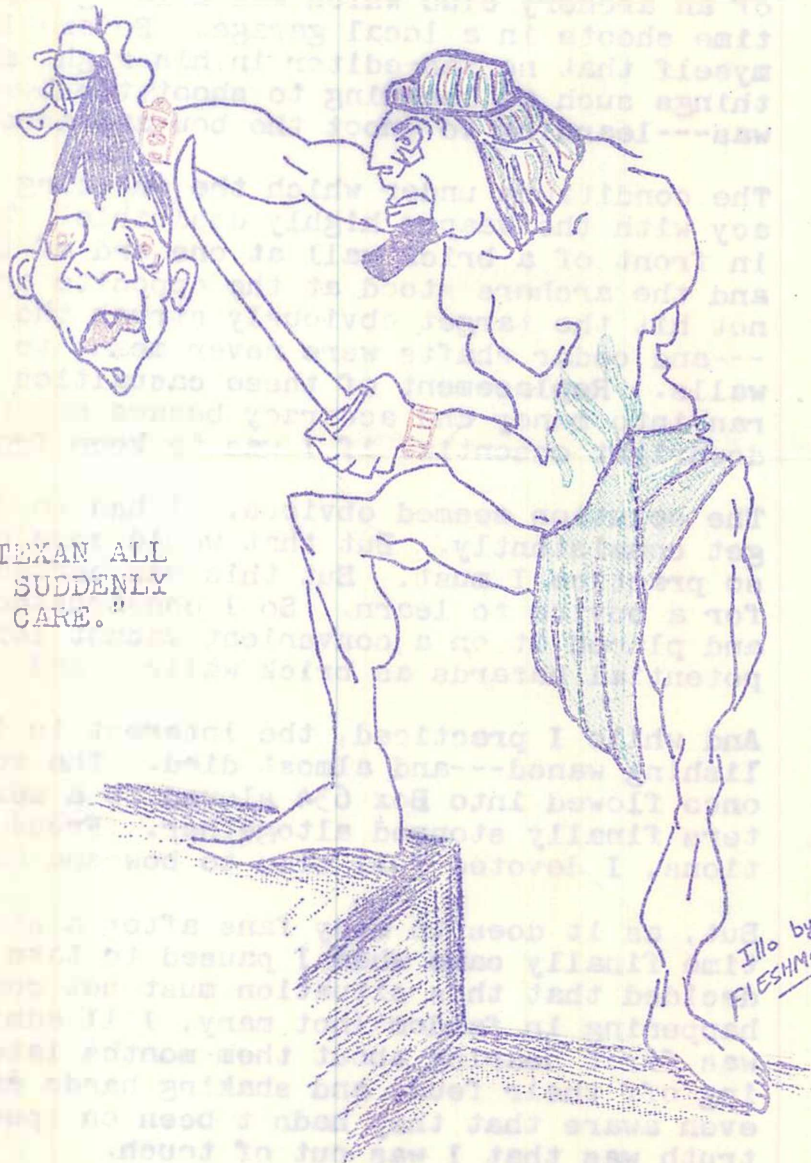


CONFAB



"I'VE BEEN A TEXAN ALL MY LIFE---AND SUDDENLY I JUST DON'T CARE."

Illo by FLESHMAN

COMES THE RESURRECTION...

It was shortly before the end of last year that the last issue of CONFAB appeared. Then, before material for another issue could be assembled, archery reared its head.

Archery is a sport in which I've been mildly interested for some time. But about that time I discovered the existence of an archery club which was holding their weekly winter-time shoots in a local garage. Before I could reason with myself that no fan-editor in his right mind has time for things such as learning to shoot the bow and arrow, there I was---learning to shoot the bow and arrow.

The conditions under which the shooting was done made accuracy with the weapon highly desirable. The target was placed in front of a brick wall at one end of the garage building and the archers stood at the opposite end. Arrows which did not hit the target obviously struck the brick wall behind it ---and cedar shafts were never meant to be shot into brick walls. Replacement of these casualties (I discovered) soon ran into money and accuracy became not only desirable but downright essential if I was to keep from bankruptcy.

