

OPEN SEASON ON ELEPHANTS

a plea for fair-play issued to members of SAPS with Four Richard's Almanac #17.

What do you call an elephant who acts like a jackass?

Sad. I used to like Bruce Pelz. If he was arrogant, and a bit hung-up on fannish Power Politics, it was something I could over-look; as long as his power-drive didn't hurt anyone, it was just a way for him to compensate for some inadequacy he met in mundane life. This may have hurt him as an individual, but then I was in no position to offer advice.

More recently, however, Bruce has tried to use his position to do harm. While he was only harming himself, though I was sad to see it, I couldn't Speak Up; his life was his own to use or waste as he wished; but now he's bringing others into it. The fact that, on several points of personal philosophy, I disagree with Walter Breen (upon whom Bruce is bent on bringing his considerable power) has nothing to do with it.

Here's what Bruce's editorial in SPELECEBEM says to me: he feels Walter Breen is a Menace; though he has no proof of this, he's willing to take hearsay evidence (which even the convention committee has found will not stand up in court) -- Walter Breen is Guilty As Charged until he can prove himself innocent -- and that, though he feels the FAPA blackball is a dirty-deal as it stands and certainly unfair, he has no qualms about being dirty or unfair or urging others to be so. And now he would like to get as many members of SAPS as he can to cast Walter on his say-so and the same lack of evidence.

Paraphrasing, I would like to state that I find Bruce's statement that our absolutely-publishing organization can get into loads of trouble if Walter gets arrested the absurdest single idea put forth in this whole argument. Walter was questioned by the police some time ago, after the BOONDOGGLE (and other fanzines) were turned over to them by Bill Donaho and Alva Rogers. No such investigation followed -- though if it had, it would have been due to the likes of Donaho and Rogers, who turned the zines over to the cops in the first place. This whole argument of Bruce's is based on one false premise: that Walter is guilty as charged. (I don't think he is, and I believe I speak for most fans when I say that the concon certainly hasn't proved their belief to the contrary, i.e., their statements that Walter is an (I quote) "alleged child molester.")

Bruce states that he finds it hypocritical to bar Walter from the convention and not from other fannish organizations. Well, I am against barring Walter from the convention, when it comes right down to it, but others have agreed that the committee has the right to bar Walter just for suspicions. (Does an APA?) But since I do not and will not hold a Pacificon membership (reasons for which are outlined in FRA #17), my own personal say-so doesn't hold there. (Neither, come to think of it, does anyone who is a member -- the Pacificon committee (all four of them) voted to suspend Walter's membership over the protest of eight (all the committee allowed) BArea fans, and they are still holding to it over protests which are numerous and from varied corners.)

But I will be damned, and damned again, before I will be dictated-to, by Donaho or by Pelz, in an organization in which I hold membership and in which I do have a voice. It was Donaho who stated, in the BOONDOGGLE, that it was his intention to drive Walter Breen out of fandom -- and, over the protests of such fans as Warner, Boggs, Blackbeard, White, Gerber, Nelson, Lichtman, Bjo & John Trimble, Perry, etc., etc., he seems to be carrying out his threat.

After Breen, who next? Dick Ellington, because he is a member (a high-ranking member) of an organization on the Attorney General's list? Dave Rike, for socialistic leanings? Ted White, because he 'preaches free love'? Or you -- what have you done lately? Or, more probably, what can't you prove beyond a shadow of a doubt -- since the burden of proof will fall on you, not on your accusers -- that you haven't done?

The average fan, who has no control over the committee, is forced to either boycott the convention or accept the committee's 'right' to bar a fan whose behavior at scores of conventions have been without incident. In SAPS, the action that will be taken will depend upon your vote (and I feel sure we can count on Bruce to assume that anyone who is 'neutral' is on His Side -- remember, those who do not vote must waive all rights to protest), not on the action of a convention committee consisting of four people. Since you have a voice in SAPS (and none in the Pacificon, whether member or not), by no stretch of the imagination could voting to retain Walter's membership be considered hypocritical -- except, perhaps, by someone who hoped to sway your vote by calling you names if you don't vote His Way. (The fallacy in this type of reasoning is known as "Poisoning The Well," I believe.)

Like it or not, we are called upon to act as judges. We must consider whether, to our eyes, he has been proven guilty of the charges placed against him, and we must then inform Pelz of our answer. Drag out all of the publications that have a bearing on this -- the fan-

lines for and against, from the BOONDOGGLE to this and any others you may have received today. Read them; read them all; weigh them as best as you can; decide whether, in your own mind, by the evidence presented and the defenses offered, Walter is guilty; then, with nothing but your integrity and ability to sift the truth from the lies standing to keep a member from being thrown from the organization, vote; try to keep an injustice from coming to pass.

You are called upon to judge a man.

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