

SPUDNUT

SPUDNUT #1, letterzine suppliment to SPUD #1, is from Gary Deindorfer, 447 Bellevue Ave., #9-B, Trenton, NJ 08618, USA.

Art Credits: Steve Stiles, logo; SHeryl Birkhead, backpage.

"I need a thang! I need a BIG thang! I need a REAL BIG thang!"
 --Anita Fang, "I Need a Thang!," I NEED A THANG! Thang Records

THE WAY IT IS, IS THIS I don't expect to have trouble filling up the eight pages per issue of future SPUDs. I always will have ideas for the thing, probably more ideas than I can fit in. Thus, I did not relish the idea of half of SPUD #2's eight pages being occupied by locs. Nor, at the rate I have been receiving locs -- and thank you! folks -- would four pages of locs have done these fine letters and cards I have received justice. Thus, I have decided to follow SPUD #1 with a letters suppliment, namely this zine. About two months after you receive this, you can expect to see SPUD #2, eight pages all of my own writing (nor am I soliciting outside written contributions; only art. And thanx for the art, Sheryl and Steve.)

As for the title, I got it thusly. I received a loc on SPUD #1 from Sheryl Birkhead. She says: "You say SPUD (as in hot potato?) (or as in SPUDNUT -- a delicious, but difficult to find doughnut made from potato flour -- not a comment on the faned)." In a later letter, Sheryl continues: "Spudnuts are DELICIOUS-- if you like yeast (raised) doughnuts then I would bet you'd love 'em if you could find 'em anymore-- they have more flavor than the wheat flour kind."

I suggest we hold the East Coast Corflu at Sheryl's house and then go to the nearby place in what she says is Hanover, Maryland and load up on spudnuts. This idea appeals to my well-padded stomach.

Anyhow, I thought SPUDNUT would be the perfect title for this letters suppliment. So why don't I put out a SPUD #2 with eight pages of my own writing and eight pages of locs? Well, you see, I thought it would be more provocative and fannish -- therefore, more senseless -- to do it this way. So, without further ado, let's get to the locs and pocs!

Locs And Bagatelles

DAVID LANGFORD I see the TAFF Dirty Tricks Campaign at work in your ABIGAIL piece. The lady has based her entire platform on being unmarried and available, not to mention looking better in a mini-skirt than the opposition. (Or was that Michael Ashley?) Now you've landed her with a spurious husband. Tut-tut.

It hadn't previously occurred to me that WHAT FANDOM NEEDS IS MORE STORIES ABOUT COFFEE SCENTED URINAL CLEANERS. (To be followed up, of course, in the inexorable process of time, with a letter from Joseph Nicholas pointing out that since increasing entropic processes will sooner or later put out the sun and bring a halt to all life on earth, any talk of a coffee-scented urinal cleaner renaissance is mere self-deluding fantasy.) /94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU, U.K./

JOSEPH NICHOLAS A large part of your response to the extract from my letter seems to rely on wishful thinking rather than dull old reality. To suggest, for example, that Robert Lichtman's TRAP DOOR could be a focal point fanzine if it was published more than once a year is interesting -- but also irrelevant, since the suggestion addresses what you wish were the case rather than what actually *is* the case. TRAP DOOR won't be published more than once a year and those hankering after a focal point fanzine must look elsewhere. (Such as Arnie Katz's FOLLY?) You note, for another example, Alan Dorey's expressed desire to publish more often, but confuse this with the actual intention to do so -- and it should go without saying that unless the promised fanzines actually materialize, the promises are worthless. Similarly with the monthly fanzine it is rumoured Dan Steffan and Ted White may produce: we need to see the fanzine, not the rhetoric.

