

dol drum 3

sfpa
mlg.12
june
'64

It seems like I just finished the last issue, and now it's time for dol-drum #3. As a matter of fact, it was only a month ago that I wound up #2. The trouble with spreading the construction of a magazine over a 3 month period is that you just finish cutting the last stencil and it's time to start all over again. That's the way it goes sometimes, and all like that.

To do things differently, I read this mailing in one sitting. While others may blanch at the thought of reading an entire SFPA mailing in the period of an hour or two (I'm a slow reader), I found it generally enjoyable. It was a good mailing.



The personnel and overall quality of SFPA seems to be an item of discussion that's sitting on the nose of a number of members in this eleventh mailing. I find this in itself interesting enough to fill some sparetime with my observations and opinions, un-crocodile as they may turn out to be. Although I'm not the only member of this group who is an outsider (the label fits. Anyone living in New York State who participates in SFPA could be considered nothing but an outsider, no matter how welcome or un-welcome he is by his Southern apamates), I hope no one boils inwardly or outwardly at any evaluations or conclusions I may make in the course of writing this off the top of my head. I mean to make it complimentary, but I sometimes have an uncanny way of shaking things around before I actually wind up doing so.

An objective study of apa groups is certain to peg SFPA pretty low on the scoreboard. This is unavoidable. When speaking of fanzine quality the ratio of good to bad would probably be no different in SFPA than in any of the other groups. But the ratio of SFPA-good to, say, FAPA-good is another thing. Zines like LOKI and ISCARIOT can stand up well to anything another apa has turned out, but this objective fact isn't worth too much when you're looking for an apa that's going to reward your publishing efforts with a good quantity of good zines. SFPA is small. Though it has probably the same percentage of good material as the next apa, it hasn't got that material in sufficient quantity to entice people to come here and publish instead of going to a bigger apa. With this point in mind it's not too hard to judge the thoughts of the 'average fan'. If he's got to publish a fanzine in order to receive an apa mailing, he's naturally going to go to an apa where he'll get more for his efforts. He'll get more crudzines, too, but he needn't look at them. He's only interested in how many good zines he's going to get.

It's interesting to know just why fans do join SFPA. There are sixteen of them as far as I know, and maybe some of them will tell me why. Al Andrews says "ISCARIOT is pubbed first because of my interest in the SFPA; its circulation in general fandom is secondary." Why is this so? Can it be that some members are in the group because they were with it from the beginning, and have become fond and 'attached' to it? Can this be part of a three-fold reason, with the 'color' of an exclusive Southern apa a second reason for membership? I don't know. I'm just guessing. I do know that there's an element of personal contact between most members of this group, and where your friends are so you too tend to gravitate. So we've got three possible reasons for membership: association, exclusiveness, friendships. Good reasons.

An inexperienced fan who lives in the South isn't going to be questioned too much if he joins SFPA even if he's in the N3F and N1APA is easily available to him. While he may go into other apas later, he'll probably still maintain his SFPA membership for one or more of the three possible reasons that I gave in the last paragraph.

Why, then, would the apa attract outsiders? I can speak for myself on this, anyway. One reason is Hulan and Plott, friends of mine. Friendship, then, is a reason an outsider can give, too. The other reason is based on personal taste and, perhaps, personal faults.

When it comes to an apa, I've got a mild claustrophobia. In mundane life I've got an aversion to crowds. Not a fear of crowds, just an aversion towards them. A crowd that is unified toward or with something is one thing - a crowd composed of individuals each seeking their own directions, objectives, and interests, is another. I can tolerate the one, but I avoid the latter. Keeping this particular line of thought on the topic of an apa group, I have the feeling that an apa can climb in membership to a point where it loses a quality which only a small group of people can have. That quality is hard to express. It's the difference between a town and a city, a club and a federation of clubs, a meeting and an assembly, a state and a country. It's an attitude, perhaps. It's a situation where each fan has more time to devote to another fan because there aren't so many members in the group that he would be strained if he tried to communicate with them all. It's a position where a fan group is better unified and more "personal" if there aren't a great number of members with a great number of viewpoints on how things should be done.

