

Jay Kinney

# CARRYING ON

## EDITORIAL

One day during February, the view from my office window was strange, as I sat shivering through noonhour, gazing at the East River. It was only a little above zero, and the river was untrafficed that day, except by ice floes. My co-workers have told me that the East River is truly not a river at all, but actually an inlet of the Atlantic Ocean and, thus, salt water. Although it was very cold that day, I doubt it cold enough to actually freeze icebergs in the ocean...the ice must have come from upstream...from the Hudson River, I suppose.

Looking at the ice floes that drifted into view, and that completely covered the East River, I recalled one night many years ago, sitting aboard the River Queen (permanently moored, and converted into a nightclub) watching the ice come down the Mississippi. Enormous glacial icebergs, looming hugely into view, aimed directly at the River Queen. It was sickeningly fascinating, watching freight-car sized chunks hurtling toward the Queen...you couldn't help but brace yourself for the impact. Each chunk rammed the River Queen broadside, and the whole boat shivered with the jar (...as the band played "Nearer My God To Thee"....)

For the past thousand years or so my maternal ancestors never lived more than fifty miles one side or the other of the Mississippi. With my family tree's roots so firmly planted in Midwestern mud, it's no great wonder that the East River reminds me of Missouri.

\* \* \*

Chris Couch and Jay Kinney came over to spend an evening with us, for dinner, and to help us get out Focal Point #23. We decided that it would be best to eat first, then collate...so Arnie, Jay, and Chris gathered around the kitchen table while I made spaghetti sauce. As quickly as we had finished eating, we cleared the table, spread out the pages, and commenced our collating.

It went very quickly, with so many hands to help, and much more pleasantly than if we had been doing it alone - the conversation and company made light of the work. We were drawing toward the finish when the phone rang...Terry Carr, checking to see if it would be an appropriate time to come to call. By the time he, Carol, and Sid Coleman arrived, we had applied the last mlg label and licked the last stamp...so after giving the Carrs and Sid their copies of FP, we moved into the living room.

In the course of the evening, the subject of writing about your friends came up. Carol remarked about the reticence one tends to feel when in the company of someone who habitually writes up every fannish encounter; she asked if Arnie and I had noted this tendency toward hesitancy among our friends. Arnie in particular, with his diary-style fanzine, LOG, is quick to seize each fannish word spoken in his presence, and to expound on it in a later article. Terry and Carol each do the same; I also (as evidenced by this article) sometimes draw on fannish encounters for subject matter.

I can't honestly say that I have ever felt any reticence due to the fact that I knew there was a likelihood my actions would be reported to the fannish world; perhaps the knowledge that, if it came right down to it, a simple request would probably suffice ..

to have Arnie expunge anything I disliked too much from LOG....although I have never really given any conscious thought to that possibility ever arising. Fortunately, the chance that our conversations with each other may be reported later has never really inhibited Arnie and me.

It struck the consciousness of us all that this little fannish encounter - the evening, the visit, this particular conversation - was most likely to be reported to the fannish press, not once, not twice, not even thrice...but four times, as the Carrs each wrote their version, Arnie wrote his entry for LOG, and I wrote my paragraphs for POTLATCH.

Because of the disparity of mailing lists, there are probably not a dozen persons in fandom who could read all four accounts....but isn't it a trippy thought to think of the varying views of the same tiny event - like a surrealist painting.

Now, if Chris will only write for APA 45, and Jay will report it in NOPE.....

\* \* \*

It's almost unbelievable to me that I should be working on the third issue of a monthly fanzine. I am pleased, of course, that I've so tenaciously clung to my own schedule, but I'm also amazed that I didn't waver in my determination. The only explanation I can offer is that, compared to FOCAL POINT's bi-weekly publication, the monthly schedule of POTLATCH seems leisurely.

That, and the matter-of-fact, no-nonsense attitude of Terry and Arnie, both of whom ritualistically produce columns within a week of the publication of the last issue, as if to say "See, you have this material - fruit of our labor, sweat of our brow - and we'll brook no debate on the subject of publication dates." Jay Kinney, with seeming deliberation, reinforcing their arguments, comes for dinner and asks to be allowed to stencil up some art for POTLATCH. How can I do anything else but more or less maintain my monthly schedule? -- But, still, I am in a state of wonderment that it has happened this way.

The greatest problem to me in trying to publish is not the contributions...I couldn't have been more serious when I said Terry and Arnie and Jay almost force me to the mimeo by their punctual productions. The handicap I've had to struggle against is my own reticence in writing. I think anyone who's read these issues of POTLATCH must have noted it..to me, it's very evident that my writing is still forced...very labored and inhibited...all the wrong things for a personalzine to be. Each time I sit down to write I am bothered by the question: just how personal should a personal zine be? Where is the line that lies between impersonalness and bad taste. What do my friends actually want to read?

And, these weighty philosophies, together with the still-present remnants of my last year's writers block, cause me to fear even the attempt. So I sit and stare at the white paper that so frequently remains white despite my intentions and determinations.

In contrast, there's Bruce Telzer.

Bruce came to dinner a day or so after Potlatch 2 was published and, after receiving egoboo for his article, entered into a discussion with Arnie on the subject of writing. He said he felt no pride in anything he writes because he finds it so easy. Personally, I find it so difficult that I'm proud even of the black marks on white paper, whether they say anything or not....

\* \* \*

I was listening to the radio one Saturday night, and found myself completely engrossed and enraptured by a talk show, oblivious to the rest of the world. It was one of those open-discussion panels, with a seven-second time delay to expunge anything unfit for the airwaves -- and it dawned on me that here was an example of real time travel. Those panelists were literally living seven seconds ahead of me. My mind bogged down as I tried to comprehend the vast significance of that seven-second time delay: I never quite determined which of us was living in Real Time - them, seven seconds faster than me, or me, doomed to an infinity of being those moments behind the progress of the world. By listening to a time-delay, am I permanently retarding myself, or will I "catch up" at the end of the program?

I grappled with the paradoxes involved in those seven seconds until I felt I had an understanding of their relationship to Real Time. Just as I was slipping back into my more normal state of tranquility, and shedding the anxiety I had built up over this line of thought, one of the panelists casually let slip that the program was pre-recorded three days earlier.

I've still not got it straight whether they are three days plus seven seconds ahead of Real Time, or three days less seven seconds behind; or if I am caught in some never-never land between the two realities of seven seconds from now, and three days ago.

I only hope no panelist made the mistake of stepping on an insect.

\* \* \*

Every day a freight train comes down the East River and sails underneath the Brooklyn Bridge at precisely 12:25.

Daily notings of this fact have produced many questions in my mind, that I've only now become courageous enough to ask. Perhaps someone can tell me: why does the train come down the river, instead of chugging along a track as you might expect? Does the traincrew stay with it on its sail, or do they leave the train when it boards the ferry, and a different crew take over at its port? The ferryboat men -- are they employees of the railroad, or of the shipping firm? Are they paid at the rate of railway crew men, or at the rate of merchant marines? How does the freight train get maneuvered off of and on to the ferry? -- Watching the ice floating with the tide, I have to ask: has any freight train ever been sunk by ramming into an iceberg?

(Did you know that there's a train that runs from London to Paris? I've always wondered: during the war, was there ever any train sunk by a submarine's torpedoes?)

There really ought to be the makings of an article, in between all these facts and questions....darned if I can get at it, though.

\* \* \*

I've particularly enjoyed the zines that have come in during the last month or so. No, Mike Glicksohn, I'm not conceding that "zines are better'n ever". My enjoyment of fanzines has increased because I'm really beginning to get back into the spirit of things where fandom is concerned; the identity crisis I've felt seems to be leveling off, and the pleasure I used to find in fandom is apparently returning.

I thought it was nice (unnecessary..but nice) of the several fan editors who sent their zine in trade for Focal Point and included a copy for me. And, also nice of those fan editors who send the trade copy to FP and included my name on the mlg. label. (This

is the easiest way for faneds trading with FP to let me know they're interested in Potlatch.)

But the kickiest moment of the past month just had to be unstapling Redd Bogg's fapazine, and having Arnie say: "How come he sent it to you, and didn't send a copy to me?"

But that's not really what I was going to write about, when I decided to write a paragraph about fanzines....

The most Strange moment I've ever had in fandom came a couple of weeks ago when I opened an envelope from Pam Janisch (2624 S. Kingshighway, 3rd Floor South, Apt. 12, St. Louis, Missouri 63126), and pulled out a copy of GRILS. Totally offset, with a beautiful three-color cover by Joe Staton, GRILS #3 is a much more impressive looking zine than either of the issues I worked on. The contents are rather slim: there was a chatty and interesting editorial by Pam explaining that her two ex-coeditors had gone the way of all coeditors, but that she does hope to continue publication on her own. There was a long forgotten article by me on the need for communication, an article by Myron Marty concerning flag decals and related subjects, and a letter col. There were a few errors in layout, an adequate number of typos, and scattered here and there small flaws in the presentation that made GRILS 3 something a little less than perfect. But, despite the flaws, the zine shows promise, and under Pam's guidance I hope will have a long future. (It will be nice to have a zine other than OSFAN representing St. Louis fandom...)

But, it sure as hell did seem strange to see it come sliding out of its envelope, and to know it was none of my own.

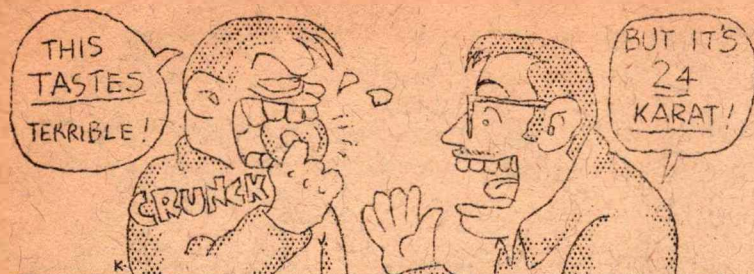
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\* This, then, is POTLATCH #3, the monthly fanzine from Joyce Fisher, who can be \*  
 \* located at 59 Livingston St., Apt. 6-B, Brooklyn, NY 11201. This is the Febru- \*  
 \* ary, 1971, issue, despite the fact that it is now mid-March (for reasons I just \*  
 \* can't understand -- like, I just blinked my eyes, and February was gone...). Do \*  
 \* you care to make any bets as to whether there'll be another issue out this month \*  
 \* to Catch Up? -- I dunno, but I've got Hope. Meanwhile though, I hope you'll en- \*  
 \* joy the goodies herein. Jay Kinney is to be thanked for the art (Thank you, Jay)\*  
 \* "The Golden Bagel" is a column by Arnie Katz, and "Entropy Reprints" is a column \*  
 \* by Terry Carr. "Counting Coup" is a letter column, and all else is by me. \*  
 \*

\* Special thanks for production help go to Arnie for lettering-guide work (all) \*  
 \* & mimeography, and to Terry for typing his own stencils. What nice guys! \*  
 \*

\* Potlatch is available for various things; I am particularly covetous of your \*  
 \* letters-of-comment and your contributions. I'm also interested in arranged \*  
 \* trades---but I won't make an arrangement to trade for any fanzine that is al- \*  
 \* ready coming into the household in trade for Focal Point. I may also think to \*  
 \* send you a copy of Potlatch in exchange for 35¢, but it's a very Chancy thing \*  
 \* and not really to be depended on for more than one issue at a time---in other \*  
 \* words, I won't keep track of subs, so don't send them. --jf. \*  
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A COLUMN BY Amie Katz

# THE Golden Bagel

Currently producing fan historians may be divided into two categories, loosely speaking. There's Harry Warner, and then there's the Rest Of Us.

