

CONTOUR

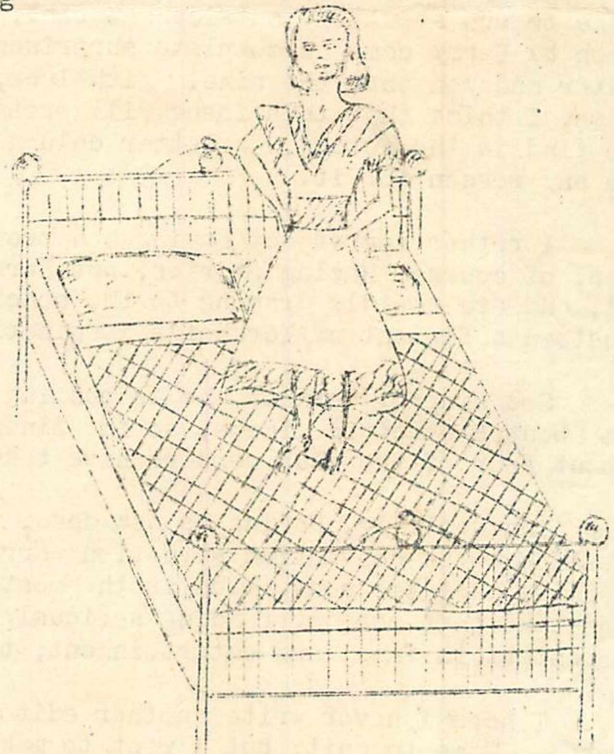
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The theory of relativity,
I might as well confess,
The very fascinating stuff,
Is proving quite a stress.

"All motion must be relative."
"The speed of light is fixed."
"Men's speeds are far too small to
Shake until thoroly mixed. count."

The book lies open by my side;
The thoughts churn in my head.
I think I'm getting nowhere fast--
I should have stood in bed!

.....Phyllis King



SPRING 1950

NUMBER ONE

CONTOUR (subtitled The Shape of Things tho this is hardly necessary for purposes of identifying this zine) is published by The Hodgepodge Press for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association and a few friends who were so foolish as to request copies. All material not otherwise identified is the editor's. Art is done by the person whose signature appears upon it, and if signed with a K, I have had to blow it up, reduce it, or some such. The editor of this is Bob Pavlat, whose mailing address is 6001 43rd Avenue, Hyattsville, Md. This is Number 1, Spring 1950, intended for the 51st FAPA mailing.

"Beardmutterings!"hemutteredinhisbeardwhenfirsttheheardofbeardmuttermutterings

One of the many reasons I have wanted to publish a fanzine is because of the chance to write editorials. I love to write editorials. Heck, in editorials one can talk about the shape of things till he (one) is blue in the face. And there are so many things to be talked about. Politics, red headed women, sports, Crutch, hydrogen bombs, Rotsler's nekkid women, Russia, education, blondes and brunettes, price support vs. the gold standard, nudes vs. nekkid women, flying saucers, neckties, the fact that _____ is rapidly going to the dogs, etc. Since I mention it, I believe that stf is largely going to the dogs, but that's far too broad a topic for an editorial.

One of the other reasons I wanted to publish a fanzine was so that I could get in the FAPA and be sure of getting such items as Wild Hair, Ah! Sweet Idiocy, Sky Hook, Horizons, Primal, Mascue, etc. (tho several of these were never seen until a couple of mailings ago.) I am now getting these, and wishing to continue, must publish something.

Conny is intended to be primarily a personal opinion effort, tho I would like to run about 1/4 outside material. The poems by Phyllis King and the cartoon by Derry came as complete surprises to me, as did the various small sketches hiter and yon thru the zine. With luck, I may wind up with a cover. In any case, I think that this issue will pretty well represent what you can expect to find in the future. A letter column will be established if there seems to be any reason for it.

I rather regret not having had previous fan publishing experience. There was, of course, Hazing Stories, but Derry and I aren't quite sure who edited it, and are rapidly drawing to the conclusion that it wasn't edited, being instead a figment of Kerkhof's imagination.

