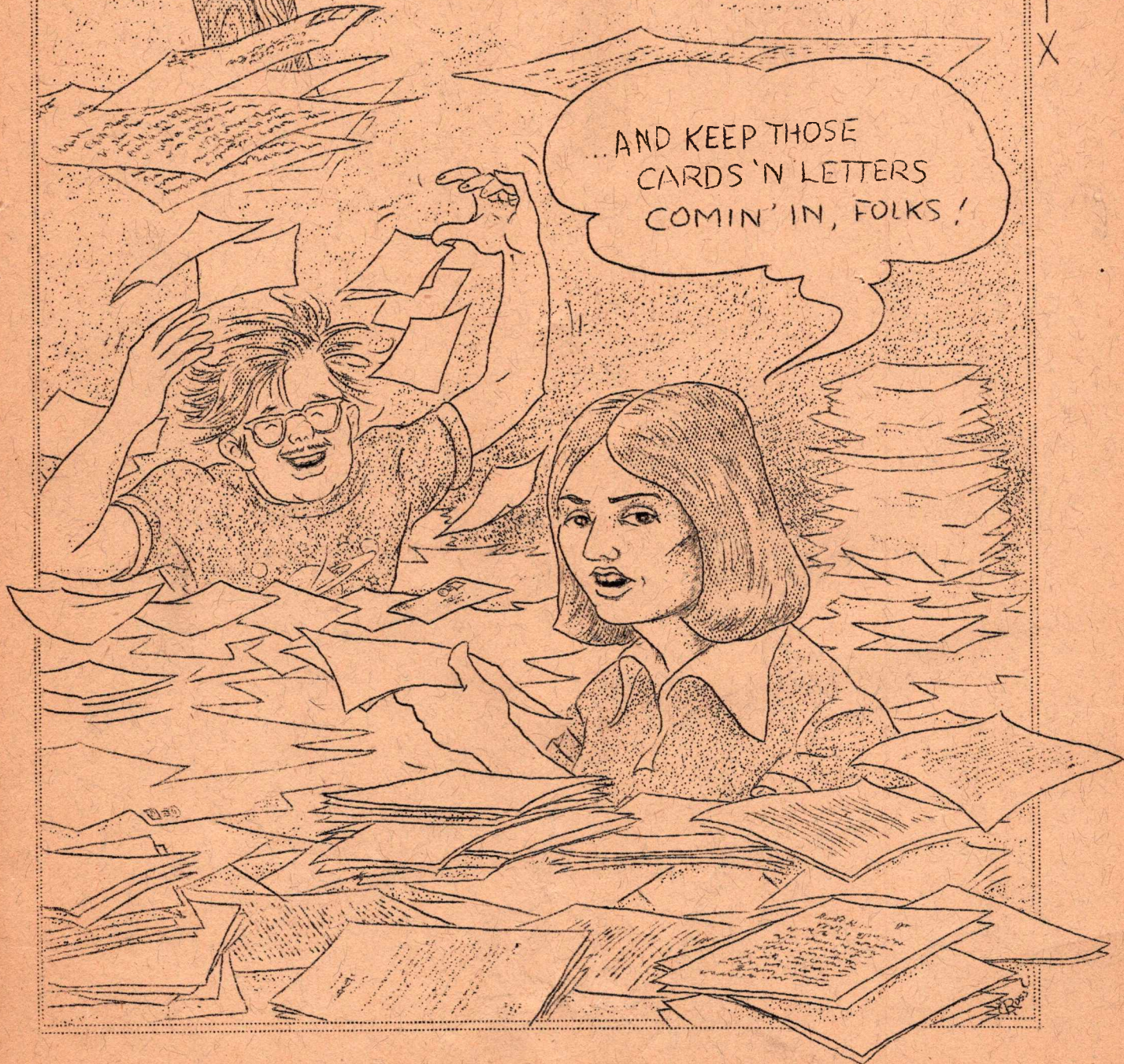


SPECIAL "WE GOT LETTERS" ISSUE

NUMBER SIX



...AND KEEP THOSE
CARDS 'N LETTERS
COMIN' IN, FOLKS!

QUOTE: swoon SIX

To demonstrate how necessary this Special Letters Issue really is, please note that the following letter comments on SWOON #3...

A little professional sympathy from HARRY WARNER

I can feel sympathy for trade magazine editors who are scared to run statistics. Newspaper work is even worse than magazine production in this respect, because there's no foolproof way to be certain that a typographic error won't creep in when there are only hours between typesetting and press run. Without asking anyone's advice, I adopted a policy while I was still reporting: never run any figures in stories about farm insect and disease problems which included recommendations for control.

