

# HOBBLEIN

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Edited and published monthly by Greg Benford (Boyd House, Norman, Oklahoma) and Ted White (107 Christopher St., New York 14, N.Y.); available from White for 25¢, comment, trade, or contribution. Mimeographed; 24 pages each.

After more than a six-months' lapse, "The Monthly Fanzine" once more has appeared on the scene. There is a definite contrast between the two issues at hand, and Ted White says there'll be even more changes evident in coming issues; Ted has quietly decided that this year there will be A New Ted White, and naturally, this means A New VOID too.

Ted may coggle a bit at the implication of that last sentence that VOID is a White fanzine and Benford is only along for the ride, but I think it's about time that even VOID's coeditors faced the situation. It may not have been true, despite appearances, that Benford had little to do with VOID during 1959--ap-



parently Greg was pretty active behind the scenes, even if the only direct evidence in the pages of VOID was a 1½-page editorial every issue and a few comments in the lettercolumn--but these two issues show White definitely taking the helm firmly in his teeth, full speed ahead and damn the metaphors, and Greg's own editorials present evidence that he's about as much an onlooker as the rest of us.

In #19, for instance, Greg announces that not only has he sold his fanzine collection, but he's also sold his stf collection for one dollar cash and a collection of The Scientific American. And if this isn't enough to convince anyone that he is doing a good job of cutting all permanent ties with fandom, there is also his admission in #20 that when White dropped VOID last June Benford had considered the zine definitely folded and didn't think he would ever publish a fanzine again. The conclusion is obvious and inescapable: as Ted White goes, so goes VOID.

And frankly, I don't see why White and Benford deny it, nor why any of the readers consider it a Bad Thing: the present VOID is a damnsight better than it was under Benford alone. White and Benford have both stated that their tastes and editorial policies coincide closely, so materialwise the current VOID isn't much different than it would be with just Benford handling it, and certainly no one could deny that White turns out a far better-looking finished product from the material than Benford ever could. It may be true that Greg writes better editorials than Ted does (I think so myself), but the White-dominated VOID still has Benford's column--so why gripe?

The nineteenth issue of this sterling fanzine was mostly put together last July, and parts of it suffer for this reason--particularly the lettercolumn. VOID's editors made the zine a monthly with the idea specifically in mind of getting a topical lettercolumn; it's ironic to note, in this July 1959 issue which was published in March 1960, how successful these intentions were. The lettercol in #19 would have been excellent last July--but Not This August, nor even this March; it's merely good, appearing this late.

Benford's editorials in both #19 and #20 are quite enjoyable --and particularly so to me, because it seems to me that Benford these days is writing very much like I manage to do sometimes. Now, I guess I'd better explain right here that I don't think he's imitating me--more likely, he just likes the same kind of fannish writing that I do, and therefore affects that style himself. Greg has even taken up Randy Brown as a suitable subject for funny chitterchatter--a year ago, when Brown was in San Francisco for awhile, I was planning a series of pieces about him myself. (I gave it up, though, when a series of Brown's inadequacies-in-action affected me in a way that made me lose any creative sense of humor I had regarding him.) I like this stuff of Greg's, and hope he continues.

Ted's editorial in #19 is mostly concerned with changes projected or already in effect with VOID, but the part I liked best was where he explained that his feud with Guy Terwilliger was over, and ended up saying, "Bigolly, who do you suppose I'll make up with tomorrow? Stay tuned, gang!" I like it when people have a sense of humor about their feuds! (Bjo and I had a ball insulting each other this past New Year's as midnight signalled the end of the TAFF campaign.)



The material in #19 is more varied and more meaty than that in #20--Harry Warner writing interestingly about Circus Fandom, Andre Norton on The Care and Raising of Anthologies, some reprinted stuff of mine, a brief article by Bloch, and White himself writing an Open Letter to Robert W. Lowndes--and the artwork is reproduced a bit better--using Gestofax for all of it, which is slightly (but only slightly) better than White's own stencilling--but I must confess that #20 impressed me as a better issue; I hope I'll be able to explain why as we go along here.

