

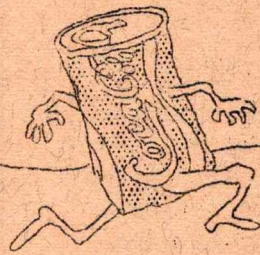
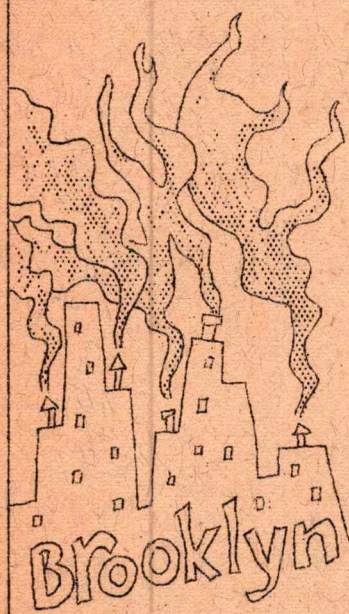
POTLATCH

° GALA FIRST ISSUE °

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...



PeterMax®

CARRIVING ON

POTLATCH #1 comes to you from Joyce Fisher, 59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, NY, 11201, December 1970. The cover for this issue is by Jay Kinney. "Egoboo Express" is by Arnie Katz, and "Wilde Heir" is by Walter A. Willis. All other written material is by the editor. Special thanks for all lettering-guide work and production assistance to Arnie Katz, who will also be mimeoing this for me. Potlatch is available for trade (by arrangement), contribution, LoC, and/or at the whim of ye editor; or for 35¢ for one issue (no subs accepted).

* * *

"Don't sleep away the morning," Arnie shook me from my dreams. "Get off your ass and publish!"

Some explanation as to how our heroine got to the point outlined in the previous paragraph would probably be appropriate....

After Ray and I decided to go our separate ways, I turned my eyes toward the east, and to that fannish mecca: New York. Rich and Colleen Brown hospitably offered me a place to stay and storage space for my belongings, and I settled in with my pyramid of packing crates and cartons. Finding work was a snap; I became so proficient at locating jobs that I was getting a job-offer a day. It became such a habit to find new jobs that each time I saw a newspaper I'd automatically turn to the ad section to see what might be available in my field, even though I had actually began working during my first week in the city as administrative assistant of an insurance agency. While quick and proficient at finding work, I had less talent in locating apartments. Although the Brown's hospitality never wavered during those months, I felt that I and my tower of boxes, which occupied nearly half of their living room, would be better gone. Fortunately I fell for the fast-talking fannish ways of Arnie Katz. We went apartment hunting together and had much better luck than I had had on my own.

Which brings me to the present, when all about me seem unified into one great forceful personality urging me to fanac. In final potent persuasion, Jay Kinney dropped by to visit a day or so ago and did, on stencil, the cover for this first issue. After that, what fan would even wish to resist the pressures to publish?

* * *

Far be it from me to depart from that fannish tradition which requires the editor to spell out in detail his plans for his new zine. I thought at first to make Potlatch a vehicle for essays by Dean Koontz, for reviews by Richard Delap, for profound tidbits from Leo Kelley. Perhaps, I mused, Piers Anthony could be persuaded to snipe at Father Tucker from these pages, and interspersed between these fannish gems could be pearls of wisdom on the art of fanzine editing, fresh from the qualified pen of Linda Bushyager. Indeed, I thought, I might do well to model my zine's layout style on Granfalloon; to take my cast of contributors from Beabohema; to temper it all with the kindly personality found in the letter column of S.F.Review.

Or then again, maybe not.

