

# CONFAB

# 3

March 29, 1954

Bob Featrowsky

Box 634

Norfolk, Nebr.

...let's start right off with the letters this time...

RUSSELL K. WATKINS, 110 Brady St., Savannah, Ga.

...I'll confess also, I judged you to be a bright high school student. But I guess you don't feel alone now in your age bracket in fandom. I'm one of the 27 class too. So that makes you, Geis, Riddle, Grannell, Carr and me in the same boat. Fannish boat, that is. Crowded, isn't it? More crowded than I expected. Poor young Boggs, he doesn't belong in our elderly class.

...Thanks for mentioning DAWN even tho it took CHILDHOOD'S END mutual praise to bring it on. Truly you had better read it right away. I don't know what you can be putting on your reading list before it. Fanzines, maybe?

As for covers for fanzines; I think Geis has no argument or if he has he sort of dispersed the thing himself. I use a cover simply because I don't use much other artwork and that is about the only chance the artists have for appearing in D. I like artwork and use it occasionally for fillers when I need them and for color. As far as Geis' original argument goes, there is no necessity for any artwork in the zines whatsoever. Those illustrations only tend to copy prozines more. Because our amateur publications are magazines and a magazine requires a cover that is why most fanzines have covers. I agree that in the case of CONFAB, a cover is really not needed since C is not really a magazine. It is more of a periodical in a newspaper type way if you know what I mean. Many zines don't use a contents page and along Geis' line of thought they aren't needed in our fanzines either. I agree with him on this one. I use one only to give credit in a more formal way to my authors. I doubt that they are of any value other than this. For many zines use them and then don't even number the pages thereby making the contents page useless for its real purpose.

...they wouldn't even need a title if they are just going out to all the fans as a letter or letters. Why waste space with covers, contents pages, illos and titles? Just print the blame thing all over the paper and send them out. Why, the ideal zine of that type wouldn't have other writers for it either. The editor and publisher would write the whole thing himself except if it was a letterzine such as yours is. I suppose Geis' ideal zine is ACRONIC CHRONICLE. This is a printed mag with no cover, no illos and written all by the publisher. Tho the subject matter is not stf this periodical represents a type thing that Geis wants (or seems to want) in a typical fanzine. Let's see an issue of PSY that way, Geis. I may completely agree with you.

Geis' humor is on the rocks. There's your pun back at him.

((You're right about the fanzines being on my reading list ahead of CHILDHOOD'S END. By the time I get the fanzines read, CONFAB put out and no correspondence answered, there

doesn't seem to be much time left for catching up on my pro reading. But I'm all set in case any such time turns up. I buy my sf in pocket-book form (mainly for reasons of money but also for reasons of space) and right now I must have a dozen or more books waiting to be read. Sad but true. # Speaking of ideal zines (according to the ideals you mentioned), the nearest thing I can think of in the fanzine field would be Vernon McCain's REVIEW. It's all written by the editor, with the exception of the letters, no cover, no illos, not even a lettered title--just typed. (For the information of those who haven't seen it, REVIEW is a limited-circulation zine--about 30 circulation.) ))

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"Up with the aged fans!"  
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G. M. CAHN, 8325 - 31st N. W., Seattle 7, Wash.

"How come I'm in FAPA?" Gosh, Bob, I joined FAPA the same time I joined SAPS...I've been there all along. The only thing is that when I joined, SAPS was a feeble little thing with an acute inferiority complex from being sneered at so badly by the down-the-nose-peering Fapans that I felt sorry for us and used by GT as prop-aganda in its favor...worked, too. Now the story is reversed, and SAPS bourgeons greenly while the greybeards of FAPA cower defensively behind their "insurgent Line", so I have decided to switch apazines for trading purposes. Just to see what happens, if anything.

Paul Mittelbuscher's comments on "escape from reality" were very pertinent. The search for the answer to the "WHY?" of living has indeed fascinated homo saps ever since he lifted his brutish head and noticed the heavens. I suspect that the phenomenon of fandom results from these restless minds who are not willing to drown out this persistent "why?" in the more elementary pursuits of lusts, greed, and vacuous "peace of mind" (which most often means just absence of perplexity).

