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THE

PRIMROSE

PATH

LOTS OF FEN have been asking such questions as "When ya gonna get yer next issue out?" and "Howcum I haven't received Abby #2 yet? You must have forgotten to send me a copy; it certainly has been time enough to get out another issue." Now lookee here: I made a point regarding the schedule of this fmz last time, and things haven't changed much since then: it's irregular. In fact, Abby is so irregular that I feel like signing a testimonail for Carter's Little Liver Pills. I can't forsee my ever publishing more than five issues a year, and as things are going now, there may well be only three or four.

Why? Gee, I dunno. I could afford it if I really tied myself down to a strict budget, I guess. And I don't particularly mind the labor involved in collecting material and cutting the stencils. It's just that indefinable laziness within me, I suppose, that tells me soothingly, "Why rush yourself, bwah? Wait'll next month..." The sirens of gafia, lounging on their sea-washed rocks, crooning me a lullaby and strumming their lyres. It takes a lot to overpower them and get started, but once I do, it's a downhill slide the rest of the way.

This should be a hint to prospective contributors (and I hope everyone reading this thinks of himself as such): if you have an article or column that will become dated in a few months, better notsend it my way. I don't include article-long reviews of books or writers in this class, tho; books and writers remain around for years and years. Only news items are included herein, and articles reviewing the s-f scene at a point where things may change very shortly.

Better send it to FANTASY-TIMES.

NEXT ISSUE which is being formulated now, will contain, among other things, a new John Berry column illustrated by Art Thomson, a mood piece of some length by Don Stuefloten, and another item by DAG. However, I'll still be accepting material for Abby #3 up to and including the first of July. Artists, don't send anything unsolicited; all of my art is done on a commissioned basis these days.

I'll also be at the MidwestCon this year, and will be more than glad to talk over any ideas you may have on articles and stories...when I'm not acting as honorary member of the South Gate In '58 committee or attending SAPS gatherings, that is. Look for the kid with the glasses and the massive, high-browed head. Warning: reacts most violently to name when someone says it wrong.

MIMEOGRAPHED BY

IT'S ALMOST INCREDIBLE but it's true. The editors of my all-around favorite prozine, INFINITY, the Shaws, have come out with a new fanzine that almost as good on the fan scene as ISF is on the pro. 'Tis called EXCELSIOR, and has come forth twice at this writing. Leeh has changed considerably since the days of QUANDRY, but I don't honestly think of it as a change for the worse, as good as Q was. So far, she's come up with a very tasteful balance of trufannish material and pro s-f criticism.

The most stimulating material of all has shown up in a column entitled "Critic At Large", which is exactly that. It's obvious that the Critic is either Larry or Leeh, but for the life of me, I can't tell which. The writing is wholly unlike the Hoffwoman we all know, yet it is also far removed from Mr. Hoffman's INFINITY editorials, which I take as better examples of his true writing style than stories, blurbs, and whatnot. It's a real Boggsean type mystery. At any rate, the Critic is an excellent one, and has, in two issues, torn apart two of my favorite recent novels before my very eyes...and made me like it. Spa fon, it's damon knight all over again!

For something far above this humble effort, for some fanreading that will stick with you for a while after you've thrown the mag down, order a copy of EXCELSIOR from L. Shaw Ltd., 545 Manor Road, Staten Island 14, state of ~~NY~~ New York. It might help to enclose a dime or so, as circulation is limited.

I'm perfectly willing to offer JWCjr and Gold free space if they'll edit a fanzine as good as this one.

THE BEST FANZINE of them all, however, is born elsewhere...in good old Belfast, naturally. I refer to Walt Willis' staggering seventy-pager, THE HARP STATESIDE, a blow-by-blow account of WAW's 1952 journey across the Atlantic Ocean and the United States for the ChiCon II. It's packed with priceless glimpses of Sixth Fandom for those of us who weren't around at the time, profiles of the top fen of the era, some of whom are merely names today, others who are as big as ever. (And you can take that any way you care to.)

The volume is illustrated on each page by the one and only Arthur Thomson, mimeographed impeccably, and written tremendously. It's definitely the best single fan volume of the past three years. I recommend it without reservation.

THIS HAS BEEN the onset of an attack by the second issue of ABERRATION, lest I neglect to say it elsewhere herein. The editor is still Kent Moomaw, you poor persecuted people, and his address is still 6705 Bramble Avenue, city of Cincinnati, zone of 27, state of Ohio. Future issues of this rag may be obtained by either commenting, contributing, or sending me a fanzine specifically designated as a trade copy. The editor promises never to hack out another boring, uninspired, sophomoric editorial such as this one; rather, to omit TPP if he finds himself as void of ideas as he did when he began this. Hoping you are the same, he remains,

QWERTYUIOPRESS

Kent Moomaw
1957

BY BOB

When I was very young (that is, some five or six years ago), I was noted as a prolific and usually readable writer for fanzines. My copy was eagerly sought by such faneditors of the day as Lee Hoffman, Gregg Calkins, David Ish, Bert Hirschhorn, and others long vanished from the fannish scene.

Subsequently I saw the error of my ways, and I'm currently noted as a prolific and usually readable writer for prozines. My copy is sought with varying degrees of eagerness by such proeditors as John Campbell, Horace Gold, Paul Fairman, Larry Shaw, and others of that ilk.

There are a number of curious and (I think) significant aspects of my conversion from fan to pro, which is why I'm taking up Kent Moomaw's valuable space and, for the first time in quite a while, giving some words away.

One thing should be noted: while I was a fan, I wasn't particularly noted for writing fiction. I had a few stories published, mostly in my neofannish period, but my fame as a fanwriter was based on a number of dry sercon tracts on s-f and related subjects. This is significant, for reasons I'll undertake to explain later on.

But even more important is this fact: whereas in earlier fandom it was common for the fannish populace to graduate to prodom en masse (best example of this is the NYC Futurians, a fanclub whose members included Bob Lowndes, Don Wollheim, Fred Pohl, Damon Knight, Richard Wilson, John Michel, and numerous other pros of then and now, including Cyril Kornbluth and Isaac Asimov spasmodically), in what we fondly call Sixth Fandom, only two (count 'em, two) have made the big jump from fan to full-time pro writer. Harlan Ellison is one, and I'm the other. Some, such as Dean A. Grennell, Jim Harmon, Vernon McCain, Marion Zimmer Bradley, and Joel Nydahl, have made sales ranging from one to ten in number, but both Harlan and I support ourselves exclu-

fandom

stepping-

SILVERBERG

sively by our writing.

