girl I was fortunate enough to marry. I asked myself a question which I do not remember seeing in any of the quizzes designed to enable you to find the ideal mate. Coming upon a frozen butterfly in the backyard, does she (a) put it on top of the lodgers wardrobe with a drop of honey for when it wakes: or... I have to report however that this same woman has refused to surrender Wrhn 28 since it arrived and I had to make my own lunch yesterday. I asked her what she thought of it but she just shook her head and said 'Remarkable...remarkable...' I think in a small way this is an example of the maxim that behind every great man there is an astonished woman. :: Other thoughts about the text was that good ghod what a lot of it there is, and how fortunate I am that people like or at least pretend to like this ill-written rubbish. I can however all the more appreciate the artwork, which seems to be full of style and charm and warmth, and the sheer taste-



fulness of every detail from the most prominent to the most minute. I am quite breathless with admiration everytime I leaf through it. And by the way as one who has tried his hand at bookbinding and has commissioned some work professionally for the office, I am full of the most sincere respect for the firm who did your binding. I didn't know it was even possible to do a job of this class with mimeo paper and without stitching. It's nice to know that real craftsmanship is still to be found. :: This is the first letter I have written to another old fannish friend for many years, and it seems inadequate. It's even more inadequate for a friend who has also changed my life retrospectively, so that I would die happier tomorrow than I would have believed possible; and enriched the rest of my life with the revival of old friendships and the making of new ones, now under weigh. (32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, Northern Ireland)

Now, Walt, I'm hardly the person totell that anything I published by you was "ill written rubbish". Suppose you convinced me? Why, I might walk down to the nearest sentry box, climb the parapet, and throw myself off the El Morro wall -- just for spite! And then there's the arguement that brevity is the soul of wit (or at least half of it) and the fact that your most famous pun and the Telekinesis piece, which I have seen in print more times than "The Enchanted Duplicator", are from Slant. Perhaps, Chuch Harris isn't your severest critic, after all...which, come to think of it, explains a lot. :: Incidentally, the book was stitched; top-stitched and over-locked rather than saddle since there were no signatures. We will fall apart long before it does. :: Well, that's that, it was. What next?

I could go on reading about Wrhn 28 (and allied matters) for a good while longer but perhaps you're all impatient to get on to something else. The last issue contained no letter column, as I'm sure those who wrote about #27 noticed, but I've saved all those letters all these years and some of them might still be of interest to fan historians -- if not to the people who wrote them. Wrhn 27 is dated September, 1970, but I didn't get around to sending Ted White his copy until the middle of 1976. (He will be the first person to see this issue, though.) He wrote me a letter about it on August 7 that same year and, now, only five years later I am rushing it into print:

TED WHITE: Skyhook impressed me greatly in the fifties, and it seems to me that Wrhn alone of its successors caught the essence of what made Skyhook a major fanzine (at least for me): a combination of attitude and appearance, coupled with genuinely literate writing on topics of interest, both stfnal and fannish.

I doubt I'll ever cease to be a fan, in the overriding sense of involvement with fandom at least on the personal level, but I must say that present-day fandom holds much less allure to me than it once did. On occasion I have mused that the fault was mine -- that my attitudes have changed too greatly for me to appreciate those aspects of fandom which once held me in their thrall. But reading Wrhn made it clear to me that this was not the case. Fandom has changed more than I have. It has grown, evolved, and become an altogether larger place filled with people whose knowledge of fandom extends back hardly more than the last few years. The character of fandom has changed, grown both more diffuse and more superficially sf-oriented. Fanzines today are full of book reviews and bad amateur sf; I am bored with them. I thumb through them looking for relevant material and find little.

Oddly, in my present position as editor of Amazing, I find I am part responsible for this. In this my eighth year I can point to a variety of newer, up-and-coming fans as graduates of Amazing's letter column, fans who I "discovered" in that sense. Almost single-handedly I revived a dead tradition: the prozine letterhack. And I brought fanzine reviews back to the prozines. To what purpose, I wonder? When you and I were youngfans there were perhaps 500 fans of all types (collectors to avid fanzine pub-



lishers) alive anywhere in the world. Now worldcons attract thousands -- and I would guess that by the same criteria I used in assigning the number 500 (in the early fifties) there are now at least 10,000 worldwide... The small town has become a bustling city. "Progress" has come to fandom.