I enjoy publishing this apazine. If SFPA folds I have no intention of packing my bags and moving to N'APA or SAPS. True, I'm on the FAPA waitlist, but it's still going to be more of a long wait. If at this moment everyone on the list above me gaffiated, I'd refuse FAPA membership. What I'll do a couple of years from now when I reach the top is another matter. I may want to join in a couple of years, and if I hadn't put myself on the waitlist I wouldn't be able to, would I? The fact is, I'm in SFPA and have no intention of joining any other apa for at least a couple of years. This makes my opinion of our group fairly apparent: I actually like it....

Up to this point I've daringly ventured forth opinions on why Southerners are in this group and I've spoken for my own presence here. There's still the matter of what attraction SFPA holds for the other outsiders present. I've got no answers to this question but I would like to pick on member Arnold Katz and ask a question for which I'm curiously seeking an answer.

Why are you in this group, Arnie? With no prior insight into the character of SFPA you continually downgraded it. And then you joined it and set spurs to the attack. What possible reason can you give for such inconsistent behavior? No one joins an apa merely to launch an attack upon it. It's like posting Wheaties in a stamp album; it's crazy....

Further, it's not worthy of you. NEMESIS #1 is vaguely reminiscent of DUSK #1, an old N'APAZINE of mine that had somewhat the same flavor as yours but thankfully lacking the viciousness. I complained about N'APA, which was a ridiculous thing to do because I wasn't experienced enough to go forward and contribute anything really worthwhile to it myself. My zine wasn't an example of what I thought the apa should contain in the way of good material, but this particular fact didn't occur to me.... I don't mean to say that my suggestions weren't right at the time, but only that I wasn't any Shining Example of merit. NEMESIS goes one unfortunate step further than DUSK: it's malicious and in bad taste. This is disappointing, because I had a fairly high opinion of you and you're turning the supports for that opinion into pipe-cleaners.

I still consider you as promising new fan talent, but your attitude is getting onto the wrong track. You wouldn't talk the way you do in NEMESIS to people you meet in mundane life, so why turn around and act like this in fandom? I'm not a booster of SPPA to the point where I'd cast it in bronze, but I feel that any group of sincere, intelligent people should be shown more respect than you've shown so far for SIPA. It rubs me a little wrong when I find someone who acts toward the group as though he'd just waded to his knees in garbage. I seldom shell out serious criticism like this, but I like the people in this group (whether I make the right impression when I kid with them or not....), and I'd like to ask you to give serious consideration to what I've said here. There's no joking involved, pal.

The only summation that would hold any clear water would be that everyone in the group must find within it something of interest; whatever form that may take. Nobody is in here for no purpose at all, or for no cause at all. Sometimes this may be hard to believe, but....

MCism

WARLOCK....Larry Montgomery

"Warlock".... That would be a good title for one of my zines, wouldn't it?

I'd almost venture the opinion that WARLOCK 3 is better than your old SPECTRE 1. You think so, maybe? It's a good zine; a bit short on wordage, but up to par on written material, art, and layout. I might make an exception about the mailing comments - they're too short and more like capsule reviews than like anything else - but then everybody can't be expected to turn out as much excess wordage as me... Actually, the MCs are disappointing, but you'll probably step them up a little bit as you become more familiar with the fine art of dishing out egoboo to your fellow faneds.

I let my mental guard down and actually read the three pieces of fiction you printed. Joe's story was mood-gimmick with bare-boned and fast-paced writing. I can't say that it's anything too worthwhile to the fiction field, but it was interesting. For some reason or other it seemed to be a borderline piece of material that you know wasn't good and yet you actually liked reading it. I can't explain it any better than that, though I obviously couldn't do much worse either. Ange's fiction was cute and a little more thought out as far as plot goes. I can't say it was any better written, or that it was more interesting than Joe's, but it was obvious that a little more effort went into this story. BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON, by the pen of Scott Martin, was bad. Very bad. Not as bad as some of the things that Bradbury has written, but that's not saying much.