Now, I say, there must be some reason why vast numbers of earlier fans (Chad Oliver, Algis Budrys, Ray Bradbury, Larry Shaw, Milton Lesser, Judith Merrill, James Blish, Arthur C. Clarke, as well as the men listed above) graduated to prodom, while just two of all the fans since 1950 or so have made the grade. And I think it's largely due to a few changes in the nature of fandom.

Both Harlan and I published fanzines: he, SF BULLETIN, and later, DIMENSIONS, I, SPACESHIP. Both were sercon fannags. We both wrote a great deal for other fannags: Harlan, lots of fiction, but always a good many articles, myself, almost exclusively articles of a critical or historic nature.

And we both liked s-f.

This curious addiction of ours set us off in sharp contrast from the other fans of the day: from Max Keasler, publisher of the immortal FAN-VARIETY, who was a fan though he had never read a word of s-f; from Lee Hoffman, who published the best fanzine of the era despite a preference for western stories; from Kent Corey and the other new fans who much preferred talking about fandom to talking about s-f.

In short, there's been a change in attitude in fandom. S-f is a secondary interest; fandom itself is the chief focus of fandom's interest. Hardly a fan alive in the Sixth era bothered to read the prozines, let alone write letters to them as I did for a while. Some made surreptitious mss submissions, but didn't publicize the fact. They failed to develop that critical appreciation of s-f which is need for any professional writer of the stuff.

a s a

s t o n e

It's important to note that neither Harlan nor I wrote overmuch fiction for the fanmags. The chap who's always contributing s-f stories to fanmags usually never makes the pro grade; he's never faced with enough difficulty in seeing print, never really gets the stiff challenge the pros present. Besides, all s-f published in fanzines stinks. That's a dogmatic statement, but I'll stick to it. If it were any good to begin with it would be sold, not given away...and there's no taboo within the bounds of good taste that a prozine won't break if you've got a good enough yarn.

So the other fans of our era spent their time reviewing each other's fanmags, writing fannish yackety-yak for them, or else writing bad stories for the fanzines and never aiming their sights any higher. All during this time, Harlan and I wrote critical dissertations that most other fans found a little dull (along with plenty of conventional fannish stuff, of course). We read a lot of s-f. We were somewhat bored with the extreme fannishness of our contemporaries. And today we're professional writers.

With the return of prozine letter columns a while ago, a return to the old sort of pre-professional fan is beginning. Folks like Kent Moomaw and Marty Fleischman, who seem to be present in every letter column with sound critical appraisals, are on their way to prodom. They are taking the same path Harlan and I took, and Bob Lowndes and Chad Oliver and all the others before us.

Fandom's a steppingstone, a place in which a young writer can learn to think in public, to develop a clear-cut prose style, and above all, to see his name printed. It's a sort of apprenticeship to the pros, for those who are so minded. Most of my fannish contemporaries didn't bother to make use of fandom's facilities in the most efficient way... and they never made the pro grade, either.

As for you newcomers, you members of Ninth or Tenth or whatever fandom this is now...hell, don't you listen to me either. I'm making a comfortable living now. I don't want a bunch of fast-typing new writers swarming up from fandom during the coming year. Keep on reviewing your fanzines, and keep on writing your clever fannish satires, and keep on writing your fiction in the STELLAR manner.

But don't write any s-f. And if you do, don't send it to John Campbell or H.L. Gold. You might become a pro that way.

---by Bob Silverberg

- - - - -
GEE, NOW I FINALLY KNOW DEPT.

"In the sun-kissed vallies of the snow-covered hills,
The Lord put a woman and man.
"They clung to each other so they wouldn't catch a chill,
And that's how lovin' began."

Lines from a popular song

dean a grennell

the murky way

There seems to be something in our culture that makes us seek for absolutes. We tend to see things either as Unmitigated Evil or Sublime Virtue. We love to speak in broad generalizations...generally speaking.

It seems to me that this is true of most people. I feel a little wistful about this because I sometimes think I am but a lonely chip of dither awash in a sea of people who know their own minds. Well, do I recall those moments of near panic when I used to find myself confronted with a cigarette machine into which I had just inserted a quarter. Which brand to buy? Which knob to pull? I tell you it drove me clean frantic and at times I'd finally, out of sheer desperation, shut my eyes and grab any knob at random. Which is all right except that I'm equally reluctant to accept the arbitrary decree of consulted fate which rules out coin-flipping and buck passing. Besides, the eyes-shut-and-grab technique was apt as not to leave me with a pack of Kools [Or Viceroy's, eh, Rike? -- CKM) or some other brand which I despise to the remote corners of my being. Eventually I solved the problem with the aid of a fortuitous attack of bronchitis by stopping smoking, but that is another story.

I think there is a word -- vaguely recall reading it somewhere once -- it's "nitchevo" or something like that; won't vouch for the spelling. Russian, maybe, maybe not, which I believe is translated to something like "it doesn't matter" or "it makew no difference" or something. If there is a word such as this, and if it means that, and if it's spelled that way, and if I had occasion to have a coat of arms -- then that is the word I would like to have emblazoned in nice arty script across that wavy ribbon that they have on coats of arms.

I am, I guess, a peasant without a cause to be a rebel without. Few things set me aflame with an ungovernable urge to Do Soemthing. True, there are things at which I am appalled or repelled, but not painfully so. I grotch a little sometimes at my vision of the vast seas of furor raised over teenagers nowadays but I manage to neutralize my discontent fairly well by rationalizing that this is partly my natural distaste for anything that is overdone, and partly simple jealousy that nobody made such a fuss over teenagers during the era between 1936 and 1942 when I was a teenager, plus the fact that nobody seems to make a fuss over thirty-agers today. I view the adored idol of millions such as Liberace and Elvis Presley with the same quiet disgust I felt for Frank Sinatra in an earlier era and console myself with the thought that this too shall pass. I resist the temptation to found an international Poop on Presley Club complete with monthly bulletins, clubrooms, secret grips, signals, and (most important) dues, on the grounds that I simply don't care that much. It isn't worth the bother. Nitchevo. Fout.

Oh, there have been times when I cared for something, all right. I've vague recollections that I once could have mustered 87 pages of fine printed argument as to why it was almost obscenely unfair to permit (in the armed forces) the NCO clubs for their non-com officers into which the poor, trod-upon privates and PFCs weren't allowed. But I feel a little sheepsh about the way all my magnificently marshalled points of irrefutable logic seemed rather silly, suddenly, the day I became a corporal and thus eligible to join the NCO club (which turned out to be a fearsomely dull place which, once joined, I rarely attended afterwards.

