

Confab

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TO BEGIN THE CONFABULATION...

This is the initial appearance of my latest effort, CONFAB. MOTE managed to weather the fannish storm for about a year and a half but finally succumbed. This is its successor, so to speak. I hope it will last longer. MOTE was begun with very little contact with fandom and no experience in fanzine pubbing, but, even so, it apparently made a small mark (scar ?) in the fanzine world. CONFAB should do better, I hope.

This will be what is known as a limited circulation zine--about 50 copies per issue--and distributed almost entirely by trade, that is if all you fan-eds are willing to continue the trades you've been carrying on with MOTE. Absolutely no cash subs with this zine. I've had enough subzine experience with MOTE to hold me for a little while. If you receive this first issue, you'll continue to receive CONFAB-- unless you write me a real nasty letter. If you pub a zine, I'm hoping that you'll consider this a trade. If you don't pub a zine and receive this, you must be a good friend of mine.

This first issue should not necessarily be taken as an example of what I'm hoping CONFAB will eventually become, but we all have to start somewhere. I'd like to build CONFAB into a letterzine mainly, with maybe a bit of additional material to keep the letters going, published about monthly (maybe a bit oftener if time and material permit), with about eight or ten pages per ish on the average. It won't be a one-page news-and-chatter sheet as has been rumored. (Maybe two pages, though.) Jawn Magnus and Chaz Wells are working that angle quite well right now with SMUG and GREY respectively. I'm working a different angle. As Walt Willis so aptly put it, "...there is hardly a single fanmag primarily devoted to the fascinating field of fandom itself, as opposed to science fiction." That's my angle...fandom. I'm interested in fandom first and science fiction second, and CONFAB will, I hope, reflect those interests. I'll need letters and/or articles on most anything concerning fandom if CONFAB is to develop into the type of thing I have in mind, and I think there is enough interest among the fans to support such a mag.

Incidentally, all letters received will be considered as potential CONFAB material...unless, of course, you threaten me with bodily harm...and out-weigh me sufficiently to impress me. How else can a prospective letterzine exist?

Future issues may or may not have covers and/or inside illos, depending on time and talent available when the urge to put out an issue presents itself. Cartoon-type things are what I'd like to use.

All in all, I'd like CONFAB to be a strictly informal, friendly type thing with none of the justified margins, dummies (this is being composed on the master, as if you couldn't tell from the typos and lack of coherence) and all the other work entailed in pubbing a regular, sub-type zine. All of which is just a long-winded way of saying that I'm getting lazier and looking for easier ways of staying in fan-pubbing. Or maybe I'm just getting smarter. The old German proverb carries a pretty good thought--"We get so soon old and so late smart". No?

WHICH BRINGS TO MIND...

Have you noticed the recent rage of foreign languages in some of the newer and younger fanzines? Not satisfied with the old, standard Latin and French phrases, a fan now has to have a fairly competent command of Spanish, German, Irish and all to understand some of these fellows. Maybe I should brush up on my Polish and get on the bandwagon too? Isn't the English language expressive enough for current fandom? Or maybe the old saw about "A little knowledge..."?

THE TREND IN TRENDS...

There's more and more being written recently on the various trends in science-fiction, fandom, fanzines, and other subjects innumerable. The fanzine trend is the one I particularly had in mind. In my short period of acquaintance with fandom and fanzines (about two years) the pendulum seems to have swung from one side to the other and now is on the way back again. Two of the first zines I started reading regularly (and incidentally, the only two I've ever had cash subs to) were OOPSLA and QUANDRY. Both were great favorites of mine and both were, I believe, rather typical of actifandom of a couple years back; that is, the fun-loving, informal, having-a-great-time type of thing. After their lamentable demise (although OOPSLA has made one recent appearance), a different sort of zine started taking the spot-light. I like to consider SFBULLETIN as being typical of its particular reign. I don't mean to infer here that all fanzines during the QUANDRY period were like QUANDRY or that all fanzines later were carbon copies of SFBULLETIN, but I think that both were outstanding examples of their times. (I may be reminded by some that SFBULLETIN is still alive but, nevertheless, it hasn't made an appearance in several months and, in my opinion, is dead even if subsequent issues do appear. Fans forget a zine quickly if it doesn't keep up a regular schedule and that spot-light that's been lost is hard to regain.) SFBULLETIN was more the serious, "pro" type of zine---interested more in science-fiction and less in fandom than previous zines. But now most of these serious-type zines seemed to have burned themselves out and the friendly-type mags are coming to the front. Several of these are the one-sheet news-and-chatter snapzines, designed with less of an eye on layout and more on frequent publication. Some fan-eds are pubbing such a thing as a supplement to their regular zine and some are dropping their other zines in favor of the so-called snapzines. (Yes, I saw the light too.) And the trend will probably continue. So it's been from the friendly to the serious back to the friendly. And along with this has been the changes in the science-fiction field as a whole. The recent boom seems to be busting and science-

fiction as a type of literature, while probably more widely accepted, isn't quite the fad that it was a year ago. If this means, as I hope it does, a return to the friendlier, more closely knit fandom of that period now so condescendingly referred to as "Sixth Fandom", I for one am all in favor of it. Give fandom back to the fans, or some such thing.

ALL HAIL...

My favorite (and also, apparently, the favorite of many others) of the current fanzine crop is Dick Geis' PSYCHOTIC. Without resorting to any checking, I believe he's managed to publish eight issues on a regular monthly schedule and that in itself is quite an accomplishment currently, even if the zine weren't the top-quality thing it definitely is. To me, a regular monthly schedule is one of the first requirements of any zine if it is to hit the Favored Few. Fans will overlook minor faults here and there if they feel they can depend on the zine coming out regularly. And Dick has been doing that.

PSYCHOTIC has a "flavor" all its own---and that too is a requirement for a favored zine. It's not an imitation but it will doubtless have imitators. It shows a rather wry editorial sense of humor that appeals to me immensely.

I have two other reasons for liking PSYCHOTIC that probably aren't due to the zine alone. The first is the fact that it's a dittoed and not a mimeoed zine. I'm a ditto devotee myself and I rejoice that a dittoed zine can take top honors in the field. I hope that this fact will put a few people in their places who look condescendingly at anything dittoed and refer to it as "that horrible purple print". I have always preferred a ditto to a mimeo for my own work because I believe it has several advantages over the mimeo, the main one of which is the reproduction of artwork. I have only to point to the Bradley illos in recent PSYCHOTICs as proof of my statement. I'll admit that I've seen some good mimeoed art too, but nothing superior to Bradley.

My other personal reason for rejoicing over PSYCHOTIC is the fact that the ed is in his mid-twenties. Being a comparatively old man for a fan myself (I'm 28), I particularly enjoy a zine by someone who is past his teen-age uninhibited exuberance. While I'd be the last to deny that exceptionally fine fanzines have been and are being pubbed by teen-agers, there is a certain air of propriety that shows through in a zine whose editor has a few more years under his belt that is not always so apparent elsewhere. I don't mean that a fan-ed should be a sour-faced old cynic or a veddy serious kind of guy. Perish the thought. I don't think fandom could exist like that. But I do know from personal experience that a person's view-points change on many things when you pass your care-free teens. You acquire a better perspective. And this shows up very favorably in a fanzine. There are a few teen-agers that have this perspective but they are the exception.

(You'll get my bill for this plug for PSYCHOTIC on the first of the month, Dick.)

AND SO...

Next issue of CONFAB (bigger and better, I hope) will be out in a month...or sooner. Till then...

Bob DeArment

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