Bob Shaw's cartoon has a cleverness of both style and content which I very much enjoy. It seems to me that most of the original Wheels of IF were very much oriented in the same direction as the original New Yorker crowd, and that Shaw, if he lived in NYC, could find his way onto that magazine's staff without much difficulty. :: Terry Carr's comments on fanzine fandom are, sadly, as appropriate today as they were in 1970. One has only to substitute other names, other titles....

Harry Warner's "A Wealth of Fable" was a pleasure to read, although I suspect he idealizes in places. His treatment of Gertrude Carr is if anything, a bit mild -- but I suppose anything other than the total context of the woman and her treatment of Willis would suffer in this respect.

The TAWF -- Tenth Anniversary Willis Fund -- had more than its share of unpleasantnesses, for example. None of these unpleasantnesses were the fault of the Willises, but rather came about through the maneuvering and petty-politicking of those Americans concerned with the fund.

One mild example may suffice. Warner refers to "two welcoming parties." In fact, there was one, which consisted of the Wollheims, Terry Carr and myself, and perhaps one or two other fans. While we waited at the airport we were joined by Richard Eney. When we saw him, Terry suggested to me, jokingly, that Eney had come to snatch up the Willises and carry them off in his car to Washington, D.C., on the outskirts of which he then lived. I laughed. "That's ridiculous," I said. "Eney -- even Eney -- wouldn't do that!" Imagine our astonishment when he moved to pick up their luggage and escort the Willises to his car!

"Uh, wait a minute," I said. "Where are you going?"

Eney replied that he'd been deputized by Larry and Noreen Shaw to drive them out to the Shaw place on Staten Island. I was amazed, since I'd talked with Noreen not an hour earlier and the understanding was that we -- Terry and I -- were to do that.

But while I was Chairman of the Fund, Larry and Noreen were the Treasurer and Secretary, respectively, and had done more than anyone else to help the fund succeed. It was incomprehensible to me that the Shaws had invited Eney up from D.C., knowing his attitude towards me, since the only possible result of this would be to introduce friction into the affair where, I thought, surely none was wanted.

It appears that my breakup with my first wife, Sylvia, was responsible for this turn of affairs. Although neither Sylvia nor I wished our mutual friends to take sides, the Shaws and the Lupoffs had in fact taken sides -- against me, and based upon a series of misunderstandings in addition. Eney was imported to express their displeasure with me and to push me out of the social activities which had been planned around the Willises arrival. (Subsequently I was snubbed by the Shaws and the Lupoffs at their joint party at the Chicon III, and even had a door closed in my face. People can certainly be cruel upon occasion.)

It was the Wollheims who rescued the situation at the airport, by suggesting we all go to their house, not far away, where Elsie put together an excellent impromptu dinner for us all.

I went to bed that night, sick to my stomach with tension and unhappiness, and



slept not a wink. I was aghast that the Willises, whom, quite frankly, I idolized, should be caught in the crossfire of such mean-spirited goings-on. As it happened, Walt and Madeleine spent much of the next day sightseeing in NYC and I was the only one who had the leisure time to accompany them. While Madeleine shopped at Macy's, Walt and I settled into a comfortable spot in the basement area where furniture was grouped and I had a chance to explain what I knew of what was going on and to make my apologies for his involvement in such affairs. But I still think it was a rotten way to welcome the Willises to America.

On a slightly more happy note, I should report one incident which gave me much -- if inadvertant -- egoboo. It was on the Willises return to NYC after their country-wide tour and Greyhound's loss of their luggage. We had gone back to Macy's so that Madeleine could shop for some clothes to replace those which had been lost. Walt and I killed time while she shopped, and then that evening I took them to "That Was Burlesque," playing on 2nd Avenue. This was something Walt especially wished to see, but Madeleine found it largely a waste, since she had a hearing problem and the comedienne's patter was too fast and too much in dialect for her to understand. As we drove away from the theater I consoled her with the thought that as the trip to Macy's had been mostly for her, so the burlesque show was largely for Walt. Quite without advance planning, I said, wrapping the thought up, "Tit for tat, you know..." Walt completely broke up and only then I realized the total appropriateness of my inadvertant pun. That made my day.

