

CONFAB

Jan. 10, 1955

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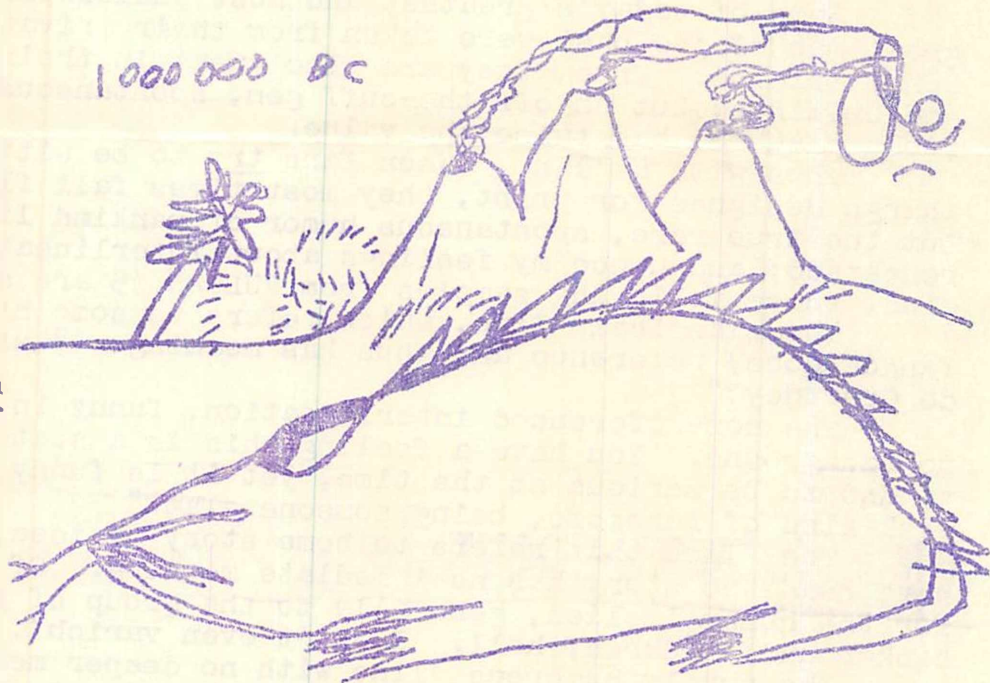
The last issue of CONFAB (#7) was dated October 18. That's almost three months by my little Handy-Dandy calculator. (At least no one has written asking why they'd been dropped from my mailing list during that time. They must be getting used to my periods of gafia.)

What has happened during that time? Well, actually nothing stupendous....

I mentioned last issue that I was due for entrance into the Spectator Amateur Press Society. That entrance has come and gone and part of that period since CONFAB #7 was spent in preparing my activity require-

ments for that worthy organization, along about the first of December. The first part of this zine was prepared before that time. And after getting that SAPS mag out it's taken me until now to finish this issue. All of which is rather painfully obvious, I suppose. But I'm still in there punching---well, maybe jabbing would be a little better word---I don't intend to let that gafia

get me down altogether. Being in SAPS, I intend to do a quarterly mag which will take away some of the time I'd probably normally devote to CONFAB so there may be a little longer than usual gap between CONFABS about every quarter. But I doubt if anyone will get too alarmed then. As I said before, I think most everyone is familiar with my periods of gafia. CONFAB #9 will be along---soon, I hope, but I'm not holding my breath till then. Till then... Bob



The letters, man, the letters.....

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

(Nov. 6) ...You might mention as a note to Vorzimer and the rest that work on the WHO'S WHO is already partially begun. I won't say much more than that just at the moment except to guarantee that when it finally appears it will be well thought out and capably done. As things stand in my mind, it promises to be a combination of two or three ideas: WHO'S WHO, FAN DIRECTORY and another.

...I'd like to add my plea for an abbreviation for the "interlineation". I use "itl" myself, but there must be a better one. "'lino" has promise. ... I am currently waging a sort of one-man war against the present brand of 'lino. Most of them today are offshoots of the original idea, and while the original had meaning and purpose, 7th Fandom (or whatever the present group happens to be) has misunderstood the idea and misused it. To my way of thinking, a 'lino is a quote out of context--an idea borrowed from a personal letter or some other source that was not designed to be printed. It should not have been written for public perusal, egoboo, or just to be witty.

Some of today's greatest and most philosophical statements by great men of the past were taken from their private letters to personal friends. True, they are also great in their public speeches and writings: but an off-the-cuff gem, spontaneous and not deliberately planned, has twice the value.

