

P O O K A

JANUARY

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POOKA

#1

DEC, 1955

OMPA

6

Published by

Don Ford
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This is NOT a subscription fanzine, nor a tradezine. Primarily it is published for the 45 members of OMPA, but I decided I might as well send it out to a few other people I know, who perhaps will find something of interest in it.

So, for those who do not belong to OMPA (Off Trail Magazine Pub. Assoc.) here's something that affects you: in order to get issue #2 of this rag you'll have to mail me a Post Card with your name and address on it. I'll file those away for the next mailing list. Thus, if you're not interested, do nothing and POOKA will darken your mail box no more. If you are interested in getting #2, you will have to get sufficiently interested to send me a Post Card. Note: this means Post Card; not a letter.

OMPA has at the moment two recruiting agents traveling about the U.S. signing up unsuspecting fans as members. While Ken softly strokes his luxuriant beard and fixes a hypnotic eye at his prospects, Pamela approaches from the side and swiftly and painlessly extracts the \$1.00 entry fee with a long sweeping, clutching grab of her dainty right hand. This dexterity is offset by the naive, wide-eyed look of innocence on her face; which a con man would give anything to achieve. Against such a smoothly operating team, 2 members of the CINCINNATI FANTASY GROUP quickly fell prey.

While fan publishing is not new to me, this entry into an APA is. I'm just a bit uncertain as to what to put in the mag that will interest the majority; but after thinking it over I've decided to more or less be myself & the heck with the readers. As long as I'm paying for the paper, etc. might as well have the attitude that seems to be successful with the Pro mags.

Due to the CLEVENTION, and TAFF nominations, I've been a bit rushed for the past 6-8 weeks. Ken & Pamela's visit added to the confusion. If I had it to do all over, I'd still do the same things. Looks like I'm going to be rushed all my life. For this reason POOKA #1 may read a bit skimpy to you.

While I've not been working too long at POOKA, I have been mulling over a number of ideas about it for a long range basis. 4 issues a year should leave me with enough time to make each issue fairly good, if I get on the ball. You won't see any fiction in POOKA, unless it is of a satirical nature or in a humorous vein. I've been reading fan mags for 20 years, now, and I do have some definite likes and dislikes.

One type of article that is interesting and tends to be worth reading again, a year after it is printed, is one on some phase of collecting. How many of you have ever gone back to a fan mag 6-12 months old and tried to read it over? Doesn't seem to have much, does it? Yet, an article on collecting almost always holds up for 5-10 years.

Over the past couple of years I've bought up a lot of old fan mags. There'll be evenings when I'll read nothing but old fan mags...catching up on something I missed getting back in WWII. I read VOM, solid, for 2 nights. Quite a mess of crud, today. Yet, when they came out they were really interesting and the #1 mag. Same thing goes for a lot of Tucker's early LE ZOMBIE's. However, every once in awhile something stood out in each mag. I ran into. Got a big kick out of Tucker describing his first meeting with Doc Barrett back around 1943-44 and his description of the event.

Something else I want to try in POOKA is photo work. Shots of the fans seem to be universally interesting. I can run through some old fan mags, here, and see pics of Tucker 15 years ago,

E. E. Evans, E. E. Smith, Frankie Robinson, etc etc. There, again, it's those particular issues that stand out after the immediacy of the mag has worn off.

All of which is leading up to the old pitch of: 'Stick with me, boys, ...you ain't seen nothin' yet.' Sort of a Ray Palmer editorial slant. This time, though, I hope to set a better record.

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It has always been my contention that as long as one keeps his hobby on the level of fun he can sustain a certain steady output of work over the years almost indefinitely. When fans get ambitious and announce that they're going to come out monthly, or weekly, I sit back and wait. It isn't too long before they're so far behind schedule that the next step is in folding all together, which they do.

One magazine that I've always admired is FANTASY-TIMES. Twice a month it comes out. Not just 1 or 2 months, then 'Kaput'; but year after year! I told Taurasi that I was constantly amazed at his capacity for work. When we met for the first time (Philly 1953) he told me that his wife worked just as hard as he did; and that without her help, F-T would not be possible. Of course, Ray Van Houten works just as hard, too. The award given to FANTASY-TIMES at the CLEVENTION was well earned and long over due.

"I shall always think of America as the land of squealing tires."
Ken Bulmer

BRITISH EXPORTS

England seems to be able to export such nice ambassadors to U.S. fan world. So far, I've been very lucky in managing to meet all of them. First across was Ted Carnell, who came to the CLEVENTION in 1949. 2nd was Walt Willis at the CHICON II in 1952. 3rd was Arthur Clarke at 2 successive MIDWESTCONS. 4th was Bert Campbell at the PHILCON II in 1953. 5th & 6th are currently Ken and Pamela Bulmer to the CLEVENTION, 1955.

Meeting anyone at a convention can be a hectic thing. Often first impressions can be misleading; but Ted Carnell seemed to strike everyone just right at the CLEVENTION. The best part was

the week-end after the CINVENTION when we went up to Indian Lake at Doc Barrett's house and held a small con, there. Ted was back from Chicago, then, and we had about 12-15 people who could sit around in a most relaxed fashion and sort of all join a conversation, together. It was there that we really got to know Ted and like him very much. We did the same on a smaller scale at the CINVENTION, but not as much due to the press of con business. We all liked that informality so well that the MIDWESTCONS were born out of that particular week-end.