Speaking of Kerkhof, he is running this off for me. Frank has the keys to about 8 electric mimeos, so the zines can really roll. Trouble is, only about four of the club members have taken the trouble to learn how to run them.

Incidentally, Hazing is now dead, tho it is subject to revival if we ever feel that the convention situation warrants it. Derry and I are both of the opinion that the convention is the most important single expression of fandom, and take that part of fanning seriously. (The major purpose of conventions is to entertain fans, and entertainment, to us, is a serious matter.)

I hope I never write another editorial of this type. Even I am getting bored. Time to quit, but I want to make one last remark. For the first few issues Conny will probably take on a variety of aspects--colored paper, justified copy, cover, no cover, contents page/no contents page, two columns, etc. Don't let it worry you, she will eventually hit a rut and stick there. 'Twill probably be the deepest rut available, one where no effort at all is involved to stick there. After all that experimentation, she'll probably look exactly like she does today.

THE FAN CONVENTIONS?

(The following is partly copied from a letter of mine to Redd Boggs, which was inspired by his "The Hydra's head .. / professional index .." in the Bloomington News-Letter, No. 13, October, 1949. If this were SusProg 45 this would probably be called "Rejected: Dean Boggs," and if this were that same zine a couple of years earlier it would probably also be mentioned that this is being typed on my first, and at present, only cellophane stencil. A resurrected one at that!)

On the back of this page there is a little cartoon drawn by Chick Derry some six months ago. It is not a particularly "nice" cartoon, slamming, as it does, both professionals and the "Miss Science-Fiction" idea. As so many good things do, it gets part of its effect by over-emphasis. I do not think that professionals are particularly anxious to get either the conventions or the money from such conventions. Of the twenty or so authors, editors, artists and agents that I have met at various and assorted conventions, only two would be classifiable as anxious to grab the conventions. A third person I know by repute to be in the same category. One other is either misled, or is not the person he seems to be when met and talked to. All four of these professionals are Hydra members. This is not a blanket condemnation of Hydra by any means. I have nothing but the highest regard for such Hydra members as Verin, Rothman, G.O. Smith, and Jim Williams. ((All based on a late '48 membership list.)) Nor do I intend to condemn by not naming, for I'm including only people whom I know, even tho only slightly, and I know less than half of the Hydra members.

To

re-ask an old question--one I've answered in several different ways myself--what is the purpose of conventions?

Primarily, they exist to entertain the attendees. Parts of such entertainment are the fangabs, chances to meet other fans, chances to pick up original drawings, manuscripts, etc., chances to drink in convivial company, play poker, get away from the wife for a few days, etc. Not least is the chance to meet, listen to, and talk to the various professionals present.

At

least, that's my idea of conventions. David Kyle apparently thinks they, at least partly, exist for the purpose of popularizing stf. So, apparently, do many other fans--and perhaps they're right. I for one don't care if stf is ever popularized, due to a feeling best characterized by Boggs' "Craters" of the Moon. That is not a (or the) major purpose of a stf convention, however, any more than the major (or any) purpose of American Legion conventions is to popularize the American Legion. My old outfit, the 100th Division, doesn't throw conventions for the purpose of popularizing that now defunct outfit. Stf conventions are largely reunions, even tho there may not be too much of the 're-' involved.

Quoting from

Boggs in BN-L: "As long as a good show is put on, it matters little who produces and directs it." Probably a professionally (author, editor, etc.) conducted convention would be better publicized, better run, and possibly more interesting than are fan conventions. The profits from such a convention could largely go to the sponsoring group--and if they do the work, I can see no objection to that.

What I do object to--and it's about time that I got around to mentioning it--is (1) Some professionals, such as David Kyle and the others who sponsored the "Miss Science-Fiction" stunt, seem to think that fans are juvenile enough, or stupid enough, or something enough, to appreciate such stunts. From what I saw at the Convention, they aren't. (2) A professional group, which would probably hire people to get things done might be willing to hold the convention in

cont. on page 5



SINC' AH STAHTED MAKIN' MONEY THAY'R ALL FIGHTIN' OVAH LI'L ME.....

cont. from page 3

their locality year after year, and might succeed in their attempt to do this due to the good show they would put on and the usual heavy proportion of local fans. This would, of course, deny the convention--except at rare intervals or in rare cases--to any fan more than 1000 or so miles from this city. (3) There is a possibility that a professional group might want to exclude other professionals. (Of course the same things can be said about fans, but the situations vary greatly in seriousness.)

