

# WHERE HAVE ALL THE MISFITS GONE ?

Many long years ago there were a group of happy little people in the state of Michigan, they sat around weekends and talked about rocketships, they met in book stores and took trips to amusement parks. This little group grew and grew, in a couple of years they were holding regular meetings and had a membership of over 100.

They called themselves The Michigan Science Fantasy Society, a name that was soon shortened to "Misfits". Over the years the name has remained but there have been vast changes in the group itself. A very few of the original members are still around and a few more are traceable.

Over the years I have tried to keep ~~work of some people~~ and I may as well report on them at this time.

Our primary founder was one Benjamin Singer, a youth of some 16 or 17 years, he was wildly enthusiastic about the club, and various other things. Ben's early adventures have been well documented over the years. A full report on these will have to wait until Martin Alger and I do our long planned "History Of The Misfits".

As Ben grew older he (as most do) discovered girls and along about '51 he grew interested in one Nancy Moore, a sexy female from Cincinnati; Nancy moved to Detroit and for the next two years we waited for an announcement of a wedding.

The wedding never came off, Nancy & Ben had a strong disagreement and the next thing we knew Ben was planning to marry a non-fan named Eleanor. In the meantime Nancy had married another Detroit fan Harold Shapiro.

With his marriage Ben almost vanished from our sight, wife Eleanor disapproved of fans and I suppose figured that she would have enough difficulty raising Ben without outside influence. I'm forced to admit that she did a good job. In the next few years Ben held a succession of improving jobs, by the late '50's Ben was half owner of a small advertising agency. To the best of my knowledge they had no really large accounts but they seem to have prospered.

In the early '60's, oh about '61 I think, Ben sold his interest to his partner and started taking college courses. Obviously Ben had grown up, I can well imagine the problems he must have had in even finishing high school. In any case he took some courses locally and then moved to Pennsylvania when he ran the gamut of courses.

In the last few years we've seen almost nothing of him, generally he would be home each year at Christmas time and would phone me. Last week he phoned, he tells me that he now has his masters degree and that after the holidays he and Eleanor will travel to Europe for several months then he'll take one of several teaching jobs that have been offered to him.

I wish him well, but I just can't really imagine Ben as a professor, this is the boy that used to pass out atheist pamphlets to members of Jehovah's Witness's. He's the one that brought the FBI down on Bennett Sims through a threatening letter. Oh, the legends of Singer would easily fill these meager pages and the odd thing about him is that no matter what tale we invented it would be far less than the true one that Bennie would bring upon himself the following week.

He's tells me that he specialized in abnormal psychology and I merely commented that at least he had a working background of the subject!



Harold (Hal) Shapiro

Another of the original members was Hal Shapiro, a "rather sharp tongued" teenager who liked to play one-up and get involved in things fanatical. Hal never had a strong interest in Sciencefiction. He was more concerned with fans and publishing in general he has maintained some contact with fandom through most of the years since about '48.

Hal seems to have a talent for getting wound up in things, sometimes too deeply.

Probably about late '48 he enlisted in the Army, from '48 to '52 he spent time in Alaska, the Southwest and in Missouri. He probably met Nancy Moore (Cincinnati) in 1949 and presumably carried on some correspondence with her.

He had occasional furloughs to Detroit and saw Nancy a few times in '52, to our surprise they were married about August of '52. Presumably he couldn't get leave for a honeymoon since he went back to Missouri and spent a few weeks in the guard-house while Nancy moved in with his sister.

I don't recall just when Hal was discharged from the Army but it couldn't have been too many months before he was back with us, and soon after that he and Nancy moved to Cincinnati. I don't know too much of his life in Cincinnati other than that he worked at various jobs, the Singer sewing machine co. among others.

During 1959 he and a partner formed a small advertising or promotion company, I recall that they wanted to push some sort of promotion at the Detention whereby he would give away one or more diamonds. We had no reason to think it was other than honest, but we were awfully cautious in those days and turned him down flat.

Hal & Nancy attended the Detention but within the next few weeks their marriage came apart at the seams. Hal returned to Detroit while Nancy remained in Cincinnati.

Hal threw an expensive New Year's Eve at a local hotel that winter, then gave up whatever the company was he had to Cincinnati. He was flat broke, without even the money to pay his party bill at the hotel.

He tried to get into advertising work in Detroit and apparently didn't make it, he may have had some short term jobs but the next thing I have knowledge of was some months later when he was working as a salesman for the Hornes (Hanes?) manufacturing company of Ohio or Indiana. He was an over the road salesman and was out of town quite a bit.

As some of you know he left Detroit just before Christmas of '60, he traveled to Wyoming, meeting Nancy who had joined the WACs. Perhaps he hoped to re-marry but she already had her divorce and in any case nothing came of this. In the next few weeks he traveled widely, Idaho, Indianapolis, Miami, etc among other places. Then he settled down for a while.

From approximately Feb '61 to Sept of '64 he spent his time in Kansas, Terra Haute, Indiana, & Florida. He returned to our bosom in September of '64 and has been with us since that time. He worked for a few weeks at a wholesale grocer, however they have a policy of laying off their men every 12 weeks to avoid paying unemployment insurance, Hal had to go.

Several months ago (perhaps last Spring) he went to work as a driver salesman for a soft drink company. He worked for them until sometime this summer when he started to work for another company selling bottled water - actually a very similar job only this time they didn't color & sugar their product.

He seems to have done well with them, somewhere in his travels he met a young lady who must be quite ambitious. At the age of nineteen she was already assistant manager of a chain drug store. I suppose Hal must have wanted to hitch his wagon to a rising star. In any case he married her two weeks ago. He is being transferred to the Lansing office next week as some sort of manager and thus passes from our view again for a while.



