

# CONFAB

May 3, 1954

4

"The Fan-Dads' Gazette"

\*\*\*\*\*  
Bob Postrowsky           \*\*           Box 634           \*\*           Norfolk, Nebr.  
\*\*\*\*\*

There seem to be a few mistaken ideas currently about CONFAB which I'd like to straighten up...or, more properly, about CONFAB's circulation. So this is the deal: CONFAB is not available to anyone on a subscription basis; there's no cash charged or received for it. It is distributed on a "trade only" basis, being mainly swapped for other zines from other fan-edds. I used the word "mainly" because the trade basis isn't too strictly adhered to; several fans receive it who don't publish anything, but who have expressed interest in the thing in one form or another. Since CONFAB's circulation is small (about 50, or thereabouts) I naturally want to send it to only those interested in receiving it, whether they publish zines themselves or not. Most of the active fans are themselves fan-edds, hence the "trade only" method of distribution. But it's still available to non-fan-edds who will show their interest in receiving it with an occasional letter.

While on the subject of small circulation, CONFAB's circulation is small because I want it that way. I intend to keep it very near to the 50 I started with. But it has been growing a bit lately with new fan-edds being added to the list. But to balance the situation, there are also several fans currently on the mailing list who haven't made a peep since I've been sending them CONFAB. So, sometime between now and the next issue, my mailing list will be revised. New and interested fans will be added and those who are apparently not interested in the zine will be dropped. So if your copy has a big "X" on the mailing wrapper, this will be your last copy unless I hear from you within the next month.

This issue has a mixture of colors. This page and the last two are purple while the others are blue. I'm going back to that horrible old purple print again. I don't see any advantages in the blue, not to mention the fact that they cost quite a bit more than the purple. As Rich Lupoff pointed out, color would be an advantage in a sub-zine, but in something like this legibility is the mainest requirement. And I think the purple is better in that respect. Better than the blues available around here, anyway.

CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON played here recently but I didn't see it. Dick Geis mentions it rather unfavorably in his letter thish. Anyone else seen the thing? It played here as part of a double-feature for 75¢, Dick. First 3-D pic around here for some time. If 3-D movies are on the way out, as the talk seems to indicate, pity the movie houses that have invested in that expensive projection equipment. Maybe I didn't pull too big a boner at that when I got a job with a wholesale grocery company. Folks will

(Continued on the back page.)

LETTERS????

I got a million of 'em...

...well, a dozen, anyway...

~~~~~

DEAN A. GREENELL, 402 Maple Ave., 2nd du Lac, Wisconsin

Thanks for sending CONFAB #3. It's a nice magazine and I like it...chiefly because it makes interesting reading. That's a department where so many fanzines are woefully lacking. I think that's the basic factor in all this controversy regards humor vs. Serious Constructiveness--in the final analysis it doesn't make too much difference whether your magazine is humorous or not, so long as it's interesting.

Commenting on the letters. Does Watkins mean that we are in the same age-bracket with GM Carr? I'd say she was a few years older, inasmuch as she's a grandma a couple times over and I'm still some ways from that milestone (in fact, it's terribly doubtful if I ever will be a grandma but that's not what I mean) because my oldest daughter Pat just turned 8 in January. Russ' daughter Pat is still some ways from that age so we won't be fan grandads for quite a while yet. Russ practically puts us in the same group with EE Evans, agewise, that is.

Oh yeh--he says that "Boggs doesn't belong in our elderly class." I think he's computing on false statistics. Boggs pointedly refuses to divulge his age but he once let slip the fact that he was drafted in 1942 which would have made him at least 18 then and maybe a year or so older so he's up there too.

I enjoyed your frank and candid confession to Ellik that you "were a teen-ager yourself at one time". Hey--come to think of it, so was I!

According to Hirschhorn there's something utterly dreadful with reading Mad and other EC comics and, to rate in his eyes, one must read Pogo and discuss philosophers. Well, I've read Pogo for a number of years now and I still do; and I've discussed philosophers too--even quoted Hegel in the original German in a recent issue of Grue--but if I have to eschew Mad and Panic to get or keep Bertie's good regards, then I'm afraid that said good regards are something I'll have to dispense with. Somehow I find it hard to class the continued approval of Hirschhorn along with things vital to my mental well-being. Matter of fact, I think that if I ever did anything he approved of it would scare hell out of me.