Quoting further from Boggs' article: "...the more the professionals dominate the conventions, using them to propogandize the public about science-fiction's growing popularity and appeal, the better it is for the fan field....Science-fiction may be winning new readers at a spectacular rate...but I have seen no evidence that it is winning new fans...." Redd then goes on to point out the poorness of recent fanzines, compared to prewar ones, and to state the conventions would, if properly promoted, "create fans out of casual readers." (underlining mine.)

I greatly doubt if that is an excuse for letting professionals run conventions. Fans, from what I've seen, are born, not made. They may be pushed over the edge, but not "created." It would seem--though it could well be faulty reasoning--that the fan who required the least pushing would be the best fan, at least in the long run. Our present-day convention setup would seem to attract that type fan who needed little pushing.

It may be that conventions don't attract fans. I noticed no new products from Philadelphia, Toronto, or Cincinnati following their conventions. Conventions, instead, seem to weed out the weaklings in the sponsoring city old-guard. Maybe they do bring in new club members, but apparently not hyperactive fans.

The only valid reason yet presented for the professionally produced convention is the show they might offer, and that, to me, is offset by the type of show it might be, and the danger of losing the convention to a single city.

Bill Evanstell smethat he gave upon interlineations because they were too hard to end unevenly

Boy's Life--the Boy Scout magazine--has carried the following science-fictionally associated items recently:

A book review of Conquest of Space, which it recommended, together with a plate from the book. (Think it was the "Target: Luna" plate.)

That was in the December, 1949 issue. In another issue at about the same time there was an article, "Exploring Mars," by R. S. Richardson.

In the February, 1950, issue, we find "Trail to the Stars" by Captain Burr Leyson, which covers the V-2 experiments, the WAC corporal, and possibly a couple of other recent rockets--I don't remember. In addition, the author explains the space station concept and mechanics, the usefulness of such a station (weather predictions, perfect vacuum for electronics experiments, space-travel station, etc.) and the possibility of its being not too far off.

Wonderful, how young they're breaking them in nowadays, isn't it?

My brother, age 15, won't read stf.

* * *
Whadde ya do
When yer writin is thru
But ya have 3 more lines to fillup?

* * *
Ya hem an ya haw,
Ya wish ya could draw,
But cha can't, so ya know that yer
stuck

RETURN TO SENDER

consisting of comments on the 50th FAPA mailing

THE TALISMAN: Personally commented upon. Excellent. SPACESHIP: I wonder if I could have done as well at their age? Would favor an increase in Fapa comments and legibility, no personal objection to a general circulation zine as long as there are eight or so pages of Fapa material per year. (No, I don't know what "Fapa material" is, but I don't believe that it is non-fannish fiction.) LIGHT: More interesting than the previous 3-4 issues, primarily because of "Light Flashes." Why that column interested me this time and not before, I wouldn't know. HORIZONS: Fapa, to a newcomer, seems to operate fairly well under the quarterly set-up it now uses. Annual memberships would cause the troubles you mention, as well as allowing the s-t to let things slide (tho I imagine he could in any case). The treasury would fluctuate rather severely--tho that is not bad in and of itself--and you would apparently have to change the date of change of office. The main factor against the yearly system would be that Fapa would be subject to rapid changes of character, many old members dropping out and new ones coming in at a single mailing. Slow change is always better. "Football teams are more highly predictable than baseball teams, I believe. The Washington Senators can beat the Yankees perhaps 1/4 of the time (maybe), but could the Redskins beat the Bears 1/4 of the time, even assuming they played 22 games? I doubt it. THE (UNSPEAKABLE) THING: First time I've seen this, and a pleasure it is to see a production job like that, even including the reversal of pp. 7 and 8. (I solemnly swear to never again abbreviate in context except when I don't know how to spell the word). "The Turtle Started It" quite good, other contents, outside of those dealing with your personal experiences of little interest to me, tho they might be more so if I knew more about Japanese fantasy. How can you win? Hope the "girl/boy" doing fine. PLENUM: Milt, you're partly responsible for this issues' lead article. Might have been postponed till Hazing 2 except for your article. A TALE OF THE EVANS: Your characterization was very poor this time around.