Harry, his reputation made secure by All Our Yesterdays (the book) and "All Our Yesterdays" (the column), goes merrily along, shedding helpful illumination on fandom's musty corners.

For the Rest Of Us, it is a waiting game. Carefully, carefully, we build our little theories, waiting for the signal to unleash them upon fandom. And what is that signal? What is that clarion call?

The only signal needed to kick the Rest Of Us into vibrant life and full throttle pontification is a mention of Numbered Fandoms. The phrase, "What fandom is this, anyway?" is beloved of fan historians even above the much-cherished, "What's the focal point of fandom?"

So anxious to expound are the Rest Of Us, that we will even accept something less than a bald query as the necessary spark to set off an article on Numbered Fandoms.

When Will Straw's letter of comment on POTLATCH #1 arrived, I knew I had before me a golden opportunity. I had a minimum of two week's head start on other would-be explainers of Numbered Fandoms, not to mention an In with the editor.

Three definitions are necessary before we can get down to talking about Numbered Fandoms. A Fandom, according to the Judicious Speer, is a reasonably stable period during which the mainstream of fandom has more or less similar ideals and approaches and subscribes to the same set of fannish institutions.

Transitions are periods between the plateaus represented by Fandoms. A Transition is characterized by the existance of numerous trends side-by-side with no one stream of fandom dominant. A Transition occurs when the institutions of the previous fandom decay sufficiently that they no longer represent the mainstream of fandom and no new institutions have yet shown sufficient strength to take over. A focal point fanzine is one which is of paramount interest to the majority of active fans.

Let's start with Sixth Fandom. We have to start somewhere, and there's no sense going back to the beginning when the subject is fandom in the 50's and 60's. Besides, the Rest Of Us are in substantial agreement about pre-Sixth Fandom, so it would only be going over old ground unnecessarily.

The rise of QUANDRY was concurrent with the beginnings of Sixth Fandom. The ideals and traditions of Sixth Fandom were embodied in Lee Hoffman's monthly. QUANDRY displayed wit and humor, sophistication, a sense of family, and a lively interest in time-binding among other characteristics.

Though QUANDRY folded after 30 issues, VEGA, published by 14 year old Joel Nydahl, took over without missing a beat and became the new Focal Point. Nydahl burned himself out fannishly with a year of monthly publication, capped by a huge annish and almost complete gafiation.

Sixth Fandom was something of a Golden Age for fandom. There were so many highly talented fans that it proved unusually tenacious. It was as though the participants were keenly aware that they had something especially good and were reluctant to let go.

When Nydahl disappeared, another fanned stepped forward to pick up the torch. Richard E. Geis started publishing PSYCHOTIC as a monthly and quickly gathered many of the leading lights of Sixth Fandom around him.

When PSYCHOTIC became the Focal Point, it marked the beginning of the end for Sixth Fandom. 1954, the year PSY was the undisputed leader, was more a silver age than a golden one. The fans were still very good, but the best works of Sixth Fandom had already been done.

Geis's interest in science fiction was much greater than that of the fans who had dominated Sixth Fandom. Sixth Fandom didn't exactly ignore science fiction, but they were hardly hot-eyed zealots. Geis was also much more feud-oriented than the easy-going Sixth Fandomites. The younger Sixth Fandomites, going under the name "Seventh Fandom" were a bit more rough and tumble, but since they were much, much younger, it was natural that they would be a bit more hot-tempered.

Slowly, Sixth Fandom slipped away as Sixth Fandom became only one strain in a heterogenius fandom. HYPHEN was pure Sixth Fandom in orientation, but it was no more the Focal Point than Charles Riddle's PEON, a science fiction fanzine of the day.

The Sixth Transition was marked by an Apa Boom. The FAPA and SAPS waitlists lengthened, and new apas, OMPA and the Cult came into existence. Genzines appeared, but none mustered the fandom-wide appeal which would have given the period cohesion.

Rick Sneary's slogan, "Southgate in '58!", was one of the things which helped usher in Seventh Fandom. Since the late 1940's, Rick had been proclaiming his hope for a world-con in Southgate in 1958. As the target year approached, many fans thought this dream should be made into reality and increased their activity accordingly.

With the cooperation of British Fandom, which bid for the Loncon in 1957 so 1958 would be a West Coast year, Southgate won the bid for 1958.

Fandomwide interest in something as fannish as Southgate tipped the scales slightly in favor of fannishness.

Terry Carr and Ron Ellick started their newszine FANAC, which put fandom back in touch with itself and handled the news in a pithy, personal way which was the essence of Seventh Fandom. It became the Focal Point. When fans said, "FANAC is indispensible," they weren't kidding.

At Southgate, an attempt to establish the WSFS, Inc. as the ruling body of fandom was thoroughly quashed and with it much of the power of sercon fandom.

Seventh Fandom lasted from 1958 to 1960 in its pure state. In that year, without losing the qualities that made it Seventh Fandom, a new element, embodied in fanzines like HABAKKUK and WARHOON was added to the mix. Seventh Fandom, unlike Sixth, took a lively interest in the Big World Outside, in jazz and sportscars, in politics and bohemianism.

Although FANAC was the Focal Point of Seventh Fandom during its first few years, there were many other fanzines which complemented it in approach and style. On the heels of FANAC's initial success came a wave of small, personal fanzines from people such as John Magnus and Ted White. These were followed by full-size genzines such as INNUENDO and VOID. OOPSLA! and HYPHEN, survivors of an earlier era, showed new life.

The Chicon III was, for all intents and purposes, the culmination of Seventh Fandom. AXE, the fanzine started by Larry and Noreen Shaw to oversee the Tenth Anniversary Willis Fund, became the Focal Point after Terry passed FANAC on to Walter Breen who quickly ran it into the ground.

Within a year after the Chicon III, all the major fanzines of Seventh Fandom were folded (except HYPHEN, which published about an issue a year). I doubt if the demise of Seventh Fandom can be attributed to anything more sinister than weariness. The prime movers of the era had been feverishly active for four years running; they had published and written as well or better than any fans before or since, and they had brought Walt and Madeleine Willis to the Chicon. It was time to take a rest, think about home and family, and perhaps get ahead in the Big World.

Seventh Fandom's leading lights paused, and in that pause fandom fractionalized and the Seventh Transition began. There were fanzines oriented along Seventh Fandom lines, like FRAP (Bob Lichtman), QUARK (Thom Perry) and MINAC (Ted White and Les Gerber), but they were not at center stage as the zines which preceded them had been.

Sercon fandom was, in 1963, equally incapable of producing a Focal Point. There was considerable activity of a stfnal nature, but it was so divided among splinter groups like the Burroughs Bibliophiles that no fanzine appeared which could unite fandom under the banner of science fiction.

It's impossible, of course, to know what course fandom might have taken if the Blow-up hadn't happened. Some feel that things were starting to build back up and, in truth, several fans seemed to be stirring themselves to increased activity when the Breen Boon-doggle split fandom open.

When the Pacificon II barred Walter Breen from the convention, virtually every fan took sides, one way or the other. Feelings ran high, and friendships that had been built over the years, shattered, some never to be restored. The general attitude among older fans after the shouting abated was that it seemed like a good time to give fandom a rest. There were no winners in the big feud, and the more years one had in fandom, the more one tended to have lost.

In the calm following the storm, there could hardly be said to have been a genzine field. Those who stayed active confined their fanning to apas, psychic defenses up at all times. Several generations of new fans floundered around, looking for a direction, not finding it.

Again there were fanzines which expressed the fannish point of view in a manner paralleling Seventh Fandom. QUIP started appearing every three months in 1965, and it was joined a couple of years later by John Berry's FOOLSCAP. Though both zines found favor with a segment of fandom, neither could, by any stretch, be called the Focal Point. SPECULATION was pre-eminent among serious science fiction fanzines, but it grew to ignore fandom so totally that there was nothing in it around which actifans could rally.

The apas boomed again in the mid-1960's, with a large number of new groups created by newer fans who were too anxious to publish to cool their heels on the waiting lists of the established apas. If the models had been there, many of them might have published genzines, but as it was, they joined six or seven apas instead.



Mailing comments as a way of life pale, and the apas started to decline after the Tricon in 1966. There was talk of a renaissance as new genzines appeared, but still there was no single publication that could serve as a Focal Point.

Then, just after the NYCon III, Dick Geis revived PSYCHOTIC. Overnight it became the fanzine. Featuring a balance of fannish and science fictional material, it was frequent, lively, and well produced. And it came at a time when fans were wanting a rallying point.

If the Focal Point fanzine is a reflection of the Fandom in which it is published, it is also true that the Focal Point fanzine can influence its fandom. So totally did Geis command the attention of fandom that when he began increasing the emphasis on sf and phasing out fan-oriented material, a majority of active fans were willing to go in that direction with him. If QUIP and FOOLSCAP were at the side of the stage during the Seventh Transition, they were out of the theater in the back alley in Eighth Fandom.