The solution seemed obvious. I had to learn to hit the target consistently. But that would come only from practice---so practice I must. But this was certainly not the place for a novice to learn. So I constructed a makeshift target and placed it on a convenient vacant lot away from such potential hazards as brick walls. And there I practiced.

And while I practiced, the interest in fandom and fan-publishing waned---and almost died. The volume of fanzines that once flowed into Box 634 slowed to a mere trickle. The letters finally stopped altogether. Freed from these distractions, I devoted full time to bow-and-arrowing.

But, as it does to many fans after a siege of gaffs, the time finally came when I paused to take stock of things and decided that this situation must not continue. Things were happening in fandom (not many, I'll admit, but a few) and I was first hearing about them months later. Fans were calling off their feuds and shaking hands again before I was even aware that they hadn't been on speaking terms. The sad truth was that I was out of touch.

No longer did I find my name mentioned in the fanzines. No longer did I find reviews of CONFAB. No longer did the neo-editors hopefully send me their fond first issues. This

must not happen. I made a careful selection. The bow and the quiver of arrows were laid aside. I brushed the dust from my litter; I roused the spiders from their snug little homes in the innards of my typer. And as I stood there surveying the results of my labors, I felt sorta proud---and a little lonely too.

I was a fan again.

ON POLICIES . . . PAST AND FUTURE

Heretofore, CONFAB has been appearing on a highly irregular schedule (anywhere from three weeks to nine months between issues. It has been intended mainly as a letterzine with the readers' letters being almost the entire bill-of-fare. It has seldom sported illustrations or careful layouts. It has been distributed on a free-gratis basis. This has been the policy of CONFAB heretofore.

But, beginning with this issue, these statements are no longer all strictly true.

CONFAB will hereafter be published on a monthly schedule. No more of the nine-month gestating periods between issues. This issue is scheduled for the first of September. The next issue will appear in one month.

This issue still features letters as the main course, although I have given myself an extra page or two here to begin things. But, within the next several issues, I would like to start printing additional material---columns, articles, or what have you. This is, of course, provided I can locate some agreeable writers. Fannishness is the preferred theme, but not to the complete exclusion of other material. The letters will continue to hold a featured spot, but I would like to enlarge the mag to include additional material.

As you can see, I have put a bit more work into the layout of this issue, complete to a cover illo. Covers will probably continue in this general style---again, provided I can contact some ambitious fan-artists. Interior illos will begin next issue. As a last resort, I might even do them myself. In other words, I'm working for a more presentable mag.

And now we come to that statement about the free-gratis distribution. The policy on this point is not quite so definite. Everything depends on how well the subjects of the two preceding paragraphs can be worked out. If I can make arrangements with suitable columnists and writers and artists who will keep me supplied with sufficient material to publish the kind of mag I would like, say 24 pages a month, I do not intend to continue the free distribution. There will then be a subscription price. The amount will depend on what I think the mag is worth, both quantity- and quality-wise, in comparison with the rest of the field. Until such time, though, CONFAB will continue to be distributed without charge.

This, then, will be the policy of CONFAB hereafter.

THOSE REPRODUCTION BLUES...or THAT ~~SHIT~~ DITTO...

A flat-bed ditto can be a dastardly, back-biting critter. I speak from experience. I've had one of the blankety-blank things for several years now, and I've used it for all my fan-publishing. At first it worked fine--no complaints. But more recently it has taken up the exasperating habit of putting a big purple smear across the printed page. The first half-dozen pages of the letters are probably prime examples in most of the copies.

This certainly wasn't in keeping with the more careful reproduction I'd had in mind for this issue. I determined to correct the situation. Mumbling something about "...no mere machine...", I tackled it with vengeance and pliers and screwdrivers. And I couldn't do it.

The thing works fine when I use a new, virgin sheet of paper. The trouble starts when I start to print the reverse side of the sheet. Then the rubber pressure roller seems to pick up some of the purple stuff from the printed side of the sheet and ingeniously transfer it, in the form of a smear, to the back-side of the next sheet.

