

ZAP GUN

-- A term originating in American fan Martin Alger's famous remark at Torcon (in Jul 1948) about what ray guns were supposed to sound like (Zap! Zap!). The same convention marked the first fannish outburst of the brief-lived fad of fans hunting each other down with water pistols in the form of toy ray guns. As a consequence of publicity given to Alger's remark, fans took to calling said water-pistol ray guns 'ZAP GUNS'.

[See RAY GUN, BLASTER, PLONKER, TORCON & ZAP! ZAP! ATOMIC RAY IS PASSE WITH FIENDS]

"ZAP! ZAP! ATOMIC RAY IS PASSE WITH FIENDS"

-- The incredibly condescending headline of a newspaper article by George Bain, reviewing Torcon 1, which was published in the July 5th, 1948 issue of the Toronto paper THE GLOBE AND MAIL. The article was equally condescending. Sample paragraph: *"Seen any machine-men of Zor lately? They have organic brains in metal cube-shaped bodies, you know. What's the word from Helen, the lovelorn robot, or the snail-lizard of Venus? How're interplanetary communications with you, kid?"*

The headline apparently originated in a comment made by Martin Alger which George Bain must have overheard. A 16mm British film called 'ATOMIC PHYSICS' was being shown, some fans were fascinated, others bored and milling about. Seeing this, Alger later in the convention commented: *"It showed who were the science fans and who were the Buck Rogers fans who expected ray guns to go Zap! Zap!"*

As Leslie A. Crutch wrote in his TORCON MEMORIES article: *"I wonder if it was his remark that might have been overheard and used by the reporter of the Globe & Mail when he made up the title for the article?"* Alger himself certainly believed this to be the case.

The two articles came out before the convention was over, hence the reaction on the last day (Monday) as reported by Crutch: *"...was George O. Smith, ably abetted by Bob Tucker supplying sound effects, reading two articles about the convention, which appeared in the Globe and Mail and the Daily Star. Tucker makes a better ray gun than a paper doll. Smith would ask him to "make like a ray gun" and Tuck would jump up and go "Zap! Zap!" Some wag would ask Tuck to make like a "man with three heads" -- another, "Make like a wax doll, Tucker!"*

The reason the Globe and Mail article has entered into fannish legend is that it is considered the absolute and perfect example of the kind of mindset with which the journalistic media tends to view sf conventions, sf fans, or even science fiction in general. Consider it as an object lesson for convention publicists. Somehow the press has to be convinced there is more to sf than "gosh wow Buck Rogers stuff". Not an easy task.

Crutch had a somewhat impractical suggestion to make in #36 of LIGHT (Aug 1948): *"The Canadian fans are pretty steamed up over the Bain thing in the GLOBE AND MAIL. However, it was to be expected. A paper that allies itself with the Conservative interests, politically, of the Province, and our brown-mouthed premier, George drew, in particular, isn't too particular as to how it reports anything anyway. Truth and accuracy at the GLOBE AND MAIL are strange bed fellows. The TORONTO STAR report was serious report was serious, but somewhat inaccurate. Our American friends will no doubt seethe because we are given the credit for all the conventions. I think what should*

be done in the future to prevent reoccurrences [sic] of such things is to request the reporters to submit their copy to the Convention Officials so that their errors can be corrected and misapprehensions scotched while in their infancy." Sure...right... that'll work...

Here follows the complete text of the George Bain **"ZAP! ZAP! ATOMIC RAY IS PASSE WITH FIENDS!"** article printed in the Globe & Mail July 5th, 1948:

Put down that ray-gun, Buck Rogers, I've got you cold. So I let him have it with my 25th century rocket-pistol (zap zap), hopped into my space-ship (zoom swish), and made off to the planet of three-headed people. Minerva was waiting for me, a light sparkling in every one of her six television eyes.

Seen any machine-men of Zor lately? They have organic brains in metal cube-shaped bodies, you know. What's the word from Helen, the lovelorn robot, or the snail-lizard of Venus? How're interplanetary communications with you, kid?

Nothing wrong with me that a long rest – and protection from another science fiction convention – won't cure. The sixth world convention of these publishers, writers and readers of fantastic tales is being held at 55 Queen Street, East. Just take a firm grip on yourself, plunge right in, and it shouldn't be more than a couple of weeks before you can sleep again without nightmares.