((I don't belong to either SAPS or FAPA but, until recently, I don't believe I've ever heard that you belonged to FAPA. And your own mentions of FAPA in GEM TONES were always of a chiding nature, so I just jumped to the conclusion that you were strictly a SAPS supporter. Moral: Never jump to conclusions. # Seems to me that a little more thought on this question of the "why?" of living on the part of a few more people would do a lot toward improving present-day world conditions.))

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"Toddle---I'm too tired to 'coo'."  
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DEAN GREENNELL, 402 Maple Ave., Fond du Lac, Wisc.

...Bob, I am pricked by the horns of your dilemma on page 6 of CONFAB #2. I sat there, after reading it, and puzzled over it:

"Eye sense of humor...?" Hamun. If I was a Grennell or a Willis I'd have a pun to top that, but at the moment I can't think of a thing." I sat there, as I said, and tried to think what I'd say if I was a Grennell or a Willis. Suddenly I realized with a start that I was a Grennell or a Willis, in a manner of speaking. That made the problem more pressing yet. What would I say, I asked myself.

This business of puns, Bob---it's the first ten thousand or so that come the hardest. Finally comes the stage where you can no more shut the things off than you can stop breathing (tho they tell me that that's possible too). You come to a thing like this and you start running over all the things that start with a sound similar to "rye"...rifle, rhizome, rhyme, rye-crisp, ribald, dave Rike, ripe, riboflavin, riposte, wright brothers, rice krispies, rise-and-shine, for rize and so on down to illegitimate pronunciations like ryegur-gitate. Punning, in the final analysis, is largely a test of the efficiency of your vocabulary's filing-system. It's not how many words you know but how quickly you can lay your hands on them. Pun-man-ship is merely a specialized development of the same ability that a poet must have...the knack of finding the wryght word in a hurry.

Funny thing about it is that rye is my special favorite type of panther-sweat. Ordinarily, I prudently let liquor alone and very rarely indeed do I go out and get liquored. But when rye is available, I am sometimes tempted. You see, Bob, I'd rather be ryed than prudent.

Anytime, boy...anytime.

Your first page turned out rather well so I guess you can be fairly grunted after all...

It is interesting to note that Charles Lee Kiddle is even about six months older than I but of course we're both beardless lads besides such hoary old-timers as Bloch and Tucker.

In regard to Hedd's letter--It always seemed to me that Joel Nydahl's VEGA was a leader of that sort during its all-too-brief span of existence. Yes, it's true--I got a letter from Joel yesterday and he said that the annish was the last one. It has gone the vega all flesh-in-the-pans and I, for one, will miss it dreadfully. Even Rich's PSYCHOTIC, fine thing that it is, can never replace the spot in my affections held by the big V...at least I don't think so. Joel's mag was the first fanmag I ever saw and the first one ever to run any of my stuff. But Joel says that he is going to do up one for FAPA. Why don't you get your name in to Boggs for the waiting-list of FAPA?? True, they call it the graveyard of fans--where old fans go to die--and all that, but there's some pretty interesting stirring among the headstones sometimes. Yes indeed.

Who thunk up that interline just ahead of my letter in CONFAB 2??? Cute, whoever...

As you've found out by now, BLEEN turned out to be a supplement to GRUE, postmalled for FAPA, carry comments on the mailing just received. My sapszine is called SPACEWOOF, in honour of Art Kapp's notable SPACEWARP.

I'm glad there's somebody else that hasn't finished CHILDHOOD'S END. I got maybe as far as the first 3 chapters. Jean finally finished 1984 but I've had that for near a year now and haven't even finished the first chapter. I'm just not a True Fan, I guess.

By the way, a book I'd heartily recommend, even if you have to break down and buy it, is H. Allen Smith's THE COMPLETE PRACTICAL JOKER. \$3.50 and worth twice that!

