

A L'ABANDON N° 6

A FANZINE CALLED USELESS



This is a 1st abandon #6, CP #24, begun 19 January 1960, at the home of Terry and Miriam Carr by Jim Caughran, who resides at 1909 Francisco St., Berkeley 9, California, USA. It is intended for the 23rd mailing of the Offtrail Magazine Publishers' Association, but as usual, I don't know whether I'll make it -- tho I guess I'll have to postmail if it doesn't, to save my membership. I'm sorry I let things get down to the point where I have to publish or go; but schoolac kind of snuck up on me. This is now finals week, which means I should be studying, but fanac is a good diversion from studying ...

Cover is by Atom, stencilled by T. Carr. Mimeography is by Ron Ellik. There may well be material in this fanzine from Miriam Carr, who says she wants to do guest mailing comments, and Bill Donaho, who says he might write more about peyote ... Who me? I don't know exactly what I'll have here, but it'll probably include mailing comments and comments on whatever comes to mind. As usual.

Reconvene chez Curran and Donaho -- Bill showed up at Carrs' and suggested we come over for Jack Daniels (Jack Daniels is a Good Man - plug for Hickman). This is essentially a traveling type scene fanzine, as Dave Rike would probably say. This may turn into a visiting sort of one-shot yet.

Due to my laziness in publishing, I have two mailings to review. I'll begin with the older, which is probably all the better because I haven't yet had a chance to read the later one.

Mailing #21 ---

OT -- Joy, I like the comment of "labour of love" on Vondruska's credentials. Putting out a fanzine on one's wedding night is the most fannish thing I can think of. The sheer dedication ...

The turnover is something we might possibly view with alarm, but I think (hope) that the thing will stabilize. I think that the small mailings we've been having lately may have a share in turnover, or vice versa, or something. Both Tapa and Saps are at the other end, low turnover and high page count, and it seems odd that Ompa should be different.

The Ompantology strikes me as one of the best ideas I've seen recently -- count me for any help I can give.

APathy -- and this is one of the best indexes I've seen for some time. If someone had done this for Tapa ... One quibble: a mag of mine from the 16th mailing wasn't listed, not that it was worth remembering. In fact, it was one of the least memorable things to be fannishly published that year, and is maybe better left the way it is. I can't make much comment, because there's nothing I could suggest; this is about as complete a fan index as could have been compiled. Very good job.

AQOS -- Mercer. Vowel sound in Hello -- I think I'm the only person in the world who pronounces the word without a vowel sound -- I don't know how I do it; I don't try at all ...

BLUNT 13 -- Sanderson. How far do English secondary schools go with math? Here 2dary schools stop with intermediate algebra, trig, and plane and solid geometry, so colleges starts with analytic geometry, then goes to calculus, theory of equations, symbolic logic & set theory and like that. Undergraduate work goes through a number of electives, finishing, probably, with function theory, theory of functions of a complex variable, etc. Graduate work goes on from there.

I suggest that Ving get in touch with Dave Rike for his duplicating bit -- Rike seems to know quite a bit about most mimeos.

I must have been in rather an uncommunicative mood when I read the mailing; there seem to be very few check marks here.

ERG -- Jeeves. I presume you've seen Rotsler & Pavlat's TABLEBOOK?

GRIFFIN -- Spencer. Cal registration is down to a machine-like process -- new students still have to go through the long line (and even that is pretty well organized so that it doesn't take more than an hour or two, plus a morning or so for pre-enrollment in classes), but continuing students can merely send in an envelope with twenty or so cards and be registered and preenrolled, painless.

Students are not allowed in the Cal library stacks unless they have a 3.5 average ($\frac{1}{2}$ -way between A & B). Undergraduates, that is; grads have stack priveleges. Instead you have the privilege of waiting half an hour or so while the people behind the scenes look for the book, then come out to tell you that someone else has the book out, or that they can't find it, or something like that. Any old excuse ...

The Student union, or the nearest thing to it while they're building a new student union has good jazz and classical music in its juke box, very little rock and roll. You Easterners have no taste.