Potlatch was an Indian custom of gift-exchange: naturally this zine will be available for arranged trades. I will hope to avoid Potlatch wars: tradition required that the recipient of the gift respond with an even larger gift, and the

escalation of trading could continue until one tribe was bankrupted. This zine will resist the tendency of 3th fandom zines to grow fat, and instead will appear as close to monthly as I can manage, hopefully making up for its diminutive size by its frequency. My own meanderings will make up a sizable portion of future issues, I suppose; however, I would hope also to be able to print a fannish contribution or two and a letter-col each issue. Which makes a total of three ways to get this zine: you may contribute, you may LoC, you may trade. (There is also a chance that you may be one of those few people in this world whom I love, admire and respect so much that you will unfailingly receive a copy of every thing I publish...but I wouldn't really count on being in that position, if I were you, cause there aren't too many who fill that spot.) There isn't a person who's receiving this issue who would be Smiled Upon for taking advantage of the next method: it is, however, also possible to receive this for 35¢. No subs for more than one issue at a time will be counted; any money received for more than one issue will be spent on lollipops and icecream cones.

(I wonder if it would be reasonable to require that the money be sent in pennies....so as to make it so awkward and difficult to obtain Potlatch that all the sticky-quarter people wouldn't bother?

* * *

Life in the Big City has had its moments of strangeness. Before I came here, I would have argued that New York is not so very different from St. Louis...only more so. But, in actual fact, I've found New York to be a great deal different from any city I've lived in before, and in more ways than just the enormous number of people with whom I share my zip code.

Any description of my reaction to the city would have to begin with one very fundamental fact: crowds bother me. There are few things I like less than lots of people and noise and commotion. They confuse and upset me, and I try to avoid them whenever possible.

As a consequence, I spend a lot of noons sitting in one of the unoccupied offices (of the insurance agency where I work) staring out of the window like some iconoclastic city over-seer. I'd rather skip lunch and avoid the mob of people that works in the financial district of Manhattan.

The view is nice from where I sit. Out of my steel, brick and marble tower I can see the East River, and the motion of the waves makes a pretty picture. Even on a grey and rainy day, there's a certain peaceful poetry contained in the scene. There's a moderate amount of traffic on the river, and gazing at the ships leaving the patterns of their wanderings on the calm waters, I get caught in fancy that it's another time and place. I think a lot about the men who went Down To The Sea In Ships, and the women who waited, spending their noon hours on the Widows Walk, looking out to the horizon.

Perhaps that hour a day, spent quietly watching visions of the tall-masted ships and wondering at the men who sailed them, is the only completely tranquil time I spend in the city...

Discussion of New York without mention of the subways would be impossible... and I've had many hours of feeling the subways to be the same. Big, noisy, fast, crowded, cheap, efficient...so many adjectives to describe a transportation phenomena

I don't really yet understand. I'm usually lost, when I'm on the subway; it's no small miracle that causes me to arrive at the place I intend to go, and in fact it's fairly infrequent for me to arrive where I plan to go on the first try. I've spent most of my commuting time, since coming to New York, in trying to figure out whether I'm on the right train...or, upon discovering it to be the wrong train, in trying to locate the way to where I was supposed to be a half hour ago.

Not that it's difficult to find someone to give directions: people have been consistently kind about offering to help when I've confessed that I've lost my way... but because of my dislike of strangers, I generally wait too long to ask, until I'm really thoroughly turned around.

Yet despite the hustle and bustle that characterizes New York, it has a charm that outweighs the negative aspect of commotion. New York City is, despite everything I had been told and believed, more akin to some small European village than to the sophisticated leader of the western world I had expected.

I mean, fer ghods sakes, they've got street vendors all over Wall Street. And the very sophisticated market analysts sit in front of their skyscrapers eating Good Humor Bars. And everyone arrives at the office in the morning carrying a tiny paper bag which contains bread and butter to snack on. And during the noon hour, push-carts pass up and down the canyons, selling hotdogs. And side-walk merchants spread wares on the curb, hawking clothing, jewelry, portable radios. It's a three-ring circus, and each time I walk out into it, I want to convulse with laughter at the difference between the New York image, and reality.

New York is not the crown of the civilized world. New York is actually eight million European children, playing at being grown up.

* * *

Going to a bookstore in New York is different from St. Louis, where any trip to buy the latest Ace Special is likely to bring you into contest with another fan wanting the same book. While examining the sf section of every store I enter, I tend to watch the other customers, expecting to see a familiar fannish face. In all the book-buying expeditions to date, I've yet to run into another trufan....not even a sercon fan.

There has been one exception to this, though, when Arnie and I were examining the new sf titles at Bookmasters.