Thus with a 'lino. When fans try to be witty and write things designed for print, they most times fall flat on their face. But the true rare, spontaneous humor of mankind lies not in the rehearsed; and hence my feelings about interlineations. To my mind, these following samples from VULCAN #5 are some of the best:

The classical 'lino, which refers to some historical (as fandom goes) reference and thus has meaning: "Qui a vu le bateau de Courtney?"

The non-referenced interlineation, funny in itself and needing no background. You have a feeling this is a statement that was intended to be serious at the time, yet it is funny in itself: "I'd feel kind of lonesome, being someone else."

The 'lino that refers to some story or idea, yet unless you have read the story has no immediate meaning. Of interest, except for the humor implied, generally to the group of people in on the background: "Skren, hell. I can't even varish".

The purely humorous 'lino with no deeper meaning: "Let's find a mirage and sneak up on it." "They should put wheels on this ball so we could roll it." "I'm gonna stomp your head in, one by one".

Other examples: HISTORICAL OR CLASSICAL "Yngvi is a louse".
NON-REFERENCED/SERIOUS AT THE TIME "Actually it's very good, if you can stand it".

And no listing is complete without a couple of the overdone 'linoes, the poor ones that the writer has tried too hard to produce. "I has one grunch but...MY GRUCH, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE EGGPLANT?"

Enough.

((I had never thought of trying to classify interlineations but can see how they could be. # As for the current 'linos being offshoots of the original---I can't speak with authority, but it seems logical that the original interlineations were, as you say, ideas borrowed from letters and such which weren't written for publication. I much prefer this type to those specially written for linos. Most of the interlineations in CONFAB are taken from the letters I receive, although some times the supply does not quite take care of the demand for an issue, and I'm forced to devise some extras. Usually, these fall rather flat, though, which only goes to help prove your ideas. # Glad to hear that you're working on the WHO'S WHO idea. I'm another one of those guys who'd like to see something like that but wouldn't want to try and put one out. Let me know how you're progressing.))

"If only he'd keep his collection in order so I could find what I want to borrow with less trouble".

NORMAN G. BROWNE, 33 Lyonsgate Drive, Wilson Heights, Toronto, Ont.

(Nov. 9) Have just finished reading the newly printed THE MORTAL STORM by Sam Moskowitz. I found the book so intensely interesting and thought-provoking that I am moved to comment and review it. However, since I am not doing any regular book-review column, I have no other outlet for my opinions other than a letter to CONFAB. I hope you will find what I have to say of sufficient interest to print.

My first reaction was that the book read like a piece of highly imaginative, very deep, historical fiction. I class it in the same field as fiction because none of the events, people or publications mentioned in the History are close to me - all happened long before I entered fandom. Having no tangible link with the here-and-now, it falls into the same category as anything else having no feeling of immediate reality and thus I read it as if it were an item of fiction - though I knew it to be not.

I class the History to be deep for the simple reason it brings into discussion such large number of people and titles. It's almost like reading a stf novel that has 200 principle characters. It becomes an exercise in memory to keep track of the various events, people and titles that are continually mentioned, dropped and then referred to again later. A glance at the index, the number of items indexed and the number of times some of them are referred to will give anyone owning a volume an understanding of what I mean.

The first thing that fascinated me about the History was the style of writing employed by Moskowitz. The whole style and content might be summed up in the six-point alliteration: Facts, Figures, Fans, Fanzines, Factions and Feuds. And that's about the whole story. Rarely does the History go into opinion or motivation or background of character. There are no character studies as such and about all you learn about a person is his name and age. I found the whole style of writing employed in the book to be quite effect-

ive and I'll more than likely copy it when and if I ever get around to doing any more work on my history of Canadian Fandom for the last four years.

Of course, a comparison of the past - as outlined in the History - with the present fandom is inevitable. First of all, I would say that present-day fandom is considerably more mature than past. It is mature simply due to its age and the fact that a hard core of "Old Guard" fans exist now that didn't exist then. Then, fandom was brand-new and everyone was on the same footing.

Fandom nowadays, takes itself less seriously than it did in the past. Anyone today who proclaims that fandom has a "purpose" and tries to lead a crusade toward a tangible or intangible goal is laughed at. We also tend to laugh at anyone saying that the literature of Science Fiction has a purpose and that it is striving to point the way to a better world and that we readers should work toward the accomplishment of that purpose, etc. Today, fans make no bones of the fact that science fiction is simply another form of escape literature and that fandom is nothing more nor less than a hobby.

Not so them!

The second thing of note is the size of fandom - then and now. At the time the FAPA was organized, in mid-1937, there was less than 50 active fans in fandom and the average fanzine had a circulation of between 35 and 50. Now, how many active fans are there? Heck, the very term has been subdivided four times at least and each of these new groups contains a host of fan. There are maybe 50 to 75 "Old Guard" fans, possibly around 10 superfans, around 50 BNFs and another 200 or more active fans.