Of course, you may have a few bad moments if you start worrying about the cosmic veils of meteoric dust which is going to cover the Earth in a few years. Don't let it get you; it's just going to last for forty years and after that the sun will shine again.

The business about the cosmic veil is contained in one of the fanzines which are available for the fen attending the Torcon. A fanzine, among science-fictionists, is a fan magazine, fen is the plural of fan, and Torcon is the Toronto Convention. Cunning, aren't they?

Those of the tender nerves should make a point of avoiding the drawings displayed at the convention. They are up for auction (if anyone wants a good portrait of a fiend for the bedroom wall, this is the place to get it) and are the originals of pictures which appeared in fantastic and astounding magazines and books.

There's one cozy little number, for instance, that shows a poor bloke being clutched to the breast of a beast that had the body of an octopus and arms which are individual snakes. Any number of these pictures show people being done in with ray-guns (zap zap ...ugh, you got me), spaceships flying through the mushrooming smoke of atom-bomb explosions, and lightly clad maidens being menaced by fiends of one sort or another.

On Saturday, before the formal goings-on of the convention started, the delegates were free to examine the fanzines, new books, and drawings on display, and to cut up touches about fiends they have met in their readings. Two men in one corner were earnestly discussing werewolves; a group of three were lost somewhere in outer space in a jaunt between Mars and the Moon.

The fen are kept in touch with one another and the writers of their favorite type of literature mostly by the fanzines. One of the latest of these is a jolly little number called simply, MACABRE.

It is advertised: "Want to feel disgusted, scream in horror, beat your head, kill your mother-in-law? Read MACABRE."

Science Fiction is years ahead of actual science, according to David A. Kyle, a fan, literary agent, writer and publisher of Monticello, New York. "We had the atom bomb 15 years ago," he says, indicating that the atom is pretty much passe now. "We're on to new things."

At one time during the war, the FBI in the United States told one science fiction magazine that it would have to drop an atom story because it might give away military secrets. The publisher said his magazine had been publishing atom stuff for 10 years and if it was to discontinue abruptly it might create suspicion. Atomic fiction marched on.

Author Robert Bloch analyzed the reasons why people write and read science and science fiction and approved of them. Mr. Bloch told his audience he had a Jekyll and Hyde personality and also managed to use a creditable imitation of Peter Lorre at his creepiest in his address.

And for comparison's sake, here is the complete text of the **TORONTO STAR ARTICLE** printed July 5th, 1948:

About 200 science-fiction writers – they are the guys who turn out this horror stuff that makes you wake up screaming in the night – attended the sixth annual convention of the Torcon Society.

They don't look or dress like the characters from their books. In fact they look just what they are – successful business men who write fiction as a hobby. They say it helps them relax. In the group are included advertising men, doctors, lawyers, a movie projectionist and just about any occupation you wish to name.

Robert Block, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is an advertising copy writer. In his spare time he turns out "chillers". As a boy, Mr. Block says he used to sit in graveyards to get an inspiration for his horror stories.

"I'm too old for that now. I'd get rheumatism; so I just sit at home and wait for the ideas to come," he said.

Last night, Block awoke in the middle of the night and rushed for a pencil. He couldn't find one so he got out his typewriter. He had a plot for a story.

It concerned a man who murdered his wife, and then planted poinsettias on her grave. The flowers took root in her body and strangled him while he was standing on the grave.

Does he have nightmares? No, but he admits his wife sometimes does.

Started at 16.

He writes short stories, novels, and radio scripts. "Stay Tuned For Terror", one of his radio serials, was broadcast by the CBC. Mr. Block read horror books as a boy and decided he could do as well as the author. When he was 16, he wrote his first story and has been writing ever since.

"It helps me relax after a hard day at the office," he said.

The Torcon Society meets annually. This is their first convention in Canada. In addition to professional writers and publishers many members write for a large number of amateur publications which have sprung up in the U.S.

Wilson Tucker of Bloomington, Illinois, runs a movie projector. In his spare time he writes detective stories, "The Chinese Doll", his best known book, is to be published as a pocket book after appearing as a serial in several newspapers.

He admits his job helps him get ideas for his stories.

"You can't see 200 movies a year without borrowing something from them," he explained.

