

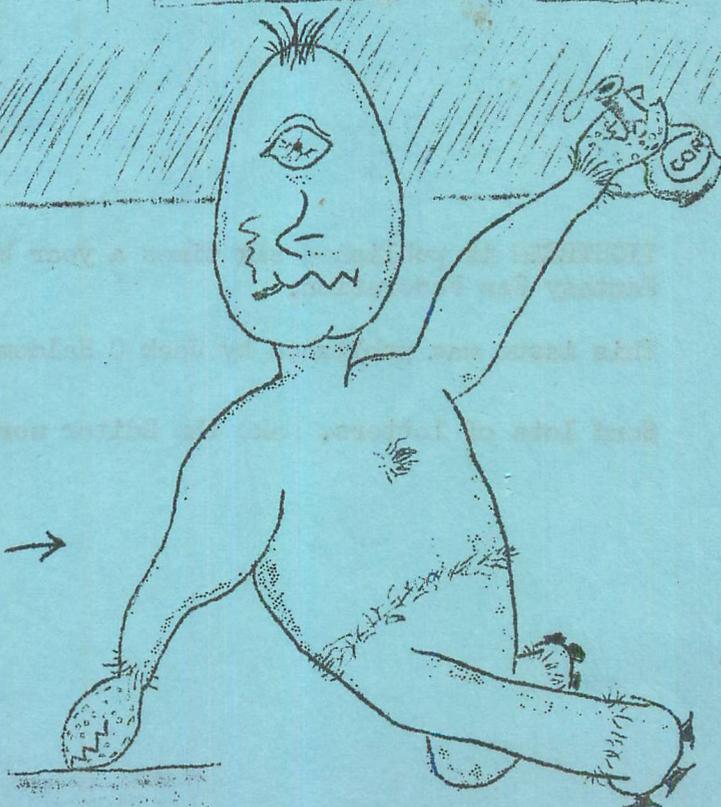
July, '67

Tightbeam

44



Tight B.E.M. →



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TIGHTBEAM 44

JULY 1967

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Send lots of letters. Make the Editor work.

ALJAE PRESS PRODUCTION

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Alma Hill; 463 Park Drive; Boston 15, Massachusetts

Dear Jack,

I had a ball with the letterzine. Photoprocesses are a breeze for the editor. I gave Wally Gonser, the Official Publisher, some tough problems of facsimile, because blue ink doesn't reproduce well, and pencil is spotty. He said he wasted a number of plates trying to get better repro. I wrote and told him that if anything didn't come out well, he should cut it out and run in the Declaration of Independence. But he kept on trying. He only charged the club the cost of materials, and showed us how well he can do if given proper camera-ready copy. For photoprocesses such as multilith, the copy should be sharp and contrasty, especially when they are reduced to half-size in camera, as you can see by examining the drawings and text.

For my part, I never try for perfection, just for information, because that's where the most fun is. So the above is some of the information about our last letterzine.

Another thing we found out is that photocopy is too costly for our present numbers; the paper costs about the same, and the postage is less because photo-reproduction halves the size. But even so, the cost per copy is high because of the cost of those plates. But if the club membership goes near 500, it will be time to go from mimeo to photo, because the extra copies will cost but little and the allotment will be greater, enough to take care of the cost of plates -- and the time factor will represent a saving that would get more and more important as the quantity goes up.

For any Fandbooks or special issues, the good looks, high speed, and high quantity of photoprocess may be just what we need.

But having used up the club's budget to save my own time and energy this way, and to have fun with the artwork, it seemed to me to be only fair to pay the postage myself without billing the club, or trying to. I will not accept reimbursement; it was a small ticket for so much fun. I sent all the overseas mail first class, and the same to Canadian and APO addresses. But here is another piece of information I went after -- how much better is first-class mail for a publication? For letters transacting business, air mail that goes in a day is far better than first-class that takes up to a week cross-country. But how slow is third class? I sent air-cards at the same time as first and third-class copies to various officers and members, asking them to notice the spread in time. Fact is better than guesswork about this? Most copies went third-class, with about two weeks leeway to arrive in May. At an ounce and a trifle, some were accepted for first-class at an ounce, than another postal clerk called it an ounce and a half. But third-class mail will take it all for a 4¢ stamp, regardless -- whereas by first-class, a mimeozine with 24 pages could cost 25¢ or more -- subject to further data-search, I think this would save a week's time at most, but at a cost to the club of about two such issues -- presswork and all -- sent third-class. After this first-hand look at the question, I'd call the slower service a better value, and perfectly adequate for fanzines. Who's in that much of a hurry anyhow?

Show me a fan in too much of a hurry, and I'll show you somebody who has lost time somewhere else by goofing off, right? That's what I did -- took an extra week puttering, when the zine was already mostly thrown together on a Saturday. Then Wally Gonser needed time, and the pages took a week or so to come back across the country, so I crowded the deadline rule. Wally did send Janie an advance copy in plenty of time to meet the letter of the deadline rule; and I got the copies into the mail promptly also, so both letter and spirit of the deadline rule have, I think, been met.

There were, as it happened, some letters much too long -- inspired, no doubt, by the overly-slim issue for #42. I cut Stan Woolston and Don Franson unmercifully but let them know so they could write for you too. Same with Jerry Page. I gave all sorts of views a good deal of space, and when a letter was cut, it read better. This is what I call editing rather than censorship.