And what about fanzines? All through the History, Moskowitz never mentions more than 20 or so fanzines as being in existence at once (excluding FAPA). Excluding all the APAs there are still near something like 100 fanzines being churned out today.

And what is the result of present-day fandom's bigness? In those days, there was always a main-stream of fandom. Fandom was united, one, and always aware of what it was doing. If there were feuds, fandom was aware of them and either on one side, the other or neutral. The same thing applies to any fads, cults, ideas, projects or whatnot, then in vogue.

Nowadays, I would say fandom was too big to have any main-stream. There are projects, fads, feuds and ideas being developed all over fandom at various times without the totality of fandom being aware of them. Nowadays, the majority of happenings in fandom are local in nature, dis-organized and de-centralized. Only events such as a world convention or fad-hoaxes like "7th Fandom" manage to reach the main-stream of fandom.

What of fandom 25 years from now?

Another interesting observation that many may overlook after reading the book is the fact that around 80% of the BNFs and active-fans of that day carved for themselves, in later years, a place in stf-prodom. Nearly all the major fans of that era have become either professional authors or magazine editors or publishers or book editors or publishers or agents of one sort or another.

It's almost a vicious circle: Science Fiction provides fandom a reason for existence and also feeds new blood into fandom. Fandom in turn acts as a proving-ground and apprenticeship which cul-

minutes in feeding new blood and ideas back into science fiction prodom. The underlying message in THE IMMORTAL STORM is that fandom and science fiction exist in symbiotic relationship with each other neither is capable of existence without the other.

And, of course, the question arises as to whether it is a continuing process and are the top ranks of fandom still rising into prodom? I believe it is.

I'd like to hear what others have to say on this book and on the topics I have brought up for discussion.

((Very little I can add to the discussion here as I haven't read the book, but come ahead anyone who wishes. These pages are wide open.))

"Is there a current gafiation on your end?"

DEAN GRENNELL, 402 Maple Avenue, Fond du Lac, Wis.

(Nov. 9) ...I really enjoy reading good interlineations for, I suppose, about the same reason that your wife probably enjoys an occasional meal in a restaurant. I mean, it's nice to let someone else do the work for a change.

It's no easy task keeping a fanzine supplied with inlins, as you very likely know. I don't know what system you use to assure that a supply is available when it's needed. But maybe you'd like to know the modus operandi I use for the various things I toss off now and then.

The company I work for gives away little spiral-bound pocket notebooks with their name on and I always carry one in my pocket. As I go through my everyday activities, every once in a while something comes up that either is or can be converted into grist for the old Gestetner.

I have found that I must get it down within seconds after I think of it, for two reasons. First, of course, because I need it to fill future pages with but secondly---and most importantly---because I will forget it within about 5 minutes of the time I think of it and the only thing left is the uneasy memory of having thought of something.

The tough part of this is that I drive myself crazy trying to remember what the gag was...it might have been an inlin or a cartoon idea or what-have-you...but once I'm no longerable to recall what it was, the blame thing assumes the stature of the funniest thing of the century. I am suffused with chagrin and replete with rue because I have let this evanescent gem slip through my leaky memory.

But I find that if I once get them safely down in the notebook, even though they be scrawled on the seat-cushion with one hand while I'm driving and not even looking at what I'm writing, then they assume their proper perspective. I may come back to the item and decide not to use it, once safely noted. But the lost items devil me for weeks with distorted memories of their Olympian stature.

Sometimes I wonder why I use interlineations at all when they cause me such grief. But the truth of the matter may be that the only reason I publish anything at all is to have a place to work

off my old interlineations. That may not be the truth but it's close.

((I'm afraid that I don't use anything quite as systematic as you do. As I mentioned a couple pages back after Gregg's letter, most of CONFAB's interlineations come from the letters I get. Some are taken verbatim, others I have to twist a little. Usually I can screen enough out to fill the spaces between letters. Unfortunately though, I seldom take the time to pick them out before I start typing the masters. So then, after each letter, I have to sort through the letters to try and find an interlineation. All in all, I believe I spend just about as much time hunting the interlineations as I do typing the letters themselves. Gets frustrating at times as you can well imagine. But nevertheless, that's the "system" I use.))

"Could it be that you are a telepathic receptor or something?
If something, don't answer."

ERIC BENTCLIFFE, 47, Alldis St, Great Moor, Stockport, Cheshire,
England

(Nov. 25) ...four interlineations are superior to those appearing in most zines, mainly I think because they seem to be new and original. It seems to be the policy of one or two faneds to reprint their 'linos from other mags, in preference to culling them themselves. The crack about "Crotted Creeps" which originated at the Mancun, has now appeared in at least four zines, there are others too. Even Dick Geis has been guilty of this 'crime' of reprinting 'linos. If 'linos are to be used I think they should be original at least. Having just discovered that it takes me just as long to type 'linos as interlineations, you can put me down as a detractor of Harness! My right hand would appear to be faster than my left. And the girl friend wonders why I always sit on her right when we visit the cinema!

