

A P O L O G I A

The Pacificon II Committee has cancelled the membership of Walter Breen. The committee feels this to be a necessary and desirable action. But it could have been done differently. It should have been done differently.

Walter Breen's presence at a convention is highly undesirable. But the reasons for this do not make him a monster. He is still a human being—albeit a sick one—and should be treated with the dignity and consideration to which any individual is entitled.

I should not have published the BOONDOGGLE. Walter Breen should have been given a chance to keep the matter quiet if he so choose. I still believe that he would not have done so, that he and his friends would have made the same terrific fuss they did. But he should have been given the chance.

There is an old saying, "When you are about to kill a man, it costs you nothing to be polite." I would add that it is something you owe him as a fellow member of the human race.

I cannot speak for the rest of the committee of course, but I think I can see why I did what I did. Somehow or other I'm not in the habit of "killing" people. And I'm a fan and regard excluding someone from the worldcon as the equivalent of cutting him off from society, of killing him. I felt we had to do this to Walter Breen. But I didn't like it. And in order to bring myself to the point where I could stomach it, I had to cease to regard him as a human being. I did so. The attitudes which produced the BOONDOGGLE followed. The state of my thinking can be seen by my Naming Names which was hugely unfair to many involved.

I've already apologized to them. But I also think I owe an apology to Walter Breen. I hereby tender it.

The BOONDOGGLE was essentially true of course. But that's no excuse.

And as the instigator of the anti-Breen "crusade", I think it's high time it was all brought to a crashing halt. We've all been highly emotional, we as well as they, and it's time we stopped all this bloody nonsense.

Let's look at it from a purely practical point of view for a moment. We're going to get nowhere. Walter Breen is not going to be run out of fandom. Nor am I. There are too many people on both sides. And leave us face it, some of our best friends are evil monsters on the other side. Some friendships are already irreparably gone. Let's don't send any more down the drain.

And let's be both practical and fair. Walter's close friends say he now has a chance for rehabilitation. Let's give him that chance. After all, from the practical point of view, he's not dangerous any more. From now on he's going to be watched like a hawk and pounced upon at the least sign of deviation. But again, let's be fair. Let's make this surveillance as unobtrusive as possible.

He can't be watched closely enough at large affairs like the worldcon, but he can be at smaller gatherings. And it seems to me that if—after a couple of years or so—there are no complaints against him, he should be welcome at worldcons again.

Bill Donaho
Berkeley, Calif.
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