First, my suspicions were directed at the rubber roller. I scrubbed it with ditto fluid and with soap and water; I scraped it with a sharp knife; I even used sandpaper. The succeeding test run was a bitter disappointment. Next I tackled the felt wick and steel roller which feeds the fluid to the paper. I tore the whole thing apart, scrutinized it carefully, and reassembled it. And still no improvement. There being no other working parts to the thing, I decided the rubber roller must be the culprit. Possibly a new roller would correct the situation, but who was I to spend five bucks on a new roller, when the whole machine probably wasn't worth much more than that.

Then my fannish mind pondered on how one goes about correcting offset troubles with a mimeo. Of course... Slip-sheeting! But who ever heard of slip-sheeting on a ditto? But then, who was I to falter in the face of ridicule when I might be on the verge of an important discovery? I put the theory to the test. As the sheet was run through the machine, a sheet of mimeo paper was run through with it, between the copy sheet and that dirty, old pressure roller. And... Eureka! It worked!

Which just goes to show, a fan never knows what he is really capable of doing, until he is put to the test.

CONVENTION REPORT, ANYONE?

I'm hereby begging on bended knee for a report on the World Con for the next issue. If anyone would like to do a report and would like to see it get into print before the convention as been almost forgotten as a topic of discussion (it has happened) let me hear from you. I can promise you immediate publication.

See you in a bigger and better (I hope) #13...

Bob Piotrowski

THE READERS RAMPANT

DEAN A. GRENNELL, 402 Maple Ave., Fond du Lac, Wis.

CONFAB #10 in and appreciated. Liked the ESHM drawings as always. Say, have you heard anything out of Ron lately? He wrote last spring and said that he was being shipped to Germany or somewhere and would send his new address from there. Haven't heard a word out of him since and I have a bunch of mags with his work in them here waiting to be sent him if I ever hear where to send them.

CONFAB #11 on hand too (nice to see this comfortable old job turning up again!). In answer to your comments on EdCo's letter:

I could discuss guns, I suppose, since I have some minor interest in and knowledge of them and I might talk about sports cars and women but I don't know too much about either of those except that you can spend a lot of money on them and they are both hard to catch going around corners.

But I had a lot of fun last summer, plooping about beneath the surface of a small lake upstate a ways. It's about 3 miles long by a mile or so wide and God-knows-how-deep. I didn't get around to learning how to swim at all till I was 18 and have been no more than indifferent at it ever since... could maybe swim 100 feet without touching bottom if I had to, but not much more.

I guess it was from reading Cousteau's THE SILENT WORLD or something but I got interested in diving last winter and this spring I bought a face-mask, a snorkel and a pair of fins for my feet. With these I proposed to explore the Mysterious Green Depths.

First time I tried them it was barely past the first of May and upland lakes in Wisconsin at that time of year are COLD. Considering that, I had trouble controlling my breathing. The mask fits over your nose and you are supposed to breathe through the snorkel with your mouth. But when the water is cold and you are inexperienced, you are apt to try to breathe through both, get nothing, panic a bit, try to pany, can't do that either and come grampussing to the surface, snorting and spraying. Thus with me.

But later on, as I got more practice and the water got warmer, it was easier. I found I could keep afloat with almost no effort whatsoever and the snorkel eliminated the troublesome business of fighting to keep nose and mouth above the

surface. The fins gave my feet an amazing amount of additional thrust and the mask kept the water out of my eyes. Fine deal. I was able to paddle at my leisure for hundreds of yards at a time, gawking down through the water and placidly gulping through the snorkel.

As far as exploring the deeper part of the lake, I didn't. Water pressure on the ears increases rapidly as you go down and I found that my "floor" was about 20-24 feet down. The bottom at that depth isn't greatly different from what it is closer in to shore. You see some fish, it's true, but it's illegal to try to spear them in this state. ..oh, I suppose you could spear rough fish such as carp, but there aren't any of those in that particular lake that I ever saw.