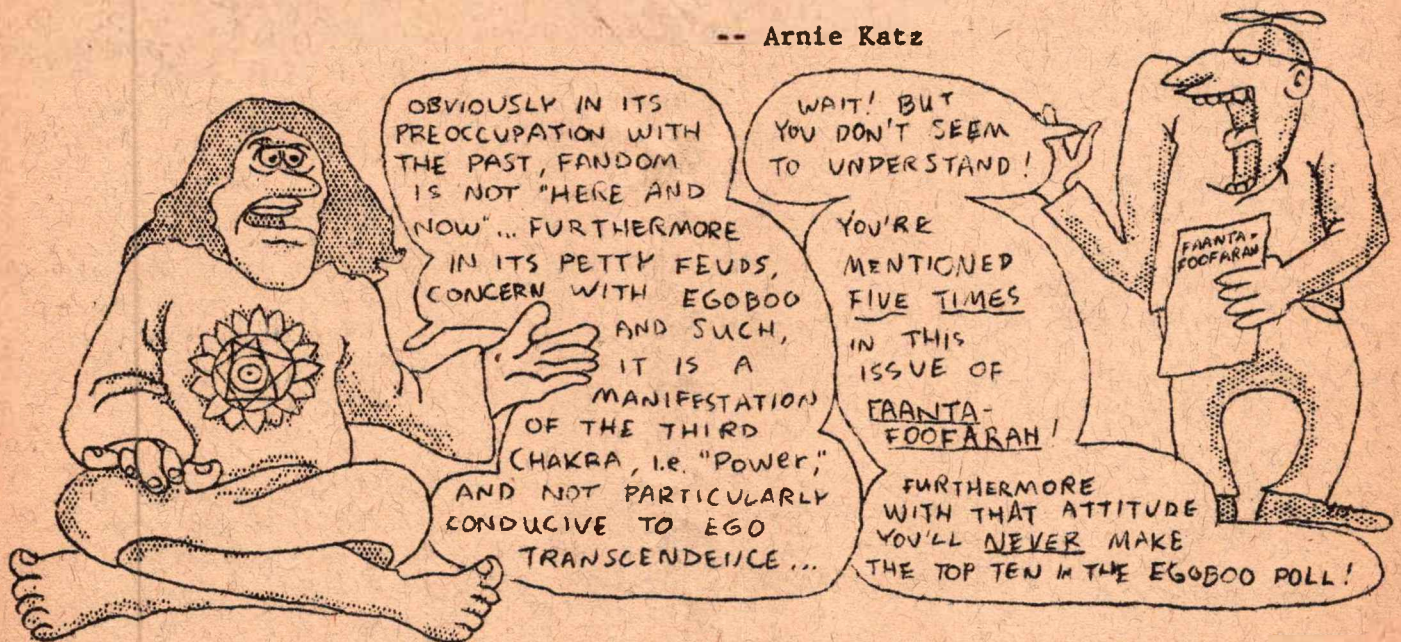
When PSY reached the point of ignoring fandom totally and the letter column got just a bit too loud and dirty, PSY started to slip as the Focal Point. The shift to half-size issues, the name change to SFR, and a little slowing of Geis' publishing schedule while he marshalled his energies in the push which has made SFR the largest circulation fanzine in history, marked the end of Eighth Fandom.

It is not enough for a fanzine to be received by every active fan. It must be read, listened to, respected. SFR has less influence on active fandom today with a circulation of 1500 than it did in the period between the NYCon and St. Louiscon when it had a circulation in the low to mid hundreds.

Since the St. Louiscon, roughly speaking, we have been in the Eighth Transition. There are still fanzines, SFR in the lead, which represent Eighth Fandom. They are alive and well, but they are no longer the mainstream. There are now the so-called Insurgent fanzines, FOCAL POINT, METANOIA, POTLATCH, EGOBOO, NOPE, and such. Neither element, I would say, has yet succeeded in establishing itself as the mainstream. If and when one does, Ninth Fandom will come into being.

And you probably thought you were going to get a prediction out of me.

-- Arnie Katz



Kinney

# ENTROPY REPRINTS

In the first issue of POTLATCH Joyce reprinted Walt Willis's classic article Wilde Heir, in which Willis, having just received a fanzine from Charles Burbee, said, "Ghod, I wish I could write like Burbee," but he knew he couldn't, because he didn't live in California. "Observe," remarked Willis, "that even Lee Jacobs did not write like Burbee until he went to California."

The fanzine he'd just received was JAWIBUCO, a one-shot published chez Burbee on June 5, 1954. The title had been made up from the first two letters of the last names of the participants in the one-shot session, Lee Jacobs, Don Wilson, Charles Burbee and Ed Cox. JAWIBUCO was one of the best of the Insurgent one-shots, any list of which would be headed by the famous WILD HAIR (on which Willis had based the pun in his article's title). Aside from two pieces by Burb himself, JAWIBUCO contained Lee Jacobs' Charles Burbee, Living Legend, in which Jacobs proved that you didn't have to have feuded with the LASFS or heard the Laney laugh to write first-rate Insurgent-style fanstuff. Jacobs had recently moved to California and he had fallen under the Burbee spell; so naturally he began to write like Burbee.

Aside from its other virtues, Charles Burbee, Living Legend is a funny article because it was something of a put-on. Jacobs spends the whole article telling Burbee that he's a Living Legend, but the fact is that Jacobs was in the process of manufacturing that legend as he wrote. Burbee had a great reputation as a fanwriter, and he had been inactive outside FAPA for half a dozen years or more, but I don't believe anyone had yet begun to write of Burb as a Living Legend till Jacobs coined the phrase.

Clarence Lee Jacobs was a journeyman fan who'd been around fandom since about the time Burbee retired into FAPA. When Jacobs was in the army, c. 1950, he coedited and copublished with Les and Es Cole (and there's a once-famous, now forgotten fan couple!) a somewhat notorious fanzine called ORGASM. It was notorious for its title, mainly, which so uptightened various fans that the editors finally bowed to the gripes and changed the name to THE BIG O. It was probably the only fanzine that ever had an article specially written for it by Henry Morgan.

During the later fifties Jacobs was active in both FAPA and SAPS and became well known for his fannish pastiches of various types of genre fiction, all of them starring Wrai Ballard, a SAPS and FAPA member. The most famous of these was Wrai Ballard, the Musquite Kid, which was filmed by Unicorn Productions, a LASFS offshoot, as The Musquite Kid Rides Again, starring Ron Ellik in the role of Wrai Ballard. In other stories in the Ballard Chronicles, Jacobs' versatile hero was a private detective, a space hero, and so forth. Fannish gaglines flew thick and fast. ("He got me in muh typin' shoulder!")

Jacobs' first fannish claim to fame, though, was an article he wrote for Art Rapp's SPACEWARP, the focal point fanzine of Fifth Fandom, late forties. I remember being much impressed when I read of how, when Walt Willis met Jacobs c. 1950, Walt cried happily, "Lee Jacobs! The Mathematics of Fandom!" Now that's the way a fan-writer likes to be greeted.

Lee Jacobs died early in 1960, just a few days after Ron Ellik's death. We lost two good men that week...and, incidentally, two good fan writers.

-- Terry Carr

# CHARLES BURBEE -- LIVING LEGEND

LEE JACOBS

"Why don't you write an article about me," said Charles Burbee.

We were sitting at a table in the Burbee home, drinking Home Brew, doing the simple little things that Fapa members do at a Burbee one-shot session.

"Why don't you write an article about me," he repeated.

"Hell, Burbee," I said, "I could never write an article about you."

"Why not?" he said. "I wrote an article about you. I gave you egoboo. Why don't you write an article about me? Why don't you give me egoboo?"

I hesitated. I was a guest in Burbee's house. I had to be polite. I had to be tactful. I didn't want to act like a fan.

"It would shatter the Legend," I said simply.

"The Legend?"

"Yes," I repeated, "it would shatter the Legend. Don't you know?"

"Don't I know what?" asked Charles Burbee.

"The Burbee Legend," I said.

"My God, Lee," he said, "is there a Burbee Legend?"

"Of course there is a Burbee Legend," I said. "That's why I don't want to write an article about you. It would shatter the Burbee Legend." I took a sip of Home Brew. "It's Laney's fault."

"What is Laney's fault?"

"The Burbee Legend," I said. "He started it. He wrote an article for the Fapa on how to become a fabulous, Burbee-like character. He mentioned that Willie Rotsler had tried for years to be a fabulous, Burbee-like character, but had only succeeded in being an arty-type feller. He said that you were a dirty talking person. 'Charles Burbee is the dirtiest talking person I know' was the way that Towner put it.

"Laney started the Burbee Legend," I said.

"Laney only started the Burbee Legend?" asked Charles Burbee. "You mean there's more?"

"There's much more," I said. "I could write a ten page article on the Burbee Legend if I wanted to. I could tell about the female N'York type fanne who asked about Burbee. 'Is it true what they say about Burbee?' she asked, I could tell about Hal Shapiro and the Postcard Episode. I could tell about many things. But

I won't, of course."

"Why won't you?" asked Charles Burbee. He seemed interested.

"You wouldn't believe the stories that are circulating about you," I said. "Fapa wouldn't believe them. They are part of the Burbee Legend."

"Oh," he said.

"They were circulated by fans," I pointed out.

"I wouldn't believe them," he agreed. He hesitated. "Why wouldn't I believe them? I am a fan myself."

"What?" I was astonished. "You are a fan?"

"Yes," he said. "I am a fan."

"You jest, Burbee," I said. "You aren't a fan, Why do you say you are a fan? Why do you, a Living Legend, make such rash statements?"

"I read prozines," he said.

"That proves it," I said. "That proves you aren't a fan. Modern fans don't read prozines. They read pocketbooks and write letters to fanzines. They don't read science fiction."

"They don't?"

"They don't."

"How would you know?" asked Charles Burbee. "Didn't you publicly state that you are not a fan? If you are not a fan, how do you know so much about Modern Fandom?"

"I'm a member of Saps," I said.

He nodded his head understandingly. He had heard of Saps.

"That has nothing to do with it," he said. "I don't care what the modern standards are. I am a fan. A fan of the old school, if necessary, but I am still a fan."

"You do have a sensitive, fannish face," I admitted.

He smiled at such praise.

"So why don't you write an article about me," said Charles Burbee. "Why don't you tell all of fandom that Charles Burbee is a normal fan with a sensitive, fannish face who reads prozines like the fans of the old school?"

But I won't do it. I'll drink Burbee's Home Brew and chuckle uproariously at incredible but true tales of the old Lasfs. But I won't write an article about Charles Burbee at this one-shot session.

I wouldn't want to shatter the Burbee Legend.