"Hmmm. George Barr sold a cover."

I whirled around, looking for the source of the voice.

"Not bad. But I like Jones better." Another voice, coming from the opposite side of the rack of books where I was standing.

"Hey, Arnie," I whispered in a stage voice that must have been heard all over the store. "Those guys must be fans."

"Fans!" exclaimed Arnie. "There are fans in this store!"

We peered around the rack to see what effect our words had on the two strangers.

"Certainly is a good day for fanac," remarked Arnie leadingly.

"Yeah...sure would be a nice day to meet some trufen."

Not a quiver of recognition from the two strangers.

"Haven't met a new fan since Lunacon," Arnie tried again.

Nothing -- no response.

Suddenly the top shelf of books started slipping..sliding..then

CRASH. All the books toppled onto the heads of the two teenagers.

"Let's get out of here," said Arnie. He grabbed me by the arm and pulled me out the door.

"Do you know what I did?" Arnie doubled up with laughter outside the store. "I knocked that shelf of books on those guys."

"That's ok," I comforted him. "They were obviously fake fans."

* * *

Not that the above represents the solitary example of chance meetings with fans since coming to New York. A couple of weeks past, Arnie and I decided to see the sights of Greenwich Village. We were happily picking our way through the throngs of sight-seers-looking-for-hippiedom, when who should we see coming our way but Elliot Shorter, newly returned from his TAFF trip and full of news of Euro-fandom. Not the least important tidbit of news he passed to us was that Pete Weston will be standing for next years TAFF race--a candidacy I heartily support.

With the chance of Pete being brought over by TAFF, and Bob Shaw coming over via the BoSh Fund (--send your contributions to Rich Brown, 410 61st Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11220...do it now--) Noreastcon bids fair to have a highly distinguished pair of visiting BNF's. I'm looking forward to this chance to meet them both.

* * *

The section of town where I live (--Brooklyn Heights, a historical preserve which restricts anything post-1890 in the way of architecture--) is very Politically Concerned. When I go to the corner deli, I am beset by no less than three political science students, relieved of their classes at Brooklyn U. during this campaign, distributing handbills concerning the candidate of their choice. A table has been set up in front of the butcher shop and my signature is requested on some petition or another; I am offered "Support So-and-So"buttons; I am invited to engage in debate concerning the merits of liberalism over conservatism with a sidewalk defender-of-democracy. It's all very lively; it's wonderfully intense, and it serves to make one all the more cognizant of the importance of the up-coming elections (which will surely be history by the time this is read.) It also serves to make me all the more angry at the fact that this year, of all the years, I am without a vote.

I can grudgingly admit the logic of not being allowed a New York vote until I have been here a full year; it is understandable that the Powers That Be would be dubious about allowing newly-arrived persons any voice in deciding local contests which would, of necessity, be unfamiliar to anyone who hasn't been here for some time. My real complaint is not against the waiting period that exists before I will be permitted to be a registered New York voter; rather, my gripe is directed toward the laws that forbid me the privilege of voting via absentee ballot in Missouri. If I haven't been in New York long enough to be registered in New York, then I can't understand why I can't retain my voting privilege in Missouri until that waiting period has passed. But, whether I understand the logic of it or not, that's the way it is.

* * *

I don't think I could ever get involved in games fandom. The diplomacy games I've played have usually led to an exchange of quite undiplomatic words between the players; I have a great interest gulf left uncovered by bridge; and I feel rooked of my time after spending an evening at chess. Worse even than playing these games would be a fandom devoted to discussing them...or games drug out interminably by mail.

Nevertheless, despite the seeming contradiction, I am quite fond of playing games on occasion. It's fairly infrequent, tho, for a newly-devised game to really capture my interest. (I still consider Monopoly to be the pinnacle of gamesmanship, which shows you about where I am in this regard...) However, this most rare event has taken place. Avalon Hill's newest release, "The Stock Market Game" is my latest craze. Players are started with ten shares each of Blue Chip and Speculative stock, \$2000, and twelve moves in which to accumulate their fortune by trading in Blue Chip, Speculative, Preferred, Bonds and Warrants. The market, just as in real life, is sensitive to the volume traded and in a multi-played game, manipulations of the market become a very real factor. Only the most miniscule element of luck is involved; a skillful player can accumulate his fortune even during a bear market.