It remains my impression that the trip was not by any means an unalloyed pleasure for the Willises; that they found themselves caught up in undercurrents and counter-currents among their hosts which left them with something of a bad taste in their mouths. I think, in retrospect, that we were enormously selfish in our approach to the Fund and their trip: we made of the Willises objects which we fought over. We wished to see them because they -- especially Walt -- were a legend to us, not because we genuinely appreciated their company as people (although with acquaintance I certainly did value them as people). And we certainly did not appreciate what the trip meant to them in terms of the moral obligation we foisted upon them as a by product of our hospitality. It has been my conviction ever since that the real reason there was no second Harp Stateside was that Walt could not put onto paper his real feelings without the fear of offending those of us who had made the trip possible, something which went totally against his grain. (1014 N. Tuckahoe St. Falls Church, Va. 22046)

CREATH THORNE was reminiscing on November 4, 1971: Recently I've been reading through my file of old Wrhns, and I was so impressed by them as I read them again that I thought I'd write and give you the egoboo you deserve. I found the latest, fannish Wrhns to be the most interesting. When I got to the series that began with #23, May 1968, I found them so interesting that I started taking notes: For instance, these notes on the first page of #23: "Fandom & Wrhn given significance, but with the light fannish touch. Like Elizabethan poets writing for immortality, but done so unpretentiously that no one could object. Also, note similarities to old vignettes that opened letters in the old letter columns... Analysis of act of creation good, particularly with the analysis of the analysis in the penultimate paragraph. This is a writing trick Bergeron often uses." :: I am fascinated by the shadowy personality that haunts Wrhn. Interesting bits of information fall out: rb has traveled widely -- Rio and Istanbul are mentioned; he has appeared in ads in national magazines; he's obviously a very cosmopolitan person. But perhaps most interesting of all is your revealing that you can't read fiction. That's the mark of the person too caught up in the hectic world. I know exactly how you feel because I felt the same way when I was living in Chicago last year being a city dweller doing city things. But now that I'm back in the relative quiet of a small college town in Missouri I find that I can enjoy fiction once more (not to mention life). (Address misplaced.)

(rb: I think you might be right -- about retreating from the world, I mean. Here



in Viejo San Juan I am living in the 18th Century -- or at least in a house that used to quarter the barracks and scullery (well, not all of them!) of the first Governors of Puerto Rico. Of course all the old armor has been thrown out and the place restored to something more in keeping with 20th Century refinements: with bathrooms and kitchens. The Institute of Puerto Rican Culture oversees these restorations to make sure they remain faithful to the spirit of the 18th Century and earlier which qualifies them for life-time tax abatement so what we have is the original architectural volumes and touches -- like 15ft ceilings with exposed beams, facades reconstructed according to the earliest available plans, etc -- and electrical outlets and modern plumbing. I've sublet my apartment in New York and the income is taking care of the mortgage on it and the house in which I am writing. The sound of nuns singing at their morning devotions in the small convent across the street is carried into my living room by a gentle breeze as I sit here smugly contemplating that I am now, for the first time in my life, living virtually rent and tax free -- under somewhat idealic circumstances. Finally, I have time to answer letters ten years old. But here's one I've delayed too long to record:

JAMES BLISH, 14 October 1970, on Wrhn 27: Between you and Terry Carr, there's a fair amount of discussion of Beabohema. The question will probably be moot by the next issue of Wrhn, but I don't think Terry's criticism of Lunney is intemperate. No matter what his age, Lunney made his first splash by publishing a wildly inaccurate and scurrilous "inside story," -- which might have been excused on grounds of editorial inexperience had he not followed it with three more from the same hand (or at least under the same name), after it had been pointed out to him that the first one consisted mostly of inventions and that the man hadn't even bothered to check facts he knew to be easily available to him. This is no service to anybody, let alone one deserving an award. You are probably right that the first products of now-respected fan editors were nothing to brag about, but I strongly suspect that they weren't also nearly solid masses of libel.)