Like most of his colleagues attending the convention, Mr. Tucker started by writing “chillers”. However, he found they were pretty tough to sell so he switched to detective stories. He thinks detective stories are easier to write because of their looser construction.

The authors are quite proud of the scientific accuracy of their work. “Sure we use our imagination”, one said, “but we really rely on scientifically proven facts for the base of our story.”

They like to tell about a story based on an atom bomb published in one of the magazines while the Manhattan project was still in the hush-hush stage. As a result, the FBI investigated author John Campbell and wanted to know where he got his information. For a while they suspected he had a pipe-line to the project. As it turned out, he just used his imagination but his scientific training resulted in this fantasy being close to the fact.

Fans of the horror fiction are really avid. They crowd around their favorite author with autograph books. Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster used to be fans of the chillers before they rode to fortune on the coattails of Superman.

As CANADIAN FANDOM editor William D. Grant later wrote: “*The star is usually a very accurate paper, but look at the mess they did on the Convention.*”

I’ll say! Robert Block? Block? BLOCH you idiot! Some reporter. No wonder there was no byline.

Press coverage of SF conventions is an ongoing problem. There’s only one way to manipulate the press, give them plenty of comment hooks and fascinating visuals, plus any short & pithy (i.e. quotable) statements both humorous and profound. Otherwise they’ll revert to the usual clichés in the belief that’s what their readership expects and can identify with. All you can do is try.

[See **GOSH-WOW-BOYBOY**]

THE ZERO-G LAVATORY

-- **Faned: Scott Patri.** Perzine pubbed out of Cumberland, B.C., beginning in 1994. Very personal indeed, Patri carrying on a one-man crusade against 'Trekkies'. Enlivened with his own art, especially the escapades of 'The Beanie Brothers', trufans who make life miserable for Trekkies. Also contains Patri's own fiction. (More details to be added)

1994 - (#1 - Fall) (#2 - Winter)

1995 - (#3 - Spring) (#4 - Summer) (#5 - Fall)

1996 - (#6 Spring)

ZERO SUM GAME

-- **Faned: Taral.** Perzine.

1978 - (#1 - Jun)

1984 - (#2 - Dec)

ZIMRHA

-- **Faned: Wayne Bourgeois.** A one-shot pubbed out of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Described as "*almost 40 pages, unreadable because of poor mimeography, but also illustrated.*" (CC) **1969** - (#1 - Mar)

ZINE

-- In mundane usage, short form of 'Magazine', but in fannish terminology, short form of 'Fanzine'.

ZINEDOM

-- 'Fandom' refers to SF fans in general, though often narrowed to include actifans only. But 'Zinedom' refers specifically to fanzine fandom in all its aspects: fanzine editors, publishers, readers & collectors, as well as the fanzines themselves and everything to be found within their pages.

ZINE NOW, TITLE LATER

-- **Faned: Janet Wilson.** APAzine.

1980 – (#1 - Feb) (#2 - Jun) (#3 - Sep) (#4 - Oct)

ZINE ONE, TAKE ONE

-- Pubbed out of New Westminster, B.C., circa **1987**. The clubzine of the U.S.S. Discovery Star Trek Club. (GS)

THE ZINE THAT HAS NO NAME

-- **Faned: Mike Glicksohn.** Pubbed out of Toronto, Ontario. At least two issues. (Details to be added)

1976? - (#1 - ?)

1977 - (#2 - Mar)

ZIRCON

-- **Faned: Bee Stuckless.** APAzine.

1984 – (#1 – Apr)

1985 – (#2 – May)

LE ZOMBIE

-- Famous U.S. fanzine by legendary fan Bob Tucker. #63 dated July 1948 is of particular interest, as it is the 'Special Canuck Edition' distributed at Torcon 1, the first Worldcon held in Canada. Here are some excerpts with 'Canadian content':

editorialies

The convention committee have broad shoulders. They have need of such broad shoulders because they are responsible for all the ink-smearred pages of this issue, all the sloppy mimeographing, all

those thumb prints dotting the margins, those torn pages, all the faults of this, the sixty-third issue of LeZ must be blamed on them. (There be no faults in content of course.) The Canadian convention committee conceived and have now hopefully executed a special Canuck edition of LeZ. Heap mud upon their ears, the unwashed infidels.