Arnie and I recently introduced Rich & Colleen Brown to the game, thinking that it would be a natural for Rich (because of his professional connections with the market.) But that wiley oriental Colleen outplayed us all, amassing a total of something like \$46,000. After her easy victory, Rich had to forcibly halt her from running down to the exchange to apply her new-found trading skills--and their life savings--to some blue sky stock.

It's possible to play a game based on historical re-enactment of the 1929 crash; I haven't read far enough in the rules to know if the losers must jump out of the window at the game's end.

* * *

The latest WARHOON (fine fanzine, that...) has a letter from Terry Carr that I particularly liked. Terry mentions a number of things that he wrote in 1960, and explains that his personal life at that time was such as to cause problems in his fanac. I appreciated his candid statements; they give me hope that the difficulty I've had doing fanac during this year may be only temporary.

It seems likely that the second issue of this zine will be easier to write for, than this first...hopefully I'll know the answer to that question in just about one month -- which is when I expect to have the second issue ready to go. -- jf

EGOBOO

ARNIE KATZ

EXPRESS

It all started so innocuously. Johnny Berry called me on the phone when he got back from Europe before he left again for the St. Louiscon. We talked for a half hour about various fans he'd met in Britain and Northern Ireland. "Oh by the way," he told me, "Pete Weston said to tell you that he somehow never got a copy of QUIP #6." I made some kind of that's-too-bad-I'll-have-to-do-something noise, but really didn't think very much about it. I'll admit freely that I do, at times, take a little bit too casual an attitude toward sending out copies of QUIP.

A week later, I received the latest issue of SPECULATION. I opened it, and the following note fell out:

Arnie: Besides trading with QUIP, I'd be pleased if you reviewed this issue in your fnz column. By the way, do you have a spare copy of QUIP #6? I never received this one, and I wanted to see if there were any comments on my piece in #5.

Best -- Pete

"Say," I said to myself, "the post office must have done its trick and lost Pete's copy. I shall really have to look for a spare." I mentally noted it on my "must do" list.

Then two days later, a letter arrived from England. It was from Pete Weston. ~~Please~~ entries out of the way, Pete moved to the main topic:

Mainly, I never received QUIP No. 6. It was definitely No. 6, although I know you had your postal troubles with No. 7. But the reason I miss it so much is that I never did see what anyone may have said about my article in the previous issue! There may have been some egoboo for me, unused and long since gone cold. Still, I'd love to have the issue if there is one about anywhere. Is there any chance?

The thought of Pete Weston deprived of his egoboo rent my heart, friends. I vowed that just as soon as I had completed my chores for Ultimate Publications I would hunt up a replacement copy for the one that obviously had never reached Pete. Pete, I swore, would yet receive his just egoboo.

I was reading the words of that venerable sage T. O'Connor Sloane when I heard the sound of a low-flying plane. It faded, and I went back to my reading. But almost immediately it was back loud again. I went to my window, leaned out, and looked up at the sky for it. I couldn't spot the plane, but it had obviously been a skywriter. A message floated across the blue fall sky in huge white letters:

SEND ME QUIP NUMBER SIX, ARNIE -- PETE

I couldn't believe it. "I guess there are no limits when a fan wants his egoboo," I mused. I shrugged and went to find a copy of QUIP #6 for Pete Weston. I dug my last

remaining copy out and put it on the receiving tray of my mimeograph so that I would not fail to find it again when I wanted to mail it the next day. I went back to my reading.