((And there you have it, folks; a complete course in punmanship in one easy lesson. Nothing to it, apparently, if you're a Grennell or a Willis---in this case a Grennell. I doubt if I'll ever live through that first ten thousand though. # Sorry to hear about the demise of VEGA---another victim of annishitis. Perhaps a fannish law against oversize annishes would not be out of place. # The interlineation you referred to was taken from a letter received from Don Cantin nearly a year ago. He said at the time that he was going to send it to you for FILLER, but he succumbed to gafia about that time and apparently never sent it. Ordinarily, I wouldn't give the sources of my interlineations but since Don is no longer in fandom, I don't see why there would be any objections. # I still haven't tackled CHILDHOOD'S END but did manage to get 1984 read several years ago. Shake, Brother Un-True Fan! # Gad! Buy a book? That doesn't sound like a loyal Un-True Fan.))

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"Keep up the type of letters you printed this issue---even if you have to write them all yourself."  
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GREGG CALKINS, 2827 - 11th St., Santa Monica, Calif.

I don't know if I'm having aspersions cast in my direction or not, in these recent issues of CONFAB. However, I note that everybody seems to be casually mentioning their ages and obstruively, if not loudly disclaiming any connection to the "15-year old" fan.

I must admit I am a little awed to find that Riddle is 31, you are 28 (tho I was already aware of this) and Geis an almost-27. Nevertheless, I'm going to stick up my fair-haired-head-with-the-two-wet-places-behind-the-ears and proudly claim to be in my teens. An old and gray 19, to be sure, but still in my teens. Not only that, but when the first issue of OOPSLA! came out, I had just barely turned 17.

As for Boggs: I'm a little miffed to hear him say that Quandry's competitors were ("included") Oopala!, OPUS and Slant. OOPS, I'll have you know, is still very much with the world. Of course, perhaps Boggs speaks in a slight past tense in regards to Q's demise, not ours. In that case, I'm mollified.

Re Geis' "rye sense of humor", all I've got to say is that if you don't scotch him pretty fast, I will. That sort of stuff goes agin the grain, if you know what I mean.

((Since you're 19, Gregg, you won't have long to wait until you too can cast aspersions on the teen-agers. Seriously, though, I don't believe I disclaimed any connections with the teen-age fans. I correspond and swap zines with a lot of them, since they are, after all, in the majority in fandom. Maybe the fact that the past-teen-age fans are in the minority forms some sort of bond between them. # Redd will have to defend his own position regarding his mention of OOPSLA!. I'm not going to stick my neck out on that.))

RON ELLIK, 232 Santa Ana, Long Beach 3, Calif.

...whatinell's wrong with fifteen, fourteen, sixteen, etc., year-olds? Just cause you got 13 years on me doesn't make me respect you any more. (Don't get me wrong, friend; I give you all the respect I give any fan, because you would seem to appear to be a teeny bit higher on the scale of fanevolution than I, yours truly being a neo.)

Given your 13 years I could just as easily be 28, jes like you.

But, minus the seemingly all-important 13, I and mine are regarded as juvenile by the elderly gentlemen of fandom. Like you sez, physical age is no criterion. Forsooth and we are juvenile... physically. Mentally? I get high grades in high school. I find myself able to understand with only the average amount of difficulty the stories in ASF, which is my favorite pro-zine. And the puns of sixth and better fandoms so far have not yet been completely above me.

Of course, you did not say anything against youth, in general or particular, yet in CONFAB. And, again, I am only one example. But at the first NAPA meeting (the new NAPA, not the old one) a poll was taken of the present 15, 16, 17 and 18 year olds, and most of them admitted having high grades, and from the conversations I would not class them as idiots, zactly.

Again, just one example. There are a lot of teen-age fans who I would class as idiots (thass a conceited statement, if you didn't notice). No names.

But there are adults who I would classify as idiots, too. Here, as teen-agers. ... Again, no names.

((Nothing wrong with teen-agers as such, Ron. I was one myself, once upon a time. But we don't seem to be referring to the same thing. Apparently, you're speaking of intelligence or mental ability, while I meant perspective or viewpoint. The two don't necessarily go together. And I think you'll find, when you've gained those extra 13 years, that your viewpoint has matured too.))

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"I'll bet you're really 16 but you want to confuse us all."  
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NORBERT HIRSCHMAN, 353 Riverside Drive, New York 32, N. Y.

