

# VIEWPOINTS

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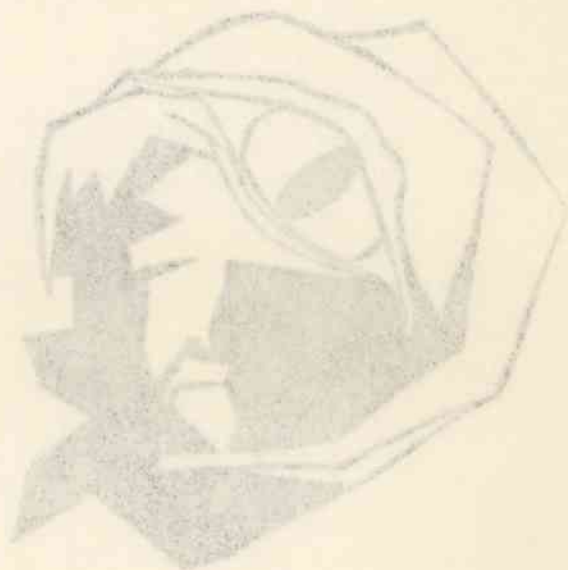


FANTASY AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION

# VIEWPOINTS

1964

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# PRO FAN FEUD



A controversy has risen about the management and tone of World Science-Fiction Conventions, particularly the coming one in Chicago. Since these annual conventions are of major interest to most science-fictionists the matter merits attention. It also merits attention because the conventions are of major importance in presenting science-fiction to the general public; because we who have paid our membership fee have a right to know of and to vote on the development of the convention; and because the loudest noises do not always represent the will of the majority, though they frequently and successfully pretend to such.

On examining the argument I have decided to deal only with the very representative material in Lee Hoffman's excellent magazine QUANDRY, as such appeared in the recent seventeenth issue.

Ken Beale, BRONX, N.Y. says: "... As a matter of cold hard fact, thus far, the names of no fan involved in putting on the con have reached my ears. May & Mahaffey are certainly not financially uninterested in SF and you know about Bleier and Dikty. And those 3 scientists, while not pros, cannot be called fan either. Speaking of them what on earth does he [Korshak] think they will have to say about SCIENCE-FICTION, when addressing an audience who've read it a good deal longer than they have? Or are they going to talk physics? Just the thing to put a lot of fans to sleep."

And from Rick Sneary, South Gate, California comes the obviously hasty paragraph saying:

I see you are a bit worried over the Chicon II. As one who did holler Huckster some time ago, I'm gratified, if not happy, to see others seeing the same danger. . . . The whole thing with the Chicon is that there aren't any really well known fans there. A collection of old timers and pros. No one will know how bad things really are until it is too late. . . . I think we need a new guard of convention planners . . . no pros. . . . Even such people as Speer, Ackerman, and Tucker are a bit too old to handle the selections without the thought of money. . .

On the other side of the fence a longer item by Edward Wood contains the following:

The rhetorical question, 'Did you ask fandom if it wants a respectable convention?' by Lee Hoffman in QUANDRY [16] can be answered just as facetiously by 'Did you ask fandom if it does not want a respectable convention?'

Implicit in this, is the idea that humor and fun are separate from dignity. It is not necessary to consider fandom a circus in order to have fun. Nor is maturity incompatible with fun.

To offset the bad publicity fandom has given science-fiction, (anyone who thinks the preceding statement to be false, can look up the many references to fandom in a variety of general magazines from TIME to the NEW YORKER) fandom has got to get a good press. Even with the best decorum, there is no guarantee that the publicity will not be bad. . . . The fan review in the professional magazines amount to an unearned subsidy. Notice . . . the importuning of professional artwork . . . at the conventions. And the seeking after a guest of honor! And the use (abuse) of the readers columns of the professional magazines to sell magazines or advertise fan events - is of valuable aid to fandom. This writer had heard individuals gloat over having ruined the readers columns in the older magazines and writing in to prevent the formation of readers columns in the newer magazines. . . . Perhaps fandom is of the opinion that it deserves the benefits it has obtained from the professionals. Let fandom think back to the 30's when the only way to gain subscribers to fan magazines of the times was to send out fan magazines to the readers

who wrote in to professional magazines ... cooperation between all parts of the fantasy and science fiction fields makes for the quickest and best way to advance science fiction. If fans will not cooperate with the professionals, then they should not cry when favors are withheld from them...