I've never been much of a letterhack, but once a letter of mine was printed in AMAZING STORIES -- I forget what I said and doubt if I really said anything at all.

I received a letter from some chap who saw it, however. I don't think he's connected with mainstream fandom, but for a little while he bombarded me with letters recounting the rank injustices which had been visited upon him during the years of his wretched life, and, seriously, if he wasn't stretching things, the poor guy did get a raw deal.

His primary trouble seemed to be with his parents who, it was alleged, practically kept him a prisoner in his own room although I got the impression that he was somewhere in his thirties. They refused to let him go see a doctor when he got sick with the result that his health was permanently damaged and they wouldn't let him read anything other than the newspapers, not even classics such as Robinson Crusoe and Treasure Island, and especially into science fiction, and so on. I don't mean to be altogether callous; I would hate like poison to be in a fix like that poor guy claimed to be, though he apparently got hold of that issue of AMAZING STORIES in some way.

And somehow he managed to put out publications. I hesitate to call them fanzines, because they were mostly little printed-on-both-sides one-sheets, professionally done on a press. Like most stuff in most fanzines, though, he was secure in his viewpoint and he was crusading hammer-and-tongs for his pet cause.

And that cause was...? Well, guess now: it wasn't any of the baffling complexities dealing with segregation and intergration and pro-segregation and anti-pro-segregation which sometimes requires counting out on the fingers to work out which side is being defended. Nossir, he had nothing to say about that or Communism, up or down with, and he didn't seem to care about vivisection or flourides in water or the creeping peril of the slimy petty-bourgeois middle classes [Ouch! -- CKM] or the joys of vegetarianism or how chiropractors can cure tooth decay by cracking your spine or how doctors are dirty bastards or any of the standard crusades.

His fearless fighting forthright fulminations floundered ferociously at cruel and heartless parents who downtread their down-trodden offspring. He thundered with might against these heartless monsters and spoke of setting up a foundation to foster and succor worthy souls who had heretofore writhed under the fiendish dominion of sadistic fathers and demoniacal mothers.

All of which is not overly startling. Nor is it very original as thoughts go. Chap name of Aesop, quite a while ago, came up with a fable about a fox who crusaded to have all foxes cut their tails off, citing all sorts of advantages to (?) caudectomy, or whatever the word would be. The crusading fox, you'll remember, had previously lost his own tail in a revolving door or somewhere.

So it goes. In more cases than otherwise crusaders have some sort of personal axe to grind, directly or indirectly. Certain nasty-minded cynics have tried to put over the theory that the American Revolution was fermented and fanned by several Yankee merchants who stood to gain handsomely if the relationships between England and the colonies were severed. Not satisfied with that, they have gone on to say that the prime movers in the War Between the States were economic pressures as much as ethical ones if not moreso. They cite billions of dollars owed by Southerners to Northern creditors -- debts which could hardly be collected from a citizen of a hostile nation.

Even today -- even in fandom -- true, unselfish motivation still isn't what you would call common. Diogenes could wear out as many lanterns hunting an altruist as an honest man. I could cite for-instances but I dern if I a-goen to. Start naming names and you get controversy and that's just another name for trouble, and that's what I'm allergic to -- as I keep telling myself. I'm just a good-natured slob trying to get along. Crusading against crusaders...

---by Dean A. Grennell

"Bob! Bob! Where is that man?" Elaine hurried to the bottom of the stairs and called again.

"I'm in the bathroom, honey! W'dya want?" His voice was muffled by the bathroom door.

"Put up a guest towel while you're there, and hurry! The ashtrays need cleaning!"

"Oh, for chrissake," he muttered as he opened the door and stepped over to the bannister. Traces of shaving cream stood out in ragged patches on his face.

"Why can't you do it?" he shouted down. "I've got to put on a clean shirt."

"Well, hurry, Bob!" Her voice was plaintive. "The baby's wet, and I'll have to change him, and you know she's going to be here any minute now."

"All right, all right." He grumbled and mumbled and tramped off to the bathroom, swinging his towel pettishly.

He selected a clean shirt with care, and slipped into it quickly, fumbling with the collar as he rummaged through the open drawer for a collar stay.

"Damn kid would have to be wet at a time like this," he muttered. He snatched a tie off the rack behind the door, knotted it expertly, and hurried out of the room, buttoning his cuffs as he went.

He bounded down the stairs in three leaps, his legs finding the proper treads with practised ease, and dashed to the kitchen via the couch and table in an erratic curve, gathering ashtrays as he went.

Elaine was attempting to keep the baby's active legs from dislodging a diaper while she fastened it. The pink chubby body wriggled joyfully. It appeared to be enjoying Elaine's struggles thoroughly.

"For God's sake, Bob, hurry!" she pleaded through a mouthful of pins. "Everything's got to be just right this time."

"It will be. Stop fussing." He wiped out the last of the ashtrays and hurried back to the living room, juggling his load gingerly. He had barely finished resetting them and was viewing the room critically when the doorbell rang.

"You ready, Elaine?" he called.

"Yes, let her in."

He adjusted his best company smile and opened the door to admit the tailored, bespectacled young woman who stood there, a briefcase in her arm. She stepped in briskly, accepted his proffered hand, and mur-

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mured the required inanities in answer to the banal chatter he was pouring forth.

"Dear, Miss Wilson's here," he called.

"Coming, Bob."

Elaine was careful to stop a moment before she entered the room to create the desired picture effect, the door framing her admirably. Her dress was modest, yet stylish, and succeeded in concealing a lush figure. It blended well with her nearly-blonde hair, and naive, long-lashed blue eyes. It was very "right".

Bob nodded and winked his approval over the social worker's tweed shoulder.

"Dear Miss Wilson. So glad to see you." She smiled sweetly.

Bob frowned as a caution not to overdo it, and let the expression disappear as Miss Wilson turned. She seated herself near the coffee table with the idea of using it as a desk. With brisk, business-like movements, she began delving into her case, coming up with papers which she piled with bureaucratic neatness.

"Well, this should be my last visit," she said, thumbing through a stack filled with forms.

"Yes, we certainly hope so," Elaine said breathlessly, then crimsoned. "I mean.. ..I didn't..."

"Quite all right, Mrs. Koler. I know how it must be. This red tape does get a bit tiresome." She smiled her special, understanding, social-worker smile.

