

CRANK

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DRIVING THEM WILD: Many years ago fans used to enjoy putting out odd-sized fanzines just because they knew these things would drive those fans who collected and bound their fanzines wild. I recall a momentary thought along those lines myself, back in 1964 when Les Gerber and I put out the last issues of MINAC on legalength (8½" x 14") paper. Now, of course, those copies are all dog-eared and crumbling because either you have to fold them or they stick out of any pile they're in and get bunged up. We didn't really use that odd size to spite collectors; I simply had a number of reams of the paper left over from a mundane mimeo job. (In fact I still do. *Sigh*)

And our present division of the publishing of CRANK wasn't designed to spite collectors, either. But it may drive a few of them wild.

Rob and I discussed this.

"You know," I pointed out, "you and I are going to be the only fans with complete sets of both the US and the British editions."

He chuckled. "That will drive a few people wild," he said, or words to that effect.

Because CRANK is the Kindly Fanzine, and we don't really want to drive our readers wild, we have come up with the following solution (or "scheme") for those among us who are Collectors:

For an annual subscription fee, we will supply you with copies of both editions of CRANK. Yes, you too can have both the cute, compact, British quarto edition and the cuddly, twilltoned, American lettersized edition of the same issues of CRANK, the Monthlier Fanzine, if you are prepared to pay the modest sum of \$10.00 (or £7.00) for a copy of the edition issued on the opposite side of the Atlantic. That's right!

Americans need pay only \$120.00 a year - Brits only £84.00 - to receive copies of the edition published overseas!

As we all know, collectors are Big Spenders - but the money they spend rarely ends up in the pockets of the creators of the objects of their lust; it goes to dealers - and this scheme is one designed to meet both the needs of genuine collectors and of ourselves, starving faneds labouring away in garret and basement, spending our hard-earned money on paper, ink, and stamps.

Who knows? If this idea catches on we may be able to achieve a full subsidy... *tw*.

THE LANGEFORD HUGO has drawn much comment from our readers, not least from those of our antipodean cousins involved in the actual ceremonies down-under. Irwin Hirsh writes of being "...able to play an interesting game of trying to get the Hugo results out of Roy Ferguson, who was in charge of the awards sub-committee. On the first day of the con we discovered that Terry Carr had missed his flight out of San Francisco and wouldn't be at the con after all. When Roy was told he started to look very worried. "Hmm," I thought, "does this mean Terry Carr has won a long-overdue award for the Best Pro Editor?" The next day I heard that Roy had discreetly approached the 'Britain in '87' table about finding someone to accept the award on Dave's behalf should he win. Since, at such a late stage, there was no need to cover for those who hadn't won a Hugo it could only mean that Dave had won the award. Great news! Dave and Terry and William Gibson's wine were fantastic and added up to quite a bit. Enough, in fact to make up for the tedium of the ceremony - if Oscar night can't be made into an interesting-in-itself ceremony, I can't see how the Hugos can be. There is obviously a boredom factor inherent in awards ceremonies that will never be overcome..."

Irwin's fellow Ozfan, Marc Ortlieb, "...loved the description of Dave Langford's reaction to his Hugo. I only wish I could have been there at SILICON to see it. Instead I was stuck up on a podium handing the thing to Malcolm Edwards. Dave should consider himself lucky that there was no way his name could have been misspelled on the slide. (Then again, prior to the convention I would never have thought it possible that the word PLESS could make it through whatever half-arsed proofreading done by the person responsible.)

We have a photograph of Justin Ackroyd, in the Ortlieb backgarden, using a Hugo to dig an unwanted plant from the garden. (It was taken during a pre-Aussiecon Committee meeting.) If Dave starts getting uppitty about his rocket, remind him that it might be the one that was used that day..."

Mike Glicksohn is concerned that I "...failed to mention who suggested the standing ovation as soon as Dave walked through the door..." Why Michael, it was me wot done it. While you were in the con hall, announcing the news to those participating in SILICON's programme, I set it up with those in the bar. Alan Bostick, meanwhile, tells me that "...the chain of communication which told you that Dave Langford had won the fanwriter Hugo didn't stop in New York. During the weekend of Aussiecon I was up north in Oakland, visiting Debbie Notkin and Tom Whitmore. We were woken by Patrick Nielsen Hayden calling with the news. (Quite likely he didn't call right away - the call came at about 9am our time, which is noon in New York.) He didn't know about any of the others; Debbie told us he said that the connection with Avedon was bad, and that he could barely understand about Langford. "It's amazing," Debbie said. "We know who won the fanwriting award and we don't know who won the novel." We didn't find out until the next day when our own source, Doug Fawt, called with the complete results....."