We used to publish quite a few articles about extension service recommendations for combatting the red banded leaf roller or the leaping apple leaf mite. I just refused to worry any longer about the possibility that a proofreading mistake or another mistake in resetting an incorrect line might cause a lot of people to destroy valuable trees or plants by advising ten times or a hundred times the right quantity of insecticide or fungicide. I also put the word "now" into permanent exile from my journalistic vocabulary after it came out in print a couple of times as "not" and created disorder and deep remorse among the people involved. (On the subject of avoiding certain words to diminish the chance of embarrassing typos, I guess the most outstanding instance of which I am aware involves TV Guide. That journal never, ever refers to a comedy sketch as a "skit." to eliminate the possibility of offending readers' sensibilities.-ak)

Ross Chamberlain's confession about reading "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" encourages me to reveal that I'm reading for the first time "Gone with the Wind." It's one of those books that seems awfully familiar on first reading, because I've heard people talk about it so much, and I've read so much about it. I am surprised to find myself enjoying it much more than I'd expected. I can identify with Ashley in a lot of ways, the clumsinesses don't seem so bad amid all the excellencies, and it was exciting to find a Hagerstown native make a brief appearance in it; Father Ryan, the historical poet who grew up here. (Frankly, Harry, I don't give...er, you were saying? ak)

You're right in your explanation to Bruce Arthurs about how on-the-air experiences can remove inhibitions about tape recording. I did a local news broadcast daily for several years over a local radio station whose FM signal reaches quite far out to an area that must contain four or five million people. I knew that the laws of probability made it unlikely that all these people in Baltimore, Washington and other metropolitan areas

would simultaneously choose to listen to the news from Hagerstown on any given late afternoon, but even so, after I got used to the potential audience for my radio voice, I no longer felt any shyness about talking into a microphone for a tape that perhaps a half-dozen fans at the most would hear. The specific episode that got me over the hump was the day after an election when someone shoved into my hands the just-released final tabulation of the Washington County voting, less than a minute before air time, and I risked adlibbing the entire broadcast in the form of summarizing the outcome by these figures which I hadn't had time to glance over. (We weren't really as inefficient as it sounds, getting local election news. At that time, voting was done by paper ballots here and the bigger polling places rarely finished tabulations until some time Wednesday for Tuesday elections.) (←One thing which made it relatively easy for me to overcome any mike shyness was that our only competition -- "Wide World of Wrestling -- was so wretched that I knew that anything we did would seem slickly professional by comparison. ak→)

::: 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

A consumer alert from CREATH THORNE

I too have seen the offer Joyce speaks of, the Franklin Library's edition of the Masterpieces of American Literature. Actually, it's a very misleading ad -- their "limited heirloom edition" is actually not a limited edition at all -- it will be produced in quantities of several thousand (reminds me of the Sears & Roebuck edition of Ben-Hur I saw once -- on the copyright page it read "Limited to 1,000,000 Copies"). That word 'heirloom' suggests that the buyer is setting up a valuable store of books that will be passed down and treasured in the years to come -- but the books actually won't be valuable at all (a good limited edition is, say, twenty copies) and certainly never will command their retail price or anything near it. I'm irritated by such things because I've been studying the craft of bookbinding for the past couple of years, and I've come to appreciate the craftsmanship and artistry that is apparent in a fine binding. The binding of a book can be a valuable, artistic artifact. That's why I had to see the whole idea of the craft misused and degraded by people like the Franklin Library.

You two just celebrated your fifth wedding anniversary? Why, so have Ann and I. We were married on May 28, 1971. We celebrated by buying Ann a Kitchen-Aid mixer which she has been hankering after. After she opened it up, the situation reminded me of Joyce and her blender which Arnie once wrote about. I was on the verge of suggesting that Ann whip up a bowlful of water, but luckily we thought of something else. (←Coincidence upon coincidence! Joyce just got a mixer. We picked it up at one of the mammoth flea markets which are so popular in the New York area right now. She was dying to give the mixer a try as soon as we got home, but this time she resisted the temptation to mix water. I've noticed that our diet has been gradually altering in response to the impact these gizmos have made on Joyce. Or does everyone get served soup, salad, entree and dessert in one bowl?→)

::: 806 East 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637

Sports questions from ERIC MAYER

Arnie, I'd love to hear some more about the wrestling journalism business. It seems like an awkward affair. You know it's all a fake, the wrestlers and management know you know it's a fake, but are you allowed to let them know you know? If you know what I mean?

Something that's always fascinated me is the question of who decides which wrestlers win and lose, and on what basis are the decisions made? It must be a pretty sticky mix of sports/entertainment/business considerations. I assume, for instance, that Bruno's

the perrenial champ because promoters make more money out of that arrangement. It mystifies me how wrestling fans who pretend that the thing's legitimate don't worry about the fact that Bruno never wrestles folks like Ivan Putski or Andre the Giant.

Not that I don't like wrestling. I do enjoy the televised matches, which I realize are wrestling at its worst. (I know because I did get to see a real Madison Square Garden card on home box office last year, though it wasn't a very distinguished championship match. Waldo Von Eric ambushed Sammartino and tried to brain him with the championship belt. I'd hoped for something more marathon in nature.

