

The 22nd issue of the frequent fanzine that wishes it had some of that Letterman money. Edited and published by Andrew Hooper and Carol Root, 4228 Francis Ave. N. # 103, Seattle, WA 98103, members fwa. Available for the usual, i.e., letters of comment, submissions of art or prose, or your own fanzine in trade. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 166, 10/29/93. Material this time comes from Andy, Algernon D'Amassa, and Catherine Mintz. Art by Ben Bost (title), Bill Kunkel (p. 1), S.S. Adkins (p. 2), Alexis Gilleland (pp 3 and 5), Randy Mohr (p 3), Diana Harlan Stein (page 4) and Bill Rotsler (page 6). Also available at the same address is Fanthology 1989, featuring a cover by Dan Steffan, original art by Stu Shiffman and Craig Smith, articles by 14 notable contemporary fan-writers, including a rambling and politically dubious editorial by A.P. Hooper. The whole 60-page package is available for \$7.00, plus \$1.00 for third-class postage, and all proceeds will be divided between the Transatlantic Fan Fund and the Down-Under Fan Fund. Hurry! Only dozens of copies remain....



THE RAINY TOWN TATTLER MEETS A BROOKLYN GORILLA by Andy

WE'RE VERY SORRY that the use of Mark Manning's bulk-mailing permit necessitates the placement of his return address on the mailing face of this fanzine. We wish that we could avoid the confusion that this causes for some of our readers. But this is the third time that we've noted that correspondence should be sent to us at our Francis Avenue address, and that address has appeared in the second sentence of the entire fanzine for more than ten issues now. The conclusion I have come to is that people who are sending letters and trades to Mark Manning are not actually reading *Spent Brass*, and wouldn't mind very much if we removed them from our mailing list. We'll try to make an exception for subscribers to *The Texas SF Inquirer*, who were given the incorrect address in the 50th issue of that fanzine.... **GET WELL WISHES AND POSITIVE THOUGHTS** should be sent to Don Fitch, one of the most generous and hard-working people in fandom. Don found that the apparent sinus infection he suffered with all

through ConFrancisco was in fact a reaction to some sort of growth that would require surgery to remove. He joked in a recent letter that he figures he will soon have to add his nose to the list of body parts -- eyes and ears -- that he currently puts on in the morning. We think he deserves to have a gold nose like Tycho Brahe did. Get well soon Don! **MARK YOUR CALENDARS** for the weekend of November 4th, 5th & 6th, 1994. I've been asked to appear as Fan Guest of Honor at Contradiction 14, to be held in Niagara Falls, NY, over the aforementioned weekend. Who knows what I'll be called on to do...the blizzard of contracts, death-threats, promotional materials and chain-letters that arrived in the wake of my accepting the part leaves me to wonder if any of the members of the committee have jobs. If you'd like to show up and ask in a very loud voice just what possible justification there is for my being chosen as GoH, send \$17.00 (cheap, huh? I'm probably all they could afford after they got Janet Kagen and Mike Resnick to come) to Contradiction 14, P.O. Box 100, Bridge station, Niagara Falls, NY 14305-0100.... **MY COLUMN** of fanzine reviews inside should not be taken as a sign that I have assumed that task on a continuing basis. Our regular columnists have failed (for a variety of excellent reasons) to submit any reviews for some months now, and since we are still eager to offer some comment on the rest of the fanzine milieu, I have stepped up to pinch hit this issue. A frequent fanzine needs columnists who are prepared to submit material frequently, and before I begin calling in favors, turning over flat rocks and applying infusions of tana leaves in an effort to find a new fanzine reviewer, I thought we might throw it open to our readers. Anyone out there have opinions they would like to share on current fanzines? We can promise that you won't ever have to wait too long to see your column in print.... **THE 1993 POLL** results are not in this issue because as I write this the deadline for sending in the ballots has not yet passed. We'll continue to accept votes until we go to press on issue # 23, so please send in your ballot if you haven't done so already! **NEW OFFICERS** were elected recently for SF3, the Madison fan-club's corporate arm. Our long-time association with that group leads us to wish the new officials the best of luck in their endeavors. Perhaps they will be able to explain to the members of SF3 why their thriving clubzine was throttled over a year ago, and why its putative replacement has yet to publish a single issue.... **GAFIATES FLUSHED** from their long slumber in recent months include Bill Donaho, who enjoyed his time at ConFrancisco enough to assemble and mail a new issue of his fanzine *Habbakuk*, after a hiatus of 25 years, and Greg Pickersgill, whose fmz *Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk* had jaws dropping on both sides of the Atlantic on its arrival. Anyone out there who sends us a facsimile of the latter title would earn our undying gratitude.... **POTLATCH III**, a worthy event of interest to serious-minded fans (e.g., people who know how to read) will be here soon: February 11th to 13th, 1994, at the University Plaza Hotel in Seattle. Memberships are \$30 until January 15th, available at P.O. Box 31848, Seattle, WA 98103. Potlatch is the west coast entry into the small, brainy convention field, pioneered by events like Readercon, Sercon and Fourth Street Fantasy, and I recommend it to the many fans who get the creeping horrors at the prospect of attending enormous modern cons. Stu Shiffman and I are struggling to organize an alternate history panel that "doesn't suck"; your suggestions will be appreciated. Also, I'm running the dance this year, so only one Grateful Dead request per hour, please.... -- aph. ♡