The *loopi*est response comes, of course, from Gary Deindorfer: "Ah, the image of you fan-greats sitting or standing around the bar *communing* with happy yells about Dave Langford winning the Hugo as Best Fanwriter, I don't know how to finish this sentence. But, ah, that is a warming feeling and makes me want to propose marriage to Judith Hanna so I too can move to Britain and join in the hip fun. Yelling, waving arms in jubilation, knocking over pints of beer. Hey, this is what's *happening*. American fans sometimes yell and wave their arms in jubilation but they don't knock over pints of beer; they knock over containers of marijuana.

So, fandom at large (and it is getting very large) had enough sense to give Dave Langford the Best Fanwriter Hugo. That is good. Langford Rules! Fannish fandom Rules! And not only does he rule, his brother Jon's group the Mekons is original and also good. I like their new song, something about getting used to being human again. Since I was human already, I can't identify with the song that well, but I like it anyway. But don't be misled. The secret to winning the Best Fanwriter Hugo is not to have a younger brother in a punk band that is actually good. The secret is writing well, whether your younger brother is an underground star or not." Thank you, Gary. --rh

AN UNBELIEVABLY CHARMING begins with a complaint about the late arrival in Britain NOTE FROM JOY HIBBERT... - as everywhere - of the PONG Poll Ballots. What joy did not receive - none of CRANK's British readers did - was the mailing wrapper which accompanied the American copies of CRANK #1, on which it was explained that the deadline for receiving the Ballots had been pushed back yet again to accomodate my extreme tardiness in getting them out. But Joy understands: "No doubt you had your reasons, such as wanting to make sure only the right people voted. Presumably this was also your reason for refusing my kind offer to distribute them with BISCUIT? Never know who they might go to. Of course, you said some crap about me not sending you a fanzine (what I'd said was that despite all the fanzines she'd gotten, on request, from me, Joy had never deigned to send me a copy - any copy - of hers), but it never occurred to me that you'd be interested in an accessible genzine with no intercontinental bitching or anything faannish like that."

Hard to believe that any fanzine published by Joy could so signally fail to reflect her own personality but, as I say, I've not seen a copy of BISCUIT ((me neither - the reason Joy's not on CRANK's UK mailing list -rh.)) and it appears I'm destined never to do so, since Joy's sense of fannish ethics will not allow it. Pity. -tw.

TRADE SECRETS Having decided some time ago that this time around I would run one of Ted's pieces on the front-page and do an appropriate illustration to go with it I pored over his contributions with particular attention when they arrived and decided that the previous piece was the one that most lent itself to a funny illo. Now unless you're in the habit of starting a fanzine on page three - probably a conditioned response for the *SUN* readers among you - you will already have noticed that this is not what actually appears on the front of this issue. The original illustration showed a terrified Ted White fleeing from an enormous Joy Hibbert and when drawing it I was chuckling all the while. Avedon, however, didn't like it and pointed out that even leaving aside the questionable nature of fat-jokes it was giving her far more prominence than she deserved. This was true, but more to the point was that my own personal sense of fannish ethics wouldn't have allowed me not to send a copy of the issue - and that's something I have no intention of doing. So another piece was needed for the prime spot.

Ted's DRIVING THEM WILD is one of the slighter pieces he sent this time but it seemed to me that I might be able to use it as an excuse for doing a 'collaboration' with

Atom since I'd spotted a caricature by him of Ted in Avedon's art-file and reckoned I could do something with it. What I did do with it was to drop dollar signs into the eyes on a xeroxed reduction of the original and to paste it down on a xerox of a strip of letratone (why waste expensive letratone when a xerox works as well). All that was then needed was to paste down an accompanying picture of me - another xerox reduction, this time with pound signs dropped into the eyes - and the illo was complete. Total production time around a half-hour and an interesting little experiment.

I only mention all this because I'm sometimes asked how a particular effect is achieved, or how to speed up production, but that illo has one last little 'secret' that might amuse you. The sharp-eyed - those with long memories at any rate - will already have spotted that the picture of me is a self-portrait from the cover of EPSILON 9 (1981) but how many of you noticed that this in turn was taken from page 4 of STARFAN 1 (1980)? Comparative analysis of these versions of my 'official' self-portrait will provide - apart from endless hours of fun rummaging through your fanzine collections - a graphic record of the ever-changing Hansen hair-line.

Three uses of the same picture? That's not too many. -rh.