Whilst we are on the subject of films, I may as well comment on the pro and con of 3d (it's a small D for my money), I seem to be a fence-sitter on this subject too. It really depends on the film itself, for instance if HAMLET had been made in 3d or Cinema-scope, it would have greatly detracted from its artistic merit, the camera work on this film was wonderbar, a marvelous melange of light and dark, which greatly added to the mood of the film. I do not think that the mood could have been captured by the use of 3d... although I must admit that Wide Screen might have enhanced the effects. Wide Screen did justify itself to me in War of the Worlds. I saw this film twice, once on wide screen, once on ordinary, and the WS did definitely improve matters.

Personally, I rather doubt if a fannish Whose Who will ever be published. It would entail an enormous amount of work, and there would be incurred so many setbacks that I doubt whether the intending pubber would stay in fandom long enough to put the thing out.

The return of questionnaires is the big snag and I cannot see any way around it....I don't think it likely that you would get more than a 20% return, even if you offered money. About the only way around this I can see is for some fan who has a fair knowledge of all the active fans, their aspirations, past and accomplishments to just go ahead and write the thing himself using his knowledge to do this. Don't ask me who would be eligible, Walt is about the only person with a brief on fans both sides of the pond...but I don't think he would care to undertake the job. One rather good aspect of this idea is that even if he didn't know all the gen stuff when he puts out the first edition of this, any incorrect entries would bring hasty letters, and the second edition could be really authentic (if you will pardon the word)...I think it would be much easier to get the facts this way, than sending out Q's!!

As I have never attended a USA convention there seems to be little point in my commenting on this controversial topic.... However, here's an idea which we (in UK) are trying out next year, and which might be worth trying in USA. One of the main moans of after-con reports is that 'I never had time to get to know half the people I wanted to'...one or two of us were talking this convention 'fault' over at the Mancon. And, the idea of CONVACATION was born, ie, that those fans who felt inclined, should spend their annual vacation at the same resort, at the same time. And, if possible, in the same hotel.

To start the ball rolling, Torquay has been chosen for the site of this new departure, and a couple of good hotels located by local fan Nigel Lindsay. There will be no set program, no organization, just those fan who can/want to make it will foregather for a week or two weeks. I am looking forward to next July very much for I believe that even if the attendance at the first of these conventions, it can still be grand fun, and I can't think of any folk I would rather be surrounded by whilst on vacation than fans.

((I hadn't really realized, until I started typing this letter, the number of people commenting on the interlineations this time. And some of them even favorably, too. I agree with you about originality being an asset, in regard to interlineations. Although sometimes, after a session of sweating some out of my letters, I must admit that that asset begins to depreciate a bit and I start thinking of all the good interlineations I could copy from someone else's zine. Or maybe they just seem funnier in another zine where I can't see the mental sweat involved. # The CONVACATION idea sounds fine. We might run into a bit more trouble here though because of the greater distances to travel, but of course that could be remedied by making them somewhat regional, couldn't it. No doubt someone will now come along and point out that Joe Phan suggested the same thing back in Second Fandom....like all the other "new" ideas in fandom. Anyone?))

"...led's end this thing right....meaning soon..."

ED COX, 15 Avenue 36, Apt. 14, Venice, Calif.

(Nov. 7) ...Stan Woolston and I first started corresponding back in 1948 when we were both new FAPA members. Outside of his activity therein, publishing the FAN DIRECTORY and other NFFF work, he never seemed to reach the point of enthusiasm as he indicates in his letter this time. I always thought he ought to write more than he did. Stan has had a lot of ideas and twists on old ones in his FAPA writings.

Further on in CONFAB, I find some talk about motion pictures. Especially concerning the value of CinemaScope. Let's take a look at CinemaScope. The extra-wide screen gives an illusion approximating the scope as seen by a person's eyes, which makes scenes, especially medium to long range shots, pretty realistic. The sound business doesn't mean twice as much sound, but directional sound. As the scene goes into the action, the sound realistically comes from all sides and then the rear. This hasn't been used too much yet but fine examples are in "Knights of the Round Table" and much more recently, "A Star is Born". As for price, any first-run exclusive engagement is going to cost you more, no matter what type of filming process. Since right now, the total of CinemaScope equipped theatres in the US and Canada number over 8,700, you're liable to find that you can wait for second runs. Here's a tip though, try to see them in the first runs. Often there is some cutting done before the second runs begin (known as "at popular prices").