For many moons I have lain here in this dark hole.

IVY LEAGUE BONES

by Catherine Mintz

A hundred years and more ago Connecticut was farmed quite intensively, especially considering the place was scraped clean by a glacier that left debris all over the landscape. These days the fields are mostly abandoned and the state is a virtual suburb of New York city, but time was when there were families that had lived on the same plot since pre-revolutionary days, and when they died they were buried in it.

Yale University is located in New Haven, Connecticut. It was founded back when the area was more rural, and it, too, has a cemetery, filled with the remains of local notables from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and well-protected by twenty-four hour guards.

Across the street from the graveyard is the no-outsiders-admitted clubhouse of Skull and Bones, a Yale secret society originally for men only. The club has its own hermetic rituals, one of which is rumored to require new members to rob a grave.

George Bush is a member of Skull and Bones.

The uncharted back roads of Connecticut, where the weeds struggle up through broken asphalt, gravel, or even hard-packed, rutted earth, make good hiking trails. They wind past abandoned stone houses, meandering fences built out of rocks pulled from the fields they surround, farming equipment rusting into the soil, all of which are overwhelmed by a profusion of wild grasses and second-growth forest. The signs of the ancient ice are everywhere.

It was a fine day in late spring, and I was walking with three or four other people. We had already encountered two teenage boys who had obviously thought they were in

untracked wilderness and were resentful of being caught so far from their pants, when we passed the bullet-hole riddled corpse of a WWII-vintage car at the edge of the trees and were confronted by an exceedingly angry elderly lady, in a print dress, apron, and flour. She had to be from the dilapidated house in the middle distance, but looked distinctly out of place standing in a field.

One of the others appointed himself as diplomat and went to parley; the rest of us retreated and looked innocuous. By the arm motions, it was a vigorous discussion, but we were confident -- until she yelled something and a man appeared at a side door of the home. He stood with his hand on what might have been a cane, but looked a great deal more like a gun with its stock resting on the ground by his foot. Our diplomat made a strategic withdrawal, and we all turned around and went away.

"What was that about?" someone asked. Usually the people we met let us pass, even if they refused to let us search for glacial traces on their land.

"I told her we were from Yale."

"Ah?"

He explained she had said that in the long grass by the side of the road was a graveyard and it had held the bones of her parents and grandparents until it had been robbed. She was certain "those Yalies" were responsible for the repeated thefts, and that we were the scouts for another band of Ivy League grave robbers.