I could go on and mention Dwinelle Hall, the building in which it is impossible to find anything ("And did he ever return? No, he never returned, And his fate is yet unlearned. He may walk forever in the halls of Dwinelle, he's the man who never returned"), Sam classes on the observatory hill, classes of 500 people (don't get alarmed, there are smallersections which are required for the same courses, it's just the lectures which are that bad), the messes which are clubs, like the French club with 40 people walking around struggling to talk in a language they barely know, and much more, but I think I'll let it go around a cycle or two.

GROUND ZERO -- Dietz - Raybin. Why don't you rearrange your pages so as not to continue whole pages from one place to another?

Exterior note -- Karen Anderson was just saying that Astrid's first word was "money" -- shows she's the child of a dirty pro ...

THE LESSER PLEA 13 -- Joy Clarke. Teaching Nicki to ask "What does Fijagh mean" seems the height of fannishness. Problem is, what happens when a relative or non-fan friend goes to pick her up? Or, for that matter, a fan who hasn't yet figured it out -- there are those.

I wondered at your "Ronand Terry jumping on me for this .." until I figured that it was Bentcliff & Jeeves. The Real Terry, he of Carr, says that the phrase is copyrighted to refer only to him and Ron - it must be, it says just Ron and Terry an their Hugo.

Unfortunately, reading is not much taught by phonics any more; I learned it that way, and read and spell rather well, while my sister, who learned sight reading, is rather unadaptable to new words.

Yes, Americans learn World History, in most high schools, at any rate. There are, of course, those who don't finish high school, or don't learn anything while they're there, but ... I didn't like the course while I took it, tho I didn't do too poorly -- even though the teacher caught me sleeping in class, cheating on a test, etc., I got a high B. The teacher was about as stupid a woman as I have had the misfortune to meet.

I wonder where you got the figures for book stores -- there are prob bly fifteen or twenty bookstores within a few blocks of campus here, mosly serving the same 20,000 people ... There are something like 65 in the Oakland phone book, which includes Berkely and a few other places for 6-700,000 population, maybe. But, on the other hand, I don't think a University town can be considered as representative. In addition oto normal bookstores, most drug stores, bus depots, etc., sell pocket books, which are about the biggest sellers these days, despite the fact that the ones which are usually circulated aren't usually worth reading.

"You bastard," said Sam Hall. -- T. Carr

FEALS -- Dietz. Explain, please, how something can be a stimulant when its habitual use can be likened to alcoholism, Mrs. Moskowitz.

Your comments ag inst Elling on pl6 #'s 1 & 3 seem quite uncalled for -- I don't mind your vilifying someone, if you've got a reason, but the use here ...

PHENOTYPE -- Eney. Speaking of state educational systems, Kansas nearly adopted a math book giving pi as 3.000 simply "to make it easier for the kid." Phooey.

STILL LIFE -- Slater. Over here, a 30-ft. trailer is nothing. A good many are fifty foot monsters, nearly untowable. I don't know why people don't just build houses ...

MAILING COMMENTS #3 -- Ellington. Damn it Ellington, Which question?

but I don't think he's as big as Donahoe's Habbucuk. Your cats are here, incidentally - Crazy is swahingher tail against my leg at this moment.

SCOTTISHE -- Lindsay. IBM stands for International Business Machines, a firm which produces machines which operate on punched cards at high speed, among other things. The punched cards can be sorted in almost any way desired at almost no time, take less storage space than most filing methods, and other advantages. Many American businesses are run on IBM cards. They also made the first electric typer, I think, and still make one.

End of the comments on the Twenty first mailing. Guess I'll finish this stencil with comments on the 22cd mlg. But it's late, and I should be getting home, so I guess I'll lop it off here and continue elsewhere.

* * *

21 January, at Francisco St. I was just reading that second or third paragraph up there, the one on IBM machines, and was amazed at its lack of sense. Which should, I guess, teach me not to compose on stencil when I'm that tired. This typer seems to be the fourth used on this sterling publication. It's Ron Ellik's, the same Ron Ellik who will probably run this fanzine off in a few hours.

Guess this is a fairly good place to start mailing comments on the twenty-second mailing, with a mention that I seem to be especially full of typos today.