What's more, CinemaScope is not alone now. VistaVision is here as well as ToddAO. 20th Century Fox makes all movies in CinemaScope and MGM seems to be leaning toward VistaVision (see "White Christmas" as an example). The quality of acting will by no means be limited as the industry settles down. What with the growing number of theatres so equipped, and the growing number of films being made, they can afford to depend less on the process and more on the story and acting. Sure there are stinkers like "Haji Baba" but there are also such films as "Captain Lightfoot" which has fair story, good acting and wonderful photography (this will be released in a month or so). Opening in Hollywood this month is "Desiree" starring Marlon Brando, Jean Simmons and other good actors. A particularly fine job of acting is done by James Mason in "A Star is Born" which is supposed to be Judy Garland's baby, but Mason stole the show.

As for 3-D, it is on the way out if not altogether out already. I've seen no trace of any 3-D movies in production now or in the future. Something else is bothering me...why am I defending movies?

Harness' breakdown of FAPA is interesting. While I don't either agree or disagree, he could've included Harry Warner, Jr., Bob Tucker and a few others in the quality-quantity department as well as others in his other departments. What about MASQUE?

I will heatily second his motion in re 1 2 3...Infinity.

Hmmm, pardon while I get out my old, gray beard, don it, start stroking it...now. Concerning the slight discussion of QUANDRY... I remember the day, one of many, that a fanzine plopped into my mailbox at 4 Spring Street that was unfamiliar to me. Thinnish,

usual first-issuish type of thing. It was the 2nd issue of QUANDRY. One of a slew of the things that were piling into my mailbox in those hectic days. So it happens that I have most of the early QUANDRYs and few of the last. I guess the latter are still in that big envelope she mentioned when I phoned her in Savannah last year. Even then I guess I didn't make it clear as to where I wanted them sent. I guess I'll live though. Without them, that is.

Note on Bob Bloch's note: Anybody would have a ball anywhere if they had three lovely females with them everywhere they went while they are wherever they are. Or something.

Skipping back, there is a mention of a "Who's Who" of fandom. This gets the nomination of the ultimate impossible fan-task. Who, may I ask, could delve way back into so-called 1st fandom, and on up (except currently), and get all the accomplishments of all the major fans? Don't say Sam Moskowitz. Stick with the Fan-Directory, you're liable to do much better. I imagine that there are fewer fans who would want to buy anything such as a "Who's Who" unless they had their names in it!

Or, does "...and contain the names and accomplishments of all fans..." mean all fans? Ghod!

((I doubt if anyone would try to compile a who's who of fandom covering everyone way back to the so-called 1st. More probably it would be a listing of the more current fans... or at least the fans more currently active. Just my opinion, though. A "complete" listing would probably be a lot nicer but would naturally be a Herculean task. Some enterprising fan could probably spend the rest of his fan-life compiling it. And few there are who are so enterprising.))

"...I don't want to poop along doing the minimum..."

RICHARD E. GEIS, 2631 N. Mississippi, Portland 12, Oregon

(Oct. 5) ...One thing about letters by Redd Boggs; when he is finished with a subject, there just doesn't seem to be much left to say. The guy is so clear-headed and lucid that to go against him in an argument is something akin to taking your fannish life in hand and putting it on the block.

The blacklist idea is n.g. as far as I'm concerned. I can see the value of a Complaint Department as a sort of clearing house in which fans air their grievances, but to institute a Blacklist is a bit unfair to the person who, through no fault of his own, is tarred and feathered before he can clear up a misunderstanding or make good and valid excuses. I dislike lynch law anywhere. This blacklist thing is very much a McCarthy type tactic.

Unquestionably it would be valuable to have a list of dead-beats and chronically irresponsible faneds, but I wonder if it would be possible to verify and check for accuracy the complaints of fans. It just might occur to a few local fans somewhere to have a bit of fun by mailing in untrue complaints against a fan they may not happen to like so much. That's the danger.

I'm inclined to feel in re the personality vs the abstraction debate Mittelbuscher brings up, that there is, alas, not enough of the SKYHOOK type of fanzine material in circulation, mostly because most fans aren't equipped to comment on science fiction intelligently, realize it, and so steer clear of making asses of themselves. What fandom needs is a lot more serious comment on the promags; the situation calls for mature, intelligent fans who are old enough to have a background in the field.

((I'm inclined to agree with you about the blacklist idea. Over a period of time, no doubt just about every fanned would have some sort of a complaint made against him. When someone starts making rules to which fandom has to conform (with the threat of a place on the Blacklist if they fail to do so) it seems to me they usually end up doing more harm than good---despite the original good intentions. As you say, there's always someone who'll take advantage of what could be a good thing and use it to their own advantage. In the office where I work, I'm sort of a second junior assistant to the credit manager (in fact, I have ambitions of being a credit manager myself some future day) and work with "credit ratings" and "deadbeats" and the like. In business it's a necessity, but I doubt if it would be practicable in fandom.))