Weird, we said, and went on, wondering who else was out in the woods.

It was a late night in early summer, and I was with a party of people in a restaurant. On the television over the bar some comedian, making jokes about the presidential campaign, asked his audience if they wanted a grave-robber for president. The people at my table smiled or laughed or contemplated their coffee. Someone asked what the joke was, and I explained that Bush was a member of Skull and Bones, and that members of Skull and Bones were reputed to go digging in cemeteries.

"Ooo," said one of the women in our group. "That's nasty!"

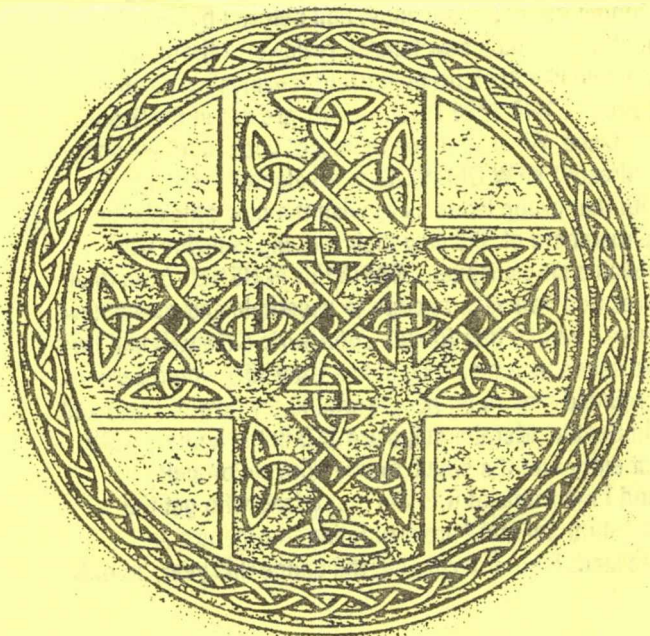
From the next table a voice said: "They only take one nobody cares about."

We all looked at one another and ignored the intrusion.

"If it doesn't bother anyone," said one of the men at our table, "then...."

"I don't know about that," I said, pieces having belatedly clicked into place, and I told the story of the lady and the graveyard.

There was the sound of a chair scraping back, and someone muttered "You made that up," then much louder, "You made that up!" A young man lurched out of the



shadows and into the light cast by the TV. He was wearing a dark suit and tie and had used beer for aftershave. Three or four hands tugged at his sleeves and coattails, while a chorus of voices told him to "Sit down!" and "Shut up!"

"It's just a story," one man at our table said back over his shoulder.

The defender of the faith was pulled back into his seat and distracted by fierce whispers. We, already having paid our bill, prudently got up and left.

Out on the sidewalk the woman who thought robbing graves was nasty said, "In the woods? That did really happen."

"Yep." We went a few paces, and I added, "You know, her grandmother may have been the first woman to get into Skull and Bones." We grinned a little.

"Spring is the time when the secret societies pledge."

"And he was pretty drunk."

We looked at one another speculatively, then walked off through the concrete canyons, talking of other things entirely: politics, and the budget, and who might win the election. -- Catherine Mintz *

DE PRAXIS-BONE CONNECTED
TO DE THEORY-BONE!
DE THEORY-BONE CONNECTED
TO DE AXIOM-BONE!
DE AXIOM-BONE CONNECTED
TO DE LEMMA-BONE!
NOW HEAR DE WORD
OF DE LAWD!



TINY TALES OF TERROR: NYC METRO REPORT

by Algernon D'Ammassa

As the two vans of Russians were cutting his chest open, Anthony Fonseca, 8, of the Partnership School, quizzed his pen pal, Patrick Chaing, 8, about his term, which had been defined by a prolonged recession and almost constant fiscal distress. New York state police investigators believe his mistake may have been letting a former Roman Catholic priest celebrate Mass at the church.