OFFTRAILS -- More heavy turnover -- I wonder whether the system of notifying members that they are members in their first mailing might have something to do with the turnover. And I hope that we don't have to go the route of reducing the membership to forty, even temporarily.

ARCHIVE L\$ - no, ll. Never could understand why a capital l is a \$. Anyway, this is a good fanzine, and I hope your change of policy doesn't mean there won't be more like it. Monday the 11th reminds me of the were-diplodocus (that can't be right, but I can't find it in the dictionary) mentioned in Boucher's Compleat Werewolf -- the one who said The Words and smashed half of Darjeeling ...

Moorcock's reign as Tarzan ed produced some good things. I was reading the strip I was mentioned in a while ago, and couldn't believe I was that villanous. "Kill 'im!" I kept thinking to Tarzan, until I remembered it was me. What was the ending? I never did see either the beginning or the ending, just several issues out of the middle.

Birchby is interesting, but Moorcock's Treasury of Animals is great.

Enjoyed your comment on bi-apanism.

mailing comments, page 5

BLUNT 14 -- Sanderson. Parafin here means, commonly, the heavier parafins, from the chemical angle, usually on those solid at room temperature and melting at slightly above. Chemically, it's anything of form C_nH_{2n} plus 2, of course.

DUPE -- Ashworth. I don't know whether I could stomach someone or not -- probably not, if I had to do the killing, but quite possibly otherwise. I just hope I am never in a position where eating someone is necessary.

ERG 3 -- Jeeves. Teachers' salaries are substandard here too, tho I don't know what the figures are. I don't know why it is that they aren't appreciated more, tho I suspect some of it might be a carryover from teachers being spinsters with no one to support. A good many of today's teachers are women whose husbands work, probably because almost no one else can afford to be a teacher.

The article on space travel is very good - I especially liked the line about the plumb bob, for orientation.

GRIFFIN 3 -- Spencer. Your Huffenpuffer has been outmoded by the Harmonized door. Notes from undercover are good, but somehow lacking, and maybe a bit too repetitive. I liked the magazine, tho most of it defys comment.

And that's as far as I've read this mailing -- guess I'll have to make further comments in between reading snatches, if only to fill this page. I'd write something on something besides the mailing, but that I don't feel up to it. DAMN! I just dropped the corflu -- good thing the rug is predominately blue, but I'm certainly a mess. Guess I'd better lay off a while and buy dinner.

GRIST v2n1. Mills. I'd like to get UR, if I may. I'll try to comment; it may be months later, but I'll try to comment.

Add Pakistan and India to the countries which drive on the left. It makes trouble, trying to switch from one to the other -- the first time I drove a car in the US on returning, I pulled out into the left lane on a rather quiet (thank goodness) street, and drove a hundred feet or so before a car showed up in my lane. I honked get out of the way at it, and we both slowly stopped, facing each other. Then I realized what I was doing, and laughed like hell. The people in the other car just looked shaken.

Or have I told that story in this magazine before?

Another damned extemporaneous note -- If anyone has old ompazines, especially old Offtrails they would like to part with, pbeferably assembled into mailings, for mailings prior to 16, I would much like to buy them. Write.

PHENOTYPE -- Eney. Haven't got much to say, except to wince at the thot of a gallon of sulfuric acid all over the floor (using 36 normal acid in drop-size quantities was bad enough), and to say that I liked most of your comments.

SATAN'S CHILD -- Eatigan. I voted against your amendment, I'm afraid, not because it's a poor idea, but largely because it was too imprecise, and worded clumsily. The several run-on sentences were not the sort of thing one should have in the constitution.

Guess I'd better cut this stencil off about here; Ron wants to run this and several Fapazines off for various bay area fans, and I ought to be studying for my French final tommorrow. I may do another page or two asa second section.

For OMPA With Love and Squalor

-- from Miri Carr

About 30 seconds ago

Tell me something that could have happened thirty seconds ago. mdc

because, you see, I left the typer to get my cigarettes, got involved petting the cats, and when I got back to the typer I didn't know what I was talking about.....

CATS! I am over at Bill Donaho and Danny Curran's house now, and they have these cats. Two of them are Bill's. Ahab is a huge (approx. 1½ stone) Black altered male. He is a real beauty, and very good natured, except that he takes no nonsense from other cats because he knows that he owns the house! Another interesting aspect to his personality, is that he doesn't know that he has been altered. He was attempting to ravish Shithead just a minute ago.