Finally, what happens if, like in the old boxing pictures, one of these guys decides he doesn't want to take a fall, and starts in for real? (Winners are decided by the promotional office and communicated to the wrestlers shortly before the night's action begins during a closed-door locker room meeting. They don't take much trouble with the minor matches, but the feature attractions often have scenarios plotted in advance. All four of us wanted to start careers as wrestling plotters, but the field doesn't seem to be accessible to freelancers.

(A wrestler who actually won a match he was supposed to lose would be in great danger of bodily harm and would, at the least, have trouble getting matches anywhere. However, the referee would probably come up with some pretext for not counting out the intended winner, or else the promoter would find some reason to reverse the decision.)
::: 175 Congress Street, #5-F, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

Arnie is stung by JIM MEADOWS' comment

Do you really work for Chain Store Age? I mean this jump from one mundane sounding trade mag, to a wrestling mag, and then back (shoop, shoop) to another mundane sounding trade mag is a little weird. Why not something out of the way? Do you know that there are only two magazines serving the bee-keepers of America? There is a gap for you to fill, Arnie!

I remember, oh around 72 or 73, wandering into the periodical room of the Chicago Public Library (I went there to read the comics in the microfilmed newspapers). Surprisingly, there were these magazines, not a full collection, not even a full collection of one category on the shelf in the newspaper room. And under Q, I found Quick Frozen Foods. Quickly, I turned to the masthead. Your name was there. Wowowowowowowowow, I mouthed noiselessly, the neofan in me taking over completely. This wasn't a fanzine, this wasn't a copy of Amazing (almost a fanzine), this was a ****mundane**** publication. And one of my fannish heros (you heard right, Arn) had his Name printed in it.
::: 31 Apple Court, Park Forest, Illinois 60466

DCN D'AMASSA gives fans the clap

Ah, I see you, Arnie, are among those of us who use fannish names in mundane contexts. When I was in Vietnam, I wrote many of the mimeographed pamphlets distributed to incoming personnel. I used to fill the sample situations with fannish names. I was particularly amused and gratified by being assigned the job of writing a simple, accurate, practical manual for the avoidance of venereal disease when sampling Vietnamese prostitutes. We were encouraged, you see, to write little morality tales to entertain as we instructed. I gave the most horrible social diseases to some well known fans.

Since I was one of those fans to whom Ed Wood told his various reservations about Harry Warner's book at Boskone, I found it particularly interesting to see Harry's side.

Without passing judgement on the merits of Ed's objections as such, it still strikes me as presumptuous to alter or even request alterations of what is essentially a personal document. An editor has an obligation to point out and have corrected factual errors, and should suggest improvements, since authors usually have a blind spot about their work. But other than in a work of fiction (and I'm not even sure that it's totally defensible there), I think the editor has an obligation to keep hands off.

::: 19 Angell Drive, East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

Dale's Arden-t defender, HARRY WARNER

You may have misjudged Dale Arden. I'm no expert of the Flash Gordon episodes, having seen only a few, but isn't it possible that Dale is motivated by a deep insight which requires some thought and analysis to discover? The episode you cite, for instance, when she messes up Flash while he is confronting Ming: Perhaps Dale understands the symbolism of the sword as Freud did, grasps instantly the fact that Flash is yielding to impulses which would both deprive her of his affection and render the remainder of the episode unfit for innocent young audiences, and acts as she does on the theory that physical danger for Flash is preferable to this sort of X-rated symbolism.

I was about to deny with proper gratitude Joyce's discovery about my role in fandom. Then I got to thinking it over, just as I advise you to proceed in the case of Dale Arden, and I am beginning to wonder about myself. It is possible that this Galactic Observer would be conditioned before being sent to Earth so that he wouldn't consciously realize his mission. In this way, there would be no danger of revealing himself in a field where participants are normally as frank as they are in fandom. If something like this has happened to me, then I suspect that one of two things will happen. Either would explain why I haven't done anything but sit back quietly and write locs and complain about my health. It's possible that fans are destined for great things somewhere in the universe, but the arrangements to collect them for this purpose are so expensive and complex that the authorities Out There want a big haul while they are at it. If this is so, obviously the requirements are in excess of four thousand fans, because I attended DisCon and nothing happened. The number of fans who will be collected may be considerably above that number. Tentatively, I'd say, logic calls for the denouement to come the first time a worldcon draws perhaps 8000 fans into one place and I show up at it. If the whole hotel vanishes with a loud whoosh, only to reappear somewhere east of Sirius, don't say I didn't warn you.