MOONSHINE: Wonder where I remember the city of the Hawkmen from? I don't believe that I was reading Flash Gordon at the time. FIN/PT: Dougherty will do. Do what? Plenty of those cover jobs he's asking for, natch. Could ask for some help myself Bob, if I had the faintest idea of when anything else would issue from this address. FAPANTHOLOGY: Compare Lewis (the hero) in "The Rumor" with Evans' character. "Cover perspective bad, about the poorest Kroll I've seen, tho still not bad. How does Miller manage to get his 'touch' into even copy work? ASTRA'S TOWER: Which brings up the question of whether or not one underlines an apostrophe. Think I will, if for no other reason than to prevent the appearance of an extra word. Now I notice that I underlined the one in "FIN/PT" and consistency calls. "The Sound" is one of the few (repeat: few) fantasy poems I've liked. MINDWARP: How did "Fap-anthology" manage to come off the press of the Rapp, tho "is warped in some way?" "I don't believe that mention of the world sticon has come up at WSA meetings more than once in the last three months. (It occurs to me now that a certain member has been absent for approximately that length of time. I wonder....) Anything gets tiring after a while. "Rothman pointed out in last (this?) mailing's "Plenum" that fans can be either fans or pros, and vice versa, depending on the time and the situation. May I suggest that a fan may also be not a fan, depending on the situation. When it comes to conventions, a "fan" is not a "fan" unless he is a member of the convention committee.

Who should decide where the next convention is to be held: a person in South Gate who won't join a convention society because he sees no chance of attending, or a character in the District of Columbia who joins in spite of seeing no possibility of attending? I do not believe that the person in South Gate has any rights whatsoever in the choosing of a convention site, having disowned his interest in science-fiction conventions (for that year) by not paying his buck. Not a buck to fandom (whatever that is) but a buck toward a successful convention (I know what that is.) This guy, however, who gives his dollar to a non-convention-sponsoring NFFF is supposed to have as much right in voting as either the person who belongs to only the convention or the person who supports both the convention and NFFF. I don't believe that NFFF has ever done much for conventions. Conventions, on the other hand, have done a hell of a lot for Neff. To get back on the subject, science-fiction conventions are primarily for THOSE FANS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN SCIENCE-FICTION CONVENTIONS. These people, I feel, and only these people, should have a vote concerning the convention site for the coming year. There are some others who have certain rights, of course: the professionals who by their mere presence help make the convention memorable certainly deserve a vote. Outside of a few ill-defined people of this class, the only way to establish that a person is interested in a convention is to see if it is monetarily worth anything to the individual. If it isn't, why should that person be privileged to help decide where someone who has demonstrated a real interest in the convention is going to go next year? The objections to the convention society holding the voting seem to be well taken, however, which leaves things at about the same point, i.e., "a third sector of fandom...preferring the present voting system, and trusting fandom's sense of fair play to see that the convention is rotated around the country," a "sense of fair play" that very nearly went afoul at the last convention. (Incidentally, merely to keep the record straight, Rog, when he was counting ballots at the Convention, called for a recount when the tally on the second ballot came out to 60 for New York, 59 for Portland. The ballot was not found on the floor, in a pocket, etc. I was leaning breathlessly over Rog's shoulder at the time (personal interest) and would have dropped a ballot on the table had I thought of it, but naturally I didn't. I'm not sure of the identity, but I believe that it was Dr. Barrett's son, Jerry, who had counted the Portland ballots, which possibly explains the error in the first count. (For those of you who are wondering, this is addressed mainly to Coswal and a statement of his in Late Night Final in the 49th mailing.))