# COUNTING COUP locs

TED WHITE, 1014 N. Tuckahoe Street, Falls Church, Va. 22046

Bob Vardeman is entitled to his admiration for Harry Warner, but credit belongs elsewhere in one respect: the self-disqualification for subsequent Hugo awards as fanwriter. The first fanwriter Hugo was won in 1967 by Alex Panshin. When he was again nominated in 1968, Alex disqualified himself, offering as explanation the need to see others in contention for the award. That year, I won that Hugo (Harlan Ellison phoned me a month or two before hand to assure me it was all set: "I was going to be the winner, but hell, Ted, I've got more important Hugoes to win--I wouldn't want to win three in one year; that would be embarrassing. So, listen, I told Bill and Alva and those guys that I'd drop out and leave it to you three fanzine people. And, I told 'em to throw my votes in with yours, Ted, so congratulations! You're gonna win!" You can imagine how this bouyed my flagging ego...), and you may recall that when I was again nominated at St. Louis, I disqualified myself as a previous winner. So Harry had precedent for doing the same thing, contrary to the implications in Vardeman's letter. (Funny, I don't recall him writing any letters after I disqualified myself, about what a truly great fan I was... I guess some are born to greatness, some are called to greatness, and some will never make it, in Vardeman's book...\*sigh\*)

I like SFR, possibly because I think I understand what Geis is doing. The vitriol, like the rapine and poisoned-pens, is not the point. The point is to give everyone and anyone enough rope to, ah, Do His Own Thing. The audience forms its own conclusions. For years I was a lonely voice crying out in the wilderness that pros were far from the exalted beings most fan took them to be--that the subculture of prodom is, if anything, more juvenile, venal, and debauched than anything fandom has yet envisioned or encompassed. Why, in my early-sixties muckraking pieces for LIGHTHOUSE, for example, I stirred up several large feuds and triggered a lawsuit, purely by accurately reporting the goings-on at a Hydra Club meeting. (I'm still blacklisted, as a result.)

The after effects of that piece amused me, some of them. I had criticised a lady critic/author. A noted male critic/author who has violently disliked that lady made a point of meeting me in a restaurant and telling me for more than an hour what an absolute shit the lady was. "But, Ted, this is not something you should write about in a fanzine," he said, as he got up to leave. I gather the point of the interview was to set me straight about the cannons of truth and honesty among pros.

Later, when Alex Panshin was editing the SFWA FORUM, he'd show me the asinine, jerky letters famous pros had written him, presumably for publication. "I can't print this," he'd say. "They'd never forgive me for it when they had second thoughts and saw it in print." So he didn't print a good deal of it--including an exchange with a major editor which was stupifying in its revealing glimpse into the barren shoals of that editor's low-IQ mind--and what thanks did he get from these vaunted pros? He was reviled for "censoring them", that's the thanks he got.

"Print it," I'd tell him. "Print it all. These guys are jerks. They're proud of it. Who are you to save them from themselves? We can all deal with them much more realistically if we gain some insight into their tiny minds." But Alex is, sadly, a gentleman of the Old School, and he refrained. He took his lumps silently when what he should

have done was to let these cretins expose themselves to their hearts' content.

Well, I suppose it would have damned him equally--from the opposing viewpoint. The members of the SFWA did get up in arms about their own behavior among themselves in the FORUM, with blame laid to the doors of the innocent editors. And Geis has been reviled much of late in the fannish press for letting the pros sound off instead in his much more public forum.

But I think Geis should get a medal--particularly from fannish fandom. You guys always wondered about those secret pro parties, didn't you? And wondered if maybe there was Better Stuff going on over there? Forget it. Most nonfannish pros have huge egos, very thin skin, and regard all comers as dangerous enemies if they show any talent. They are, after all, not in it for the fun of it--as fans are--they are competing for the money, the awards, and the adulation--which they regard as their due and the only real excuse for the continuing existence of fandom. Mostly they are small-minded, biggotted, and hateful. If you doubt me, check them out: any issue of SFR will do.

Isn't this a genuine public service on Geis' part? Are two Hugoes--maybe three--too large a price to pay? I think not.

A footnote to Richard Bergeron, who callously cut me off his mailing list, and never sent me the much-fabled WARHOON 27: VOID was never, ever, nominated for a Hugo. At times that used to induce a mild bitterness in me--especially considering its high showings in fanzine polls like the FANAC Poll. But we never printed more than 175 copies, and usually the mailing list was under 150 (I tried to keep it below 125, but had my lapses). No wonder we were never in contention with the blockbusters like XERO and WARHOON, with their mammoth circulations. After reading your expose of the calculation you put into winning your Hugo, I'm not sorry, either. A bit too much tarnish on the thing, I'd think.

Funny, when I was just a kid and genuinely trying to make VOID a really great fanzine I thought that in itself was enough. I thought that actively seeking an award was reprehensible, that excellence was its own reward, and that the Truth Would Out. But I was always such an idealist about fandom, you see. It never occurred to me I could buy a Hugo. Well, that's one thing I'm glad of.

Hmmm. This letter seems a bit cynical. Put it down to...a certain detached view of the microcosm. It's still the only worth while game in town, though...

::I don't mind, so much, that the pros are being exposed for What They Are, as that an entire Fandom is so near to being molded into the same shape. That, I think, is the really reprehensible thing about not only SFR, but all the other zines of that ilk---they tend to change the literature of fandom into a combination of ass-licking and hate-mongering. Which I think is a pity. Personally, I'm too old to become interested in the hero-worshipping facet of sercondom, and I find the poison-pen exchanges to be too much for me--I am frightened by the posturings and growlings of fandom's and prodom's peculiar paper tigers.

Which is very far afield from the reason I don't want to see SFR take a third Hugo. I don't want to see SFR (or any other zine) win three Hugo's in a row because I think it will do so much to belittle the value of the fan awards. Even though, as I spelled out in my article, I am very cynical in my opinion of how a fanzine Hugo can be won, I would dearly love to see my article proved false, and to once again believe that winning a Hugo actually indicated something about Quality.

SHELBY VICK, 111 Cove, Panama City, Florida 32401

Once upon a time there was a young man (well, young at heart, at least) who was sat upon by a vicious brown monster horde. They were all similar, but with differences. Some were skinny and encased in white ricepaper sheaths and had no necks, just glowing baleful red heads, others with white necks, others with necks half white, half black, some with a greenish cast, some wearing weird plastic hats. Even tho they were monsters, the longest were only 100 millimeters long, until one popped up that was 101 millimeters.

Well, sir, this young-hearted man began to get old lungs from these nicotine monsters, and decided he should really fight back. I mean, at first he wasn't the least worried; he was bigger than all of them put together, and he Could Quit When He Wanted To.

Having read all the proper books, the way he chose for quitting was one that none of them advised. He swore off cigarettes for Lent. This was quite understandable, since he was of fannish extration and had never gotten closer to a Catholic church than swapping dirty jokes with a priest. Well, he proved he could quit. Not one cigarette did he smoke during Lent. Went thru five boxes of cigars, but not one cigarette. Then, having proven his independence of the Filthy Weed, he began smoking twice as much as he had before. Then he decided maybe he should follow some of the rules for quitting he had read about and made a big production of his next attempt to quit. (That is, he did all this after trying to quit on the sly, and working easily down to just one or two cigarettes per day.) He made A Public Announcement to his family and co-workers that THIS IS IT!

He quit.

All day long, and not a single cigarette.

Not even a cigar.

The next day nothing much was said about it, aside from the fact that he usually prefaced every statement to everyone with, "I quit smoking twenty-eight hours and sixteen minutes ago." (Appropriately updated, of course.)

Eventually, however, the novelty wore off and it wasn't mentioned. In fact, the novelty wore off sufficiently that the young-hearted, old-lunged man decided he was doing well. Really, to prove he was doing quite well and that not smoking no longer bothered him, he decided to smoke a cigarette. Just one. Where no one could see him, of course. I mean, one or two a day don't really do a bit of harm!

Y'know, he began to think there was something badly wrong with him. He knew many people that smoked two, three packs a day and just could not quit at all. He knew others who smoked as much and had just quit, like that, no sweat. But never had he heard of anyone who could almost quit, who could drop down to next to none, but not cut loose all the way. All his friends said, "Good grief, if I could cut down that much, I'd quit entirely! One or two cigarettes a day just isn't smoking at all!" And other such encouraging remarks. He felt Out Of It. An oddball. A freak. Somebody who Could Smoke Just One.

Until...

One day in his mail there appeared the second issue of a wonderfully amusing fanzine name of Potlatch in which one Joyce Fisher revealed that she, too, could cut her smoking down to one or two a day.

It is a proud and lonely thing to be a fan, but it was a horrible lonely thing to be the only smoker in the world who could Almost Quit. Thanks to you, Joyce, I'm not lonely any more.

::I'm almost sorry to tell you you're Alone Again. I've not had a cigarette (not even a cigar) since New Years Eve (79 days, 15 hours, and 20 minutes ago). But, Great Ghu! I sure would love to have Just One....

LYNN HICKMAN, 413 Ottokee, Wauseon, Ohio 43567

...On the Hugos, I was nominated twice but never won, although I understand it was only a few votes difference one year. But I didn't advertise or push. Somehow, it wouldn't mean much to me to get one that way.

F.M. BUSBY, 2852 14th Avenue W., Seattle, Washington 98119

Of all the discussion of "Blue Jaunt" and the Hugoes, the most interesting was Dick Bergeron's description of the measures he took "to make sure" Wrhn won in 1962. In return I should describe the measures we took here in favor of CRY before that zine copped the marbles in 1960:

We published every monthly issue on time in our full run of 120-to-130 copies, and mailed it to our subscribers, contributors, "agreed trades" and 5 or 6 fine people who always got every issue whether they deserved it or not. Pretty sneaky ingenious tactics, wouldn't you say? We were even so sneaky as to put our "CRY" ad in support of the Seacon bid in (I think) the Pittcon Program Book rather than in a Progress Report in time to try to influence the Hugo voting. Well, tactics vary; it just goes to show that there's more than one way to skin a cat.

With all due and friendly respect to Terry Carr, I can think of several Con Committees whose later lack of interest in Hugoes is due neither to gafia nor to being Convention Fans rather than Fanzine Fans. On the latter count I cite the South Gate, Detroit, Seattle, WashDC, Berkeley (twice), NyConIII and St.Louis Committees--which adds up to 8 out of the last 12 U.S.Worldcons, more or less chaired by fanzine-fans for the most part, and most of them still publishing. No, a ConCommitteeman's later disinterest in Hugoes is, I think, due to everyone's trying to make such a Big Deal out of them, and he knows damn well they really AREN'T. It's not cynicism exactly; he just can't get it up for 'em any more, is all. Or so I have found it, over the past ten years.

DICK GEIS, P.O.Box 3116, Santa Monica, Calif. 90403

Let us not have harsh feelings; I like you. You write good.

The situation re SFR and the Hugo is simple---I think SFR in 1970 has earned its third Hugo. By that I guess I mean that I earned it; I worked very hard, I turned out seven good to fine issues, and I think overall the magazine would not disgrace the award. I have established a right to claim a nomination. I would obviously very much like to "make history" with a third consecutive Hugo; and then, as I mentioned in SFR 42 (on the way) retire from the Hugo races in the future.