If you have any other questions, just let me know.

Aloha,

Alma

((The typed material came out very well in TIGHTBEAM #43, but the pencil was hard to read. Could be that for a regular publication, all letters should be retyped. Still, it was a good experiment and the information on costs was worthwhile. -- My first and second-class zines came on the same day - two days after the air mail. --jch))

George H. Wells; 24 River Avenue; Riverhead, New York; 11901

I'm sending this for Tightbeam #43, as Janie Lamb just sent me the #42 issue, with my first package of materials. My name might not be yet on the membership roster, but it should be soon enough. I had been a member of N3F in the late fifties and I decided to join again, perhaps to make contact with general fandom again, after gaffiating for over 5 years.

I'm not sure the extent of the purpose of Tightbeam but I'll just presume it's a general lettercolumn type mag for all N3ffers and presume that I can generally write anything I like and expect some kind of publication or reaction.

I was rather struck by the general nature of most of the comments in Tightbeam #42. Seems to bring back memories of the N3F when I was last a member. There seems to be a kind of neurotic frustration (actually I'm not enough of a psychologist student to know if frustration is correctly used here, but I'm rather sure the neurotic fits) that the N3F is just not living up to some kind of ideal org in the sky that most members picture the major science fiction fan org as striving for. Active members, great publications, organized activities, group loyalty . . . and so on; all tend to fall short of a great model of activity. I think this is merely part of the old debate of fandom as a way of life or as a hobby, but I rather feel that the purpose of all our organization and activity should just be to enjoy ourselves and do what we want to do. There's no great need to organize and conquer the world, or even just fandom, but only to organize in so far as it extends the pleasure principle of allowing us to do whatever we feel like. Also to be kept in mind is the great anthropological general principle that no tribe's real life ever lives up to or fits the pattern of its ideals or of its ideology.

Now I'll just let that paragraph sit up there and find out if I've suffered from limiting my fan activity to reading Marvel Comics' lettercols too long.

Ahah, just came across John Kusske's statement; "What does the N3F do for sf that only an organization of its nature could?" and all of a sudden a great fiery hand (maybe just a finger) came down and wrote across my retina in either script or block letters: WAS FAN MADE FOR SCIENCE FICTION OR WAS SCIENCE FICTION MADE FOR FAN? That seems to reinforce what I was trying to say above and it reflects the mood I'm in right now pretty well. Of course there will be times when some part of my psyche will get psyched up into striving to create some kind of great sf fan org with daily publications, people all over the world writing letters and organizing local fan activity, sf mags increasing their circulation a hundred fold, and all other kinds of great creative activity and organization. To counter this must come an historical understanding of our inheritance of the puritan ideal of great activity and industry and its functional decline, along with an increased guilt by those who feel the ideal should still

be followed to the letter. In some fields there is a need for organization that hasn't been met, such as political and economic organization of slums, underdeveloped countries, and also the psychological organization of some of the mentally ill psyches, but I kind of get the feeling that the dynamic organization model just isn't needed for science fiction. Last night I finished reading John Coleman Burrough's TREASURE OF THE BLACK FALCON, much to my enjoyment. (Yes, it was nice to finish the thing, that's one enjoyment, and then it was enjoyable to speculate on sequels such as TARZAN BENEATH THE SEA or FIGHTING JOCULAR IN PELLUCIDAR, etc. and then there's always the satisfaction of having finished a task, and that of reading a fantasy story and having one's sense of wonder and imagination exercised.) Now I COULD have spent the time enlisting membership to the N3F

I wonder why science fiction fandom is such as it is, while mystery fandom, whatever that is, is so less organized, and actually doesn't exist as a visible group except in extreme cases (the mystery pros are visible, and some specialist groups) . Actually of the latest books I've read, perhaps only JCB's rates as SF, except for some Marvel and DC comics I've read, while my latest prozine was THE SAINT containing THE GADGET LOVERS from a tv script and several other entertaining stories, some of weird nature like THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY, and my latest books besides JCB include MANCHILD IN THE PROMISED LAND, TROTSKY'S MY LIFE, the two Macfadden SEXTON BLAKE's, THE MAN FROM O.R.G.Y., John Garford's AVENGERS series #1 and publications of the Young Socialists, the Soc. Workers party, and the American Nazi party, just to keep me on my toes in political science. Actually the Nazis have a comic book feature with THE STORMTROOPER called WHITEMAN, which is an interesting Superman takeoff. Villains include SUPERCOON, THE MIGHTY MOTSA, and the usual propaganda.

As Stan Woolston brings up censorship, let me say that as of now I think pornography should be available to every adult to buy or not to buy as his choice dictates. As Jack Douglas said, I think, "Some people need it". Perhaps there is a need for N3F to work on, campaigning for more pornographic sf (it's something to think about) and of course a relief fund to supply those poor adult fans who need it and can't afford it.

May the Great Glaroon bless and keep you all,

YAWS,

G.H. Wells

((SF fans, being of a many and varied sort (often clannish), tend to bond together in all sorts of clubs and societies requiring some kind of organization. These are usually run somewhat ineffectually, due to the fact that they are composed of fans. You are not alone in branding them neurotic, but this is the first time I have heard of anyone giving fandom the fiery finger. --jch))

Phil Muldowney; 7, The Elms; Stoke; Plymouth, England

Dear All,

Every time an issue of TIGHTBEAM lands on the doormat, it prompts me to put a few thoughts down on paper. Maybe this time this letter will even get into an envelope and into the post. I hear that miracles do happen.