FAN-DANGO: Seems that some of FootLooses' snipping is becoming a near compulsion. Usually like the Laney-Burbee outfit--I teethered on the Burbee Shaggie--but can't quite go for this. Like Milt, I have trouble seeing the tongue. I can't quite forget the Washington (Raymond, that is) episode. THE INSIDER: Time Trap was on Washington stands for about a week, the Gladicator lasted a couple of months. Didn't personally want the latter, didn't manage to obtain the former. Worlds Within has been on the stands about a month at this writing (3/22.) CONSTITUTION OF....: Particularly appropriate for me at this time. THE FANTASY AMATEUR: I imagine that a neofan should beware of sniping at the efforts of the five top fans? Was quite interested in the report, on the whole.

Migod!I've drawn the lines and now I can't think of a single leg good interlineation to put in here

As some of you may have noticed, fanzines are commented upon in the order listed in The Fantasy Amateur, in which they are currently listed in the order of receipt. I see no reason to change this system for the postmailings, the first of which is:

MASQUE combined with ...AND FOLLOW SLOWLY: The first Rotsler zine I've seen since Neophyte died aborning. It's a nice sensation to believe the mail-

ing is just about over, and then suddenly find something like this in your mail box. " Why the "V" on Masque's cover, Bill? Left over from the war effort? " The art, throughout Masque, is beautiful. (I don't know why I like it, but I know what I like.--And if there are any five faps who are ignorant about art, I'm one of them. But be that as it may, I'll still say I like your nudes--and otherwise--regardless of not being able to say why. (Because they're nude?) You could, of course, object to my doing so, but I imagine that the egoboo will (as Willmorth once said about some money I sent him) "be accepted in the same spirit as it was offered." " Seem to be veering, as well as wearing out the ()s. Not only that, but for a minute there I donned my hostile facade. Probably due to my _____ complex, the word you fill in the _____ being governed by your psychological school and on how often you don the same face.

Your "Suggested Steps in Galactic Colonization of New Planets." (1) "If unfriendly Military handles situation, if possible." In other words, the author assumes that (a) we intend to exploit the planet ('else why would we land?) and (b) that our Terran science is supreme ('else why chance antagonizing alien cultures?) Your point five, apportioning of land according to need is both too Capitalistic and too Socialistic to suit conservatively liberal blood. The U.S. homesteading background should offer at least a guide for solution of this problem. " Best pics: Gal opposite editorial page, end of editorial page, three cowed figures (best in issue,) Kley-type Manning's, gal in chains, babe on page because "I liked the picture", Sand Jones sketch, period. Bill, your hands and arms need improvement in many of your pictures--especially hands. " "Scorn of the Blue Tiger" strictly wonderful, "Sin" frankly lousy. "Oh, Don't Bother Getting up" is a beautiful idea. Second verse (stanza?) "Hoovey, again for judgement day, With little whispers 'Think we may Do a one-shot fanzine right this minute?'" etc. reminds me of Spear's 1945-or-so nomination for immortality of somebody's "Breathes there a fan with soul so dead that never to himself has said: 'Think I'll start another fanzine!'".

SHADES ##### OF ##### AL ##### ASHLEY

Department of corrections, explanations, additions, and possibly, apologies.

I was going to run on thru the rest of the postmailing, but left the bundle at a friends house, so I guess I won't do so. Mailing time is now drawing near anyhow. Will have comments on those zines either in the postmailed Bobolings, if I get it out, or in some fanzine next mailing.

Somehow, I missed Redd's Compromise in MINDWARP. First, how does he plan to locate "all fans" or what will be the criteria for a fan. Whoops, I see that that is defined in point three. Anyhow, I still feel that only Convention Committed members should have any voice. If NFFF wants to earn its keep, why not poll those people who join? " 25% seems like an awful lot for NFFF. I think 20% for them and 25% for next years sponsors would be more equitable. Don't believe I'll enter this discussion tho. I'm prejudiced.

No interlineation this time.