If he were to toss aspersions at the puerile competitors of Mad and Panic, such as Eh, Crazy, Nuts, Madhouse, etc., then I'd go along with him for once. But the aforesaid Mad and Panic contain things that can afford mild amusement if you have a mind that is reasonably flexible and free of this obsession to appear Adult In All Things. Matter of fact, Mad and Panic are read and enjoyed by Boggs, Silverberg and Willis and I don't think Bertie would class any of them among the callow children of seventh fandom. Incidentally, two of the magazines he lists with approval--Vega and SF--are published by teen-agers and fans who are not totally free from the dread taint of seventh fandom...Joel Hydahl (age 15) and John Magnus (age 18, I think) and the editors of Confab and Psychotic are hardly

Warner  
Boggs  
Ellik

what I'd call 6th fandom holdovers. But Hirschhorn's basic philosophy has always been "If it doesn't please me, then it's no damn good." That's why it gives me so much pleasure to disagree with him.

And you know, of course, that this ponderously dignified old fogie Hirschhorn has possibly reached the venerable age of 16 by now himself...or did you? That probably accounts for his frantic struggles to disassociate himself from the shenanigans of these unspeakable children. Some 16-year-olds take themselves very seriously indeed--and a good thing, too--nobody else does.

Which brings us to Mitty's letter and it's statement that, "...Ed Wood has naught but scorn for all active fans while Grennell seems to love 'em all and prefers to deal strictly with fan personalities and projects in his publications." Well, not quite all, Paul--I have no residual love whatso-a-tall for the Bitter Young Man of Chicago, Mr. Edward Wood. (There's another fan who goes by the name of Ed Wood who's not at all like Edward Wood.)

I think when Crus #20 arrives you'll find some things not directly concerned with fan personalities but when you've read science fiction, as I have, for more years than Hirschhorn's been living--since 1929, to be exact--it becomes touched with the familiarity that breeds a bit of contempt. I still like what impresses me as good sf but I don't feel impelled to read every story in Spaceways or Vortex and comment exhaustively on them. I seem to have reached the stage where I can take it or leave it alone. People, in the end, are more interesting than abstract ideas. This may be due to the fact that I'm people myself and not an abstract idea (no matter what people say). I can't seem to see much danger of SFandom being exploited like movie fandom was...you'll never have the huge droves of SFans that made the movie fanzines sprout so profusely. In this case, there's safety in sparsity, rather than in numbers.

((Am inclined to agree that "interesting reading" is essential in a successful fanzine, whether it's humor or serious. But there are few who have the wherewithall to write interesting stuff in either style, judging from the current crop. (Typo?) # I'm a short distance from being a grandma myself. My oldest daughter Linda just recently hit 6. # Can't say that I'm exactly mad about Mad, but I did enjoy the couple copies I've seen. Might be more of a fanatic on the subject though if the Gurn thing was distributed here. Only thing they seem to carry here is Nuts and one or two more of their ilk. Nuts! # Guess I've reached the "take it or leave it" stage of sf reading too, although I haven't been reading it quite as long as you, Dad--since 1940 or so, I guess. The only pre-editor I support regularly is Mr. Mines, and he's happening sorta seldom now. Pick up an occasional Galaxy if I'm feeling particularly flush. No doubt everyone will agree with my choice of mags.))

\*\*\*\*\*  
"...just a Fan-Dad with a retarded mental development."  
\*\*\*\*\*

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

The most comment-worthy item this time is the increasing in-

terest around Clarke's CHILDHOOD'S END. It seems strange that with all this comment about the story, no one has yet mentioned the most obvious thing. It is a very clever exposition of one of the oldest religious doctrines, or should I say "myths" to be carried down intact from early beginnings.

The physical appearance of the "Overlord" should have been the give-away, because Clarke has quite openly identified him with the conventional picture of the devil--all black, complete with horns and tail--and depicted him as very persuasive and in complete domination of this planet.

Actually, this story is a very clever exposition of the doctrine of Satan's Fall and the Beatific Vision, and Clarke does it so skillfully that it passed completely over their heads. At least I assume it must have, because otherwise why wouldn't somebody have mentioned it? I suppose it was put over so obliquely that it would pass over the ordinary fan enthusiast, however I suspect there is a two-fold reason it could. First, there is an appalling ignorance of religious doctrine; (the basic and traditional reasonings of doctrine) and, secondly, the burgeoning pseudo-"atheism" which is natural to the post-adolescent. Anything which appears to bolster a breaking away from early religious instructions comes as a welcome gift at this period, and at a superficial glance, Clarke's book does appear to look down the nose at conventional belief.