...I think that fandom is slowly but surely deteriorating. When Silverberg printed his history of fandom in Q and divided fandom into 7 groupings, all were noted for their various types of fruitfulness. 6th fandom was particularly noted for the quality of fans and fanzines. Q, Fv, Opus, Odd, Ocpala (which is being revived) and many other good, substantial mags devoting themselves to the whimsies of fandom. 6th fandom also was a sophisticated group - enjoyed Pogo and freely and frankly discussed the philosophers, artists, etc.

Current fandom is completely immature. I don't mean to say that it is taken over by adolescents for you had many in 6th fandom as well. But these adolescents are, almost to a man (or should I say 'boy'), completely immature, naive and sometimes downright

Magazines now try to emulate the pros more than ever before. It is now a crusade - "a stepping stone to the stars" (as one fan put it). The mags, whether neat or not, contain straight-up stuff - ridiculous and spineless humor and editorial comment not worth a tinker's dam.

7th fandom now reads Mad and other E.C. comics - a conglomerate of the most ridiculous and childish humor I've seen - a far cry from the funny, yet completely wise Pogo.

Is it any wonder that the good mags remaining - Confab, SF, SpaceShip, Vega, and Psychotic, and Hyphen (a pitiful hand-picked array against the backdrop of nearly 40 different magazines of childish origins) are all pubbed by older fans or by 6th holdovers?

Is this a momentary dip? A sort of 1929 depression after the glorious era of the '20s? I'd hope so. But if it keeps up much longer, many of us won't be around to see.

((No time to comment; too busy digging my bomb shelter.))

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"...WHY should I beware of the Jabberwock?"  
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PAUL MITTELBUSCHER, c/o George Werneke, Sweet Springs, Mo.

This continuous reference to the fact that "my zine concerns fans and not that sad old topic Science Fiction" bodes ill. Why this harping and trumpeting on that specific question? Why should anyone feel it necessary to apologize because his/her zine does happen to empathize Science Fiction? Let me make it clear that fans as a whole are not repulsive to me, that I recognize them as individuals with INDIVIDUAL failings. I've never been able to ascertain the logic behind "labeling" a certain group of people because of their religion, color, business, ancestry or interests. The extremists continue to attempt to convince us that fans are (1) Malcontents, juveniles, psychologically unadjusted, adulterers, escapists, Communists, etc., etc. or (2) Cosmic-minded, talented, generous, adventurers, etc., and that all fans are our brothers and anyway aren't they interesting people Ad Nausea.....Ed Wood has naught but scorn for all active fans while Grensall seems to love 'em all and prefers to deal strictly with fan personalities and projects in his publications. Personally I do not like nor dislike ALL fans, I should certainly not wish to publish any amateur magazine dealing exclusively with such but this doesn't mean that I don't enjoy G&UE either. Presumably we are Science Fiction fans, therefore we have some interest in SF, therefore I feel that zines should retain their primary purpose, that of dealing with SCIENCE FICTION in what ever way seems best and NOT with FANS. However one can find a comparative situation in the "movie" magazines which give the lie to their name by dealing almost exclusively with movie ACTORS and not with "Moving Pictures". This would seem to indicate that many prefer to place the empathize on people instead of an abstract "thing". I sincerely hope that the fan mags don't disintegrate even farther and turn into reports on the love life, political views, glamour hints, etc. of BNFs. Somehow I just can't get excited about Coreen

Calvet's divorce or G.M.Carr's grandchildren. Can't you just see it: Harlan Ellison posing for beefcake pictures, Rich Elsberry giving advice to the lovelorn, GMCarr as a fannish "Hedda Hooper", Cantin as the fannish Bob Hope, fans appearing at premiers of new SF movies.... "Handsome BNF John Magnus uses Glickenhaamer's Petrified Goosegrease after every meal, be like your favorite BNF John Magnus, use....." "Hedd Boggs now appearing in SKYHOOK (in 2 1/2 D) says: "Join the 1955 Crusade against GAFIA, contribute NOW"..... "This is Jimmie Fiddle-fiddle in Hollywood: FLASH...former child actor Robert Bloch was today arrested for driving while sober, Bloch's pogo stick went out of control on the corner of 5th and Asimov causing inflammation of the upper hemisphere, etc, etc.....