Why bother going down then? Well, I suppose you could say that it's like visiting a different world, trite though that may sound. It's interesting to watch fish in their natural element and it's highly intriguing to experiment with the nullification of gravity you encounter once immersed in the water. It's quite a deal to hang, motionless and suspended in the water, every single muscle totally relaxed, moving up and down as you breathe through the tube. Sort of like free-fall, if you know what I mean.

Next year I hope to work out some kind of arrangement to permit me to get at least a few extra breaths while down there. I can't quite see laying out \$180 or so for an Aqua-Lung or similar device but I'm going to see what I can rig up or get hold of. As it is now, I have to come up every minute or so. I can stay down for as much as a minute and 45 seconds if I don't move but any exertion cuts down on the time. You can't do much in that length of time.

So there's a few words on skin-diving and does any of the readership have any interest in sail-boats?

((The skin-diving sounds like great sport, Dean, although I have never been a swimmer of any sort. Floating has been my limit and that only in water shallow enough to permit me to get my feet under me in cases of necessity-- which seemed to be fairly often as I recall.

The Aqua-Lung should be a real addition to the skin-diving equipment, but I didn't realize they were that expensive. What little knowledge I have of them (outside of seeing Godfrey wallow in one on TV) was gained from watching the local life-guard operate in a drowning case here some time back. The equipment, purchased by the city only a short time before, proved itself quite valuable at the time.

Sail-boats are rather rare around here, Dean. There are a number of outboard motor enthusiasts about, but guess there isn't a large enough body of water available for sailing.

And while on this general subject: I'm usually not much in the line of outdoor sports, outside of some occasional fishing, but have taken up archery during the past several months. I've found it to be a very interesting (and time and money consuming) pastime. Is there anyone else among us who is interested in the subject?

I haven't had a word from FLESHMAN for a couple of

years now, I'm afraid. Have been using a lot of his illos
but have had most of them on hand for some time, awaiting
their turns.)

SHOON WAREL, 5 Playfield St., Dundalk 22, Md.

The last three issues of CONFAB did not contain my letter of rebuttal to numerous critics of my expose of unethical fan editors and my explanations about EEEvans. Lest some think I was either without courage or lacked rebuttal arguments, would you print this, making the facts known? All I can ascertain from your not printing my last letter to you is that you have tired of controversy and dropped it for that reason.

As to my criticism of EEEvans who spoke disparagingly of Ellison and the Detroit teenage fans: I have since been forced to the conclusion that Evans may be correct in his estimation of teenage fans being thoroughly irresponsible, though I still had found Evans himself somewhat "high-hat" when I attempted to converse with him at the Philcon. Therefore I would like to admit his estimation is right and hence to retract my defending of teenage fans.

If you are curious as to why, it has to do with two teenage fans who acted just the way Evans said teenage fans do act. Ellison, whom I defended against Evans' disparaging remarks has set out for reasons best known to himself to "feud" with me and has talked Mason into helping him; Mason as you may know attempted to label me as anti-Semitic etc in WENDIGO; while Ellison has been making poison-pen letter charges about me.

The other teenage fan who caused me to concur with Evans is Ron Ellik who has a dislike of anyone prejudiced against teenage fans and feels teenage fans should be allowed to use water guns, etc at Cons. I told Ellik I thought a certain amount of teenage antics should be allowed and that I would certainly judge any teenage fan on his intelligence rather than his physical age.

So when Evans made his crack about teenage fans, I showed Ellik, also, my sincerity and consistency by publicly stating several places I thought Evans was off base and prejudicial. Ellik replied later to me in a hot letter for attacking his friend Evans, and acted very contradictory seeing as how I was backing him up.

Ellik's beer bottle throwing out of hotel windows was tossed in my face to my embarrassment but the beating I took from that also meant nothing.

So taking both Ellison and Ellik into account, my issue with Evans over his crack about teenage fans has netted me nothing but trouble from Evans' friends; besides the fact that the two teenage fans, whom my statement was meant to support, themselves, for contrary reasons best known to themselves, have decided I am their enemy.

No matter how Evans may have rubbed me personally, I am forced to concede that he is right about the irresponsibility and immaturity of

teenage fans who obviously don't know the meaning of the word "gratitude".