Conventions are not merely for fans, but for everyone interested in science fiction, readers, professionals, fans, writers, publishers, and even children.

And that, my friends, is the meat of the matter. Let us examine the 'cuts' selected not because the above persons represent the worst or the best, but because they presented the two sides in a manner most convenient for this article.

First: Beal objects because no well known 'fen' are involved in putting on the convention. The obvious fact remains that Korshak has been a well known fan for years, and the others have been well known for a lesser length of time. It is also true that a large percentage of professionals rose from the fan ranks. And the fact that they are now able to earn a living at a job they love most certainly should have nothing to do with making them less enthusiastic about science-fiction, or in putting on a good convention.

As for 'Those 3 scientist'. What will they have to say to an audience who've been reading science-fiction a good deal longer than they have?

My dear, sir, it is quite possible that the scientist Muller, to name one, was reading science-fiction before you discovered the purpose of the family bathroom. At least a picture in THIS WEEK a year or two ago showed him reading an early Street & Smith ASTOUNDING.

Another point which you seem to overlook is that a brilliant man can read science-fiction a few months and have more of value to offer than an ordinary reader or a dimwit who has collected all the magazines for twenty-five years. I have an acquaintance in each of those catagories. I further sugges a thorough reading of Hayakawa anent science-fiction in the Nov-Dec. 1951 RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST.

As for the 'lecture on physics': in the few years I've been a fan (14) and the years I've been more or less active (10) I've found that almost universally, fans are intensely interested in news and information on a new discovery in any field of science, or a report on the problems hindering the next step forward.

Of course the scope of science-fiction, due to recent popularity, has not only broadened but widened. It now attracts, to parts of it, some of the better minds of human society; and to parts of it, many of the lesser minds. And for those lesser minds, who may suffer greatly, (in their limited way), while affairs operate on a higher level, I suggest the convention maintain a sideroom with a complete set of PLANET COMICS.

Sneary cries 'huckster' because professionals are devoting their spare time to organizing the convention. Since they are professionals in the field, Mr. Sneary seems to consider it inevitable that these professionals will organize the convention to promote their own financial interests. I am certain that each of the pros in question is quite aware that the best advertizing they could do would be to present a good convention and at the same time gain the reputation of having not given their vested interests the slightest advantage.

Sneary also objects to the 'old timers'. I'd like to point out that those old timers do have experience, a valuable asset in any project.

Are Speer, Ackerman, and Tucker too old not to think of money? I hope so! You can not slip away from the fact that 'money' is what lubricates the wheels of human society. The convention must pay its bill, which won't be small, and it should leave a few green and silver seeds to start the next convention - otherwise there will be no next convention - either pro-exhibits or smoke filled rooms.



# LIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES

Leslie Croutch in each issue of LIGHT gets away with more light murder, to my infernal delight, than any other light hearted fanzine to gleam through the years. Its flight unblighted as it serves to lighten my load with its wicked beam of light, lit lightly, yet fiercely lighting the lightly lit light of laughter which both enlightens me and lightens my gloom whenever it alights lightly in the light of my day. Lightly I pray, may each LIGHT be more lightly lit and more often alight and anon the volumns my heart will lighten as they lightly light on the lightly lit bust of Jessabelle slightly above my chamber door.

## GENESIS

"In the beginning God devided.the darkness from the light and the light from the darkness and the darkness he called night and the light he called day, and he divided the white from the black and the black he called evil and the white he called good, and the white he called paper and the black he called ink, and the white he called negative and the black he called fulfillment of activity requirements."

# A PLACE OF WORDS

● Here-where the issue converges on a few picas of verbage strewn carefully with the hope that out of it will grow something larger than before, here where the group is gathered on the verge of expectations, here where I am not alone, here is a place of words.

"I haven't the faintest idea of what a pamphrey is. But it doesn't sound very pure. Especially, '... a snow-white pamphrey rode The Lady of Shallot'. No not very pure at all."

Rich Elsberry in SNULBUG

"I'm bewitched!"