"I'm trying to get back in a fannish groove."

TED WHITE, 1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, Va.

(Nov. 8) ...It seems that British fandom is finally coming to life...and it's amazing (pardon the word) how greatly UK fandom already differs with our own. This fact was driven home quite forcibly by EYE #2 and BEM #2 which came a couple of weeks ago. In between these two came two other AngloZines... ..At any rate, these guys have their own whacky type of humor...and it's like starting out in fandom all over again! Of course I recognize the really BIG names, but the rest of them are so much Greek to me. All the jokes, references, etc. seem so esoteric, that I felt as tho Fandom was no longer worth it... But I pulled through.

This isn't like one of our past fandoms. The Anglofans seem to have bypassed our rather over-sized strictly classed (pro-fan) fandom for a much more delightful one...makes me wish I were there.

((I can't speak with authority on the subject, but I seem to recall reading that current British fandom is akin to early US fandom with its more closely knit pro-fan relations. Correct me if I'm wrong. # No doubt some of the US stuff seems pretty esoteric to UK fandom too. But the increase in the exchange of zines between the two, which seems to be going on now, will cut this down somewhat.))

"I've got more than enough to do with a zine as popular as mine."

GEORGE WEIZEL, 5 Playfield St., Dundalk 22, Md.

(Dec. 31) In the CONFAB issue before last, I happened to include the name of Jim White (the present head of N3F Ms Bureau) in among the names of unethical fans and fanzine editors. Though I do differ with him on a matter of ms policy, he actually did not deserve to be cast in with the scoundrels I exposed. Therefore I would publicly like to apologize to him and withdraw his name from among the fan black list.

If you think my idea of such a public blackballing is without effect, let me say that a certain Frisco fan had several mss of mine along with other mss from the Fanzine Material Pool and ignored all letters on their status, nor would return my stuff or the mss Graham (present head of FMP) had sent him. So after 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ months I threatened this culprit with exposure in my public black list if he did not return the mss in a month. Well he did even though he went almost over the dead line. Graham can corroborate this.

I understand that EEEvans made his bid for the con in Cleveland in 1955 by characterizing the Detroit bidders as juvenile and hence not worthy of having it. Now that rather snobbish and narrow attitude I have found on the part of a few other Cleveland fans and think it should be shown up for its rank stupidity.

EEEvans I judge to be about 45 or 50; EEEvans also is a comparatively newcomer to fandom; and lastly he is a hack writer (read any of his crud in the prozines, don't take my word for it) so that even the halo of being a good pro writer does not hover over him to make him seem worthy of defending. He objects to teenage fans very obviously or rather anyone his junior in years. I am 33 years old and no kid. Yet when I met him at the Philcon I found him a very supercilious, peering-down-the-nose character. Fandom was formed by teenage fans when EEEvans was never in it or heard of it. What would he had thought of the (then) teenage organizers of fandom like Tucker, Moskowitz, Ackerman, Madle, etc.? The teenage fans of today is the old-timer fan tomorrow. I think EEEvans should keep out of fandom's cons and general society if he thinks that overall fandom is nothing but juveniles.

This narrow and cliquish attitude of a few other Cleveland fans is characteristic of people like Don Ford. Take what was said of him in the Philcon Report #2, put out on Sept. 6, 1953 right at that con, under "Convention Ramblings"-

"Don Ford was giving out tickets Friday for an invitational party in his room. Some fans didn't like the idea of ending the so-called 'Open Door' policy."

Of course that was Ford's personal prerogative. But this initiation cards business begins to look like the manifestation of his desire for a personal clique. Proof is in an article Ford wrote in "Canadian Fandom" for Sept. 1954 titled "Indian Lake Story". In it he says because of only a few rowdy fans Beatley's was no longer available for any future Midwestcons; to exclude these few rowdies he said they were considering that eventually Midwestcons would be open only to fans who received an invitation card. Now that is a stupid thing to do; since he knows who the few rowdies are it would be a simple matter in an "open" con to merely have the sergeant-at-arms politely escort the rowdies out, not let them in since they are

known, and are but a very few as he says. This matter of admission by invitation only will lead to abuses right off. Anyone feuding with him over personal matters (and this letter he undoubtedly will take that way) probably will not get an invitation. Also such an invitational business will lead WITHOUT A QUESTION to an inner circle in fandom.