I wonder if it is worth the cost of posting overseas TIGHTBEAMS by first class mail? I don't know the comparable time for delivery, but to take TB 43 as an example. From the postmark it was published somewhere around April 20 or after, I cannot read the last figure. It reached me on June 1. Four to five weeks. From what I can remember second class mail has not been much slower than that. Anyway I am glad to get the chance to comment on an issue of TB.

When ever I have opened an issue of TB, there has always been the soul searching, whither the N3F debate. Suffice it to say that I am rather bored with the whole thing, and can't be bothered to waste energy on the discussion. It may be useful to have somewhere to air opinions, but how about some more interesting topics than interminably contemplating the future of the club? Some discussion is interesting, but please, does it have to occupy the majority

of the letters in each issue? It is getting so you can invariably forecast the general make up of TB.

The look of TB 43 was pretty good, the illos brightening it up a lot. I'm sure the use of the original letters saved you a lot of time and trouble Alma, but couldn't you have retyped some of the more illegible letters? The first page of Richard Labonte's letter for instance. His writing must be difficult to read at the best of times, but when it was printed it was virtually illegible. I can still only fathom a few words. Also I could only read about half of Michael Viggiano's letter.

Thanks for reprinting Damon Knight's Boskone speech, it was interesting. I don't know about distribution in the U.S.A., so all I can talk about is the British market. The situation is somewhat different over here, mainly because the distribution area is more compact. Most of the large paperback houses do their own distributing. Since every one of the large British paperback publishers are now including some science fiction paperbacks in their lists, sf paperbacks in Britain are reaching a very large market.

With magazines the position is very different. The British wholesale magazine system is completely dominated by three large wholesalers. If you can't get one of these to distribute your magazine, then you are in great difficulty indeed. This is one of the main troubles that faced NEW WORLDS and IMPULSE. They found it very difficult to get good distribution. ANALOG and F&SF both have very efficient distribution systems, and for most of the time we have been faced with the ludicrous position of being able to get the two American magazines far easier than the British ones. From what I can gather, production of the new format NEW WORLDS has been held up because there has been difficulty in finding a distributor. There was a report last year that W.H. Smith the largest British wholesaler, refused to handle IMPULSE because the title was suggestive!

As to the feasibility of Damon Knight's scheme. Well, is a large wholesaler going to take any notice of the requests of a few people? Even if the whole of fandom cooperated, it would only be a few complaints per wholesaler. Now if the wholesaler was pressured by several of his retail outlets, then he might think twice, and get something done.

The point about anthologies got me going. Does anybody agree with me that there are far too MANY anthologies being published nowadays? I am getting fed up with yet more anthologies entitled the Best ever published, or some such title. Some people have remarkably divergent ideas about quality. Every time I open an anthology nowadays, I have read half the stories. The publishers have harvested a nice cheap crop of anthologies for getting on for twenty years now, perhaps the bottomless well is running dry.

I see some where in that long peice of vitriol Johnny Berry asks about the B.S.F.A., so what does he want to know? Membership varies from 250 to 400 and over, publish VECTOR at least eight times a year. For several issues recently VECTOR was professionally printed, but the treasury was overstretched and we are back to mimeo. It is a general criticism zine, with reviews of books, which are then generally available to the membership from the library. Does the N3F have review copies of books? The B.S.F.A. magazine and book library is a very large one, all publications being available on loan to any B.S.F.A. member in Great Britain. The president is Edmund Crispin the anthologist and mystery writer. Unlike the N3F he is a nominal president, the work is done by a committee consisting of secretary, Chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer and Publications officer. The secretary at the moment is the much appreciated and ever hard working Doreen Parker. There, would you like some more information Johnny?

Oh, yes, Lin Carter. That man irritates me no end. Granted that IF may be aimed at a teenage audience, but is that any reason to write a column suitable for rather simple five year olds? There may be certain childish aspects of fandom, but it does not deserve the Lin Carter type treatment. Can anyone tell me why Lin Carter ever got the job of writing the column? I would have thought there were far better fan writers equally as knowledgeable, who could have done a better job of it.

A question that has interested me is how much influence editors have on the quality of an sf story. At the annual Easter convention in Bristol, John Brunner was near murder at the numerous changes that Bantam has made in their edition of PRODUCTIONS OF TIME. They had not only made colloquial changes that are acceptable because the book had to be adapted to the sf market, but they had changed whole sentences and had made innumerable bad changes in phraseology. They had not asked Brunner's permission, and there was very little Brunner could do about it. I wonder how many times this has happened before? How much right has an editor to change parts of an author's story? Surely when we buy a book by an author we want to read, we are paying for the words of that author, whether they be absolute trash or not. What right has an editor to make cuts which an author does not want? Has the influence of editors on sf been detrimental or no. Sf has had a lot of good editors, thank god, from John Campbell onwards. But how many bad editors have there been, who we have never heard of?

John Andrew's letter was interesting. A computer based oligarchy. The idea sounds frightening. Visions of 1984 and all that. I don't know enough about computers to suggest any fail safe remedies, I would have thought that since in the final analysis computers are 'controlled' by humans, then in the very nature of the human animal, it would be open to corruption. Also, however, would such a system of issues always voted on by a qualified elite. After all the present governmental system is complicated enough. If every law and major issue has to be debated among a continually differing body, with the usual divergent viewpoints, then it would be madness.