Indeed, your response to my argument about the slow decline of fanzine fandom reminds me of those I've received here from the likes of (for example) Michael Ashley and Harry Bond, who have similarly resorted to wishful thinking, and argued in particular that people could publish fanzines instead of going to conventions or getting online with BBSs. True -- but it is equally true that they could stand for Parliament or row the Atlantic single-handed. The fact is that people don't publish fanzines, and those who wish to refute me would be better off examining precisely why this is so, and seeking to foster an interest in fanzines *per se*, rather than indulging in repeated exhortations that fanzine publishing is something people should do.

In any case, several of the fanzines you mention in your response are anything but frequent -- and without a relatively high frequency of publication, as I constantly argue, one cannot have a thriving fanzine culture. The issue of Hazel Ashworth's LIP to which you refer appeared in October 1991. PULP was last published in November 1991. No other issue of GROSS ENCOUNTERS has appeared since the one to which you refer, published in May 1992. The frequency of both SALIROMANIA and SLUBBERDE-GULLION has fallen off to roughly quarterly (or longer). DAISNAID has never been other than an occasional publication. Simon Ounsley's stuff comes out as and when (his health has recently improved dramatically, but I understand that he still has to take life very easily). Maureen Speller, despite claiming in one of Ounsley's fanzines ^{that fanzines} were about to enjoy a renaissance, hasn't published anything of her own in some years. In short, matters are no more resurgent now than they were a year ago.

/5A Frinton Road, Stamford Hill, London N15 6NH, U.K./

TED WHITE Joseph Nicholas is both right and wrong in the letter you quoted. He's certainly right that a brief flurry of fanzines is no blizzard; we can both remember a time when there were more fanzines -- especially of the big fat kind -- coming out regularly (or at least arriving regularly in our mailboxes; even if each title came out only a few times a year, there were more titles). These days the arrival of a STET is a Big Event.

But Joseph is wrong about the "conclusions" Dan Steffan and I supposedly reached "after forty issues of PONG in the early eighties: that the effort expended is out of proportion to the response received...." We didn't feel that way at all. We got a **lot** of response to PONG and most of it was gratifying. (What was less gratifying was the response of a mediocre few who resented us for putting out a better fanzine than they could, or would. The spiteful attacks were disheartening.) But putting out a fanzine every two or three weeks is demanding, of both time and money, to say nothing of the ongoing creative demands. We never intended to go on doing PONG forever, and we felt forty issues were enough, so we planned to make that fortieth issue the last one almost a year earlier. Putting out our first annish was stressful -- we put out what amounted to a major issue of a genzine two weeks after the previous issue, while Dan was sick and we were both dealing with a weekend of entertaining, with visitors from out of town, and the annual Halloween party -- and after things settled down a bit we sat down and planned the coming year for PONG: an-every-three-weeks schedule instead of the biweekly schedule, slightly larger issues, and termination with the 40th issue, due shortly before the 1982 Worldcon. It had nothing to do with the feedback we were getting; it was just a case of us figuring that forty issues were enough. (We definitely wanted to beat the thirty-issues jinx.) We **did**, however, feel that we'd done our bit for the nonce, and it was time for someone else to pick up the banner and run with it a while. And Joseph is right that despite claims to the contrary, no one else did that. So it goes.

The more surreal pieces didn't connect too well with me, but I liked "Mrs. Utz" (is Utz a common name in Pennsylvania Dutch country? I can't help thinking of the potato chips...) **{I think it is.}** and the untitled sequence of dialogue (although I wondered a bit about its context, and point). /1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, VA 22046/

 She: I hear the children of the world crying out.

He: So do I, and I wish they would shut up. They're starting to get on my nerves.

 ROBERT BLOCH Off to Las Vegas to GoH at Antiquarian Book Fair -- but wanted to tell you I enjoyed SPUD's contents, and particularly the fine interlineations. You've revived a lost art!