But I also have begun to wonder about my attic. It seems improbable that I should have so much stuff crammed into it and that I should never make an effort to straighten things out so I could find what I want. There is also an odd desire of almost every fan who visits my home to take a look at my attic. Somewhere within the walls of 423 Summit Avenue, could there be a highly sophisticated device exerting an influence on fannish visitors to climb those stairs? Is there another mechanism concealed somewhere in the attic that probes each visiting fan, because only one or two fans are destined to be the ambassadors? Most important of all, what will happen when eventually the right fan or fans stand on my attic looking around? Will I suddenly obey hypnotically planted instructions, reach for my copy of the 50th SAPS mailing to show my visitors? Will the envelope containing it activate by its motion the ignition switch, and will the entire attic suddenly take flight into the Hagerstown atmosphere, straight toward the stars, as all those paperbacks, fanzines, and other contents tumble about and reveal the controls and amenities around the attic which they've been concealing all along?

Bill Kunkel continues to fascinate me. This kind of life is as alien to me as that in A Martian Odyssey, so maybe I admire his writing for much the same reason as my long-standing love for Weinbaum's fiction.

750
Your own essay on Captain Video makes me feel somehow deprived. I was too old in 1949 to have watched him, even if my home had had a television set in that year. Rather, I feel somehow cheated because I grew up before there were telecasts to enjoy in boyhood and then get nostalgic about in maturity. (←There's only one thing to do to defeat the alien menace from space of which you are an unwilling (and unknowing) puppet. You must -- this is your duty as a Terran -- deny the space invaders the vital knowledge of fandom which they seek. So, without delay, ship me all your fanzines and I will hide them in my collection! Don't thank me; any true patriot would do the same. ak→)

::: 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

MIKE GLICKSOHN, for want of a crayon, types...

Just a short note to express appreciation of SWOON 4 which I read and thoroughly enjoyed on the way to Cincinnati for Midwestcon. I was kinda hoping you might be there so I could slip away to my room, write THANKS in crayon across a brown paper hotel laundry bag and hand it to you by the poolside, thereby saving myself a ten-cent stamp, a sheet of paper, an envelope, and the time it will take me to express the same basic sentiment in a much more verbose manner. But you didn't attend, which really isn't surprising, I guess, after SWOON 4. Midwestcon is perhaps the most fannish con of the year, and the stfnal material that abounds in this issue proves that Arnie, at the very least, is an irredeemable closet sercon fan! Probably beats poor Joyce when she gets too fannish too, the brute. Stand up and be counted, Arnie: you're an unreconstructed stf fan, as Terry Carr would have said. (He's a fannish fan, used to publish and write for lots of fanzines...) (←I'd reply to this gross accusation, but "UFO" goes on in ten minutes and I have to get this done.ak→)

I guess the written highlight of this issue is Bill's autobiographical segment, which combines humour with pathos and manages to create a rather frighteningly low-key piece of personal history. It doesn't come as any surprise to me that Bill's lifestyle is one I could never have lived, I've known that for years, but I still found myself in sympathy with what he was writing. I put that down to the straightforward way he described what he went through, without self-pity for the times that now even he regrets. I don't judge other people if I can help it, whether I find their lifestyles admirable or not (a subtle distinction, I know, but it does exist) which lets me be both repelled and fascinated by what Bill wrote. And he wrote it well, too, which makes it a much better piece than it would have been had it only had the events described going for it.

While Ed Wood's article makes what appear to be some valid points (the role of Earl Kemp, for example) many of the changes he wanted of Harry seem to be largely motivated by self-aggrandizement, or Advent-aggrandizement. If Advent didn't fit the theme that Harry was working through the book, then Ed is out of luck: undoubtedly Advent is important to Ed and the people who started and developed it, but I doubt the company features as prominently in the history of fandom as Ed likes to think it does. Let Ed write his own history from his own slant if he wants to: at least he'll be sure of finding a publisher. And I'll get the mimeo edition of "A Wealth of Fable" and be happy to have it.

Tsk, tsk. You really have been away, haven't you? Don't be shy, Arnie, you'll find Fandom welcomes newcomers with a friendly smile and an encouraging pat on the back, and us oldtimers are ever happy to answer the questions of enthusiastic neos. Without asking questions, you'll find it very difficult to understand the traditions, history and ~~whiffle-whiffle~~ legends of fandom, and you'll make embarrassing faux pas like this one. The Bowers-and-Glicksohn show is the exact opposite of a mutual admiration society as far as in print appearances are concerned. (Personal feelings are immaterial here ~~and the same anyway~~.) In thousands of locs I've insulted Bowers, denigrated his fanzines,

his talent, his mimeography and his intelligence. And two or three times when he can remember the barbs his friends try to have him memorize, he's cast rather weak and insipid aspersions my way. None of this "Hale-fellow-well-met-pat-on-the-back-saviour-of-fandom" sort of stuff. (The fact that Terry deserves such compliments is also immaterial: in fact this whole paragraph is so immaterial I suspect it was ghost-written.) What you were falling into in your answer to Terry's compliments was the Glicksohn-and-Glicksohn show, a very different bottle of scotch. Try to get it right next time, okay, okay? In years to come fanhistorians are bound to use SWOON as a source and you've a responsibility to posterity to preserve things as they actually are. That's a fine fellow. (Ah, Mike, underneath it all, the truth is that you venerate Bill Bowers. He's long been your ideal, and it's widely said that he is both ghod and guru to you both inside fandom and out. I know this is true, because Bill told me so himself.ak)