George H. Young

" Most of you will know George, by reputation, if not in person." George again was a founding member of the Misfits, to the best of my knowledge it was George & Ben Singer who decided to form the club after being forced out of the Hypertoreans.

In any case George was on the scene early in 1947 and was a prime mover in the club, he was probably about 16 at the time (possibly 17). He was under less parental control than most of our members. Now, George was always the happy-go-lucky sort and stayed this way until the last few years.

It was George who planned trips, pushed plans for attending conventions (his first was the Torcon). George it was who wore the first propeller beanie, and was mighty proud of it. As recent as three years ago Ray Nelson was still drawing "Beanie Boy" cartoons, originally they were meant to portray George's features and his attitude toward things in general, some years later he added George's wife Mary in his cartoons.

George graduated from high school and managed to land a job in a medium sized factory in Detroit. His plans became even more grandiose as the years went by, surprisingly he managed to carry many of them through after a fashion, however he was more given to impulses than to planning and thus became the butt of most of our jokes.

He was always so serious about these things that eventually we coined the phrase "the hurt look" referring to George when someone would explode his plans. The years rolled on but George changed little. George it was who bought a pit sized racer & never got it running, it was George who bought a secession of old cars, few of which ran or lasted more than a few weeks when he did get them running.

In 1951 George was drafted, he managed a few months training in the mid-south & managed to attend the Nolon. He went overseas a few months later and saw service in Korea, He speaks of shooting and being shot at but had more references to mixed bathing in Japan. He came back to us in the Spring of '53 and we welcomed him with open arms. He had all this money he'd saved overseas and promptly spent it on an almost new Studebaker, that lasted him about two weeks. One night a friend was driving him back to Indiana and they phone-poled. We didn't see any combat scars but he got a beauty from the windshield.

Soon George was discharged, he went back to work for Excellio corporation and decided to attend college. He saved a little money then took a leave of absence from his job. He spent most of the next year in college but wasn't doing especially well as he was enjoying himself with parties, etc.

The Spring term ended in June of '54 and George decided he'd better get a summer job, he acquired a fiancée some months earlier. Somehow that summer he just never got around to getting the job. In July he & Roger Sims put a minor affair called the Border Cities Conference, then it was almost time for the big one in Frisco. He and Roger took the few dollars they had and headed west (See Collector Sum '54). Well, the money ran out. George made it home but barely. He stayed in Detroit a week or two then headed up to Cadillac to visit his family. He spent the winter in Cadillac, (it was a mighty bad year in Detroit), and got a small job in a local hobby shop there.

Spring came and we thought sure that George would be back but he didn't show up, along about this time I started working at GM's transmission plant, working seven days a week and making piles of money. I started tearing off my checks stubs (\$150 to \$170 per week) and sending them to his father, along with notes "if George was here he'd be making money, instead of setting up there drinking your beer and smoking your cigarettes". This seemed to have an effect - George came home to us.



George came back early that summer. He took a job driving a cab and quickly learned that was an ideal way to starve to death. Eventually he did a job working with me at the Transmission plant. He bought an old Hudson and merrily we rolled back and forth to Ypsilanti every afternoon.

He hadn't really changed. We'd drive half of the 22 miles on the gravel shoulder, dodging mail boxes, passing everything in sight, trying to make up the late start we'd gotten, we seldom made it on time. Finally in December we disposed of the Hudson, it was the first snowfall of the season, there's a complicated "s" curve on the expressway. We made the first leg, then left the highway, went down through the median and up onto the highway again -- facing the on-coming traffic. Neither of us were hurt but the car wasn't worth repairing.

George had been dating a local teenage girl and he told me in January that they were thinking of getting married. Two weeks later they decided they'd waited long enough and he told Mary Southworth to bride.

They were married in February of '56 and soon after that things got rocky for them, he was laid off from the GM plant in June and had a succession of jobs in small tool shops. The first baby came that fall and they proceeded like clockwork after that. Mary had one every year for the next five. For the next couple of years George found it easy to get jobs but a few weeks or perhaps a couple of months was the best he could do at any of them. The plant would slow down and George would move on, or he'd get a salesman job just before sales hit the seasonal bottom. At times we wondered just what they were living on.

There were frequent threats to cut off the heat, or lights, etc and sometimes they'd lack a phone for a few months. Meanwhile they'd be another mouth to feed with each passing year. When they had a car it would need frequent repairs or would sit for weeks, months (in one case over a year) because they lacked the money to make the repairs.

Finally about two years things picked up generally in the Detroit area and George managed to hold jobs long enough to pay off some of his back debts. They acquired a car last year that seems to be holding up and two years ago George working a check-kiting scheme and actually managed to buy a house.

The house buying deserves justification. You see they wanted to buy this G.I. repossessed house, the house was an excellent buy (I wish I had bought it) but the government wanted proof of a decent bank account, a down payment deposit, etc. They didn't have the pot or a place to put it. So, George borrowed \$20 from Roger Sims, and opened a bank account. Now, he was respectable and had a bank account so he went to a finance company & borrowed \$400 ("Yes, I have a bank account"). Now he took the \$400 and banked it as a saving account. He then wrote a check for \$400 and turned this over to the real estate company, the check was pre-dated and they agreed to hold it two weeks. The real estate company notified the VA that they had on deposit \$400, the VA and found that he had an account of about \$400 and sold him the house on a 30 year contract. He's been busy making payment to various people for the past two years but despite all this he managed to come out clean and the house is his.

For about two years he's been working as a hardware clerk and seems to be doing quite well. The Detention was George's climactic point in f-edom, while he attends conventions etc his fanish interests are primarily in the past, he gets no current fanzines and doesn't seem to care what is current now. He reads some Stf but most of his leisure is spent bowling, playing bridge, etc.

Old fans like old soldiers just quietly fade away.