It was evening that very day, as I lay reading 1930's AMAZINGS that I heard the voice of Ghu. "All right Katz!" it boomed. I stumbled off the bed and looked around quickly. "All right, Katz!" it thundered again. I realized it was coming from outside. I pushed aside the shade and saw, down in the street, a sound truck. Someone must have been watching my window with glasses, for as soon as I moved the shade, the amplified voice burst forth again. "We don't want to hurt you," it said. I am always terrified when people say that. It means they're going to hurt you, no matter how much they say otherwise. "Just throw down a copy of QUIP #6 and we'll go away." I felt like one of those poor wretches who had piled up a big fine at the library and been rousted out by the police a few years back out on Long Island. "You have to the count of ten, Katz!" I looked around me for the copy of QUIP. I couldn't find it. "10-9-8--" Maybe it was because I was nervous but I couldn't remember where I'd put it. "7-6-5-4-" I frantically sorted through the piles of fanzines and bound volumes that littered my floor. "3" Pause "2" Pause "1" The most ominous silence of all. "All right, Katz, this is it!" the voice screamed. I heard a small explosion. Then my window was shattering. It couldn't be! My mind cried its protest. The noxious fumes from the Ditto Fluid Bomb spread through the room. My head reeled. I knew that if I didn't get out of there, I was done for. I could only think of escape. The fire escape and front door were covered by the truck. I rolled the toilet paper out the back window and had an escape. I was free in the alley. I ran and ran and ran.

It was morning, and I regained my senses enough to realize that, in a feat of super-human stamina, I had made it all the way out to New Hyde Park, a distance of some 15 miles. But as I collapsed on the front lawn of the family home, the only thing I could think about, the only thing I could feel was "Safe! Safe! I'm Safe!"

Then I heard the plane. I looked up and saw it swoop low over the town. This was no skywriter, but a sleek jet fighter. I could dimly see a circular emblem, the emblem of the RAF, on the underside of its wings. Its whine became a roar as it dived at me. Calling upon reserves I had thought exhausted, I stumbled to the front door of the house. With quivering hands, I found my key. Shots pinged around me as I tried to work the front door lock. I felt a sharp sting in my leg as I fell through the doorway into the house.

I was frantic. The plane circled and came back for another pass at the house. I ducked away from the window, just in time to avoid another hail of machine gun bullets. The plane flashed by and was again out of sight. But I knew, somehow, that it would be back. It was. It swung around toward my house again. I noticed there was something somehow different about its approach this time. It didn't seem to be coming in as low. "It couldn't," I murmured as I gazed at the missiles clinging to the underside of each wing.

It could.

It did. The house next door went up in a funnel of flame. Just a shot to find the range, I knew. It would be back, and it would fire again. I raced down the steps to the basement.

It was back.

It fired again.

WILDE HEIR

WALT WILLIS

The other morning I was eating breakfast when the mail came. I opened it. "Ghod", I said, spreading marmalade distractedly on a crudzine from N. Carolina. "Ghod!"

"Not.....?" said Madeleine, growing pale.

"Yes," I said, "It's from Him. Charles Burbee."

Madeleine hastily swept the floor, polished the furniture, and brought out the table napkins.

"What does He say?" she asked.

I pulled myself together, and spoke in hushed tones. "He says I have Impeccable Taste."

"Burbee says you have Impeccable Taste?" said Madeleine.

"Yes," I said, "He says I have Impeccable Taste. He also says that one of my articles was Very Fine."

"Will you continue to live with me?" asked Madeleine humbly.

"Yes, woman," I said. "I shall not allow this to turn my head. I shall continue to mingle with ordinary people. Besides you need not feel inferior. Burbee says I have Impeccable Taste and since I chose you, you must be a very paragon among women."

"Thank you," said Madeleine, "You make me feel humble....and sort of proud."

"That is all right," I said approvingly. "Burbee thinks well of Pogo. Your taste while not so Impeccable as Mine, is quite good."

I continued reading His fanzine, absent-mindedly proceeding with my breakfast. "Another crudzine?" asked Madeleine, passing me the marmalade.

I ignored her. My mind was on higher things.

"Ghod," I said. "I wish I could write like Burbee."

"Hell," said Madeleine, "You're always saying that. Why don't you try to write like Burbee?"

"Because," I said, "for one thing I do not live in California and do not know Francis Towner Laney, Al Ashley, and similar fabulous fannish characters. Observe that even Lee Jacobs did not write like Burbee until he went to California. My Taste is far too Impeccable to attempt to produce a travesty of Burbeeism."

"You have fabulous fannish characters here," said Madeleine. "Chuck Harris, he who is coming to stay with us tomorrow, is a fabulous fannish character. It is not essential to live in California to be a fabulous fannish character. Though it helps."