::: 141 High Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

JESSICA SALMONSON has a narrative hook

Those assembly line cathouses (unless your city is not enforcing any laws ever) are quite likely legal businesses. I live a few blocks from the president of the Seattle chapter of COYOTE (cast out your old tired ethics) which is sort of a prostitutes' union to decriminalize prostitution. She says the places the police can't quite reach are the "sex rip-off enterprises" where all the ads and hype suggest more than is actually delivered. Depending on local ordinances, quite a lot of nasties can be performed without breaking laws. A man usually ends up paying to watch a woman undress as sensuously as she can (and, I gather, most of them ain't that good either) and a man can play with himself if he wants, but no physical contact is allowed cuz no one knows who is an undercover policeman and who isn't. Naturally, many customers get irate and feel cheated that they only got to look, but there are always a couple pseudo-pimps or bouncers to throw out the complainer, who can hardly tell the better business bureau the ads were misleading and false. (While again emphasizing that I do not myself patronize such establishments, I have it on unimpeachable authority that the ten buck whorehouses in New York do, in fact, give inside what their advertising promises. The latest wrinkle is the Broadway Burlesque. The strippers do not get paid for taking off their duds. They strip merely to show their wares to prospective customers in the audience. Business is transacted behind the curtain.ak)

::: P. O. Box 89517, Zenith, Washington 98188

PETE WESTON recalls summer in the city

Please don't embarrass me with all this talk of your 20-month fafiation; that's hardly more than the intervals between issues of some people's fanzines. And it's now been more than three years since my last Speculation and still you're keeping me on your mailing list. Really, I'm very grateful indeed and sorry I haven't responded before in some way.

Just at the moment it is terribly hot here; I haven't felt so hot since that night in 1974 when I stepped out of Kennedy Airport into the New York night, on my TAFF trip. So hot in fact that yesterday I just keeled over - fainted - while standing in a queue at the local butcher's shop. All the little old ladies with big heavy baskets made clucking noises as I collapsed onto a chair. I haven't done that since I had to have a blood test before the birth of our second daughter (not that I was scared or anything, but after the junior nurse failed to draw blood with the first needle, broke the second needle in my arm, and whipped out a third needle for another attempt, I sort of felt the world going around in circles and slumped to the floor.)

Actually that night in New York sticks in my memory. On the 'plane I still felt as if I was in Britain. On disembarking I strolled down concrete corridors and came to a sign "Fallout Shelter". Then around a corner and I saw a big, fat cop with a leather belt around his paunch hanging heavy with revolvers, grenades and I don't know what else. Suddenly I realised that America is a very foreign country.

::: 72 Beeches Drive, Erdington,
Birmingham B24 ODT, England

Treading the line with CATHY MC GUIRE

Thanks for SWOON #4. I had heard all sorts of good things about it from many people and I was eagerly awaiting it. I wasn't disappointed - it's just the kind of zine that I love to get. Some zines intimidate me, either by the appearance or the style, and I'm afraid to give my comments because they would be insufficient. Some zines leave me indifferent, thru bad repro or nothing worthy of comment. Your zine, on the other hand, adroitly treads the thin line between being both fannish enough to make me feel at home, and professional enough to have plenty of comment hooks and quality material.

It's amazing how all of your articles could be both fannish and sercon (or at least informational) at the same time. Truly, you have a gift for both writing and editing, Joyce. I loved your Blue Jaunt; it built up to the ending without ever letting it slip ahead of time. Are you sure Harry's an Observer? I guess I'd better get into the public view more if I don't want to miss out on the excitement. (If he takes you up in his craft, will you invite me?)

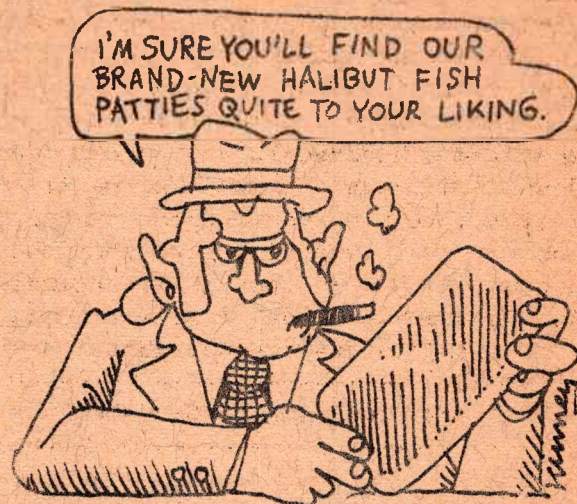
Is all that incredible tale by Bill Kunkle true?? That's some kind of personal history! I know people who have gone through much of the same, but they didn't survive it. (Although they're still around.)