It is rather interesting how the computer is regarded with distrust among the general public. Technology goes spinning along so fast, that many are left in its wake, rather frightened, rather scared, by the changes that they are seeing. There seems to be a general feeling of remoteness, 'this has nothing to do with me, I cannot control it, I cannot understand it.' Maybe this is one of the greatest problems of the modern industrial nation, especially with the increasingly massive urban conglomerations. The individual is becoming increasingly remote from society, he is a minute cog in a vast machine over which he has no control. Is man becoming isolated in his towering apartment blocks? There seems to be a mood of cynicism, of sarcasm, that goes with this attitude, which is reflected in the general disillusionment with politicians.

Back from the depths to some reality. I liked Harriet Kolchak's idea of a list of local and international clubs and a list of fanzines. How about reviews of the pro magazines as well. I know that on a selfish level, these are services I would like.

Time marches on.

Anybody noticed the proliferation of sf awards around nowadays? The Hugo, the Pongs, the nebula awards, the 'Isaac', the British Fantasy award, and others which I can't remember. I've probably got some of those wrong. Oh well, I suppose it provides employment for the statue makers

all the best,

Phil Muldowney

((Interesting point about the rapid growth of technology. The same can be said for the biological and social sciences. What worries me is the applications of these advances. I'm thinking especially of the use of motivational behavior studies used by mass advertising -- the latest on the Pongs is that they are not Pongs anymore -- jch))

Donald Franson; 6543 Babcock Ave; North Hollywood, Calif. 91606

Dear Jack,

I hope you will have room for this letter. Nearly two-thirds of my last letter to Tightbeam was cut out. Since I try to condense my letters beforehand, this is a lot of information to repeat, but I will try to make it as brief as possible, then go on to current thoughts.

I can't complain about cutting, in itself, because one of the things I said, and will say again, is that the Tightbeam editor has the power of censorship. Any fanzine that is printed and widely distributed is a potential instrument of libel, and the editor should have complete authority to cut anything out that he doesn't want to print, short of misrepresentation by quoting out of context. He not only has this authority, but an additional responsibility to the club, not to allow anything to appear that may get the club in trouble. When I was President, I made it a point to warn every Tightbeam editor of this responsibility. Since libel and obscenity are difficult to determine, the editor must be given full authority to use his own judgment, and it is up to the President to appoint responsible editors in the first place.

The editorship of TNFF carries even more responsibility, as it is the official organ of the club, and should reflect official policy, as far as possible. Of course any editorship includes the right to editorialize, without which there is no enthusiasm for the job, and it is a job (otherwise why is it so hard to find editors?), but this should not extend to widespread interpolations of opinion on every item and report, as is often done. Still, since capable editors are so hard to find, this is a fault that should be put up with, and can be kept under control by a watchful President, who has the power to criticize and instruct his appointees, as well as to fire them or replace them.

Some people think that the President should be editor of TNFF himself, so that he can control the material that represents the club. This is wrong thinking, since the only material he needs to control is the official news and the bureau reports. If the bureau heads would send in their reports direct to the President, he would know what's going on and would also be able to summarize them for TNFF -- cutting some, combining some, expanding some and creating others where none was sent that time. This summary would be more interesting than the raw reports, in most cases. Official news he can put into the President's message, and leave the bulk of the editing, as well as the publishing and all the work that goes with it, to the Official Editor. The President, of course, (or the Official Editor) should not edit the Directorate Reports, which are the responsibility of the Directorate Chairman.

There are four work-horse jobs in the N3F: President, Secretary-Treasurer, Directorate Chairman, and Editor/Publisher of TNFF. These jobs should not be combined. Each of them is a full-time fan job, as much as any fan job is full-time. I know -- I tried to do two of them when I was President and was forced to take over TNFF by a resignation. It's just too much. If I am elected President I will not edit TNFF or Tightbeam on the side -- that's a promise and a threat. I will appoint editors for the club zines. If they don't happen to agree with me, but still do a good job and come out on time, their jobs are safe.

The N3F needs more officers and bureau heads. I don't mean more offices and bureaus; I mean more workers to fill those positions. And I mean workers, not just office-holders. And I don't mean work either, it's fun -- as those who do it know, unless there is too much of it. And the only way to share the overload is to get more members active. This is obvious, isn't it? Yet the usual reformers start at the other end -- "clear out all those who don't agree with us, and we can do the job easier, with fewer people." It doesn't work out that way. It is the job of the President to get disagreeing (and disagreeable) people to work -- if not together, then separately -- for the good of the club. Oil is needed, not dynamite.

Games Bureau is science-fiction oriented, or was at first. Jetan is from Burroughs, Fairy Chess has sf connections, and if Diplomacy isn't fantasy, what is? But the Games Bureau has been expanded too much, takes in too much territory. Classical music, stamps, etc., have nothing to do with science fiction

or even with games. This is contrary to the preamble of the Constitution ... This is not an "sf-forever" appeal, but there are stamp clubs.