In November of 1942 the last copy of the Swisher checklist was published. I think it is about time that that project was started up again. I'm willing to do it. My fanzine files are, to put it mildly, incomplete, so I'll need a good bit of help on the years from 1942 to date. Some has already been promised, and the project is started. Many more personal letters and requests will be sent within the next six months (I'm doing MA work if you wonder why the delay.) This is a blanket request tho--will you help? What fanzines will you be willing to bring up to date from '42? Letters or FAPA (or Saps, since I have access to their mailings) comments appreciated.

MAYBE IT'LL HAVE A TITLE NEXT TIME

Dear Coswal,

I've that for quite a while about the various possible methods of filling 10-12 pages in the first issue of Conny, and an open letter to someone seemed like a good idea. There are a couple of things I wanted to say to you anyhow, and an open letter seemed to be a good place to kill two birds with one stone. I only hope that I can make this of enough general interest that Fans will not object to a series of them. I don't know who I would want to write next time, there are several possibilities. Unmade comments do seem to pile up, at least in my case.

That, of course, is the reason for this letter. Not being too much of a letter writer, I have made few or no comments to anyone on their material in the 48th and 49th mailings. In some cases that was because there was nothing to comment upon, but in most cases it was due to my own inertia. In your case, I'm afraid I'll always be finding minor things to mention.

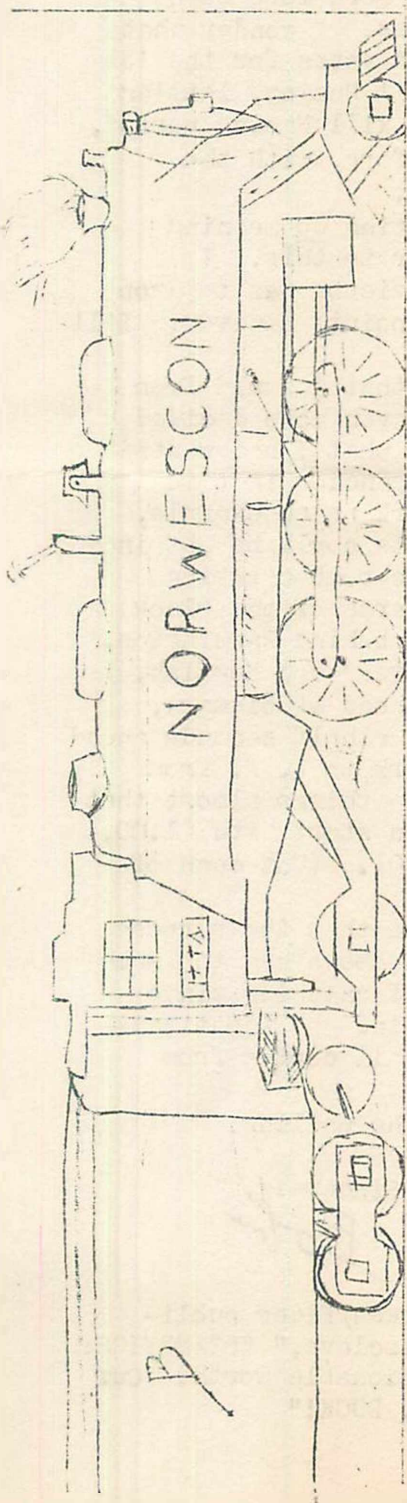
The first item that comes to mind is one from your LATE NIGHT FINAL, where you commented that Palmer had said he didn't like the idea of bringing out two bi-monthly mags, a-la-Merwin (at the time.) I IMAGINE that you have heard by now that he is bringing out another magazine, to alternate with OTHER WORLDS, and to be called IMAGINATION. It will be out either in June or in August, and will have a Bok cover, so Friedman says. I have a hunch that rap is planning yet a third mag, which will see print before '51.

Re your comment that the writing list had been hanging near ten, I wonder if it's any place near that number now. As nearly as I can find without careful checking of the latest mailing (which is impossible since practically every WSEFan on the waiting list has part of it) eight or so people are out of FAPs, which should almost clean up the waiting list.