I would deem it a great privilege if you would print this entire letter so that readers will know why I took issue with Evans and why I am now apologizing to him and to any of his friends who took exception to what I said.

((Sorry if you felt that I'd shorted you of your say in the controversy a few issues back. That wasn't my intention. As I recall, the letter you refer to arrived shortly after issue #9 was put together. Then came the nine-month lay-off before I got around to working on #10, and picking letters for that issue. I decided not to include yours as I feared you might object to having it appear at such a late date.

The floor is always open to anyone who has steam to blow off and is certainly also open to any replies or rebuttals. OK??)

BILL COURVAL, 4215 Cherokee Ave., San Diego 4, Calif.

I'm sorry I didn't comment on #10 like I led you to believe, but dammitt, all those dated letters didn't inspire me. Thanks for giving me another chance.

Gad, you've gotten more slimmer and less controversial than #10 was. Also, the illos are gone. You didn't try to remedy the situation by padding it with something by you either. Tsk, tsk, looks to me as if you're in one of those pessimistic moods that precarious faneds often find themselves in. That is, they get mad at fandom because they feel they have been badly treated by it. They then put out a below-par issue embodying the mood of "If the fans like it, good. If they don't, hell with 'em. I'll get out of fandom then." The fans usually sense this and oblige the ed with indifference.

Bearing in mind that this invaluable example of my superior thought-processes might go the way of the cross to SFR I continue to write. (Oh the cross we fan bear.)

I too, am a believer that the growing pains SF is going thru might prove to be fatal. True, the writers are trying to present us with universal truths as opposed to the ideals (or universal utopias) that were predominant in the era of the Williamsons, Kuttacks, Hamiltons, Leinsters, etc, but in this replacing of romance by realism the new school of writers has taught me only one thing. They can't write. A Gunn or a Young will tell me that a woman has to sit when she goes to the head like anybody else, and a Williamson will portray her as a vessel of all the tender spiritual qualities. Which one am I going to read? Williamson, of course, because he says it a hell of a lot better than Gunn. I've been sampling Huxley, Wolfe, Joyce, Frost and a few others and from them I have learned only one creed. THOU SHALT NOT SUFFER BAD WRITING TO BE READ. If the new crew can't do a good job then give SF back to the idealists.

((I'm afraid you're using an erroneous standard by which you're judging CONFAB by starting out with issue #10 as you did. All the earlier issues were more on the order of #11 (no illos of any kind) than #10, which was the only issue up until now to have a cover illo and interior illos of any number. How does this issue strike you, aside from the fact that it's late?

You're way off base, lad, if you figure I've got a mad on at fandom. I certainly don't feel (and never have) that I've been badly treated by fandom in general or any fans in particular. In fact, I might say, with all modesty, that most all of my efforts in the fan field have been received rather well. And that #11 issue sure as heck wasn't put out with any such attitude on my part as you describe. It was small because I had only a few letters to put in it and I didn't "pad" it, as you say, because I was mighty busy and wanted to get the issue finished before the holiday season. As for the readers being indifferent to that #11 "below-par" issue, response to #11 was 2 to 3 times that of #10.

Oh the cross we faneds bear!

G. M. CARR, 5319 Ballard Ave., Seattle 7 Wash.

...Speaking of fannish phenomena, Stan Woolston mentioned the most baffling and mysterious of them all -- the NFFF. This organization continues to be the despair and delight of fandom: it creeps along like an overwatered house-plant, offering an infinity of barren foliage but never seeming to mature into blossoms of achievement. I won't die -- but it never really burgeons into healthy life. This organization has the potential of being really helpful and of use to fans. The only thing is, it never seems to get beyond the "potential" stage, no matter how hard the individual acti-members work at it. The reason of course, is simple -- fannish anarchy. The organization is forever plagued by attempts to re-organize; to set up channels of authority; to establish responsibility. There is no possibility of ever achieving this because there is no real leadership possible. Here in NFFF the principle of "government by consent of the governed" is brought to its ultimate. And since there is no way of compelling obedience (as there is in even the most democratic of civic governments) there can never be a full and complete "consent of the governed". No matter how willing to cooperate the fans are, if just one or two refuse the voluntary acceptance of responsibility the entire chain of activity breaks down. Once it does, there is no way of bridging the broken link. One Committee Chairman who accepts the job and then neglects it, can (and does, often) bottleneck the activity of all the rest. If it were possible to collect all the stencils that somebody offered to run off, and then forgot in a bottom drawer some place; or all the manuscripts that someone offered to cut on stencil and waited for someone to send the money for the stencils; or all the material which somebody else gathered to compile into a "benefit" and then was distracted by girls or sports cars or any of the other hazards to adolescent fandom -- NFFF would have so many "benefits" it would use all their \$1.50 annual dues in postage alone! Probably the only thing which could cure this anarchy would be to impose economic penalties. ...for instance,