Bob sighed audibly and relaxed. Miss Wilson indicated a sheaf of forms and impressive looking legal documents. "These will have to be signed in a notary's presence. They're the final adoption papers. No hurry about it; you can go down to the courthouse and do it any time. And now I would like to see the baby, please."

Elaine nodded and moved to the kitchen, leaving Bob to smile nervously at Miss Wilson and Miss Wilson to smile reassuringly at Bob. Elaine returned moments later with little Ronnie in her arms. He was cooing happily and obviously still enjoying the entire business.

Miss Wilson rummaged through the seemingly inexhaustable case and came up with a stethoscope and other odds and ends.

"This is just a formality," she said apologetically, but to Bob her examination took hours. He fidgeted impatiently as she probed, tested, examined, measured, and in general recorded everything of possible interest to anyone who should happen to browse through a social-worker's files.

She finally sat back and allowed Elaine to return Ronnie to his crib; he had fallen asleep in the midst of things. "He's in fine health." She seemed quite satisfied.

"Oh yes, we're very careful with him. We want him in the best possible condition." Bob was the model of righteous fatherhood.

"Well, just a few more questions and we'll be finished." Into the briefcase and out with a notebook. She repeated the routine questions of her previous visits: were they sure they wanted it? Did they realize the responsibility they were undertaking?"

Bob yessed automatically to all of the questions. Their answers seemed to please Miss Wilson. She concluded her instructions on the care of the infant, and closed her briefcase with a decisive snap. "Now remember, if you have any further questions, or any trouble at all, be sure to call us."

"We will, by all means," Bob answered, and moved quickly to the hall closet for Miss Wilson's coat.

Bob and Elaine stood together at the door, his arm around her waist, forcing his lips into one last grimaced smile as she turned and called, "Good luck!"

They waved. Miss Wilson slid behind the wheel of her grey Plymouth, and headed the car down the street.

They stepped back inside, closed the door, and sagged down onto the couch with sighs of relief. "I thought she'd never go," Elaine muttered wearily.

"Well, it's over now. That's the last we'll see of her. Just in time, too." Bob stood up at the calendar nearby. "October 29th. Just two days."

"Did you hear where it's going to be this year?"

"Yeah. Johnston called me at the office yesterday. Same as last year.

"Ugh!" Elaine shivered. "That place is so dirty. Couldn't they find anything any

better this time?"

"You know how things are, honey. Gotta take what we can get. That one's deserted, and nobody suspected a thing last year."

The baby began crying. Elaine got up and moved slowly into the kitchen, with Bob trailing behind. They stood at the crib for a moment, looking down at the child. Ronnie was howling mightily for his supper.

"Guess he's hungry. It's time." Elaine didn't move, though.

"He is healthy, isn't he?" Bob turned to his wife. "Good thing we were able to get the final papers. We'll have them signed tomorrow. And then...?"

She smiled. "Aren't you forgetting? Johnston is an MD. He can write a certificate with no trouble at all."

"Yeah, that's right. I forget about that. This sure is handy, isn't it? Wouldn't be much of a Black Mass without a sacrifice."

They smiled serenely at each other.

---by Dick Ellington

WESTERN INTERLUDE

A Vignette Dedicated To Leeh Shaw

The masked man, a resplendant figure in dusty black and silver, urged his great white stallion ahead at a swift gallop. The ball of flame high above in the cloudless sky rebounded from the metallic trappings which crested the the steed's beautiful saddle, and from the spotless paors of spurs and pistold of its tall, lithe rider. Beside the masked man, keeping pace on a dun-colored pony, rode the Masked Man's constand Indian companion, clad in supple buckskin, straddling his mount with nothing other than a brightly woven blanket. His moccasin-clad feet met beneath the pony's belly.

Together, they raced across the floor of the canyon.

"...so damned poor I couldn't even afford silver bullets..."

Suddenly the Masked Man's gleaming eyes chanced to stray upwards to the canyon rim. There, unmoving but menacing, dotting the high cliff wall, could be seen a virtual horde of mounted redmen. The same sun that glinted on the Masked Man's magnificent outfit fired the colors of the tawny head-dresses, the polished arrow tips, and the deep scarlet bodies of the silent onlookers.

The Masked Man's perceptive vision disregarded these, however, and instead sought to interperet the while and yellow bands of paint which marred the uniform crimson skins. War paint!

Raising one gauntled palm, he reined the great white horse to a halt. His perfectly shaped Stetson fell back on its buckskin catch-string, and the desert breeze stirred his deep, lusterous hair. To one side, his constant Idnian companion pulled up, his eyes following the Masked Man's arm as it pointed out their situation.

"It looks like we're surrounded," the Masked Man rumbled.

"Where you gettum this 'we' stuff?" replied his constant Indian companion.

Is it true that Cheerios have lost their ghu-power?

"...starring Jim Harmon as Brace Beamer..."

THE WHEELS OF CHANCE

FAAAAAN-TYPE
FICTION

BY GREG BENFORD

Hurriedly, I stapled the last copy on the stack and glanced at my watch. It was 2:32 PM. Twenty-eight minutes until the mail truck left. Looking at the piles of VOIDS stacked neatly around the desk, I wondered how it would be possible to get all of them into one sack -- indeed, if such a large bag even existed.

"Jim!" I called frantically. "Hurry up! Get a bag for all of these copies while I try and sort them!"

"Don't bother," my brother replied. "I've done all that. Wait'll I get something to carry them in and we'll be all ready to roll."

As I sat on a nearby pile of magazines waiting for Jim to return, I contemplated the situation. The family car was gone on a trip, and since sole transportation in getting our magazines to the post office lay therein, we were left without any means for travel. The mail couldn't wait, and with the truck leaving at exactly 3:00 for Frankfurt, that meant we had only twenty-eight -- nope, twenty-seven -- minutes to get the mags to the APO, buy the stamps, stick 'em on, and get the copies into the slot. Well, I thought, there's always the bicycle.

But it's missing a basket, a remote corner of my mind answered. Whoever holds the bag will have to carry it in his hand.

Somewhat disturbed at this thought, I lifted a few of the magazines to estimate their weight. They were heavy.

At that moment, Jim entered the room once again with a larve bag under his arm. "Drop these in here!" He thrust it into my hands. "Soon as we're through, you can run downstairs and get the bike out while I bring the bag down."

My heart leaped. Perhaps he was planning to take them down to the APO himself and spare me the strain. Gosh, what a noble gesture! I'll stay here and write letters while he's gone and maybe fix him a pitcher of iced tea or something after the long hot ride. With these happy thoughts, I stuffed the mags into the sack and left for the basement.