Speaking of the latest mailing, be it here recorded that I did not get the postmailing which Donaldson complained of not getting. (Higgs?) What kind of an activity requirement is that? I'll write for it, but it shouldn't be necessary.

Continuing with comments on LATE NIGHT FINAL, I see that you doubt your ability to write. Apparently somebody was once awfully rough on your writing, as I've seen similar comments by you elsewhere. The widespread favorable reaction to your Convention ramblings should be some indication that your writing does impress others, regardless of what Burbee may say. This open letter may be another indication that some fans are interested in, and even impressed by some of your work.

Finally, we come to your review of HAZING STORIES. As noted in the editorial, Derry and I take conventions seriously--much more so than ourselves. In "Get Your Program" Derry was, of course, serious.



The only thing that was tongue in cheek was his answers to the various and assorted conventioners. As you may have noticed, almost everyone was a composite of various Philcon attendees. (Torontonians, for some reason, did not get much mention.) He gets a bang out of all these characters, and would, like me, sell his collection to go to a convention. "The Ultimate Investigation was not presented at the Convention because (1) Derry couldn't go, (2) Briggs couldn't go, (3) Pavlat got the unexpected check enabling him to go the day before he left, and hadn't planned to go till that time, and (4) the wire recorder on which we had planned to record the UI, as an emergency measure, was busted. "Regarding the Washington "Insurgents." Why do we rate that name from both you and Laney (and, I think, Rapp too)? We were objecting to only one facet of WSFA, not the whole club. Nor, we eventually discovered, were more than three or four people involved in that phase of club activities. I wonder what Derry, Briggs, myself, and maybe a few others will do if WSFA votes for the '51 convention? Nothing, probably. "I've about decided to kill Hazing, letting Thudding Blunder Stories take its place. We once decided to kill Hazing period, but then people started to tell us they'd liked it, where before, with the exception of FAPA, there had been only a dull, dead, silence.

Re: your own and others' comments on Rapp's thumbs pointing up meaning death. I don't believe that anyone is yet sure of the answer to this. I recall ^{3/10/51} somewhere that the thumbs down signal meant that the victor was to drop his weapons, i.e., let the vanquished live. Mere technical point, however. I'll ride along with the majority.

I decided, at the end of reading the fiftieth mailing, that I would from then on make marginal comments on what interested me. I am even more decided to do that now, after spending half an hour trying to recall what I had wanted to say about the INSIDER "Time" article. Such minute discrepancies in time would be usable storywise. Take long distance detonation work as an example, particularly in "push-button" warfare. Surely unusual effects could be obtained if a Washington General pushed a button which fired an atomic-bomb-carrying rocket, that rocket in the Black Hills, and that particular area of the Black Hills 2 seconds (or is that too much of a time discrepancy?) behind Washington. Or, perhaps, two seconds ahead (a la Thiotimeline.) To get very van Vogtish, a situation can be imagined where Washington is one second ahead of Bismark, and two seconds ahead of L. A. Bismark, however, is one and a half seconds ahead of L. A. To complicate things, a series reaction thru Bismark to L. A. from Washington takes three seconds. Sounds like fun maybe? Some things almost that simple have occurred in international finance, where a guy can start with \$1.00, change it into 16 different currencies, and wind up with \$1.01. (Not much of a gain? Try starting with \$1,000,000).

Finally, a comment on "identical copies." It would seem that the purpose of that provision in the constitution was to make sure all members had the same reading matter. Paper color or weight (you wouldn't think of checking zines for that, would you?) would not matter, as long as the material was identical-- errors and all. This would apparently call for printing of all copies from the same stencil (master, plates, etc.)

That seems to be all for this time Walter, see you in the mailing.

Sincerely,

Bob

AND that is all of Conny #1. Coming in future Hodgepodge Press/Elder publications are: "Why I Hate Stf," "A Passionate View of the Disclave," "PLANETICS: an analysis," and Foo knows how many other articles of questionable worth. Our motto is: "When you see the symbol of the Hodgepodge Press, DUCK!"