If I haven't pinpointed it, ONCE AROUND THE BLOCH is scheduled now for July. And yes, it may have its warm spots! /2111 Sunset Crest Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90046/ **{I look forward to reading your autobiography, Robert, as I am sure we all do.}**

ROBERT COULSON I was rather interested in your and Joseph Nicholas's comments on fandom. I suppose I get a couple of dozen fanzines -- not all of them frequent -- but very few of the ones mentioned. Obviously fanzine fandom is larger than most fans think, but there is less interaction among fanzines than there used to be.

Enjoyed your memories of Mrs. Utz. I can remember most of my teachers, though I probably had fewer than you did; one for each two lower grades and a faculty of eight in the highschool. Total of 12 teachers for 12 grades of school. My favorite was Chesteen Chapple, who was highschool science teacher, town clerk, Sunday school superintendent, Scoutmaster, took wedding photos in his spare time, had some connection with the Civil Air Patrol, and owned the only wire recorder I ever saw; they were very exotic in the 1940s. He also covered up for me once for an incident that might well have got me fined, though I don't suppose there would have been a formal arrest. I kept in touch with him until he died a few years ago. One never knows when half-forgotten people out of one's past will reappear; my third and fourth grade teacher were present at my highschool class reunion a few years ago. /2677W-500N, Hartford City, IN 47348/

CHARLES BURBEE I found SPUD #1 highly enjoyable, especially the sketch on Mrs. Utz. Did/care for Dream Bridge. Got a kick out of Urinal Sketch. /P.O. Box 2284, Temecula, CA 92593/

A. LANGLEY SEARLES I enjoyed your account of Mrs. Utz, and was interested to learn that coffee-scented cleaning fluids are now available -- a great improvement over ubiquitous pine! But will the association cause us to drink less coffee? /48 Highland Circle, Bronxville, N.Y. 10708-5909/

HARRY WARNER, JR. I've been among those who feel fanzine publishing is on the wane despite occasional flareups of activity that seem to give false promise of a reversal of the trend. However, I admit that the problem involves principally general interest fanzines that are readily available to anyone interested. I have no idea how many good fanzines may exist out there that I've never heard of because they almost never are mentioned in other fanzines and don't include me on the mailing list. I do know about some fanzines that meet the criterion of lack of publicity in fanzine review columns and do arrive here regularly. For instance, there is Langley Searles' FANTASY COMMENTATOR, a beautifully reproduced, fat sercon fanzine that isn't pedantic or incomprehensible but deals with people and books and magazines in a way that would interest most fans if they knew it existed. It circulates in FAPA and I have no idea how Langley distributes other copies but it's unknown to most fans. Four months ago, a Rick Sneary memorial fanzine was published with appreciations of Rick and reprints of fanzine material written by him, and so far I've seen it mentioned in only one fanzine whose editor hadn't seen a copy but somehow heard about it. Bob Peterson produces each month, regularly as clockwork, a single-sheeter that apparently goes out only to other First Fandom members, with entertaining accounts of his travels and reading experiences and occasional reprints from very early fanzines. Bill Danner's STEFANTASY, the only letterpress fanzine in existence, has quite a few fans represented in its loc section each issue but you could read other fanzines for a year and not see a word about it. Pete Presford's anthology of Eric Mayer's fanzine writings came out a year ago and I think it's been reviewed in one fanzine to date. Every other month, the SFPA mailing contains a new issue of Guy Lillian's SPIRITUS MUNDI and Alan Hutchinson's variously titled apazine, almost always running to 30 or 40 pages apiece, chockful of splendid faanish material, and even the mailing comments frequently are detailed enough to be interesting as mini-essays to someone who hasn't seen the

publication they concern. I have no idea if Alan or Guy distributes many copies outside SFPA but these are unknown fanzines to most of the outside world. I'm sure there must be many more publications of this sort which I know nothing about and it's a shame that fandom doesn't have their equivalent in big-circulation, widely reviewed genzines.