require a \$100 performance bond in the form of a legally valid promissory note. If the volunteer publisher or stencil cutter or Committee Chairman had not performed what he promised by the date promised, the promissory note to be turned over to a collection agency. I'll bet there would be a flurry of activity then..... But that idea too is merely another leaf on the fruitless vine which is NFFF. Who could be found that could be trusted to hold the notes?

The question, "What is the response, percentagewise, to your fanzine?" brings up the interesting point of what do you regard as "response". Personally, I should say that the response to my GEMINES is well over 100%, because I use my fmz as trading material (or did, until I discontinued the practice) and I kept finding more and more fmz sent to me than I had sent out until the total swelled to a point that is quite a different thing. In the next-to-last issue of GZ, I sent out about 28 copies outside of FAPA (mostly to waiting listers). From those 28, I received 11 letters of comment for the letter column and several others which did not go for publication. I'd say, therefore that the response was approximately 50% on that group. However, the number of comments in review columns; the number of fanzines received in exchange -- these things also must be included as "response". I have noticed that the fans who most often reply with a letter of comment are those who publish a fmz, but pub so irregularly that they do not want to wait for their next ish to reply. But since I never send GZ to a non-pubbing fan on a sub basis, this picture may be way off. people who pay for a fmz have no obligation to comment on it. Why should they? -- they paid for it. And the sad truth, which ampubbers are reluctant to recognize, is that to send a fanzine to a non-pubber is to "cast pearls before swine" metaphorically speaking. They may be willing to pay for it, but they can never have any idea of what they are buying unless, they, themselves, have tried to publish and/or edit one. Even if they did comment, it would probably be some stupidity like, "What's THAT got to do with stf?" or, "Fanzines are supposed to be about science fiction" or whatever notion they happen to have. Fanzines are not "supposed" to be about anything whatsoever except what the editor/publisher happens to want to publish. But subscribers can't be expected to know that. They judge a fanzine by the same standards as any other prozine they purchase -- and the fanzine comes off very poorly in the comparison. It is a waste of time and effort to sell fanzines to non-pubbers; but it is the height of futility to send free copies and expect any adequate response. Unless the recipient happens to be a potential ampubber just waiting to be introduced to the hobby, the fanzine is wasted. Even members of one's own family can do no more than give an amiable (if patronizing) pat on the head -- more for the pleasure of seeing one's expectation than from any appreciation of the gift. They probably regard it with the same fond tolerance that a Grandmother shows toward the First-Grader's crayon-scribbled "Valentine" -- and appreciate it in just the same way. To expect adequate or sensible letters of comment from this type of public is just plain wishful thinking. The sad truth is that even the best fanzines are just so much crud in the eyes of non-pubbers and non-fans.

((In speaking of "percentage of response" to fanzines, I was referring to the number of letters of comment as compared to the number of copies of the mag mailed out. 50%

is mighty fine response to GEMZINE, but I seriously doubt if it would be anywhere near that high if the circulation was several times that 20 figure. Law of diminishing returns, or some such thing. Response to the last CONFAB was much better than on #10 -- nearly 20%. I could no doubt raise that percentage quite a bit by whittling the mailing list down considerably. But I'll settle for the 20% and be happy.))

TERRY CARR, 134 Cambridge St., San Francisco 24, Calif.

Well by Ghod, you made it with another CONFAB! Very, very welcome indeed.

