

BLAT!

A
SUPPLEMENT
TO
BLAT! 3

A · R · C · H · I · V · E · S

INTRODUCTION

Strange. Very strange. That's what it is. Who'd have thought that after twenty-odd years I'd be writing another editorial for *Egoboo*? Didn't we get enough egoboo back then?

Well no, of course not. You can never have too much egoboo. In fact, as I recall the response was pretty sparse on the ground for the last few issues. *Egoboo* began in the summer of 1968 as a small, frequent fanzine — a sort of glorified two-person letter substitute in the form of a miniature genzine — and somehow it established itself in the minds of fandom as just that: small and frequent. No matter that after the fourth issue, at the end of that summer, when I went back to college 3,000 miles from my co-editor, the gaps between issues lengthened to three or four months; no matter, either, that after a few issues I took over virtually all the editorial and production chores and doubled the size of the zine to a modest genzine of 24 pages, pulling in several irregular columnists besides ourselves. *Egoboo* was still a small, frequent fanzine in the minds of fandom — until the long cycle of their attention span was reached and a new impression embedded itself: *Egoboo*, the infrequent fanzine, the fanzine that's spent itself, the fanzine that hardly comes out any more and might fold at any time. This, too, was an impression that was hard to shake, but it was also considerably less congenial than the first one: it meant that no one bothered to write letters. (Well, not *no one* — as evidenced by the pages of time-mouldered letters that you're about to read.) In the last issue, I addressed this perception and promised that *Egoboo* was not dead, that it would keep on appearing, and that we'd appreciate getting more letters.

It just took us a little while.

John D. Berry

EGOBOO 17

When we started *Egoboo*, in the summer before the Baycon (which was eulogized at last year's San Francisco worldcon as "Fandom's Summer of Love"), I was a first-year college student about to turn eighteen, home in suburban Bronxville, New York, for the summer, my head stuffed full of the excitement of a year away from home in the hotbed of psychedelia and counter-culture, the San Francisco Bay Area. Apart from pining in an unrequited transatlantic romance for an exchange student I'd met the winter before, all that I did of importance that summer, or so it seemed, was work on fanzines and take the train into New York City to Ted's apartment to talk with him and other fans and publish those fanzines. We had a lot of fun inventing the artform — the idea of a "miniaturized genzine" was Ted's and Les Gerber's, and one that he and Dan Steffan later perfected in *Pong* — and it was gratifying to get all that quick response. Besides, 1968 was a time of ferment in fandom as well as the outside world: "It's Eighth Fandom Time (Maybe)," as Ted declared in our second issue, pointing to the apparent fannish renaissance all around us. Even since Dick Geis had revived his once-seminal fanzine *Psychotic* in the fall of '67, in a burst of energy and renewed enthusiasm, fanzine publishers had been popping out of the woodwork. Fanzines, as Ted put it later, were *talking to each other*, and a lot of them were doing a very good job of it. That's what we wanted to participate in.

So we did.

In a sense, *Egoboo* spanned the lifetime of this putative "Eighth Fandom." Even though the exuberant, argumentative, SF-based Zeitgeist of fandom in 1968 (remember the ironic "two-hundred-dollar suit"?), especially in the pages of *Psychotic*-turned-*SF-Review*, differed quite a bit from the inward-looking, hyper-fannish Gestalt of fandom in 1972, expounded and proselytized (and practice, sometimes brilliantly) in the pages of *Focal Point*, *Potlatch*, and other fanzines of the Brooklyn Insurgents, still, you can look back on that period as a single long outburst of fannish creativity and fractious community. After 1972, things tapered off. Energies dissipated. Cohesion unknit. New patterns and new fans, of course, which would create a different, more diffuse fannish scene in the later '70s, were beginning to coalesce, but they hadn't yet found their form.

And fandom itself had grown and changed in a fundamental way, as science fiction became a mass phenomenon instead of the marginal enthusiasm of a few readers of weird books. No longer would we be able to speak of fandom as one thing (if we ever had); it was no longer a single small town but a series of expanding suburbs, and

as we've seen over the two decades since then, each group, whether village or subdivision, had to find its own community on a more and more local scale. "Fanzine fandom," in those days, was a much larger thing than "fannish fandom," but today you often hear the two phrases used interchangeably — to distinguish "us" from the great mass of science-fiction fans whose experience is not centered on reading and writing the printed word.

There was nothing symbolic or reflective of the times in how *Egoboo* ceased publication. We just got tired of the old forms and went on to other things. In the fall of 1972, I moved from the Bay Area back to the East Coast, following my co-editor, as it were, to Falls Church, where he had grown up and where we became the nucleus of the unlikely community known as "Falls Church fandom." (Occasionally, in fits of self-referential self-hype, we'd call ourselves "Fabulous Falls Church Fandom.") I lived at first in Ted and Robin's house, later with rich and Colleen brown, and eventually in an apartment way out in the country with Terry Hughes. We all hung out together, laughing and playing and having a good time, and we immortalized a few scraps of it in the pages of an irregular one-shot called *The Gafiate's Intelligencer*. (We confused all our readers by numbering the fanzine as though each time we got together was an issue, whether we committed anything to paper or not. Only three real issues appeared, as far as I can remember.) But all this superseded the fanzine form that Ted and I had established in *Egoboo*, and somehow we just never got around to publishing another issue.

Well, obviously "never" is a word that one should use with care. Ted has found another willing collaborator ("Want to make a BNF happy?") and a new form to perfect (nobody would call BLAT! "miniaturized"), and part of this new form seems to include exhuming, one by one, the unpublished last issues of what are now, inarguably, old fanzines. So *Egoboo* 17, rescued from oblivion, is finally appearing after a slight delay of only 22 years.

The stencils were languishing in Ted's basement, and although he and Dan have run them off, they haven't actually sent me a copy yet. So you see, I haven't *read* these pages in more than twenty years. Dan did remind me, in a cursory way, of what was in them. You know, I'm kind of looking forward to seeing what we said.

You too? Well, get on with it, then! What are you waiting for?

And don't forget those letters.

— John D. Berry, May, 1994