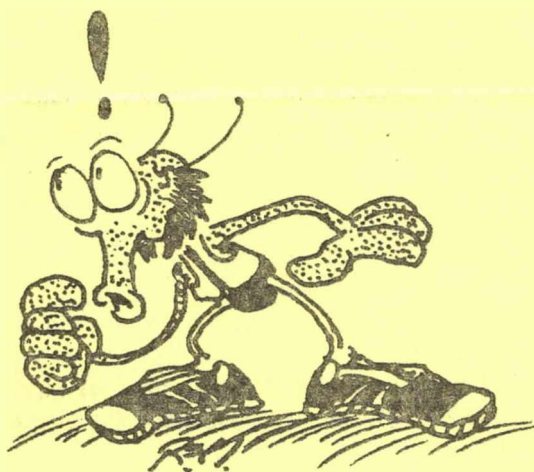
Still, many older residents remained in Pelham Parkway. Mr. Edelman said he remembered the nights years ago when he and his family sat on park benches financed

through the sale of state Dormitory Authority bonds. But now that way of life may be teetering, some say -- falling victim, like many of the residents themselves, to the Great Trans-Atlantic Showdown (your chance to see and invest in the finest domestic and imported leather furniture at *unique Showdown savings*).

In all, it was a day that addressed a broad range of vital constituencies. the ethnic factor is only one variable in a three-week strike at 248 stores in New Jersey and New York this afternoon. Exhaustion may have played a role in the once grim buildings that were a warehouse for the mentally retarded. But after seven years of managerial tinkering and ownership battles, disabled people were packed into foul-smelling rooms, children lay naked and untended on the floor, and each year the city is paying \$270,000 to \$300,000 more for concrete than it would on the open market.

Now, after a week with a Presidential visit that led to a huge traffic jam in Queens, several black politicians and leaders visiting the precinct pulled back a blanket and saw a medical-waste incinerator with a 12-inch handle buried in the woman's head.

When asked why he did not move to Florida, Mr. Edelman said, "It's not my cup of tea." -- Algernon D'Ammassa ^

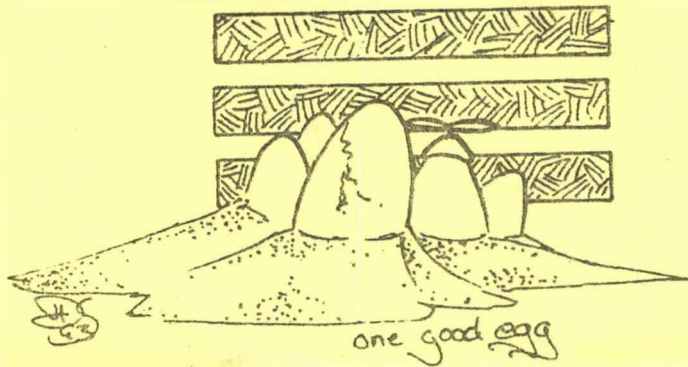


And in the 43rd month everyone would say "Hey, there's no lake of fire...."

Fuggheads are the life blood of a healthy fandom - Charles Burbee.

OF THINGS PAST

fanzine reviews by Andy



Every year sees the publication of a number of special fannish reprints, commemorative editions designed to lionize individual fans or fanzines of the past. As a dedicated timebinder, these special editions are often the things I look for most eagerly in any fannish year, and judging from the way in which these editions are snapped up at auction and at fanzine sales tables, I'm not alone in this affection. Harry Warner Jr. won a Hugo award this year for his history of fandom in the fifties, which leads me to think that the passion for fannish history is not an esoteric special interest as some fans have tried to characterize it in the past.

This is why, with many new issues of such current fanzines as *Opuntia*, *The Reluctant Famulus*, *Slubberdegullion*, and *Empties* available to me, I have chosen instead to review a few of the special reprints published this year. And this has been a very good year for reprints and fan history. In addition to our own *Fanthology '89*, Corflu Ten published a reprint of Jeff Smith's *Khatru 3 & 4*, and its program book featured a special section on Corflu history. Candi Strecker has published the second volume of her landmark work on popular culture in the seventies, *It's a wonderful lifestyle*, and Rob Hansen's *Then # 4*, an overview of British fandom in the seventies, is already eliciting controversy, although it hasn't even been published yet.