You feel such ego and greed is unseemly. You feel others deserve a chance at the award, which is flattering in that the phrase implies overwhelming power and quality in these quarters. Or at least circulation, which, really, doesn't mean that much, since most of the subbers to SFR are simply readers and not convention goers.

My postcard to you was a joke. The ad in the Noreascon PR was an experiment in arrogance in a way. Actually, in a very real way, this "campaign" for the third Hugo is a game with me. Of course I want the Hugo, but I am getting a tremendous kick tweaking some fannish noses in the process...yours included.

::Indeed, let us feel warmth toward one another; I like you too.

And, now we have that touching exchange of affections behind us, let's get on with it....



Just as you said, the situation in re SFR and the Hugo is simple...I don't think any fanzine published is worth three Hugoes in a row. And, I think your offer to retire from the future Hugo races is just about the most obnoxious thing I've read lately. It sounds as if you view fandom as some sort of boxing match, and imagine that you'll retire an Undefeated Champion.

I believe I've made it fairly clear that, although SFR is a very fine sercon zine, it's not my favorite fanzine. But, no sin in that: there are many fans who'll disagree with my dislike of sercon material. However, despite my dislike of book reviews (which in itself would keep SFR from being my favorite fanzine) my objection to SFR winning a third award consecutively is not based on the merits of the zine. I simply dislike having my theories proved correct; I'd like to see a zine with a fraction your circulation beat you out for the award. Barring that, I'd at least like to see some zine win whose editor hadn't alerted his readership to the contest, and coached his readers on how to vote (for him).

It is very possible that you would still feel the award had some meaning for you, despite your having asked for it---though I wonder about that, and can't help but imagine the rocketship will gleam a little less when you reflect on your method of attaining it. But I'm less concerned at how the rocketship looks to you, than how it looks to me, and having it clearly proven that it's so readily and repeatedly available for no value higher than circulation and the asking will do little to enhance my regard for the Hugo.

JONH INGHAM, 21157 Kingscrest Dr., Saugus, California

Was up at Greg Shaw's when news of the earthquake came, so my Mother and I spent an anxious day driving back, fantasizing on just what damage the old abode had sustained. ("The chimney has probably fallen off"... "The whole place is probably a razed and smoking ruin"... ) We finally arrived to find the outside just fine but the inside a wall to wall disaster area. A floor to ceiling bookshelf had deposited its contents on top of the stereo and a coffee table, eradicating the latter. A few hundred dollars worth of crystal was powder on the floor. The kitchen floor was covered with glass, china, spices and sauces. In my room every piece of paper had deposited itself on the floor, including all my fanzines, which had taken up almost all the walking area. For a moment I considered spreading them out a wee bit further and having the most fannish carpet in existence. In the end I sat down and read a letter from Terry Carr and POTLATCH, the fanzine to forget earthquakes by.

The cover is, again, excellent. If Kinney keeps this up we can start wallpapering the walls a la the old Avalon and Fillmore posters. (In fact, it would create a great fannish total look with the carpet. I'll just spread a few Xeros around the baseboards so as to reflect off Kinney's signature.)

Congratulations on "Entropy Reprints"; it certainly is something that is needed in fandom. Avhile ago Len Bailes and Bill Glass lent me a bunch of old fanzines, among which was ENTROPY. It's a pleasure to see the tradition carried on. Hey Terry, how about re-printing "No Mo Hupmobile" by Dean Grennell? It may just be the best piece of fan literature ever produced. (Or is that saying a little too much?)

SETH McEVOY, 217 Burcham Drive, East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Perhaps I just can't see it, but I don't agree with Will Straw when he talks about the revival of apas. It is possible that they will soon be important, but from what I hear of FAPA, and what I know of SAPA, APA-45, SLAN-APA, and MYRIAD, all the apas are in a slump, with many old members dropping out of apa fandom and who knows what they are doing? Perhaps what he means is that most of the apas are having a great influx of new members, and

that fans are invading the apas in droves.

I think that the main focus of fandom is turning into something new, that is neither apazines or genzines, but personalzines, like Metanoia, Potlatch, and many others.

::Though I knew that some apas were experiencing a recession in quality and quantity of material, I hadn't known that it had actually reached the point of members dropping out....perhaps I should have realized it, but my contact with apac is now non-existent since I dropped out of the apa I was in last summer. Interesting to learn that I'm not the only one who drifted away from being interested in apazines (to the exclusion of all other fanac.) Has this reached the proportions of a Trend?

JOHN D. BERRY, 35 Dusenberry, Bronxville, New York

This second issue is a good fanzine, and the continuity and balance that a lettercolumn provides aid this impression. Unlike a number of current fanzines, Potlatch is unabashedly oriented toward content, not layout style; I wish more of the beautifully reproduced fanzines could come up with this kind of written material. I don't mean by this to denigrate Jay's artwork; as a matter of fact, I suspect that one of the reasons I like this issue more than the first is the liberal profusion of Kinney cartoons. Jay also seems to be working on a series of covers, all expressing a peculiar brand of surrealism, and I'm looking forward to seeing his future front-page decorations for Potlatch.

I've never had this fear of dentists that people keep claiming is so widespread, but I suspended the memory of my happy relations with my own dentist to plunge into the maelstrom of Bruce's dentist story--and it was an enjoyable swim. Bruce's first article, in FOCAL POINT, established that he had the skill to write up his experiences; in "Down in the Mouth", he's proved that he can write them up very damn well. I chuckled a number of times while reading the article, and I was reminded of Thomas Pynchon's V., in which Dr. Eigenvalue, a dentist, serves also as something of an analyst, and Pynchon writes a few paragraphs about how dentistry is replacing the psychiatric profession as doctor to the neuroses of modern society. (Again a phenomenon I've never really encountered.) If Bruce ever begins making up incidents like a new John Berry (of Irish vintage, of course), fandom had better prepare to be deluged under a flood of Telzer manuscripts.

Arnie is perfectly capable of replying to Will Straw's strange conception of numbered fandoms, and I'm sure he will, but let me register my protest anyway. For one thing, Will forgot the idea of interregnums, which Ted White worked into his articles on numbered-fandoms-since-6th (After Silverberg?) in SFFY and in EGOBOO. I hardly think that the then adolescent Los Angeles fans (Pelz, Johnstone, and our own Rich Brown) had enough effect to constitute a "fandom" in any sense of the word, and the humorous fanzines Will mentions from 1962-64 are usually regarded as unsuccessful attempts to buck the prevailing trend as far as I know.

I agree completely with your comments to Mike Glicksohn, whose opinions are usually admirable. This muttering against the people who ask if maybe today's fanzines aren't a little poorer in general than those of many earlier periods reminds me forcibly of the complaints of the young British fans after 1964 or so when they were criticized for writing mostly crud. "All is relative, so we're not worse we're just Different." I don't mean to pick on British fandom; that argument has been hashed out many times. I suppose there will always be those who can't tell good writing from bad, and even more common, those who reverse Sturgeon's Law and consider 90% of everything to be good. Nor do I intend to denigrate the high-quality material that is produced in fandom today, especially in the field of graphics. But the average level of writing in fanzines, apart from the ideas expressed and apart from my own particular tastes, is pretty poor. It's ironic to see Mike Glicksohn defending the quality of mediocre fanzines, because I consider him,

along with Greg Shaw, to be one of the best relatively new fanwriters. (I know that Greg was in fandom before I was, but he himself admits that he didn't learn to write well until his recent return to fannish activity. In any case, he is certainly a "new fanwriter" compared to Terry Carr, Calvin Demmon, Ted White, Harry Warner, Greg Benford, or most of the other top fanwriters currently working.) The best single statement made so far is yours, which is true regardless of your feeling for the comparative quality of current and ten-year-old fanzines: "Refusal to see how today's fanzines could be made better could easily cause the field to stagnate." There's a very real danger that the editors of the best zines appearing today might get so bogged down in defending themselves and the current state of their fanzines that the zines would never improve any more.

REDD BOGGS, P.O.Box 1111, Berkeley, Calif. 94701

This is more of a reply than a genuine letter of comment on the issue, fine though the issue was. I'm particularly happy about Terry Carr's "Entropy Reprints". And Bruce Telzer is impressive, writing in his own way. If comparisons weren't odious, I'd point out Telzer's writing to several youngish fans who have made some reputations doing the same sort of thing in a much inferior way.

But replies. I don't take an especial delight in "condemning New York", and even if I did, it wouldn't be because I am a Californian. (Indeed, a native Californian by now, since I have been here nearly nine years--if that doesn't qualify me, what would?) Still, I don't think California, despite the smog in Los Angeles, is as bad as New York City, or as bad as most of the east coast megalopolis. I was talking a week ago with a fellow who is teaching at a college in Baltimore this year, and was back in the Bay Area briefly to marry a girl I know. I asked him the usual question, "How do you like the east coast?" He said he was horrified at the extremes of weather back there, and especially at the dirt that encrusts everything in the east. And those are the factors that would prevent me from living in New York if I didn't have to. As for the habitability of the midwest, it is certainly less dirty--although St. Louis is pretty bad in the downtown area--but the weather is even worse than on the east coast. I can't imagine how I survived all those years in Minnesota.

I'm surprised to learn from Harry Warner that "FAPA members made special efforts to publish good things in the February mailing when the egoboo poll ballots are distributed." Now he tells me. I have some contributions, if not "good things" exactly, in the current February FAPA mailing, but these are the first contributions of any sort I've had in the February mailing since 1964. According to the November FAPA official organ, I came in #2 in 1963 (presumably the poll taken in February 1964) so maybe Harry is right. I haven't placed high since then. Well, we shall see how well I do this year. If I had only thought of this trick before!

Jay Kinney's cover for this issue reminds me of a cover on Sky Hook in the early or mid-1950s. It was my idea (as were many SkHk covers) and drawn for me by one Bob Dougherty, a fairly active artist of the time. This cover, like Jay's, made the spaceship/insect analogy, and in addition the one of suns/sunflowers. Thanks for reminding me of Bob Dougherty. He lived in the Bay Area as I recall. If I can ever locate him now...

:: Funny you should mention it, that living in California nine years qualifies you to be a native.... I know you were speaking tongue-in-cheek, but it really is Almost True. I know that, while I was there, the most rare thing in the State seemed to be someone who was actually born and raised there. It was so infrequent (..I met not even one during my six months or so residence in Hollywood..) that, as you indicate, the "authorities" on the state are those who have lived there for more than five years. By staying more than five years, I guess they've established their right to be Natives. Which gives rise to a Question: Where do all the Californians go?