Not much to say about #19's material, actually. There's nothing commentworthy about Warner having done an interesting article, and I don't have anything else to say about the piece. Andre Norton was interesting, though she didn't say much of anything new, and that's my only comment on that piece. My own stuff (editorials from the boarding-house scandal-sheet I edited while at the U. of California) amazed me when I reread it, because the style I used almost throughout was considerably more imitative of Burbee than I remembered ever having done--but on sober consideration that really shouldn't be so surprising, because these were one-page editorials turned out frequently, just like Burb's Shaggy editorials of old, and that chitterchattering, anecdotal style is ideally suited to the task of writing to fill a given amount of space. But I really shouldn't talk too much about my own writing, so that'll be all the commentary on that bit of material. Bloch seemed unnecessarily disjointed and pointless, making his piece rather weak, and that's my only comment there. And White's argument with Lowndes was nowhere near as comment-provoking as most heated White writing is, simply because its faults were repetition of statements that most everybody has been making for years (so I don't feel like arguing with them and see no need to comment much either) and White's usual foible of presenting so much good evidence for his side of the matter that he seems to overwhelm himself with the force of his own dialectic and ends up jumping to conclusions which don't necessarily follow, and couching them in unnecessarily-strong terms (and when Ted goes off on a flyer like that it's better to ignore it and let him see his own errors in a few months than to force him to defend his conclusions and thereby maybe have him convince himself completely and lastingly).

Now as to VOID #20... I think this issue is the better of the two for the simple reason that it's more informal. Ted is capable of producing fanzines that seem so well-thought-out-in-advance that though they are paragons of layout and reproduction they also seem to have smothered the spark of spontaneity and informality which is so enjoyable, and possibly necessary, in a fannish monthly. But Ted has apparently resolved to take things (even insults, sometimes) less seriously this year, and this issue of VOID--which Ted says contains some evidence of the direction he wants it to take in the future--reflects this.

The cover is a nice Gestofaxed drawing by Atom, but all the interior illos are stencilled by Ted himself. I really prefer it this way, because Ted is a master craftsman at stencilling illos, and Gestofaxed drawings always make a fanzine look like the product of such a dedicated editor...if you follow me. The air of informality is heightened by the several Lil Peepul cartoons by



Lee Hoffman--why, in places this issue actually looked like the fondly-remembered QUANDRY! And, to complete the picture, almost all of the material is editorially-written.

Ted has told me that he had more fun putting together this issue of VOID than he's had in fanpublishing for years, and although there'll probably be wags who'll remark that that's just because in his Detention report he managed to insult more people than he's ever done before, I think it's because Ted let himself get more informal than he's been in a subzine for years. And I think it paid off, too: this issue reads like it was fun to produce.

If I had more room left I might launch into a diatribe on the subject of how informality and spontaneity can be a double-edged sword in fanpublishing. Sometimes it causes neofannish oneshots, sometimes it mars potentially good issues like the former MEUH and more recently some issues of SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES--and sometimes it produces a QUANDRY or a GRUE or a VOID such as is beginning to shape up now. It all boils down to the fact that informality, like any other attribute, style, or attitude of fanpublishing or fanwriting, needs talent to manage it well. And VOID, with Ted White as editor-publisher and Greg Benford in the position which is effectively Contributing Editor, has all the talent it needs.

RATING for the two issues: 8.

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Well, I could have sworn when I typed the copy for the above that I'd run out of room, but I see I still have a few lines, so I think I'll use them to acknowledge a few recently-received fanzines which I wanted to review but didn't get to.

There was the second issue of Andy Main's BHISHI'LLAH! (I'm beginning to agree with Jim Caughran's observation that Andy will prove to be the Best New Fan of 1960), and George Jennings' NOMAD #3 (the reappearance of which gladdened my heart, and I hope you manage to stick to that every-three-weeks schedule for more than two issues this time, George), the 4th issue of the Dietzes' OM-PAZINE, PEALS (which prompts me to remark that Andy Reiss is getting to be a hell of a good cartoonist, and also that the Dietzes should fold the always-behind-the-times newszine GROUND ZERO and do a fine generalzine along the lines of PEALS), the second NEW FRONTIERS from Norm Metcalf (this thing got off to a good start and is improving rapidly--anyone for a photo-offset zine in the Top Ten?), TRIODE #17 from Eric Benteliffe and Terry Jeeves, and APORRHETA #15 from Sandy Sanderson (these last two zines' being back on schedule, plus the announcement from Ashworth that he'll be issuing ROT in a subzine format probably a la the old BEM, has me once again thinking what a Good Thing TAFF is--a fan gets nominated and all of a sudden his fanac quotient goes up both productionwise and qualitywise, usually), and quite a few others, too, all appreciated. Keep sending 'em, eh?

And in case anybody is wondering why I devoted so much space to reviewing VOID when I had so many other zines I also wanted to review...well, apart from the fact that I consider the reappearance of VOID a happy occasion in the fanzine field and expect great things of it soon, it's also because I just couldn't resist giving the zine a review in the Ted White manner, sort of...

--Terry Carr