So obviously this invitation card business has been in Ford's mind for a long time. That it goes deeper than just the attempted exclusion of a few rowdy fans seems evidenced by Ford's invitation party deal at the Philcon where he used it to assemble only personal friends.

When I went to the Philcon in 1953 it was the very first I have ever attended one. I asked a hotel worker on arrival where the con people were and he directed me to the bar. I saw a group at a table that seemed to be them; and going over I inquired of a big guy sitting with them if they were con members. The guy was Don Ford. He got up and said to me: "Yeah. What about it?" in a very hostile voice. My thought was what the hell have I gotten into here, what have I run into? This unfriendly greeting damn near spoiled the whole con for me, because I thought for a second that the conventions must be private affairs for select fans. How else judge this "welcome" to fandom and fans of whom I had known only through letters from back in the 1930s. Any fan who has come to Baltimore will testify as to my friendly welcoming and trying to make their visit pleasant. The last fan I was host to was Al Leverentz who will attest to this. The point is that Ford then struck me as not a very friendly, sociable person. What I have heard of him later plus his invitational Midwestcon idea furthers the impression.

EEEvans and he are cast from the same mold. I would like to know how much he agrees with Evans' views on why the Detroiters should not have gotten the 1955 bid. One other thing: actually it was politics in part that got Cleveland the bid. Ford made the acceptance speech at the 1953 Philcon for the Frisco fans; the Friscans and the Cleveland group (of which Ford is tied in with) made a deal before the voting that if you vote for Frisco in 1954 we will swing our bloc of west coast votes so that you Clevelanders get it in 1955. Don't ask where I got this data; it was common talk in the corridors of the Philcon hotel in 1953--but I got it from a better source than mere corridor gossip. Baltimore is making a bid for the Con here or Washington, D.C. in 1956 but since the voting will be done in Cleveland (and it is a fact that the con city always has the biggest bloc of votes) I anticipate no support from them. If anything they will try to see we don't get it if the 1956 has to be voted in England.

((I pass. Anyone?))

"Now who will HODGE PODGE use for target practice?"

RICHARD LUPOFF, 10100 W. Broadview Drive, Bay Harbor Islands,
Miami Beach, Florida

(Nov. 21) I was going to devote this letter to the following

thesis: That the salvation of the floundering science-fiction magazine industry lies in more emphasis on features, less on fiction. My star example was to have been FUTURE, which I buy religiously for its fine features, as opposed to several other magazines which publish perhaps better fiction, but which I pass up anyway. If editors think they can compete with the fine pocketbook originals and reprints appearing lately, they're wrong.

I had it pretty well worked out, citing examples and giving reasons, and then what happened...star witness FUTURE is replaced with SCIENCE FICTION Stories, which competes with the pocketbooks on a straight fiction basis. Oh well.

So instead let me make further comment on my letter in C7. Upon checking I see that while there is no such statement in so many words, there is an implication in my letter that the pros do not change. In fact I went to some length to prove so. Now let me say just the opposite. Of course the pros change. They have changed radically in the thirty years they've been around. (All right, ARGOSY goes back to 1832, so sue me.)

The emphasis has shifted from SCIENCE-FICTION to Science-FICTION, and almost to sciFICTION...I don't care what anybody says. Boy am I belligerent.

The emphasis has shifted from the physical sciences to the social sciences, and somewhat to the mental 'sciences'.

The attitude has shifted from the childish to the (with fingers crossed) mature.

Characterization has gone from cardboard to flesh and, in CAVES OF STEEL, to flesh-metal.

To use another Asimov device from MODERN SCIENCE FICTION, let me classify science fiction as either gadget, adventure, or social. In the late twenties and early thirties stf was 75% gadgetry, 25% adventure and virtually no social. In the later thirties and forties there was 20% gadgetry, 70% adventure and just the beginnings, say 10%, was social science fiction. What's it been lately? Maybe 75% social science fiction, w5% adventure science fiction and virtually no gadget science fiction. Challenge the percentages if you like, but I think I have the trends right.

So, what is my point? Does science fiction change or doesn't it? I say both. The seeming inconsistency is but an illusion. The framework of science fiction (fiction based on either 'what if' or 'if this goes on' is fairly well the same today as it ever was, but the content is different.

From its once separate--almost exiled--position, science fiction is moving toward the main stream. Publishers can put out a book labelled "science-fiction" and be assured of a fair sale, but also sure of no best-seller. See the Ballantine line. But they can take a chance on offering stf to the general market, and risk a complete bust---or a sensation. The former is an age from which stf may be emerging. The latter blending with the mainstream may happen now--or later--or never.

Had 1984 appeared in a stf mag and as a stf reprint, and had THE SPACE MERCHANTS come out on the general market, the two books might have had just the same effect...in reversed position, of course.