Arnie, I especially liked your piece on Captain Video. It was a bit before my time, and it surprised me that SF was on the tv almost since tv started. I was under the impression it was a new development. (But then, I'd never really considered it. I'm not much of a tv viewer.) Besides being full of info, it was a great story. Do you know if Fred Scott was the same guy who had a cartoon show when I was a kid, about 10 years later? And Tobor was used as the name of another robot in the 60's cartoon show "The 8th Man". Wonder if they're related? (The ideas, not the robots.)

JOHN CARL takes a flyer

It feels good to know that the Katzes are still around and lively. You lend a quiet elan to the largely drab current fanzine scene of your own refreshing design, and heck, you even almost had me going to battle the hordes of nine-year-olds to see a Captain Video movie currently showing at one of the local theaters, just to see if it's really as camp as you make it out to be (though it's hard to imagine anything much more thoroughly camp than Adam West and Burt Ward: farce played to perfection. Holy Video-mulch!), while most fanzines aren't worth the time of day.

Sometimes I'm so enthusiastic about flying that I seriously consider taking flying



lessons and getting a license and saving my nickles and buying a plane. I've flown a good many hours in small planes and I think they're perfectly ducky. For one thing, the actual sensation of flight is much more obvious in a six or eight passenger duoprop than it is in a 747 designed for people who hate flying. One of the finest possible thrills is when you're flying in moderately rough weather and the plane hits a downflow and dips a hundred feet in the space of five seconds: you actually fall those hundred feet, and you are weightless until the plane levels out again. The first few times you feel like taking your stomach out and putting it aside with a reprimand to never alarm you so severely again, but after you're more used to it--though you can never really get used to it--no possible carnival ride will be met with anything more than a yawn. Ah. Someday, someday I will take up hangliding.
::: 3750 Green Lane, Butte, Montana 59701

STU GILSON makes his SWOON debut

Even though you may have taken an extended leave of absence from fandom, you evidently lost nothing if you're still able to produce something so marvelous as the 4th issue of SWOON. Lucidly written, informative, enjoyable; SWOON is possibly the nicest unsolicited zine I've ever had the good fortune to receive. You have obviously taken great measures to insure both written and graphic quality in your fanzine; the artwork was generally excellent (particularly Ross Chamberlain's work and Arthur Thompson's beautiful pieces), the layout made for easy reading, and the paper itself was pleasant to the eye and touch. Swooner or later you're bound to be up for a Faan, either as best faneds or as best writers; that day is not long in coming.

Arnie, your thoughts on Flash Gordon and Captain Video were fascinating! I have long been intrigued by dramatized s-f (fostered, no doubt, by my passion for nostalgia), and your observations served as a fine replacement for the shows I was never fortunate enough to see. I can't entirely agree they contain the same degree of social comment as you pointed out (it may very well exist, but wasn't necessarily intended as such originally), but much of what you say makes reasonably clear sense just the same. I would hope you plan further articles of such a nature; these I eagerly await. (←Wait till you read my next monograph, based on "Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe." It's called "Tarnak, a Tragic Hero?" Don't miss it if you can.ak→)

Both your editorials were written in such a manner that they could easily have served as goh speeches, being as they were both conversational and pertinent to all fen. In many ways, they (and yours in particular, Joyce) reminded me of the talk Leigh Couch gave at Minicon this year, a delightful series of reminiscences about her earlier years in fandom. Many times co-editorials contain only disparate subjects with little or no unifying theme shared between them; in your case, your editorials were individual yet complementary, they enhanced one another. Whether intentional or not, such a connection made for highly enjoyable reading; even more important, it allowed me to gain a little insight into you as individuals, which is the most anyone can ever expect of you. What more can be said?

The rejection of Harry Warner's manuscript, I'm afraid to say, is news to me. That bit of information alone is enough to arouse hostility in even the most reasonable of fans; for Harry's reputation as an intelligent and insightful historian is unassailable, and one cannot help feeling he is more qualified to write a fan history than Ed Wood. True, a number of the criticisms Wood raised are founded, but that does not give him the right to demand they be heeded letter-for-letter just because he's in a position to exercise his authority at Advent. WOF (a title I happen to like) is Harry's book, and as the author it is his privilege to submit the finished manuscript in the form that pleases him, not his publisher.