New Yorkers, on the other hand, seem to move no further from their native city than Long Island...an occasional especially hardy one may venture as far as Westchester, and real Pioneer Stock may permit a New Yorker to live in New Jersey..so long as he's in sight of Manhattan's towers. As for the rest of the nation, well, New York-born citizens seem bereft even of enough imagination to realize that there is "the rest of the nation"; they conceive the rest of the nation as being composed of some bottomless pit...much as Columbus' crew must have conceived the ultimate end of their voyage.

I don't know about FAPA, since I'm not a member. (But, I've got hopes for Some Day Soon...I'm up to #14 on the w.l.) But, I'd be much surprised if the FAPA egoboo poll worked too differently from the Hugo balloting, and I'm certain that Harry knows whereof he speaks....

TERRY CARR, 35 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201

I've figured out why you eat paper. Obviously you were at one time trained as a secret agent, which training consisted of eating messages after reading them. Probably your memory of your period as a spy was wiped from your mind by narcohypnosis when you left the service -- and presumably other memories were implanted to fill the gap. You probably "remember" a whole lot of unreal things, like tribal dancing at the equinoxes, or some uneventful job somewhere, or living in some other city than New York. St. Louis, maybe.

But don't worry about the paper-eating; it's just a vestige of your spy training. Lots of retired agents do it; it doesn't necessarily mean your memories are apt to come back. Good thing, too, because you can guess what they do to supposedly de-briefed agents whose memories return. Messy. Take my advice, though: if you ever get captured by the Other Side for questioning, don't bite down on your right rear molar....

::Terry just called on the phone to ask for some fan's address. As I (Arnie) talked to him, Joyce recalled that she had gotten a bulky envelope from Terry about a week ago. Fearful that he would refer to something in a note he might've included in the as yet unopened package, Joyce rushed to open it while Terry and I settled the fate of fandom for the next month. Though Terry had stapled the letter (and an accompanying "Entropy" column) to the envelope Joyce succeeded in getting the note loose just in time to tell me to tell Terry that she had gotten his note.

When Terry hung up, I asked Joyce what was in the letter. She showed me the two delightful paragraphs printed above. "You're going to print it, of course," I said.

"I dunno," said the editor of POTLATCH. She wasn't sure it was truly vintage Carr.

"look, it's pretty funny, and it's a letter from Terry," I reasoned. I didn't add that I had never had an LoC from TCarr.

So, she stenciled it up, and once she had it all stenciled, she turned to me and said, "You know, this is a comment on LOG, not POTLATCH. You remember the stuff you wrote about me eating paper?"

I remembered. Then it hit me: I get my first letter of comment from Terry Carr and Joyce is running it in her fanzine, for godsake!

I told her the least she could let me do was answer Terry's letter in POTLATCH, which I'm in the process of doing.

But you know, I think equality of fanac still has a few rough spots. -- Arnie

NORM CLARKE, 9 Bancroft, Aylmer E, Quebec, Canada

You cannot fool a crafty old bastard like me, "Miss" "Fisher". I happen to know that you are really Arnie Katz, for I have a keen eye and a smart brain and I noticed the address. So: you are Arnie Katz, or possibly his fifteen-year-old twin brother. That is the way I have figured it.

This is not a loc in the usual sense; there isn't really much to Comment on, you know. But that's fine: there are thousands upon thousands of fmz that sustain themselves and, one supposes, their many thousands of readers with their millions of thought-provoking, insightful and really freaky Comments. You know, Insights and Philosophy and all that. Well, that's okay, too. I guess. I suppose I can even dig that there are actually millions and millions of "science fiction fans" who subscribe to--uh, what was its name again?--oh yeah, Scientific Fictional Refuse; and, by wrinkling my brow a lot, I can even imagine these same multitudes actually sitting there for hours and hours, reading an amateur magazine full of professional writers talking about that major underground artform (and themselves), pseudoscientifiction (as I believe it is called).

Meanwhile, back in Aylmer, an old fan has been sitting, waiting, snoring softly through the passage of the years, keeping warm by the flames of burning copies of Astounding Analogous Tales (April, 1943 - mint cond.), sustaining himself with the life-giving chemicals still to be found in, oh, The Incompleat Burbee, Hyphen, Grue, Fijagh, LeZ, Birdsmith and (my personal favorite) the legendary Honque (Ted White does this sort of thing much better than I).

Surprise! The old fan mentioned in the last paragraph is none other than I myself! I don't give a rotten damn for science fiction or science fiction amateur magazines (sometimes erroneously called "fanzines".) I like faaans and fanzines and fanzine fans and fan fandom.

I like yer ole fanzine, "Joyce", and I like Nope and Egoboo and Metanoia and even Focal Point; and things are looking up. Cheers.

Well, I said this wasn't going to be a Letter of Comment, and it isn't; but I must say that your paragraph about your "plans for your new zine" ("essays by Dean Koontz," etc) was pure delight. And your column about Geis and fmz Hugos deserves applause. Apropos of nothing in particular, a couplet just popped into my pretty pink brains:

One Richard Geis  
Will more than suffice.

I thought I'd read almost all of Willis' stuff, but "Wilde Heir" was new to me, and very funny, of c. Arnie's story was just silly, which is what he intended, I guess.

Say! If you're not Arnie's 15-year-old twin brother, then you must be living in sin! Please cancel my subscription.

::Since I just couldn't bear the thought of cancelling your name from my mailing list, I have instead determined to stop Living In Sin. As of April 25, I will, as it were, Sin No More.

The above Announcement is, indeed, For Real.

GREG SHAW, 64 Taylor Drive, Fairfax, California 94930

The first thing to catch my eye was your piece on the Egoboo Poll. I'm looking forward to the results, naturally, because this is the first such poll for which my fanac is

eligible, and I was very pleased and flattered to find my name and my fanzine mentioned among your choices in two categories. You've presented a good range of choices here, though I'm sure many fans would not think so. I was very surprised at your mention of a fanzine I'm not familiar with, GILGAMESH. I hope my ignorance will be excused if I ask who puts it out and where I can get a copy. Among your choices for "all time best fmz" is one I'm also unfamiliar with, BEM. I hope somebody can tell me who and when.

Terry's reprint is an excellent choice. This sort of humor is not generally considered funny anymore, and it takes a real adjustment of the mind to slip into the context of this piece. This particular adjustment is one I especially enjoy, because I have an odd nostalgia for the way fandom was when I was 3-4 years old. It's a common affliction in these times, I guess. Today I was reading an article by Vernon McCain in a 1952 fanzine where he waxes nostalgic over the fandom of the pre-war years -- a decade before he entered our midst. He was bemoaning the insufferably huge convention attendance figures, the lack of unity and singleness of purpose in fandom, etc. Maybe 1970-71 will seem simple and halcyon to the fans of 1990. If there are any.

Bruce Telzer's story is very funny, though I keep wondering how much of it is true. If it all is, I want to tell him to forget about Dr. Needle's predictions for his future mouth, and beat it on down to a normal dentist where he can get his cavities filled for \$10 apiece. Any time you get handed a line like "Personalized Dentistry - \$1548" a synopsis should connect in your brain telling you, "friend, you is in the wrong place!"

I also enjoyed Arnie's column, but again I couldn't keep from wondering how much of it was true. I would have been a lot more interested to know how those non-fans knew so much about George Barr et al. than I was in your problems pronouncing "werewolf". But, like most of Arnie's stuff, it made me laugh, so who am I to beef?

I'm sure Arnie will be expounding with glee on the subject of Numbered Fandoms now that Will Straw has raised the issue, but I can't just sit here and watch this kind of nonsense going down without speaking out. If we numbered fandoms your way, Will, we'd be in 38th fandom or something by now. Fred Patton and Don Fitch coming into fandom is hardly the occasion to usher in a new era. The way I see it, a "fandom" is known and remembered as a gestalt -- a time when a lot of people were hyperactive, producing quantities of good writing and creating an atmosphere that would be remembered fondly in colder times. Calling 1967-69 "Eleventh Fandom" just because nothing went on then is ridiculous. Sixth fandom occupied the early fifties, and though there was never an interregnum like we had in the 60s the period of '58-'62-3 should be called Seventh Fandom because a whole new thing came about. New traditions were born, some of the finest fmz of all time were published, FANAC provided fandom with a sense of unity long missing. There has been no "fandom" since then--just an endless series of book reviews. FLYING FROG, FRAP and the rest were, as Bob Lichtman will tell you, only a hopeless attempt to revive a fandom that was clearly dying.

Harry Warner will of course repeat his contention that the whole idea of numbering fandoms is a bunch of poppycock, but there's no denying it can be a useful way of looking at things, if handled intelligently.

Anyway, Will Straw, this is Eighth Fandom. Ted White said so.

::GILGAMESH is Terry Carr's personalzine. I questioned him about its availability and was both surprised and flattered to learn that it's only going to 20-25 people, on a closed mlg. list. BEM was edited by Tom White and Mal Ashworth, 54 to 58. If you check out Arnie's article in the next issue of ENERGUMEN, "Light of Other Days", you'll learn All About BEM. Numbered fandoms are not only based on a useful concept, they're also a lot of fun, and make fan history easier to keep track of.

Geis and SFR won at St. Louis, won at Heicon, but what about Boston, especially now that Charlie Brown, seemingly panting with frustration--if not greed (which seems more appropriate to repeat-attempts)--has joined Dick in asking for votes? Charles has the same large circulation and probably an edge in readers in the northeast. And what about the broad hints by the editor of yet a third zine? Considering the most recent issue of Energumen, Michael's fanzine seems the most well-rounded pub and will quite likely be on the final Hugo ballot.

It would be much nicer for all concerned if fanzine editors didn't come right out and actually ask for a Hugo vote. Such editors can be the most exemplary characters, be faultlessly generous, kind to Piers Anthony, careful not to stroke even the most trigger-happy fan or pro the wrong way, but will have spurs dug into them at first sign of their glancing a little too long into their favorite mirror.

A chap like Richard Geis should realize early on that he has a lot going for him that doesn't have to be enhanced by anything--no matter how humorously it is presented. I'm reasonably sure that in his instance such over-reaching is merely ingenuousness, not quite as crude as gaucheness, but still something which experience could eventually curb. If Dick gets his third Hugo and "retires", he will quite likely have garnered it in spite of his awkward advertisements. A huge circulation does count for something, much of it damned tedious--hard--work.