CRANKING IT OUT: It's starting to look like our bi-continental publishing plan is an Idea Whose Time Has Come - and not just for us. But, wait a minute: how about giving credit where it's due?

Spring, 1982, Disclave at the Marriott Twin Bridges: Moshe Feder is throwing an ice-cream party in his room. On the balcony outside his room Avedon and I are chatting. We are talking about putting out our respective fanzines, a common topic.

"You know what kills me, Ted? Avedon is saying. "It's not the xeroxing. I can get that done for free. It's the bloody postage! And not just the postage - it's the bloody overseas postage! I mean, you have a choice: You can put your fanzines on a boat for about what it costs to mail them first-class in this country, and they'll get there sometime next year; or..." and here she begins waving her arms energetically, "you can spend a fortune on each copy and send them airmail!"

I agree with her, and throw in a few supplementary details. "we send PONG 'airmail printed-matter' " I say. "We have to with a frequent zine like that."

"You know what we ought to do?" Avedon says. "We ought to just send our stencils over there. Let somebody local, like Rob, run them off and distribute the copies. It'd be fast and a lot cheaper."

But then we start thinking up reasons why it won't work - like the difference in paper sizes, the imposition on the putative British publisher, the question of sending already-used run-off stencils or fresh ones, etc. At some point we are joined by Dan Steffan and maybe Terry Hughes. We talk about the idea some more but resolve nothing. It sounds like more work than anyone wants to pursue. Typical fan-nattering.

But that's where I first heard the idea broached of separate editions - British and American - of the same fanzine, each for domestic consumption. What we hadn't considered at that point was the question of joint editorship, the reciprocity between editors in each country. That was Rob's contribution - and once he'd suggested it, I saw how it resolved several related problems, like the motivation of the poor sod who has to run off the used stencils at the other end. Thus I was primed for his suggestion that we co-edit CRANK; Avedon had laid all the groundwork three years earlier,

But we are not alone. CRANK will soon no longer be unique. Other transcontinental fanzines are being mooted

FUCK THE TORIES is the title selected by the troica of editors on three continents who hope to have their first issue out by the turn of the year. I spoke with the American editor, who turned out - to my vast surprise and dawning delight - to be Terry Hughes, as we collated CRANK #2.

"How did this come about, Terry?" I asked. What I was afraid to come right out and ask him was how this would affect our co-publishing relationship on CRANK. Terry is CRANK's right-hand US co-publisher, you know. Without Terry, no American would be able to read this. I was pleased with and proud of my role in Terry's ongoing degafiation, but sudden fear gripped my gut as I wondered what would happen to Terry once he fully degafiated. Would he remember those who'd helped him on the way up? And more important, would he still help me? Would he still have the time,

"Well," Terry told me, "you know how Leigh Edmonds, Joseph, and I did that insurgent issue of the Aussiecon newsheet? I guess you could call that a trial balloon. We'd been talking about doing a fanzine together, and..."

"Did the advent of CRANK have anything to do with it?" I asked.

"Well, Judith said you and Rob were planning something, and you'd mentioned it to me, but you see, we thought you were planning something completely different.... something that didn't involve running off each other's stencils."

Terry says that the editorship of FTT will rotate, but he's the first editor, and already has several contributions on hand for the first issue. "But FTT will be more of a genzine, not small and frequent like CRANK," Terry said.

And a note from Leigh Edmonds mentions being "...on the way to posting off the Australian contributions to the first issue of FUCK THE TORIES 'The fanzine for right-thinking trufans of the left,' which Terry Hughes is supposed to be editing at this very moment and which is, after all, the result of yours and Rob Hansen's fertile imaginations."

Leigh adds: "One thing that Aussiecon II did was confirm me in my feelings that Australian fandom is far too provincial and that, for example, RATAPLAN would have been a much better fanzine could I have published it from someplace like San Francisco. So in the future Valma and I will be much more international in our fanac. See you in Britain in '87. Splitting my fannish psyche into THE NOTIONAL on one hand and FUCK THE TORIES on the other means that I can still do the things that need to be done to encourage local fandom but I don't have to be concerned about being esoterically fannish when I want to be." THE NOTIONAL is a superior newszine and we look forward to FTT. Ghod knows the 'right-thinking trufans of the left' everywhere need a good genzine. -tw.