However, Clarke's description of the culmination of the human race in a race of Homo Superior is a striking parallel of the triumph of the human soul over the animal body which contains it. The sorrow of the "Overlord" at his physical inability to participate in the advancement which this new Homo Superior has grown into, is perhaps the most understandable presentation of Satan's punishment that I have ever read, and certainly his description of the "Rapture" and the breaking up of this planet is one of the best I've ever seen. In fact, he succeeds in making the "Beatific Vision" seem like the bliss it is supposed to be.

Clarke embroiders his theme with a few superficial changes to make it suitable fare for science fiction. He changes the devil from a spiritual being to an extra-terrestrial and the eligible candidate for the Beatific Vision from the individual human being to the human race. But in spite of these camouflages, he sure put over the tremendous drama of Lucifer's loss being humanity's gain.

((Have you moved again, or did you just grab the wrong rubber stamp? I know that "5319 Ballard" used to be your address, but thought that "8325 - 31st N.W." was the current one. # Your letter did do one thing for/to me, GM; it prodded me into finally reading CHILDHOOD'S END myself. Can't say whether Clarke's "exposition" would have gone over my head or not, as I already had some preformed ideas about the story from your letter before reading it. But I don't suppose Clarke would have to be too oblique to pass over many a modern head.))

\*\*\*\*\*  
"...never again gonna do any fanning on company time."  
\*\*\*\*\*

PAUL MITTELBUSCHER, c/o George Weirich, Sweet Springs, Mo.

...This business of age confessing may become a new fannish fad, meself wondering how elderly such peoples as Willis, W. Paul Ganley, Wells, Bradley, Harmon, Chuck Harris, Bob Shaw and Kessler are?

Generally speaking I agree with Hirschhorn. I haven't noticed an abundance of pro imitators nearly so much tho as down-right Crudzines. Youthful enthusiasm leads numerous 14 year olds to dash madly into the midst of the maelstrom with hapless creations of no worth whatsoever. It seems that they are suddenly "inspired" and with no forethought as to (1) Money, (2) Method of reproduction, (3) Contributors, (4) Material, (5) Schedule, etc., etc., present fandom with an unreadable (both from standpoints of reproduction and quality of material) collection of sheets of paper. The familiar "house ads" inside warn us that we "dare not miss the next 12 issues so why not subscribe" and that "free lance work is solicited". Usually we are assured that "all stories are new" also. The price is often an outrageous 20¢ and the editor, in order to increase circulation, offers a "prize" of a free lollypop to whomever secures 5 subscribers, which contest received approximately 2 entries neither of which can persuade anyone to take a copy as a gift. There are nearly 95 sub zines in existence today, an astonishing number when you think about it, yet one is hard pressed to find 10 which one can recommend without reservation.

I'm inclined to disagree with Geis. The mere fact that one keeps editorial comment to a minimum does not necessarily mean that the zine is an inferior one, that he lacks "personality" or that he is a neo being careful not to be juvenile. Frankly, when and if I edit or aid in editing something again I intend to let the contributors do the work. Why the hell should I publish a fanmag just to have a place to ramble on about various and sundry items of interest when I can do the same thing in somebody else's zine and be called a "columnist" for it? I'm referring to a subzine, naturally.

Re Geis' confession of being unwed: While we're making surveys, why not one to determine the percentage of married to unmarried fan? Could break it down farther into categories such as Widow/Widower, Confirmed Bachelor/Spinster, Homosexual, Woman Hater/Man Hater, Prude and Psychological quirk for those unmarried. Should be interesting, sort of a toned down fannish Kinsey Report.

((Not much I can add to your reasons for an abundance of crudzines except an Amn. # Your wondering about various fans' ages, plus your suggestion of a fan-type Kinsey Report, give me an idea for a wonderfully egobooful fannish project. My name will go down in fannish history. On second thought though, I probably won't be able to get around to it for a while so I might as well pass the idea on for any ambitious-type fans in the audience. My project? A fannish Who's Who, complete with name, address, age, marital status, and all other pertinent and impertinent information on every current fan. No more wondering. Teen-ager and old-timer alike will be exposed for all to see. (Might even be able to work up a very profitable sideline of blackmail from some of the info obtained.) And of course it would be photo-offset so pics of each fan could be printed. And, with the big turnover in fandom, it would have to be an annual publication naturally.