((My idea of fandom is a group of people who have found a common denominator in their mutual like for science fiction. Apparently you believe they should stick strictly to science fiction while I personally don't see any benefit in such a limitation. I don't consider myself "star-begotten"; nor do I consider myself "mal-adjusted". I like science fiction and I like to get acquainted with others who also like it. And in the process of getting acquainted, we'll probably find many other mutual interests to discuss. Any epa mailing should give a pretty good idea of the wide variety of mutual interests in fandom in addition to science fiction. But there's the advantage--most every fan can find at least one other fan who shares his interests, whether they be exclusively science fiction or to the exclusion of science fiction. Am I that wrong?))

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"...let's start an anti-fan-cover campaign..."  
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RICH LUPOFF, 2629 S. Bayshore Drive, Miami, Florida

...As to Boggs and you, and your comments on the size of fandom, I am sorry but I think a small fandom is the best fandom. Sorry because I think fanning is a highly enjoyable pastime if nothing more, and I would like to see its pleasure expanded. However, according to information I have (this was before my time) there was once a similar movie fandom. Yes, in the early days movie fans acted much like today's sfans. Movie fandom grew and grew, and was completely commercialized by professional movie fan magazines, and was dominated by screamingly infatuated bobby-sexers and escapist matrons, and reduced to its modern state of being worse than nonexistent.

Perhaps my fears are ill-founded, but I fear that an overgrown sfandom would fall prey to similar commercialization and lunatic fringe-ism, and be perverted to the degree we see in today's movie fandom.

As for your considering fandom more important than stf (at least from the fan's point of view) I fear that we have a basic disagreement, and that neither of us will be converted to the other's feelings. It seems to me that your position is like that of saying "The important part of religion is churches, prayers, hymns,

not God himself." As a rather militant agnostic (at the moment, next week OAHSPÉ) I might think that religion was more important than God, but stf does exist (I hope) and to say that stfanning is more important than stf per se seems ridiculous to me....

((I, too, favor a small fandom, Rich. That's been my contention for some time, so I don't see where we have any disagreement there. # Neither do I consider "fandom more important than stf". I don't believe I've ever made that statement. I do find myself more interested in fandom than in science fiction though. Nothing ridiculous about that as far as I can see, though/realize that not everyone will agree with my feelings.))

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"All first rank letterzines have at least one good feud."

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S/Sgt STEPHEN F. SCHULEHEIS, AF 15495905, Hq. 3750th AB Gp,  
Sheppard AFB, Texas

Gad! The banter exchanged in this issue makes me feel young and spry again. It must just have been Winter, or too much Air Force, or something, that's been making these young joints feel a trifle creaky of late. But you old fogeys make me realize that I, though well on the far side of 23, am still a young chicken, with plenty of fanhood yet ahead of me. I feel better already.

When you get the Fan-Dads underway as a going concern, you must make CONFAB the O-O. Then, in a few years, 15 or 20 at the most, you can change the name of the zine to "The Fan-Dads and Grandads Gazette", a suitably decorous title, I think. Come to think of it, though, there's probably at least one Fan-Grandad around already that could be conned into the organization. There's got to be at least one to support the euphonium.

Yah, everybody's discovered CHILDHOOD'S END, and thus far I've looked in vain for someone who doesn't go along with the cheering (or at least quietly applauding) throng. Frankly, I can't see what all the ruckus is about. The book is well written, true enough, but then Clarke would have to slip pretty far to write one that wasn't. On the other hand, the book seems to me to be vastly unsatisfying either philosophically or as a novel. I hold it to be the worst book that Clarke has yet written. Perhaps it's aroused so much admiration because, unlike the rest of Clarke's work, it fits in with the very popular "prophet of doom" school of writing. It's certainly easy to see why the author felt it necessary to disacknowledge the opinions expressed in the book.

If anyone cares to slug it out tooth to typer over CHILDHOOD'S END, I'm ready and waiting for them.