A blend of stf with straight or detective material is not at

all new. Who remembers the WWII Big Little Books? And Charlie Chan? In one such book the US government diverted the Gulf Stream for military purposes. Stf? Or detective? Both.

And as for the 'new' emphasis on psi powers: MAXIMO, The Amazing Superman, Better Little Books 1444, 1445, appearing in 1941. Russ Winterbotham, author. Maximo flies, teleports, does all sorts of matter-manipulation via his superbrain. Said brain is ten times normal capacity, and is used with ten times normal efficiency. Effect: Maximo operates his psi with 100-brainpower. Also: a machine is created to duplicate Maximo's brainpower by electrical methods.

((Re FUTURE: You just can't depend on nothin' no more--- no how. # I seem to recall the Big Little books from earlier than the WWII period. Might be wrong though. Didn't the Big Little books come first, then the Better Little series? Don't believe I ever owned any of the Better Little books but did have some of the others back in the dim, dark years. Dick Tracy and Tailspin Tommy I can recall, but no science fiction. # I favor the trends in science fiction away from the gadget and toward the social. How about you?))

"Your mag was manna from, if not Heaven, a heavenly female student acting as a Christmas relief postman."

STUART MACKENZIE, 5 Hans Place, Chelsea, London SW1, England

(Dec. 8) ...I see that EdCo is right in there pitching for the faned. May I take some space to tell you how I, as a neo-fan and neo-ed, operate? Usually, thank the Lord, we don't have to write around too much for pieces - they just seem to gravitate in the general direction of the zine. But when I do get a contribution the normal method is to drop the fan a pocsarcd acknowledging receipt - and unless I know immediately that it is something I'm gonna use in the next issue I don't do much more about it for a while. If it does appear in the next issue then he or she gets a copy anyway and sees the reader's comments (if any) in the next issue after that. If we do reject, then we always try to say why, as nicely as possible, and if we can suggest another zine that we think might like the thing or be able to use it, why then of course we do. Dog does not eat dog, and in any case it is a cardinal offense to discourage any fan from writing. Fandom is merely a conglomerate expression of a lot of egos, insofar as its publishing is concerned. And if the mass ego is to be sustained then the particulate egos must also be cultivated...and the need for new blood is always self-evident.

I am delighted at the picture of a wizened faned, squatting by a cauldron of sour-mash which is kept at the bubble by the piles of unsolicited mss which he hasn't even bothered to acknowledge. I'd like to meet the character - he has more nerve than I have. And I assure you that my neck is brazen from the feet up.

How right the man is....a faned it seems to me spends at least 3 times as much effort answering and writing letters than ever he puts into his actual zine. In fact, I have heard tell that this is one of the greatest joys of being a faned - the getting of letters from people one doesn't know and so on...

((I'd be interested to know what the percentages of time spent on your zine and in writing letters will be after several years of faneding. I have a hunch that as time wears on more time will be spent on the zine and less on answering the letters. At least that seems to have been my experience--as anyone who claims to correspond with me will readily testify. At first the fannish flame burns high and bright but this can only continue for a limited time, when it either burns itself out or tapers off to more of a steady simmer. I like to think that I'm still simmering.))

"Why is it that so many US fans live in boxes?"

DON WEGARS, 2444 Valley St., Berkeley 2, Calif.

(Nov. 1) ...I was really taken in by page 10 of the last issue, as I too use a flat-bed ditto. But never in my life have I seen anything like that. Really, it looked more like the work of a shifting hekto outfit than the ood old ditto.

I'm inclined to think that 3-D is on its way out. The same may be said for Cinerama. But Cinemascope is a horse of a different technicolor. I recently viewed THE EGYPTIAN on the wide screen, and previously I'd seen KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE. There's no getting around it, Big Screen and Loud Sound is here to stay--if the movies hang on at all. I wouldn't know about the silent films (not being a fandaddy) but I imagine that some of them were pretty good. Lon Chaney was one person I'd like to have seen via the flickers. After reading Bob Bloch's story in BEYOND about the old time films I'm very interested. He describes (in some old FANSCIENTs) how the organ was like magic, more or less. Must really have been something...

((There are probably more of you who are wondering about those squeezed-together lines on the bottom of several of the pages in the last issue. As Don mentioned, I use a flat-bed ditto. This has a rubber roller in it which corresponds somewhat to the impression roller on a rotary machine. But here the master is held stationary and the roller rolls the sheet of copy paper over it to produce the impression. As near as I can analyze the problem, a couple years of use had slickened the roller so that it didn't feed the paper properly but instead was slipping, causing the copy sheet to slip as it passed over the master. And this squeeze the typing down to about half its normal size. A little sandpaper on the roller seems to taken the slick surface off and apparently all is well again. I hope.))

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