A short while later, I came groaning up the basement steps with the bike and was met by Jim who opened the door from the outside. I bounced the bike down the three steps outside and propped it up on the stand.

I turned to Jim and said in the merriest tones possible, "Well, boy, it looks like you're all set to be off. Make sure you have the money for the stamps and watch

it on the roads with that bag."

Jim looked shocked. "Me??? I'm not taking these heavy things down there! After all, you're the darned editor; it's part of your duties. Now get going or you'll be late!"

"But, but, but..."

There was no use in arguing. I climbed onto the bike and took the bag in my left hand, pedaling furiously for the highway. Soon I reached the crest of the nearby hill and started down it, careful to maneuver the bike so that I would get a maximum of power from the glide. The bike wobbled a bit going down because of the weight in my left hand, but I kept pumping.

At a speed of near twenty mph I reached the highway, only to find it loaded with traffic, and in the process of slowing, burned a good inch off my rear tire. Fannish sweat was popping out on my forehead. Taking advantage of a moment of comparative calm, I darted across the highway, narrowly avoiding a car and two kiddie tricycles which passed me coming over.

Grimly determined, I swung into operation, my belabored legs battling the hill that separated the APO and me. Up the path I labored, muscles straining, until a motorbike passed me by two inches, forcing me off the road. Merrily, I bounced over the curbstone, over an island, and into another street. The forward tire skidded on some stones, I swung about, and just as I thought I was in the clear, an ice-cream cart blundered into my line of sight.

CHERRRAAASSSHHH!!!

I lay on the pavement, my mouth tasting of chocolate, someone yelling in my ear. The magazines were scattered across the street, mixed with bars of ice-cream; several children were tearing the envelopes to make a holder for the ice-cream, while others were scrambling down the open freezer, which lay overturned in the street. The attendant, I realized, was doing the yelling.

Somewhat dazed, to say the least, I staggered to my feet, wadded some money into the man's hand, and gathered up the VOIDS. After hastily inspecting the bicycle, I set out once more, pursued by a gang of chocolate-faced children; I later discovered that I had three of their bars in the bottom of my bag.

The APO almost in sight, I pedaled harder. As I hit the cobble-stoned street, the sack suddenly sprouted a gaping tear, and torn envelopes, magazines, and ice-cream cones went spilling across the sidewalk. Undaunted, I wadded them into my shirt and walked the bike the rest of the way.

Inside, I was greeted with something less than joy. You see, I had mailed things here before. Nevertheless, I persuaded them to sell me some stamps, and I set to work. At around the twenty-fifth copy, as I was rewetting my tongue, I looked at my watch. It was 2:50.

The sponge! I pounced upon it and began applying same to the stamps. Slapping them on furiously, I noticed a crowd of people collecting around me, all amazed at my lightning movements, I guess. I must have been the personification of speed and grace, my clothes torn, my face filmed with perspiration, my tongue hanging out, ice-cream melting down my arms...

ed

Soon I was finished. I look/up at the crowd, and they pretended not to notice me. The time was 2:59. I rushed for the slot and was inserting the first copy when

the clerk rumbled at me in his bass tones, "Don't bodder ta puttem in da box, kid. We'll take 'em on out ta da truck."

I had won. I handed the magazines over to the clerk with a tired grin.

Coming back, my wheels fell off.

---by Greg Benford

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CHERCHEZ LA FEM

Dean Grennell

ABERRATION has hove in and if it weren't as sorry a cliché to say a fanzine is promising as it is to say a new-fledge faned is "industrious", I would say it, but since the adjective is so cruelly overworked, I'll fumble about and say that this is one of the relatively few new 'zines to arrive recently for which I earnestly faunch for the second issue. Someday that, too, may become a cliché but for the nonce, I said it first. I think.

"Abby" as an abbreviative pet-name for ABERRATION is perhaps a little unfortunate since that is what Peter Vorzimer used to call his fanzine, ABSTRACT, and apparently Pete still plans to knock out an occasional issue because I received a copy not long ago. This entire matter of who calls their 'zine what is of utterly no concern to me and I pass it on in a completely non-committal tone of voice. It's just that I thought you ought to know that there's another Abby in fandom (to say nothing of Rotsler's wife, Abney -- about whom it is difficult to say nothing... rrrrarrf!) Maybe you could call it 'ration or something.

((A copy of the first issue has been sent to PJV at his new San Diego address in hopes that he will get riled up about my using Abby as a nickname concerning this mag. If he does, I shall be happy to feud it out with him; if he doesn't, to hell with him. In any case, Abby it is, and Abby it will remain.))

Curtis Janke

I got your first issue of ABERRATION yesterday, and outside of flaws that I need not detail because you know all about them yourself, it is a good first issue. Not the least of its excellences is the fact that you spelled the name right. Most people just can't resist the temptation to spell it with two "b"s instead of two "r"s.

The best thing in the issue, for me, was Schulzinger's column. This sort of thing doesn't necessarily produce wild guffaws, and isn't meant to, it being intended for connoisseurs who can appreciate the feather-touch type of artistry. Perhaps others will pass it by, but let it be known that at least one person dug the superb way in which he recreated, without even straining for effect, the way a lesser writer might have, the precise color of pompous assinity so typical of certain very young neo-fans when they first begin writing for fmz. It is possible, I suppose, that you got this article from a pool, but if not, why not try to get him to do a series? My suggestion for another would be something like this -- "Marriage:

Legalized Prostitution", that being another of the great philosophical thoughts that bursts upon the average sappy 13 or 14 year old while raptly contemplating the unraveling of his umbilical cord. Of course, this should not be done too cruelly, as these kids often grow up and start making sence, so there's no use in alienating them by being too savage. But then, I imagine as accomplished a satirist as Schulzinger doesn't really need such suggestions or advice from me; I had to say enough to fill out this page to make it worthwhile mailing!

((You're no mean satirist yourself, my friend. Incidentally, Mark is not only not 13 or 14...he's older than I am! But not bigger, luckily.))

Didk Lupoff

A couple of points on the purely physical makeup of the zine -- blank ink on grey paper is not the best combination in the world, and in a couple of places you had those full-width columns running pretty deep without relief. Narrower columns are easier reading, and broken up pages are easier reading than solid pages of type.

One might think that written matter should stand or fall on its own merits, but it just isn't so. Physical presentation has great effect upon reception of the matter presented.