For a long while, I thought I was the only fan old enough to have gone to school in the era when the students stayed put in one classroom and the teacher switched from one subject to another, instead of a mad rush by a mob of kids every hour from one part of the building to another. But I see you had the same experience, which I think made for better learning environment. (In fact, a modified version of it has been tested in several local schools in recent years although in this system, a team of teachers is assigned to the classroom where the kids stay most of the school day.) Mrs. Utzas you describe her must have been quite similar physically to the woman who was editor of the part of the local afternoon newspaper successively called the social page, women's page, family page, and various other things for several decades. However, the local journalist's character was not as pleasing as that of your teacher.

There's not anything in particular I can think of to write about the brief unrelated sections that follow the two lead items in this issue. I gather/^{they}are isolated extracts from your experimental or unfinished writing projects ~~{yes.}~~ and it's hard to judge them on the basis of these brief samples.

Wouldn't television commercials be full of praise for coffee-scented bathroom cleaners if they existed? Those custodians probably drank lots of coffee while in the john and pretending to be cleaning it. /423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740/

 "Benzidrine baby, give me yer ben-- ben-- benzidrine." --Benny Z and the Dreens, "Benzidrine Baby," BENZIDRINE BABY, Benny Z Records

TOM JACKSON I agree with your policy of sending a copy of SPUD to everyone who requests one, but I wonder if from a marketing standpoint you should take a different approach. Such as stating that you will send copies of SPUD to only the wittiest, most talented fans, then running off 5,000 copies of your zine and mailing it out to everyone. That seems like the best approach for gaining popularity. /1109 Cherry, Lawton, OK 73507/ ~~{That is exactly what I did! It's called "kissing up for TAPP."}~~

STEVE STILES I have no idea if we're due for another fanZine renaissance or not. I receive only half the fnzs you mention, and of those only a smaller percentage really interest me. Maybe it's because I'm Old & Tird & Jaded, a semi-gafiate. Or maybe because so many of them seem slapdash, trivial, and sloppy. Like Cheslin's fanzine. At any rate, postal costs must be contributing to the decline in publishing -- I see that SPUD cost twenty nine cents in postage for each copy. ~~{And a dollar for each copy mailed overseas.}~~ How big is your mailing list? ~~{Circa 200 copies.}~~

I remember quite a few of my old grammar school teachers; some were neurotic bitches that made going to school pure hell, some were merely "neutral," and some had a true gift for teaching and imparted an enthusiasm for learning to their students (which was difficult given the average size of the a class, in my day forty pupils for forty-five minute sessions). And one committed suicide byjumping out of a supply closet window .. he really was memorable!

I had one teacher, Mrs. O'Reilly, who also had orange frizzy hair resembling a Brillo pad; she was something of a superpatriot and had com-

posed a tune that she would beat time with while we marched around the class singing it: "I'd like to be the sort of man/who really is an Ameri-can./Who is an Ameri-can!/With head erect and shoulders straight, blah blah blah..." Well, I liked her little tune and I liked her ... What can I say?

As for the neurotic bitch variety, there was a Miss Burke in sixth grade, a near hysteric, I would say; I don't remember if I was in my clown stage or my trying to be invisible stage at that point, but something in me seemed to rub Miss Burke the wrong way; perhaps it was my being left-handed -- she saw something sinister in that and tried to break me of the habit, publicly ridiculing me when she'd catch me using my left hand, making me sit in a corner facing the wall, and like that. At that time of my life I was beginning to realize that I had some drawing skill and that it was not in my right hand. Also at that time, our school was having a contest to design the school flag. Fed up with Miss Burke's humiliations, I decided to try for first prize and thereby win some respect ... I drew up 5-6 designs and submitted them.

About two weeks later the principal announced the results over the public address system; I had won third prize. Miss Burke asked me to stand up in class and I did so, expecting to get a bit of egoboo. Instead, Burke launched into a mean-spirited little speech to the effect of "You think you're an artist but you only won third prize, smartass!" Come to think of it, maybe it was at this point that I entered into my trying to be invisible stage... /8361 Lucerne Rd., Randallstown, MD 21133/

Hear the cry of the lonely keebird as he flies over Arkansas in August:
"Kee- Kee- KeeRIST it's hot!"