"Woman," I said. "You are right. My Impeccable Taste tells me that you are. I shall suggest to Chuck Harris that we produce a oneshot for FAPA."

Next morning I went down to the docks to meet Harris. I saw his sensitive fannish face loom greenly towards me through the cattle. I ignored his greetings.

"Burbee," I said. "Burbee says I have Impeccable Taste."

"He said that?" said Harris.

"Yes," I said. "He also said that one of my articles was Very Fine."

Harris turned humbly to get back on the boat again.

"No," I said, "You may stay. With my Impeccable Taste I have decided that you are a fabulous fannish character. We shall produce a FAPA oneshot after breakfast. Do you like marmalade on your crudzines? Or I have some books from Ackerman in JAM condition."

Harris looked doubtful.

"I am sorry," I said, "That was not worthy of my Impeccable Taste. That was not Burbee-like, that was a lousy Willis-type pun. It is my Impeccable Taste which enables me to recognize these things.

"What are you talking like Burbee for?" asked Harris.

"I am not talking like Burbee," I said, "and if you had Impeccable Taste like I have you would realize this."

Harris abased himself and beat his head on the ground.

"Never mind," I said kindly. "I am in fact talking like Lee Jacobs talking like Burbee. It would be disrespectful to Ghod to imitate Him; instead we shall imitate Lee Jacobs imitating Burbee. Lee Jacobs, though a fabulous non-fannish character, and whom I have met in London and Chicago, is not Ghod."

"What shall we do first?" asked Harris.

"First," I said, "I must now address you as Randolph instead of Chuck. Then you must go out and expose homosexuals."

"Have you," he asked, "any special homosexuals in mind, or is the ability to recognise them a by-product, a facet, of your Impeccable Taste?"

I smiled kindly at Madeleine, who was cleaning my shoes in the corner. "We shall find them" I said. "We shall have no difficulty. Vinc Clarke, one of England's fabulous fannish characters, has declared that Northern Irish fandom is remarkably homogenous. I am the genius, therefore the others must be homos."

"That was not like Lee Jacobs talking like Burbee," he pointed out. "That was

like Willis talking like Jacobs talking like Burbee. That was a lousy Willis-type pun. Are you sure you have Impeccable Taste?"

"Burbee has said so," I pointed out reprovngly.

"I am sorry," he said humbly. "It is just that I cannot become accustomed to the honour of being a fabulous Burbee-type character. Could I not be a fabulous Harris-type character instead?"

"Very well, Randolph," I said. "I know how difficult it is to be a fabulous Burbee-like character. Even I should find it difficult were it not for the Impeccability of my Taste. After we have finished breakfast I shall go to my fabulous attic where I have Fandangoes which list the characteristics of these homos. Meanwhile I can tell you that I understand they are fans who prefer to go about with men rather than girls."

Harris went out into the morning.

Some hours later he returned. "I have found no less than three homosexuals," he said.

"Randolph," I said, "I am proud of you. What are their names?"

"Peggy Martin, Sadie Shaw and Madeleine Willis," he said.

"Randolph," I said, "I am no longer proud of you. You have made a mistake. These are not homosexuals."

"But they go about with men instead of girls," he protested. "They are effeminate."

"Randolph," I said. "These are girls. I fear you have been concentrating too much on your fanac. Since you have been out I have been reading my Fandangoes. It seems that homosexuals are men who act like girls, have high voices, wear strange clothes, etc."

Harris went out into the afternoon. Some hours later he returned. "Bob Shaw wears a green corduroy jacket," he said doubtfully.

"No," I said, "Bob Shaw is a fabulous Burbee-like character like ourselves, who collaborated on The Enchanted Duplicator. He is above suspicion."

"Well," he said, "George Charters wears shirts with colored pockets."

"No," I said, "George Charters is also a fabulous fannish character. He cut the stencils for The Enchanted Duplicator and is above suspicion. That shirt is merely part of his cowboy set which he wears while reading Max Brand."

"Well," he said desperately, "James White helps pro editors off mountains and lies on hotel corridors passing notes under their doors until walked on by chambermaids."