Ravishing is when you tip your hat before raping someone. tgc

Which is as good a time as any to introduce you to Shithead. (I'm sure that Dick has told you about his cats, but I thot I'd give you my side of the story. Like, Essentially.)

Shithead is a very sweet little queen who is in heat at this very moment. And she will most likely be in heat when you read this. And a couple of times in between, too. Our Siamese queen is of the same type temperament and sexuality. Shithead is the original "Little Match Girl". She has the most pathetic little squee for a voice, and acts extremely pathetic and like please stop beating me. Her eyes are yellow-green, her fur is more or less tan and black tabby. Her nose is a dark peach colour with a black line around it.

How do you spell illiterate? Djinn Dickson (from KKAnderson's oops!)

Like I was saying, the above lino is from Karen Anderson's one-shot for the SAPS, The 'zine was titled "Earthwomen's Burden". Djinn also wrote part of the mag.

White Faced Simony is the youngest cat. She is white-faced all over, and has one blue eye and one green eye with a yellow circle about it. She is so dainty and pretty and sweet! She is the most beautiful cat I have ever seen that isn't any particular breed. Another thing about her is that she is de-f. Bill tells me that this is quite common with pure white non-albino type animals.

I'm almost out of stencil, so I guess I'd better tell you who I am and what I'm doing. I'm Miri, like I said. I'm on the waiting list and thot I'd contribute something to Jim's 'zine, so's maybe somebody might respond in some way, because we joined the waiting list to get acquainted with some of you fine fen with whom there seems no way to be in contact outside of OMPA.

--- miri

An Article On The Basic Works Of Aristotle--II

to be completely fanish; the title was INNUEENDO. We discussed whether or not we should accept dirty ole money for the zine. I was against it; I'd been in fandom several years by this time, and I didn't want to bother with bookkeeping and sticky quarters and such. I mentioned Houston to Dave.

"Houston?" he cried. "W. S. Houston? The guy who sends sub money and his address and nothing else?" I nodded. "What do you know about him?" Dave asked, very interested.

"Nothing," I said. I explained that he'd never written me a letter, and Dave said he'd had the same experience with him regarding his (Dave's) former subzine, CALIFAN. We fell to discussing what we called The League of Silent Pen, and decided then and there that INNUEENDO would be available only for trade or letters of comment.

Later still, Ron Ellik and I started a newszine called FANAC. We were publishing it every week or so, and it was costing us money--so we announced sub rates. And almost immediately we got a couple of sticky quarters and a card with W. S. Houston's name and address. It developed that Ron knew of Houston too, from the days when he published his first subzine, FANTASTIC STORY MAG.

About that time I fell to thinking quite seriously about W. S. Houston. Here was a fellow, almost entirely unknown to fandom, who went around subscribing to fanzines right and left, and presumably reading them. Certainly he took some notice of the steady stream of fanzines pouring in, because nobody ever had to bother to notify him that his subscription was expiring--promptly, every time, along came Houston's money for another sub.

He must have a fabulous collection of fanzines, if he collected them. And he must have an amazing knowledge of fannish esoterica, having read all those fanzines. I visioned myself someday running into a normal, middle-class man and mentioning my name, and suddenly this man would say, "Terry Carr! Why, you published VULCAN and FANAC! Tell me, how's the Tower coming along? Where's Carl Brandon these days?--still up in Sacramento? What's your current opinion of Sandy Sanderson? How's Miriam?" and he'd go on and on like that, while I stood there trying to place his name. And, worse yet, if I figured out who he was--what would I say to him? I mean, what can one say when meeting someone who's been sending you sticky quarters for years, and nothing else?

The figure of W. S. Houston assumed gigantic proportions in my mind. He was a silent figure sitting by the side of the Path of Tru-fandom, watching each traveller pass by, offering sticky quarters to the fanpublishers among them ("and here's my card, sir"), sitting quiet and meditating. He saw fans come and go, fandoms flare up and pass, customs and morés and running gags enjoy their brief moments in the sun. He saw it all, and smiled, and thought about it maybe, but never said a word. At least, not out loud.