PEGGY BURKE Regarding Mrs. Utz, I loved your description of her hair, "like an extroverted Brillo pad!" I've never heard that look expressed quite that way, but I know exactly the look you're talking about. I enjoyed your profile of her very much. It's teachers like her who take their jobs seriously and really get into teaching that make school worthwhile and make the most impression on their students. I'm glad you had one. They seem to be pretty rare, and I was lucky enough to have not one, but two, outstanding teachers in sequential years. Of course, they were married. He taught algebra; she taught world literature. He was dark haired and brown eyed; she was blonde and blue eyed. They had a running friendly feud over which was the "better sex." Some of my friends were lucky enough to have Mr. & Mrs. Knauss during the same year; they griped about the amount of work (both of them believed in homework and also believed in getting their students to do the best work they could), but everyone agreed that they were the best teachers they'd ever had. /1212 Greenway Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89108/ ~~{Say, you weren't Steve Stiles's sixth grade teacher, were you?}~~

DAVID THAYER Is your quote about a nymphomaniac autobiographical? ~~{No, unfortunately.}~~ The lasting joys in life have little directly to do with the momentary ecstasy of sex. ~~{All kidding aside, David, I agree.}~~ /P.O. Box 905, Euless, TX 76036/

LUCY HUNTZINGER, THE HUMDINGER Your fanzine was a weird collection of stuff. I will be interested to see the next one to see if you solidify your presentation of material. It jumps around too much for my taste in this first issue, though I was much taken by the revelation of the existence of coffee-scented cleanser. /2305 Bernard Ave., Nashville, TN 37212/

JOSEPH T MAJOR The letter to Ken Cheslin from the English Socialist seems odd, especially since he neither publishes his fanzine frequently nor seems to be particularly interested in matters fannish. It is almost as if he drifted into the wrong category.

You could also mention that Bill Bowers has revived OUTWORLDS for the third or fourth time.

Nice surrealistic pieces there. You know that there are two important things in surrealism: Power tools, bedsheets, and the Lincoln Memorial. And did you know that not wanting to use public restrooms because they are too filthy is a symptom of obsessive-compulsive disorder, for which one can be expensively treated with powerful health-destroying drugs? (This last, unfortunately, is **not** surrealistic.)
/4701 Taylor Boulevard #8, Louisville, KY 40215-2343/

DAVID PALTER The dreaded Joseph Nicholas appears in SPUD #1, accusing you of thinking superficially. For Joe, this is a very mild attack. He is, on the whole, the most consistently insulting writer I have seen in fandom. Yet his letters are widely published. Why? He generates discussion. Any discussion is better than no discussion, apparently. Ah well. No doubt I have failed to appreciate his finer points, somehow, churl that I am. /55 Yarmouth Rd. (Basement), Toronto, Ontario M6G 1X1 Canada/

GENE WOLFE Thanks for SPUD, with more of interest than many eight times its length. I particularly liked "Dream Bridge to Elsewhere" -- but then, I liked it all. **{Thank you, Gene. This praise really means something to me, coming as it does from a writer of your magnificent stature.}**

Why is it that people affirming or denying a resurgence never mention THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF SCIENCE FICTION? /P.O.B. 69, Barrington, IL 60011/

"Speak the truth, but leave immediately after." -- Slovenian proverb
(courtesy of Michael W. Waite)

MICHAEL W. WAITE The reminiscence of your sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Utz, brought back memories of my sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Rickett. She was over six feet tall, slender and always wore old granny dresses. She was a wonderful teacher who encouraged us to start our own sixth grade newspaper. It was called THE SIXTH GRADE TATTLETALE and was undoubtedly the forerunner of the NATIONAL INQUIRER. I wish I had kept a few issues but, alas, I didn't.