"Randolph," I said, "You are again wrong. The pro editor in question was a female type creature called Bea Mahaffey. James White is a fabulous fannish character too."

Harris went out into the night. Some hours later he returned. He had a distraught

look on his face, like Laney finding that E.E.Evans had several stamps he needed for his collection.

"There are no more fans in Northern Ireland," he said.

"Very well, Randolph," I said. "You may finish your breakfast. Do you prefer mimeo or hecto?"

"No!" he cried. "You, with your Impeccable Taste, have declared that there must be homosexuals in Northern Irish fandom. It is my Ghod-given duty to expose them. I realize that James White, George Charters and Bob Shaw are fabulous fannish characters and above suspicion, but the others I mentioned answer your description. I shall denounce Peggy Martin, Sadie Shaw and Madeleine Willis. I shall nun them out of fandom."

"Randolph," I said patiently, "Calm yourself. I explained this to you. These fans are girls."

"No!" he said wildly. "They are men! Homosexuals!"

"Randolph," I said, "Randolph----"

He began to roll about the floor, frothing at the mouth. "I shall expose them!" he screamed. "Perverts! That Madeleine Willis is the worst of the lot. He has been sleeping with a man for years."

"Randolph," I said. "Randolph. She is a girl."

"NO!" he cried, "A queer! A homo! Painted and padded! Disgusting! It must be exposed!"

"Randolph," I said. "I assure you that Madeleine Willis is a girl. I am in a position to know."

He rose to his feet, a wild gleam in his eye. "Let her prove it!" he shouted. "Let her prove it to me!"

I looked at him for a few minutes.

"Very well, Randolph," I said. "You may call me Oscar."

--Walter A. Willis
July, 1954

blue jount

JOYCE FISHER

"Do you know what Dick Geis did?" asked Rich Brown incredulously.

"No" said Arnie, without pausing in cranking out FOCAL POINT. "What did he do?"

"In the latest SFR, he talks about his two Hugos, and he says he wants to win again this year ..."

"That's incredible. How could anyone have enough chutzpah to ask for his third Hugo?"

* * *

It is incredible that Geis should be so greedy as to ask for three Hugos...it was actually a little immoderate of him to ask for two. I had to contrast his attitude, the second time around, with that shown by Ed Meskys the year after NIEKAS won the Hugo. Meskys realized that many among his massive readership were unfamiliar with fandom-at-large, perhaps receiving no other fanzine, and possibly prone to take his circulation of the Hugo nomination ballot as a request for their vote. He used the opportunity to give an (admittedly sketchy) explanation of fandom and the traditions surrounding the Hugos, and ended with an admonishment against their voting for NIEKAS, expressing the opinion that it would be inappropriate, unattractive...and unfannish... for NIEKAS to again be nominated.

Some difference, no?

There is, of course, no incident I can quote in comparison to Geis' gauchery in asking for a third Hugo. The act speaks for itself. What does incite me to comment, though, are his remarks implying that this would prove him to be the best fanzine editor ever, and SFR to be the best fanzine of all time.

Geis may or may not be the best zine editor, and SFR may or may not be the best fanzine ever. I have my opinion, but my opinion is certainly counterbalanced by his. I find some amusement, however, in his using the Hugo as his "proof" that this amount of quality exists in himself or his zine.

What price a Hugo nomination? A hasty scanning of the zines nominated in the past several years would serve to make one think that quality is not necessarily a ruling factor. Or, at least, there have been some pitiful examples on the ballot masquerading as fandom's best.

While I was on the counting-end of the ballots, and watching the nominations come in, I developed my own theories as to how to win a Hugo. I'm not saying that all these methods are used by all victorious zines...to the contrary. Before continuing, this disclaimer: I in no way mean to imply the following remarks apply to Dick Geis or to any other Hugo winner of the past. However, I offer up the following ideas so that Joe Phan of Podunk Corners can place his zine in the running...

There's been a great deal said about the need for massive circulation, if your heart is set on an award. The emphasis on circulation leads to errors, however; obviously the circulation must be directed to those readers most likely to join the convention and vote.