Still more impressive than these was the small blizzard of reprints and special editions that issued from the hands of Arnie & Joyce Katz and their cohorts in Las Vegas fandom. Arnie arrived at Corflu with a bundle of very fat envelopes to hand around, and included in these were a new edition of *The Incomplete Burbee*, originally published by Terry Carr, Ron Ellik and Peter Graham in 1958, and *A Taste of FRAP*, a new selection of reprints from Robert Lichtman's fanzine of that name. The envelopes also contained a collection of aphorisms by Bill Rotsler, a one-shot featuring new writings by Charles Burbee, and the beginning of a fannish memoir by Arnie. All of these had been ground out in anticipation or appreciation of Silvercon II, in March of this year, a volume of publication that staggers the imagination. But it was the

first two I mentioned that I looked to with the greatest enthusiasm.

Robert Lichtman is regarded by many to be one of the best writers and editors currently active in fandom. Many people don't know that he was publishing an equally-well regarded fanzine 30 years ago. *FRAP* featured some of the best columnists of the day, and is well-regarded by those fans who had a chance to read it. I have never had the pleasure of doing so, and I was eager to have the opportunity.

The collection shows that Robert's fine taste in columnists, as well as his gift for unusual editorials, are nothing new. Here are Ray Nelson and Calvin W. "Biff" Demimon, casting a satiric eye on popular cultural phenomena of the day, seeking satori in the preparation of pataphysical hamburgers and conducting an interview with God. Redd Boggs offers one of those effortless Redd Boggs pieces that manages to turn a drive down to Garden Grove into a fannish odyssey. And Greg and Jim Benford are here, Greg's piece in particular a priceless account of driving to L.A. and their impressions of the fabled LASFS in 1963.

My only criticism of the volume is that its production is less than ideal. The collection is photocopied, which is not an innate strike against it, but the quality of copying could be better. Some pages have gray shadows in the blank spaces, while others have text and art that is rather too pale to be easily read. The large title fonts which Arnie has chosen seem especially prone to the shadows, and I've never found them very aesthetically pleasing in Arnie's other zines, either. But the material is so strong, and Arnie and Joyce's selection of it so true, that it could have been reproduced on a runny ditto machine and still have been worth reading.

The same production problems plague *The Incomplete Burbee*. There are typographical errors and mistakes that more careful proofreading could have cured (This edition claims to have been published 25 years, to the month, after the original publication in 1958. Why Arnie kept it lying around for ten years is beyond me...), and internal margins so small that I found it necessary to perform surgery on my copy, and re-staple it so that I could read all the text. Matte lines abound. From what other people have told me, the order of material was altered from the first edition, and the contents list contains no page numbers -- a puzzling decision.

I hesitate to castigate anyone for these faults, being so prone to them myself, and Arnie's poor eyesight makes it hard for him to directly supervise the physical quality of his publications. Still, this is the kind of project that has a degree of importance within fandom, and one would ideally like to see it brought off with less attention to deadline, and more to detail. Arnie did say that subsequent printings would be cleaned up, so perhaps all of these criticisms have already been addressed. And there is a lot of good art included, by

Rotsler, Craig Smith, ATom, Lee Hoffman, Steve Stiles, and many of the rest of the usual suspects.

But once you begin to read the material included in *The Incomplete Burbee* all such concerns drop away. Burbee is, well, unique. There is a kind of love/hate toward fandom that comes through his writing and gives his stuff a quality which many have imitated but no one has ever quite captured. Pieces like "Day After Victory" and "Calling Mr. Flugel" stand easily alongside the best work of any mainstream essayist of the immediate post-war era. Through his observations -- often bitingly cynical, but never egregiously cruel -- one of the great truths of fandom emerges: that once you learn to stop taking fandom so damn seriously, the real fun and pleasure of the hobby emerges.