((Do you have anyone in particular in mind for that Fan-Grandad's position, Steve? # I still haven't gotten around to reading CHILDHOOD'S END yet, so will have to just stand back out of the way of the flying fur.))

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"Even if my zine hadn't been mentioned I still would have liked G."

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RICHARD GEIS, 2631 North Mississippi, Portland 12, Oregon

...The older fans naturally tend to flock together (we're for the birds) because of a common more mature viewpoint and outlook as opposed to the frenetic activity of the younger teen-agers. It's also natural that there should be a sort of "Inner Circle" of ancient creaks like us. Something like the greybeards of any society. Except that in our case we have it over the younger ones because, generally, we have more experience, background and (Ghu, forgive me....) writing talent.

Well...I suppose I might as well confess too. Truthfully, I thought you to be about the same age as mentioned by Mrs. Carr and Riddle. As to WHY I thought you that old, I think it was because I didn't approve the half-size of MOTE, altho I didn't mention it at any time (my feeling is that 8½ x 11 is the only size for a good layout and proper handling of material, and that anyone who uses any other size format that changes the relative space to type size relationship of 8½ x 11, was either a young inexperienced fan or an older misguided fan), and the fact that your editorials and other comment seemed curiously devoid of personality; it seemed like it was written by a younger fan who was being very careful not to be juvenile. Actually, I think, it was because your editorial policy excluded the long personally written material that would establish your personality. More than likely, too, you're not as egocentric as me and a few others who delight in spouting off in our own and other's fanzines.

There is one slight hitch to be being a member of the Fan-Dads; I haven't got a wife and child. At least, none to speak of....

Re PSI being the possible leader of the present era of fandom or something: my feeling is that anyone with a little ability and talent in the editing and publishing field of fandom who is willing to work a little bit and come out monthly with a thirty page zine.... and keep it up for a long while...is almost bound to have the leading zine in fandom purely by default. I should qualify that by saying: anyone with a mature outlook (or what passes for it in fandom) and a bit of talent, etc. A zine that if halfway decent can simply roll over the other zines by coming out monthly over a long period of time. The editor learns his fanzine trade much quicker that way, and seems to improve much faster than is apparent with a bi-monthly or quarterly zine. He presents a reliable and quick showplace for the writings of the fans, and naturally all the better ones will contribute as this is more and more obvious to them after issue after issue comes out on schedule. One thing is important: the zine should have good legible reproduction.

Hmmm. I've just presented a good formula for success with a fanzine. Provided one has the personality and is willing to do a LOT of typing.

Y'know, I just joined the BOOK OF THE MONTH CLUB. Yop, just got all six of Winston's books on the second world war. FREE. I figure it was worth it. The other books promise to be as good too. I'm not in the least afraid of being labeled pseudo-intellectual or culture-crazy. I really intend to read those books, not just put them in a prominent place and let visitors infer that I am a well read and informed man of the world. They already know that from the framed nude of Marilyn Monroe that hangs on the wall. MmmmmmmBOY!!

((Glad to see that not everyone is against older fen. "Ancient Order of Ancient Creaks"? # About the lack of personality in MOTE, it was probably because the editorials were written by a neo who was trying not to sound like a neo in the first issues, thus forming a rut from which I didn't seem to be able to escape in later issues. Toward the end the awful truth was dawning on me, which was part of the reason for discontinuing it. # I think your formula for success with a fanzine is a good one. Most any fan can build his zine into a leader---if he is willing to work at it long enough. But I doubt if many faneds really start out with this ambition in mind at the first. Or if they do, they don't keep plugging along until they reach their goal.))

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No "editorial" in this issue. The different letters seem to bring up a pretty good variety of subjects for discussion without one. But mainly because I didn't want to run over 10 pages and I had more than enough letters to fill them. And I'd sooner listen than talk anyhow.

Am using Sovereign blue masters this time. I'd intended to run off a few pages before writing these comments but didn't get it done so I don't know how they'll turn out. Do they look better than the purple I've been using previously? A B Dick masters don't seem to be available in this town, Dean.

Until another three-four weeks, then... *Bah*

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Savannah, Ga.

"The Fan-Dads and Fan-Grandads Gazette"