And then, even more important than large circulation, these potential voters must receive the zine at the appropriate time. Timing of issues is the single most important factor in a fanzine's campaign to win a Hugo.

Because fandom politely pretends that the material voted upon appeared the previous year, it is necessary to have at least one issue out during the year voted upon. But don't strip your files of all the best material you have, for it is highly unlikely that the quality of that issue will influence the vote at all. The bulk of the voters have a much shorter memory than that, and do their actual voting on the basis of the zine most recently received. -- December is probably the best month to hit with your Qualifying issue...this will give rise to the impression of a frequently published zine, when you come out with the more important issue in the Spring.

You must have an issue out to coincide with the period that the nomination ballots are being circulated. (The ideal would be to have two issues..if you are really anxious to win...one immediately after the official ballot has been released, and one which hits the reader's mailbox one week before the voting deadline. But, if you can only release one issue during this period, time it for as early in the nomination period as you can get.) Naturally, you must circulate the nomination ballot with your zine...you've hardly a chance if you don't. To play safe, discuss the ballot in your editorial: draw your readers' attention to it and to the fact that you are eligible, in as straight forward a request for votes as you have the stomach to write.

If your mailing list is as it should be (and I'll go into that in a paragraph or so) it would be difficult to avoid winning a nomination if you have been successful in your timing.

The next obvious step is to get an issue out to coincide with the actual balloting. Here again, ideally, two issues would be better than one, the first timed to hit as soon after the ballots have been released as you can, and containing in your editorial (1) effusive thanks to those who nominated you, and (2) a request for their votes on the final ballot, and (3) directions on how they can obtain a ballot (ie, how to join the convention.) The second issue should be received one week before voting deadline...you may omit point #3, as it would obviously then be too late for any of your readers to join the con and vote.

If you can only manage one issue during this period, the issue one week before voting deadline will generate the most votes. (This is a point, I discovered while counting the ballots, where many zine editors have misjudged, assuming that they would generate more votes if they released the issue early enough so that their readers would still have time to join the con and receive a ballot. The few votes they pick up this way are more than outnumbered by the votes received in the last flurry of balloting.)

With four issues of even average quality, timed as I've explained, and sent to an appropriate mailing list, I would almost guarantee Joe Phan his Hugo. With two issues placed at optimum delivery times and sent to a good mailing list, he still has an excellent chance.

Obviously you want your zine, and the ballots, going to those fans most likely to

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vote. Consequently, that means it must be sent to the fans most likely to join the con.

If the concomm will release a list of its members' names and addresses to you (..St. Louiscon refused to do this, but some other con may agree to your politely worded request; it's worth a try..) then that should be your mailing list. Or, barring that, you can spend a profitable hour or so going through the latest Progress Report, picking out a list of members whose addresses you do have available. (If you plan to do this, prepare in advance by obtaining as many club rosters as possible for the section of the country that will host the con.) Next best bet to a mailing list made up of actual con members, would be a mailing list of every fan in that part of the country whose name and address you can locate, as they are likely to join the con because of their proximity. And, don't limit the list to only those names you recognize as fanzine fans. After all, if the voter has only seen one fanzine -- yours -- who do you think he'll vote for?

Another nice touch is to take an ad in the Progress Report which accompanies the nominations ballot, offering a free copy to any convention member who'll send you his name and address. Then make sure you enclose a nomination ballot with every one of these freebees you send out.

Probably any ambitious fan-ed can expand on these suggestions I've outlined, but based on my experiences with the fanzine Hugo, victory would be almost inevitable if the steps I've mentioned were followed. The entire theory rests on those three points: circulation, timing...and brashness on the part of the editor.

Anytime an award system has degenerated so much that an article like this can be written, there can be a strong argument made that winning a Hugo...or even two or three of them...does not necessarily indicate outstanding quality on the part of the zine.

In passing, for what it's worth (and perhaps this says something about the validity of what I've written) I'll mention that there is one category of fan who is notably lackadazical about sending in nominations and ballots. I was surprized just how little interest is shown in the fan awards by the fans who served as committee members of past conventions. Could it be that their enthusiasm for the Hugos was dimmed by what they saw when they counted the ballots?
-- jf

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