Your review of SWORDS & SORCERY is noted. I'm not too much of a fan of that type of story material, so consequently I didn't buy

the book. I can't say that your review has given me the desire to buy it, either. Witches and beasties and bumps in the night and all like that. Speaking of bump in the night, I'm doing this thing on stencil again and above the noise of the typewriter I heard the goddamndest screams coming from out there in the night someplace. Just before I started to talk about the witches and what-acts up there. Ordinarily I'd think it was another of my friends having the DTs or something, but this was too loud. It would have to be to reach me in my bedroom and over the boom bang of this crummy portable. So anyway I go out to see whathell's going on, and whatever it was was across the road and over in the woods some place. EEEEEYYAAAAAIICCCCCCCCHIIHHHHHH was the sound it made, in case you're interested. So I got the flashlight and threw its beam at the trees. Nothing but noise. Playing the light along the lake shore I saw eyes, but I couldn't see any more than that. I tried to make it to the road and keep the animal's attention on the light while I did so, but it got wise and thundered away through the woods. Now I've lived up here for over ten years but I've never heard an animal make a noise like that. The best I can deduce is that it was wounded, whatever the thing was, but how it got wounded and how it could run so fast if it was wounded is beyond my poor reasoning powers. I do know that the eyes were big, and wide-spread.

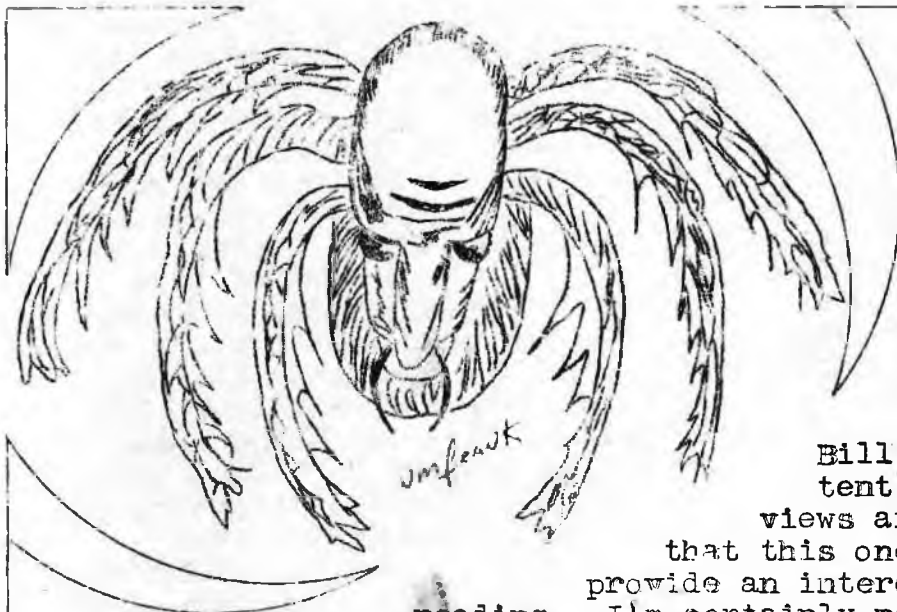
If I find out anything more I'll let you know later on.

You know my motto: Don't write about something - just write

ISCARIOT...Alfred McCoy Andrews and Dick Ambrose

Best zine in the mailing, of course. It's one of the best zines in fandom, as far as my own personal taste is concerned. I can't say that there's anything of earthshaking nor intellectual importance in any of the material I've seen ISCARIOT print, but then what some other fanzines consider of intellectual importance I consider of tinkertoy merit. I'm just a born anti-intellectual, as any of the bearded avant-guard fans will tell you. (I know one of them who isn't going to tell you much of anything about me. He's up to his beard as far as an evaluation of character goes....)

