



the bnf of iz —  
an exegesis

Written and published by Terry Carr, 41 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn, New York, 11201, for inclusion in the FAPA and OMPA mailings containing THE BNF OF IZ by Carl Brandon. Heading illustration adapted by Ted White. Layout by Ted White. Mimeography by QWERTYUIOPress. Typed by TCarr.

Walking around Ted White's apartment on a recent visit, I stumbled across a pile of unassembled pages for some fanzine or other. I picked myself up, and also a couple of the pages, and discovered that they were from THE BNF OF IZ, which Ted had published in 1959 but of which only a small number of copies had been distributed. It had been advertised for sale at 35¢, and a number of people had bought copies; in his somewhat disorganized manner, Ted had neglected to send them out till a year or so later (at which time, to make up for the delay, he included gratis copies of the second ASDFGHJKLibrary publication, THE ADVERSARIES by Kent Moomaw). These copies were the only ones distributed -- and, it appeared as I looked at the piles of loose pages on the floor, also the only ones collated and stapled. The sheets were dusty, sun-bleached around the edges, and some showed obvious signs that a cat had sharpened his claws on them, but the full story seemed to be there.

I pointed them out to Ted, and asked him how many copies were there; he said something like 150. I offered to assemble and staple them so that we could put them in FAPA and OMPA, and Ted was delighted to agree. I guess he needed the floorspace.

After putting them all together, I reread what Ron Ellick and I, as "Carl Brandon," had written back in 1958 and found that a number of the allusions had with the passage of years lapsed into obscurity. So I've written out explanations of the ones which an intelligent latter-day fan, or even one who was active in 1958 but has less than an eidetic memory, wouldn't understand, and I present them below. I've ignored more universal and longstanding allusions like changing the color of the Yellow Brick Road to purple because it's Ghu's color, or the Emerald City to amber because that's the color of Bheer; I assume you'll recognize those.

page 3

"...had been only to one Oklacon."

The Oklacon was an annual regional convention held in Oklahoma in the mid-1950s, characterized by attendances numbered only in the dozens. Due primarily to Ron Ellick, who attended one and wrote it up in INNUENDO, these conventions acquired a fannish reputation for being alternately dull and juvenile.

"James L. Quinn sent her If every other month."

In the fifties, before Galaxy's publisher bought the magazine, If was published, and for a time edited, by James L. Quinn, who made it a practice to send review copies of each issue to a good number of fans. This made a particularly strong impression on me (there's also a reference to it in My Fair Femmefanne) because in the mid-fifties I stopped buying s-f magazine for a time, so If was the only one I saw then.

"Ray Palmer sent her sample copies of Other Worlds with pleading form letters."

This was another mid-fifties phenomena: when Other Worlds was in its death throes, Palmer took to sending sample issues out, along with form letters pleading for subscribers. He wailed that if he didn't get them he'd have to fold the magazine, but went on to rhapsodize about the great things we'd see in the magazine if he got 5,000 subscriptions, or whatever the necessary number was. It was a transparently sad spectacle of a formerly successful editor unable to adjust to changing times (the death of the pulps, the foundering of the s-f boom of the early fifties).

page 4

There's an error in stencilling following the third paragraph: a paragraph in which Dorothy sees that the speaker is a scarecrow has been omitted.

"Although there is a cat in the Amber City that doesn't talk at all. Of course, that's because he's a non-fan and hasn't anything to say. His name is Kitter."

A reference to Ron Kidder, one of the Toronto triumvirate of Raeburn-Kidder-Steward. Kidder was apparently only a fringe-fan, though, and his contributions to fanzines were extremely infrequent. On the Oz level, the reference is to the Glass Cat, a haughty and vain feline who would frequently refuse to talk with people and animals she considered her inferiors. (The fact that the Toronto trio in the fifties were well known for wearing motorcycle jackets and talking about jazz and sportscars made the term "cat" an obvious pun.)

page 5

"You know that beanies protect the fannish headbone from unfannish thoughts..."

This concept comes from a brandonization of Pohl & Kornbluth's Gladiator-at-Law which Boob Stewart once started but never finished. I haven't read the Pohl-Kornbluth story, but I think originally it was a helmet which protected people from treasonous thoughts.

page 10

"All the inhabitants were wearing beanies with fan wampum signs on them."