Walt Willis seemed completely fagged out at Chicago. He had a sort of dazed look in his eyes and I often wondered if he didn't feel like it was all a dream. We didn't see too much of Walt; But I actually didn't know him too well, then, and put it down as merely him not having enough time to see everyone & thus wanted to be more with his friends. I suspect that long bus ride & the breakdowns that each had, contributed much to that tired look about him.

Arthur Clarke was quite a hit at the MIDWESTCONS. At a smaller con, one gets to know the others better and Arthur is very much of an extrovert. Quite a wit on top of that, he kept us laughing all the time with his jokes & snappy repartee. I can't say that I got to know him too well...not like Ted or the Bulmers, but he did impress me as being an individual very much on the ball & one who has a zest for living a full life. He's one person I'd like to know better.

Bert Campbell had that "Willis" look about him...the fagged out look, I mean. He was around at Philadelphia & I saw him off and on during my many room hoppings, but he never seemed to have too much to say and seemed to be very much on the shy or quiet side. To those who know him well, this may give a laugh; however, that's my impression of him.

The Bulmer's were the ones with whom I really got to know rather well during their stay in the U.S.; particularly since they spent a few days in Sharonville prior to the CLEVENTION.

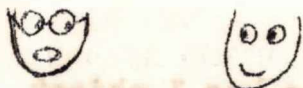
They'd been spending some time in New York and when we learned of their decision to spend the week in Sharonville, we didn't make any elaborate plans for their entertainment, feeling that a simple and unhurried life might appeal to them after the frantic rat race of the big city. I knew that the various clubs had planned special meetings and programs for them, and that various people wanted to take them out to Dinner, etc, so, I reasoned, a change of pace would be welcome.



NOTHING LIKE LIFE IN A
SMALL TOWN, HUH, KEN?

CONVENTION TYPES

PRO HUCKSTER



OF COURSE, MR. HAMLING,
I DON'T READ YOUR
MAGAZINE.

These are the publishers & editors of the various pro mags. The publishers are quite friendly & end up donating a great deal to the auctions. The Editors, of course, plump for THEIR mags all the time; but are nice to talk to; unless they've rejected your story.

FAN HUCKSTER



YOU HEARD ME,
50¢ EACH FOR FATE

This is the guy who comes to the con to have it pay his expenses for the year. He brings piles of old mags & books, hoping to foist them off on the young and eager fan who is attending his first con. This type spends every free moment in the display room working on a sales pitch. During the times the room is closed (during con sessions) he mopes around like a lost soul.

favorite author ready to go to the bar for a drink & private conversation, this guy comes up & wants you to go look at his Egyptian edition of Captain Future. How these types ever enjoy a convention is beyond me. Maybe they get their jollies in selling science-fiction.

Invariably they always have something super-special in their room. This, they've been saving just for YOU! About the time you've got your

FAN MAG EDS



SO THAT'S WHAT COREY
DID WITH HIS BUS FARE
MONEY.

This numerous & hardy breed spends their con moments with each other. Methods of reproduction; quality of paper; difficulties of securing good art work, articles & stories & reviews; distribution, etc are discussed in a special jargon. One important thing to do, here, is always carry a dozen copies of your latest effort under your arm. This is handy in badgering fans for subs & articles.

BROWN NOSERS

This fan is on hand to supply cigarettes, matches, drinks, and run the various errands that BNF's or PRO's may desire. They live for that moment of receiving a kind word or gesture. Their leech like qualities are superb.

BEANIE CROWD



Sel-explanatory. Leader used to be Harlan Ellison; but he's growing old, now. Looks like Mark Schulzinger will pick up the torch.

HARL AND ME CAME
A LONG WAY

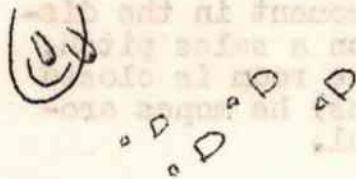
CON POL



This is the type who has 1 object in mind...get the con for his city next year. For free drinks, a glad hand, and the chance to feel like a BNF, stick with him & his mob for a few days before the voting. Don't say yes too soon, though. Appear to be making up your mind.

THEN ALL WE GOTTA DO
IS GET THE VOTE FROM...

CON WOLF



This guy goes to the con for the women. Programs, displays, fan mag, mean nothing to him. His con life is devoted to getting next to sweet young things & dropping names as fast as he can, in order to impress her. Once she goes to his room to look at his etchings, she's a dead pigeon.

1st CON ATTENDEE

This type can usually be detected by the wide-eyed stare & the open mouth. Usually in their teens, they're soon

snapped up by 7th Fandom, given a beanie & water pistol, & end up their 3rd day by getting 1/2 crocked on their first taste of beer. The sight of authors, editors, and BNF's is too much for them to take in one dose. That look of awe on their faces when they're introduced to a big name Pro like Lou Tabakow or Frankie Robinson is something for the fan camera addicts to catch on film.

* * *

Cover symbolizes that all great fans are born on January 14th.... Ken Bulmer, Don Ford, Lou Tabakow. Who else?

Artwork in this issue is by Mark Schulzinger.