((If you found last issue tough reading, you'll probably never get through this one. Seriously, have you succumbed to the average American's desire for more pictures and less written matter? The only art you'll see in Abby henceforth will be the covers, of course, and a few special interiors...outside of that, nothing. And if you can't stand it, I'm afraid you'll have to go off into a corner with the latest issue of LIFE or PARIS MODELS and forget about this mag.))

Buck Coulson

I object to the sentence (by Terry Carr, presumably): "Genus fan is an evolutionary type crittur who is born interested in nothing but stf, and becomes gradually, through that interest, more mature." In the first place, I've known a lot of enthusiastic neofans (YANDRO seems to attract the type), and never yet have I encountered one who had no outside interests. Science fiction may be the major interest, but it is never the only one. Second, the implication that maturity is achieved through fandom. It may be (and indeed I think it is) speeded up somewhat, but an individual capable of being mature is going to be mature, sooner or later, with or without fandom. And I can think offhand of dozens of fans -- including Bnfs -- who are not mature and probably never will be. Claude Degler was a fan for years. George Wetzel has been around for quite a while, and so, presumably, has the un-named Bnf whose opinion of himself was so high that he couldn't allow one lousy article of his to appear in an untewted fanzine. Close to 33% of present-day Bnfs are childishy egotistical. They may be interesting to correspond with, but they definitely aren't mature.

Enjoyed the editorial, but have few comments on it. Middle class traditions may appear to regulate everything, but traditions change, and change fast. 100 years ago fifteen or sixteen wasn't virtually adult -- it was adult. A girl who wasn't married by the time she was sixteen was an old maid. The kids you don't think old enough for steady dating were raising families. Social conditions, the need for more years of study before beginning a career, et al, have steadily raised the top age of "childhood". And naturally parents tend to lag a bit behind the times. They were ready to earn their living at a certain age, so their children should be too. It's too bad but so far no one has found away to change human nature.

((Wetzel's trouble isn't maturity, as far as I can see. He's just a nut.))

Greg Benford

God, Kent, this editorial on teenagers is a bit unstable, don't you think? Hell, freshmen aren't that young! ((Not by today's standards, no, and that's the point I'm trying to make.)) Mebbe around Cincinnati they grow 'em small, but over here towards the end of the year most freshmen are 15. ((Veritable greybeards, eh? Listen here, my transplanted friend, I wasn't 15 until half-way through my sophomore year!)) But essentially you're right -- teenagers are shoved into society and fitted into molds designed by their parents. Usually. However, this is understandable, as most of the little freshmen will grow up to be clerks in some office and live out their dreary lives in their mass-produced homes, anyway. Society will force you to conform always. Have you read "The Lonely Crowd"?

Agree steadfastly with Carr and Rike. The old days of "stf is good and there's no other thing like it and we should all remain loyal to science fiction and band together against the fringe fans like Bob Tucker" are dead and gone now, and the faster we forget them the better. Fandom has become a diverse thing, with many different factions and groups. There is no actual plane of "actifandom" now. There is a small portion of ground, but now a whole mess of cuts have been taken away and there remains the general intercourse between groups. Cliff Gould's new Austin Healy or Porsche aren't heard of in Britain. Terry Jeeves' job as a school teacher was relatively unknown except in his group of friends. Fans just don't get together and communicate all to hell and gone anymore. Still, though, I like it. Socialism in fandom wouldn't be good.

Mike Gates

Received, and, I must add, liked, ABERRATION. I am sure that it will become a top zine. I am pubbing a zine very soon, and plan to review yours in mine. The material in it is good and you were lucky to get a variety of writers. I have been very lucky in getting several good pieces for my zine. John Berry did a small bit for me that was tops. It will be small, only 18 or so pages, and right now I'm at a loss as to what I'm to do about a cover. Suggestions?

((Yeah...why not have one? Seriously, though, any of you looking for a faned who will appreciate receiving contributions (yeah again...outside of me, that is) should write Mike at c/o Col. J.R. Gates, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Commanding General, Northern Area Command, APO 757, New York City. If he edits a good enough mag, perhaps Benford will stop slandering him in print.))

John Berry

As for ABERRATION itself, I found it quite pleasant. I particularly liked the firm strokes of the illo on the front cover. I also liked the OOPSLA-type paper you use...also, a little touch but appreciated, was the artistic use of red lettering. Of course, it was a pity about the two blank middle pages, which could have been utilized to advantage. ((Red lettering was Labowitz's idea, I must admit. But the blank pages were Gary's doing also, which about even things out.))

I note the cross on the last page, by the contributions spot. Now understand that nothing would give me greater pleasure than contributing to your fanzine, but fen seem to get the idea that I am appearing far too much...at least I think they do. Still, as long as faneds ask for material, I shall obey, as long as my mind stands the pace. I have sent something to Arthur Thompson for him to do a heading illo for you. He will send the article and Gestetner stencil to you fairly soon, maybe a coupla weeks after you get this. It's a new idea for me, a sorta column, called PONDERING. The first episode deals with a novel I wrote, and lost the last page, and couldn't remember who the spy was, and...oh heck, wait until you read it..

I hope you like it; if not, send it back. I have a couple of further episodes in the works, so let me know if you like the idea.

((You're committed now, John. Haven't received the column at the time of this stencil cutting session, but will especially expect it shortly. Remember, out there, he said he was going to do a column for me! You heard him! You're all witnesses to the deed! Uh...what are all your names and addresses...?))

Thomas Scortia

ABERRATION certainly is, isn't it? You might possibly get more subscriptions if you printed the price rather than leaving it to be esped. Surely you want others than Black Jawn and Randy Garrett to subscribe.

((If you'd haul your miopic eyeballs out from between the covers of the pro-zines with your stories in them, you'd find Abby's sub price listed on page three of the last issue. However, it's a little late for subs now, as I'm abolishing them as far as Abby is concerned. If you don't have enough ambition to comment, contribute, or tell me that you're willing to trade, you won't be receiving this mag much longer. Not everyone who sends me an fmz gets on my trade list, either. Unless you check the "trade" box on the mag, or inform me, myself, and my id that you want to trade by separate letter, it's no go. At this writing, my trade list shows VOID, PLOY, EXCELSIOR, ZODIAC, RETRIBUTION, BRILLIG, FANATTIC, and FAFHRD, and while a few more may be added twixt now and mailing, no major changes are likely. Ic any of the rest of you want to trade, you'll have to say so. I'll run this thing in editions of twenty-five copies rather than give it away to people who never do anything to earn it.))

Ron Bennett

I have here -- Cecil, will you get off this thing? I don't care if it si not soft paper, you can't sit on it! -- er, as I was saying, I have here a copy of one ABERRATION which to my mind is a real dirty trick. You sub to PLOY, and then come up with a magazine for trade. What do you want I should do, split in two already?