A questionnaire I sent out some years ago asked whether N3F members were interested in an N3F newszine. The vote was no, 3 to 1. Yet they asked for more news in TNFF, 23 to 1. I tried to give them this (when I was editing) in fillers and in the columns "Gateway to Fandom" and "News and Announcements" Also listed were current fanzines, local clubs and dates of conventions. This should always be a continuing service in TNFF, no matter from what source it comes (generally fanzines the editor gets).

Yet it makes sense to recommend newszines and other outside publications. Why not? The N3F is a club, not a publishing service. If something already exists, why should the N3F supplement it with a counterpart of its own?

I'd like to encourage an N3F genzine, though. One put together lovingly and unhurriedly, as a club project, might be a credit to the club, and offer an opportunity for fanzine-making to many members who could not otherwise participate. First step is to appoint an editor and a publisher. Any volunteers? Someone suggest a decent name, too.

There have been many suggestions for a giant, catch-all list of all fans everywhere in the world, complete with thumb-nail descriptions of their interests. This would require a tremendous amount of work, would be obsolete even before it was published, would be expensive, and would be of very little use to anyone. More useful and practical would be lists by category, of active fans in that category. The N3F does a little of this now. For example, the Correspondence Bureau tries to publish names of fans now interested in correspondence, and what kind. The Collectors' Bureau has a list of collectors in various categories, that could be updated and pruned regularly. The "New Fanzine Appreciation Society" is an attempt to create, for the benefit of faneds, a list of fans guaranteed to respond to their fanzines. Such lists could be made on any subject or activity, which might not be long but would include active fans willing to participate. The presence of these lists in TNFF would not constitute a formal bureau. But beware bureaucracy; keep the categories simple.

I question the value of "The Immortal Storm" and "A Sense of FAPA" to neofans. One is filled with the detailed machinations of bitter fan-feuds; and the chief feature of the other is a diatribe by an ex-fan whose punch-line is "Why don't YOU leave fandom?" This is strong stuff for anyone who hasn't yet learned to take it all with a grain of salt.

Can non-members participate in an N3F bureau? In a sense, non-members, as well as all of fandom, indirectly benefit from any N3F activity. In another sense, why should non-members who wish to participate actively in an N3F bureau continue to be non-members? The only difference between a member and a non-member is that the member pays dues. Therefore the non-member who participates in N3F activity is privileged to the tune of \$1.75 a year. It certainly isn't fair to the member. In some cases non-members are even named as heads of sub-bureaus. Here is where the President can put his foot down.

Should non-members benefit from N3F bureaus? --yes. Should they control them? --no.

I'd also like to comment on the agitation to allow non-members into N'APA, the N3F's apa. This is pretty ridiculous, considering that the logical source of new members for N'APA is the parent club. If the membership of N'APA has dropped recently, maybe there is not enough effort put into advertising N'APA within the club -- a short paragraph in TNFF is hardly sufficient. We shouldn't have to go outside to hunt for members, after 8 years.

I am glad that fandom is once again trying to "do something to promote science fiction". Damon Knight's plan to intimidate wholesalers into stocking stf won't work, but it's only the latest in a recent series of such commendable

actions, such as the apparently successful campaign to keep "Star Trek" on the air.

I was interested in the specious argument against universal suffrage, in itself a proof that the "wise" are not so wise after all. Aristocracy is not new -- the "government by the best people", whether chosen by birth, ability, or intelligence tests does work -- but only with the "consent of the governed." The "wise" may rule, but all must have the opportunity to vote, or willingly consent to being governed. If they are deprived of their vote, by test or otherwise, they will feel they are not involved in the government, that it is not functioning with their consent, that it is not "their" government. And you know where this leads -- to revolution. Now if you say that the "wise" should govern, I'll agree with you, and the most ignorant voter would also agree. But when you say that only the "wise" should vote, you had better provide them with weapons, too. Come to think of it, this all sounds like Heinlein

Anyway, intelligence tests do not necessarily guarantee the ability to pick intelligent men as representatives. While a test in governmental methods might be useful for office-holders, voters don't need to know technical details (except in California). We don't have a democracy, we have a republic -- which seems to have been forgotten. We elect a representative who should have the ability and is trusted, with the proviso that if he fails we can throw him out later. This requires good sense -- but not a high I.Q.

Yours,

Donald Franson

((I agree with you about division of labor. When someone takes on too much, something is likely to suffer. -- Sending bureau reports to the President to be edited and forwarded to the TNFF O.E. hasn't always worked too well in the past. People complain about the way their reports are published, and it's often hard to find out what went wrong where. -- jch))

Stephen Compton; 6532 Estates Drive; Oakland, Cal. 94611

Tightbeam #44:

I hope this letter doesn't have to be forwarded to # 45. At any rate, I have noticed that two kinds of members almost completely monopolize Tightbeam: new members making their first splash (welcome to them), and old (long-time) members, often officers of the club, who are more or less regular contributors. As a usually quiescent member of 3 or 4 years' standing, I'd like to break this pattern for one issue. (I sometimes wonder what would happen if most of the membership -- say about 300 -- did the same and wrote letters for the same issue of TB? The editor would probably have a nervous breakdown.)

TB #43 was good and long, and the many high quality illos were very enlivening. However, on my copy at least, a few letters were sometimes too light to read. Still and all, congratulations to Alma Hill.