Mrs. Rickett was the town's "old maid" who eventually married the town's most eccentric bachelor -- they were both in their mid-forties at the time of their marriage. Mrs. Rickett continued teaching and Mr. Rickett continued with his door-to-door salesmanship, which included a line of seemingly indestructible socks. My mother always bought a year's supply of socks for our entire family (all 8 of us). I suspect we were one of his best customers. They were wonderful people.

My third grade teacher, Miss Hornung, used to tie my feet to the rounds of the chair because I had a tendency to walk around the room too much. My fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Biers, used to read to us a half hour every morning. That was the year I "seriously" discovered the library. My seventh grade teacher, Miss Shannon, was strict to a fault. You needed a "presidential pardon" to get back into her classroom, once she had sent you packing to the principal's office. Amazing what one remembers from youth.

You mentioned Lois Walker. Well, I was madly in love with foxy

Lois Watson. The most beautiful blue-eyed blonde that ever walked the face of the earth. THE last time I saw her was at our high school graduation, in 1956. /105 West Ainsworth, Ypsilanti, MI 48197-5336/

LINDA KRAWECKE Uh, coffee scented cleaning liquid? Sure. That may explain your men's room smell -- Me, I get a heavy dose of watermelon scent on the underground train I take to work each morning. No kidding! Not just watermelon but like the watermelon incense sticks I used to burn back, back way back in time. What a trip. Fortean. Keep in touch. /28 Duckett Road, Haringey, London N4 1BN U.K./

GARRY KILWORTH On the whole I found your fanzine interesting if a little incomprehensible to an outsider. I liked best A TALE OF TWO URINALS because I could sympathize with your love of the smell of coffee. As you say coffee always smells better than it actually tastes. I mean I like the taste, but it never actually lives up to the promise of the pre-taste aroma. It's a bit like political assurances and treaties with Native Americans -- the before is better than the after. Walking past a coffee shop, one gets the idea that a cup of the dark liquid would change one's life, and I always fall for it. /Wychwater, The Chase, Ashington, Rochford, Essex SS4 3JE, U.K./

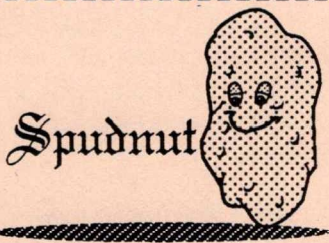
SUE THOMASON About the only sensible comment I have on your fanzine right now is

HUH???

/190 Coach Rd., Sleights, Whitby, North Yorks. YO22 5EN, U.K./

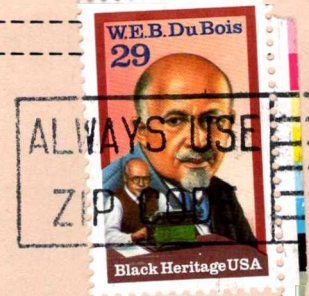
RICH DENGROVE About the Golden Age of Fanzines, there never was any Golden Age. It's a myth. Seen through the gauze of time, any era becomes a Golden Age: even the 50s can become one, the era of McCarthy and conformity. On the other hand, without the gauze of time, nothing is the Golden Age. Certainly not the 60s, which was ballyhooed as being on the verge of the Golden Age, the Age of Aquarius. I know I had bad trips then. At 48 my mind is already starting to play tricks on me: times of life that seem like heaven on Earth should better have been characterized as hell. So, don't believe Joseph Nicholas, or anyone, who tells you how great the past was. /2651 Arlington Drive #302, Alexandria, VA 22306/

WAHF: Ned Brooks, Catherine Mintz, Brian Earl Brown (congrats to you and Denice on the birth of little Sarah!), George Flynn, Harry Andruschak, Berni Phillips, Chester D. Cuthbert, and Tom Feller.



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