Actually, it does raise a problem, you know, Kent. Should you be putting out Abe on any sort of regular schedule, I can see no alternative but to return your sub and mark you down for a trade copy. I note you have a sub worth half-a-buck still awaiting fulfillment, so to save time and to simplify matters, I'm enclosing same. If the shock's too much for you or if you don't propose to put our Abe out any longer, or if you think I should have the cash, as I'm for any and all charity directed toward me, ployse send the enclosed cash to Bob Pavlat. This breaks my heart, but I don't think I can be fairer.

Don't laugh. Don't thank me. Don't even look ployed. PLOY will be coming to you bedore long as a nemestitic revenge.

((But Ron, this is all so appalling! After all, man...honesty in fandom! Why, the two simply don't mix. Ponder what would happen if fen suddenly turned honest: no more gypped subbers, rooked contributors, cheated faneds, no more feuds, no more characters like Vorzimer and Hall to berate...ghads, wot a ghastly idea!))

William Rotsler

Is that "walking cocktail" gag original? Would like to use it as a cartoon gag (professionally, that is) and pay you a fourth of what I get for it.

((It's yours, Bill. Hope you'll be able to sell it for much moolah.))

Robin Wood

Got your 'zine today. It was addressed to someone called (and I quote) "Robin Hood Wood". This is an outrageous lie, and I may decide to sue you for slander and several other such things. But being so industrious as I am, I will probably decide to show mercy, as this is your first offense.

Heck, I might as well admit it. I have a very suspicious name. Always running into letters and things addressed to all kinds of weird people. In fact I can think of two people who I suspect don't even exist.

((Hell, if you could gather a band of acolytes and assault fandom together, you could call yourselves "Robin and his Merry Fen." Your name is perfectly suited for fandom...so punnish. And if you think you have a suspicious name, take an oogle at mine, keed. Kent is sort of suave and worldly...but Moomaw! You'd expect either something like Kent Murdoch (George Harmon Coxe's detective character) or Waldo Moomaw, but never a combination of the two. I may just change it legally one of these days. Then you'll be sorry I didn't go on calling you Robin Hood...won't you?))

Alan Dodd

I thought it was probably only a matter of time before you did decide to publish a fanzine of your own. I remember you stating as much in a lettercol some time ago. ((Yep, in OBLIQUE #5. I've come a long way in my ideas about the relative simplicity in doing publishing since then.))

I wonder who this Bnf could be that treated you so badly. Couldn't be Boyd Raeburn, could it? I'm just going by the style of writing. Maybe it was someone else. ((It most certainly was! Boyd's been damn fine to a punk fan like myself; I felt a lot better about getting one lousy letter of mine printed in A BAS than I have about getting whole articles in most other fmzs. Let it be known that Boyd Raeburn is most assuredly a Good Man.))

John Qualgiano

Thank you for ABERRATION. It was pleasant reading. I wish you had put more of yourself into the mag, Kent. I think when you decide whta you want your zine to be and make it that way, you will get more enjoyment and have the so-called Bnfs on your contents page.

((What contents page? I think more of stencils than to waste them thus. However with Grnenell, Silverberg, and Ellington in thish and Berry coming up, I feel pretty good. Hoping you are the same, Charlie.))

Vernon L. McCain

I think ABERRATION shows promise...I particularly like the theme of this issue: the opposition to the demands by the unthinking ones that no one be different. But don't overplay it. It is very easy for fans to strdtch themes such as this to paranoid proportions and has been done more than twice. And you don't have to go back to Degler for examples. Becoming monomaniac or fanatic about it not only doesn't convince people, but actually does your cause harm, becuae they tend to regard youu and anything you advance, as ridicilous when that happens.

And it seems to me that the defensive, self-pitying tactic is a bit too close in this issue...from the attempts to blame crime on conformity to the exaggerated faults of the middle class to the irritation expressed by Coulson that he can't convert his friends.

The important thing is to keep your sense of humor. If you can laugh at yourself, others will laugh too. They'll laugh in any case, but if you are laughing at yourself they will laugh with you, not at you. You'll have more fun editing your fanzine, your readers will enjoy it more, and who knows, you might actually bring one or two people around to your way of thinking. But don't let it bother you if you fail. The world will keep right on spinning, and you with it.

((I now have the Secret of the Successful Faned, straight from our High Priest's mouth: laugh at yourself. Ok, Vern, henceforth I'll devote a little time each day to laughing like hell at myself...it had better pay off, too! Seriously, I'm not in the least out to crusade for anything; the first ish just happened to turn out that way. All the contributions were purely the whims of their writers. I'll leave crusading to Ron Smith and Ray Schaffer, thankee. Glad you think I have possibilities, though.))

Joe (GALAXY) Gibson

Yes indeed, there are some dirty Bnfs. Look how those British took the Con, this year! Walt Willis and I had it in the bag, too -- we were going to see that Antwerp got it. But then Walt didn't win TAFF again last year. And after he'd promised. Now we'll never see the expression on Jansen's face.

And then there's the lawt time (well, no, not the last time -- he pays well) Bob Bloch stayed here. Robbie had carefully deposited three towels in the bathroom labeled HIS, HERS, and -- nothing at all, since we couldn't find one labeled ITS. So next morning, Bob falls off the side of the livingroom couch on a few old broken bottles and goes in to wash the blood off. (He rinsed the tub, too, but it still bears slight traces of green.) And after I'd awoke, had my morning's snort, and got the icebag properly tied on, I toddles out to the bath chamber. And what do I find? HERS and -- nothing -- have been left untouched -- and HIS has been used!!

Now if you wrote as well as Bloch does, you wouldn't need my material for your fanzine. You wouldn't even have a fanzine. You'd have nothing but old copies of PLAYBOY, POLICE GAZETTE, and SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN with your stories in them, and a large bank vault opening off the squash court.

But what gets me is these dirty neofan editors who send you their fanzines full of sparkling neofan crud that makes you realize what an old greybeard faaaan you are. The least they could do is get an article by some not-quite-so-young fan like Bob Silverberg ((heh-heh)). As it is, I don't recognizw anyone on the contents page. ((Godammit, what is this? There isn't any contents page!! Honest!!)) Last time I was at a MidwestCon, Doc Barrett mistook me for a patient -- recommended a very good psychiartrist, too. I just don't recognize anybody in fandom any more. Or possibly it's that they don't recognize me any more. You probably got my address out of MYSTIC's personals column. ((Not quite, but almost as bad -- it was VOID.))