I believe it was Lee Hoffman who, with her li'l people cartoons, established the convention of showing that a pictured character was a fan by putting a beanie on his head, or, in the case of a pro, a beanie with a dollar sign instead of a propellor. "Fan wampum" was a brainstorm of Orville Mosher, who figured that the amount of fannish obligations (for writing an article for someone, for running off his fanzine, for stencilling a drawing for him, etc.) should be specified in "fan wampum" units. Thus, you'd charge somebody five fan wampums for stencilling his cover -- Mosher actually mimeographed fan wampum bills for this use -- and you could use the bills as legal tender to pay off a fannish obligation to someone else. Fan wampum wasn't to be used for actual monetary debts such as buying stencils or old magazines from someone (which makes the reference in THE BNF OF IZ inaccurate). A fillip to the fan wampum idea was the suggested use of the bills as quotecards (which were popular then), each owner of a bill signing the back before passing it on to the next payee. Fan wampum actually had limited use in the mid-fifties.

page 13

"You're nothing but loud-mouthed jackasses."

Loud-Mouthed Jackass, or LMJ, was a common term in the mid and late fifties, though Dick Ency overlooked it both in FANCYCLOPEDIA II and the Additions and Corrections. It referred to usually teenaged fans who were belligerently opinionated and often particularly critical of well-known fans, whom they considered "little tin gods" because they didn't pay enough attention and homage to newer fans. Peter J. Vorzimer, who among other things complained loudly that he wasn't getting his due when he traded his monthly ABSTRACT for less frequent zines like Calkins' OOPSLA and Silverberg's SPACESHIP, was in many ways archtypical of the LMJ. (Ron Ellick, who had feuded hotly with Vorzimer, wrote this entire chapter.)

page 14

"Once Dorothy saw a Budgie, which said hello to her, and she wished Bob Shaw could have been there."

When John Berry was first writing articles about Irish Fandom one of his most frequent running gags was BoSh's contention that budgerigars couldn't talk. Parrots and minah birds talk, BoSh reputedly hold, but not budgies. But of course all creatures in Iz talk.

"So this is what the race of high men has come to."

The sexual symbolism in this chapter, which I wrote, is so labored as to be totally obvious in most cases, but probably the attempted pun "high men"/hymen is just too far out.

page 16

"In the outskirts of the Fraudling County, near the border of Iz, there is a terrible witch who is always casting spells and hoaxing everyone."

"Fraudling County" is a pun on Quadling County in Oz, as was the earlier-mentioned "Grunchkin County" on Munchkin County.

page 17

"I call it Ezra. ... It weighs a pound."

This is both labored and obscure. At the time I was writing this chapter, Redd Boggs was in a period of near-gafia, and about all we heard from him was that he had just discovered the poetry of Ezra Pound, which was much more interesting to him than fanzines.

The character Jack Fugghead, who chases Professor Woggleboggs away, is of course a satire on George Wetzel.

page 19

Ron, who wrote this chapter, gives a much more accurate idea of a typical Walter J. Daugherty Project than the usual neoInsurgent simplified concept of grandiose ideas never implemented.

Daugherty's ideas were and are often grandiose, but also usually good ideas. Far from never being implemented because of Daugherty's laziness, he usually put a lot of hard and careful work into them but abandoned them before completion.

THE BNF OF IZ, an excellent publishing job which was never quite completed in the sense of being distributed fully, is something of a Walter J. Daugherty Project, come to think of it.

page 20

"I am a Stay-Offman."

A pun on Stu Hoffman, who is reputed to have one of the best s-f collections in existence. He was a TAFF candidate in one of the early elections.

pages 21-22

Ron, who claims to hate squirrel jokes, wrote this chapter, which presents perhaps the arch-typical picture of a silly squirrel. The characterization conforms uncannily to that which Boyd Raeburn imputed to Ron in his original remark on the subject; Ron was going along with the gag here.

page 23

"After all, Blog cures everything, from gafia to snake-bites."

I adapted (or "stole") this line from Boob Stewart, who wrote a similar one ("Blog, your favorite breakfast cereal and snake-bite remedy") for The Fannish Revival Hour, which appeared in Gina Ellis' WENDIGO, I think.

"Pillar of the Nameless Ones"

One of the TAFF candidates in an early election -- Wally Weber or G. M. Carr, I believe -- was described in the official spiel as a "pillar of the Nameless Ones". Since the Nameless Ones were at the time virtually an unknown local club (CRY was still a scrappy little club newsletter with almost no outside circulation), this recommendation appeared both pompous and meaningless to most fans, and was widely quoted and satirized as an example of fringefannish fuggheadedness.

page 26

"...I found some old football tickets that had blown across the Deadly Desert, and I sent them through TAPA. I thought they were perfectly innocuous, you see. But everybody got mad at me!"

FAPA members of the fifties, but perhaps few others, will recognize this allusion to Wilfried Myers, a mundane-apa member who somehow wandered into FAPA. Having the typical mundane-apa orientation which puts little emphasis on content, most on showing off one's printing equipment, Myers was vastly unpopular in FAPA for his incredibly dull publications. The thing which most irritated Fapans, though, was his including in several mailings examples of tickets he had printed for local high school football games.