Not one red cent from the sale of this issue will find it's way into the greedy pockets of Editor Tucker, except of course small fees to cover costs of stencils, paper, ink, postage, staples, time, and the wear and tear on the typewriter ribbon we aren't using. Should you take leave of your senses and purchase a copy of this, rest happy in the knowledge that the convention committee will reap the benefits from the sale – they'll get a penny, I collect the rest. Hah.

TORONTO TODAY

It is my fervent hope that a goodly crowd, and much of the same crowd, gather in Toronto this week. Speer has already told us he couldn't make it because the date will conflict with his schooling; this is too bad. His absence will not only rob us of the opportunity of manufacturing newer, more pleasant rumors, but we shall also have to get along somehow without the annual anti-dero legislation.

POOR PONG'S ALMANAC

Ye sultry month of July, 2048

- 3 S *Canada captures convention for second time. 1983.*
- 4 S *Disgruntled faction announces rump convention in Chicago.*
- 5 M *All fandom embroiled in war! Half favor Canada, remainder swear to go to Chicago.*
- 6 T *Ackerman-Moskowitz coalition favor Canada, begin printing propaganda to influence younger fans.*
- 7 W *New stf mag hits stands: Terrible Tales, edited by Robert Bloch. 1961.*
- 8 T *Discerning fans discover entire contents of Terrible Tales written by Bloch, using pen names.*
- 9 F *Terrible Tales fold.*
- 10 S *Fans girdling for war on eve of Canadian convention. 1984.*
- 12 S *Ackerman turned back at Canadian border. Passport forged.*
- 13 T *Canadian convention collapses when Moskowitz fails to show. Newark delegate discovered in Chicago. Claims "deros put me on wrong train."*

ZOOLOGY

-- **Faned: Michael Skeet.** Humour/rumour/satire zine pubbed out of Edmonton 1985/1986. Did takeoffs on Edmonton fandom, NEOLOGY zine, fannish politics, etc. "*Published by ESFOG, the Edmonton SF Old Guard.*" (Details to be added)

*"The Old Guard has effectively broken away from ESFACAS to form their own club, meeting weekly in a local pub, and even publishing their own (satirical) newsletter ZOOLOGY" - (RR)
"HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!! The time IS ripe for fandom without guilt. I love this stuff. Ook ook!" - (BK)*

1985 - (#1 - Nov) (#2 - Dec)

1986 - (#3 - Jan) (#4 - Feb) (ZOOLOGY SPECIAL - Mar - Supplement) (#5/6 - May/Jun)

[See **NEOLOGY**, **ESFOG**]

ZOSMA

-- **Faned: Steve George.** Irregular genzine pubbed out of Winnipeg, Manitoba, from 1977 to 1981. First three issues were titled UNIVERSE, then name changed to ZOSMA with issue #4. (Details to be added)

As UNIVERSE:

1977 - (#1 - Jun) (#2 - Sept) (#3 - Oct)

As ZOSMA:

1977 - (#4 - ?) (#5- ?)

1978 - (#6 - Aug) (#7 - Sept) (#8 - Sept) (#9 - Sept) (#10 - Sept) (#11 - Nov) (#12 - Dec)

1979 - (#13 - ?)

1981 - (#14 - Jun) (#15 - Jun) (#16 - Jul) (#17 - Aug) (#18 - Sept) (#19 - Oct) (#20 - Nov) (#21 - Dec)

ZX

-- **Faned: Andrew C. Murdoch.** Perzine pubbed out of Victoria, B.C., in the mid 1990s. (Details to be added)

"One thing definitely mentionable about ZX, they were stapled along the top of the page, which meant you had to read the zine as a flipchart. It was a bit of a pain at first, but you gotta admit, it was unique. The first five issues were paperzines; when Andrew did a sixth issue as an E-zine, he said he got nearly no response to it. With that, ZX was dead, and when Andrew restarted a zine with COVERT COMMUNICATIONS he readily went back to paper. And, good for him." (LP)

1993 - (#1 - Jul/Aug) (#2 - Sep/Oct) (#3 - Nov/Dec)

1994 - (#4 - Jan/Feb) (#5 - Jun)

1996 - (V2#1 - Aug) - pubbed as an Ezine.