*Some married contributors that  
marks the movie  
line*

Just a form questionnaire to each fan will get all the necessary information. Now what am I offered for the exclusive rights to this potent project?))

\*\*\*\*\*  
"...the new col song -- That's a Moray."  
\*\*\*\*\*

RICHARD GEIS, 2631 North Mississippi, Portland 12, Oregon

Right away before I say anything else, I'd better say something in my defense about that remark in my last letter in #3. I refer to my statement that older fans had more writing talent than younger ones. That isn't quite what I meant. I should have said that older fans usually have a more highly developed writing ability. This is obviously because they have "the mature outlook" and because they have through the years written more, and thus have had more practice. And I'll stop before I put my other foot into it.

Ah...Mr. Grennell, sir...you may prefer to be ryled than prudent, but would you prefer to be ryled than President? And, too, firewater can be very detrimental to your health. You may become ill and then wonder what on earth ails you. Then, sir, you may even die. And when they lay you in your beer, I'll say, "Alas, poor Grennell, he couldn't say 'when'". But they may be perceptive people; they may bury you next to Old Grandad. Of course you may not even die or even be ill. You could get a lot of sympathy, tho, if you champagne.

I'd better stop before you blow your cork.

Bob, I like that CONFAB logo very much. Also like the blue print. I'm using it too now, after seeing it in GRUE and BLEEN. I been converted. Understand, tho...I'm still a boy.

WARNING: Do not see THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. I wasted \$.90 on it last night and feel cheated as hell.

((And what could I say to something like that?))

\*\*\*\*\*  
"All right, discriminate against me because I'm only 20½ years old."  
\*\*\*\*\*

VERNON L. McCAIN, Box 876, Kellogg, Idaho

Very promising mag you have here. Infinitely superior to MOTE. I won't go into details on my opinion of CONFAB since I've already done so in the next REVIEW, but I predict bright things for it. I have a very fraternal feeling toward CONFAB. It matches REVIEW in so many aspects of editorial policy and handling that I rather think of them as sister magazines (this is fraternal?) tho I must confess I prefer CONFAB. Seems I outsmarted myself. Original idea behind REVIEW was to eventually grow into a letterzine, also....but so many had been launched recently with sad results and finally expired after fruitless pleas for letters...any kind of letters...that I thot I might sort of slide into it backwards as did VOM...which as you know was fandom's only successful letterzine prior to CONFAB and which originally was the letter column of IMAGINATION and later

became a fanz of its own. I expected to print whatever letters came in on REVIEW and gradually let them come to dominate the mag while the other sections shrank more and more. But it's been an uphill struggle. Quotable letters (one reason for not calling it a letterzine was to avoid having to print everything that came in since many letters aren't worth the space) are few and far between it seems, most of my mail being devoted to too personal items to quote. So am now working on the tenth issue of REVIEW and here CONFAB has accomplished in its third issue what I set out to do, by the simple and obvious device of announcing it was a letterzine. As I said, I outsmarted myself. Of course, you may have a slightly larger circulation than REVIEW, which, admittedly, would help, but I'm not that interested in developing a letterzine. Just to set the record straight, by the way, the "limited" part of REVIEW's "limited circulation" is something of a fiction. I have never turned down anyone who wanted to trade and friends who I am particularly interested in having receive the magazine, such as Redd Boggs, get it whether they have anything to trade or not. It's true the circulation was only thirty for the first four or five issues, but when my trade list grew too large the run went up to its present total of forty. I haven't had any real need to issue more, so far, though if and when I do I'll have Wells jump it to fifty. The list of people who receive the mag is constantly changing as new mags are received and old ones lapse. One reason why I'm able to keep the circulation down is that I don't keep sending copies for six or nine months on the off chance the editor is still publishing. I have no trade list, as such, and, while I'll usually carry any trade for at least one extra issue, if the interval since I've last heard from him totals the length of time between three issues then he just quits receiving the magazine. The mag's "trade only" policy isn't too strictly enforced. I've sent a couple of sample copies to people who wrote and asked for them, altho having nothing to trade, and I'm perfectly willing to keep sending the mag free to anyone who shows regular signs of interest, trade or no. It's just that fandom's most interesting and active fans tend to be editors and by establishing a trade only policy I thus limit REVIEW's circulation to an inner circle of highly active fans who are the ones I wish to reach.