You invite suggestions on your new policy. Well, I'd like to suggest your adding articles on 'fandom and fannish aspects' to your list of the type of material you plan to print in future issues. I like your resolution to "stay seldom (if at all)" printing fiction and poetry. I wish most fanzines would adopt this policy. I've got nothing against good fannish material in either category, except that it's seldom you'll see any of this type of material that is good. Also, I can understand the position of fans who feel their zines must have a 'policy'. But, Al, if someone wrote you a really good article about, say, scuba diving, or a really humorous piece of material about a visit to the doctor, would you reject it? You probably would, but I wouldn't. If I liked it, and if I thought a sufficient number of my readers might like it, I'd print it. One thing that seems funny to me is the fact that fmz publishing is



for fun, and to set up a policy that would exclude material that you would love to print would be taking away some of that publishing fun.

Bill's review was competent, as usually his reviews are. The only effect that this one had on me was to provide an interesting few minutes of reading. I'm certainly not going to write Howard DeVore asking for those two issues of TOPS IN SF that are reviewed, but I enjoyed the review just the same.

Slaughter Row: You comment in your review of OUTRE about the different color heats and ditto waxes. And you mention the green. I used green ditto masters once, and it only took about ten minutes to make out every word on a page. The red isn't very good either, and some of the black turns out well at first but with age you pick up a zine and find that the black has turned to green.... Blue and purple are the best, altho there are black masters that don't turn your fanzine green and these are just as good if you can find them. I've forgotten which brand is the best, but my ditto is busted and I guess I won't need to remember anyway. As far as I'm concerned, tho, I'd rather see a fanzine dittoed with black carbons than with blue or especially with purple.

I'm not an ERB fan or a fan of Oceania legend and mythology, but the two articles on this subject were interesting and contained some information that was new. I must be some sort of fakefan, because I was better acquainted with Oceania and its history than I was with Burroughs and therefore found the Walker ERB article contained the most unfamiliar (to me) material. Marine biology is an interest of mine, and I note that you mention Dick is going into this field in college.

I might be able to comment in length, or otherwise, on your discussion with Chesney, but I have an aversion to discussions dwelling upon the fringe of the real heat of religious controversy. The issues brought up are debatable but they're rather pale in color and when I discuss religion I like real slam-bang action. If the real truth were known, I couldn't care less for religion in general or discussion on same in particular. But if there's a little action to the debate, a little nonsense, and no one really cares how things progress or turn out, then and only then will I be interested enough to participate. I refuse to talk about religion to anyone who would take the debate in dead seriousness (however serious he is about his religion I don't care; it's how serious he is in discussing it) and/or be upset when I kidded around

a little and perhaps even throw a few insults into the discussion. The same thing goes for politics, another subject I consider dull bull-session material; or even for sex, which is one big sleeping pill to talk about seriously and with no-nonsense. I can understand some people wanting to stick to strict debate rules on any of these subjects, but these people are going to find me avoiding them.

STRANGER THAN FACT....Jim Harkness

What's the general line of thought behind stapling a Hugo Ballot near the center of a fanzine? It would be a torturous job to either cut it out or disassemble the zine and then re-assemble it after taking out the ballot. It would be a torturous job to me because I'm lazy. It would merely be a pain in the butt to anyone else. Nobody in his right mind is going to bother. You crazy or sumpthin'?