If Matt Venable has discovered Tchaicovsky is the greatest composer, I have discovered that James Joyce is the greatest writer. I lament that after the great experimental age of the '20s, we have lapsed into an age of solid, conventional prose, and that Ulysses and Finnogans Wake are yet largely lonely monuments to the genius of their creator. The early works, Dubliners and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, have been more influential, although little fiction has met their standards. Those books worked a revolution in prose in their day. Perhaps today we need another revolution in prose.

Science fiction is especially plagued with conventional prose. There are poetical qualities in such writers as Theodore Sturgeon, Ray Bradbury, the late Cordwainer Smith, and Roger Zelazny. But, except for some of Alfred Bester's stories and his novels and a few of Zelazny's early stories, real experiments with

form, style, and construction are extremely rare. In fact it has taken an outsider, William Burroughs to adapt SF to his prose experiments (The Ticket that Exploded, Nova Express, The Soft Machine).

If I ask for more literary experimentation in SF, it is not that I want to see SF become merely an avant-garde vehicle, as even Knight abhors, but that I would like to see a part of SF advance the tools of literary expression; I would like to see new prose as well as good prose. It seems to me that if writers want to describe worlds and futures very different from the here and now, they will need to use and develop unconventional forms.

Getting back to Joyce, Finnegans Wake and the Nighttown dream fantasies in Ulysses would probably satisfy Judith Merrill's definition of SF. Anthony Burgess (of A Clockwork Orange) provides one of the best general introductions to the master in Re Joyce (available in Ballantine pb). And the recent movie of Ulysses, while not having the innovative genius in its medium of the book, is still worth seeing as a faithful, if reduced, picture of the original; but read Ulysses or the commentary of Re Joyce first, so you can follow the movie.

Thanks to Alma for printing Damon Knight's speech. However, suppose wholesalers, persuaded by fans, do increase distribution of SF; will the sales of SF necessarily rise in proportion (at least) to the increased supply?

I think it would be a good idea for the National Fantasy Fan to print the Guest of Honor speeches of future Worldcons and perhaps of local cons, too.

John Andrews' letter was one of the most interesting. His account of Prof. Travis' scheme for computers to determine who would vote reminded me of a similar proposal put forth by Campbell in the August, 1966 Analog. Readers in later issues showed how such a system could be sabotaged, however, and JWC admitted that "There never was and never will be any system a determined crook can't bolix somehow." How true! And the computer system seems to have more dangers than some others.

As for Andrews' question on why there are so many anti-utopias: Erich Fromm, in his Afterword to the Signet edition of 1984, says that such demoralizing and dehumanizing events of this century as the two World Wars, the Depression, the rise of mass industry and mass culture, the atom and thermonuclear bombs, and the continuing development of a terrifying technology that shows no end have all overthrown a centuries-old Christian optimism in man's ability to perfect, or at least improve, himself. Now, it seems, man can all too easily pervert and destroy himself.

Our society seems indeed to be becoming one in which "the military will become dominant (in fact, if not in law), ... /and/ fright and hate of a possible aggressor will destroy the basic attitudes of a democratic, humanistic society." On that cheerful note I sign off.

Fannishly yours,
Stephen Compton

J.F.Kusske; %Alton Chermak; Lincoln Ave E.; Mounted Route; Alexandria, Minn. 56267

Dear Tightbeam;

I detect a note of hysteria in some of the "replies" that people have made to my TB letters and to my editorial comments in TB 42. It appears that the purpose of these people is not to answer my questions or to defend the N3F against my charges, but rather to discredit me personally. I refer to Alma Hill (who dismissed various arguments of mine by calling them "loaded language") and Harriett Kolchak (who claimed my objections were "screams"). I wish to make it clear to these two women that any opinions that I have are expressed in clear unemotional English and that my thinking is done in sober soft tones. Evading

the issue by attacking the man instead of what he says is poor technique, and both of you should be old enough to know better.

All the important services to fandom are performed by individual groups. Take the conventions, for instance. One would think that the only international fan-club would naturally be the group to put on an annual Worldcon. But it isn't. Can you imagine what would happen if the N3F ran a convention?((A vivid description of just what would happen, complete with a whole hatfull of names being tossed glibly to and fro, has been omitted. This due to the fact that I'm editor and think I oughta edit a little. --jck)) Let's face it people. The N3F is very inefficient. I'm surprised that anyone even bothers to contest that statement. Independent groups can and do perform services with much ^{loss} time, work, and trouble spent. TAFF, TOFF, and the various regional and world conventions prove my points. whatever the N3F is now doing for fandom is either not needed or very minor.

Clay Hamlin has really said very little -- he has not been able to see the main point of the discussion. What does the N3F do for its various branches? Let's look at it this way: suppose the N3F were to die tomorrow. What would happen to the story contest? There'd still be fans, wouldn't there? They'd still write stories, wouldn't they? The story contest would still be a good idea, wouldn't it? Naturally the story contest would still go on. The N3F contributes nothing to it. (Money is no problem - a few fans could kick in a couple dollars each). It only harms the story contest by insisting that only N3F members can send in stories free. I'm not against the N3F doing things -- but I feel that it should do only what an organization of its size is uniquely able to do: finance special fan-publications, act as a clearing house for sf and fan information, recruit and teach neos and perhaps some others that I am not aware of. When the N3F begins to involve itself in private fan matters like manuscript bureaus and games bureaus it is only adding red-tape to the system and performing an ultimately destructive end.