As to the response I've got on my fmz...well. VULCAN rarely got over about 10%, but this latest DIASPAR got around 20%, I'd say. Mainly because I cut off a lot of deadwood when making up the mailing list, and also because of a rather controversial article in the issue. NON-SENSE, my erstwhile hektoed cartoonzine, averaged 5% to 10%...which is pretty good, I guess, for a little zine like that which took only 2 or 3 minutes to read and was immediately forgotten.

Which brings me to Steve Schulthels' observation that a fanzine can be judged on the length of time it takes to read it. It's pretty good for fanzines of a purely fannish nature, which take little concentration...but how about something like INSIDE or SKYHOOK which, while highly enjoyable, also call for a certain amount of manipulation of the gray matter? There the system of evaluation breaks down.

Will say, though, that CONFAB has always been read in one sitting every single time. I can't think of any other fanzine offhand, which can make that statement. (Anthropomorphism, anyone?)

Was thinking today about the old line "fanzine writing helps one who wants to become a professional writer." Well, that's my aim, and I've certainly done enough fanzine writing. The usual benefits cited are criticism by fans and incentive to write when one isn't good enough to sell to the pros. Trouble is that very few fans pay much attention to fanfiction, so consequently there's little comment on any stories which get printed...and very damned few fanzines even print it, thereby taking away the incentive to write. Offhand I can think of three or four fmz today which print an occasional bit of fiction, no more.

But I find that fanwriting has helped me, and in an entirely different way than the above. The matter of "slanting" material for a certain market is highly important in pro-writing, and it's also important in fandom (which I learned well when handling the FMZ). I've been writing steadily and fairly heavily for three years or so now. During that time there has been only one fanzine which I set my sights on that I couldn't get material in (FANTASIAS, which rejected two or three things of mine and then folded). I've been constantly slanting my fan-writing thereby acquiring a pretty good eye for how to do it professionally.

All of which is not to say that I'm in fandom for the good it will do

me, or even that it has done me that much good (I could have learned slanting methods faster by plain study at 16), but merely to suggest that fandom can be all things to all fan.

And on that profound observation, I'll go.

((I think most everyone benefits from being in fandom in one way or another. The audience for would-be writers, artists and editors (those who hope to do such work professionally) is the most apparent and possibly the least important. I think more is to be gained from the mutual exchange of viewpoints and ideas. And on that profound observation...))

DICK LUPOFF (current address uncertain)

...Your remarks on reader response shock me. Or were they a deliberate plant meant to shock someone?

Regardless, 7% response is disgraceful. Two or three times that is disgraceful. What do these parasites think you're publishing CONFAB for, profit? Bad enough on a subzine where the editor still loses money; at least the subbers contribute something to the cause. But when you expend the time and effort--and yes, the emm oh en ee ai: money--that you do on an absolute free-on-request simon-pure giveaway--you even pay the postage out of your own pocket--and they don't have the decency to drop a 2¢ pocktared in the mail, simply acknowledging receipt of each issue...phooey!

Anybody who fails to respond to two, or at the most, at the very outside most, three issues, cut 'em off. The hell with 'em. And if that would leave you with such a small circulation that C isn't worth the while then drop it. Much as I hate to give that advice. If just for the selfish motive of my own continued enjoyment, I wanna see CONFAB coming out fat and frequent for a long, long time.

But don't knock your head against a brick wall, wasting your time and effort and money for a bunch of boobs who don't know or care enough to sit down and write a note saying "Thanks for C; please continue sending." 7% indeed!