In Burbee's world view, monomaniacal devotion to fandom, to science fiction and fantasy, is proven to be antithetical to fannishness. In essence, Burbee and his close-contemporaries turned the paradigm of fandom on its ear, an act which is still reverberating through the subculture today. You should get this collection, regardless of the quality of duplication or layout or any of that stuff. Only by reading the material for yourself can you appreciate the impact that Burbee must have had on the childish, self-important world of organized fandom in the late forties. I think it's remarkable that nobody killed him.

On the other hand, it's also surprising that no one ever tried to kill John Berry and Arthur Thomson for some of the bad puns and bizarre humor they perpetrated through their Goon Defective Agency stories. Drawing their inspiration from the humor of The Goon Show -- a brilliant radio comedy group who were at their prime in the early fifties, Spike Milligan, Harry Secombe and Peter Sellers -- John, Arthur and a handful of imitators and co-conspirators (like Chuck Harris) published a series of satirical mystery stories, featuring fannish characters and settings. In America, we would call them Brandonizations. Their joint fanzine, *Retribution*, is fondly remembered by many British fans of the era as the high point of fandom in the fifties. And much, if not all, of this writing, has not been available for nearly forty years.

Now, stepping up to rectify this situation is the remarkable figure of Ken Cheslin. Publisher of *The Olaf Alternative*, b/w *Outhouse*, Ken is one of the most energetic

fan editors publishing today. But his titles have lacked a certain attention to production values in the past...let us merely say that the average issue of *Outhouse* would make *The Incomplete Burbee* look like an illuminated bible.

So it was with some trepidation that I received the first of three volumes of GDA reprints from Ken. Titled *The Bleary Eyes: The Early Years* (or *The Early Days* depending on whether you choose to believe the cover or the contents page), it features seven stories from the adventures of Goon Bleary, detective extraordinaire, and a section of notations explaining many of the references to both fannish and mundane figures of the fifties. But I needn't have worried. This -- and the second volume, just released under the title of *The Middle Ages* -- is just about the best-looking fanzine I have ever seen from Ken. Certainly this is due in part to the consistently fine quality of the illustrations, almost all of them by ATom. But perhaps the secret lies in the prosaic notation: "re-typed by Vinø Clarke." Ken himself admits that Vinø's contribution is somewhat more involved than this. While some of the pages list badly toward one margin or another, or the type seems to swim through a wrinkly paste-up, there are very few typos, and the print is always pretty easy to read. The layout is far simpler than what Arnie Katz achieves with his computer-aided design, but I think it compliments the material well.

If I have any real criticism of these volumes, it lies with the quality of the material reprinted. I found both volumes entertaining, sometimes only mildly amusing, other times acutely so. But all of it has an ephemeral quality, a sense that it would have been much funnier the first time around, when all of the people in question were well-known to the reader, and there was no need to consult the exegesis at the front of the book. It would be of use to the reader to already possess some knowledge of the major figures of fifties fanzine fandom before beginning these volumes. It also helps if you find the Goon Show, and the school of absurd British humor which it inspired, funny to begin with. I admit to being so inclined, and thus the ultimate impression I have is a positive one. But I think many readers, especially American readers, might find the whole thing a little tedious.

Still, making this writing available to a modern audience is a good and useful thing. And I challenge the reader not to find something funny in the delightfully smutty "Stage Flight," or the elaborate intrigue of "The Goon And Sixpence," both found in volume II. The latter tale is a titanic saga of the conflict between northern and southern fandoms in Britain, vast in scope and painful in the lengths to which it goes to justify the pallid pun of the title. The whizzing of plonkers and spattering of zap guns is almost audible the reader. Gripping stuff indeed!

According to comments from John's introduction to volume II, all copies of volume I have been sent to readers at large. but perhaps some stock of volume II remains, and could be secured by writing to Ken at the address below. At the least, you might express a desire to be put on the list for volume III.