LIFE WITH THE LEFTIES, PART 1: "Ms Carol has as yet failed to construct a coherent Marxist analysis of the clash between UK and US fandom", said Joseph Nicholas, at the party thrown by Malcolm Edwards and Chris Atkinson to celebrate Britain winning the 1987 Worldcon. Avedon was speechless. She had indeed failed to construct such an analysis - the very first thing anyone arriving on these shores should do, after all - and she hung her head, promising to do better in future. Having thus seen to Avedon the editor of Pimlico CND's newsletter, GROUND ZERO NEWS, then turned and discussed that magazine's prospects with his wife, Judith Hanna.

"No dear," said Ms Hanna, patting him on the head, "I don't think there's any chance of GROUND ZERO NEWS winning the Nova Award."

Later that month, on Saturday 26th October, Joe and Judith took part in this year's big CND march - and that very evening Avedon and I attended a small dinner party at Sherry Francis' spacious Finsbury Park abode that was billed as THE SOUTHERN GIRLS' BURRITO FIESTA. After we had all feasted on the excellent Tex-Mex cuisine of Sherry's native Texas it wasn't too surprising that the conversation turned to politics. Mike Dickinson declared himself an anarchist ("...though formerly an anarcho-syndicalist", he was careful to point out) while Sherry admitted to being a Marxist. Daunted by such company and doubtless still shaken by Joseph's earlier criticism, Avedon followed Roz in identifying herself as a mere radical. Jackie Gresham meanwhile, totally intimidated by these revelations, claimed to be "apolitical".

"You don't mean...?"

"Yes...I'm a Socialist."

She hung her head

The wimpy liberals in the group kept our silence. I was particularly quiet as I brooded over the reasons why I couldn't add my own voice to this revelatory session. After all, it's a terrible thing to have to admit that you too have as yet failed to construct a coherent Marxist analysis of the clash between UK and US fandom. -rñ.

FROM THE PRO UNDERGROUND comes a scurrilous little piece, circulated by xerox copy through New York's editorial offices, the title of which is 'Money For Nothing - or The Editor's Lament'.

Intended to be sung (or hummed along, or sub-vocalised, or something like that) to the tune of Dire Straits' 'Money For Nothing', it offers stanzas like these:

*Now look at them writers that's the way you do it
Write your stories on your home p.c.
That ain't working that's the way you do it
Money for nothing and books for free
Now that ain't working that's the way you do it
Lemme tell you those guys ain't dumb
Maybe get a blister on your typing finger
Maybe get a blister on your bum.*

And there's (plaintive voice in background):

*I want my, I want my, I want my
Own p.c.!*

Plus the refrain:

*We gotta buy them paperback novels
Hardcover reprints, anthologies
We gotta jigger them p&l statements
We gotta figure them royalties*

But here's my favourite verse:

*See the little fascist with the green bush jacket
You can hear him everywhere
That little fascist has a five-book contract
That little fascist is a millionaire.*

It was at SEACON '79, in the SFMA suite, that he told me he was a millionaire. I think it was in the same monologue that he told me he had one hundred men - former

soldiers, once under his command - who would kill for him. "They'd kill for me, Ted," is about the way he put it. Then he went off and punched out Charles Platt at another, more exclusive, party. -td.

MY ILLNESS & NOVACON 15 both started on Friday 1st November and it was soon clear that each would have an effect on the other. Quite what the illness was I never did find out but its nature unfolded as the convention itself did.

NOVACON was held in Coventry's De Vere Hotel, which was smaller than I remembered it being in 1975 and 1977, and a lot further from the train station. Could the illness be affecting my perceptions, I mused, particularly as the place evoked so little nostalgia - a surprise for the hotel that hosted the first convention I ever attended. My suspicions were further aroused when I 'saw' Dave Bischoff and Charles Sheffield at the con, but they were confirmed when I stumbled into the fan room and imagined it to be bursting at the seams with more people than were to be found in the rest of the hotel.

"This will never do", I told fan programme supremo Tony Berry as we were carried to and fro by the seething crowd (and who wouldn't seeth when it took so long to get a pint?). "There's no way you can hold any programme items in here." Berry - who will one day grow up to be John Jarrold - agreed.

"Too true, boss", he said, and with one mighty bound he had the fan programming transferred to a suite on the same floor but far enough from the bar to keep the beer-swilling hordes away. Unfortunately it was also far enough removed to keep most of the audience away, which was a shame as Berry was the committee member who most had his act together and the fan programme was the only part of the convention that really went as originally planned.

Rob Jackson was hovering around the fan-bar and selling copies of THE TRANSATLANTIC HEARING-AID, the chapters of EGoh Langford's now completed report gathered together in a single edition for the first time. Rob has done a nice job and it's a handsome volume, but I have my reservations about the cover. Jim Barker has caricatured Langford many times before so it's a shame he should have produced such a poor likeness this time, and particularly on this of all Dave's works. Ah well.