As to Clay's questions -- they are easy to answer. Yes there is (or was) a non-N3F lending library. I wouldn't lend books from my private library to strangers but apparently the fellow who runs this library does. It is not too expensive and seems to have a large selection of books.

Many apas have started in the last 6 years and are still in existance. APA45, TAPS, STOBCLER, SFPA, APA L, VALAPA are only the ones I know of. Many of them are much more successful than N'APA is. What do you mean it takes a large organization to make an apa successful? This statement is in direct opposition to the facts. How do you suppose FAPA, SAPS, and the Cult started? Not through the good offices of an N3F club! Any apa has new members available; N'APA has less than most because it can draw only neffers. Where do you suppose new members come from, Clay? The N3F doesn't hatch them! As for this bit about the directors running things when they think it is needed - you are assuming that apa-members cannot run their own offices. Again I point to FAPA and SAPS. Did they ever have five Elder Gods to step in and Point the Way ((sic)) to erring members? No -- but both groups are still going strong today. An apa is an organization of and by itself -- directors of the N3F, many of whom are not members of the apa, cannot understand its needs and problems. Yet you would give them the power to dictate. Such a set-up, I feel, is ultimately destructive. The apa may be kept alive indefinitely under it, but any material produced for the group will be crud. (Witness N'APA today)

Janio's letter is intelligent, but most of her points are not valid. Her continuity thesis, for instance does not hold. How many of the N3F's bureaus have died or stagnated over the years? Plenty....do you know why? Because the

success or non-success of those groups depends on the individual fans in it. Take away the talented and enthusiastic individual and the bureau dies. But take away the superstructure and it will continue to flourish. The N3F can't provide continuity, only the fans themselves can, and they won't unless they are interested.

The trouble with N3F members, particularly the ones who have been in the group for a long time, is that they depend on the Neff to do much of their fanning for them. They say "N3F affords me contact with both old and new fan." Well, sure it does. But have you ever thought of making these contacts yourself? Go out and join an apa; write loc's to genzines, read the lettercols in prozines. Don't let the N3F become your fandom, there's a lot more to our sub-culture than TNFF and TIGHTBEAM and 300 people. Sure there is a place for the N3F, and if the N3F were run more efficiently it would serve a much better purpose than it does today, but fanning is still an individual hobby.

While I have the space I'd like to do a little non-N3F advertising. APA45, of which I'm OE, will celebrate its third birthday in October. Back when it started, many BNFs were sure that the apa would not succeed. Originally planned as a group for teenagers, there is an amendment to the constitution pending that would allow anyone to join. I'm not sure if it will pass or not - if you were born before 1945 and want to join write me for information. By the time you read this we'll probably have a waitinglist again, but in the past, the wl has moved fast. Dues are \$1.00 a year.

Faanishly, John

((There are many things the N3F is able to do for you. One of which is pubbing the above letter and sending it to some 300 people. -- One of the best reasons for running the story contest through the N3F is the large membership. Sure, a small group of fans could get enough money together for prizes, but informing such a large number of potential entrants is carried out best by an organization such as the N3F. -- When a parent club forms an apa among its membership, it is necessary for the club to have some sorts of checks on the apa. Provisions against such calamities as OEs gaffiating and the like, The N3F does this through the directorate, with a directorate representative in N'APA. There are two directors (not "ghods" and not "elder" either, thank you) in N'APA at this time. --jch))

Sherma Comerford; 83 Lincoln Ave.; Newark, N.J. 07104

Dear Jack (TB),

The subject of conversation seems to be what the N3F is, what it isn't, and what it should be. Some excellent points were made in TB #43, especially by Stan Woolston, Harriett Kolchak, Don Franson and Janie Lamb. I find it very interesting to see how the people who have the greatest practical answers to the questions posed above are the ones whose names I see when credit is given for hard work well done. On the other hand, the loudest knockers are otherwise strangers (at least to this fairly new fan).

Of course the N3F isn't all it might be. It will never be all it might be, because there is always more that can be done. That statement is so obvious it's almost analytic. So is this: Anyone who thinks the N3F should be doing something it isn't (and he's probably right!) should get off his duff and start organizing it himself. I do believe that's how these things get done.

Having said that, I will heroically edit my comments (*@!*#!!) on the nearly illegible photo offset repro of #43. I nearly went blind trying to read the copy. Stan Woolston take note - TNFF is, at present, legible.

Now for a change of subject. I am told that I can't write a letter without mentioning Star Trek. That may be true, In any case, I am trying to spread a piece of very annoying news about the show.

Juanita Coulson has informed me that stations receiving their signal from WNBC-NY (that includes at least half the country) are getting shorter segments and

longer commercials than stations connected with KNBC - Los Angeles. This results in scenes being cut, and in at least one case, the cut was pretty drastic.

I refer to the episode "Dagger of the Mind" where we first learn of Vulcan telepathy. In the cut version, we heard Spock tell us that the sharing of minds can be dangerous. In the uncut scene, you find out why. Spock becomes entrapped in the mind of the madman, and Dr. McCoy has to pull him away from the contact bodily.

I have written to KNBC to protest such commercial padding. If anyone else wishes to do so, the address is NBC-TV, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY.

On the same subject, I would like to pass on something from SF Times: Star Trek has three Hugo nominations. If you believe the show deserves a Hugo, it is important that the vote not be split. There is a move afoot to put as many Star Trek votes as possible behind "The Menagerie". This show was written by Roddenberry himself, and if it wins, it would put the Hugo where it really belongs.