The only things read in your fmz were the editorial, lettercol, and MCs. Very seldom do I read fiction, poetry, or articles on ESP by J.B. Rhine. I have my pride, you know. (BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN: THE EDITOR OF THIS APAZINE HAS SUSPICION TO BELIEVE THAT THE AFOREMENTIONED MYSTERY ANIMAL IS A FOX. WHEN QUESTIONED AS TO WHAT ANIMAL MIGHT MAKE A NOISE SIMILAR TO AN AMPLIFIED INTAKE-OF-BREATH SCREAM, A RELIABLE SOURCE VOLUNTEERED THE INFORMATION THAT, UNDER UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, A FOX WILL MAKE THAT TYPE OF SCREAM. WE NOW RETURN TO OUR REGULAR BROADCAST.) There's just some types of material that I don't care for, and your fanzine has the regular habit of publishing just such material. Objectively, it's not a bad zine. But my subjective taste buds register disinterest.

Now this here editorial of yours has several edges for comment-hooks, and I shall go forth and reduce your sermon to smouldering ashes. I shall slice you up with my little broadsword, so to speak. I shall unholster my rusty ray-gun and, rrrhhooom, rrrhhooom, disintegrate the floor out from under you. Yes, let me go forth and do this,

Your entire tirade against smoking seems to be backed up by the fact that the government tells you smoking is harmful.

Don't believe everything that the government tells you. Don't forget the first polio serum that came out not too long ago, the one they said would prevent polio and the very same one that killed hundreds of people by causing them to have polio. Don't forget that the government apologized in such a low whisper that a good percentage of the general populace still doesn't realize that that first serum was a failure.

Don't forget that while the government tells you smoking is very harmful, the most action they're willing to take against smoking is to have a mere notice put on cigarette packs that smoking may be harmful. Prohibition they know would be undesirable, but there are certainly more aggressive actions that they can take against smoking than what they are presently talking about taking. Their findings and their actions don't seem to mesh too well together. The "rational" (your word) man does not view this and then blindly believe the government. There's simply no backbone behind what they say.

As far as your distaste of smokers' breath, this is something that regular slugs of, say, Listerine can effectively combat. There are even Listerine tablets now, and probably there are even more effective tablets than that, so there's no reason why anyone need have an offensive breath. Don't put too much blame on smoking for smokers' breath when this is something that the people involved can easily avoid. You'll often find people throwing invective against all sorts of things, when the fault isn't with that particular thing in itself but with the people who use it.

"If you think I'm wrong, say so." I say so, Charlie.

ZAJE ZACULO....Len Bailes

Uijt jt b ujumf gps b gboajof? Zpv

nwtu cf ljeejoh, Dibsmjf.

SPORADIC....William Plott, Dope Addict

Sorry to see that your schoolwork is causing SPORE to suffer. There's a syllogism here someplace!

- 1) School causes SPORE to suffer.
- 2) A suffering SPORE makes you sad.
- Therefore 3) School makes you sad.

I wouldn't live in a place that made me sad. The best thing for you to do is bug the hell out of there and get an eight hour a day job that'll allow you more time for SPORADIC.

I can't wait for the next mailing when Dave Hulan will take my poor little syllogism apart, stick it in my ear, and break it off.

"My naturally inhibited, rebellious and Angry Young Man attitude." You? Bill Plott, an Angry Young Man? Foo foo, feh, and horse feathers. You may stage sit-in demonstrations in real life, but in print you're just that polite, nice college chap....

Master's article contains a trifle too much balderdash. For instance: "Several of the science-fiction pulp magazines can say -- and truthfully -- that they helped many youths find themselves and recognize themselves as individual human beings." I'm glad somebody was able to find something in those old pulps, even if it was only themselves... 'I turned to Science Fiction and found myself in an old pulp magazine'. Look -- if anybody 'finds' himself via a progine letter-column, he certainly must have been in one hell of a shape before that. If such a lettercol can help a person to recognize himself as an individual human being, he must either be a real weirdo or it actually doesn't take a hell of a push to make him recognize it. Masters is dealing solely in a couple of abstract terms here: 'finding oneself' and 'recognizing oneself as an individual human being'. They're abstract terms, but their abstract meanings are supposedly deep, and being supposedly deep it's ridiculous to couple them with such a trivial thing as a progine letter column.

Why don't you go visit somebody, Bill, so we can have another trip report?.