What originally inspired this letter was CONFAB #2. I was very surprised to see somebody querying whether I was Rich Lupoff. Now I've been accused of being many individuals, and vice versa, during my fanzish career (in one instance, I actually was) but there was always some good traceable reason for the opinion. But I'm thoroughly mystified in the case of Lupoff of whose existence I am only vaguely aware as a sometime contributor to MOTE. I don't even recall anything he's written, for sure, but I'm pretty positive his writing style isn't remotely similar to mine. So I'm very curious, indeed, as to where the idea originated. Illumination, please?

What is your age limit in this FAN-DADS thing? Being more than three months younger than this creakingly aged Geis character I regard myself as still a young sprout although I must admit it is slightly embarrassing to stop and realize one is twice as old as certain leading Seventh Fandom fans. I know it came as a shock back in 1951 when I stopped and figured up just how old Calkins was when Pearl Harbor plunged us into WWII, but, hell, some of these characters weren't even born then. I guess there's no avoiding

that old proverb "Every day in every way I'm getting older and older".

Am in general agreement with much of what Hirschhorn says but he certainly weakened his case when he lists VEGA among the good mags (a judgement with which I thoroughly agree even tho it has folded) and then adds that these are "all pubbed by older fans or 6th fandom holdovers". By what yardstick is he measuring? Joel Nydahl the editor of VEGA will soon be an ancient 16....he was fifteen during the latter half of VEGA's life, and a hoary 14 when he launched it shortly after entering fandom with the advance guard of 7F (and at the same age at which he sold that story to IMAGINATION).

Lupoff's mention of an early movie fandom similar to ours is something I've never heard of....wonder where he got the info.... I've read widely on movies and everything connected with them and never ran across it. Personally I'd be very interested in having such a group. Movies interest me tremendously even if I do react to the average Hollywood product like I do to the latest issue of SCIENCE STORIES or SF PLUS. But everything connected with movies or interest therein, especially movie fandom, is too ghaaaah for my taste. As an interesting and stimulating (sometimes) art form I don't think they can be topped and I could write endless articles about them of the same sort I do for subzines, but except for an occasional venture in FAPA on something I think might particularly interest that group, I never bother. Who's interested? My own somewhat analytical reaction to the movies, coming as it does about halfway between the calf-ish moodings of the glamour-stricken adolescents and the disdainful eloquence of the "art must triumph over crass commercialism" of the intellectuals, seems to be a unique reaction. I'd also like to see a stf-type jazz fandom of the same type, but, while an intelligent jazz fandom exists they don't take naturally to typewriter and paper like stfans do. So I have to keep writing about the latest ASTOUNDING and "who will take QUANDRY'S place", racking my brains for a new angle when I have dozens of unwritten articles inside me on subjects no one else is interested in. Darned frustrating!

May I proclaim myself unique in never having that of you as being 16 years old, (not even when you were 16 since I didn't know you then altho I suspect I probably knew you when you were closer to that age than about anyone else who has commented on the subject). Or did you, maybe, tell me your age when we first started corresponding back in 1950? How many people who dismiss you as a 7th Fandom product know you were dabbling your toes in fandom way back when Sixth Fandom was first being established? At any rate, if you didn't mention your age you mentioned enough about your work and your home life that I got the impression you were a couple of years older than I, which is correct.

((The feeling of fraternal sister-zines is mutual, Vernon. CONFAB was inspired to a great extent by ideas you expressed and used in REVIEW. You may consider yourself a godfather. # Lupoff too was surprised to learn he was considered a McCain pseudonym. I believe Paul Mittelbuscher expressed the believe, but don't know on what he based it. # Age limit for the FanDads? If you are suddenly shocked to realize that you're twice as old as certain 7Fans, you're eligible, man, you're eligible. # Probably not many are aware

The year of August



of my earlier fannish toe-dabblings, Vernon. Yours was my first contact with another fan, after your letter was printed in one of the Thrilling mags offering to initiate anyone into the mysteries of fandom. Needless to say, I proceeded to get initiated. Matter of fact though, my first toe was dabbled back in 1945 with subs to ACOLYTE and a few others whose names I can't recall offhand, but for some unknown reason the bug didn't bite me then. # I just realized---since you initiated me into fandom and inspired my zine, you doubly qualify as godfather. A double shot of Old Grandad, or something.))

\*\*\*\*\*  
"...letters with doubly ~~double~~ parenthesized interjections."  
\*\*\*\*\*

GREGG CALKINS, 2817 - 11th St., Santa Monica, Calif.