This mental image I built up of W. S. Houston was almost that of a god-figure, a father-symbol, a Protector. W. S. Houston, it seemed to me, must be as old as fandom (as old as Tucker!), as wise as Confuvius (or Hoy Ping Pong!), as patient as Taurasi. He must regard

An Article On The Basic Works Of Aristotle--III

fandom as a busy little anthill, a world-in-miniature whose cycles and tempests could be charted and graphed. He must have enjoyed watching us. He must have thought of fandom as a spectator sport.

I meditated upon the subject of W. S. Houston, and this was what I thought about him. And then Don Ford published POOKA #9, and confirmed all that I had thought.

"W. S. Houston is 80," Don wrote, "according to his membership application for First Fandom." He's a First Fandomite! I wonder if Julius Schwartz used to get sticky quarters from Mr. Houston? I wonder if Julius Schwartz ever pondered about that silent subber out there somewhere, reading his labor of love and periodically slipping a coin into an envelope and sending it to him.

"Lynn Hickman says he has one of the finest collections he's seen for a long time," said Don. Small wonder he has a fine collection! W. S. Houston is studying fandom. He is studying us. He gets ahold of every fanzine published, in one way or another, I'm sure. The subzines he sends money for; those fanzines which one must trade for he gets by buying extra copies of other fanzines and sending them in trade, subtly altering the publisher's name to that of some front-address of his; the apazines he gets in a more roundabout manner which I haven't been able to figure out--but I'm sure he gets them. I'm sure he read what Don Ford wrote about him last mailing, and I'm equally certain he'll someday soon read what I'm writing about him right now.

W. S. Houston is a fannish institution. You and I may come and go, but Houston will remain. Under one name or another, he will always be in fandom. Under one front or another.

Right now I think he is maintaining a fictitious mailing-address care of the "Keeper of the Printed Books".

--Terry Carr

Interlineations are a lot of work. --jgc.

Maybe some of you are wondering why I titled the above article "An Article On The Basic Works Of Aristotle". Well, I guess you know that this whole zine is being done at a session at Bill Donaho and Dan Curran's. All the typewriters were in use, so I wrote the above article in longhand.

I didn't have a title for it when I started it. But then Jim got up from his typer (mine, actually, but never mind) and came into the front room and asked me what I'd decided to write on. So I said I was writing an article on The Basic Works of Aristotle.

That's the book I was using for a flat surface under the paper.

--Terry

MORE ON PEYOTE

By

Bill Donaho

In view of some of the reactions to my first article on peyote, I would like to emphasize a few points that I made before and to try to answer a few of the objections that some people have brought up.

Peyote is definitely not habit-forming. All of the scientific literature confirms this. Experience bears this out. To quote Busby: "Peyote is about as habit-forming as nux vomica". It has been at least eight months since I have had any peyote and I still have great difficulty in swallowing tasteless vitamin pills. Pure mescaline does not have this effect, but it is in no way physically habit-forming.

Nor is mescaline intoxication anything one becomes psychologically dependent upon. It does not give a lift or distortion of the personality as do benzadrine or dexedrine. (I regard both of these with suspicion and am very careful about using them except to keep awake while driving. I have known people to become unable to face life without taking them).

It is not known precisely how mescaline achieves the effects it does. The theory I came across most often was that it changed the use of blood sugar by the brain. There are other theories. The question is still very much open.

What mescaline does is to partially or completely block off the conscious mind and/or ego. The senses are thereby more alive and vivid as people have learned to ignore (either for valid or neurotic reasons) much of their sense impressions and/or to filter them through their ideas of the way things are. It is a commonplace that children sense things more vividly than adults because of a lack of this conditioning. In many cases part of this removal is permanent and normal sense impressions are permanently improved. In most cases, however, the conditioning that mescaline has removed comes back within one or two days.

Also, since mescaline blocks the ego, it is possible to look behind the mask that one presents to oneself and find out what he is really like. This is the major reason so many people have adverse reactions when they take peyote; they are fighting against self-knowledge that conflicts with their ideas about themselves.