Yrs fannishly, Sherma Comerford

((Thanks for the Star Trek information. I didn't know about the difference in programming. I also agree about the Hugo vote. If votes are split, I would think that Fantastic Voyage will win. -- jch))

John Boardman, 592 16th St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11218

Dear N.F.F.F.:

It's about time to make public a disclosure which I made privately to Jim Sanders and Fred Lerner, which Ed Meskys and a few other people discovered by themselves, and several of you have indirectly guessed at - Eric Blake is a hoax.

I originated Eric-tho-Fake about 5 years ago, when I wanted to receive a number of conservative publications but felt that some long-memoried rightists might remember my name from the period of my political activity in Florida in 1956-7. So I rented Box 26, Jamaica N.Y. 11431, and used "Eric Blake" as a mail drop for this stuff. The name was compounded out of the indubitably Nordic "Eric" and the last name of a solidly provincial midwestern family who farmed near my grandfather in Iowa. That I later discovered the name "Blake" to be Anglo-Irish in origin helped matters a little; Irish-Americans constitute an increasing portion of the formerly solid WASP right wing. Another recent discovery is that the very similar sounding "Eric Blair" was the original name of the English political writer and professional sore-head who is better known as "George Orwell".

Having invented Blake for this one purpose, I decided to use him for others as well. I entered his name in a postal Diplomacy game in which I was also playing under my own name. (Guess who won.)

Finally I decided to have a little fun with the NFFF. Using one of the application forms which George Nims Raybin distributes promiscuously at Worldcons, I sent in a form. The Blake persona was that of a man in his late fifties, a professional construction engineer who had worked in the tropics before and during World War II, and is now living on his pensions and a few investments in a state of semi-invalid existence on his native Long Island.

The viewpoint which "Blake" circulated through NFFF, Diplomacy fandom, and elsewhere, was fundamentally that of the publications for whose reception he was created. He came forth as a tolerably orthodox Christian of a High-Church Anglican persuasion, and as such held the conviction, common among conservatives, that most of the rest of humanity does not have his own capacity to judge, discriminate, and reject unsound ideas, and therefore must have its reading, viewing, and thinking regulated by "community leaders". This is the "traditionalist" as opposed to "libertarian" school of conservative thought, which is perhaps best represented in fandom by G.H. Carr and Jerry Pournelle. In fact, "Blake" and Mrs. Carr had a long correspondence in which they found themselves in substan-

tial agreement on most points, though Mrs. Carr never quite approached "Blake's" grim seriousness.

There were strong elements of voluntarism in "Blake's" philosophy, as in that of most conservatives. There is a general tendency to regard the individual human Will as superior to, and capable of overcoming, all adversities including the inertia of "mass man", and a declaration by scientists that something is impossible. There was a great deal of this sort of thing in early s-f "backyard space-ships", and broad-throated heroes thwarting the schemes of evil scientists. So I made "Blake" an admirer of s-f from the Old Stone Age (1900-1935), which had real Heroes, Heroines, and Villains, instead of modern fiction (s-f and mainstream) which does not have such one-dimensional characterizations. There is a conscious archaism in a lot of conservative thought; look how Russell Kirk is much more at home spiritually in his ghost stories in archaic ages where, presumably, the Good Guys could be told from the Bad Guys without lengthy analyses of their motivations and childhood neuroses.

Whenever he dealt with contemporary affairs, "Blake" always referenced everything to the "Sinister Monolithic International Communist Conspiracy" (Henceforth "SMICC"). This, again, is in line with contemporary American conservatism, which sees the SMICC behind everything with which it does not agree, and every trend which it does not like. Of course, the SMICC is just the current version of the "International Jewish Conspiracy", "International Catholic Conspiracy", or, so help me, "International Masonic Conspiracy" with which previous generations of demagogues tried to scare people. Human nature being what it is, I have no doubt that in a couple of generations anti-Communist prejudice will be recognized as being of the same nature as anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, or anti-Negro prejudice, and the public will have found another "Sinister International Conspiracy" to excoriate - the Muslims, maybe, or the Church of the Brotherhood of the Way.

So, "Blake" has been fun, but the amusement is beginning to wear a little thin, and I've decided to close him out. The file of conservative political material will go to a friend who is a researcher for the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, and to that incisive little publication, The Dixon Line, which is challenging conservatism on its home ground in Orange County, California. And the fanzines will be left at Mike McInerney's, to be rummaged over by local Noos.

Stay well,

John Boardman

((Is it really true that John Boardman is a hoax? --jch))

Jack C Haldeman 11, 1244 Woodbourne Ave., Baltimore, Maryland 21212

Dear N3F,

As you can see from the above address, I have moved. This in part accounts for the slight delay in this issue. The fact that this is our first house and we are just getting accustomed to homeowner's problems hasn't helped any.

That this got out anywhere near on time is due to the able help of my wife, who stayed up nights typing and cranking while I was trapped into working nights and weekends. All the mistakes are mine, the hard work hers.

Also thanks to Fred Lerner and Ron Bounds for helping.

Don't forget.....

TIGHTBEAM 45 - Gary Labowitz
362 Prince Frederick St.
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania 19406

Cover of this issue was done by Joe W. Haldeman.

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