It seems reasonable to expect you to give at least one follow-up report on whether or not you have adhered to your resolution to be (and it seemed to remain) an ex-smoker. One is tempted to ask, "Is this the first time you have stopped smoking?" Your attempts to withdraw from the habit are typical, certainly, and hence you're probably open to the usual pitfalls that remain after you have ceased the addiction. One day, for example, you may have so far forgotten your dropping of smoking that you'll accept one without thinking and puff it half away before it dawns on you what you're doing. Actually, from your description, you didn't seem too badly hooked. Presumably, after peering into an ashtray, you didn't sneak out the butts at the first opportunity; after watching the bum beat you out of a long butt you, presumably, didn't loiter back later to see if he'd left you a short butt; and one gathers that quite likely you didn't awake raving in the middle of the night, throw something around you and go out into the gutters to scavenge for the tossings of late lounge-leavers.

::If both editors are to be believed...and I believe them; I don't think they would lie about such a trivial point...you are mistaken in re. the circulation of LOCUS and SFR. SFR has approximately 15-1600; LOCUS roughly a thousand. Nevertheless, it might be an interesting contest between them; I agree with you that those two zines are the two most likely candidates. I also agree with you, however, that Energumen would represent a much more attractive choice, and I do expect to see it on the ballot...but, I don't think Mike has the circulation to be strong competition against the other two. Nor do I think he is so lacking in grace as to give strong competition to the other two in their loud-voiced proclamations of their own worth.

Your imaginings of my virtues are largely incorrect; I blush to admit to most of the things you presumed were not true. You see, I was smoking two and a half packs per day---and had been smoking for 11-12 years---and quitting was really rough. Or, at least, that's the excuse I offered to myself when I found myself doing really disgusting things (stealing from ashtrays, etc.) during the cutting-down period. Yes, this was/is my first time to stop smoking...I had never been through it before, and hope never again.

It's now been 91 days, 12 hours, and 20 minutes since I've smoked.

CORY PANSHIN, Open Gate Farm, Star Route, Perkasio, Pennsylvania

Without knowing anything about the historical facts of the matter, I would like to dispute Will Straw's updating of the system of numerical fandoms on the purely theoretical ground that he makes no allowance for the transitions which were an integral part of the original idea.

Transitions are much like fandoms except for being more disorganized. They tend to last a year or two, while each fandom lasts two years or three. They often originate in catastrophes: the failure of grandiose schemes, feuds and gaffations, a decline in the prozines. The neofans of each transition are often the actifans of the next fandom. Each fandom is in part a reaction against the excesses of the one before.

Applying this to Will Straw's scheme it becomes clear that the 1957-59 period is Seventh Transition and the 1959-61 period is Eighth Fandom. His Ninth Fandom (1962-64), which seems to be little more than a "minor genzine revival" is more likely Eighth Transition. The apan Golden Age sounds like a more probable candidate for Ninth Fandom, say 1964 to 1965 or 1966. Tenth Fandom, launched by the post-NYCon genzine revival and the upsurge of Trekkies/Anachronists/headfans can probably be dated 1967-69. I suppose we are now either in Tenth Transition or just coming out of it.

WILL STRAW, 303 Niagara Blvd., Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada

Operation:Armagedden was a delight; I agree with Terry's policy of not only choosing fairly obscure pieces that would otherwise remain buried, but with showing that mid-fifties Anglofandom was something more than HYPHEN. Some of the ploys in the article border on the ingenious; with the serious constructive convention being more popular today, they could very easily be seized upon by Insurgents, and the next Secondary Universe or Mythcon might be the victim of some Livening Up. Incidentally, this would make an xlnt chapter in a project I've envisioned for some time - a Neofan's Guide made up solely of ploys various fen have devised for achieving desired ends. Shaw's Fansmanship Lectures would be an Obvious Choice, but less reknowned things like Berry's Anti-Gafia Ploys or this would make such a project of Fannish Value.

I'd agree with both you and Mike Glickson, for different reasons, on the matter of Old Fanzines; true, very few of today's zines would hold up very long as compared to 1958's offering, but the 1958-60 period has always struck me as something of a climax, and as being an exception to the overall run of fmz. Taking 1958 as being representative of the Old Fanzine period is almost cheating - going forward to the Warhoon-Lighthouse period, or backwards to the Quandry period would result in more objective comparisons. Both eras had many Good Zines, granted, but they're known really for one Stellar Fanzine than for a general level of quality shared by most of the contemporary crop of zines. I've tended in the past to call current fmz Bad, largely because I'm not particularly interested in what they concern themselves with, but I think that the literacy of many of today's sf-oriented pieces can be paralleled with that of the more respected fan writings of the fifties. I'm afraid that the Equal But Different aspect has to be considered - good writing is good writing, but I tend to enjoy an article more, regardless of whether or not it is of high quality, if it is on a topic that interests me. I've found myself bored by a Dean Grennell article in OOPSLA on firearms, and fascinated by a Leon Taylor piece in Embelyon on a story in which I had no interest, but the majority of sf-oriented writings don't interest me at all because of the fact that I lack the knowledge of the field to get out of them what the writer intends. And I think that a piece of writing in an sf zine that stimulates thought can be enjoyed equally well, if not for the same reasons, as a Willis faan-fiction piece that makes the reader Laugh.

::If you enjoy one thing more than another, don't you call it "better"?



RICK STOOKER, 1205 Logan Street, Alton, Illinois 62002

As a neofan who's first contact with fandom was essentially from SFR, I'll testify that this faanish revival is sorely needed. Too many young fans like myself come into fandom today, see lots of serious discussions of sf and book reviews, and automatically assume that that's all there is. To think that when I got SFR 36 & 37 I read all of the first and half of the second without a break that same day! And to think my height of fannish ambition was to write book reviews! When I think of all those nights I sat up sweating over some new book I'd just read, trying to put down the most outrageous nonsense about the book to send off to some crazy faned... Fortunately, I suscribed to FOCAL POINT and by reading Terry Carr's "The Infinite Beanie" and The BoSh issue of FP, I saw what other kinds of things could be done besides book reviews and deadly dull sercon articles. Why, when I first saw Jay Kinney's cartoon on the back of FP 12.5, showing a faanish fan trying to hold back a sercon, I was actually shocked and I'd wondered what kind of commie subversive fanzine I'd ordered. Then I was the sercon trying to get in. Fortunately, the pretentions of being an ambitious neofan have worn off and I'm now on the side of the faanish fan. I've read WARHOON 27 and seen what great fanzine writing can be. I've decided Pierce is too much of an idiot to waste any time on attacking. Why should I spend much time reading about sf when I've got so many books of sf that I've not got around to reading yet?

::Which is, in a paragraph, at least two of my biggest reasons for disliking sercon fan material. Number one, it's usually deadly dull. Number two, if I feel like being educated, I'll read the essays of someone whose brains I know to be superior to mine; not the serious concerned article of some would-be writer who's shooting his philosophic and intellectual wad, so to speak, in fandom. And, as you said, if science fiction is the subject that is most of interest to me on some given day, then I'll get out "A Door Into Summer" (which I still haven't had time to read) and let science fiction satisfy my craving...instead of sublimating the craving by reading an astute article by one of the primary reviewers of our day.

BOB TUCKER, Box 506, Heyworth, Illinois 61745

Tell Arnie hello if you see him. I think he will appreciate it.

::What's happening here?---I keep printing letters in response to the last issue of LOG; my fanzine's being Taken Over....

LOREN MacGREGOR, 1020 NE 89th, Seattle, Washington 98115

Sending pennies might not discourage all the people you'd like it to---I have a friend who habitually buys things with pennies, just out of spite. He's been known to run up bills of \$40 and more, and pay for the whole thing with rolls and rolls of pennies, stacked 50 each.

The potlatch, I've been given to understand, is primarily a Northwest (including Alaska) Indian thing. Is it from other parts of the country too, or did you learn of it here. People out here are quick to jump on a symbol, if they can claim it for their own.

Your description of New York fascinated me. I know two people who went there and had a horrible time--it was hot, and their hotel room got all the soot from the elevated. On the other hand, I know one of the kids from the same family who went there at the same time and had a fantastic time--he stayed at the Y and took the transit system instead of a taxi, getting off wherever he saw something interesting. It all depends on your outlook, I suppose.

::So far as I know, the potlatch is, as you say, a Northwest Indian thing; at least I've never heard of it being practiced by the Indians in the rest of the country.

Of course a person's view of New York depends on his outlook--that's true of every thing and every place, I guess. Which is the reason that, despite my nostalgic yearnings for Midwestern Mud, I'm enjoying New York so thoroughly....my outlook is getting better 'n better all the time...

I think paying with pennies would be a very nasty thing to do....and isn't there even some kind of law that a merchant doesn't have to accept over a certain number? ...Wonder if there's any such law concerning larger coins? Arnie and I are saving dimes and quarters, and our continued fantasy is the day we pay for a brand new Getstetner with eleven hundred dollars worth of dimes and quarters.

DAVE HULVEY, Route 1 Box 198, Harrisonburg, Va. 22801

Bruce Telzer's Down in the Mouth combines with the malapropism 'weird woof' to remind me of a public health dentist I once had the misfortune to visit. He smoked incessantly, had the faint odor of spirits staining his breath, loved to pay country music at full blast on the portable radio and took perverse pleasure in yelling at his patients when they failed to obey his commands with REA express swiftness. He savored the opportunity of my arrival to lecture me on the Responsibility of Youth while fiendishly screwing various needles and other strange foreign objects into my tender gums. I was only an hour late, or two hours, but I always allow an hour's delay for bureaucratic red tape and government efficiency. Sadly, he asked me to spit, and I, not knowing the accepted social etiquette of his office, unloaded a big brown blob on the nice, shiny black scrub woman washed floor. Of course, he didn't quite approve, so I had to endure another lecture, this time on the advantages of spitting in a little water-whishing receptacle on the side of the Chair. Finally, after several interesting extractions (I couldn't afford pain killer, gosh woe) and such, he presented me with what might be called the "bill". It was very low; those public health guys are cheap, if not nice, kind father images. Why, he almost smiled when I left.

JERRY KAUFMAN, 1485½ Pennsylvania Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43201

I've never had laughing gas myself. The dentists I've always been to used Novacaine. When the dentist would start poking around the far side of my teeth with his four-inch needle, I would have flash fantasies of the needle coming through my cheek. Novocaine needles are about the most morbid thing I've ever thought of.

I liked the Golden Bagel about three times as much as both LOGs together. Which is still a lot. Woof! I was laughing aloud at it, and almost poured my second helping of ravioli on it instead of the plate. Blind with hysteria, I guess.

I'm not sure why you called those zines "insurgents" in your editorial. Out of 12 zines, three are mostly serious sf fanzines (SFR, Speculation and mostly Energumen). Two more I'm uncertain of..I think Horizons is Harry Warner's FAPazine, and Gilgamesh escapes me completely. The rest are fannish. Why are they all insurgent?