He was subjected to a different and wider range of influences in his early fannish days, and it is therefore to be expected that his perspective of Fifties fandom will differ from that of Wood's. There do seem to be several serious omissions and errors in the final draft of WOF, and a conscientious publisher like Advent is right in refusing to accept them uncorrected; I think there is a danger, however, of taking this so far as to endanger the character of the history. If any changes would be at the expense of the Harry Warner imprint, then I would advise against them wholeheartedly. I think, to be honest, it would be to the best interests of all involved to practice a little give-and-take; as far as I can tell from having read only Ed Wood's side of the argument, each party is a bit too stubborn for its own good. (Uhh, I think it would be better if we waited until Joe Siclari publishes his mimeographed edition of "A Wealth of Fable" before we attempt to critique the book. To me, the dispute between Warner and Wood seems to boil down to differing interpretations of fanhistory. I personally tend toward Harry's view of fandom, and I think it's a shame that Advent decided not to give Harry free rein on his book. Yet it's also important to recognize that the publisher, as the Payers of the Freight, has the right to select what he will actually publish. As so many have said in letters to SWOON, a regrettable fuss all the way around. ak)

::: Stuart Gilson, 745 Townsend Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3T 2V5

Nouveau New Yorker NICK POLAK

Actually, Joyce, many of us are aware that it is in reality you who are the intergalactic observer, and your (and Arnie's) gafiation was merely a smokescreen to cover a quick jaunt (a blue one, perhaps?) back to whence you came to report on man's preparedness for first contact. Of course if you would have us believe otherwise...

Arnie, I find I must disagree with your statement that "...the newcomer to science fiction has this literary byway highgraded for him in advance...", as it seems to me that there is an equal amount of wheat and chaff available to the new sf reader. Often there is more of the latter than the former. I refer you to Ted White's column in ALGOL (May, 74, pp.25-27) wherein Ted bemoans the fate of novels allowed to go out of print shortly after their publication. Most of the real 'classics' of the field go in and out of print far too frequently. By 'classic' I refer to those books that we generally agree have influenced the field, and have some literary value. These are often not the best sellers. "The Stars My Destination", for example, was oop for a painfully long time before it was reissued in paperback last year. Ditto for "The Demolished Man". "Farmer In The Sky", "A Mirror For Observers", and there are hundreds of others that you or I could think of. Unfortunately, for all the gems that are reissued, there is that much crud as well. Witness "Before the Golden Age", Asimov's anthology of 20's and 30's dreck that sold quite well. Look at all the Howard reprints, the endless Doc Smith pot-boilers. (Jumpin' jets, Nick, you mean you don't like Doc Smith? Can the total collapse of science fiction fandom be close at hand. Joyce says I should recommend "Science Fiction of the 30's" as another turkey which might disinterest you.ak)

::: 271 East 197th Street, #5-A, Bronx, New York 10458

Out with the fan Hugos, says SANDRA MIESEL

Thank you for sending me your fanzine. It's pleasant and well-produced. The Chamberlain covers are delightful. But I'm a little puzzled by the honor. We're barely acquainted (since we never had much in common) and I've virtually given up fanwriting. The latter development is not really gafiation, just a cool assessment of priorities: if I'm going to put time into writing, I might as well have something to show

for it--such as money--instead of the yawns and catcalls that frequently greeted my efforts in the past.

But now that I've stopped plying that particular trade, I'm free to criticize it. Specifically, I propose that the fan-writing Hugo, like the other fan Hugos, is a meaningless award and should be abolished. It does not reward excellence--are the gibberings of a cheap pornographer "excellence"? Neither is it an incentive to new achievement. The FAAN awards are encumbered with complex rules but at least represent the choices of people active in fanzine fandom. I feel strongly enough about this issue to draft a proposal for consideration at the business meeting in Kansas City. Those who agree should discuss the matter with me at the Worldcon. (←To be honest, it's been some time since I've been able to get worked up over the fan Hugos -- pro or con. Oh, the annual announcement of winners used to really spur my Sense of Outrage, because I felt that the fan Hugos weren't truly representative of the opinions of active fanzine fandom. I did a lot of thinking about my attitude toward these awards about six years ago, and my conclusion was that I was getting too worked up over something that didn't matter much in the long run. By the winners shall ye know the value of an award. Some may think the fan Hugos valid by this measure while others (yes, including me) may judge them irrelevant by the same evidence. For me personally, the only award that means anything in fandom is the praise given to me by people whose taste I respect. It may not be as tangible as one of those silver spaceships, but I think it's a lot more real. ak→) (←It's my experience that the more knowledgeable concomm members are just as embarrassed by the fan awards as is fanzine fandom, and would welcome the chance to be rid of the encumbrance of having to administer them. Personally, I would definitely support any move to abolish the fan Hugos, and hope that this motion is brought up again at future con business meetings. I'll be interested to read the remarks of SWOON's readers on this subject. jk→)

::: 8744 N. Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46240

A warm letter from DON D'AMMASSA

The cyclic disenchantment with SF is much as you describe it. After reading all of the major backlog, I began to be disappointed with SF, wondering whatever happened to the great stuff I used to read. But then I started re-reading the classics I remembered, and I found that many of them weren't really all that hot after all. As time went by, I began to enjoy SF again, and now I find the quality higher than ever before, though it seems to have periodic bad years, like 1975, where only a few items stand out. And, of course, some of the really good early writers have deteriorated or stopped writing. Sturgeon, for one, and Heinlein hasn't written anything worth reading since THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS.