Lee Hoffman in CHOOG

"So the little man went to work in a corner behind the filing cases. He ordered anodes, diodes, triodes, quaterodes, quintodes, and even one anodyn. He also needed bus bars, a mechano set, a dozen ball point pens, a war surplus rock crusher (semi-portable, M1) and a bushel of Willkie buttons. He was very ingenious and even Mr. Johnbell<sup>1</sup>, who was very particular about such things, admitted that it was not costing too much to fantangle a dreelspreel."

Poul Anderson & Kenny Gray  
from "The Dreelspreel Fantangles"  
in SNULBUG

"I am capable of much greater trickery."

Charles Burbee in TANGENT

"I might point out in passing that anyone who tries to reform the reformers must posses --or lack-- something in great quantities."

D. B. Thompson in PHANTEUR

"I used to jump rope a lot, but they are all new to me. Little girls must have changed in the eight years since I was in the eighth grade and skipped my last rope."

Marion Zimmer Bradley  
on "Skip Rope Rimes"  
in GEMINI

"Where dead ages hide under  
The live roots of the tree,  
In my darkness the thunder  
Makes utterance of me;  
In the clash of my boughs with each other  
ye hear the waves sound of the sea."

Algernon Charles Swineburne  
from "Hertha"

<sup>1</sup>NOTE: Canbell (West. Amer.); Headhorn (U.S. Navy); Mud (Galactic) Websters Interfantastic



# SCIENCE-FICTION

## FORMAT

In dealing with the format of s.f. one must deal with readers such as the one who wrote to *WONDER* saying: "Who cares about trimmed edges or pulp paper? I don't care if you print it on chees-cloth as long as the stories are good."

The reader quoted above reveals a lack of awareness that a good writer likes his story well packaged.

A few publishers still appear to follow such a policy. At least their magazines appear to be the accident of throwing a shabby illustration and a sloppy story together printed cheaply on cheap paper. The only rule seems to be to get it bright enough to catch the eye.

To a limited extent publishers have gotten away with this, but now their gullible moron has switched to the brighter comics, and to television where he can get his thrills with far less effort.

There is left to the s.f. magazine an audience, mostly potential, which is more educated, more sophisticated, and inclined to take pride in holding itself slightly aloof from mass entertainment.

This group is larger than the one the pulp s.f. magazines now reach. They reach up to 100,000. The 'potential' audience can possibly be 500,000 in the next ten years. Campbell brought in an impressive though small segment of this group in the past ten years and is slowly bringing in more. Gold is bringing in a more liberal sophisticated section while Boucher and McComas are bringing in the literary interest. Howard Brown with the new, deluxe *FANTASTIC* is, perhaps wisely, trying to get all types. If he does that he will get his own special audience, the audience that reads all s.f. magazines, and a good share of the special audience of the other three. His circulation then may be able to support the large budget his magazine is operating on.

It is pleasing to note that slowly, one by one, the old pulps are weakening or dying, or gradually changing into quality format. STARTLING, apparently a very standard pulp, and also very successful, at present, would tend to disprove my statement. However, on examining the contents of STARTLING, one will find that they are much more mature and artfully done than any of the old pulps. Furthermore a recent news release to FANTASY TIMES announces that STARTLING will undergo improvements in format.

It is apparent that the sharper looking and better executed magazines such as ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, and GALAXY are selling well and are attracting a mature dependable audience. It is obvious that this audience wants (1) a neat attractive looking magazine and (2) well done stories.

Still, there are those die hard publishers hanging on with FUTURE, MARVEL, PLANET and a few others. However, since the laws of natural selection operate at the buyers market as well as in the field and stream, I predict that the near future will see the final death of the shaggy pulp and the slow, steady rise of the quality, digest sized s.f. magazines.

Eventually there will be a low budget slick s.f. magazine. Today a slick in a physical format, like that of ARGOSY, would need 750,000 circulation though preferably 1,000,000 because s.f. is not a good medium for the highpaying advertiser. S.f. at present can not, at best, attract over 500,000 buyers. Of course one can pick a small town where s.f. sells well, from the number of copies of ASF and GALAXY sold there, come out with the conviction that those magazines each have 1,000,000 circulation. This puts you on par with the Gallup pole on Dewey's presidency since it naively ignores large population areas where s.f. is rarely read.