::I guess I did misuse the word, now that you mention it, since my listing did contain some serious fanzines. What I actually consider Insurgent to mean is that it's non-scientifictional. My favorite fanzines of the current crop are usually those that are insurgent against the serconish, over-ornate, over-big fanzines of the fannish era just past. I'm not certain that's correct--if you (or anyone) have a better definition, I'd like to hear it.

HANK DAVIS, Box 154, Loyall, Kentucky 40854

I have the perfect solution to the problem of identifying oneself to other fans without making more of an ass of oneself than usual... All fans will wear sunglasses (those with regular glasses will have to resort to the clip-on variety) with a special filter. All fans, most of whom run around with nutty buttons on their shirts exhorting the reader (of the buttons) to "Impeach Eric Sevearid", "Stamp Out Chain Stores", "Support the Bob Shaw Fund", etc., will cunningly attach an apparently transparent, adhesive plastic disk to the face of said button. To the lowly non-fan, the button will merely appear shinier than usual, but to the fan with his special glasses, the secret message on the plastic disk will be plain as day: I AM A FAN.

I might try to patent this idea, if I hadn't lifted it from Doc Savage....

BUCK COULSON, Route 3, Hartford City, Indiana 47348

No, I don't think there are six or seven fanzines today that could be listed among the 10 best of all time, but then I don't think there were 6 or 7 on that '58 FANAC poll that could be either. Two maybe, GRUE and HYPHEN. Some of the rest weren't even the best of 1958, much less of all time. And while there is a definite difference in quality from one fanzine to another, there isn't a hell of a lot when you're judging fan eras, except of course that the first ones were crude compared to what came later. (Of course, the idea of fan eras is pretty ridiculous to begin with, if it comes to that.)

You had a nice pitch for the Egoboo Poll; the first one that made me even consider voting for a fan poll. But in the end I decided that the results would not be worth the expenditure of effort. Fanzine polls have even less to recommend them than the Hugo and the Nebula awards. They're all popularity contests, anyway, and I see no more real reason to be joyful over winning a fan popularity contest than I do an effort to be a Big Man On Campus. Certainly anyone who has a desperate desire to win an Egoboo Poll or a Hugo (or an unprecedented third Hugo) is not anybody that I give a damn about one way or another, so why bother filling out lists? I can see the pro Hugo or Nebula as a boost to a writer's stature and maybe even earning capacity, so I'll make an effort to assist the writers that I like...and since the fan Hugo goes along with the pro one, I vote. But I'd cheerfully vote to abolish all fan Hugos (if there was a reason like a shortage of money to make the awards; they aren't important enough to abolish just out of spite, or even to cause spite.)

Incidentally, I find POTLATCH a very good fanzine, though it isn't one that's going to inspire me to write letters of comment very often. I have an interest in certain individual fans, but none whatsoever in "fandom". "Fandom" is merely a place where I can occasionally meet interesting people; as an organization it is no more interesting than the population of Etna Green, Indiana, some of whom would undoubtedly also be interesting if I had a handy way of meeting them.

::I wish you had voted -- I would have been especially interested to learn what you consider the best-ever fanzines to be. -- Vote to abolish fan awards? Not I, even with my extreme cynicism on the subject....or at least Not Yet. I still have some hope that fandom may get itself in hand, and the current low-value of the awards may be improved. Eternal optimism, I guess....and unrealistic, too. Nevertheless, it would be nice if it could happen.

I wouldn't go so far as Hank Davis, with his tongue-in-cheek scheme to identify himself to other fans---some fans I'd just as soon passed me by ---but I disagree with you, too. I think fandom is a more interesting organization than Etna Green--that's why I'm an active fan. And, I like fans (most of them) better than I like mundane folk (most of them).

MIKE GLICKSOHN, 267 Saint George Street, Apt. 807, Toronto 180, Ontario, Canada

I sense a certain inconsistency in what you say and what you do. I notice that you separate off the cartoonists from the artists for the Egoboo Poll without any difficulty and I assume you realize the lack of value of such statements as "Tim Kirk is better than Bill Rotsler" or "Jonh Ingham is worse than Alicia Austin". Obviously, such comparisons are meaningless. And yet you demand that fanzines whose ends and means are as distinct as those of LOCUS, SFR and POTLATCH should be compared together and rated against each other. "Different" is fine for art, eh, but get into the realm of fanzines and especially into the realm of fannish fanzines, and suddenly it has to be "better" and "worse" again. Sorry but I'm not buying that. I'm not afraid of comparing my fanzine with any other fanzine that has the same basic goals, which includes a wide variety of fanzines such as SFR, GRANFALLOON, BEABOHEMA etc, but to compare it to FOCAL POINT is absurd. We aim at different ends are intended for different functions. It just happens that the Hugos are set up so that such comparisons have to be made, but that still does not put them on any sort of logical basis. So I still prefer to say "different" and admit that it's purely a matter of my personal bias and no inherent absolute right or wrong that's involved. Take a look at your nominees for the Poll, for example. Your preference for fannishness is obvious and perfectly valid. The poll is designed to find people's preferences and that is what you've stated. But I think you're carrying things a bit far if you try and say that all the "best" writers and artists are working within what I might call the Focal Point Fannish Circle. I'd put Jonh Ingham or Grant Canfield above Joe Staton as a cartoonist any day but that's my preference. And Colleen Brown may be the best new fan in your circle but to my knowledge I've never seen anything she has written. But she's a friend of yours so you see her material whereas you may not be familiar with all the fanzines that John Ingham has drawn for or the issues of his own fanzine that he has published. Who is "better", Jonh or Colleen? The only rational answer is that the question has no validity except on a purely and totally subjective scale and maybe not even then unless equal familiarity with the output of each is assumed. I'm not scared of "better" or "worse", Joyce, but I am scared of value judgements that claim to be absolutes. I'm as anxious as you are to see the fanzine publishing field striving for constant improvement, and I try to do this, but I also admit that different faneds march to different drummers and I'm delighted that it is that way. Be true to your own standards, but don't try to push them onto your fellows, that's all I was suggesting.

::Some way or other, Mike, you've twisted this discussion around to where we're debating the merits of fannishness over serconnishness. I won't argue about that, since (as you indicate) this could be largely a matter of opinion. However, I will continue in my maintaining that fanzines of today are, by and large, inferior to the best fanzines of yesteryear...not just "different", by virtue of their material, but "inferior" because of the lack of quality writing. As you have guessed, and I've frequently admitted, I prefer fannish material...but despite my preference, I can clearly see that SFR is a vastly superior fanzine to SANDWORM. On the other hand, WARHOON is head-and-shoulders superior to both of those zines...not because of the type of material it publishes, but because of the quality.

Or, to put it another way, I definitely can say that Alicia Austin is much better, doing the type of art she does, than Jeff Schall, who does a radically different type of art. The fact is that Alicia does a very good job of her chosen field; Jeff does an inferior job in his chosen field...the fact that they are in a different field does not defy comparisons between them, when the subject being discussed is quality.

We're sending you a group of HYPHEN's...should reach you soon. I'll be anxious to see if you won't agree after reading them that contemporary fandom has produced nothing that can compare with them in quality-writing, issue after issue.

# BLUE JAUNT -Y'ED

Brian Burley and Dennis McCunney came to visit one recent evening. The conversation drifted through various fannish channels until we chanced to the subject of BNF-dom and commenced to debate the virtues of fanzine publishing over convention attending, as to which would be most likely to make one into a Big Name Fan. Arnie naturally chose to champion the banner of the publishing giants, and Brian waved the flag of convention fandom. Even though my heart really belongs to the mimeo set, I do have more than passing interest in con fandom, and also felt it to be more hospitable to argue on the side of our guest.

"It takes mass communication methods to get your personality widely known in fandom" said Arnie.

"Not necessarily," I countered. "How many conventions did you attend last year, Brian?"

Brian counted on his fingers and estimated eight cons.

"That's equivalent to eight issues of a personal zine..." I pointed out.

"Hmmm" said Arnie, as the comparison gave him pause. Then: "But not really. A neofan today can be influenced by something published ten years ago, but he can't be influenced by the personality of a member of con fandom except right at that time. For real Staying Power, you've got to have the printed word."

"Let's hear it for the printing press", someone offered. "Three cheers for Gutenberg."

After a rousing cheer, the conversation continued. "But what is said at a convention can be recorded. Con fans are frequently written about in fanzines. Don't worry, Brian: you'll be permanent---I'll write something about you." Brian gravely offered me his deepest appreciation for guaranteeing he'd not fade away.

Arnie nodded his approval of this touching exchange of vows, then continued: "Being written about doesn't get your personality across. It expresses the personality of the person who's writing...what he thinks about you..."

"But even the best writer can't describe personality well enough to get across what five minutes of face-to-face conversation will get across. Attending eight conventions would do more to get your personality known in fandom than 8 personal zines would do."

"But how about your 'mailing list'? I mean, how many people were you really in contact with at all eight conventions?"

"That's a bad line of argument," I said to my own true love. "The size of con fandom being what it is, there were probably a group equivalent to LOG's mailing list who

POTLATCH  
Joyce Fisher  
59 Livingston St.  
Apt. 6-B  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201



FIRST CLASS MAIL

John Ingham  
2115 Kingscrest Drive  
Saugus, Calif. 91350

BLUE JUANT, continued...

attended all eight cons last year."

We continued to argue and debate, with nothing really conclusive being said.

Then suddenly, it came to me. I had the final argument, the one I knew couldn't be topped...the last word on the subject.

It was, of course, unfortunate that this Really Conclusive Argument had to be for the side I was arguing against...

"Brian--we've lost. We have to think of a way to counter this point, or we don't stand a chance in this argument.... The reason fanzine fans are more likely than convention fans to go down in history as BNFs, is that fanzine fans write the fan history. Fanzines are the source of fan history."

I have promised Brian the use of my mailing list when he produces his first personalzine next month....

jf

\* \* \* \* \*

Well, that's It for this time....and here's hoping that next time will only be a short time away...

I'm typing this last stencil on April 4; considerably later in the year than I expected to publish POTLATCH 3....but You Know How It Is. Hopefully, #4 will be much more prompt in it's appearance.

Of course, POTLATCH #4 will be published by someone named Joyce Katz....(Amazing to think that this could well be the last fanzine I publish as "Joyce Fisher"...but I hope you'll everyone of you receive it...

Naturally, the way to insure that you do, is to respond to this one....

After all, you just can't let a newly-wed faned go without letters of comment!

-- Joyce Fisher