((I'm afraid fan-pubbing doesn't work out that way, Dick. Not unless you happen to publish a QUANDRY or a PSYCHOTIC or a similar high-type zine. Maybe then you could make that 20% response I mentioned a few pages back look sick. Maybe not, though. Larger zines have larger circulations and must pull many more letters than CONFAB to make that 20%. With a circulation of about 70, 14 letters will give 20% response but if your circulation is 150 or 200, you'll need 30 or 40 letters. I don't have any figures on QUANDRY or GOPSLA or GRUE or PSYCHOTIC or HYPHEN, so I can't speak with any authority, but 20% still doesn't seem like too bad a response. 'Twould be nice if every fan-ed could expect 100% response. I'll bet circulations would be cut down to a fraction of what they are now. Theoretically, it would be possible to get 100% response to CONFAB by just sending the mag to the

persons who consistently comment on it. A total of about 15 copies would do the job, I believe. But, in addition to those who do the bulk of the letter writing, there are also a good number of other faneds who send me their mag in return for getting CONFAB. This group makes up the majority of my mailing list. Then there are a few others who don't publish or comment frequently, but they've requested the mag and usually write from time to time. So, actually, if I count all this as response, I might say that I do have close to 100 % response.))

ED COX, 984 So. Normandie, Los Angeles 6, Calif.

...In re NFFFFFFF. Let's abolish it. Sorry Stan, but let's face facts.

First, the N3F doesn't do anything for anybody. Nothing that any interested person, really interested, can't do for themselves. It is unwieldy for another thing. This ties in with the first statement.

If the members were actively interested in whatever the N3F is supposed to be for, there wouldn't be all the mess, confusion, buck-passing and little work done that there is. But you must face this fact. All the work will fall on a few. The type of person who is needed in the organization, but isn't in any numbers at all, is the active fan who is busily issuing his own fanzine and tied up in other activities in that line that interest him. Why should he be slaving in a large organization with vastly smaller amounts of egoboo when he can be issuing FANZOOM! with much, much more personal recognition and enjoyment?

They just will not! Nobody is going to volunteer for work. The proportion of organization type workers is very small compared to the drone types in any organization along the lines of the NFFF. The worker won't last long due to wising-up, getting tired, geuds among the few workers and brass, etc.

The boom in stf is over now. It's settling down to a steadyness that is needed to bring out the quality stf writing as of yore. So there won't be the steady influx of mildly interested readers who once joined the NFFF in encouraging streams. And who as steadily dropped out at the expiration of their membership when they found it wasn't much of anything and all the promises of "benefits" didn't show up. Possibly also because they were asked to lend a hand in the actual work.

No, let's let the NFFF die. It, like WEIRD TALES, is out of date and deserves to rest. Fandom, so far, has exhibited an abnormally clan-ish bent. It works best in circles, many of them interfringing and overlapping, but small groups. The followings of different fanzines, small ajay outfits and the like. An organization like the NFFF tries to be won't work by trying to encompass the whole shebang and lure newcomers into the mad whirl.

The members who might become active in one way or another probably would have on their own. How else do you suppose the ranks of fandom

find steady replacements for those who drop out?

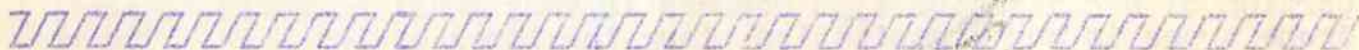
If I'm not mistaken (and I haven't time to research into the notes and mss I have here), the originators of the NFF intended it to include what was, at that time, a segment of active fandom much akin to the following of, say GRUE, which consists of most of the active fans. I don't believe it was supposed to encompass a membership of hundreds and hundreds (even thousands). But I won't go into this without further information.

Just this: Nobody loses if the NFF dissolves. If it goes on, nobody gains much either. Except the few who do all the work and not all the headaches. Don't sweat it, Stan. How can you devote time to it when you've still to publish The OUTLANDER and have HOONSIERIE to run?

((I've been wondering how long it would take someone to come out with these words regarding the NFF, Ed. You win the gold-plated cigar.

I've usually been riding the fence when discussion of the organization came up, but will say now that you've expressed my opinions pretty well.

Several years ago, when I first became interested in fandom, I asked someone (I won't mention any names because I'm not sure just who it was now) whether they thought an NFF membership would benefit me. The advice given was that the contacts gained from such a membership might be of some benefit to a neo interested in becoming active, but if said neo already had some contacts with fandom (as I had), joining clubs would offer little. I've never joined, and frankly, I can't see that I've missed much. But then, everyone to his own pet labor of love. Just look at any faneditor.))



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