All of the hallucinogens have psychological effects similar to this and are used for self-analysis. (Even when they are given by a doctor or psychoanalyst, he is usually merely an observer). They are called hallucinogens because a certain percentage of people who take them see hallucinations. These hallucinations are symbolic, like dreams, and are not random. The term does not imply that what one experiences is not real. Quite the reverse is true. That's why they are used.

Physically peyote is certainly less harmful than alcohol or tobacco. The danger, if any, is psychological. About a third of the people I know who have taken peyote have had unpleasant experiences. Most of those who did did not take it again. Nearly all of those who took peyote a second or third time in spite of a bad first experience got positive results.

I know of only one person who has taken peyote and flipped his lid or had any permanent bad effects. Perhaps the fact that he practiced scientology on himself while under the influence might have had something to do with this. Even he recovered after three or four months.

Insanity is a legal term, not a psychological one and schizophrenia is a very many-faceted and complicated disease. The peyote state resembles one form of schizophrenia. This form (to greatly simplify) is characterized by great insight and inability to act. The beauty of peyote is that you recover the ability to act and still remember the insight.

After extensive search of the literature I couldn't find any reference to actual (not theoretical warnings) bad results from the use of mescaline. There may be some, but after reading over a hundred case histories and reports I didn't find one. I thought for awhile that the bad results were just not written up. Then I started looking up LSD. By all means, stay away from LSD! There were many bad reports. To quote one: "A certain percentage of cases do not come back."

Marijuana is illegal in the U. S. because of the argument: "It's not harmful in itself, but people who take it for kicks will probably become dissatisfied and go on to drugs." This theory is not accepted by psychologists and doctors in the drug hospitals are becoming increasingly doubtful. Even if it were true, the argument could not be extended to mescaline, as mescaline-intoxication is not

something you do for "kicks". Different people get different things from it, but they are all in the direction of acquiring knowledge and experience.

----- Know Thyself -----

Through Jerry Marshall, who is half Sioux Indian, I made contact with a group of Mohawk Indians in New York and found out about their experiences with peyote. The young Indians were all for having us join them in eating peyote, but the old ones were more conservative and nixed the idea. Nevertheless, I got a rather complete report on their beliefs and practices.

There are about 3,000 Mohawk Indians in New York City. Most of the men are construction workers, working at great heights where skill and coordination are a necessity. They are physically magnificent specimens and are well-educated and very interesting to talk to. They have retained their Indian heritage and come to successful terms with the white man's world. By any criteria they have a high standard of living.

Eating peyote is a part of their religion. They take it every Sunday morning at dawn in a ceremony of the Native American Christian Church. Every boy who has started work (usually about 18) and every girl who has been married a year join in the rites.

The Indians refer to the ceremony as "going on a journey together" and say that they can only go as far as the weakest member present. After the ceremony they have a substantial communal breakfast. They also have a peyote-eating ceremony for curing the sick. (Anthropologists have recorded definite cures for all sorts of diseases including TB). The ceremony theoretically pours the collective strength into the patient. Certainly the mescaline itself is not a curative agent. The Indians think the ceremony and the peyote release psi qualities. Of course, the effect may all be in the patient, as in the current theories regarding African witchcraft.

During the ceremony the men form one group and the women another. The Indians say that they have found by experience that this works best as men and women are very different in mind as well as body. It is certainly not a matter of discrimination as the Mohawks are a matrilineal people; the women occupy high positions and own all the land.

The Mohawks told me that the only Indians in the United States who had retained their culture and their pride (not to mention any reasonable standard of living) were peyote eaters. Only a few tribes used it before they were conquered and herded onto reservations, but the practice soon spread. When one tribe saw what peyote was doing for another, they began using it also.

One reason Jerry was able to make such a good contact was that the Mohawks were interested in contacting Canadian Indians, including the Sioux. They said, "The Sioux can get along without peyote now, but the whites are pouring into their territory. There are uranium mines and agriculture is spreading further north. Soon they will be in the same situation as the Indians in the United States. Then, they will need peyote."

Fortunately, very few of us "need" peyote. It can certainly open up new horizons for us, however. Or perhaps, "reopen old ones" would be a better way of looking at it.