Clearly it was time to start the evening's drinking, a long and serious session punctuated only by the official opening ceremony. This was a lacklustre affair save for the bizarre little film that opened it - all about a man doing strange things in a lift - which would have been totally unmemorable had it not been for the sight of Chuck Harris and Pro Goh James White greeting each other heartily on meeting for the first time in decades. Just the sort of thing to warm the time-binding cockles of a fanhistorian's heart - and not a zap-gun in sight!

As the evening wore on it seemed wise to crash out early in order to give my body a chance to fight back against the encroaching virus. Wise, yes, but totally ineffectual. By the time I woke the virus, having established a beachhead in my skull and invaded my nose, had opened a second front in my gut and I was all too aware of the battle being waged along the length of my intestinal tract. This last had its usual consequences and I got to read a lot of fanzines during the course of the day, many of which will be reviewed in the next CRANK (you didn't really think we could keep up this pace of relentless anecdotalism for more than three issues, didja?), wondering all the while if the little bugger had any plans to march into the Sudetenland.

Up and about, though feeling rough, I wandered into the bookroom where Hazel Langford sat behind a table selling husband Dave's books in a vain attempt to help

finance major repairs to their crumbling manse. She was doing a brisk trade in copies of THE TRANSATLANTIC HEARING-AID and of THE LEAKY ESTABLISHMENT (which you should rush out and buy immediately), but was less successful at flogging copies of the ubiquitous WAR IN 2030, THE SPACE EATER, and of other parts of the Langford opus with titles too improbable to be disbelieved.

Later Arthur Thomson who, as exclusively revealed in the last issue of CRANK, was attending his first con in 20 years, began haranguing me about being described in that selfsame issue as 'diminutive'.

"How do you know?" he protested. "You've never seen me without my pants! And anyway, it's not the length that counts but the technique...or so I'm told."

"Yeah" said Greg Pickersgill, "you're never gonna get a part in the Tripods!"

After sending Arthur away screaming in the wake of a series of truly dreadful puns on the word 'thai' (of which I'm now suitably ashamed) I jotted this down for the benefit of Chuck Harris, who guffawed loudly. Chuck went to pocket the slip of paper this was written on but I knew his game and forestalled him by writing 'All above c.1985 for CRANK #3 NOVACON report' on the bottom. You see, one of the consequences of Chuck's deafness is that he gets all manner of amusing snippets scrawled on bits of paper for him during the course of a convention. On getting home all he has to do is copy them all out, string them together with a few choice ifs, buts and ands, and he has one of those famously funny Harris pieces that sparkle with wit and inventiveness and make him the envy of those of us who spend hours staring at a sheet of paper before being able to squeeze out the feeblest of bon mots. If only we all had it so easy!

By the evening the virus had won most of its battles and I felt as if I'd been kicked in the stomach by a mule. I wandered around feverishly for some hours, the ghost at the party, until even the convention-instinct was conquered and bed was all that remained.

Sunday passed in a blur, and only a few hallucinatory fragments remain: Langford's speech, which was long and funny and already bagged for publication by John Jarrold before the convention began; Brian Burgess getting trapped in a lift; hearing a rumour that a person or persons unknown had put in £10 worth of COFF votes for Avedon, fearing that agents of that person in Puerto Rico were responsible, and then discovering that the votes had been cast not for Avedon but for Joy Hibbert.

Me being short on holidays we didn't stay Sunday evening and so missed both Monday and the Nova Awards ceremony, though as it turns out I had to take Monday off anyway as I was still ill. Nonetheless we later learned that PREVERT got the award for best British fanzine, Abi Frost for best British fanwriter (the award itself being presented to her at the One Tun later that week), and the fanartist award by Ros Calverly. This last worried me since I've never seen anything by her and began to wonder if I was as plugged into British fandom as I thought I was. Surprisingly COFF was won by con chairman Phill Probert rather than by the infinitely more deserving runner-up and the result was quite clearly a last-minute fix by other members of the committee and/or other members of the Brum group. I don't agree with this. While NOVACON 15 was a pretty poor convention (though I managed to enjoy myself because of the good friends there and despite my virus) Probert has hardly been as consistent a thorn in the flesh of so many people over the last year as the runner-up was. Let's do it properly next time, eh?

So that was NOVACON 15, not a great con but I had a good time, while this has been CRANK #3. See you next month.

-rh.

U.S. edition QWERTYUIOPress

(stencils received Nov. 22, for reasons described above....)