Seriously, I am quite disturbed about this. Where is fandom? Who is fandom? Is fandom? It has actually been years -- years, I say -- since someone sent me a fanzine of some thrity-six pages crammed with letters from the same thirty-seven fans who had letters last issue and reviews of eighteen other fanzines, mostly one-shots, because I drew the dirty nude on page nine. I dunno what anybody's doin' any more! Tsk. Probably it's even got so bad you gotta subscribe to fnz these days. And after all the years I kept sending letters to TWS and SS trying to make Merwin a trufan and get free copies. Even neofans have gone dirty pro, I bet.

Dirty pro...now, you may have gripes about dirty Bnfs, but bhoyyy -- and then there are some dirty editors. Look, suppose you wrote a personal letter to an editor who'd published the few stories you ever wrote worth publishing, minus a few

you sold elsewhere by happening to send 'em there first. So --

You tell him the story character he wants to have stories about won't get him 100,000 readers like he hopes. ((I thot Palmer wasn't interested in statistics -- only in furthering the kind of stf he likes. You have disallusioned me, sir. RAP isn't a ghod after all. Sob.))

You tell hkm the story character must read like Spillane to be successful.

You tell him to take a look at the newsstand and see if anything else is even pretending to sell these days.

So he comes along and chops off the beginning and end and publishes the middle by itself. And simply because the guy was so emotionally confused about the thing, I think, that middle part of my letter was all he could see through his sudden, blind rage.

Well, what can ya do? Henceforth, I'm just going to ignore the guy like everyone else is doing. Them good, old Edmond Hamilton days is gone, that's all. Wonder who's drawing the dirty nude on page nine? ((William Rotsler, of course.)) I presume somebody has introduced brain washing in the N3F by now? Who's pubbing the sequel to IMMORTAL STORM?

Man, it's gettin' dark out here...

((This man is positively fabulous. I've read this letter a good half-dozen times, and I still break up each reading. Joe, you are a Good Man.))

Stan Woolston

ABERRATION. I like it. Already it has the individual flavor thaf many third issues never get. The appearance is clear and uncluttered, and not so formally perfect as toarouse the jealousy of fellow fen. ((As if I were worried.))

Boyd Raeburn

Thanks for ABERRATION. As a first issue, it shows promise. Layout is neat, and reproduction is legible. You show good editorial personality. Matdrial on the whole is nothing (with the exception of the Carr article -- I wish more people held such a reasonable view) but at least it isn't stupor-inducing, and one can't expect too much from a first issue. Schulzinger's article is mostly utter rot. A few sound points try to sturggle through the morass, but give up in despair. He sounds as if he's grinding an axe of some sodt.

Archie Mercer

I have on hand one genuine ABERRATION, which I now must take steps to Do Something About. Well, to start with, with all the will in the world, I'm not in a position to contrubute. Hell, there are people I owe long-standing obligations to that I'm worrying myself sick ((sick, that is -- damn typos)) trying to think up a worthwhile contribution for. So I'm reluctantly bound to state that you haven't a hope in Hades of getting my moniker on your contents page ((!!!)) in the near future. (Do Americans know what monikers are? ((This one does.)) Sometimes spelled with two ens. Means a name, usually a signiture, anyway. Dunno why, though.)

Let's crit the thing, anyhow. D'you know your "Primrose Path" starts out with something mighty near poetry? "Cutting stencils in the dead of night, turnign a mimeo by the dawn's first light, hitting the old stapler till his hands turn blue:" It could continue something like this: "Sticking up the envelopes and spilling all

the glue." Or something.

D'you mind me asking a personal question? If so, don't read any further. If not, though, I'd be interested in knowing the etymology of the name "Moomaw". Lots of American fan have names that intrigue me, and yours is one of them. On the face of it, it might possibly -- to my ears -- be American Indian. ((You've been seeing too many of our Western movies.)) Or possibly Slavic -- "Mumav". ((Wrong again.)) Kent's easy enough -- it should be with me, anyway, because I was born there. It being, of course, one of England's oldest counties, at one time a kingdom in its own right. Come to think of it, I suppose, if you spelled your surname "Mughmoor" or something, it too could be a genuine English type name.

((I've already told Archie what little I know of the Moomaw family roots, but I'd like to hear some other ideas before I publish same in Abby. American Indian, Slavic, and Olde Englishe, so far...any other guesses? I'll give you a broad hint: the country which spawned my ancestors has at least one fan today.))

Rick Sneary

Your fanzine came this morning, and I read the editorial. But due to steadily increasing gafia tendencies, I am not subscribing. I'm not reviewing any longer in SFParade, either. Best wishes, even if I'm not around.

John Champion

And now, "A Voice In The Night". My oh my, this is just terrible. America is really going to hell in a basket, and all like that. Simply horrible...aaarrgggh! This bit of pseudo-Geisiana, this prophecy of doom, fails to move me at all, unless to somewhere I won't mess up the floor with my loud retching. I can think of several reasons you might have printed this. You wanted comments, and this will get them, you were in need of material, or you believe it. And I certainly hope that it's one of the first two. I can also think of several reasons why Mark might have written it. He wanted to give you a big controversy for your first issue, he might believe it, or he might have been temporarily insane. I hesitate to predict what type of comment you'll get from other fans, but the moistened raspberry is all you'll receive from Pendleton.

Any person who would have the audacity to make a flat statement to the effect that "half the people in the United States are wildly neurotic or insane" is either subject to periodic insqnty or already too far paranoic for help. Generalizations of almost any type are dangerous to both reader and writer, especially those of this type. For one thing, while there is, of course, a group of middle class incomes in the United States, there is no definite, clear-cut middle class personality. Really, does he think he's some sort of ghod, setting himself up as an authority on American life? I don't know anything about Mark, but I would certainly like to, for it would help me qualify my comments. Maybe this sounds like I'm trying to be an authority myself, but I'm not. I'm stating a blunt opinion -- and I know it's an opinion! Does Mark feel the same way about what he's said?

()Which about winds up the lettercol, and the entire issue with it. Remember, comment, send me a fmz marked specifically for trade, or contribute, and I'll put you down for a copy of the next edition. If you don't, whether it's your fault or not, it'll be a long wait for Abby, I fear.

A fellow on television has just removed his beautiful blonde sweetheart's high-heeled pumps, and is currently in the process of stroking her calves most passionately, working his way up toward her dimpled knees. I shall have to look into this more carefully.))

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