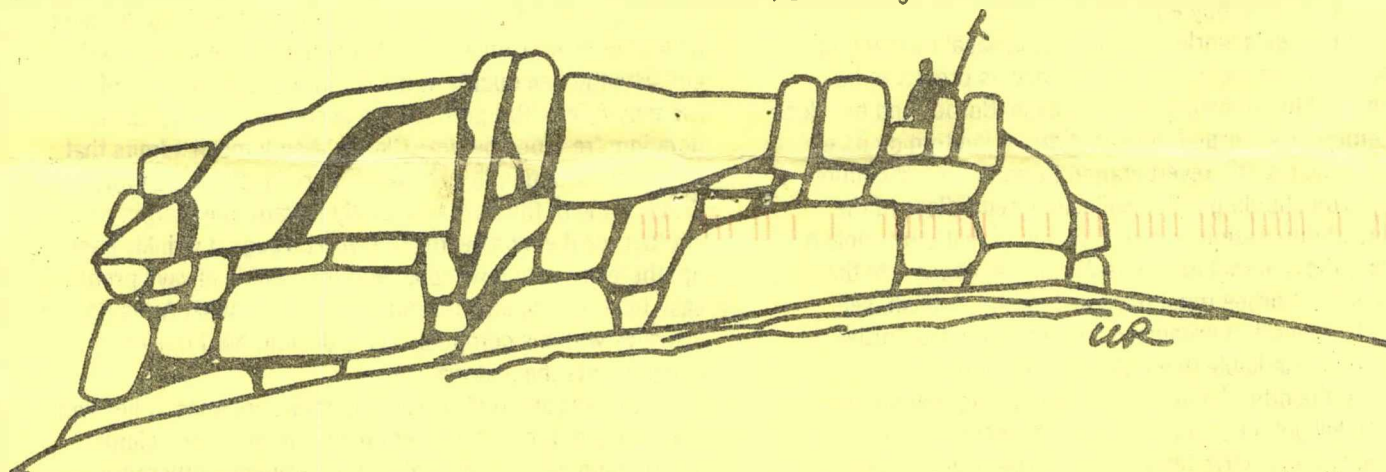
Each of the reprints considered above is worth reading on a number of levels. Certainly, the timebinding aspects are not to be discounted, for each presents a vivid image of some facet of fandom in a bygone period. But even if they did little to illuminate the fandom of the past, they would be well worth acquiring for the entertainment value of the writing alone. Editors who seek to publish such reprints deserve praise for their efforts to preserve a vital element of fannish history, but they serve themselves well in doing so. Such material already enjoys a positive critical opinion, and is likely to cast nothing but positive light on the taste and effort of the editor who reprints it.

REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE:

A Taste of FRAP, edited by Arnie and Joyce Katz Available for \$2.00 from 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107

The Incomplete Burbee, reprinted by Arnie & Joyce Katz, assisted by John Hardin and Laurie Yates. Availability not specified, also 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107

The Bleary Eyes: Volume I: The Early Years and Volume II: The Middle Ages. Edited by Ken Cheslin, "re-typing" by Vincent Clarke. Availability not specified, but write to: Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1LA, United Kingdom



CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

Algernon D'Amassa
323 Dodge St.
East Providence, RI 02914

Joe Wesson
80 Riverside Dr. # 3 - 8
Canton, NY 13617

Alan Rosenthal
P.O. Box 75684 Seattle,
WA 98125-0684

Lorelei Manney
510 S. Mills St.
Madison, WI 53715

Bob Klaehn
1341 Stardust Ave NW
Canton, OH 44708

Sarah Prince & Bob Webber
74 Mt. Vernon St.
Arlington, MA 02174

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ZIP CODE 98144
PERMIT NO. 765

Lee Hoffman
3290 Sunrise Trail
Pt. Charlotte, FL 33952