You can quote me as saying that "Childhood's End" is one of the poorest "end of civilization" (our civilization, that is) stories that I've come across. Or, if you call it a "mutant theme" you can call it the poorest story in that category, too. I must confess that I see little of any real value in Arthur C. Clarke's writing, the only story of his I ever appreciated being "Against the Fall of Night". I loved this story, although I must confess only half of it was any good. The first part, concerning the dying city and the cloudless sky, was quite good; the latter half, lousy. Clarke has little or no imagination concerning alien races. Consider the excellent themes done by other writers about the first contact with another race, or even a long-lost branch of our own, and then read Clarke's. His aliens lack life and characteristics of their own. He is like the man to whom all Chinamen look alike...or all Africans. They lack reality because he doesn't understand what is required of him to write...and his stories are equally lacking.

As for Geis: well, here is my case for covers. If you mail your mag in an envelope, you need no cover. If you mail it like OOPS, one is desirable. However, there is no good reason why a magazine should not have a cover--not a single reason--while it is quite easy to think of any number of reason for having a cover. I should think that would settle the argument.

As far as Dean A. Grennell's letter goes, don't join FAPA. Of course, if you already know a lot about that organization, you know your own mind; but if you're open for discussion, let me tell you a thing or two.

...Me, I'm a FAP, and to tell you the truth, I'm not at all sure what I'm doing there. Sometimes I think that most of the other members feel the same way. FAPA seems to be sort of a splotch scraped off of the top of fandom and set off by itself to decay. All the fans of yesteryear are there, putrescing and probably all the fans of tomorrow will be there when they've begun to decay. The only active FAPA life is brought about by the new and young fans who have heard so much about the organization and are just busting over themselves to be able to join. Well I remember the Hoffmania spread from one end of the mailing to the other when she first joined. And where is she now? A small zine now and then, no more. Burbee, once the ghreat ghod of fandom...where is he? An occasional

humorless page or two, nothing more. And so on with the rest. True, a few fans are really plugging along, making FAPA what it should be...Dean A. Grennell, for one...but the rest are either remarkably uninspired or dismally dull. Those that do bestir their stumps enough to publish seldom talk about things fannish, and to me it seems that they are working to find enough to say. I confess I find the same to be true with me.

I cannot honestly say I get one-half as much enjoyment out of FAPA as I do out of publishing OOPS. Nor do I believe the other still-active fansine publishers feel any different. Boggs is slightly different, of course, having gone the way of Burbee and Laney in his retreat into FAPA, and I doubt very much if he would find as much acclaim in the fansines of today as he found in those of yesteryear. Perhaps this is the reason for his retreat. But do not get me wrong about Boggs' talents--SKYHOOK is easily the most capable magazine I have ever come across...but I find it hard to fit it in with today's chop of fansines.

Perhaps you'd like it...perhaps you'd see only the good points and not the bad...or perhaps you'd see it for what it could be, and add your efforts to the hopeless task of extricating it from its own morass. But I doubt it. I'm staying in FAPA for a while yet--possibly because I, too, have hopes, but more probably because I like very much the productions of one or two of the members--but I shouldn't be at all surprised if I didn't pick up my activity again the next time it expired. You know that plaintive old cry: "where are the snows of yesteryear?" Well, they've turned to sludge and started publishing FAPazines.

Before I get labelled as a "serious constructive fan" and criticized for my "vicious attack on FAPA and Arthur C. Clarke" let me tell you just exactly what is wrong with me. You see, I like to read science-fiction!

((Not being a FAPAN myself, I'm open to all sort of discussion on the subject, be it favorable or otherwise.))

\*\*\*\*\*  
"...I got in a full head of sleep last night..."  
\*\*\*\*\*

RICH LUPOFF, 2629 S. Bayshore Drive, Miami, Florida

*a misspelled*

...It seems to me that the place of a mag like CONFAB is that of the role of commentator upon fandom, while not actually being a part of it. What say to that, my ancient of days? To expand a bit, it seems to me that by definition fandom must concern itself not with itself but with whatever it is fandom of. When it stops fanning what it is supposedly fanning, it ceases to be a fandom, and becomes merely a group of individuals who enjoy each others' company, be it personal, through the mail, or by means of publications such as CONFAB. I am neither condemning nor supporting this condition, just pointing it out. CONFAB, and your views as presented therein, make it not a stf-fanzine, but a fan-fanzine. You are not a stf-fan, but a fan-fan.