Nevertheless the fact remains, success is the master of fate--so trot right down to the newstand and buy two extra copies of your three favorite magazines!

# NOTES

## AT PRESS TIME

This page was left blank after the printing of the rest of the issue for such insignificant eventualities as FANTASTIC turning out to be another ZIFF-DAVIS pulp instead of a quality magazine or my not getting in FAPA for another quarter or so. (I've still got my fingers crossed!)

Concerning the virtues of FANTASTIC there is this to say: The stories, except for the Miller and the Hickey items, were excellent. The paper stock is the best in the field. But the interior layout, save for DAVID STONE, is boringly pulpish.

Anent the PRO FAN FEUD it has been learned that some of the fans complaining about the professionally managed convention are persons who spend much of their time trying to sell to the pros and very little time working for the fans. My personal opinion is that those few loud complainers are (1) badly misinformed or (2) very very little fish resentful of the fact that science-fiction fandom is becoming far too large and mature a puddle for them to rile up.

I seem to have located some help for my new s.f. art magazine CONCEPT but I'll keep my fingers crossed. It's rare help that does not peter out in the face of a long, tedious and payless task.

# THIS-WILL-FIX-GERTRUDE DEPT.

This particular little item is boosted on its merry way because of a particular little item from Gertrude M. Carr, wherein she dealt with the possible enlargement of FAPA. Such is a worthy enough project - but that woman went right on talking!

Mrs. Carr offered some suggestions about activity requirements.

It is about those suggestions that I have my tooth-brush up and it is about those suggestions that I am in a mood to tell Mrs. Carr what she can do.

The lady had the audacity to suggest a device for increasing activity requirements. And that is fine too except she suggested that each member be required to have two pages of material in each mailing! Maybe the lady is right yet, my strongest objection to FAPA is that when the mailing arrives it tends to pour out the corners of the package in the form of too many sloppy little two-sheeters, sans care, sans forethought, sans pride, sans interest. Or, in philosophical terms, almost elegant enough for a woods privy.

In the print shop alone, I devote several hours to each page of this magazine. Of course I don't expect everyone to be so extravagant with their time as I. However I would be more than slightly disgruntled to see the establishment of by-laws which would force people to produce sloppy little two-sheeters.

Being, in most lines, a firm devotee of the fewer-and-better school, I favor keeping all requirements on an annual basis as they now are. This will give those, who appreciate a good job well done, a chance to bring out one or two fine magazines per year. That is sufficient for most hobbyists yet still gives those eager young gun-poppers a chance to get a thrill from corking-off a sloppy little item for each issue.

## A VIEW TO ECONOMY...

This is the first of what I expect to be several issues of VIEWPOINTS. It is also the sixth of what is to be seven titles with which I have been connected. They include:

VISION	hectographed	art	100 circ.	1943-4	2
BEYOND	mimeographed	fantasy	FAPA	1943-6	6
VITON	mimeographed	gen.	100	1948	2
VITON, Jr.	mimeographed	comedy	special	1949	1
EUSIFANSO	mimog. & printed	gen.	100-477	1950-2	10
VIEWPOINTS	printed	editorial	100	1952	
CONCEPT	printed	s.f. art	500(?)	1952	

Maybe it's time to settle down to a good steady title or two and see what I can do with them. Of these CONCEPT is to be a deluxe annual for quite some time, in fact, as fine and beautiful a publication as I can produce. VIEWPOINTS is to be a simple little magazine promoting some serious projects, of a minor sort, and some nonsense of a major sort, whenever I am in the mood, which I frequently am. This issue of VIEWPOINTS cost only \$1.50 for 100 copies. (I do my own printing.) Can you mimeographers match that?

—Rosco



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**VIEWPOINTS:** A limited edition (100 copies) put out for the FANTASY AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION and for a few unsuspecting or kindly friends. Issues are numbered consecutively and a convenient date is over-printed, as an afterthought and consolation to the UNIVERSITY of OREGON Serials Librarian whom I understand local fan-eds have driven to dithers.

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Edited & printed by ROSCO E. (Rew) WRIGHT, 146 E. 12th, EUGENE, OREGON

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