BRUCE GILLESPIE, 26 December 1970, on Wrhn 27: "Tendril Towers Tales" has for somebody like me a lot of the aura of ancient legend, when the grass was much greener than it is now. The article gave me great pleasure, but a lot of the pleasure did not come only from its legendary aspect. For, in the LASFS of the forties the main thing I saw was the Melbourne Science Fiction Club of the late sixties and 1970. Probably many other fans will find in Rogers' article a mirror held up to reflect the whole of fandom, but an account of LASFS bears very much on the MSFC because it too has its own club rooms and has built around it a society that sounds very like Los Angeles' of the time. Alva Rogers shows that many LA fans lived very close to each other or in "slanshacks": in Melbourne, many of the most active fans live within two or three miles of each other in the St Kilda area several miles south of the centre of Melbourne. The St Kilda area was formerly one of the most expensive areas of Melbourne, but as the moneyed gentry moved to Toorak and South Yarra, they left behind them some of the finest buildings in Melbourne. Most of these have become flats or boarding houses of one sort or another, and so naturally this is the area where many fans live. John Bangsund has had several places in the area, including two places as "slanshacks" with Leigh Edmonds and Paul Stevens. Gary Woodman, a less active fan, now lives in the area, as does Peter House, a relative newcomer to Melbourne fandom. Several professionals, including David Boutland (who used to write under the name David Rome) and George Turner, also live within a few minutes walk of each other. Whether they ever have time to walk to each other's place is another matter.

For that is another aspect of the fan scene here. The most active fans of all still live many miles from each other, with both John Foyster and Lee Harding right on the edge of Melbourne, David Grigg and several others in the northern suburbs, and of course yours truly 130 miles away to the west.

Therefore the central gathering place for many years has been the Melbourne SF



Club, a place which can accommodate most of the activities you would expect at an sf club. Like Rogers when he walked into LASFS the first thing I expected to see were the Big Name Fans, but as probably happens in insitutions like this, the first people you meet are people you've never heard of, people who will become well known later on. Or else, like me, you walk in at a Convention, and it takes you the first day to get to know anybody. I did not meet Leigh Edmonds properly until nearly a year after I first shook hands with him at the 1968 Conference, and at that first conference I don't think I even spoke to many people I later came to know well. Then I found that many of the people I expected to meet most often rarely came to the Club, and finally I came to have some idea of the many groups and sub-groups that can form within even a group as small as an sf club.

But as I hinted, the real star of the show is the Club itself. The only way to find it is to know what you are looking for, as the only designation is "McGills Bulk Store #19" written above a warehouse door in a dingy Melbourne lane. The visitor ascends a steep dark flight of stairs (unless he knows where to turn the lights on), comes to a door which leads into a tiny kitchen, and concludes that he has not yet reached his destination. The visitor then bumps his head or skins his arm while walking along a narrow landing, finds more steep dark stairs at the other end of the landing, ascends these, and finds himself in a reasonable facsimile of Dracula's castle crossed with a cinema. A cinema screen lies across one wall; the ceiling disappears into gloom above the observer, and any of the woodwork not hidden by movie posters, books, theatre seats and fans looks like what it is -- the remains of an old McGills bulk store.

The Clubrooms turn out to be an infinite treasure house of precious rubbish -- the bestrange of sf in the southern hemisphere (and better than most in the USA, from what I hear), huge piles of comics, library books from the 3000 book library, posters, glasses, potato chips and even odd little tins of money. There's also a refrigerator and a duplicator, but they are usually difficult to see among the other junk. The only commodity difficult to fit into the club is people, and it has been difficult for some years to fit in enough people for a really popular film shown by the Film Society. The constant organizer, master of ceremonies, grumbler and hard worker who keeps the institution running is Merv Binns, who is also an institution in Melbourne. He seems to arrange miracles more routinely than most people arrange a walk down the street.

But its nice to know that LASFS was (perhaps) the first of these clubs. What I have just said, unfortunately, is now part of history, for the clubrooms have been forced to close after about ten years of operation -- new rooms are being sought, but they could not possibly have the same atmosphere. Two months ago the Club put in 35mm projectors for the first time as the culmination of a huge amount of improvements that have taken place over the last two years. One completely unfannish member of the club reported these admittedly dangerous conditions, and the City Council has closed the premises. What this disaster means, nobody knows, but the Club itself has created a strong enough tradition to withstand even this kind of shock...perhaps.

But Roger's history just seemed to fade away, whereas Australian fandom is still at its peak and improving all the time. We can only hope that it will leave as formidable an achievement and as pleasant a memory as Los Angeles fandom of the forties did.

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