Getting to Bert Hirschhorn's attack on current fandom, I think I might have a little worthwhile to say, as I became interested

in fanning shortly before the changeover, and had a fairly good look at the last group before the current one took over. First, I suggest, look outside fandom for possible factors. Assuming the average neofan to be 16 (ah, a few more months and I'll be an aged 20, able to look back condescendingly upon foolish teenages) suppose we look at what was going on during the seven formative years, 8-15. A 1954 neofan had this period from 1946 to 1953, during the cold-war era. A 1949 neofan experienced the same years of development from 1941 to 1948, a period of leading-up-to, fighting, and ending a war, the short postwar honeymoon, and the development of the cold war. In other words, 49neofen had experienced a much more variable world than 54neofen, who have lived most of their conscious lives in a fairly static world. This may account for greater maturity in the previous era than the current one, if indeed such greater maturity really existed.

There is also the factor that until 1950 or '51 a stf reader was almost always sneered at, that a stf fan was usually what fan is short for, a fanatic. Stf fans were people who (to quote HLGold) "know and love science fiction". With the coming of the boom, stf readership ballooned, became if not admirable at least acceptable. In came a flood of casual readers, and from it a flood of casual fans, people who did not "Know and love" science fiction, but who merely had a slightly-greater-than-passing interest in it. You may find some correlation between the dates of the boom and the coming of current-type fandom. Now that the boom seems to be deflating once more, there may be a reversion in fandom to people who "K&L" from the current casual-type fan. As I said in the last CONFAB, this is something of a sorrow to someone who would like to see the pleasures of stf, and particularly of stfanaing, spread. Yet I think it will be a healthy thing for fandom to be smaller. Less extensive fanning, perhaps, but more intensive.

((If, by your definition, you require that a stfan and a stfanzine concern themselves strictly with science-fiction to the exclusion of other fans and fanzines, then I am most definitely a fan-fan and CONFAB is a fan-fanzine. Maybe I'm unique, but I must confess to being more interested in the doings of other fans than I am in a critical analysis of a pro-author's works or a discussion of the importance of de-hydrated water as a space propellant. For me, fandom serves its purpose in providing a place where I can spout off and find someone to listen, whether I'm talking about space travel or Mickey Spillane. So be it then--I'm a fan-fan. # You may well be right about the earlier years of development affecting the neofan's degree of maturity, but I'm wondering where that puts me, with my "formative years" hitting the 1934-41 era.))

\*\*\*\*\*  
"It's always nice to send back a letter longer than the  
magazine you received."  
\*\*\*\*\*

CHARLES LEE RIDDLE, 108 Dunham St., Norwich, Conn.

...I was quite amazed at the reaction to your and my age. God, fellows, just because we're past 25, doesn't mean that we are aged! Fan-dads, indeed! I bet I could show a lot of the younger set a few things still! However, I must admit, that when down at the Fan-Vet Convention yesterday, David Kyle and I sat to one side and commented on the younger set there, I did feel my years!

((Apparently the baring of some of the elder fannish heads caused a bit of a stir in the younger set. Many didn't seem to aware of our existence, but now we seem to have come into our own. But whether for better or worse, I'm not quite sure right now.))

\*\*\*\*\*  
"Perhaps you could give me a few pointers on how to become 26."  
\*\*\*\*\*

JACK HARNESS, Cochran Hall, Meadville, Penn.

...Yes, a letterzine is a good idea. Next to an apa, it is the thing for a tired businessman to do. Tho, of a great surety, subzines are the backbone of fandom, still a letter/apazine is a very easy, and perhaps more rewarding, thing. Easier to blow off steam in and, if you work it right, the equivalent of letters which might take more time. I have seen letterzines which have satisfied my need for an answer from a person; I wrote back feeling happy.

...I think this about covers for CONFAB (in particular). Why not a half or third cover? ... I have seen good and bad full-page art covers, covers with blocks of print--the wild-hair type, covers with just the name of the zine, covers with name and a geometrical design, covers with the zine's name in block letters with the text beginning immediately below; all these can be good or bad. The thing to do is to make what you do use distinctive.

It's all right for Grennell to tell how he does puns. I do it too, and drive even my closest friends to distraction. I perhaps mull over something I or, more often someone else, has said that strikes me ripe for a pun. In 15 seconds, uh, listen--fizzling out of my mouth. For example, a friend of mine told how, in chem class, he was dissatisfied with his Büchner funnell. He decided to adapt it into a Venturi kind of exhaust. So I came up with... Nothing venturied, nothing drained. Easy as heck....