Your mention of FLASH GORDON reminded me of one of the TV episodes where the mad witch of Neptune (or some such) was pushing the Earth into the sun with a power ray. Flash to an average household on Earth. A woman, staggering with heat, stumbles up to the refrigerator, opens the freezer, pulls out a tray of ice cubes. Suddenly she drops the tray, the ice cubes bouncing on the table. "No," she cried feebly, "even the ice is hot."

::: 19 Angell Drive, East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

Living vicariously with ERIC MAYER

Bill Kunkel's rock memoirs are stupendous. What can I say? I'm a great fan of rock music, but an absolute musical idiot. Here I have the chance to live vicariously the

exciting existence of rock stardom which my limited abilities have heretofore denied me. Or something.

Really, this is my idea of excellent personal writing. Personal, but with some unique and interesting experiences to relate.

::: 175 Congress Street, #5-F, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

BRUCE TELZER is slow on the draw

I couldn't believe when you wrote about being married five years, Joyce. I feel like I've been in a time warp up here. However, I still have this nagging fear that you guys might not be married after all. I remember when the rabbi asked for two witnesses, and I went up with the two of you to his study to sign the marriage certificates. Well, never having been Bar Mitzvahed, in the eyes of the Lord (Hi, up there) I'm still not franchised to witness anything. It's been a great help in the past, like in high school when everyone would wait in the vestry of the schul down the block for the bus to come. Occasionally, the rabbi would not have a minyan for the morning services and so would come upstairs and hijack one of the guys to get his majority. Fortunately, I was immune from such abuse. I promise not to tell anyone that you may have lived in sin all these years. It still doesn't seem so long ago.

Hey, Arnie, I used to be a confirmed Captain Video fan too. The highlight of my life (other than seeing THE QUEEN when she came to town last week) was when I met Capn' Video, live, in person, some 20 years ago. I was in Gimbels shopping with my mother, and unbeknownst to us, Capn Video was in the store doing some kind of promotional spot. I was enraptured. Although he looked like a normal type person, and even was unpleasant at times in answering his manager and store personnel who were giving him directions to do and say something or other, I was thoroughly impressed. My high point came when he came into the crowd and said hello to everyone and gave out space wings to the kids. I've lost them over the years but wish I still had them.

Joyce, I know the feeling of being unable to draw anything. I used to be terrified as a kid in art class when we were supposed to draw. It didn't seem fair to me. After all, I could sit and study for a science test or dutifully memorize all my declensions in Latin, but given a brush or whatever, what was I to do? I remember in some old Fanoclasts meetings when a pad would get passed around and everyone would make some contribution to whatever was being drawn. I was always mortified when it was passed to me lest I forget for a minute my drawing inability and begin to mar the work. Usually, I halfheartedly passed the drawing along to another.

::: 319 Humphrey Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511

Britain is fine in '79!

(Unpaid advert.)

The SWOON editorial staff does not know the meaning of the word "late." As a result, it is impossible for me to describe the recent, uh, deviation from our methodically monthly schedule. So, if you like, you may think of this special letters issue of SWOON simply as "less early" than originally planned.

Joyce and I are already hard at work at the next "real" issue of SWOON, which will feature all manner of goodies. You can start looking for it in about two weeks. Why, we're really chomping at the bit here, you betcha.

-- Arnie Katz

SWOON

SWOON #6, the August issue (hah!), is edited by Joyce and Arnie Katz (59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201) on an unfailingly (ho-ho) monthly schedule.

This Fannish Insurgent Publication can be obtained for trade, contribution of articles or artwork, a substantial letter of comment or, if all else fails, by subscribing at the rate of six issues for \$5. Sample copies are available for \$1.

Helping with this Special All Letters Issue are Ross Chamberlain, Eric Mayer, Kathy Malone and, perhaps, Bill Kunkel.

Cover by Ross Chamberlain; interior illo by Jay Kinney.

We've been cleaning our apartment lately, and delving into the closets has yielded a couple of good-size stacks of "The Enchanted Duplicator" with Ross Chamberlain illustrations and "The Incomplete Terry Carr." All copies are first edition and still in mint condition. I'm offering them for \$1 a copy, maximum of one of each to the customer. (The stacks are good size, but they aren't exactly endless. And I can say with some certainty that after these are gone, I won't be finding any more of these publications.

Today is October 10, 1976. The next issue of SWOON, chock full of things by such as Bill Kunkel, Mike Carlson, Bob Shaw and, of course, Joyce and me.

SWOON

A & J KATZ

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