As to Bert--well, there is no focus of attention. However, there is a good group of newer fans who, like Dean and Geis Who, have much ballwise. In fact, I suspect the total of their output may turn out, hindsightwise, to have been the true 7th fandom. Hmmm?

To my mind, Clarke missed a bet when he divulged the nature of the Overlords. A more appealing (to me, perhaps others) plot could have been made by utilizing their \_\_\_\_\_ nature than that inverted cause-effect goof-idea. At any rate, that revelation (their demonic visage) was the real climax, and the turning point of the novel. I lost some interest toward the end, but it had some really new approaches that I didn't want to miss.

((In case anyone notices a slight lack of continuity in your letter, Jack, I should explain that I wielded a mighty editorial pencil and excerpted this much from five pages of your zany stuff. Whew! # Maybe that's why I like a letterzine. I can blow off my steam without worrying about losing subscribers as with a subzine. # I hope that some of my correspondents are accepting CONFAB as partial answers to their letters lately. Like Grennell, I've come to the conclusion that I can either pub a zine, or carry on a prolific correspondence or contribute to other zines. I can do a passable job on one at a time; I can even slug along with two at a time; but absolutely not all three at the same time. I've only got two speeds--and the other one is a heck of a lot slower than this. # I must admit that CHILDHOOD'S END was a little disappointing for me. I too thought that the ending seemed rather anticlimactic. Maybe I was expecting too much after the praise I'd heard.))

\*\*\*\*\*  
"Please accept this note instead of that letter I owe you."  
\*\*\*\*\*

HARLAN ELLISON, 41 East 17th, Columbus 1, Ohio

...I hope you will pardon my exuberance, but I'm touting a thing called DIMENSIONS which will be out sometime before the middle of May. Perhaps a few words about DIMENSIONS would prove of mutual interest to your readership.

In DIMENSIONS (you'll notice we don't abbreviate the name) we are pouring out all the ideas that have been gathering for five years in fandom. In DIMENSIONS we are getting prepared to spring some surprises that will really whistle and sing as we cut 'em loose. We're really enthused about this project--as enthused as we were as neofans some years back when we started SCIENCE FANTASY BULLETIN. This letter isn't ballyhoo, since we are not accepting subscriptions to DIMENSIONS. We cut the readership of DIMENSIONS down from the close-to-1000 that read SFB to a neat 200. Those are the folks who gave us encouragement or material or for some other reason won themselves dear to our heart. But DIMENSIONS, though closed to the idle reader coming in from Mari Wolf's column, will still be a vital and constructive force in the field of fanzines. Nothing will be quite exactly like any other fanmag has done it... as it was different in SFB in the past.

...The old SFB has been revamped from the magnetic soles of its space boots right up to the tip of its antenna, and the best features of the old have been preserved with the aquisition of the new. We sort of think it will rock fandom.

Comments and suggestions are requested on bended knees. All the support in the world is what we chiefly need.

((Sorry to have to cut your letter down so much, Harlan, but ghad---a three page plug? # Lots of luck with the zine.))

\*\*\*\*\*  
"I dreamed I went to a Seventh Fandomite bordello in my..."  
\*\*\*\*\*

"a place in the sun"  
took up pen

still have to eat when they aren't going to 3-D movies....or maybe even reading sf, for that matter.

Looks like the fanzine field is losing a few of its ditto exponents. Dean Grennell has swtch to a Gestetner mimeo. Not that I blame him, actually. I'd probably do the same if I had the opportunity. And now Ray Thompson is contemplating mimeography. Woe is us, Geis.

I'd still like to get Ron Fleshman's current address. Anyone know it? I'm clear up to here in fanzines that I'm holding for him. Also I'd like to finagle him out of some more of those zany cartoons like I used in the second issue. Real cool.

How I envy these fans who make such casual references to writing letters, cutting stencils, or reading the latest sf "down at the shop". Now why couldn't I have had the foresight to have latched onto a job with such opportunities.

Back in about a month.

\*\*\*\*\*  
"Old fans never die, they just A.P.A."  
\*\*\*\*\*

CONFAB  
Bob Peatrowsky  
Box 634  
Norfolk, Nebr.



PRINTED MATTER ONLY  
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

"wo50w"

Rich Bergeron  
R.F.D. #1  
Newport, Vt.